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Unravelling Coalition Dynamics: Explaining the Formation and Strategies of Coalition Types in EU Environmental Policymaking

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*“Without persistence, what remains is an enthusiasm of the moment.
Without adaptability, what remains may be channelled into destructive fanaticism.
Without positive obsession, there is nothing at all.”*

Octavia E. Butler
Parable of the Sower, 1993

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Abstract

Coalitions are a ubiquitous feature of EU environmental policymaking. Across EU environmental policy processes, coalitions emerge and conduct strategies to try and influence policy processes and translate their preferences into the legislative proposals. The battle between coalitions, thus lies at the heart of EU environmental policymaking and the EU's environmental ambitions. Not all coalitions, however, look or act the same. Rather, coalitions of all different shapes and sizes within environmental policy processes, such as the 'Green Growth Group', the 'Visegrad' coalition, the 'Green 10', and more recently the 'Nuclear Alliance' and the 'Friends of Renewables', emerge and carry out a variety of strategies to inflict policy change or stability. Despite this variation, much of the extant literature primarily centers on analyzing the influence of coalitions to explain EU environmental policy change. As a result, understanding what drives the formation and strategies of structurally different coalitions across EU environmental policy processes remains a central puzzle. By unravelling these coalition dynamics, insights into EU environmental policy processes and the progress of environmental action are advanced.

Placing coalitions at the center of the analysis, the dissertation first aims to develop an initial exploratory typology of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes. Then it sets out to explain the formation of, and strategies employed by these differing coalition types. Accordingly, the dissertation seeks to develop a comprehensive picture of coalitions by shining a light on the overlooked dynamics of coalition formation and strategy selection in EU environmental policymaking. To achieve these aims, the dissertation examines three core research questions:

RQ1: What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?

RQ3: Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

To answer these questions, the dissertation draws primary insights from the Advocacy Coalition Framework and interest group literature. Integrating these two literatures, a conceptual framework is developed. It enables the identification and characterization of coalitions across five structural dimensions and several conditions likely to explain the formation and strategies of coalition types across EU environmental policy processes. The five structural dimensions of coalitions include the number of shared preferences among coalition members, the size and diversity of membership,

the degree of authority, and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination. The conditions deemed likely to drive the formation of coalition types include the inclusion/exclusion of exceptional policy actors within a coalition and six legislative characteristics: the public salience of the proposal, the complexity of the proposal, the scope of regulatory addressees impacted by the proposal, the stringency of the proposals primary instrument, and the shifts between stages in the policy process. Moreover, the conditions considered to shape the strategies coalition employ include their five structural dimensions and the six legislative characteristics.

The dissertation adopts an exploratory-explanatory research design and examines coalitions across five policy processes within the European Green Deal. The five processes are related to five legislative proposals: the European Climate Law, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). The analysis proceeds in three sequential stages related to the three research questions. First, coalitions are identified using social network analysis and content analysis. The identified coalitions are then characterized, and a coalition typology is developed through principal component analysis. Second, the formation of coalition types across the five policy processes is explained using crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis. Third, a two-step comparative analysis examines why different coalition types pursue certain strategies and activities. Throughout the three stages, the dissertation triangulates a variety of data sources including semi-structured interviews, policy documents, specialized press, official EU sources, datasets, and secondary literature and websites.

Stage one of the dissertation uncovers 59 coalitions that are characterized into six types of coalitions: peripheral coalitions, moderate authoritative coalitions, fragmented coalitions, colossal coalitions, policy generalist coalitions, and commanding coalitions. The number of coalitions and coalition types present differ from process to process. *Peripheral* coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of the policy process. They support a very narrow set of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, very low levels of authority, and internally coordinate with very low levels of intensity. Peripheral coalitions are the second most occurring type and are present in all five policy processes. *Moderate authoritative* coalitions advocate for a moderate range of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of intensity. Given the high level of authority, moderate authoritative coalitions hold a latent degree of power, which may be mobilized to advocate for their moderate range of preferences. These coalitions are the most common and are present in all five policy processes. *Fragmented* coalitions advocate for a narrow set of issue preferences, have a large and

heterogenous membership, low authority, and internally coordinate at a moderate level of intensity. Such coalitions are viewed as fragmented, whereby a heterogenous set of members are loosely held together by a low number of preferences and moderate levels of coordination. Fragmented coalitions are the third most populous coalition type and are identified in all processes but the one linked to the Sustainable Batteries proposal. *Colossal* coalitions back a moderate number of issue preferences, have a very large and homogenous membership, moderate authority, and coordinate at a low level of intensity. Colossal coalitions are considered to occupy a vast space within the policy process due to their very large size. These coalitions are one of the least populous and are only uncovered in the processes related to the Climate Law and CBAM proposals. *Policy generalist* coalitions advocate for a very broad set of issue preferences, are moderate in size and have a homogenous membership, high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of intensity. These coalitions possess a strong grasp and represent a unified perspective on the proposal at hand. These coalitions are the second least common and only emerge in the processes of the CBAM and the Sustainable Batteries proposals. *Commanding* coalitions are considered the most focal or dominant coalition type. They push for a broad set of issue preferences, have a large and highly diverse membership, very high authority, and internally coordinate very intensely. Along with colossal coalitions, commanding coalitions are the least common and are only identified in the process related to the RED proposal. Together, the findings of stage one demonstrates that coalitions play a central role in structuring EU environmental policymaking. They are thus empirically important in understanding the EU's environmental policy progress. Specifically, the identification reveals a vibrant and fluid coalition landscape. Although most coalitions are short-lived, some sustain throughout the policy process, evolve, and even emerge across several processes. The creation of a coalition typology further suggests that coalitions emerge in only a limited number of distinct structural compositions. Finally, the alternating presence of coalitions across policy processes, and thus the underlying power dynamics, reflects the complex and contested nature of EU environmental policymaking.

Building on the typology, stage two finds that the formation of each coalition type is not attributed to any single legislative or actor-level condition. Instead, each coalition type emerges from distinct pathways made up of combinations of core and auxiliary conditions, comprised of legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors. Unpacking the mechanisms linking the conditions of the distinct pathways, the results further illuminate the key role of exceptional policy actors. They show that the formation of more structurally intricate coalition types, namely fragmented, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions, involve the strategic agency of an exceptional policy actor that aims to pursue their preferences through strategic

coalition building conducive to the given context. Conversely, the emergence of less structurally intricate coalitions, such as the peripheral or moderate authoritative, emerge without the agency of an exceptional policy actor. Rather, such coalitions form during processes that either have a low entry cost for policy actors to participate and potentially influence the proposal or during processes that pressure policy actors to form a coalition and try to influence a process as a last-ditch effort before it is too late.

Stage three of the dissertation shows that coalitions employ differing strategies that are informed by specific activity repertoires that are conducted at different rates of intensity. Peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily employ an inside strategy, implemented through a low range of activities. And, although moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions use the activities at a high rate, the peripheral coalitions do not. Fragmented and colossal coalitions both tend to select an inside-outside strategy. Fragmented coalitions draw on a broad range of activities and use them at a high rate, whereas colossal coalitions implement their strategy via a much smaller arsenal of activities used at a low rate. Commanding coalitions conduct an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, utilizing the widest range of activities and at a high rate of intensity. Comparing the strategies across coalition types and of coalitions within the same type, findings uncover that the size, membership diversity, and intensity of intra-coalition coordination, are core structural dimensions that initially define the coalition type's activity repertoire. Legislative characteristics, primarily the salience, complexity, stringency, and shifts between policy stages, then shape the opportunities and constraints within which coalitions operate. Each coalition type, however, adapts to legislative characteristics differently. Whereas the same legislative characteristic is found to drive each type of coalition to select different strategies, different degrees of the same characteristic, such as high and low complexity, drive some coalitions of the same type to select the same strategy but via different mechanisms. Consequently, the strategies employed by each type of coalition are not fully determined by their structure nor the context of the policy process alone. This suggests that legislative characteristics interact with the structure of coalitions whereby legislative characteristics do not impose uniform effects on coalition strategies but the strategy they select is filtered through their structural dimensions.

The dissertation makes important empirical, conceptual, methodological, and societal contributions. *Empirically*, the dissertation contributes a comprehensive systematic mapping and improved descriptions of the coalitions and types of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. It also provides new evidence regarding the formation and strategies of coalition types and

challenges the notion that coalition formation and strategy selection are affected by contextual factors or the agency of policy actors alone. By placing coalitions at the center of the analysis, the dissertation also contributes a fresh perspective of EU environmental policy and politics that goes beyond the focus of institutional and actor-centric lenses. *Conceptually*, the dissertation makes novel contributions to the scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and the ACF. The dissertation offers an updated conceptualization of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. It also identifies specific ways that drive the formation of different coalition types and factors related to a coalition's choice of strategy. In doing so, the findings stress the interconnectedness of contextual factors, individual agency, and coalitions. To that end, the dissertation also advances the category of legislative characteristics as an impetus for the conceptualization of short-term opportunities and constraints proposed by the ACF. All in all, the generic framework designed and implemented for this dissertation provides a strong starting point for the future study of coalitions in EU policymaking and beyond. *Methodologically* the dissertation provides a practical and transparent step-by-step approach to identify, characterize, and examine the formation and strategies of coalitions. It also sheds light on the complementarity of several analytical methods. Finally, the findings of the dissertation contribute *societally* by providing insights and recommendations for practitioners that engage in coalitional politics in EU environmental policymaking.

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List of abbreviations

ACEA	European Automobile Manufacturers
ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
APPLiA	the European Association for the Home Appliance Industry
AVERE	the European Association for Electromobility
Brexit	Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CANEurope	Climate Action Network Europe
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CEFIC	European Chemicals Industry Council
CEFS	the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers
Cembureau	the European Cement Association
CEPI	the European association representing the paper industry
CEPM	The Consorcio Energético Ponta Cana-Macao
CERAME-UNIE	the European Ceramic Industry Association
CIBE	the International Confederation of European Beet Growers
CLEPA	the European Association of Automotive Suppliers
Cocreal	the European Association of trade in cereals, oilseeds, rice, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed, and agrosupply
Commission	European Commission
COPA-COGECA	association representing farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
COS	Coalition opportunity structure
COVID-19	
CRM	Critical raw materials
csQCA	Crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis
currENT	the association for grid technology providers
DG	Directorate-General (of the European Commission)
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General Climate Action
DG ENER	Directorate-General Energy
DG ENVI	Directorate-General Environment

DG FISMA	Directorate-General Financial Stability, Financial Services, and Capital Markets Union
DG GROW	Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and SMEs
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG TAXUD	Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union
DG TRADE	Directorate-General for Trade
DUH	Deutsche Umwelthilfe
E3G	Third Generation Environmentalism
EASE	the European Association for the Storage of Energy
EBRA	the European Battery Recycling Association
ECF	European Climate Foundation
ECOS	the Environmental Coalition on Standards
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
EDF	Électricité de France
edp	Energias de Portugal
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EGD	European Green Deal
EGEC	the European Geothermal Energy Council
EGMF	the European Garden Machinery industry federation
EHPA	European Heat Pump Association
ENVI Committee	The Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in the European Parliament
EP	European Parliament
EPP	The Group of the European People's Party
EPTA	the European Power Tool Association
EREF	European Renewable Energies Federation
EU	European Union
Eurelectric	the Federation of European electricity industry
Eurobat	the Association of European Automotive and Industrial Battery Manufacturers
Eurofer	the European Steel Association
Eurometaux	the European non-ferrous metals association
Europacable	the European Association for wire, cables and cable accessories producers
Eurozone	
EU ETS	European Union Emissions Trading Scheme

FEAD	the European Waste Management Association
FEDIOL	the EU vegetable oil and protein meal industry association
FFF	Friday's for the Future
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HCPC	Hierarchical cluster on principal component analysis
IA	Interest association
ID	Identity and Democracy Group
IMCO Committee	The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection
ITRE Committee	The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy in the European Parliament
JTF	Just Transition Fund
LDCs	Least developed countries
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MSSD	Most similar systems design
NEPI	New environmental policy instrument
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OLP	Ordinary legislative procedure
PCA	Principal component analysis
PFPI	Partnership for Policy Integrity
Recharge	the Advanced rechargeable and lithium batteries industry association
RED	Renewable energy directive
Renew	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
REGI Committee	the Committee on Regional Development in the European Parliament
S&D	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats
SEA	Single European Act
SNA	Social Network Analysis
The Council	The Council of the European Union
The Greens	Greens/European Free Alliance
The Left	European United Left/Nordic Green Left
QCA	Qualitative comparative analysis
QMV	Qualified majority voting
T&E	Transport and Environment
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

USIPA	the United States Industrial Pellet Association
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

The battle between coalitions within policy processes lies at the heart of policymaking and the EU's environmental ambitions. Across EU environmental policy processes, structurally differing coalitions, such as the 'Green Growth Group', the 'Visegrad' coalition, and the 'Green 10', emerge and conduct strategies to try and influence policy processes and legislative proposals (Delreux & Happearts, 2016; Wurzel et al., 2019; Ydersbond, 2019). Similar dynamics can also be observed within landmark policy processes, where more specific coalitions shape policy outcomes. During the initial process the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) a diverse coalition successfully promoted the market-based climate instrument over other instruments (Meckling, 2011). Likewise, during the recent revisions of the Renewable Energy Directive clashes between the Nuclear Alliance and the Friends of Renewables took center stage (Buzogány et al., 2023). Inherently, one of the major aims in the study of coalitions is to understand why some coalitions win and others lose. Yet, to influence policy processes, coalitions must first form and conduct strategies capable of translating their preferences into legislative proposals (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Weible et al., 2020). Understanding what drives the formation and strategies of structurally different coalitions across EU environmental policy processes remains a central puzzle in the study of coalitions and this dissertation.

The global environment is in a perilous state. Despite the political dynamics between coalitions, the EU has developed one of the world's most complex environmental policy frameworks. The framework covers many key areas including climate change, biodiversity, water and air pollution, and chemicals regulation (Delreux & Happearts, 2016). The quantity and scope of environmental policy have continued to expand since the 1950s. Although there has been some rocky periods marked by less progress, including the period following the Global Financial Crisis and Eurozone Crisis (Burns et al., 2020). Nevertheless, during this process of ongoing gradual expansion, environmental policy has become one of the largest and most important policy domains for the EU and remains a central place in the EU's sphere of action. The introduction of the European Green Deal (EGD) in 2019 signaled a highly promising step in the EU's continual development and expansion of environmental policy (Dupont et al., 2024; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022).

The EGD was touted as the EU's 'man on the moon moment'. It emerged from a politicized context molded by the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 2018 report on global warming, Fridays for the Future climate strikes, and a greening of

the European Parliament during the 2019 European elections which shaped the election of incoming Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The mixing of such events placed increased attention on the enduring environmental crisis, pushing the issue to the top of the EU's agenda. It also placed pressure on the EU to reinstate itself as an ambitious global climate leader (Biedenkopf et al., 2023; Bocquillon, 2024). The EGD is an extensive environmental policy program with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and to further enhance the EU's environmental ambitions (Dupont et al., 2024; Pollex & Lenschow, 2024; Tosun, 2023). The EGD extends the EU's environmental policy focus by including a broad range of sectors that cut across environmental, social, and technical realms of policy, mobilizing a diversity of actors across various policy processes. The policymaking processes connected to the proposals under the EGD, however, have not been smooth. Rather, they have been met with surmounting levels of green backlash and heavily contested by a variety of policy actors and coalitions (Bocquillon, 2024; Crespy & Munta, 2023; Domorenok & Graziano, 2023; von Malmborg, 2023; Wettstad, 2024).

Although coalitions are imperative to EU environmental policy processes and the progress of environmental action, literature has inherently favored analyzing the influence of and power battles between coalitions. This has resulted in coalitions primarily being identified and described to explain policy change. However, coalitions across and within environmental policy processes emerge in all different shapes and sizes and carry out a variety of strategies to inflict policy change or stability. We are, therefore, left with a limited understanding of what coalitions look like, the factors driving their formation, and why they conduct certain strategies within EU environmental policy processes.

To shed light on these blind spots and develop a more comprehensive picture of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, the dissertation has three core aims. First, it seeks to identify and systematically develop a typology of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes. Second, it sets out to uncover and explain the conditions driving the formation of different coalition types. Third, it aims to reveal and explain the factors that affect the strategies different types of coalitions adopt to try and influence EU environmental policy processes. To achieve these aims, the dissertation examines three core research questions:

RQ1: What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different types of coalitions?

RQ3: Why do varying types of coalitions employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the dissertation and its structure. The chapter is organised as follows. Section 2 details the puzzle that inspired the research. Section 3 defines key concepts and terms employed throughout the dissertation. Section 4 briefly outlines the research design to provide guidance for the reader. Section 5 discusses my positionality and its potential impacts on the research. Section 6 summarizes the key findings. Section 7 outlines the main contributions of the dissertation. Section 8 gives an overview of each chapter.

2. Puzzle driving the research

This section presents the puzzle driving the dissertation. It provides a detailed look at how coalitions structurally differ, form, and employ varying strategies to influence policy processes and proposals. Following, it outlines why the existing literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and literature on coalitions outside of the EU are insufficient for explaining this variation. Finally, it points towards the importance of studying this phenomenon.

Touched on in the introductory paragraphs, the EU has developed a complex environmental policy framework, strongly advanced by the EGD. The framework comprises numerous policies that have been adopted to deal with environmental problems including climate change, water and air pollution, biodiversity loss, and social inequalities. In the EU, policies include binding legislation, namely regulations, directives, and decisions, and non-binding soft law (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Hurka & Steinebach, 2021). Although overtime the EU has expanded its environmental policy framework, building it has not been straight forward. Since its inception, the EU has enjoyed periods of environmental policy acceleration, stagnation, backsliding, integration and expansion (Dupont et al., 2024; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022).

Within EU environmental policy processes, several manifestations of coalitions have been documented within the literature and observed in day-to-day EU environmental policymaking (Bocse, 2021; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Kyriazi & Miro, 2022; Sotirov et al., 2021; von Malmborg, 2021; Wurzel et al., 2019; Ydersbond, 2018). Of these coalitions, some emerge across several policy processes. Others are present only in specific processes. Coalitions that endure several processes, for example, include the 'Green 10', the 'Visegrad coalitions', and the 'Green Growth Group'. The Green 10 comprises of 10 environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). The Visegrad member state coalition includes four member states, which occasionally try to involve other member states. Similarly, the Green Growth Group

comprises of 16 member states which also try to sometimes enlist the Commission, Norway, and political groups within the Parliament (Wurzel et al., 2019). Coalitions that have been documented within a single process include, for example, the 'Friends of the ETS', the 'Nuclear Alliance', and the 'Friends of Renewables'. The 'Friends of the ETS' includes more than 40 organizations including businesses, industry associations and research organizations (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020). The Nuclear Alliance and the Friends of Renewables both emerged in the process related to the EU's Renewable Energy Directive. The Nuclear Alliance involves 10 core member states, which fluctuated overtime. The Friends of Renewable included up to 14 member states. Both coalitions also attempt to enlist directorate generals from the Commission (Buzogány et al., 2023). Evidently, structurally varying coalitions comprised of a mix of EU-institutional and non-EU institutional actors form across and within EU environmental policy processes.

Once present, coalitions employ strategies implemented through a range of activities in attempts to translate their preferences into the policy proposals. Literature detailing the strategies coalitions adopt, mainly to explain policy change, demonstrates that coalitions conduct a variety of strategies. In the policy process related to the EU's 2030 climate and energy package several coalitions, labelled the utilities industry, the Broad Green Community, and the Alliance of the Energy Intensive Industries were found to employ an inside-outside strategy. These coalitions varied in the number of shared preferences and in their membership size and diversity. Additionally, the Visegrad+ coalition and ambitious group of member states coalition, both comprised of a differing number of member states, each employed an inside only strategy (Ydersbond, 2018). In negotiations on the EU's timber regulation, two coalitions comprised of large and diverse groups of actors, including environmental NGOs, timber companies and traders, MEPs, and some member states on one side, and forest industry policy actors, forest owners, DG Trade, and pro-forest member states on the other, both conducted inside-outside strategies (Sotirov et al., 2017). Contrastingly, the process related to the initial making of the EU ETS saw a large and diverse coalition comprised of energy firms, energy intensive manufacturers, the EU Commission, and business-oriented environmental groups, employ an inside-orchestrating strategy (Meckling, 2011). Likewise, during the revision of the EU ETS in the early 2010s, the 'Friends of ETS' also adopted an inside-orchestrating strategy (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020). In addition, the Green Growth Group and Visegrad coalitions have been found to select an inside strategy across several policy processes (Wurzel et al., 2019) as well as coalitions in the EU's Water Framework Directive (van Overveld et al., 2010).

While insights indicate substantial variation in coalition structure, formation, and strategies, the current literature on coalitions both in and outside of EU environmental policymaking is not conducive to describing the different make-up of coalitions or explaining why they form and employ certain strategies. As the literature review chapter will show in more depth, the scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking acutely rests on identifying and describing coalitions to explain influence and policy change. Consequentially, we still do not have a comprehensive understanding of the structural make-up of coalitions, the types of coalitions present in EU environmental policymaking, and explanations into the formation and strategies of the different coalition types.

Scholarship on coalitions outside of EU environmental policymaking provide some initial direction for developing explanations related to the formation and strategies of coalitions. Regarding coalition formation, it is clear coalitions form due to homophilic tendencies, notably shared preferences (Huhe et al., 2022; Ingold, 2011; Klüver, 2013; Rietig, 2018). Yet, coalition formation is also shown to be conditioned by contextual factors, particularly institutional differences across national political systems (Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025) and across policy areas within the same political system (Fischer, 2015). What contextual factors drive coalition formation across policy processes within the same policy area and political system, however, remains a black box, and falls short in simultaneously accounting for the agency of policy actors (Lubell et al., 2012). Derived from this, a guiding assumption is that changes in contextual factors related to policy processes may impose several opportunities and constraints on policy actors, which could affect the participation and coordination patterns within a policy process and thus the formation of different types of coalitions.

Literature focusing on explaining the strategies coalitions employ outside EU environmental policy processes points towards two sets of factors that are likely to affect strategy selection: coalition structure and coalition opportunity structures. Regarding the structure of coalitions, literature primarily connects changes in the coalition's degree of authority and intra-coalition coordination intensity to strategy selection (Nohrstedt, 2011; Pierce, 2016; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). But since the structure of coalitions has not been systematically characterized in EU environmental policymaking, the effect of other structural dimensions and their interactions may be overlooked. When examining the relations between coalition opportunity structures and strategy selection most studies focus on variation at the national level or across policy areas (Gupta, 2014; Gupta et al., 2025; He et al., 2025). Like the explanatory factors of coalition formation, these contextual changes again do not account for differences within a single policy area within the same political

system. Nevertheless, it is assumed that contextual factors shaping a policy process plus the structural make-up of the coalitions may also offer opportunities for coalitions to engage in certain strategies, whilst constraining the use of others. Put together, many uncertainties remain when trying to explain the formation and strategies of coalition types within EU environmental policy processes.

Underscoring these gaps in the literature, there is ever more need to examine coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Given the prevalence of coalitions and their importance for inducing policy change or blockage, unraveling the formation and strategies of coalitions is essential for understanding the progress of the EU's environmental action. By putting coalitions at the center, and not to merely explain policy change, the dissertation paves the way to a better understanding of coalitions and coalitional dynamics in EU environmental policy processes. Simultaneously, the dissertation also contributes to a more holistic view of EU environmental politics. It does so by providing a complementary meso-perspective to the study of EU environmental policy and politics.

3. Defining key terms

Hinted to in the introductory section, the dissertation draws on several concepts, presenting challenges for the reader. To mitigate such challenges, this section lists and defines the main concepts and terms employed throughout the dissertation. The concepts and terms are defined in the appropriate locations of the dissertation, but they are brought upfront to serve as a reference point. The key terms are coalition, coalition structure, coalition formation, coalition strategies, policies, legislative proposals, legislative characteristics, policy processes, politics, and exceptional policy actors.

The core concept of the dissertation is a coalition. As will be discussed in the literature review chapter, several conceptualizations of coalitions in EU policymaking exist. This dissertation considers a *coalition* as a group of policy actors that share preferences and engage in coordinated activities with the aim of influencing the policy process and legislative proposal (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Weible et al., 2020). The dissertation considers policy actors at the organizational level, and not the individual level. It is assumed that collective organizations, rather than individuals, stand in the foreground of today's politics, particularly in the EU (Ingold, 2011; von Malmberg, 2025). Within EU policy processes, coalitions may include any type of politically engaged organization, including, but not limited to, a European Parliament political group, member state, Commission Directorate-General (DG), an interest association, a non-governmental organization (NGO), a business, or research organization (Weible & Ingold, 2018).

Coalitions are structured by several dimensions which are related to the three core tenants of a coalition: policy actors, shared preferences, and coordination. Such structural dimensions include the number of shared preferences, the size and diversity of membership, the degree of authority, and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination. It is the configuration of these dimensions that constitute the *structure of coalitions*. Variation in structural dimensions is considered to result in several manifestations of coalitions (Weible et al., 2020). Yet, to exist, coalitions must form. *Coalition formation* stipulates a process whereby policy actors strategically search for and coordinate with others that share preferences with the aim of influencing the policy process (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). Once formed, coalitions employ *strategies*, which are the aggregate set of political activities coalition members conduct jointly or individually (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024). Informed by activities, strategies are not mutually exclusive and vary in their logic and focus on different targets.

As the dissertation unpacks the formation and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, it also deals with the concepts and terms of policies, policy processes, legislative proposals, legislative characteristics, politics, and exceptional policy actors. *Policies* are the measures that are adopted to deal with a particular environmental problem. In the EU, policies include binding legislation, namely EU regulations, directives, and decisions, as well as non-binding pieces of soft law (Brandsma et al., 2025; Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Hurka & Steinebach, 2021). Policies are the outcome of *policy processes* where legislative proposals are negotiated. A policy process, further discussed in chapter 3, refers to the complex interaction between policy actors, events, and contexts, which influence policies over time (Hurka et al., 2025; Klüver et al., 2015; Weible, 2023). A policy process occurs in a cycle of five stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. Given the process is depicted as a cycle, the outcome of the process, namely the policy, acts as a feedback loop to inform the agenda setting stage (Howlett et al., 2020). This dissertation pays particular attention to the making of policies, namely the legislative proposals. *Legislative proposals* are the drafts of new legislation or revisions of prior legislation that is to be negotiated. Legislative proposals are negotiated during policy processes under the EU's Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP). The OLP is considered the main procedure to adopt environmental policies (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). Given this, the dissertation centers on examining coalitions in EU environmental policy processes that are related to environmental *legislative proposals*, particularly regulations and directives. Legislative proposals are not uniform but differ in a variety of *legislative characteristics*, including the complexity of the proposal, the scope of regulatory addressees, the

stringency, and salience (Klüver et al., 2015). In this light, legislative characteristics reflect the architecture of the legislative proposal and the adopted policies (Hurka et al., 2025).

The policy process and making of policies is innately connected to politics. *Politics* refers to what happens in the policy process, where various EU-institutional and non-EU institutional policy actors interact across several venues, by exchanging information, negotiating, and bargaining for their respective preferences against those with competing interests to try and influence the environmental policies that the EU adopts (Boasson et al., 2022; Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Knill & Tosun, 2020). Some of these actors may search for or fall into *exceptional policy actor* roles, particularly policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers. Here, exceptional policy actors shape policy processes through certain strategies, like introducing ideas, building coalitions, or seeking stability and compromise, and are in positions of structural privilege during policy processes (Capano et al., 2025; Christopoulos & Ingold, 2015; Petridou et al., 2025).

4. Overview of research design

To unpack the puzzle, this dissertation analyzes coalitions across five policy processes within the EGD. The five processes are connected to the following legislative proposals: the European Climate Law, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). All proposals are either a regulation or directive and proceed through the OLP. This ensures that commonalities between the policy processes are maintained for representativeness and generalizability. Each proposal, however, differs along several legislative characteristics considered to affect the range of coalitions present, their formation, and the strategies they adopt.

The dissertation adopts an exploratory-explanatory research design. Exploration is needed due to the strong likelihood that various types of coalitions structure and influence EU environmental policy processes. Yet, it remains unclear how the coalitions are structured and what types of coalitions are present. It is therefore vital to gather empirical data to map and characterize coalitions across EU environmental policy processes before understanding why certain types of coalitions form and conduct specific strategies. Due to this exploratory-explanatory structure, the dissertation employs a sequential approach to answer the three research questions and associated sub-questions:

RQ1: *What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?*

RQ1.1 What coalitions are present in the five EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ1.2 How are the identified coalitions in the EU environmental policy processes structurally configured?

RQ1.3 How are the structural configurations of coalitions similar and different?

RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different types of coalitions?

RQ2.1 What types of coalitions are present in each of the five EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ2.2 What combinations of legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors drive the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ3: Why do varying types of coalitions employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ3.1 What kinds of strategies does each type of coalition favour across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal? How are they similar or different?

RQ3.2 How do the structural dimensions of coalition types enable or constrain the favoured strategies?

RQ3.3 What kinds of strategies do coalitions of the same type employ across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ3.4 How do the legislative characteristics of the proposals enable or constrain the employment of strategies among coalitions of the same type?

Briefly touched on in the previous section and further elaborated on in the following chapters, the literature posits insightful yet insufficient expectations regarding the possible conditions that drive the formation of different types of coalitions and affect the strategies these types adopt. Due to these insufficiencies and the complexity of policy processes, whereby interrelated factors are assumed to interact (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017), the dissertation postulates an iterative logic of

inquiry. This is not only true for the development of a coalition typology but also for the identification of explanatory factors that drive the formation of coalition types and that enable or constrain the adoption of strategies. Because of the iterative logic, the dissertation applies an abductive approach (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). Abduction is applied by drawing from existing knowledge and theoretical insights on coalitions which shape initial expectations. The expectations are then continuously updated throughout the data collection and analysis, letting the data speak for itself.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and the interest group literature form the basis of the dissertation. Both theories enable the identification of five structural dimensions that characterize coalitions and several conditions likely to explain the formation and strategies of coalition types across EU environmental policy processes. The five structural dimensions include the number of shared preferences among coalition members, the size and diversity of membership, the degree of authority, and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination. The conditions deemed likely to drive the formation of coalition types include the inclusion/exclusion of exceptional policy actors within a coalition (policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers), as well as six legislative characteristics: the public salience of the proposal, the complexity of the proposal, the scope of regulatory addressees impacted by the proposal, the stringency of the proposals primary instrument, and the shifts between stages in the policy process. The factors considered to enable or constrain the types of coalitions' strategies include the five structural dimensions of coalitions and the six legislative characteristics.

The conceptual framework centers on the notion that the architecture of policy proposals likely shapes the formation and strategies of coalition types, in addition to exceptional agents and structural dimensions of coalitions. In that sense, the dissertation advances a finer grained conceptualization to the idea that adopted policies are the outcome of the political battles and concessions made throughout policy processes. The dissertation does not seek to challenge this understanding of policymaking. Rather, it envisages that proposed policies affect the subsequent politics, which in turn affects the final adopted policy. Such logic stems from the interest group literature, which highlights that the behavior of interest groups, including coalition building, advocacy strategies, and influence, are conditioned by contextual factors at the level of the legislative proposal, in addition to institutional and actor level factors (Junk, 2016, 2019; Klüver, 2013; Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007).

Illustratively, this dissertation views EU policymaking processes as temporal chains of events that span several stages conditioned by contextual factors, which are punctuated by coalition building and advocacy efforts (Klüver, 2013). At the policy preparation stage, there is a preliminary draft

proposal which the Commission develops. The policy preparation stage ends, and the decision-making stage begins when the Commission sends the official legislative proposal to the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. During both stages, the opportunities and constraints that the design of the proposals confer to policy actors may therefore shape the coalition building processes. And in turn, once coalitions emerge, the same opportunities and constraints may alter the strategies they adopt to try and influence the legislative proposal. Subsequently, the proposals condition the coalitional dynamics during policy processes, which affect the final adopted legislation.

The dissertation is constructed in three sequential stages to answer the three overarching research questions. Aligning with the iterative and sequential nature of the research design, a pragmatic pluralist methodological epistemology is adopted. Such epistemology contends that multiple methods or methodological frameworks are used to address a particular research problem (Popa & Guillermin, 2017). Stage one answers RQ1. It aims to identify, measure, and characterize coalitions across five EU environmental policy processes. Through the characterization, a coalition typology is created. The identification of coalitions relies on social network analysis (SNA) and content analysis. Once the coalitions have been characterized, the typology is developed through principal component analysis (PCA). Utilizing the typology, stage two aims to explain the formation of the coalition types across the five policy processes through crisp-set qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). In doing so, it answers RQ2. To answer RQ3, stage three aims to explain why different coalition types carry out certain strategies and activities through a two-step comparative analysis. Informing the three stages, the dissertation triangulates a variety of data sources including semi-structured interviews, policy documents, specialized press, official EU sources, datasets, and secondary literature and websites.

5. Positionality

My positionality is likely to have an impact on several aspects of the dissertation. Positionality accounts for the researcher's demographic characteristics, personal and professional experiences, political and ideological stances, and their relation to the social and political context of the study. My positionality and the context I am embedded in shapes how I experience reality. To this end, knowledge is subjectively perceived and constructed, which impacts the research process, the structure of the research project, and the interpretation of the results (Holmes, 2020; Soedirgo & Glas, 2020). The challenge as a researcher is to ensure the patterns uncovered reflect the phenomenon under study and not pre-determined expectations. Understanding one's positionality is an ongoing process of reflection to grasp its plausible impacts on the research

design, collection and analysis of data, and the interpretation of results. Over the past years, I have strived to design and conduct research that accounts for and overcomes my biases and framings. Yet, there are several points that relate to my positionality vis-à-vis EU environmental policymaking that need further elaboration.

First, I am a strong advocate for ambitious environmental policy across all levels of society. Environmental degradation and climate change stand as some of the most pressing challenges of our time. The consequences and impacts of environmental degradation and climate change are alarmingly apparent. Science is also clear. Action, from the global to the local level, is needed to protect ecosystems and natural resources, mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollution to protect the earth's environmental systems, and enhance the resilience of societal functions (EEA, 2025). I see binding and ambitious environmental policy as a necessary component for environmental action and for a habitable future for humankind on earth. This preference for ambitious environmental policy from the global to the local level has likely framed the way in which I expect policy processes and coalition dynamics to play out. Specifically, this perspective may lead me to foreground policy actors that hold similar views compared to those that oppose ambitious environmental policy, both in contacting and reaching out to interviewees and in the interpretation of the data. Additionally, this perspective may have shaped how legislative proposals were conceptualized, implicitly favoring characteristics associated with environmental ambition, such as scope or stringency, over other characteristics, like flexibility. To try and mitigate this bias, I interviewed policy actors and analyzed a broad range of coalitions that held both pro- and anti-environmental ambition preferences. Moreover, to avoid the potential over emphasis on characteristics of legislative proposals that may be inherently linked to environmental ambition, I remained open and abductive in interviews and in the analysis of the data. This ensured that the most central legislative characteristics were identified and included.

Second and relatedly, although I am not an EU citizen, I support and believe in the EU's role in promoting ambitious environmental policies within and outside of its jurisdiction. Such role, although not perfect, plays an important part in trying to overcome the multi-faceted and complex nature of environmental problems Europe and the world are facing. As someone who has grown up in Australia, I have had firsthand experiences with numerous extreme weather events, like bushfires and major storms, drought, and coral bleaching, and other environmental problems, such as soil degradation and water scarcity. These experiences, paired with the laggard nature of the Australian government regarding environmental challenges, until recently (Crellin & MacNeil,

2023; Downie & Halpin, 2025; Hopkinson et al., 2025), has reinforced this stance. Seeing the EU in this light risks me in viewing EU environmental policies, the ambitions of the EGD, and pro-environmental policy actors and coalitions in an idealistic fashion. Simultaneously, this framing is somewhat weakened by my external and non-EU perspective. I have less prior understanding and specific expectations of how policy actors, both EU institutional and non-institutional, would act within environmental policy processes. This outsider status also enabled rapport to be made with interviewees as most were positive and open in their responses and generous with their time. I would also contend that I offer more of an external viewpoint than a European scholar working on the same topic. Yet, the combination of my beliefs in the need for ambitious environmental policy, the high esteem I hold the EU in on matters related to the environment, and the participation of pro-environmental policy actors has likely influenced my expectation regarding the preferences of policy actors and the strategies of coalitions. To account for this, I ensured that interviewees from organizations within coalitions advocating both more and less environmental ambition were included. The interviews were also triangulated with press reports and policy documents.

Third, due to my personal and professional experiences, I have become quite a pragmatic and rationally minded person. Such disposition may have influenced the identification and examination of explanatory factors and the research design. I think in a pragmatic, structural, and opportunity-constraints manner. These traits translate into the conceptual framework of the dissertation. Both the ACF and interest group literature consider policy actors as boundedly rational and interact within the confines of institutional structures, which evoke opportunities and constraints on the policy actors and coalitions. I, therefore, acknowledge my inclination to favor rationally determined factors in explaining the formation and strategies of coalitions. My pragmatism also permeates the dissertation's research design, whereby the sequential nature is informed by a pragmatic methodological pluralist epistemology. On account for this, I presented my research to scholars with broad conceptual traditions and epistemologies at multiple conferences and two extended research stays throughout the course of the PhD. By doing so, I attempted to develop a robust conceptual framework and research design driven by existing scholarship and the empirics.

Fourth, my educational background may have shaped how I approached and conceptualized EU environmental policymaking. Being educated from a Western democratic and Euro-centric perspective, in Australia and Belgium, I have developed understandings and biases about how policy is made and politics is carried out. This perspective manifests itself in the conceptual framework, whereby the ACF and interest group literatures are informed by a pluralist understanding of policymaking, stemming from democratic political systems. Although, in

conducting the research, such educational background was not a major problem as EU policymaking is also steeped in this context. Nevertheless, this could be an issue if studying other policy processes that are not inscribed in the same systems.

Finally, being a white English-speaking male affiliated to a Belgian university has influenced my access to and relationship with interviewees involved in EU environmental policymaking. As a white male with affiliation to a Belgian university, it was relatively easy for me to contact potential respondents, providing me an inherent privilege in accessing those that participated in environmental policymaking. Moreover, as a native English speaker I had no challenges in communicating with interviewees, particularly given English is one of the main languages of the EU and policymaking circles. It is possible, however, that by carrying out interviews in English only, additional perspectives from interviewees who did not speak English comfortably or spoke English as a second language, may have been missed. To overcome these biases, I reached out to numerous potential interviewees from all kinds of organizations involved in the five environmental policy processes to gain as wide a perspective as possible.

This brief section has identified and discussed my positionality and the potential issues emanating from it in relation to EU environmental policymaking. Through this discussion, there are notable implications for the conceptualization and expectations of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, data collection, and data analysis. Despite these acknowledged implications, the section also outlined the steps taken to mitigate the issues in the research process. The massive environmental challenge has kept me motivated and engaged throughout the PhD process. It is my hope that the dissertation and research outputs can contribute to an improved understanding of EU environmental policymaking and drive more ambitious EU environmental policy.

6. Summary of findings

This section briefly summarizes the main findings and key arguments of the dissertation. Regarding the first research question, the initial systematic mapping results in the identification of 59 coalitions. Through the mapping, the findings not only illustrate that coalitions are a central phenomenon structuring EU environmental policy processes, but that most coalitions emerge only for a short amount of time and are usually specific to a single policy process. Some coalitions, nevertheless, do sustain for longer periods of time, structurally evolve, and emerge across several policy processes. These longer-standing and cross-process cutting coalitions tend to comprise of a core set of policy actors, including political groups in the EP, ambitious and Visegrad member states, as well as several interest associations and environmental NGOs, that are active across most, if not all, policy processes. To this end, the findings illustrate the increasingly widespread

participation of green industrial policy actors, such as renewable energy interest associations and clean-tech businesses, and their ties with environmental NGOs in coalitions (Boasson et al., 2022; Meckling, 2015; Trachtman et al., 2025).

Characterizing the coalitions across the five core structural dimensions reveals six coalition types: the peripheral coalition, the moderate authoritative coalition, the fragmented coalition, the colossal coalition, the policy generalist coalition, and the commanding coalition. Through the unveiling of the six types, the findings indicate that coalitions in EU environmental policymaking emerge in a distinct and limited number of types. *Peripheral* coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of the policy process. They support a very narrow set of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, very low levels of authority, and internally coordinate with very low levels of intensity. *Moderate authoritative* coalitions advocate for a moderate range of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of intensity. Given the high level of authority, moderate authoritative coalitions hold a latent degree of power, which may be mobilized to advocate for their moderate range of preferences. *Fragmented* coalitions advocate for a narrow set of issue preferences, have a large and heterogenous membership, low authority, and internally coordinate at a moderate level of intensity. Such coalitions are viewed as fragmented, whereby a heterogenous set of members are loosely held together by a low number of preferences and moderate levels of coordination. *Colossal* coalitions back a moderate number of issue preferences, have a very large and homogenous membership, moderate authority, and coordinate at a low level of intensity. Colossal coalitions are considered to occupy a vast space within the policy process due to their very large size. *Policy generalist* coalitions advocate for a very broad set of issue preferences, are moderate in size and have a homogenous membership, high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of intensity. In that sense, they possess a strong grasp and represent a unified perspective on the proposal at hand. *Commanding* coalitions are considered the most focal or dominant coalition type. They push for a broad set of issue preferences, have a large and highly diverse membership, very high authority, and internally coordinate very intensely.

Through the identification and creation of the typology, the findings also illustrate that not all policy processes are structured by coalition types in the same way. Of the 20 peripheral coalitions identified, five are present in the Climate Law process, two are present in the CBAM process, eight are uncovered in the process related to the RED, another two are found in the Sustainable Batteries process, and three are revealed in the process of the JTF. Among the 22 moderate authoritative coalitions uncovered, eight are present in the Climate Law, one is uncovered in both

the CBAM and the RED, three are identified in the Sustainable Batteries, and nine are present in the JTF. Nine fragmented coalitions are revealed, with one being in the Climate Law, two in the CBAM, another four in the RED process, and two in the JTF. No fragmented coalitions are present in the process of the Sustainable Batteries. One colossal coalition is present in each of the Climate Law and CBAM processes. Two policy generalist coalitions are found to be present in both the processes related to the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries regulation. Lastly, two commanding coalitions were discovered in the process attributed to the RED. Viewing EU environmental policy processes through a coalition lens shifts attention from individual actors and institutional dynamics to the meso-level of analysis. It provides critical insights into broader participation patterns of policy actors and the complexity and contested nature of EU environmental policymaking that remain relatively obscured in institutional and actor-centric studies.

Drawing on the typology, the results addressing the second research question contend that the formation of each coalition type cannot be attributed to any single legislative or actor-level condition. Rather, each coalition type emerges from distinct pathways made up of combinations of core and auxiliary conditions, comprised of legislative characteristics and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors. As such, contextual variation across policy processes or the role of exceptional policy actors are not solely deterministic to coalition formation (Fischer, 2015). The results, therefore, challenge the conventional notion that individual characteristics of a legislative proposal, such as the salience or complexity, or the agency of exceptional policy actors alone have a direct effect on coalition formation (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017). Unpacking the mechanisms linking the conditions of distinct pathways, it is revealed that the formation of more structurally intricate coalition types, namely fragmented, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions, involve the agency of an exceptional policy actor. Here, the exceptional policy actors identify opportunities throughout the policy process and strategically engage in coalition building to pursue their preferences, particularly during increasingly challenging policy processes. Conversely, the emergence of less structurally intricate coalitions, such as the peripheral or moderate authoritative, does not include the agency of an exceptional policy actor. Instead, these coalitions tend to form either under combinations of legislative characteristics that lower the costs for policy actors to participate and potentially influence the proposal or pressure policy actors to form a coalition and try to influence a process before it is too late.

Lastly, findings linked to the third research question reveal that the strategies employed by coalitions are not fully determined by their structure nor the context of the policy process alone. The initial mapping of each coalition types' strategy demonstrates that the peripheral, moderate

authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily employ an inside strategy; the fragmented and colossal coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy; and the commanding coalitions conduct an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. Moreover, each strategy is implemented by different combinations of activities and used at varying rates of intensity. Peripheral, moderate authoritative, colossal, and policy generalist coalitions have the smallest range of activities in their portfolio. Whereas peripheral and colossal coalitions conduct their activities with low intensity, moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions use the activities at their disposal at a high intensity. Alternatively, fragmented and commanding coalitions draw on a much wider range of activities, and both use the activities at relatively high intensity. Comparing the strategies of these coalition types, the results suggest that the size, membership diversity, and intra-coalition coordination intensity primarily enable or constrain the coalition's portfolio of activities and thus the strategies they employ. Yet, coalitions of the same type do not employ identical strategies across all policy processes but adapt their strategies to the opportunities and constraints of the specific policy process. Here, the main legislative characteristics found to shape the strategies of coalitions are the legislative proposal's salience, complexity, stringency, and shift between policy stages. Intriguingly, the opportunities and constraints provided by each of the legislative characteristics are not the same for all coalition types. Whereas the same legislative characteristic is found to drive each type of coalition to select different strategies, different degrees of the same characteristic, such as high and low complexity, drive coalitions of the same type to select the same strategy but via different mechanisms. This suggests that legislative characteristics do not impose uniform effects on coalition strategies but the strategy they select is filtered through their structural dimensions.

Taking the analysis on coalition formation and strategy selection together, the dissertation contends that in addition to institutional differences across policy areas (Fischer, 2015) and political systems (He et al., 2025; Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025), contextual variation between policy processes within the same policy area also affects coalition dynamics. Nevertheless, it is not only the context that matters but the agency of exceptional policy actors and the structure of coalitions as well. All in all, the dissertation provides support for the casually complex nature of EU environmental policy processes by accounting for the interdependent interactions between policy actors, coalitions, and contextual factors.

7. Main contributions

The dissertation makes important empirical, conceptual, methodological, and societal contributions.

7.1 Empirical contributions

Empirically, the findings paint a lively picture of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking in three ways. First, the findings provide empirical support for the pervasiveness and diverging compositions of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. Through the identification of coalitions, the dissertation contributes a comprehensive and systematic mapping of coalitions across diverse EU environmental policy processes. It shows how coalitions not only structure EU policy processes but also how EU policy processes incorporate numerous policy actors and perspectives into the making of environmental policy. Such insights contribute an understanding of EU environmental politics that sits between institutional and actor-centric studies and provide an impetus for on-going meso-level analyses of EU environmental policymaking.

Second, through the characterization of the coalitions, the dissertation shows that coalitions structurally differ along several dimensions, resulting in the presence of distinct coalition types. To this end, it responds to broader calls on the systematic identification and analysis of coalitions (Fischer, 2015; Pierce et al., 2017; Weible et al., 2020). Moreover, the distinct coalition types vary in their presence across EU environmental policy processes. Whereas peripheral and moderate authority coalitions emerge across all policy processes, the other types form less systematically. Fragmented coalitions surface in all processes except for the one linked to the Sustainable Batteries regulation. Colossal coalitions are only uncovered in the processes of the Climate Law and the CBAM. Similarly, policy generalist coalitions form only in the processes of the CBAM and the Sustainable Batteries regulation. Commanding coalitions, interestingly, are only identified in the process related to the RED. The dissertation thus contributes meaningful insights into the types of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and the varied power relations embedded in EU environmental policy processes. Accordingly, the dissertation proposes a path forward for the comparative analysis of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, which is foreseen to be extended to other EU policy areas and political systems.

Third, the findings advance new evidence and empirical insights into the formation and strategies of coalition types, which have been rather overshadowed by studies on coalition influence. Together, they build upon a nascent body of work examining coalitions in causally complex policy processes (Fischer, 2014, 2015; Fischer & Maggetti, 2017) and current insights into the influence of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes (Bosce, 2021; Szarka, 2010; van Overveld et al., 2010; von Malmberg, 2021, 2023; Ydersbond, 2018). Through the QCA, it is uncovered that the formation of each coalition type is driven not only by overarching condition(s), but by distinct combinations of legislative characteristics together with the in/exclusion of exceptional policy

actors, whereby the inclusion of exceptional policy actors play a central role. The findings, therefore, reinforce that similar coalition types form through different pathways and that no single factor determines their formation in isolation. The results add to a growing scholarship on the links between coalition formation to their institutional context (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025) and offer insight into the interconnection between the agency of political actors, the context in which policy processes are embedded, and the dynamics of coalitions (Lubell et al., 2012). Beyond formation, the dissertation produces insights into the strategy selection of each coalition type. Whereas peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions tend to rely predominantly on an inside strategy, fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalitions usually favor a mixed strategy. The results of the comparative analysis contend that the strategies coalitions employ is enabled or constrained by both the coalition's structural dimensions and the characteristics of the legislative proposals. Accordingly, the findings build on scholarship examining the individual effects of the structural dimensions of coalitions (Nelson & Yackee, 2012; Vesa et al., 2020; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019) and contextual factors (Gupta, 2014; Gupta et al., 2025; He et al., 2025) on coalition strategy selection.

7.2 Conceptual contributions

Conceptually, the dissertation provides novel contributions to the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and the ACF. First, the dissertation proposes an updated conceptualization of the structure of coalitions, resulting in a new typology of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. By advancing this conceptualization and creating the typology, the dissertation aims to improve descriptions of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and create an initial means to study and compare the dynamics of coalitions across policy processes. Second, the findings identify specific pathways that drive the formation of coalition types and factors that affect the strategies they employ in policy processes within the same policy area and political system. In doing so, the dissertation offers a conceptualization of EU environmental legislation, both the proposals and policies. It purports that the architecture of legislation is multifaceted and comprises several characteristics which interact in ways that shape coalition dynamics. Through this conceptualization, the dissertation contributes to the ACF by providing a category of concepts, here legislative characteristics, that build upon the under-theorized concept of short-term opportunities and constraints proposed by the ACF. All in all, the generic framework designed and implemented for this dissertation provides a strong starting point for the future study of coalitions in EU policymaking and beyond.

7.3 Methodological contributions

Methodologically, the dissertation advances a practical and transparent step-by-step guide for the identification and characterization of coalitions, as well as the analysis of coalition formation and their strategies. Through the iterative development of the research design, the dissertation also sheds light on the complementarity of several analytical methods. Connecting the identification of coalitions to their characterization, the dissertation demonstrates how SNA and PCA can be integrated to produce novel insights. Similarly, the SNA and identification of coalitions paired with the use of QCA to explain the formation of coalitions, again, illustrates the two analytical methods' complementarity. Both combinations of analytical methods, although not completely new, and the step-by-step guide provide a point of departure for studying coalitions in other EU (environmental) policy processes, under the OLP or other procedures, or in non-EU policy process contexts and at different levels of governance.

7.4 Societal contributions

Societally, the dissertation makes four contributions to the public's understanding of EU environmental policymaking, and to practitioners engaged in coalition building and EU environmental politics. First, the comprehensive mapping of the constellation of policy actors coordinating with one another and the coalitions operating in EU environmental policy processes enables several expectations to be generated for future policy processes. For example, the public and practitioners may develop hunches as to who may participate, what their preferences may be, who they are likely to coordinate with, and how they attempt to influence future EU environmental policy processes. Practitioners wanting to participate in environmental policy processes may use these findings to guide their future advocacy strategies, such as knowing who to coordinate with, which other coalitions to look out for, and when to try and bridge divides.

Second, by identifying the drivers and constraints of coalition formation, the findings offer practitioners a basis for anticipating which coalition types are likely to emerge and the underlying power struggles that may arise in current or future negotiations. The analysis further underscores the key role of exceptional policy actors in building more structurally compelling coalitions, potentially allowing them to exert greater influence over the policy process and legislative proposals. In turn, practitioners aiming to enhance their influence in EU environmental policymaking should seek to form or engage with coalitions that include exceptional policy actors, either by assuming such role themselves or by closely coordinating with like-minded actors who occupy these positions.

Third, by analyzing the strategies and activities pursued by coalitions, the findings demonstrate that coalitions have multiple activities lying in their arsenal that can be mobilized throughout the policy process. However, most coalitions are found to only make limited use of the full range of activities. Practitioners should draw on the insights from the dissertation to understand what kinds of activities are available to build and pursue more comprehensive and potentially more effective advocacy strategies. The dissertation also identifies the enabling and constraining effects of both the structural dimensions of coalitions and the characteristics of legislative proposals shaping coalition strategies. By accounting for these conditions, practitioners can better adapt their advocacy strategies to capitalize on enabling factors while mitigating constraining ones in current or future negotiations.

Fourth, the findings indicate that the architecture of legislative proposals shape the landscape of policy processes. Not only does it affect the participation and coordination patterns of policy actors, but it also has implications on the formation and strategies of coalitions. Policymakers involved in drafting proposals should, therefore, carefully consider the overall proposal design as it may have important implications regarding the patterns of representation, the perceived legitimacy of the process, and the degree of contestation that emerges among policy actors and coalitions, shaping the EU's environmental policy progress.

8. Structure of dissertation

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 examines two overarching literatures relevant to the dissertation. First, the literature on coalitions in EU policymaking is presented. The chapter discusses the differing perspectives related to the study of coalitions in EU policymaking. Then, narrowing in on the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, the chapter sketches out the core structural dimensions of coalitions, the drivers of their formation, and the strategies coalitions employ. Because of the inherent shortcomings of this literature, insights into explanatory factors on the formation and strategies of coalitions are uncovered from literature on coalitions outside of EU environmental policy and the EU political system. Second, the literature on EU environmental policy is briefly discussed to situate the analysis of coalitions. It highlights the turbulent periods of the 2000s and pays particular attention to the emergence and politics of the EGD. The chapter demonstrates that both literatures provide excellent insights into coalitions and EU environmental policymaking and politics. Yet, they are still insufficient in understanding how coalitions are structured and in explaining the formation of different types of coalitions and the strategies they select within EU environmental policymaking.

Chapter 3 develops the conceptual framework which is used to identify, characterize, and examine the formation and strategies of coalition types across EU environmental policymaking. The chapter draws on overarching insights from the ACF and interest group literatures. Such insights help conceptualize how coalitions are structured. Because the chapter provides a refreshed conceptualization of coalitions it does not develop specific types of coalitions. Instead, it remains open as to how they manifest themselves. Further insights from the ACF and interest group literature postulate several conditions likely to drive the formation of coalition types and enable or constrain the strategies they employ.

Chapter 4 outlines the research design and methodological approach of the dissertation. It presents the three research questions. It then outlines the basis for the dissertations' abductive and sequential approach. From there, the chapter presents the selection of policy processes, informing the subsequent analysis of coalitions that lie within. The chapter then describes the data sources of the dissertation. Finally, it outlines the sequential three-stage mixed method design developed in relation to each of the three research questions.

Chapter 5 presents empirical results related to the identification of coalitions across the five EU environmental policy processes. For each, the policy process is briefly outlined, the policy networks in which the coalitions are embedded are presented, and each of the identified coalitions are described. The identification of coalitions illustrates the constellation of policy actors and coalitions in environmental policy processes, their preferences, coordination patterns, and how each process varies in this regard.

Chapter 6 presents the typology of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Informed by the coalitions identified in chapter 5, six types of coalitions are revealed and described. The six types include the peripheral coalition, the moderate authoritative coalition, the fragmented coalition, the colossal coalition, the policy generalist coalition, and the commanding coalition. Chapters 5 and 6 together answer RQ1. The typology informs the analyses in the subsequent chapters, including explanations pertaining to the formation of coalition types and the strategies and activities they employ.

Chapter 7 presents the analysis relating to the formation of coalition types. The chapter utilizes QCA to explain the formation of each coalition type. A separate QCA is conducted for each coalition type. The QCA's identify multiple pathways driving the formation of each coalition type. Doing so, the chapter answers RQ2.

Chapter 8 presents empirical material for the strategies of coalitions. The chapter sets out to answer RQ3. It maps and describes the overarching strategies that each coalition type employs across all five processes. Then, the strategies of each coalition type are compared against one another, establishing relations between the structural dimensions of coalitions and their strategies. To follow, the strategies of coalitions within each type are compared to examine the effect of legislative characteristics on the strategies of each coalition type.

Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation. It summarizes the findings and provides answers to the research questions and puzzle that drove the dissertation. It also includes reflections on the empirical, theoretical, and methodological choices made when structuring the research. Finally, the chapter identifies and proposes avenues for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the state of the art on coalitions in EU policymaking and EU environmental policymaking more specifically, as well as the broader political dynamics of EU environmental policy, with a specific focus on the European Green Deal (EGD). The chapter shows that the current state of the art on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking does not provide sufficient insight into how coalitions are structured, the types of coalitions present, and why the different types of coalitions form and employ certain strategies. By identifying such gaps in the literature, the chapter develops a compelling argument for the dissertation, which is conceptualized and operationalized in the chapters to follow.

The chapter has three objectives. First, it situates the dissertation and its contributions within the broader literature on coalitions in the EU and EU environmental policymaking. Second, it provides important context for how coalitions are structured, their formation, and the strategies they conduct. Due to limitations in this body of literature, however, existing research on coalitions in the EU and other political systems is examined. This wider perspective provides additional insights into the core structural dimensions of coalitions, as well as the conditions shaping coalition formation and the strategies they employ. Simultaneously, the literature on EU environmental policy and politics provides the backdrop for and role of coalitions within EU environmental policymaking. Third, is to demonstrate that the existing literature is insufficient for solving the puzzle presented in the introduction.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 outlines the research on coalitions in EU policymaking, highlighting the differing perspectives related to the study of coalitions. Section 3 presents the literature on the influence, structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, highlighting the inherent shortcomings of the literature. Because of this, insights into explanatory factors related to the formation and strategies of coalitions are uncovered from scholarship that examines coalitions outside of EU environmental policy and the EU political system. Section 4 outlines the literature on EU environmental policy and politics, emphasizing the importance of analyzing coalitions within. Section 5 outlines the main gaps the dissertation aims to fill. Section 6 concludes.

2. Coalitions in EU policy processes

Coalitions are integral to EU policymaking. Since policy actors are unable to decisively influence decision-making alone, they are driven to coordinate with others who share preferences to try and

influence the policy process and instill their preferences in the legislative proposals. It is through this process that coalitions emerge (Ingold, 2022; Sabatier, 1998). The formation and actions of coalitions occur in a complex multilevel governance setting that passes through several formal venues including public consultations and the Commission, as well as negotiations in the European Parliament (EP), the Council of the European Union (the Council), and trilogues. Several informal venues are also incorporated throughout (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025; Sotirov et al., 2021; von Malmborg, 2025). This complex policy process involves a plurality of policy actors, including EU institutional actors and non-EU institutional actors, that frequently interact throughout, forming coalitions (Sabatier, 1998).

Once formed, coalitions try to influence differing actors across venues and stages by employing a range of strategies (Pierce, 2016; Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024). The nested and overlapping nature of EU policymaking, nevertheless, creates another layer of complexity for who coalitions target and when. Coalitions comprised of non-EU institutional actors, such as NGOs, interest associations, businesses, and think tanks, may particularly try to influence the Commission Directorate Generals (DGs) during the policy preparation stage given their agenda-setter and policy formulator role. During the decision-making stage, such coalitions may shift their attention to the political groups in the EP and the Member States in the Council since they are co-legislators with formal decision-making authority. Coalitions that include Commission DGs may try to influence other Commission DGs during the agenda-setting and policy formulation stages, as well as the Member States and EP political groups, during the decision-making stage. Whilst also being influenced by non-EU institutional actors, coalitions comprised of Member States may seek to influence the Commission DGs, the EP political groups, and other Member States. Likewise, coalitions including EP political groups may also seek to influence the Commission, Member States, and other EP political groups (von Malmborg, 2025). All coalitions may also try to influence the public and other coalitions. The interlinkages between legislative proposals, whereby the decisions made on one proposal would have direct effects on the other, adds further complexity to advocacy efforts made by coalitions. Finally, once decided, the policy outcomes feedback into the political process, affecting the established coalitions, the formation of new coalitions, and the subsequent politics that follows (Schmid et al., 2020).

To deal with the challenging dynamics of EU policymaking and the study of coalitions within, the literature on coalitions in EU policymaking has manifested in four broad perspectives. These perspectives help narrow the field of view to certain groups of policy actors, subsequently reducing the complexity of EU policymaking and making sense of the coalitions and power dynamics at

play. Perspectives one and two derive from some of the earliest work on coalitions in EU policymaking, which analyze coalitions of member states in the Council (Elgström et al., 2001; Huhe et al., 2018; Kaeding & Selck, 2005; Mattila & Lane, 2001; Naurin & Wallace, 2008; Thomson et al., 2004) and coalitions of political groups in the EP (Brack et al., 2025; Hix & Høyland, 2013; Hix et al., 2009; Kreppel, 2000; Kreppel & Hix, 2003; Kreppel & Tsebelis, 1999). As the EU has gradually broadened, a third and fourth perspective arose to look beyond the Council and the EP, to understand the dynamics of interest group coalitions (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Hanegraaff & Pritoni, 2019; Junk & Aizenberg, 2025; Klüver, 2013) and advocacy coalitions (Brooks, 2018; Ingold, 2022; Nedergaard, 2008; Rietig, 2018; Rozbicka, 2013; Sotirov et al., 2021; Szarka, 2010; von Malmborg, 2025) in the EU. Although not a coalition perspective per se, there is another emerging body of literature that examines the internal coordination patterns among DGs and between the Commission and non-EU institutional actors, but not coordination and shared preferences together (Blom-Hansen & Finke, 2020; Finke, 2020; Hartlapp et al., 2013; Senninger et al., 2021).

Perspective one, two, and three contrast with that of the fourth perspective on advocacy coalitions. At first instance, perspective one, two, and three, focus on select groups of policy actors as the level of analysis. Specifically, perspective one centers on member states. Perspective two focuses on Members of European Parliament (MEPs) and EP political groups. The third perspective examines interest groups. The fourth perspective focuses on advocacy coalitions, and conversely, starts from the policy process as the unit of analysis. Subsequently the analysis incorporates a variety of policy actors. This dissertation embeds itself in the fourth perspective and starts from the level of the policy process to identify and analyze coalitions comprised of a mixture of EU-institutional actors, like DGs, EP political groups, and member states, and non-EU institutional actors, such as businesses and NGOs.

The four perspectives each have distinct ways of conceptualizing coalitions but with some clear cross-cutting similarities. The literature examining coalitions of member states in the Council conceptualizes them as groups that vote similarly (Bailer et al., 2015; Hagemann & Høyland, 2010; Hosli et al., 2011; Mattila, 2004; Mattila & Lane, 2001), coordinate with one another (Elgström et al., 2001; Huhe et al., 2022), share preferences (Huhe et al., 2018; Kaeding & Selck, 2005; Thomson et al., 2004; Zimmer et al., 2005), or are institutionalized groups such as the Frugal Four (Schoeller, 2022; Verdun, 2022), the Benelux (Ruse, 2012), or the Nordic-Baltic 6 (Busygina et al., 2017). Coalitions in the EP are conceptualized at the political group level, such as the EPP, S&D, and the Greens, that vote together. But as the data mainly stems from roll call votes, the coalitions

are operationalized at the level of MEPs that vote together (Brack et al., 2025; Costello & Thomson, 2016; Hix et al., 2019; Hix & Høyland, 2013; Hix et al., 2007; Kreppel, 2000; Kreppel & Tsebelis, 1999). Literature analyzing interest group coalitions conceptualizes them as interest groups that share the same policy goal (Klüver, 2013), cooperate (Junk & Aizenberg, 2025), or that cooperate and defend the same position (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Hanegraaff & Pritoni, 2019).

Closely related to these perspectives, advocacy coalitions are conceptualized as groups of policy actors that share deep core, policy core, or secondary beliefs, or a mix thereof, and coordinate their actions (Berning & Sotirov, 2024; Bocse, 2021; Reitig, 2018; Sabatier, 1998; Sotirov et al., 2021). This conceptualization slightly departs from the other three perspectives in two ways. First, advocacy coalitions may comprise of any policy actor participating in a policy process including both EU-institutional actors, like DGs, EP political groups, and member states, and non-EU institutional actors, like companies, business associations, NGOs, and other interest groups (von Malmborg, 2025). Second, policy actors share beliefs and not necessarily votes, preferences, or positions. Deep core beliefs are the fundamental normative orientations held by a policy actor, which include political ideologies, normative values, and cultural orientations. Policy core beliefs are the normative and empirical beliefs concerning the general goals of a policy area, positions on general policy solutions and instruments, the severity and causes of problems, and the role of government. Secondary beliefs are the instrumental beliefs related to the policy process and include the instrumental means for achieving policy-core beliefs (Weible et al., 2020). Issues pertaining to the hierarchy and use of beliefs in identifying and analyzing advocacy coalitions in and outside of the EU have been constantly raised (Henry, 2011; Nohrstedt et al., 2023; von Malmborg, 2025). In some instances, identifying stable beliefs of EU interest groups, member states, and political groups have proven difficult due to short-lived and constantly changing preferences, resulting in reflections on applying beliefs with more pragmatism (Lindberg & Markard, 2018; Lindberg & Kammermann, 2021; Rozbicka, 2013). Nevertheless, policy-core and secondary beliefs still share similarities in terms of preferences pertaining to the solutions of an issue and the instruments embedded in legislation used to solve the said issue.

From these four perspectives and the studies on coordination within the Commission, several preliminary insights inform the analysis of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. First, coalitions are an integral part of EU policymaking and can be found across the Commission, the EP, and the Council. Second, and relatedly, the Commission, the EP, and the Council are not unitary actors, but are made up of DGs, political groups, and member states all with their own

preferences and interests, and that engage in coalitions. Third, despite slight conceptual deviations, each perspective conceptualizes coalitions as groups of policy actors comprised of EU-institutional and non-institutional policy actors that share preferences and coordinate to influence a policy process and legislative proposals. Fourth, each perspective primarily focuses on identifying and analyzing the formation and influence of coalitions either across several policy areas or as in-depth case studies. Yet, and as will be discussed in the next section, the results from cross policy area studies and comparisons of the in-depth case studies constantly illustrate that coalitions differ across policy areas and between policy processes. Fifth and relatedly, coalitions have received much scholarly attention. Such attention, however, has centered on examining their influence and explaining policy change. Thus, attempts to unravel the black box of coalitions by systematically and comparatively characterizing their structure and analyzing their formation and strategies, particularly within a single policy area, have been left unexplored.

To progress insights into the types of coalitions in the EU, their formation and strategy selection, the dissertation pays specific attention to EU environmental policy, particularly given coalitions vary across policy processes within the same policy area of a single political system. Environmental policy provides a fruitful backdrop to examine coalitions in EU policymaking. Environmental policy is a central policy area of the EU, becoming one of the EU's largest and most important policy domains (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). Since its inception, EU environmental policy has evolved over periods of expansion, strengthening, sidelining, and dismantling (Burns et al., 2020; Dupont et al., 2024). Such larger policy change dynamics, especially accounting for the numerous crises that environmental policy has endured, raises questions around the political dynamics of EU environmental policymaking and the coalitions within. The next section primarily sketches out literature that examines coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Where necessary, literature on coalitions in EU policymaking and coalitions beyond the EU is consulted.

3. Coalition dynamics in EU environmental policymaking

This section details the influence and success, structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. It demonstrates that most studies pay attention to examining policy change because of the influence and success of coalitions. Yet, given the inherent focus on policy change, explanations regarding the formation and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policy have been largely black boxed. By comparing the studies on influence and success and drawing from additional insights on coalitions outside of EU environmental policy, preliminary insights into the structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions are developed.

3.1 EU environmental policy change: the influence and success of coalitions

Much of the extant literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking sets out to explain policy change. From these studies, three main pathways driving policy change are advanced. The three pathways all highlight the central role of negotiated agreements between coalitions, which is considered a core feature of EU policymaking (von Malmborg, 2025). In addition to negotiated agreements, the first pathway examines policy change resulting from a shock to the policy process and policy learning. The second highlights the role of exceptional policy actors in facilitating policy change. The third outlines policy change due to coalitions joining forces and shifting the power dynamics between coalitions.

Policy changes via shocks, learning, and negotiated agreements between coalitions occur across multiple EU environmental policy processes. Ydersbond (2018) argues that the outcome of the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework was due to a negotiated agreement between several coalitions comprised only of member states, including the Green Growth Group and the Visegrad+, and coalitions only of non-institutional policy actors, including the 'broad green community', and the 'energy intensive industry'. Similar coalitional politics resulting in a compromise agreement was also uncovered in negotiations on the EU wind power policy (Szarka, 2010). The conclusion of the EU's FuelEU maritime proposal aimed at improving sustainable shipping, was also revealed to be a result of a negotiated agreement between two coalitions, triggered by external and internal shocks, namely the Paris agreement, the IMO climate strategy, the incoming Commission, and presentation of the EGD (von Malmborg, 2023). Policy change related to the updated provisions for individual metering and billing (IMB) within the EU's energy efficiency directive was also prompted by an internal shock and negotiated agreement. The internal shock was marked by Sweden, a key policy actor within the policy process altering their preferences to oppose the IMB provisions. This shift led to the preferences of the dominant coalition, which supported IMB, to be questioned, and the subordinate coalition's preferences, which opposed IMB, being affirmed. Through Sweden's advocacy, other actors updated their preferences in line with the Swedish led subordinate coalition, resulting in the expansion of the coalition opposing IMB. This gave the expanded coalition more authority and success in instilling its preferences in the proposal (von Malmborg, 2021). The updating of preferences and learning also occurred during the policy process of the EU's Water Framework Directive. Two of three identified coalitions were able to strategically use technical information due to their high levels of organizational capacity. Such information was able to shift the Commissions preferences via policy-oriented learning, enabling the coalitions to have their preferences instilled in the legislative proposal (van Overveld et al., 2010).

Closely related, policy change and coalition influence is also found to be facilitated by exceptional policy actors included in a coalition. Nedergaard (2008) outlines that the 2003 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform was triggered by the spread of mad cow disease and ongoing international trade negotiations. These external events drove EU and non-institutional policy actors to update their preferences regarding the need for CAP reform. This led to the expansion and increasing power of the moderate reform coalition, an inferior coalition to the more powerful status quo coalition. Despite the shifting powers of the coalitions, a compromise was facilitated by a policy broker within the moderate reform coalition, which sought to find a middle ground between all coalitions. The role of a policy broker in driving policy change is also identified in the policy process related to the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the EU ETS, and the JTF. In the RED, Bosce (2021) reveals that the pro-fracking coalition comprised of businesses had greater success in inflicting policy change because it included more brokers, which prized the coalition with greater access to exchange information more frequently with the EP. Similarly, through the inclusion of policy entrepreneurs, the heterogenous 'Friends of the ETS' coalition was able to frame the problems of the EU ETS in 2013 as a climate problem that was accepted by business interests, driving the subsequent EU ETS reforms (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020). Likewise, the JTF was concluded through a vigorous interplay between a heterogenous coalition that favored a large JTF, a homogenous coalition of member states that are climate friendly net-contributors to the EU budget, and the Commission who took on an entrepreneurial role by building support for the JTF, resulting in a bargained solution and a greener and more socially sensitive JTF (Kyriazi & Miro, 2022).

Another line of argument highlights that policy change in EU environmental policy derives from coalitions joining forces, which shifts the balance of power during the policy process. Berning and Sotirov (2024) demonstrate that the adoption of the EU's regulation on deforestation-free products was facilitated by an agreement between a pro-change coalition and a contra-change coalition. The pro-change coalition emerged due to three smaller coalitions coming together during the policy process. By joining forces, the new pro-change coalition was now larger, more heterogenous, and ultimately more powerful than the contra-change coalition. As a result, the pro-change coalition was more successful in institutionalizing its ambitious preferences, although the contra-change coalition was still able to water down the scope and stringency of the proposal. In the policy process related to the EU timber regulation (Leipold et al., 2016) and three EU forest policies (Sotirov et al., 2021), policy change was also found to be inflicted because of coalitions merging and tipping the balance of power during the related policy process.

In sum, the literature shows that coalitional politics is a central driver of policy change in EU environmental policymaking, operating through three recurring pathways. First, policy change is frequently triggered by external or internal shocks and policy-oriented learning, which leads to a negotiated agreement between competing coalitions. Second, exceptional policy actors within coalitions facilitate compromise, reframe policy problems, and expand coalitional support, driving a negotiated agreement. Third, policy change may also result from shifts in relative power between coalitions, particularly when coalitions merge or expand, altering the final negotiated agreement.

While the literature surveyed provides rich insights into how coalitions contribute to policy change, coalitions are primarily mobilized to explain policy change. Yet, when identified coalitions in this literature are compared, it becomes evident that coalitions are structured around core dimensions, emerge across multiple policy processes in all different shapes and sizes, and conduct varying strategies.

3.2 The structure of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking

Scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking implicitly illustrates that coalitions structurally differ. Such coartness lies beneath the inherent objective of explaining how and why coalitions influence policy processes and policy change occurs. This has led to an oversight into the systematic identification and structural characterization of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes. In this light, when comparing identified coalitions in EU environmental policy processes they are found to structurally differ across five core dimensions: the number of preferences a coalition advocates for, the size and diversity of membership, the authority of the coalition, and the intensity at which members within a coalition coordinate. Each dimension will be outlined below.

3.2.1 *Shared preferences*

The *number of shared preferences* that a given coalition advocates for alter from coalition to coalition. Some coalitions may advocate for a single preference, whereas others are found to advocate for two or more preferences. Examining the FuelEU Maritime regulation, von Malmberg (2023) uncovers two politically influential coalitions, which both advocate for two preferences. The first coalition advocates for high emissions reductions and a sub-quota to stimulate market development for renewable fuel of non-biological origin (RFNBOs). The second opposing coalition advocates for moderate emissions reductions and no sub-quota for RFNBOs. Rietig (2018) also identifies two opposing coalitions in the EU biofuel policy process in the mid-2000s. The two coalitions advocate for one preference each. One coalition prioritizes economic development, whereas the other prioritizes environmental sustainability. Finally, Lindberg and Kammermann

(2021) uncover five coalitions which differ along four preferences related to the EU's Clean Energy Package in 2015 – 2016.

3.2.2 Membership: size and diversity

The *size and diversity* of a coalition's membership range from a small to large number of policy actors and from a single policy actor type to many policy actor types. Examining the EU Emissions Trading System, Fitch-Roy et al. (2020) uncovers the 'Friends of ETS' coalition which comprises of more than 40 policy actors of several types including electricity producers, the wind industry, businesses, think tanks, and industry groups. Kyriazi and Miro (2022) uncover a small and homogeneous Frugal member state coalition, a broader heterogeneous coalition comprised of eastern member states, environmental NGOs, trade union federations, and big European businesses, and a homogenous coalition of 15 member states, named the Friends of Cohesion. Of the two opposing coalitions identified by Bosce (2021) in the process related to the issue of fracking in the RED proposal, the anti-fracking coalition is identified as homogenous, consisting of environmental NGOs. The pro-fracking coalition, alternatively, is more heterogeneous in its membership and includes an industry association, businesses, and EU and non-EU states. Finally, a variety of coalitions have been identified in EU forest policy processes, all of which differ in their size and diversity of membership (Sotirov et al., 2017; Sotirov et al., 2021; Berning and Sotirov, 2024).

3.2.3 Authority

The *authority* of coalitions also differs. Examining the policy process of the EU's first Climate and Energy Package, Ydersbond (2018) identifies the Green Growth Group¹, the Visegrad coalition, and three additional coalitions consisting of policy actors from utility and energy-intensive industries. It is found that the final 2030 Framework is understood as a compromise among the coalitions that possessed the most authority, in addition to advocating for many similar issue preferences, and coordinating more intensely. Van Overveld et al. (2010) similarly shows that during the policy process of the EU Water Framework Directive, the water coalition failed to be influential as it lacked authority, hindering its ability to present a persuasive argument or speak with a single voice. Similarly, Wurzel et al. (2019) find that the 'green trio' coalition of Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, which evolved into the 'green sextet', with the inclusion of Austria, Finland, and Sweden was able to facilitate the adoption of EU environmental policies with a

¹ The Green Growth Group, initiated by the UK, is comprised of Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Slovenia, United Kingdom, and Norway. The Commission also regularly attends meetings and Austria has been asked to attend.

relatively high level of environmental protection due to the coalition's authority in being able to provide ideas and expertise.

3.2.4 Intra-coalition coordination intensity

Coalitions may opt to *coordinate* at different rates of intensity by engaging in different joint activities and strategies to influence policy processes. Ydersbond (2018) argues that coalitions do coordinate at different rates, which affects the coalition's ability to influence policy. Moreover, Wurzel et al. (2019) also offers insights into the rate at which coalitions coordinate through different activities. They find that the institutionalized Visegrad coalition of Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia, coordinated through regular meetings, the 'Green Growth Group' coordinated through a variety of meetings and workshops in the margins of the Environment Council, and the 'green trio' and 'green sextet' coalitions also coordinated closely with one another. Variation in coordination intensity among coalitions is also illustrated by Nedergaard (2008) who shows that three coalitions in the 2003 Common Agricultural Policy reform coordinated their activities at different intensities from meetings and publishing a joint letter to sharing discourses.

To summarize, EU environmental policy processes are influenced by a variety of coalitions that differ across five core structural dimensions. Additionally, it is hinted that differences in the structural dimensions of coalitions may also impact on a coalition's ability to conduct strategies and influence policy processes. By accounting for the structural variation of coalitions, and characterizing and systematically comparing them, more nuanced understandings of coalitions including their formation and strategies can be developed.

3.3 The formation of coalitions

Understanding and explaining coalition formation has intrigued scholars for years because working in a coalition provides several benefits but also induces costs on policy actors. Coalitions are costly arrangements for policy actors to form and sustain. When a policy actor enters a coalition, they must use their limited resources to coordinate with others and make compromises on their preferences. Policy actors may, therefore, lose their flexibility and identity vis-à-vis their principles, including their constituencies, their members, or the broader public. In turn, this may negatively impact the policy actor's reputation since policy actors themselves cannot claim credit for success or influence (Hanegraaff & Pritoni, 2019; Junk & Aizenberg, 2025). Conversely, forming a coalition may also prove attractive for policy actors to maximize their success in the policy process. By being in a coalition, policy actors can leverage shared preferences and increase pressure on policymakers to adopt these preferences. It can also strengthen a policy actors' network, enhance their access to information, improve their reputation and political standing, and

build and maintain partnerships that might prove useful in the future (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Fischer, 2015; Junk & Aizenberg, 2025).

The literature surveyed in the following subsections draws primarily from scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Due to the underlying focus on explaining coalition influence and policy change and the single case focus, the literature provides actor-level insights into the drivers of coalition formation in EU environmental policy processes. Yet, it does not offer much direction regarding the role of contextual factors although varying coalitions form across contextually differentiated policy processes. To gauge an insight into plausible contextual factors shaping the formation of coalitions, literature focusing on coalitions in EU policymaking and outside the EU system are relied on.

3.3.1 Drivers of coalition formation in EU environmental policy

Across the four perspectives of coalitions presented at the beginning of the chapter, several actor-level drivers of coalition formation are identified, including preference and belief homophily, geographical proximity, and aligned party and integration ideologies.

Preference and belief homophily

The formation of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking primarily contends that shared preferences and beliefs among policy actors participating in a policy process are key drivers. In the policy process of the EU ETS, shared preferences plus the inclusion of a policy entrepreneur played a key role in driving the formation of the 'Friends of the ETS' coalition (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020). Belief homophily, particularly policy-core and secondary beliefs, are also deemed core drivers of advocacy coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, such as in the processes of the EU ETS (Abel & Mertens, 2024), EU regulation on deforestation-free products (Berning & Sotirov, 2024), pesticides and environmental risk assessments (Hunka et al., 2015), the Renewable Energy Directive (Rietig, 2018; Szarka, 2010), the Common Agricultural Policy (Nedergaard, 2008), several forest policies (Sotirov et al., 2021), energy efficiency policy (von Malmborg, 2021), the electricity market directive and renewable energy directive (Lindberg & Kammermann, 2021), and the EU's 2030 climate and energy framework (Ydersbond, 2018). Preference and belief homophily are also identified as primary drivers of coalitions across multiple processes beyond EU environmental policymaking (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Huhe et al., 2022) as well as outside of the EU political system (Henry et al., 2011; Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Weible et al., 2020).

Cleavage lines: geographical proximity & ideology

The formation of coalitions, primarily comprised of member states in the Council and political groups in the EP, are also found to be driven by three cleavage lines: geography, party group ideology, and integration ideology. As will be touched upon, these lines are not static.

The central geographical cleavage in EU environmental policymaking driving coalition formation is the east-west divide (Toshkov, 2017; Wurzel et al., 2019). For instance, the 'green Trio' included western member states Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, which grew to the 'green sextet' with the addition of Austria, Finland, and Sweden. Again, in negotiations on the 1992 proposal for a carbon/energy tax, a coalition comprised of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden emerged (Wurzel et al., 2019). Perhaps the most prominent coalition of member states in EU environmental policymaking, however, is the Visegrad coalition. The Visegrad coalition includes eastern member states, namely Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, with the occasional addition of Bulgaria and Romania, and has been identified across multiple EU environmental policy processes (Ćetković & Buzogány, 2019; Kyriazi & Miro, 2019; Skjærseth, 2018; Wurzel et al., 2019; Ydersbond, 2018). Although prominent and rather institutionalized, the Visegrad coalition does not have a common position across all environmental policies, particularly energy policies, due to changing national preferences (Ćetković & Buzogány, 2019). These incoherent patterns have also been observed in the voting patterns of MEPs on issues related to energy and climate, whereby MEPs from Visegrad countries are found to be more influenced by their political group ideology than geographical proximity (Zapletalová & Komínková, 2020). Earlier scholarship that sought to explain the formation of member state coalitions across an aggregated number of policies that span several policy areas also uncovers geographical proximity as a key driver of coalition formation. Here, the most prominent geographical cleavage line driving member state coalitions was the north-south division (Elgström et al., 2001; Kaeding & Selck, 2005; Mattila & Lane, 2001; Thomson et al., 2004; Zimmer et al., 2005), which later fragmented into an east-north-south division (Naurin & Wallace, 2008). Such cleavages, however, slowly weakened over time as member states formed coalitions based on shared preferences at the issue level (Huhe et al., 2018, 2022).

The scholarship examining ideology as a driver of coalitions in EU environmental policy mostly focuses on coalitions of political groups in the EP at the aggregated level of EU environmental policy. The literature here postulates that on the one hand, coalitions of political groups formed based off a left-right partizan cleavage (Brack et al., 2025; Braghiroli, 2022). However, the left-right division is not always a consistent driver. Growing evidence suggests that coalitions of

political groups are emerging along a pro- versus anti-EU integration ideology cleavage. Such shifts have been denoted due to a growing politicization of environmental policy and the rise of populist anti-European parties. This, in turn, has resulted in intensified cooperation between the pro-integration political groups and the exclusion of radical right and conservative groups (Buzogány & Četković, 2021; Brack et al., 2025; Braghiroli, 2022; Petri & Biedenkopf, 2021). The broader literature on coalitions in EU policymaking also highlights partizan and integration ideologies as drivers of member state and political group coalitions. Regarding member state coalitions, it is revealed that, on average center-left governments are more likely to vote together than with governments from the center-right (Hagemann & Høyland, 2008, 2010; Hosli et al., 2011; Mattila, 2004). To a lesser extent, member state coalitions are also found to be occasionally driven by economic preferences, namely being a contributor or beneficiary member states of the EU budget (Bailer et al., 2015; Hosli et al., 2011), and pro- versus anti-integration preferences (Mattila, 2004). In terms of coalitions of political groups, the left versus right party ideology also surfaces as a key driver (Costa & Marié, 2023; Hix & Høyland, 2013; Hix et al., 2007; McElroy & Benoit, 2007; Kreppel & Tsebelis, 1999). When national pressure is exerted, however, the left-right driver tends to be silenced as MEPs vote along national lines to reflect their member state's national interests (Costello, 2011; Costello & Thomson, 2016; Koop et al., 2018; Meserve et al., 2017). In more recent times, a pro- versus anti-integration ideology cleavage driving the formation of coalitions in the EP has emerged, taking over the traditional left-right cleavage (Cheysson & Fraccaroli, 2025; Hix et al., 2019).

In sum, coalitions in EU environmental policymaking are formed by several drivers. The shifting explanations, however, suggest that coalition formation in EU environmental policymaking is rather fluid, altering from policy process to policy process. As such, the formation of coalitions may not only be driven by factors at the policy actor level but also from contextual conditions that offer opportunities and constraints to policy actors during the policy process to participate and coordinate. As much of the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policy processes is case specific and examines coalition influence and policy change, there is a need to go beyond this literature to gain an understanding of the role of contextual factors in conditioning coalition formation.

3.3.2 Coalition formation beyond EU environmental policy: exceptional policy actors and contextual factors

Scholarship that examines the formation of coalitions outside of EU environmental policy and the EU political system, proposes that coalition formation, in addition to their influence, is further

implicated by exceptional policy actors, namely policy brokers and policy entrepreneurs, and alterations in contextual conditions, which shape the policy process.

Exceptional policy actors

Several works demonstrate the role of exceptional policy actors in coalitional politics and policy change (Christopoulos & Ingold, 2010; Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Varone, 2012; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996). Yet, despite their central role in instigating policy change, their part in coalition building has not been greatly studied (Nohrstedt et al., 2023; Petridou et al., 2025). Nevertheless, Henry (2011) finds that in California regional planning policy coalitions form because policy actors are driven together to avoid the divergent beliefs of the opponents and due to the role of policy brokers. Here, brokers are considered to use their positions of political power to forge coalitions for the pursuit of specific policy goals. Such finding, in addition to that of Fitch-Roy et al. (2020), indicate that brokers and entrepreneurs, although not vastly documented, do play some role in the formation of coalitions.

Coalitions, however, do not form in a void, but their formation is also shaped by the opportunities and constraints that contextual factors offer to policy actors to participate, coordinate, and compete, driving the formation of varying coalitions (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025). Yet, there has been little research to date that uncovers or establishes relations between contextual factors and the formation of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. This blind spot may be partly attributed to the overemphasis of policy actor level drivers and the lack of comparative research in the area. Nevertheless, there is a nascent literature developing outside of the scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. With roots in the advocacy coalition and interest group coalition perspectives, this scholarship is beginning to connect contextual factors to coalition formation at the EU level and outside of the EU system. Such contextual factors span across three levels, namely at the institutional level (Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025), policy process level (Fischer, 2015), and legislative proposal level (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018).

Institutional characteristics

Scholarship outside of EU policymaking demonstrates the effects of macro-institutional factors on the formation of coalitions. This literature draws on advocacy coalitions and the advocacy coalition framework to analyze how institutional contexts across and within countries provide opportunities and invoke constraints on the coordination patterns between policy actors. Comparing across countries, the formation of challenger coalitions, opposed to the more authoritative dominant coalitions, is driven in countries that have a decentralized political system, such as in the US,

Germany, and Switzerland. It is posited that a more decentralized system provides more opportunities and venues in which a diversity of policy actors can participate. In countries with centralized systems, challenger coalitions are found to either not form or when they do the number of preferences they share or the intensity of their intra-coalition coordination is very low (Ingold et al., 2025). Satoh et al. (2025) identify similar results. They find that in countries with a majoritarian system, the formation of coalitions is driven strongly by shared preferences. Conversely, in countries with more consensual systems, coalitions are less likely to be driven by shared preferences as broad-based cooperation is more prevalent. Yet, as discussed above, coalitions of different structural compositions also form across policy processes within the same political system. This suggests that the formation of coalitions may also be driven by contextual factors at the policy domain level.

Policy domain characteristics

Insights into the impact of policy domain factors on the formation of coalitions are examined on coalitions outside the EU system. Focusing on 11 different policy processes that span across several policy domains in Switzerland, Fischer (2015) illustrates that the formation of a dominant coalition is uncovered either when a policy process deals with domestic issues and has open venues or when a policy process is Europeanized and has closed venues. Open venues present a variety of actors the opportunity to meet, exchange information, and learn, reducing the costs of coalition formation. The domestic issues and federal system of decision-making further require a diversity of policy actors to be incorporated into the decision-making process due to veto concerns. In Europeanized processes there is a two-level game that transpires whereby the executive administration needs domestic support before it defends its position at the EU-level. Due to this, a dominant coalition needs to form. Conversely, when policy areas are not federalist, Europeanized, or have open venues, the formation of a dominant coalition is limited, and the formation of equally strong coalitions occurs. Although this study directs attention to the character of policy processes, Fischer (2015) examines contextual differences across policy processes that relate to different policy domains. As a result, there is still little knowledge of the factors shaping policy processes within the same policy domain, such as environmental policy. In this sense, contextual factors that vary within the same policy domain need to be considered. Here, literature points to the effect of varying characteristics of legislative proposals as contextual factors affecting the formation of coalitions.

Legislative proposal characteristics

Research from the perspectives of interest group coalitions, but not within EU environmental policymaking, and advocacy coalitions, provides initial impetus for factors affecting the formation

of coalitions at the level of the legislative proposal. Here, the two perspectives highlight the effect of public salience and the newness of a proposal on coalition formation. From the perspective of interest group coalitions, Beyers and De Bruycker (2018) show that EU legislative proposals with a high organizational, media, and public salience drive the formation of homogenous and heterogeneous coalitions in altering ways. They demonstrate that legislative proposals with high organizational salience increase the chances of interest groups forming both homogenous and heterogeneous coalitions. Alternatively, they also illustrate that proposals that receive high media and public salience are found to slightly drive the formation of heterogeneous coalitions but not homogenous coalitions. Steeped in the perspective of advocacy coalitions outside of the EU system, Wiedemann and Ingold (2024) illustrate that the formation of coalitions is also affected by how new a proposal is. The authors posit that the newness of the pesticide policy proposal in Uganda drove the formation of coalitions with incohesive sets of shared preferences as policy actors had not yet developed precise preferences themselves. Together, the studies demonstrate that legislative proposals are not uniform but differ across several characteristics and variation in such characteristics may also alter the formation of structurally differing coalitions.

In summary, the very small body of work surveyed provides insights into the different levels of contextual factors that condition the formation of coalitions. Specifically, differences across political systems, policy domains, and legislative proposals all invoke opportunities and constraints on policy actors to participate and coordinate with others, which, in turn, condition the formation of structurally varying coalitions. Such studies, however, have been based outside of the EU system or across several legislative proposals. Thus, empirical insights into the drivers of coalition formation in processes that lie within a single policy area and political system, such as EU environmental policy processes, is greatly underdeveloped.

As a starting point, the dissertation centers on the varying characteristics of the legislative proposals as probable drivers of coalition formation. This is because the dissertation focuses on the formation of different types of coalitions within EU environmental policy processes. Hence, the contextual factors linked to the political system and policy domain is held relatively constant. As will be further outlined in chapter 3, it is considered that the differences in the characteristics of legislative proposals define the contours of EU environmental policy processes. The contours of the processes, in turn, shape the participation, coordination, and preferences of policy actors, and therefore, should condition the formation of different types of coalitions.

Although the literature provides initial hints into how legislative characteristics may affect coalition formation, it is evident that proposals not only differ in their salience and newness but also in other

characteristics like their complexity, scope, and stringency (Junk, 2016; Klüver, 2015). These characteristics, however, are not deterministic in driving the formation of coalitions. Rather, as the literature implicitly suggests, coalitions emerge from the interaction between actor-level factors, such as shared preferences and the role of exceptional policy actors, in addition to contextual conditions. This duality, therefore, needs to be accounted for when developing explanations for the formation of coalitions. Despite this, systematic comparative analyses of coalition formation within a single policy area remain scarce, particularly in EU environmental policymaking. Addressing this gap, the dissertation sets out to uncover how the relations between the characteristics of legislative proposals and exceptional policy actors relate to the formation of structurally distinct coalitions.

3.4 The strategies and activities of coalitions

Once formed, coalitions decide upon and employ strategies via a range of activities to try and influence policy processes and instill their preferences in legislative proposals (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). Much of the literature discussing the strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking does so to describe and explain advocacy success, influence, and policy change (Bosce, 2021; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Meckling, 2011; Nedergaard, 2008; Sotirov et al., 2017, 2021; von Malmborg, 2021; Ydersbond, 2018). Such overemphasis has meant that explanations pertaining to why coalitions in EU environmental policy conduct a given strategy have fallen to the wayside. There is a small body of literature that, nevertheless, analyses factors that influence a coalition's strategy. This scholarship, however, empirically centers on policy processes outside of the EU system. To follow, the strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking are outlined. This is then followed by a presentation of literature that examines coalition strategies outside of EU environmental policymaking to shed light on factors that alter coalition strategy selection.

3.4.1 Coalition strategies in EU environmental policymaking

Studies discussing the strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking stem largely from the perspective on advocacy coalitions to describe the coalition's success and influence in inflicting policy change or stability. Due to the inherent temporal perspective in explaining policy change, much of the literature centers on in-depth single case studies. Together, this has resulted in very few comparative studies that aim to explain why a coalition employs a certain strategy over others. When the strategies of coalitions are compared, however, it is evident that coalitions conduct various strategies implemented through numerous activities.

Across EU environmental processes, coalitions are found to conduct an inside-outside strategy implemented through several activities. During the negotiations of the EU's 2030 climate and energy package, three identified coalitions each employed an inside-outside strategy, informed by meetings with EU policymakers (inside), as well as organizing events, using the media, publishing reports, and participating in public hearings (outside) (Ydersbond, 2018). During the 2003 negotiations on the EU's CAP, the agriculture coalition also employed an inside-outside strategy, implemented through meetings with policymakers, publishing a common letter, and using the media (Nedergaard, 2008). During the process leading to the emergence of the EU timber regulation, the contra-regulation coalition engaged in an inside-outside strategy by making statements in negotiations and publishing position papers. The pro-regulation coalition, on the other hand, utilized an inside-outside-orchestration strategy implemented through a series of activities including drafting proposals, making statements during negotiations in the Council and EP and publicly, conducting a public poll, publishing reports, as well as enlisting support from individual big timber retailers to increase the coalition's influence (Sotirov et al., 2017).

Coalitions are also found to conduct an inside-orchestration strategy. Such strategy, however, has only been documented in negotiations on the EU ETS. In the early stages of the EU ETS, a pro-trading coalition employed an inside-orchestration strategy by lobbying and finding an ally in the European Commission, as well as by playing multilevel games and mobilizing national level actors to lobby receptive member states to indirectly influence decision-making at the EU level (Meckling, 2011). The Friends of the ETS coalition present during the policy process of the ETS reforms between 2012 and 2015 also engaged in an inside-orchestration strategy. Here, the coalition directly lobbied the Commission, MEPs, and member states and orchestrated support from the business community to support their inside activities and enhance their influence (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020). Similarly, a coalition opposing the issue of IMB within the EU's Energy Efficiency Directive employed an inside-orchestration strategy, implemented through a variety of activities including having meetings with and sending letters to EU policymakers, organizing a seminar in the EP, and mobilizing policy actors at the national level to lobby national policymakers and indirectly influence the EU level (von Malmberg, 2021).

Not only do coalitions employ a mixed strategy, but they also conduct single strategies. Spanning across several EU environmental policy processes, three coalitions of member states, including the green trio and green sextet coalitions, the Visegrad coalition, and the Green Growth Group, are all found to favor an inside strategy, implemented mostly through making statements in negotiations (Wurzel et al., 2019). An inside strategy was also carried out by the Visegrad+ Group

along with Spain, Portugal and the Baltic countries during negotiations on the EU's 2030 Climate and Energy package, where the coalition threatened to block the negotiations by using their veto (Ydersbond, 2018). During the process on the 2003 CAP reforms, the moderate reform coalition, composed mostly on MEPs and a Commissioner, was found to employ an inside strategy, implemented through meetings with policymakers and sharing positions repeatedly during the negotiations in the Council and the EP (Nedergaard, 2008). The inside strategy is not only conducted by coalitions comprised of EU-institutional policy actors. During negotiations on the EU Water Framework Directive, three coalitions of non-EU institutional policy actors each employed an inside strategy by directly exchanging information with the Commission, EP, and the Council, which varied overtime (van Overveld et al., 2010). Moreover, in the policy process related to fracking, coalitions engaged in an inside strategy to influence the EP through direct contact with MEPs (Bosce, 2021).

In sum, the literature indicates that coalitions in EU environmental policymaking tend to employ an inside strategy, which is complemented with either an outside or orchestration strategy. The mixing of the three strategies results in coalitions conducting numerous combinations of activities. Despite this variation, there are still little to no systematic analyses that aim to understand why coalitions in EU environmental policy processes deploy such strategies or activities. Nevertheless, there is a growing literature that lies outside of EU policymaking that offers insights and explanations into why coalitions conduct a given strategy.

3.4.2 Explaining coalition strategies

Scholarship that aims to unearth factors that shape a coalition's strategy has manifested in two primary categories steeped in the perspectives of interest group and advocacy coalitions. The first centers on a coalition's structural composition (Elgin & Weible, 2013; Pierce, 2016; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). The second focuses on changes in contextual conditions (Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025; Kubler, 2001).

Coalition structure

A central focus on explaining the strategies of coalitions examines variation in their structural composition. This strand of literature argues that the structural composition of a coalition, including authority and intra-coalition coordination intensity, enables them to carry out certain strategies (Pierce, 2016; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). In one of the only studies that quantitatively examines the relationship between authority and strategy selection, Pierce (2016) shows that during the Colorado hydraulic fracturing policy process, both pro- and anti-fracking coalitions possessed high levels of cognitive and external authority and pursued mixed inside-outside strategies. However,

the anti-fracking coalition enjoyed greater public support and engaged in these activities more frequently, highlighting the importance of external authority. Similarly, Elgin and Weible (2013) illustrate that during the Colorado Climate Action Plan policy process the pro- and anti-climate coalitions both had similar levels of individual and organizational policy analytical capacity and had no major differences in the use of seven activities that informed their overarching strategy. Moreover, Nohrstedt (2011) demonstrates that during the nuclear energy policy processes in Sweden, the losing coalition, which had less formal legal authority but relatively more cognitive and external authority, utilized an outside strategy, conducting activities of support mobilization, protests, and public meetings. The winning coalition, on the other hand, had more formal legal authority enabling the coalition greater support in key decision-making venues to inflict policy change, despite having less authority overall. Adopting a network perspective to examine climate mitigation lobbying strategies in Finland, Vesa et al. (2020) find that the pro-economy coalition selected an inside strategy because of its authoritative position and strategic ties to government ministries. This also led the coalition to avoid an outside strategy. Providing an alternative insight, Weiler and Reißmann (2019) examine the link between intra-coalition coordination intensity and strategy choice of interest group coalitions across several policies in Switzerland and Germany. They show that coalitions who coordinate intensely conduct an inside-outside strategy. Yet, when intra-coalition coordination intensified, coalitions were more likely to favor an inside strategy.

Overall, this literature contends that coalitions with more authority or that internally coordinate with more intensity conduct a mixed inside-outside strategy. Coalitions with less authority, on the other hand, opt for an outside strategy. Interestingly, it was also highlighted that the degree of authority possessed by a coalition may not always result in that coalition winning.

Contextual factors

Another strand of literature assesses the relationship between contextual factors, namely coalition opportunity structures (COS), and coalition strategies. This nascent strand of scholarship offers some verifying empirical insights, yet outside of the EU system. Overall, this scholarship establishes a burgeoning pattern, whereby the more open a policymaking system is, the broader the strategies of coalitions are. Examining drug policy in Switzerland, Kubler (2001) contends that the open federalist system and local autonomy conferred to sub-national regions created openings for coalitions to conduct both an outside strategy at lower governance levels to indirectly influence the national level and an inside strategy, particularly during democratic policymaking procedures. These early insights have since been trialed and supported across several national contexts. Focusing on hydropower policy in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar, He et al.

(2025) illustrate that coalitions in the countries with less restrictive COS use a more diverse set of strategies. Likewise, by focusing on nuclear and forest management policy processes in India, Gupta (2014) argues that in highly centralized closed decision-making contexts, coalitions adopt a confrontational outside strategy implemented through activities such as public protests, hunger strikes, and rallies. Alternatively, when decision-making is relatively open, coalitions adopt more assimilative outside strategies through activities like deliberation, appeals, and petitions. Examining coalitions within a collaborative institutional context, Koebele (2020) finds that an orchestration strategy implemented through cross-coalition coordination may be weaker when there is a significant history of conflict and/or large asymmetries in power or authority among actors within a policy process. Alternatively, cross-coalition coordination may be stronger when there is a shared threat or goal prior to the policy process beginning. Taken together, the small but growing scholarship posits that shifts in COS, including the openness of venues, the rules of engagement within a policy process, and the patterns of coordination within and across coalitions within those processes, influence the strategies of coalitions (Gupta et al., 2025).

Put together, the studies surveyed on coalitions within EU environmental policy processes show that structurally varying coalitions conduct a range of strategies, underpinned by a mix of activities, across policy processes. Yet, this variation has yet to be systematically understood. Nevertheless, a growing body of scholarship has developed beyond EU environmental policymaking that sets out to uncover factors affecting a coalition's strategy choice. This body of work provides evidence that links the composition of a coalition, COS, and the strategies coalitions adopt. Although this literature offers exemplary empirical evidence, it almost solely focuses on either the coalition's level of authority or the impact of COS at the national level or across policy areas. As such, there is little insight offered into the effect of other structural dimensions, such as size or membership diversity, and contextual variation at the level of the policy process, particularly within the same policy area and political system, despite evidence of varying strategies. Following the logic of factors that affect the formation of coalitions, it is considered that both the structural dimensions and the characteristics of legislative proposals will affect the strategies of coalitions.

The next section now turns to the literature on EU environmental policymaking. This body of literature heavily centers on broad EU integration theories such as intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, to uncover overarching patterns of environmental policy progress, backsliding, and leadership. Emphasizing the role of the Commission, EP, and the Council, however, overshadows the complex reality and the pluralistic nature of EU environmental policy processes. By analyzing coalitions within EU environmental policy processes, the dissertation employs a

meso-level lens with the aim of providing a complementary perspective to the literature on EU environmental policymaking and politics (von Malmborg, 2025).

4. The politics of EU environmental policymaking

Environmental policy occupies a central place in the EU's sphere of action and has become one of the largest and most important policy domains of the EU. EU environmental policy has evolved over varying stages. Its inception dates back to the start of the European integration project with the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Since then, EU environmental policy gradually expanded until its rapid acceleration between the 1990s and early 2000s due to the signing of the Single European Act (SEA). The signing of the SEA institutionalized the environmental policy domain in the EU by creating a legal basis and enabling the adoption of environmental policies at the European level. During this time, the Commission was also interested in establishing the EU as a leader in international environmental diplomacy following the United States' withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol in 2001 (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). From the early 2000s, the expansion and acceleration of EU environmental policy has also endured periods of turbulence, characterized by several stages of enlargement and crises (Burns et al., 2020; Burns & Tobin, 2020; Dupont et al., 2024). This, however, all changed with the inception of the European Green Deal (EGD) in 2019 (Skjærseth, 2021).

4.1 Environmental policymaking in times of crises

From 2004, EU environmental policy was met by a period of turbulence. This turbulent period was marked by the challenges brought on by the enlargement of the EU, the Lisbon Treaty reform, and a multitude of crises, including the Global Financial and Eurozone crises, Brexit, COVID-19, and most recently the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including others (Bocquillon, 2024). From 2004 through to 2008, EU environmental policymaking dynamics began to shift as new member states and MEPs were incorporated following the enlargement of the EU. Although considered an environmental leader, during this time, the EP proposed fewer environmentally important amendments. Yet, the amendments proposed were more successful in being adopted in the final legislation, including some ambitious and innovative policies (Burns et al., 2012). Likewise, new member states included in the EU following the 2008 enlargement, particularly the Visegrad countries, were able to reduce the ambition of some environmental legislation in the Council (Skjærseth, 2018). Although EU environmental policymaking was able to adapt through the period of enlargement, the pursuit of ambitious EU environmental policymaking was sidelined in the years immediately after the 2008 Global Financial and Eurozone crises (Burns et al., 2020; Gravey & Jordan, 2016). Recovering from the financial crises, the EU was struck by the Brexit

crisis in mid-2016. The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the EU has been considered to potentially affect EU environmental policymaking as the UK is seen as an internally important actor that has constantly pushed for more ambitious environmental policy (Dupont & Moore, 2019). All in all, this turbulent period brought several challenges to the high level of environmental policymaking the EU had previously enjoyed (Burns & Tobin, 2020; Dupont et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the EU has been able to stay its course and continue to develop a rich environmental policy mix. In 2019, this environmental policy mix was further accelerated by the introduction of the EGD (Dupont et al., 2024; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022; Skjærseth, 2021).

4.2 The European Green Deal

The EGD emerged in 2019 from a very favorable context shaped by the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 report on global warming, and the Fridays for the Future climate strikes. The 2019 EU elections, which defined the composition of the EP and the selection of the von der Leyen Commission, followed this spike in climate salience. The EU elections resulted in a reconfigured constellation in the EP. The Greens/European Free Alliance (the Greens) largely increased their presence; the two center political groups, namely the European People's Party (EPP) and the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), lost ground; and the extreme-right (ID) and extreme-left (the Left) gained some seats. This composition and the ascent of the Greens subsequently shaped the von der Leyen Commission's green agenda and pushed the European Commission to prioritize the making of ambitious climate and environmental policy (Biedenkopf et al., 2023). Put together, the mixing of such events placed increased attention on the enduring environmental crisis, pushed the issue to the top of the EU's agenda, created a window of opportunity for the recently elected Commission to be environmentally ambitious, and put pressure on the EU to reinstate itself as an ambitious climate leader, both internally and externally (Bocquillon, 2024; Dupont et al., 2024).

The EGD is an extensive environmental policy framework comprised of a broad set of policy initiatives. The aim of the EGD is to put the EU on a path to carbon neutrality by 2050 and strengthen the EU's global leadership ambitions (Dupont et al., 2020; Skjærseth, 2021; von Homeyer et al., 2022). The transformation to carbon neutrality by 2050 requires environmental policy integration into all EU policies and legislation, whilst simultaneously making sure that the transition is just and no one is left behind (Dyrhaug & Kurze, 2024). The main initiatives of the EGD involve raising the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, through a new Climate Law regulation, strengthening current and introducing new environmental legislation to achieve the new target. Within the EGD, the 'Fit for 55' package, which deals with climate and energy

legislation, was introduced in 2021. The package included revisions of existing legislation, such as the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), the Effort Sharing Regulation, the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), and many new legislative proposals including a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), a second ETS and associated Social Climate Fund, a regulation addressing methane emissions, and a Just Transition Fund (JTF). In addition, several other initiatives and legislative proposals within the EGD linked to green investments, energy security, industrial strategy, circular economy, mobility, and cross-cutting policies such as state aid rules, were put forward (Dyrhaug & Kurze, 2024; Skjaereth, 2021). Hence, the EGD has initiated the further expansion of EU environmental policy by attempting to integrate it into all policy sectors and initiatives (Dupont et al., 2024; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022).

Since its inception, the EGD and policy processes have been backed by a high degree of climate momentum in the face of several crises and growing opposition. The EGD has endured the COVID-19 crisis and the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Simultaneously, it has been challenged by heavy opposition of the Visegrad group, strong industry lobby, and cross-sectoral alliances (Dupont et al., 2020; Eckert, 2021; von Homeyer et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the legislative proposals and overall trajectory of the EGD have remained resilient and have been further strengthened. This is particularly attributed to the leadership of the Commission (Pollex & Lenschow, 2024), which, interestingly, diverges from the Commission's past where it abandoned its entrepreneurial role in the decade after the 2008 Global Financial and Eurozone crises (Burns & Tobin, 2020; Steinebach & Knill, 2017). The early resilience of the EGD is somewhat of an interesting development in EU environmental policy as it departs from previous policymaking dynamics, whereby when the EU is struck by crises, environmental policy tends to be downgraded, sidelined, and its ambition reduced.

Towards the end of the first von der Leyen term in 2024, the EGD, nevertheless, was met with green backlash. Several legislative proposals, like the Nature Restoration Law and the greening of agricultural policy and pesticides, were weakened and withdrawn, particularly because of increased contestation sparked by farmer protests across the EU, rising living costs, and energy security concerns (Bocquillon, 2024; Delreux & Crellin, 2026). This rising backlash against the EGD emerged within context that was shifting from international cooperation to geopolitical competition over who benefits from and controls the energy transition. This shift has been particularly spurred on by the United States' Inflation Reduction Act and China's dominance in global manufacturing of most industries related to the energy transition (Meckling, 2025; Sun et al., 2026). As a result, the EGD and the EU's transition to net-zero is increasingly being reframed

in green industrial and competitiveness terms (Bocquillon, 2024). Within this updated framing, the Commission tabled the 'Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age' in early 2023, leading to the adoption of the Net Zero Industry Act and the Critical Raw Material Act in March 2024. The overarching aim is to boost the EU's industrial competitiveness by enhancing its net-zero industry amid this global clean-tech race, whilst remaining cognizant of reaching its net-zero goals (Commission, 2023). Following the June 2024 European elections and rise in the far right and center right parties (Brack et al., 2025), the new incoming von der Leyen II Commission cemented the industrial and competitiveness framing. It tabled the 'Clean Industrial Deal' in early 2025 to try and boost the EU's competitiveness of energy-intensive industries and the clean-tech sector, whilst promoting circularity within Europe (Commission, 2025).

Research unpacking the EGD, to date, has mostly focused on the institutional developments of environmental policy (Dupont et al., 2024; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022) and the political undercurrents particularly within and across the Commission, the EP, and the Council. Regarding the latter, studies have examined the general political developments of the EGD and the Fit for 55 package (Bocquillon, 2024; Pollex & Lenschow, 2024; Rosamond & Dupont, 2021; von Homeyer et al., 2022) or specific legislative proposals, including the Climate Law (Domorenok & Graziano, 2023; Siddi, 2021), the EU ETS2 (Wettestad, 2024a), the CBAM (Wettestad, 2024b), emissions performance standards for new passenger cars (Gheuens, 2025, 2023), and the JTF and Social Climate Fund (Crespy & Munta, 2023; Kyriazi & Miro, 2022; Leppänen & Liefnerink, 2022). Some attention has also been offered to the responsiveness of the Commission, EP, and Council to electoral and interest group concerns (Gheuens, 2025); non-EU institutional actors in the CBAM (Otto, 2025) and the JTF (Kyriazi & Miro, 2022; Leppänen & Liefnerink, 2022); and discourse networks of EU-institutional and non-EU institutional policy actors in the CBAM and the CAP (Durel & Gosselin, 2023).

Such scholarship provides admirable insights and advancements in understanding how and why EU environmental policy and the EGD have emerged and evolved over time. But despite mentions of EU and non-EU institutional policy actors, the dominant macro integration perspectives applied to EU environmental policymaking tend to fall short in accounting for the wider landscape of policy actors, their preferences, and coordination. This is particularly interesting considering the alternating resiliency of the EGD sparked by moments of enabling and constraining politicization (Bocquillon, 2024; Dupont et al., 2024). By unravelling the dynamics of coalitions within policy process of the EGD, the dissertation provides a complementary insight into the political dynamics

of EU environmental policymaking as it seeks to capture the broad spectrum of policy actors, preferences, and their coordination patterns.

5. Summary of coalition dynamics in EU environmental policymaking and gaps to fill

The literature surveyed throughout this chapter provides several excellent insights into coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and EU environmental policymaking and politics, more broadly. Overall, it is evident that coalitions are a central phenomenon in EU policymaking, including environmental policy. Yet, by tracing the evolution, scholarship on coalitions in EU policymaking is shown to be highly fragmented and has developed in four broad perspectives. The four perspectives center around coalitions of member states in the Council, coalitions of political groups in the EP, interest group coalitions, and advocacy coalitions. Each perspective illustrates the fluidity of coalitions across and within policy areas and proposes some similar and contrasting conceptualizations. But at its core, coalitions are considered to share three core dimensions: policy actors, shared preferences, and coordination. Moreover, despite variation in the structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions, there are several gaps which this dissertation seeks to build on.

First, comparing the structure of coalitions identified EU environmental policy processes shows that coalitions are implicitly differentiated along five structural dimensions. These include the number of shared preferences among members, coalition size, membership diversity, authority, and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination. However, current scholarship has not yet systematically accounted for the structural differences between coalitions across all dimensions identified. This is mainly due to the overemphasis of the literature in explaining coalition influence and policy change. Treating coalitions as homogeneous or differentiated by only a few dimensions risks obscuring variation in how coalitions are organized, form, and engage in strategies. To fill this gap, the dissertation aims to identify coalitions and characterize them along the five structural dimensions to develop a typology of coalitions. The typology enables research to move beyond case specific descriptions and provide a common analytical framework that facilitates comparison of coalition dynamics, such as their formation and strategies, across policy processes, policy stages, and institutional contexts.

Second, despite the literature illustrating the presence of structurally varying coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, research has yet to fully realize what factors drive their formation beyond actor-level explanations. This is intriguing because existing research, mostly outside of the EU policymaking context, demonstrates that exceptional policy actors and changing contextual

conditions shape the formation of structurally altering coalitions. However, a shortcoming of this broader literature is that explanations only cover contextual variation across political systems and policy areas but not contextual variation within a policy area of the same political system. This dissertation aims to address this gap by examining the formation of different types of coalitions within and across EU environmental policy processes. In doing so, it seeks to establish links between the characteristics of EU environmental legislative proposals, the role of exceptional policy actors, and the formation of different types of coalitions.

Third, by comparing studies on the influence of coalitions and policy change, the literature surveyed illustrates that coalition strategies differ across EU environmental policy processes. Yet, little to no attempts to unravel and explain such strategic differences have been advanced. The dissertation seeks to fill these gaps by mapping and explaining the strategies and activities that different coalition types employ across EU environmental legislative processes. By drawing on the literature that explains the strategies of coalitions outside of the EU system, the dissertation aims to connect coalition structural dimensions, changes in contextual factors across environmental policy processes, and the strategies and activities of different types of coalitions.

Fourth, scholarship on the broader political dynamics of EU environmental policymaking is limited in offering a meso-level systematic account of the various EU-institutional and non-EU institutional policy actors and coalitions participating in environmental policymaking processes. Although the literature on EU environmental politics offers strong empirical insights into the politics of EU environmental policymaking within and across the Commission, the EP, and the Council, the literature simplifies the complex and multi-level character of EU policymaking. By adhering to the first three gaps and unravelling the phenomena of coalitions in EU environmental policy, the dissertation also seeks to provide a complementary perspective to the politics of EU environmental policy. The dissertation thus aims to build on this extant literature on EU environmental policymaking, and particularly the EGD, by examining the policymaking processes from a coalition perspective.

6. Conclusion

The review of the literature demonstrates that scholarship on coalitions in EU policymaking is extensive and has fragmented into four core perspectives. Bridging across these perspectives, the chapter focuses on studies that analyze coalitions within EU environmental policy. Here, literature primarily identifies and describes coalitions to explain their influence and policy change. When compared, however, several insights regarding the structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions are found. Yet, because of this focus on influence and policy change, little to no work

has attempted to systematically account for the structural variance among coalitions and identify the factors that shape the formation and strategies of structurally differing coalition types. These gaps become even more evident when incorporating insights from the broader literature on the formation and strategies of coalitions outside of EU environmental policy and the EU political system.

Given these shortcomings, the dissertation positions coalitions center stage rather than as an independent variable. Doing so not only allows for the structural variation among coalitions to be accounted for but also enables the black box of factors driving the formation of varying types of coalitions and the strategies they select to be opened. As such, the dissertation seeks to unravel the dynamics of coalitions and progress our understandings of them beyond case specific descriptions within EU environmental policy. The following chapters will outline the approach to conceptualize, identify, and explain the formation and strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policymaking.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Explanatory Factors

1. Introduction

The previous chapters have identified the research puzzle and highlighted existing gaps in the literature. Coalitions play a vital role in structuring and influencing EU environmental policy processes. Yet, it is unclear as to how these coalitions are structurally similar or different, what factors drive the formation of structurally varying coalitions, and why different coalitions employ certain strategies. This chapter, therefore, develops a conceptual framework for characterizing coalitions, and analyzing their formation and strategy selection across EU environmental policy processes. The conceptual framework is developed from a generic perspective of policy processes and applied to the EU context. Hence, it has general validity to other processes within the EU and other political systems. The framework draws primarily on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and interest group literature to conceptualize how coalitions are structured and to identify conditions that are likely to drive the formation of distinct coalition types and the strategies the different types of coalitions deploy. It is through the conceptual framework and its operationalization that guides the answering of the three research questions.

The chapter is structured in seven sections. Section 2 briefly outlines a policy process and its stages in relation to the EU policy context. Section 3 briefly presents the core tenants of the ACF and interest group literature, the two theories that underpin the conceptual framework of the dissertation. Section 4, 5, and 6 relate to each of the three dependent variables of the dissertation: the structural dimensions of coalitions, coalition formation, and coalition strategies. Section 4 uses insights from the ACF to develop the structural dimensions along which coalitions differ, and for which coalition types are derived. Section 5 and 6 both draw on the overarching theoretical framework to identify legislative- and coalition-related factors which could explain the formation of different coalition types and the strategies they employ. Section 7 concludes.

2. Conceptualizing policy processes: the policy cycle and EU environmental policymaking

This section briefly outlines the stages of a generic policy process and relates it to the EU context. In doing so, attention is given to the plurality of EU and non-EU actors that participate and engage throughout.

2.1 Policy processes and the policy cycle

Policy processes occur in a cycle of five sequenced stages (Howlett et al., 2009; see figure 3.1). Pioneered by Lasswell (1971), the five stages include agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The agenda setting stage is the earliest stage of the cycle. It refers to how problems come to the attention of policy actors and how a variety of solutions are proposed. Next, the policy formulation stage refers to how specific policy options are developed within government to adhere to the attentive problems depicted in the agenda-setting stage. Here, the range of plausible choices is narrowed by excluding infeasible ones. Following, the decision-making stage accounts for the process by which governments adopt a particular policy and course of action or non-action. This can involve the adoption of none, one, or a combination of solutions. These three stages make up the 'policymaking' aspect of the policy cycle.

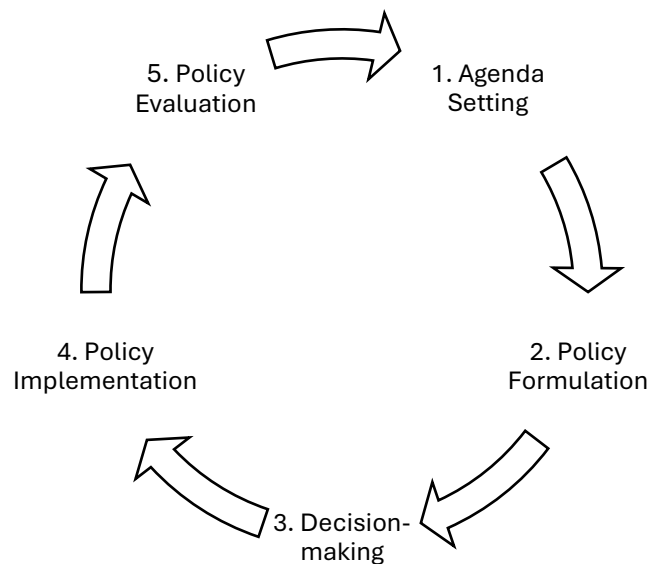


Figure 3.1: The policy cycle

Once a policy has been made, it is then implemented. The policy implementation stage relates to how governments put the policies they adopt into effect. Finally, policy evaluation refers to the process by which the results of the policies are monitored by both state and societal actors. The outcome of the policies, derived from this final stage, may then be re-conceptualized as problems that require other solutions, acting as a feedback loop to inform the agenda setting stage (Howlett et al., 2009). Across the policy cycle, policymakers and governments are not separated from

societal actors but interact with them across several venues by exchanging information and negotiating and bargaining for their respective preferences against those with competing interests (Boasson et al., 2022; Knill & Tosun, 2020). Since this dissertation is focused on policymaking, the first three stages – agenda-setting, policy formulation, and decision-making – are next outlined within the context of EU environmental policymaking.

2.2 EU environmental policy processes

The main procedure to propose, negotiate legislative proposals, and adopt environmental policy in the EU is the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP) (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; von Malmborg, 2025). The OLP can be devised into three core stages, aligning with the three policymaking stages of the policy cycle: the agenda-setting stage, the policy formulation stage, and the decision-making stage. As the Commission is the exclusive agenda-setter and has the monopoly in formulating and introducing legislative proposals (Laloux & Delreux, 2021), the agenda-setting and policy formulation stages are combined into a single policy preparation stage (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025). Across these two core stages – policy preparation and decision-making - coalitions emerge and conduct strategies to influence the process. Each stage will be presented in turn.

2.2.1 Policy preparation: agenda-setting & policy formulation

The policy preparation stage begins with the setting of the agenda, which is subsequently followed by the formulation of legislative proposals. EU agenda-setting is formally dominated by the European Council and the European Commission. The European Council sets the strategic agenda, which defines the general guidelines for the political direction the EU and the incoming Commission is to take. Although the European Council has no official legislative functions, its conclusions influence the subsequent formulation of legislative proposals (Heidbreder & Brandsma, 2018). With the strategic agenda in mind, the Commission has the formal right to set the priorities for the subsequent formulation and decision-making stages. Being the only institution that can formulate and submit proposals, the Commission is considered the formal agenda-setter (Laloux & Delreux, 2021).

Agenda-setting determines which issues are legitimate, receive attention, and are taken up for decision-making. As a result, the initial setting of the agenda is highly political as both EU institutional and non-EU institutional actors seek to actively bring issues on the agenda or keep them off (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025; Hartlapp et al., 2013). Given the highly political atmosphere, policy actors, including the individual DGs, member states, political groups, and non-EU institutional stakeholders, with competing preferences, may begin to coordinate and engage in coalition building to try and build momentum around a legislative proposal and even instill their

preferences very early in the policy process (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025; Candel et al., 2023; Princen, 2007; Rauh, 2021). Once the issues are placed on the agenda, the Commission then begins to formulate policy proposals.

Strongly interlinked with the agenda-setting stage, the policy formulation stage begins with the Commission, and more specifically, the 'lead Directorate-General' (lead DG). Here, the lead DG begins drafting a legislative proposal. During the drafting, the lead DG gathers the necessary legal and practical information, contacts external relevant stakeholders, and sets up the first legal draft that fixes a political position on the issue in question. Through this process, the frame and focus on the legislative objective is determined (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025; Hartlaap et al., 2013). The lead DGs primarily dealing with environmental policymaking tend to be DG Environment or DG Climate Action (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). A variety of other DGs, however, have also led on environmentally related policy, such as DG Energy, or more recently DG Taxation and Customs Union, with the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism proposal (Wettestad, 2024). The policy formulation stage includes multiple formalized phases that engage with other relevant DGs and external stakeholders. The core phases primarily include impact assessments, inter-service consultations, and public consultations (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025). The many phases of the policy preparation stage, which engage the Commission, member states, political groups, and non-EU stakeholders, create spaces for a plurality of policy actors to participate, voice their preferences, and coordinate with likeminded others to enhance their shared preferences. Hence, this phase is considered ripe for coalitions to emerge and influence the formulation and content of legislative proposals.

Impact assessments have become a standard procedure during initial phases of the policy formulation stage. Guided by the lead DGs, impact assessments are a structured template guiding pre-political decision-making with the aim of enhancing the amount and quality of information available on the impacts of various legislative options and measures. By situating the potential impact of various options and measures, impact assessments aim to identify the pros and cons that certain choices guiding the formulated legislation may lead to (Heidbreder & Brandsma, 2017).

Following the impact assessment phase and the initial drafting of a legislative proposal, the lead DG sets up the inter-service consultation to receive input from other interested DGs. Interservice consultations thus act as a formalized consultation mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination of policies that affect multiple DGs. Before and after the impact assessments and

interservice consultations, other forms of coordination and exchange with other DGs and non-EU actors also occur (Candel et al., 2023).

The Commission has also established a public consultation phase, which consists of several distinct instruments including online consultations, stakeholder conferences, and restricted expert groups or advisory committees, mobilized throughout the policy preparation stage (Binderkrantz et al., 2023). The objective of these consultation instruments is to involve stakeholders and gain access to the expertise required to formulate legislative proposals and simultaneously enhance the proposal's legitimacy. Consultations, however, also provide stakeholders, such as businesses, interest associations, and NGOs, opportunities to present their preferences to policymakers, enhance public attention to issues, and impact the proposals (Binderkrantz et al., 2023; Van Ballaert, 2017).

Once the drafting of the legislative proposal is completed, the Commission sends the proposal to the European Parliament (EP) and to the Council of the European Union (the Council), initiating the decision-making stage (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). The proposal restricts the scope of the legislation and largely determines the foundations for the subsequent steps in the decision-making stage (Laloux & Delreux, 2021).

2.2.2 The decision-making stage

The decision-making stage requires agreement between the co-legislators, namely the EP and the Council, for a legislative proposal to be adopted. The stage is structured in two phases: the intra-institutional phase and the inter-institutional phase.

The intra-institutional phase starts when the legislative proposal is presented by the Commission to the EP and the Council. The co-legislators both examine the legislation following its own institutional procedures. In the EP, the main forum for decision-making on the legislative proposal is the responsible committee, such as the committee on the Environment, Climate, and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) or the committee on Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE Committee). Once a position has been formed by the responsible committee, the position is then formulated into a report. The report is drafted by the rapporteur and assisted by shadow rapporteurs from the other political groups, which is then adopted by the committee (Laloux & Delreux, 2021). The position of the Council is adopted in COREPER based on preparatory work of the working party, with the rotating Presidency playing an important role as the broker. Within this intra-institutional phase, both EU and non-EU institutional policy actors may participate and coordinate with EU institutional and non-EU institutional policy actors to engage in advocacy efforts directed towards the EP and the Council to try and influence the legislative proposal (Coen et al., 2021; Hanegraaff

& Berkhout, 2019). The positions developed within this intra-institutional phase contain the amendments that the co-legislators prefer to see adopted. They, therefore, serve as the mandate for negotiations in the inter-institutional phase, known as trilogues (Laloux & Delreux, 2018).

In trilogues representatives from the Commission, EP, and the Council negotiate a compromise based on the positions adopted by their institution in the policy formulation (Commission) and intra-institutional decision-making (EP and the Council) stages. Trilogues, considered 'part and parcel of EU environmental policymaking' (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016, p. 103), are usually used early in the decision-making stage to enhance the efficiency and pace of policymaking (Brandsma, 2019; Laloux & Delreux, 2021). Trilogues are informal yet highly institutionalized meetings where the final version of the legislative proposal is shaped. Here, representatives search for creative solutions that were not present beforehand, aggregating the positions of the EP and the Council through instances of problem-solving (Laloux & Delreux, 2021). Due to the limited transparency and access of trilogues, however, it is difficult for national parliaments and other non-EU institutional actors to participate, engage with, and scrutinize the negotiations. Once a compromise between the institutions has been brokered, the proposal is reviewed and adopted by absolute majority in the EP and qualified majority voting in the Council (Brandsma, 2019; Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Laloux & Delreux, 2021).

This section has briefly outlined the policy cycle and the policy process of the EU under OLP. It has illustrated that EU policy processes are marked by high institutional complexity. Legislative proposals pass through numerous institutional venues with their own procedures and degrees of access, starting from the Commission, passing to the EP and the Council, into trilogues, and back again to the EP and Council. As proposals pass through these venues, numerous EU and non-EU policy actors seek to participate, coordinate, and influence the legislative proposal by instilling their preferences within (von Malmborg, 2025). As will be discussed below, the ACF and interest group literature account for pluralism in EU policymaking processes and the analysis of coalitions within. As such, these theories are well suited to examine coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. This theoretical framework will be further outlined in the following section.

3. Theoretical framework

This section presents the overarching theoretical framework guiding the dissertation. The theoretical framework centers on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) and supplements the framework with insights from EU interest group literature. As presented in the following subsection, coalitions, including their formation and strategies, are one of the three core concepts of

the ACF. Thus, the ACF provides a strong point of departure for the dissertation given the guiding research questions seek to examine and explain the formation and strategies of structurally distinct coalition types across EU environmental policy processes. Fusing the ACF and interest group literature, the dissertation offers a novel perspective into coalitions and, in turn, seeks to further build on the ACF. To follow, the ACF and EU interest group literature are briefly outlined, with complementary aspects between the two highlighted.

3.1 Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework emerged from the pluralist research tradition in the United States and was developed to simplify the complexity of public policy (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Sabatier, 1988; Weible et al., 2009). Considered one of the most prominent and influential theories for analyzing and explaining policy processes and policy change, the ACF places public advocacy of policy problems at its conceptual core and offers a distinct and comprehensive approach for scholars interested in coalitions, policy-focused activity, and policy change (Pierce et al., 2022).

The ACF starts with the notion that policy processes include policy actors that form coalitions by coordinating with others that share preferences pertaining to the legislation being negotiated. The ACF assumes that policy actors are instrumentally and boundedly rational (Weible & Sabatier, 2009). Policy actors are motivated by their preferences and are goal oriented. Their goals, however, are usually complex and the ability for policy actors to perceive the world and process information is hampered by their lack of time, resources, and cognitive ability to consider all issues and act optimally (Rozbicka, 2013; Sabatier, 1998).

Once formed, the ACF posits that coalitions compete against other coalitions by employing various strategies to influence decisions made by government authorities, in this case, the Commission, EP, and the Council. Following the logic of instrumental and bounded rationality, policy actors' selection of strategies is determined by which strategy will produce the most benefits for the costs incurred. Hence, policy actors must weigh up multiple factors to calculate a strategy's benefit, including costs, implementation time, likely success, degree of impact, and relative benefits of the status quo (Luxon, 2019; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). The decisions made by EU authorities, in turn, effect the institutional rules, policy outputs and outcomes, which also have feedback effects within the policy process and spill over to influence other processes. An underlying assumption of the ACF, which is adopted by the dissertation is that contextual factors, namely coalition opportunity structures and short-term opportunities and constraints may both alter the formation

and strategies of coalitions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Schmid et al., 2020).

The ACF also highlights the role of exceptional policy actors, namely policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers, and their impact on policy processes and policy change (Christopoulos & Ingold, 2015; Henry, 2011; Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Varone, 2012; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996). Policy entrepreneurs are innovative, strategic, opportunistic, and display sound knowledge of policy processes. Policy entrepreneurs inject ideas into the policy process, and discover and frame opportunities to create demand for the proposed ideas and solutions. To do so, policy entrepreneurs seek to build and sustain coalitions by providing ideational support and directing collective action decisions (Christopoulos & Ingold, 2015; Petridou et al., 2025; Sabatier, 1998). Policy brokers, on the other hand, hold a more prominent place than policy entrepreneurs within the ACF (Petridou et al., 2025). They are considered actors that seek stability within a specific policy process by intervening through the promotion of conciliatory policy solutions. They aim to mediate trust and conflict between policy actors and coalitions and find compromise (Christopoulos & Ingold, 2015; Ingold & Varone, 2012).

Early on in its development, Sabatier, who formulated the ACF (1998) proposed that the ACF is a suitable framework to study the complexities of the EU policy process. Sabatier suggested that the ACF offers several advantages for examining EU policy processes, including the identification of a variety of policy actors and coalitions; the ability for the ACF to account for the multiple venues and institutions that are involved in EU policy processes; the ACF's ability to account for major and minor policy change; and the recognition that policy processes are nested and thus multi-level, which can assist in examining policy change from the EU to the local level. Although the ACF is considered to apply well to EU policymaking, Ingold (2022) and von Malmberg (2025) contend that applying the ACF to EU policy processes may raise several challenges, including data access, delimiting subsystems, and the identification of policy actors and advocacy coalitions, among other theoretical blind spots related to EU policy processes, such as negotiated agreements. Regardless, the ACF has been convincingly applied to EU policy processes, and usually accompanied by other theories on politics, policy processes, and policy change. Moreover, applying the ACF offers a meso-level analytical viewpoint to complement the more macro-level approaches that are usually utilized in examining EU politics (von Malmberg, 2025).

The ACF's theoretical breadth involves issues related to the political mobilization of policy actors striving to influence policymaking, the patterns and tendencies of these policy actors to learn about policy-related issues, and explanations of policy change over time (Nohrstedt et al., 2023). The

ACF comprises of three core concepts – advocacy coalitions, policy-oriented learning, and policy change. These concepts are used to simplify the complexity of policy processes and operationalized to describe and explain how policy actors coordinate and form coalitions that compete in and influence policy processes and public policy decisions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Pierce et al., 2017; Weible et al., 2020). Since the dissertation's central focus starts from a notion of pluralism and is interested in explaining the formation and strategies of coalitions within EU environmental policy processes, one of the core components of the ACF, the framework is considered a solid theoretical basis in which to anchor and guide the dissertation.

The ACF proposes that the dynamics of the policy process, and thus the formation and strategies of coalitions, are shaped by long-term coalition opportunity structures (COS) and short-term incentives and constraints. COS captures the macro-institutional context, namely the formal and informal norms, including the degree of consensus, and the openness of political systems and institutional venues (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025). Variation in COS have been conceptualized both across countries (Ingold et al., 2025; Kubler, 2001; Nohrstedt, 2011; Satoh et al., 2025) and across policy areas within the same political system (Fischer, 2015). Short-term opportunities and constraints may also affect the behavior of policy actors, affecting their patterns of coordination, and thus the formation of coalitions and the strategies they deploy (Jenkins-Smith & Weible, 2025). COS and short-term incentives and constraints may be further altered by changes in relatively stable parameters and dynamic external events. Relatively stable parameters encompass the fundamental social, cultural, economic, physical, and institutional structures that surround the macro political system, in which the policy processes are embedded. Dynamic external events are more prone to change. Such events include shifts in socioeconomic conditions and public opinion, the onset of a crisis or disaster, and spillover effects from other policy processes. The inception of such events is considered to likely redistribute resources to participating policy actors, evoke changes in preferences, and offer opportunities to coalitions with limited power to influence policy (Nohrstedt, 2005).

Scholars of the ACF have only recently begun to develop the concept of COS (Fischer, 2015; Gupta et al., 2025; Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025; Weible & Ingold, 2018). Yet, variables within the conceptual category of short-term incentives and constraints have been under conceptualized and systematically under operationalized, as highlighted in the previous chapter. This poses a challenge for the dissertation. By analyzing the formation and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, COS at the macro-institutional and policy area level are held relatively stable. To overcome this challenge, the dissertation develops a conceptual

framework of plausible conditions reflecting the short-term incentives and opportunities that affect the formation and strategies of coalitions. To do so, insights from the interest group literature are mobilized. This literature, discussed below, provides conditions across the institutional context, the legislative proposal context, and the actor level to explain interest group mobilization, strategies, and influence (Klüver, et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007).

3.2 Interest group literature

The interest group literature, like the ACF, departs from the notion of pluralism in policy making (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). Interest group literature seeks to understand and explain the mobilization, strategies, and influence of interest groups and interest group coalitions in policymaking, as well as their relations with institutional policy actors. It does so by accounting for the contextual complexity of policymaking, and the properties of interest groups and interest group coalitions (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Hanegraaff et al., 2025; Heaney & Leifeld, 2018; Junk, 2019; Klüver et al., 2015; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Like the ACF, interest groups are assumed to be boundedly rational. Policy actors seek to choose the best available option given their preferences and the information and resources they have. Yet, they are bounded as the policy actors often lack adequate information and capacities to invest in lobbying and make ideal decisions (Dür & Mateo, 2016). Although this literature seeks to primarily explain the mobilization and advocacy patterns of interest groups, it does not account for such patterns of EU institutional actors. As such, there is a mismatch between the ACF and interest group literatures in terms of the types of policy actors each account for. However, since the mobilization and advocacy of interest groups are targeted towards EU institutional actors, there is an inherent interest in the dyadic relationship between the two sets of policy actors, thus indirectly accounting for EU institutional actors.

Explanations pertaining to the mobilization, strategies, and influence of interest groups are derived by focusing on three categories of variables: interest group properties, legislative-specific characteristics, and institutional context (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Junk, 2016; Klüver, 2013; Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007). Such categories of variables share many overlaps with the ACF, namely the role of the institutional context and interest group properties in explaining the mobilization and participation of policy actors and their use of strategies.

Interest group literature has primarily focused on the individual properties of interest groups to explain the mobilization, strategies, and influence of interest groups and interest group coalitions. Some of the most examined properties include an interest group's resources, membership size, support base, the breadth of a groups policy positions and interests, and the congruence of their

policy positions with public opinion (Bunea, 2013; De Bruycker & Hanegraaff, 2024; Junk, 2016; Kluver, 2015). When examining the coordination activity of interest groups and the success of interest group coalitions, scholars have also highlighted the importance of coalition membership diversity, intra-coalition coordination, and the presence of brokers (Hanegraaff et al., 2025; Heaney & Leifeld, 2018; Junk, 2019; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019).

Legislative-specific characteristics are also considered to play an important role in affecting the mobilization, strategies, and influence of interest groups (Hanegraaff et al., 2025; Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney & Baumgartner, 2008). Here, legislative proposals are not considered uniform but differ across a variety of characteristics, including complexity (Junk, 2016; Kluver et al., 2015), regulatory addressee scope and stringency of the primary legislative instrument (Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007) as well as the duration of the policy process (Crepaz et al., 2023; Willems & Beyers, 2023). Such characteristics have shown to incentivize or constrain the mobilization and activity of policy actors. This dissertation considers that the characteristics of legislative proposals can be likened to the short-term opportunities and constraints depicted in the ACF. Hence, they are useful for overcoming the under conceptualization of such conceptual category. As such, it is assumed that the differing character of legislative proposals may assist in explaining the formation of coalitions and the strategies they conduct to influence policy processes within the same policy area and political system.

Interest group literature further accounts for the structure of institutional venues. Given the EU policy process crosses the Commission, the EP, and the Council, their internal configuration and inter-institutional arrangements are considered to impact interest group mobilization, their strategies, and degree of influence (Klüver et al., 2015). Accounting for the structure of institutional venues, much scholarship has centered on the degree of access and openness of each of the EU institutional venues as well as individual DGs in the Commission, political groups, committees, and (shadow) rapporteurs in the EP, and configurations in the Council of the EU (Hanegraaff & van der Ploeg, 2020; Junk et al., 2022; Pakull et al., 2020). Here, the structure of institutional venues closely aligns with the conceptual category of COS within the ACF. Since COSs are mainly constant, the dissertation focuses on drawing insights from the individual properties of policy actors and coalitions, as well as the characteristics of legislative proposals to assist in explaining the formation and strategy selection of coalitions.

To summarize, the ACF acts as the backbone of the dissertation. The ACF assists in situating the concept of coalitions and the factors, namely exceptional policy actors, short-term opportunities and constraints, and COS, that may explain variation in the formation and strategies of structurally

distinct coalitions. Given the dissertation holds COS relatively constant, the dissertation focuses on the role of exceptional policy actors, the structural dimensions of coalitions, and variation in the short-term opportunities and constraints to develop plausible explanations pertaining to the formation and strategies of coalitions. Yet, because the conceptualization of short-term opportunities and constraints are rather underdeveloped, the dissertation borrows insights from the interest group literature. This literature shares many similarities to the ACF. It begins from the notion of pluralism in policymaking; it accounts for the mobilization, strategies, and influence of interest groups and indirectly accounts for EU institutional actors; and proposes institutional, policy-specific, and interest group property variables that affect the behavior, coordination, and coalition formation of interest groups. As such, this literature enables the category of short-term opportunities and constraints to be further developed by conceptualizing the category as the characteristics of legislative proposals. In the next section, coalitions and their structural dimensions are conceptualized.

4. Conceptualizing coalitions

The concept of coalitions is considered the bedrock of the ACF. Coalitions are groups of policy actors that share preferences and engage in coordinated activities with the aim of influencing the policy process and legislative proposals using strategies and joint activities (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Weible et al., 2020). The dissertation considers policy actors at the organizational level, and not the individual level. It is assumed that collective organizations, rather than individuals, stand in the foreground of today's politics (Fischer, 2011; Ingold, 2011). Examining policy actors as collective organizations also simplifies the number of policy actors involved in policy processes (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). Hence, within EU policy processes, coalitions may include any type of politically engaged organization, including, but not limited to, a European Parliament political group, a member state, a Commission Directorate-General (DG), an interest association, a non-governmental organization (NGO), a business, or research organization (Weible & Ingold, 2018). A policy preference describes the forms a policy actor's partiality for a policy option can take (Bolognesi et al., 2024), or a policy actors order of preferred outcomes and what matters for them (Degner & Leuffen, 2020; Metz & Ingold, 2017). Coordination between policy actors implies policy actors have organized and planned certain joint activities that are carried out to influence the policy process and to achieve the shared preference(s). Joint activities may include planning a social media campaign, organizing a protest, holding joint meetings, and/or publishing a joint position or non-paper (Weible & Ingold, 2018). Given this conceptualization, two dimensions result in the identification of a coalition: shared preferences and the coordination of joint activities between

policy actors. As illustrated in the previous chapter, although coalitions share these two primary dimensions, they also greatly differ across several structural dimensions.

4.1 The structural dimensions of coalitions

Attempting to overcome discrepancies in defining coalitions, Weible et al. (2020) presents a way to identify an ideal coalition type, or a degree of the ideal type, by turning on, turning off, or muting a combination of five dimensions including policy actors, shared beliefs, coordination of activities, resources, and stability. Throughout, however, it is acknowledged that there is also variation within each of these structural dimensions, which is taken as a starting point for the following conceptualization, when shared preferences and coordination are both ‘turned on’.

Taking the structural dimensions identified in the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and conceptual insights developed by Weible et al. (2020), with adaptations drawn from literature on policy networks (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016), and interest group coalitions (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Junk, 2016; Weiler and Reißmann, 2019), the dissertation conceptualizes coalitions across five core structural dimensions: 1) *number of shared issue preferences*; 2) *size*; 3) *membership diversity*; 4) *authority*; and 5) the *intra-coalition coordination intensity*.

The *number of shared issue preferences* captures variation in the breadth of preferences members of a coalition agree upon, akin to shared beliefs posited by Weible et al. (2020). Similarly, the *size* of a coalition stems from the policy actor attribute also outlined by Weible et al. (2020), whereby coalitions differ in the number of policy actors that are members of a coalition. The *membership diversity* of a coalition accounts for the heterogeneity of policy actor types that are members of a coalition, which is briefly touched upon by Weible et al. (2020) under the dimension of policy actors and further developed by Beyers and De Bruycker (2018) and Junk (2016). The *authority* of a coalition is an additional dimension. Building on the resource dimension, authority aims to capture the coalition’s control and power in a policy process (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Focusing on authority rather than resources offers a parsimonious dimension to capture the latent influence of coalitions, particularly when there are vast numbers of policy actors participating in a policy process, making measuring the resources of all actors a difficult task. Finally, the *intra-coalition coordination intensity* is primarily drawn from the concept of coordination of political activities (Weible et al., 2020; Weible & Ingold, 2018; Weiler and Reißmann, 2019). These non-mutually exclusive dimensions are used to systematically characterize identified coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. In the remainder of the section, the

conceptualization of each structural dimension is further elaborated on within the context of EU environmental policymaking.

4.1.1 Number of shared issue preferences

A coalition comprises of policy actors, which individually hold a range of preferences on issues pertaining to a legislative proposal. Given this, the number of issue preferences that members of a coalition share and thus the coalition advocates can vary from one issue to many issues. For example, in the EU's Climate Law, a coalition may advocate for a 55% emissions reduction target by 2030. However, another coalition may advocate for a 60% emissions reduction, the establishment of a scientific advisory board, and for the inclusion of a greenhouse gas budget for future emissions reduction target setting. A coalition advocating for a broader range of issue preferences may indicate that the policy actors within may be more coherent and unified in their advocacy and illustrate a better understanding of the legislation. Conversely, coalitions with members that share only a small number of issue preferences may not be as unified or coherent in their advocacy (Ingold et al., 2025).

4.1.2 Size

Coalitions can vary in their size or the number of policy actors that make up the coalition (Weible et al., 2020). The size of a coalition ranges from two actors and up. Larger coalitions may be considered more influential as they have strength in numbers, imply broad support for a given policy preference, and have more authority to draw on in policy processes (Junk, 2019; Mahoney, 2007; Nelson & Yackee, 2012). As a coalition's membership size increases, however, so too does the costs of coordination and maintaining a common set of shared preferences among its members. This may negatively impact on how efficient the coalition is at deciding on a strategy, hindering its influence (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018).

4.1.3 Membership diversity

Coalitions can vary by the diversity of its members or in the number of policy actor types it is comprised of. A coalition with a heterogenous membership base may comprise of multiple policy actor types, such as NGOs, interest associations, and research institutes. Because of broad informational sources and support for certain issues by addressing a broader audience, heterogenous coalitions can signal credibility of their preferences (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). More diverse coalitions may, however, result in inefficient coordination and experience an increase in intra-coalition conflict due to the wider ideological distances and functional differences between policy actor types (Junk, 2019). Homogenous coalitions comprised of policy actors of the same type may have less informational sources and indicate narrower support for certain issues. Yet,

the costs of coordination between homogenous coalitions are reduced due to lower ideological distances and less internal conflict between members. As such, homogenous coalitions may be able to decide on and conduct activities more efficiently. Yet, their homogeneity suggests that they have access to a narrower audience, raising concerns regarding the credibility of and support for their preferences. Coalition membership diversity is one of the most understudied attributes of coalitions but is considered to affect policy processes and coalition behavior (Weible et al., 2020).

4.1.4 Authority

The authority of a coalition or the extent to which it has control and power in a policy process can vary and have a crucial impact on decision-making and policy change (Ingold, 2011). The authority of a coalition is the accumulation of the individual authority of actors within a coalition and is related to two complementary factors: formal decision-making authority and structural network authority. The formal decision-making authority of a coalition accounts for the accumulative decision-making power of the policy actors within a coalition at a specific moment in the policy process. Coalitions that hold formal decision-making authority have a relative degree of power over the final decision and ability to translate their preferences into the policy (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Pappi & Henning, 1999; Weible, 2006). The structural network authority of a coalition accounts for the number of members within a coalition that hold strategic positions within the policy network of the policy process. Coalitions comprised of policy actors that hold strategic positions within the policy network can cut off indirect connections between other actors or manipulate information and other resources that travel through the network (Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Incorporating formal decision-making authority and structural network authority enables both EU institutional and non-EU institutional policy actors to be captured and aggregated at the coalition level. The authority of a coalition is considered a valuable political asset. Coalitions that are authoritative may increase their power and ability to shape policy processes (Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Yet, holding authority does not mean that a coalition is influential, whereby it successfully effects the instatement of one or more of its preferences in a policy (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024).

4.1.5 Intra-coalition coordination intensity

Policy actors within a coalition coordinate by devising and planning joint activities at varying degrees of intensity with the aim of influencing policy processes (Weible & Ingold, 2018). Members within a coalition may coordinate with high intensity by planning and conducting several joint activities including joint meetings, publishing a joint position paper or letter, and conducting a protest. Other coalitions may coordinate with less intensity by just meeting to share information

(Weible et al., 2020; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Like authority, the level of coordination intensity is thought to affect the behavior and influence of coalitions.

To sum up, this section has presented a conceptualization of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. The conceptualization builds on the work of Weible et al. (2020) and borrows insights from interest group coalitions and policy networks. It outlines five core structural dimensions that coalitions vary across. By accounting for the structural variation among coalitions across the five dimensions, it is considered that various types of coalitions, which are structurally distinct, will form and conduct strategies within a given policy process and at a given time. As such, the variation in the formation of structurally distinct coalition types and their strategies requires explanation. The following sections present the factors and expectations that help explain the formation of varying types of coalitions and the strategies they conduct.

5. What drives the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes?

In this section, the conceptual framework and expectations that drive the formation of varying types of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes is presented.

5.1 Legislative characteristics and exceptional policy actors

The conceptual framework starts with the assumption that policies create feedback effects, which result in the drafting and negotiating of legislative proposals, and subsequently impacts the formation of coalitions (Schmid et al., 2020). The altering character of legislative proposals are considered to define the contours of the policy process by offering short-term opportunities and constraints to policy actors. This in turn shapes the participation, coordination, and preferences of policy actors and influences the formation of different types of coalitions. Coalition formation is thus a process whereby policy actors strategically search for and coordinate with others that share preferences with the aim of influencing the policy process (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). As such, the legislative proposals and their characteristics are not deterministic, but it is the policy actors within, particularly the policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers, which identify opportunities to participate, conduct strategies, and engage in coalition building (Petridou et al., 2025).

From this, two categories of concepts are mobilized to assist in explaining the formation of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. The first category includes legislative characteristics, drawn primarily from interest group literature and supplemented by literature on policy design. Legislative characteristics are considered to offer short-term opportunities and constraints, as indicated within the ACF. Specifically, the dissertation centers on four legislative characteristics: legislative complexity, the regulatory addressee scope, the stringency of the

primary legislative instrument, and the shift between policy stages. The second category accounts for the agency of exceptional actors, namely the inclusion of policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers, in a coalition. This variable is derived from the ACF yet shares similarities with the interest group literature regarding the factors at the actor-level, namely interest group and interest group coalition properties.

The conceptual framework developed to explain the formation of different coalition types is illustrated in figure 3.2. In figure 3.2 the black boxes reflect the concepts from the ACF. The first box, inside the COS, depicts the policy process. It is during the policy process in which different coalition types (type A and B) form and, as will be discussed in section six, conduct strategies to influence the legislative proposal in the policy preparation and decision-making stages. The other encompassing black box depicts the COS. Given they are held constant, the COS surrounds the legislative characteristics and the policy process. The black box surrounding the concept of coalitions is also informed by the ACF, as discussed in the previous section (section 4). Here, the formation of different coalition types is what is to be explained.

The red boxes and arrows illustrate the factors which seek to explain the formation of different coalition types. The red box outside of the policy process highlights the category of concepts labelled legislative characteristics. It is assumed that the characteristics of the legislative proposal shape the policy process by offering short-term opportunities and constraints to policy actors, which in turn affect the formation of different coalition types. As suggested by the ACF and interest group literature, the agency of exceptional actors and their involvement in the coalition building process may also influence the formation of specific coalitions. The red boxes and arrows indicate that the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor, be that an entrepreneur or a policy broker, may be active in the policy process and be included in the coalition formation process. Their inclusion and exclusion are considered to further shape the formation of different coalition types. This is due to such policy actors' capacities to be strategic, opportunistic, and connect policy actors together (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Petridou et al., 2025), which may in turn affect the structural dimensions of the coalitions. This is not to say that all coalitions will include such an exceptional policy actor, but those coalitions that do include them may be of a certain type(s).

To follow, the conceptualization of each legislative characteristic and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors will be outlined. Expectations regarding their directional impact on the structural dimensions of coalitions are presented. Although reasonable expectations can be formulated about the individual conditions and their effect on the individual structural dimensions of coalitions, the current state of theorizing within the ACF does not allow specific expectations of combinations

of conditions to be formulated beforehand (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017). Nevertheless, it is assumed that combinations of legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors will drive the presence of certain coalition types. Moreover, not all conditions are conceptualized to influence all five structural dimensions.

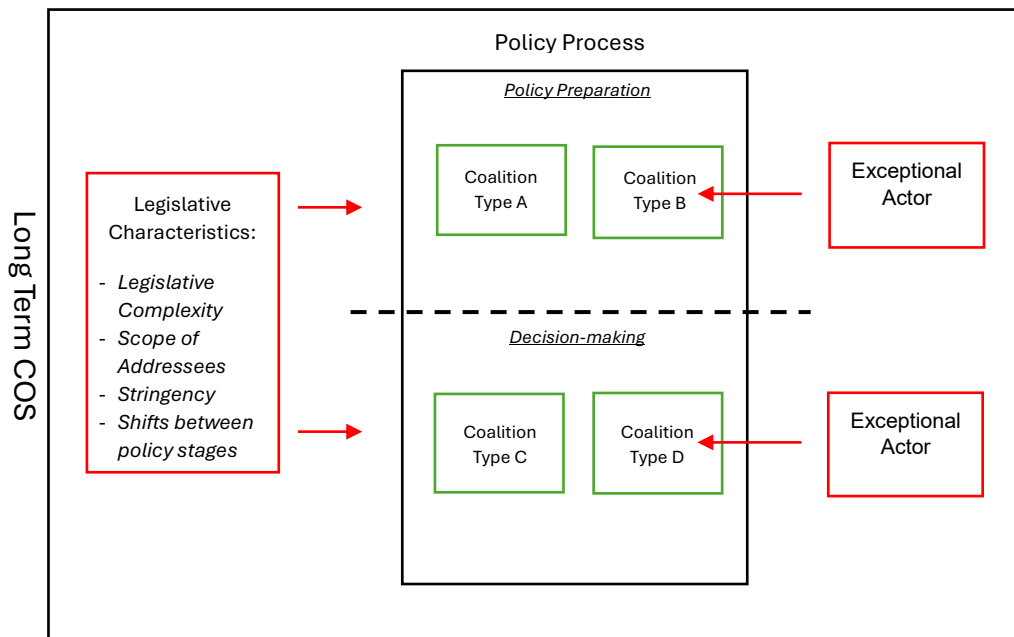


Figure 3.2: Conceptualizing the drivers of the presence of coalition types. Note: Red boxes indicate independent variables, green boxes indicate dependent variable. Source: authors own.

5.1.1 Legislative complexity

Legislative complexity refers to the degree a given legislative proposal is difficult to analyze, understand or solve, and can range from high to low (Hurka & Steinebach, 2026; Hurka et al., 2022; Klüver et al., 2015). High legislative complexity may require policy actors to deploy more resources to participate and coordinate because of the heightened need for policy actors to understand the complicated technical legislation and form preferences (Hurka et al., 2023; Junk, 2016). Highly complex proposals, therefore, provide opportunities for actors with specialized knowledge to participate and coordinate with others. Conversely, policy actors that do not possess specialized knowledge may be constrained in participation, developing clear preferences and coordinating with others (Hurka et al., 2022; Klüver et al., 2015). Less complex proposals are simpler to understand, which reduces the need for specialized knowledge and the deployment of resources to comprehend the legislation. In turn, this frees up resources that policy actors may

use elsewhere, such as developing more preferences or coordinating with several others. Taken together, legislative proposals with high complexity may constrain the participation of many policy actors, particularly if they are not already experts in the specific field or if they do not have enough resources to spend on understanding legislative proposals. For those actors that do participate in a process marked by a highly complex proposal, the number of preferences they form may be hindered given the technical nature of the issues and the need to deploy resources to understand such issues, let alone coordinate with others that also share several preferences (Junk, 2016; Røed & Wøien Hansen, 2018). Hence, it is expected that:

E1a: Highly complex legislative proposals are associated with the formation of coalitions with less shared preferences.

E1b: Highly complex legislative proposals are associated with the formation of smaller coalitions.

Highly complex proposals may also drive policy actors to coordinate with a diversity of others and do so more intensely. This is because policy actors may seek to gain access to technical knowledge and information that other policy actors possess to enhance their own understanding of the proposal. Moreover, to ensure that as much information and knowledge is shared and the costs of coordination are not lost, policy actors may double down and spend more effort in coordinating more intensely. Alternatively, less complex legislative proposals may drive policy actors to coordinate with others of the same type and less intensely. This is because policy actors may be less incentivized to gain access to complicated and technical knowledge from various other policy actor types. Even so, they may turn to other sources of information, such as the media and the public, to inform them of their preferences. Accordingly, there is little need for policy actors to coordinate with much intensity as information is obtained from other sources. Yet, considering less resources and effort is used in understanding the proposal, policy actors may seek to use such resources to coordinate more so (Junk, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015; Rasmussen & Carroll, 2014). Nevertheless, it is expected that:

E1c: Highly complex legislative proposals are associated with the formation of diverse coalitions.

E1d: Highly complex legislative proposals are associated with the formation of coalitions that internally coordinate more intensely.

5.1.2 Scope of regulatory addressees

The scope of regulatory addressees refers to the breadth of governmental and societal groups affected by and expected to comply with a legislative proposal (Fernández-I-Marín et al., 2021; Hurka et al., 2025). The addressees affected by legislation are considered to be conferred

opportunities or are constrained to participate and coordinate, affecting the formation of coalition types (Howlett et al., 2020; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Legislation with a broad regulatory addressee scope targets many groups across government and society. For example, the European Climate Law targets the whole of society. Since a broad regulatory addressee scope impacts a wider range of societal groups, it is assumed that a higher number and more diverse range of policy actors will be incentivized to mobilize, participate, and influence the policy process. Because of this, policy processes shaped by legislative proposals with a broad scope will increase the opportunities for policy actors to find many others that they share preferences and coordinate with. Alternatively, legislation with a narrow regulatory addressee scope targets only a select and identifiable set of addressees. The Sustainable Batteries regulation, for example, targets addressees only related to the battery supply chain. As such, a narrow regulatory addressee scope may only incentivize those actors directly impacted to mobilize, participate and try to influence the proposal. Because of this, those policy actors participating will have less opportunity to coordinate with many diverse others that share similar preferences. It is therefore expected:

E2a: Legislative proposals with a broad regulatory addressee scope are associated with the formation of larger coalitions.

E2b: Legislative proposals with a broad regulatory addressee scope are associated with the formation of more diverse coalitions.

The authority of coalitions and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination are also likely to be shaped by the regulatory addressee scope of a legislative proposal. Proposals with a broad scope distribute benefits and burdens across a wide range of societal groups, therefore diluting the stakes for any single group of policy actors. As a result, policy actors may be less incentivized to invest resources in building authoritative coalitions or in coordinating intensively to influence the proposal, as the expected returns from such efforts are comparatively limited. By contrast, proposals with a narrow scope concentrate benefits or burdens on a smaller set of affected actors. Under these conditions, impacted policy actors face stronger incentives to enhance their authority and to coordinate more intensively to influence the policy process, either by maximizing the expected benefits or by mitigating the concentrated costs (Klüver, 2015; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Therefore, it is expected that:

E2c: Legislative proposals with a broader regulatory addressee scope are associated with the formation of less authoritative coalitions.

E2d: Legislative proposals with a broader regulatory addressee scope are associated with the formation of coalitions that internally coordinate less intensely.

5.1.3 Stringency of the primary legislative instrument

Legislative proposals differ in the stringency of the primary instrument utilized in an aim to attain the goal of the legislation (Klüver et al., 2015; Metz, 2017; Verdung, 1998). Four types of EU environmental legislative instruments are primarily distinguished by their degree of stringency: regulatory instruments, economic instruments, informational instruments, and procedural instruments (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Oberthur & von Homeyer, 2022; Pacheco-Vega, 2020). Regulatory instruments are the most stringent of the four. They rely on a 'command-and-control' approach which uses the law to alter behavior. Such instruments include emissions targets, product standards, and bans. Economic instruments are the next stringent and aim to guide behavior by affecting actors' cost-benefit calculations. Such instruments include emissions trading and carbon taxes. Following, informational instruments aim to stimulate learning by providing information, creating awareness, and generating and diffusing knowledge. Such instruments may include product labelling and educational campaigns. Finally, procedural instruments are designed to affect how a policy is formulated and implemented, which include tools such as the delegation of decision-making, planning, reporting, and reviewing mechanisms; expert, stakeholder, and citizens participation; and impact assessments (Oberthur & von Homeyer, 2022). The four instrument types can be grouped in command-and-control regulations, which include proposals with primary regulatory instruments, and new environmental policy instruments, which consist of the economic, informational, and procedural instruments (Steinebach, 2022).

The stringency of a legislative proposal's primary instrument is expected to shape the breadth of policy actor participation and, in turn, coalition size. Highly stringent command-and-control regulations impose intensified costs and benefits, thereby increasing the stakes of the policy process. Because of this, policy actors face stronger incentives to mobilize and participate to either secure expected benefits or mitigate anticipated burdens. Moreover, EU environmental policymaking has primarily relied on command-and-control instruments. As a result, policy actors are generally familiar with these instruments and their implications, which reduces uncertainty surrounding their expected effects (Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022). Taken together, the combination of high stringency and lower uncertainty is likely to encourage participation by a broader range of policy actors. As participation expands, opportunities for policy actors to coordinate with many others increases, facilitating the formation of larger coalitions. By contrast, legislative proposals that are less stringent and rely on newer environmental policy instruments

tend to generate more diffuse and uncertain costs and benefits. In such cases, policy actors may be less motivated to mobilize, as the expected payoffs of participation are weaker or less predictable. Consequently, fewer actors are likely to engage in the policy process, limiting opportunities for policy actors to coordinate with many others, reducing coalition size. Accordingly, it is expected that:

E3a: Legislative proposals with a highly stringent primary instrument are associated with the formation of larger coalitions.

Given the intensified costs and benefits imposed by a highly stringent legislative proposal, policy actors may also be incentivized to coordinate with other actors that hold authority. By building a coalition with authoritative others, policy actors can enhance their access and capacity to potentially influence the policy process in a direction that closely aligns with their preferences. In doing so, the policy actors may increase their benefits or mitigate the costs of the stringent proposal. Alternatively, proposals marked by less stringent instruments may reduce the incentives for policy actors to coordinate and form a coalition with others that hold authority, as the effort spent doing so may outweigh the benefits of potentially influencing the proposal. Hence, it is expected that:

E3b: Legislative proposals with a highly stringent primary instrument are associated with the formation of more authoritative coalitions.

When the stringency of the legislative proposal is high, marked by a regulatory instrument, policy actors are considered to expend more effort in attempts to influence the proposal. As such, it is assumed that policy actors will engage in increased levels of intra-coalition coordination intensity. By increasing the intensity of coordination, coalitions may exhibit a coordinated front and conduct a broader range of activities (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). The effort spent in conducting a broader range of activities, in turn, may enhance the coalition's chances of influencing the legislative proposal in its desired direction, thus outweighing the costs of not coordinating as intensely. Alternatively, proposals that are less stringent are considered to reduce the incentives for policy actors to coordinate with each other as intensely, as the effort in doing so may not match the benefits. It is, therefore, expected that:

E3c: Legislative proposals with a highly stringent primary instrument are associated with the formation of coalitions that internally coordinate more intensely.

5.1.4 Shift between policy stages

The shifts between the policy stages, namely the policy preparation and decision-making stages, accounts for the changing dynamics that occur between each stage of the policy process as discussed at the beginning of this chapter (Chen et al., 2022; Konig, 2007). As the policy process moves from the earlier stages of policy preparation to the decision-making stage, the more time policy actors have to develop their preferences, learn, and coordinate or change who they coordinate with. Hence, during the policy preparation stage, policy actors may have only begun to examine the proposal, leaving less time to develop sound preferences, learn about who else is participating, and what their preferences are. Without developed preferences, policy actors may be constrained in mobilizing and deciding who to coordinate with. As the proposal passes onto the decision-making stage, policy actors will have had more time to develop their own preferences and account for those of others. This in turn may incentivize policy actors to mobilize, participate and advocate for their preferences, creating more opportunities for actors to coordinate with those that have established a broader range of similar preferences as well as with many other actors. It is, therefore, expected that:

E4a: Proposals negotiated in the decision-making stage are associated with the formation of coalitions with more shared preferences.

E4b: Proposals negotiated in the decision-making stage are associated with the formation of larger coalitions.

The shifts between stages are also considered to alter the formation of authoritative coalitions. During the policy preparation stage, policy actors may not have gained much authority yet as they will have only started to participate, establish themselves, and begun to coordinate with others. Moreover, since most formal authority lies in the hands of the Commission there are a limited number of policy actors that hold formal authority. Because of this, it is considered that in the policy preparation stage, there will be less actors with much authority, which will in effect limit the opportunities for policy actors to develop ties and build coalitions with authoritative others. As the process continues into the decision-making stage actors will have had more time to enhance their authority as they cement their position in the policy process and coordinate with others. Additionally, as the proposal shifts from the Commission, in the policy preparation stage, to the EP and Council, in the decision-making stage, the institutional authority shifts from the Commission to the political groups and the member states. This increases the number of policy actors that have formal authority. Put together, it is foreseen that there will be more policy actors with authority in the decision-making stage, creating more opportunities for policy actors to

coordinate and build coalitions with authoritative others that may not have been possible or foreseeable during the policy preparation stage. Accordingly, it is expected that:

E4c: Proposals negotiated in the decision-making stage are associated with the formation of more authoritative coalitions.

5.1.5 Inclusion of exceptional policy actors

Exceptional policy actors, such as policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers, are widely understood to shape policy processes through distinctive strategies, including problem framing, introducing ideas, coalition building, and seeking stability and compromise (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996). Owing to these strategies and their positions of structural advantage within policy processes, the inclusion of exceptional policy actors within a coalition is therefore expected to alter the formation of structurally distinct coalitions (Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Henry, 2011; Meckling, 2011). By framing problems in a certain light, promoting ideas and solutions, and finding compromises during a policy process, the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor may enable coalition members to converge around a broader set of shared preferences. In doing so, they can reduce ideological or interest-based distance among actors who might otherwise remain unaligned. To this end, it is expected that:

E5a: Coalitions that include exceptional policy actors are expected to share more preferences.

In addition, policy entrepreneurs actively engage in coalition-building to mobilize support for preferred solutions, while policy brokers bridge relationships across otherwise disconnected actors or groups. These activities are likely to expand the coalition and connect actors with heterogeneous backgrounds, thereby fostering the formation of larger and more diverse coalitions. Coalitions that do not include an exceptional policy actor, on the other hand, may not be able to bridge differences in the preferences among policy actors within the coalition, nor will they have the ingenuity to expand the size of the coalition, or connect heterogeneous actors together. Given this, it is expected that:

E5b: Coalitions that include exceptional policy actors are expected to be larger.

E5c: Coalitions that include exceptional policy actors are expected to be more diverse.

The conditions and their expected impact on the structural dimensions of coalitions are summarized in table 3.1.

Structural Dimensions	No. shared preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Intra-coalition coordination
<i>High legislative complexity</i>	-	-	+	N/A	+
<i>Broad regulatory addressee scope</i>	N/A	+	+	-	-
<i>High stringency of primary instrument</i>	N/A	+	N/A	+	+
<i>Shift to decision-making stage</i>	+	+	N/A	+	N/A
<i>Inclusion of exceptional policy actor</i>	+	+	+	N/A	N/A

Table 3.1: Directional expectations of factors on the structural dimension of coalitions

The dissertation assumes that legislative proposals are not uniform but differ across the characteristics presented above, which are non-mutually exclusive. Given this, the overall character of a legislative proposal is a combination of the individual characteristics, which provide opportunities or impose constraints on the mobilization, participation, and coordination of policy actors. This, in turn, is considered to affect and assist in explaining the formation of structurally distinct coalitions. For example, a legislative proposal, during the policy preparation stage may have a low degree of complexity, a broad scope, and have a highly stringent primary instrument. This may motivate policy actors to mobilize and coordinate in a certain fashion, with some taking on an exceptional role, enabling the formation of a given coalition type. Alternatively, a legislative proposal in the decision-making stage, that is characterized by high complexity, a narrow scope, and a less stringent primary legislative instrument, may drive the formation of a different type of coalition. It is these combinations of conditions in which the dissertation seeks to uncover. Building on the formation of coalitions, the next section presents and outlines the conceptual framework, which seeks to explain the strategies of coalitions.

6. The strategies of coalitions

This section proposes a framework that mobilizes insights from the ACF and interest group literature to conceptualize and explain the strategies that coalitions conduct in EU environmental policy processes. Both the ACF and interest group literature analyze the strategies of coalitions and interest groups, respectively. They both also advance similar categories of conditions, spanning across the institutional context, legislative proposal context, and the actor level, which affect the choice of strategies (Klüver, et al., 2015; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Stemming from the literature review, the dissertation posits that a coalition's strategy is impacted by their structural composition and the character of the legislative proposal under negotiation.

To follow, three strategies that coalitions conduct in EU environmental policy processes: inside, outside, and orchestration strategies, are presented. Potential explanations are then developed in

the following sub-section to account for variation in strategy selection. By mapping and explaining the strategies of coalitions, the research aims to shed light on why coalitions select certain strategies to try and influence EU environmental policymaking processes.

6.1 Coalition strategies

Once formed, coalitions carry out strategies to try and influence the policy process and decisions pertaining to the legislative proposal (Fenger & Klok, 2001; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Pierce, 2016). Coalition strategies are implemented through specific political activities that coalition members conduct, jointly or individually (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024). As such, an activity is an instance of a strategy. The dissertation conceptualizes three coalition strategies: inside, outside, orchestration. Inside and outside strategies are identified from the ACF and interest group literature. The orchestration strategy is adopted from the literature on global climate politics that examines the strategies that actors employ to overcome collective action problems (Abbott, 2018; Bäckstrand & Kuyper, 2017; Hale & Roger, 2014). Although some of the activities coalitions conduct resemble an orchestration strategy, as indicated in the literature review, such strategy has not been conceptually distinguished in the ACF or interest group literature.

The three strategies vary fundamentally in their logic and focus on different targets (Abbott et al., 2015; Dür & Mateo, 2013; Junk, 2016). The strategies are not mutually exclusive. Advocacy success has been found to be enhanced when strategies are combined (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). Therefore, coalitions may implement a strategy mix, choosing to opt for one strategy or balancing a combination of strategies at different times and under different circumstances (Beyers, 2004; Kriesi et al., 2007; Wagner et al., 2023). Although coalitions may implement multiple strategies, it is thought that the coalitions will favor certain strategies over others.

Inside strategies are informed by activities that are directed at EU policymakers and attempt to affect decisions from inside EU venues (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). Inside activities include meetings with EU policymakers, sending joint letters, drafting amendments, and directly engaging in EU policy venues related to the policy process (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Such activities are conducted under a logic of influence, whereby coalitions exchange relevant information with EU policymakers in return for influence. Hence, they do not generate much public exposure and are usually not visible to a broader audience (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Junk, 2016).

Outside strategies are comprised of activities that target the public and seek to affect and pressure policymakers indirectly by raising the awareness and mobilizing or changing public opinion (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Outside activities can take the form of using the media (making press

releases and contacting journalists), public campaigning, social media use, or protest events and other public actions (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). Unlike inside activities, these activities attempt to generate public exposure and attention and are conducted under a logic of reputation to maintain a public image (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Junk, 2016).

Orchestration strategies seek to target intermediaries, such as other policy actors or coalitions within and across governance levels, that share broadly similar goals. The aim of orchestration is to mobilize, encourage, support, and guide the behavior of intermediaries to indirectly influence policymakers through a chain of soft coordination. The chain is conceptualized in terms of *orchestrating coalition – intermediary X – target* (Abbott, 2018; Bäckstrand & Kuyper, 2017). As such, coalitions engaged in orchestration seek to unlock the agency of other coalitions or policy actors to help advocate and influence the policy process (Hale & Roger, 2014). Activities with an orchestration function include cross-coalition coordination, providing material and ideational support to other coalitions and policy actors, and engaging in multilevel games by mobilizing other coalitions and policy actors across governance levels. Orchestration is conducted under a logic of expansion as coalitions seek to expand its access to novel information from other coalitions; expand its strategic prowess by learning and developing similar or complementary strategies; or expand their footprint in the policy process by mobilizing and directing the activities of other coalitions and policy actors within and across governance levels (Abbott, 2018; Hale & Roger, 2014). Given this logic of expansion, it is also foreseeable that an orchestration strategy may feedback into the coalition building process. As coalitions engage with intermediaries with similar preferences and goals, such intermediaries, be that individual policy actors or coalitions, may become enlisted within the orchestrating coalition as a new member.

The three strategies, their targets, logic, and related activities are presented in table 3.2. To develop expectations regarding why coalitions conduct certain strategies, the dissertation relies on categories of concepts derived from the ACF and interest group literature. More specifically, the dissertation is interested in understanding the impact of the structural dimensions of coalitions and legislative characteristics on the strategies of coalitions.

Strategies	Target	Logic	Activities
<i>Inside</i>	EU Policymakers	Influence	• Sending email to EU policymaker • Meeting with EU policymaker • Use of consultation platform • Sending letter/paper • Sharing positions in negotiations • Joint amendments • Delay tactics (requesting translations, using procedural demands)
<i>Outside</i>	Public	Reputation	• Use of media • Publishing position paper/report/statement • Public action (protest, banner hanging)
<i>Orchestration</i>	Intermediaries	Expansion	• Mobilizing (national level) policy actors • Providing ideational/material support • Cross-coalition coordination

Table 3.2: Coalition strategies and activities

6.2 Explaining coalition strategies: coalition structures and legislative characteristics

The ACF proposes that the resources of coalitions, and the COS and short-term opportunities and constraints shaping the policy process affect the strategies that coalitions adopt (Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025; Pierce, 2016; Nohrstedt, 2011). Yet, two blind spots were uncovered in the literature review. First, except for the resources of a coalition, relations between other structural dimensions and a coalition's strategy selection have yet to be systematically developed and examined in ACF studies (Jenkins-Smith et al. 2018; Pierce, 2016). Second, although COS are found to influence the strategies of coalitions, short-term opportunities and constraints, such as legislative characteristics (discussed in section 5), have not been sufficiently established, but may also affect the strategies coalitions pursue. This is particularly true given the strategies of coalitions are found to vary across policy processes within the same policy area and political system. To overcome these shortcomings embedded within the ACF, the dissertation utilizes complementary concepts primarily from the interest group literature and supplemented by literature on policy design. In doing so, the dissertation aims to develop and test explanations pertaining to the structural dimensions of coalitions and short-term opportunities and constraints. In doing so, it aims to build upon the ACF's explanatory power.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the conceptual framework developed to explain why a coalition type employs a given strategy. The strategies of a coalition type are indicated in the green boxes and are what is to be explained. The red boxes account for the two sets of factors, namely the structural dimensions of coalitions and the characteristics of a legislative proposal, which are projected to help explain a coalition types' strategy selection. By holding the institutional context constant, it is

assumed that the structural dimensions of coalitions and the short-term opportunities and constraints provoked by legislative characteristics will shape the coalition's strategy selection.

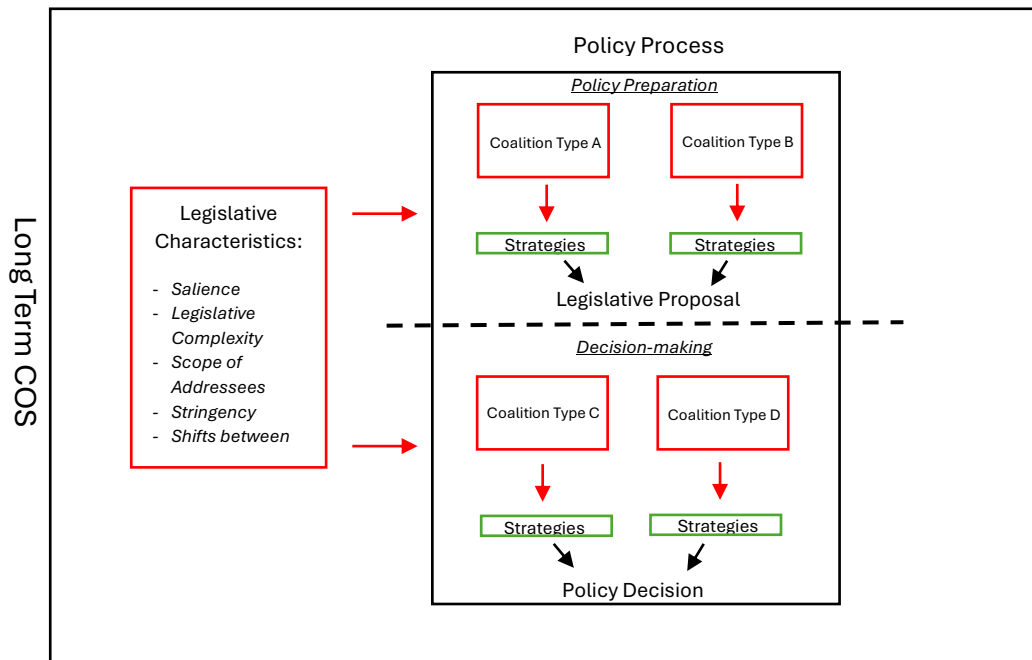


Figure 3.3: Conceptual framework: Linking context and coalition structure to strategy choice. Note: Red boxes indicate independent variables, green boxes indicate dependent variable. Source: authors own.

Accounting for both categories of factors, the conceptualization adopts a nested and hierarchical logic. Such logic is inherent to both the ACF and interest group literature, whereby the strategies of coalitions are determined by their core dimensions and the context in which the coalition is embedded in (Binderkrantz, 2005; Weible et al., 2020). Given that the structure of coalitions may remain constant or differ across policy processes, it is assumed that the structural dimensions will initially shape the strategies and activities that coalitions employ. But since not all policy processes are the same nor do they impose the same opportunities and constraints on coalitions, it is also considered that such contextual differences across policy processes will have a second-order effect on the strategies coalitions adopt. Put together, the strategies of coalitions are assumed to be shaped first by the structure of the coalitions followed by differences in contextual conditions related to the policy process. Next, expectations linking the structural dimensions of coalitions and the characteristics of legislative proposals to coalition strategies are developed.

6.2.1 Coalition structures

The following sub-section presents links between the five structural dimensions of coalitions, presented in section 4, and the selection of coalition strategies. The interest group literature, which shares similarities to the ACF and discusses interest group coalitions within policymaking, has established relations between interest groups, interest group coalitions, and the strategies they adopt. Like the ACF, which highlights that resources matter, interest group literature also argues that additional group-level factors affect the types of strategies employed by interest groups and interest group coalitions to influence policy processes. The primary group level factors that have been analyzed include the interest groups' size, varying forms of resources (financial resources, political power, and support base), the membership diversity of interest group coalitions, and the intensity of coordination (Heaney & Leifeld, 2018; Junk, 2016; Klüver et al. 2015; Kriesi et al., 2007; Mahoney, 2007; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Drawing insights from the interest group literature, the dissertation seeks to contribute to the explanatory power of the ACF by developing additional concepts to explain coalition strategies.

To this end, expectations between 1) the number of shared issue preferences, 2) size, 3) membership diversity, 4) authority, and 5) intra-coalition coordination intensity are developed. Although direct relationships between each structural dimension and the strategy are conceptualized, it is assumed that the interaction between several structural dimensions will ultimately affect the strategies coalitions adopt.

Number of shared preferences

Coalitions differ in the range of preferences they share and advocate for, with some coalitions advocating for a broad number of issues and others advocating for a single issue. It is considered that a coalition which is united across a broad range of issues will advocate under a logic of influence as the coalition seeks to capitalize on their unified front and directly engage with and express to EU-institutional policymakers their broad position. Moreover, given their broad and unified position, there should be less desire to engage with the public (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018). Coalitions that share a small number of preferences, on the other hand, may not be as unified across issues and thus not have a coherent message to send to EU-institutional policymakers. Therefore, such coalitions may choose to operate under a logic of reputation and choose to indirectly influence policymakers by gaining public traction for their shared preference, whilst simultaneously advocating for other preferences via their own means outside of the coalition. Given this, it is expected that:

E1: Coalitions that advocate for a broader range of issues are expected to favor an inside strategy, whereas coalitions that share and advocate for only a few preferences are expected to favor an outside strategy.

Size

Coalitions vary in their size (Weible et al., 2020). Larger coalitions may be considered more influential. They have more policy actors to rely on to conduct activities, can show strength in numbers, and imply broad support for a given policy preference (Junk, 2019; Mahoney, 2007; Nelson & Yackee, 2012). As a coalition's membership size increases however, so too does the costs of coordination and maintaining a common set of shared preferences, impacting how efficient the coalition is at deciding on a strategy (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018). Hence, coalitions with a relatively large membership base may operate under a logic of influence, favoring an insider strategy, as they already have considerable support from its members and to mitigate the sunk costs of coordinating in a large group. Conversely, coalitions that are smaller may be more constrained in the range of activities they conduct, but they may be more efficient in deciding on a strategy and implementing it as there are less policy actors to coordinate with. However, the limited membership may drive small coalitions to operate under a logic of reputation, engaging in an outside strategy to build support for their preferences via public opinion and mitigate their small voice. Considering smaller coalitions may be constrained in conducting many activities, they may be deterred from employing an orchestration strategy given the high resources required to mobilize, engage with, and guide other coalitions and policy actors throughout the policy process (Hale & Roger, 2014). This leads to the expectation that:

E2: Larger coalitions are expected to favor an inside strategy, whereas smaller coalitions are expected to favor an outside strategy.

Membership diversity

Coalitions vary by the diversity of membership, with some coalitions being heterogenous and others homogenous. Heterogenous coalitions can signal credibility of their preferences because of the diversity of members, which broadens the coalition's informational sources and support for certain issues by addressing a broader audience (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). Increased diversity, however, may also result in inefficient coordination and raise the propensity for intra-coalition conflict due to the wider ideological distances and functional differences between policy actor types. As such, the costs of choosing and implementing a strategy may be foreseen to be higher (Heaney & Leifeld, 2018; Junk, 2019). Therefore, heterogenous coalitions may choose to operate under a logic of influence and seek to directly

engage with EU-institutional policymakers. This is because diverse coalitions may aim to capitalize on their diversity, credibility of their preferences, and mitigate the increased costs of coordination. Due to the already diverse membership, heterogeneous coalitions are also foreseen to forego outside and orchestration strategies because their heterogeneity already signals broad acceptance of an issue across an expanded number of policy actors and their constituencies. Conversely, homogenous coalitions may have less informational sources and indicate narrower support for certain preferences. Yet, the costs of coordination between homogenous coalitions may be reduced because of the lower ideological and functional differences between members. As such, the potential for internal conflict between members is lowered. Because of this, homogenous coalitions may be able to decide on activities more efficiently. Yet, due to their lack of diversity and narrower audience, it is anticipated that homogenous coalitions may operate under a logic of reputation and conduct an outside strategy to influence the public and broaden the acceptance of its shared preferences. Moreover, the reduced informational sources suggest that homogenous coalitions may not have a solid grasp on the preferences and activities of other coalitions, making an orchestration strategy less desirable. This leads to the following expectation:

E3: Heterogenous coalitions are expected to favor an inside strategy, whereas homogenous coalitions are expected to favor an outside strategy.

Authority

The authority of a coalition may influence the strategy it deploys. Coalitions with higher levels of authority are foreseen to have increased access to policymaking venues and policymakers, and the ability to control information and the final decisions in the policy process (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Hence, coalitions with high authority are considered to have a strategic advantage relative to other coalitions with less authority. Yet, holding authority does not mean that a coalition successfully instates one or more of its preferences in a proposal (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024). Therefore, coalitions with high levels of authority are considered to operate under a logic of influence and favor an inside strategy to capitalize on their high level of authority and enhance their chances of success in instating its preferences in the proposal. Coalitions with high authority may also decide to operate under a logic of expansion and seek an orchestration strategy to boost their inside strategy by gaining access to novel information or mobilizing and guiding other policy actors and coalitions to complement their advocacy. Alternatively, coalitions with lower levels of authority are expected to operate under a logic of reputation or expansion. By operating under this dual logic, coalitions with less authority are expected to favor outside or orchestration strategies. Such coalitions may lack access to key venues and policymakers, making

an inside strategy difficult to implement. Subsequently, they may be driven to search for more creative ways to advocate their preferences, such as by cooperating with other coalitions and policy actors to gain a place in the policymaking process and remain relevant. Based on this, it is expected that:

E4: Coalitions with higher levels of authority are expected to favor an inside and orchestration strategy, whereas coalitions with lower levels of authority are expected to favor an outside and orchestration strategy.

Intra-coalition coordination intensity

Policy actors within a coalition coordinate at varying degrees of intensity. Some coalitions coordinate with high intensity and others coordinate with low intensity (Weible & Ingold, 2018; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Coalitions that coordinate at high levels of intensity may pool together more information relevant to the policy process. Such pooling may aid the coalition's knowledge on the status of the proposal, the attitudes of policymakers, and the proclivities of competing coalitions. This can also provide coalitions with a strategic advantage over those that do not internally coordinate as intensely. Gaining such an advantage is also expected to increase the efficiency in which coalitions decide upon a strategy. Hence, coalitions that internally coordinate more intensely are expected to operate primarily under a logic of influence and select an inside strategy. Yet, given the coalitions knowledge of the policy process and the proclivities of competing coalitions, such coalitions may also seek to operate under a logic of expansion, complementing their inside strategy and capitalizing on their enhanced knowledge of other coalitions and policy actors. Coalitions that internally coordinate with less intensity may lack information and knowledge of the process they seek to impact. In turn, this may limit their ability to carry out lobbying efforts efficiently and systematically (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Because of this, such coalitions are expected to operate under a logic of reputation and favor an outside strategy as strategies targeted towards public attention do not require as much knowledge of the policy process and the policymakers' affinities (Beyers, 2004).

E5: Coalitions that internally coordinate with more intensity are expected to favor an inside and orchestration strategy, whereas coalitions that internally coordinate with less intensity are expected to favor an outside strategy.

6.2.2 Legislative characteristics

Following the same logic to explain the formation of coalitions, presented in section 5, expectations between a proposal's public salience, legislative complexity, regulatory addressee scope, stringency, and shifts between policy stages and their impact on a coalition's strategy are

developed. Given that legislative proposals are multi-dimensional and thus vary across each of the legislative characteristics presented, it is assumed that combinations of characteristics of a proposal will provide opportunities and constraints to coalitions and shape the strategies they select.

Salience

The salience of a legislative proposal accounts for the relative political attention a specific legislative proposal receives from the public compared to other proposals. In this sense, proposals vary from high to low salience (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Klüver et al. 2015). The level of salience may, therefore, mediate the level of interest coalitions give to a legislative proposal and the extent to which they conduct activities and select certain strategies (Fenger & Klok 2001; Fischer & Sciarini 2016; Koebele 2020). Policy processes marked by proposals with high salience are expected to drive coalitions to operate under a logic of influence and therefore select an inside strategy. This logic is employed as coalitions seek to reap the benefits of a highly salient proposal, such as increased reputation, credibility, and future involvement, if they can successfully influence the proposal (Junk 2016; Mahoney 2007; Røed & Wøien Hansen 2018). Moreover, due to the high public attention attributed to the proposal, it is considered that coalitions may complement their inside strategy with an outside strategy. The outside strategy would assist the coalition in illustrating broad acceptance of its preferences whilst further increasing its reputation among policy actors and the public (Beyers & De Bruycker 2018; Heaney & Leifeld 2018). Conversely, when legislative proposals with lower levels of salience are negotiated, coalitions may be more inclined to adopt a logic of influence. Because of the low salience, the overall level of advocacy directed to policymakers should be reduced. As such, it makes it easier for coalitions to directly engage with EU-institutional policymakers through quiet politics (Culpepper, 2010). Furthermore, because of the low salience and lack of public attention resulting in potentially less reputational gains from influencing the proposal, coalitions may also be disincentivized in employing a logic of reputation and thus deciding not to favor an outside strategy (Giordano 2020; Leuffen et al. 2014; Mahoney, 2007). Based on this variation in salience, it is expected that:

E6: Legislative proposals that are highly salient are associated with coalitions favoring an inside and outside strategy, whereas legislative proposals that are lowly salient are associated with coalitions favoring an inside strategy.

Legislative complexity

Legislative complexity can range from high to low (Hurka & Steinebach, 2026). High legislative complexity may overwhelm many policy actors and societal groups due to a lack of specialized

knowledge related to the proposal. Conversely, less complex proposals can be easily understood by a larger range of policy actors and societal groups, as there is little need for specialized knowledge (Hurka et al., 2022). Under negotiations marked by highly complex proposals, coalitions are expected to be steered away from operating under a logic of reputation. This is because raising public awareness of the proposal through an outside strategy may burden the public with overly technical issues and result in little to no influence. Alternatively, policymakers may be more receptive to gaining information and technical knowledge. This openness should create opportunities for coalitions to operate under a logic of influence and conduct an inside strategy (Junk, 2016; Klüver, 2015). Since proposals with high complexity require technical knowledge, coalitions may also function under a logic of expansion and employ an orchestration strategy to gain access to novel information from other coalitions, learn about their strategies, or direct others in their advocacy. Legislative proposals that are less complex will be broadly understood by a wider audience of policy actors and societal groups. This creates an opportunity for coalitions to adopt a logic of reputation and engage in an outside strategy to harness the public's awareness and support. Additionally, policymakers may not be as receptive to receiving technical knowledge as they seek information from other sources, such as the media. Therefore, the potential effectiveness of an outside strategy is enhanced and the prospect for coalitions to engage in direct forms of lobbying are reduced. Hence, under less complex proposals, coalitions are considered to favor an outsider strategy. This leads to the expectation that:

E7: Legislative proposals that are complex are associated with coalitions favoring an inside and orchestration strategy, whereas legislative proposals that are not complex are associated with coalitions favoring an outside strategy.

Regulatory addressee scope

A legislative proposal differs in the scope of regulatory addresses targeted that are expected to comply with a legislative proposal (Howlett et al., 2020; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Legislation that has a broad scope and targets many groups across government and society may lead to the mobilization and participation of many policy actors. Because of this, large portions of the public may also be aware of and have an opinion on the proposal. Policymakers may, therefore, be more inclined to follow the positions of several policy actors representing interests across society and the views of the wider the public (Mahoney, 2007). Given this inclination among policymakers, coalitions may decide to function under a logic of reputation, favoring an outside strategy, as they seek to bring attention to and shape the preferences of the broader public and indirectly influence policymakers (Junk, 2016). Given a higher number of mobilized policy actors, coalitions may also

function under a logic of expansion, selecting an orchestration strategy to harness the breadth of policy actors and coalitions involved in the policy process and increase their chances of influence, albeit indirectly. Conversely, legislation with a narrow scope targeting an identifiable and narrow set of societal groups may result in a concentrated number of policy actors participating in the process. Hence, policymakers may be more open to the views of those directly impacted and less attentive to the public and broader societal concerns pertaining to the proposal. As such, coalitions may function under a logic of influence, favoring an inside strategy to ensure that their preferences are directly heard by policymakers and because harnessing the public may not be very effective. This leads to the expectation that:

E8: Legislative proposals that are broad in scope are associated with coalitions favoring an outside and orchestration strategy, whereas legislative proposals that are narrow in scope are associated with coalitions favoring an inside strategy.

Stringency of the primary legislative instrument

Legislative proposals vary in the stringency of the primary instrument or tool that is utilized in an aim to attain the goal of the legislation (Klüver et al., 2015; Metz, 2017; Verdung, 1998). Within EU environmental policymaking, four types of legislative instruments are distinguished (see section 5.1.3). Command-and-control regulations rely primarily on binding regulatory instruments and are generally considered the most stringent. In contrast, new environmental policy instruments, which encompass economic, informational, and procedural instruments, are considered less stringent (Oberthur & von Homeyer, 2022; Pacheco-Vega, 2020; Steinebach, 2022). The high stringency of command-and-control regulations is likely to increase the perceived stakes and prominence of the proposal. By imposing clear obligations and potentially high benefits or compliance costs, such proposals heighten the incentives for coalitions to actively advocate for their preferences. The high stakes of the proposal are expected to initially drive coalitions to adopt a logic of influence as coalitions attempt to directly influence EU-institutional policymakers and ensure the benefits of the proposal are enhanced or the costs are mitigated. Moreover, intensified engagement and advocacy are expected to lead to a higher degree of competition during the policy process, which may spill into the public arena. As such, coalitions may see this as an opportunity to also advocate under a logic of reputation, employing an outside strategy, to indirectly influence policymakers and gain an advantage over competing coalitions. Alternatively, proposals with less stringent instruments are likely to entail and impose unclear or lower benefits or costs. Hence, there are potentially less risks if the proposal is left untouched (Dür & Mateo, 2013). As a result, less stringent proposals may not trigger the same degree of mobilization,

contestation, or public attention. Coalitions engaged in these policy processes are therefore expected to opt for a logic of influence and prioritize influencing the content of the proposal primarily by directly engaging with EU-institutional policymakers without the need to seek a visible advantage over competing coalitions, via an outside strategy. As such, it is expected that:

E9: Legislative proposals containing stringent primary instruments are associated with coalitions favoring an inside and outside strategy, whereas legislative proposals with less stringent primary instruments are associated with coalitions favoring an inside strategy.

Shifts between policy stages

Coalitions may alter their strategies based on the policy stage in which the proposal lies, be that either the policy preparation or decision-making stage (Crepaz et al., 2023; Willems & Beyers, 2023). During the policy preparation stage, the Commission has the formal right to initiate policy and the drafting of the legislation. Policymakers in the Commission are, therefore, open and receptive to expert information from a range of policy actors to make informed decisions that are also seen to reflect the demands of different societal groups (Haverland et al., 2018; Stevens, 2023). Moreover, since Commissioners in the Commission are not elected by the public, they are less sensitive to public opinion when formulating proposals (De Bruycker, 2016; Haverland et al., 2018). To capitalize on the Commission's receptiveness and disconnect from the public, coalitions are expected to favor an inside strategy. By functioning under a logic of influence and employing an inside strategy, coalitions may seek to gain a first mover advantage to influence the policy process, particularly before the proposal is fully drafted, the parameters of options within the proposal are defined, and participation of policy actors reaches saturation (Crepaz et al., 2023; Laloux & Delreux, 2021). Gaining access, however, may prove challenging as the Commission has the power of the pen to draft the proposal, controlling which coalitions gain access to advocate for their preferences.

In the decision-making stage, the formal authority shifts to the political groups in the EP and the Member States in the Council, which have the final vote on the legislative proposal (Laloux & Delreux, 2021). As such, many more venues and access points for coalitions to directly influence EU-institutional policymakers are created (Pakull et al., 2020). Because of the increased opportunities to directly access and influence EU-institutional policymakers, coalitions may initially advocate with a logic of influence and favor an inside strategy. Such strategy may be further reinforced as coalitions feel pressured to directly influence policymakers as the policy process reaches the final rounds of negotiations and compromised agreements on a proposal are made (Laloux & Delreux, 2021). Because of the temporal pressure, a sole inside strategy may not be

the only strategy coalitions select. In the EP, MEPs are directly elected by their constituents and are, therefore, foreseen to be responsive to a wide variety of interests. Consequently, MEPs are also more amenable to public support, as not complying with such support may result in electoral damage (De Bruycker, 2016; Eising, 2007; Gheuens, 2025). Given this and their formal authority, it is expected that coalitions will attempt to influence MEPs also via an outside strategy, functioning under a logic of reputation. In the Council, Member State representatives are primarily connected to their national electorates and are rarely lobbied at the EU level due to the Council's relatively closed nature (Coen & Katsaitis, 2019; De Bruycker, 2016). Because of this, Member State representatives should be more responsive to concerns at the national level rather than public concerns or interests at the EU-level (Eising, 2016; Gheuens, 2025). Given this, it is expected that coalitions will also engage in an orchestration strategy through a logic of expansion in attempts to influence the Council at the national level. Taken together, it is expected that:

E10: During the policy preparation stage coalitions are expected to favor an inside strategy, whereas in the decision-making stage coalitions are expected to favor an inside, outside, and orchestration strategy.

Table 3.3 aggregates and presents all the expectations developed regarding the effect that coalition-level and proposal-level factors have on the strategies coalitions select.

	High/Broad	Low/Narrow
<i>Coalition-level factors</i>		
<i>No. Shared Preferences</i>	Inside	Outside
<i>Size</i>	Inside	Outside
<i>Diversity</i>	Inside	Outside
<i>Authority</i>	Inside/Orchestration	Outside/Orchestration
<i>Coordination intensity</i>	Inside/Orchestration	Outside
<i>Proposal-level factors</i>		
<i>Salience</i>	Inside/Outside	Inside
<i>Complexity</i>	Inside/Orchestration	Outside
<i>Scope</i>	Outside/Orchestration	Inside
<i>Stringency</i>	Inside/Outside	Inside
<i>Shifts between stages</i>	Inside	Inside/Outside/Orchestration

Table 3.3: Expectations of coalition strategy selection across coalition- and proposal-level factors

7. Conclusion

This chapter advances a conceptual framework for characterizing coalitions and analyzing the formation and strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes. The framework is conceived to answer the three research questions (see table 3.4).

	Stage One	Stage Two	Stage Three
<i>Research Question</i>	What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the EGD?	How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the EGD drive the formation of different coalition types?	Why do varying types of coalitions employ different strategies across environmental legislative processes within the EGD?
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	Coalition Types	Formation of coalition types	Strategies of coalition types
<i>Independent Variables</i>	Structural dimensions of coalitions	Legislative characteristics & in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors	Structural dimensions of coalitions & legislative characteristics
<i>Chapter(s) in dissertation</i>	Chapter 5 and 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8

Table 3.4: Conceptual framework of the dissertation and its relation to the research questions and structure of the monograph.

The chapter first outlined the policy process and its stages in relation to the EU policy context. Following, it presented the overarching theories upon which the dissertation mobilizes, namely the ACF and interest group literature. These theories were then utilized to build a conceptual framework pertaining to three dependent variables and their expected explanations (see table 3.4). The first dependent variable is the coalition types. To identify coalition types, the dissertation focuses on five structural dimensions, notably the number of shared preferences, size, membership diversity, authority, and intra-coalition coordination intensity. Here, it is expected that coalitions will be similarly or differently structured around these dimensions resulting in the identification of distinct types of coalitions. The second dependent variable is the formation of coalition types. To establish preliminary explanations regarding the formation of coalition types, the dissertation focuses on legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors. The third dependent variable is the strategies of coalition types. Here, the structural dimensions of coalitions and the characteristics of legislative proposals are expected to shape the strategies coalitions employ. Although the dissertation examines coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, the conceptual framework is developed from a generic perspective and may be applied across a range of EU policy areas and even outside of EU policy processes.

In developing the conceptual framework, the dissertation adopts the assumption that the formation of coalitions and the strategies they conduct are both affected by the characteristics of legislative proposals, in addition to other variables. Given legislative proposal characteristics are considered to shape the contours of the policy process, they are foreseen to enable and constrain the participation of and interaction between policy actors during a policy process, affecting both the formation of coalitions and the strategies they conduct. This assumption lies implicitly within the ACF, which highlights that both coalition opportunity structures and short-term opportunities and constraints affect the formation and strategies of coalitions (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Departing from this assumption, it is not only the legislative characteristics that are considered to affect the formation and strategies of coalitions. The formation of different coalition types is also thought to be altered by the inclusion or absence of exceptional policy actors. The strategies that coalition types employ is also considered to be affected by the coalition's structural dimensions. Hence, although legislative characteristics are considered to account for both coalition formation and strategies, it is expected that they will interact with these additional explanatory factors.

Following the logic of the conceptual framework, the next chapter outlines the research design and methodological approach. Reflecting the three dependent variables and the proposed independent variables, it discusses the operationalization of the conceptual framework to study coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. In doing so, it proposes a three-stage sequential mixed-methods research design. After laying out the research design, the remainder of the dissertation continues with identifying coalitions (chapter 5), characterizing coalitions and presenting the coalition typology (chapter 6), examining and explaining the formation of coalition types (chapter 7), and comparing and explaining the strategies each type of coalition adopts (chapter 8).

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodological Approach

1. Introduction

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the examination of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking, and more broadly, coalitions in EU policy processes, have gained substantive attention. Nevertheless, conceptualizing the structure of coalitions, and developing insights into the conditions that drive the formation of coalitions and shape the strategies coalitions select have yet to take center stage. Although the ACF and interest group literature provide guiding expectations, it is still rather unclear as to how coalitions are distinctly structured, and what exact conditions drive the formation of different types of coalitions and the strategies these different types employ. As such, the dissertation situates itself between the existing theories and empirics.

This chapter details the research design and methodological framework of the dissertation. To answer the research questions a sequential mixed methods explanatory design underpinned by an abductive approach is adopted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The approach is formulated to map coalitions, develop a typology, and understand what drives the formation of structurally distinct coalition types and the strategies they adopt. To this end, coalitions are examined across five environmental policy processes of the European Green Deal (EGD) linked to five legislative proposals: the European Climate Law, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). The dissertation triangulates a variety of data sources including semi-structured interviews, official and non-official policy documents, specialized press, official EU sources, datasets, and secondary literature and websites.

The chapter is organized as follows. Section two presents the research design including the research questions, a brief overview of the sequential mixed-methods explanatory process, and the corresponding abductive approach. Section three outlines the case selection. Section four describes the data utilized and its collection. Sections five to seven detail each stage of the sequential mixed-methods explanatory approach. Section eight concludes the chapter.

2. Research design

This section presents the overarching research design of the dissertation. The logic and structuring of the research questions will first be presented. Following, a brief overview of the three-stage sequential design will be outlined. Finally, the abductive approach underpinning the three stages is discussed.

The dissertation attempts to solve the puzzle underpinning the dissertation: how and why coalitions of similar and different structure shape EU environmental policy processes. A phenomenon that has yet to receive broad consideration in the literature. To unpack the puzzle, the dissertation is structured in three sequential stages. In stage one, coalitions are mapped across EU environmental policy processes and a new typology of coalitions in EU environmental policy is created. In doing so, it also showcases how environmental policy processes are structured by coalitions. Utilizing the typology, stage two examines and sheds new light on the conditions driving the formation of coalition types. Lastly, stage three investigates the strategies and activities of coalition types, which is not entirely innovative, albeit does require further analysis.

The dissertation requires exploratory and explanatory elements. The exploratory element is due to the strong likelihood, highlighted in the literature review, that various types of coalitions structure and influence EU environmental policy. Yet, since it is unclear what the coalitions look like, what the structural patterns among the coalitions are, and the types of coalitions present, exploration is needed. It is, therefore, vital to gather empirical data to map and characterize coalitions across EU environmental policy processes, before understanding why certain coalition types form in some processes and not in others, and why coalition types employ certain strategies. Since the research design is structured by these exploratory and explanatory elements, the dissertation employs a sequential approach to answer three guiding research questions:

RQ1: What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?

RQ3: Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

Each question builds sequentially off the last. First, coalitions and coalition types need to be identified (RQ1) to answer what drives the formation of different types of coalitions (RQ2) and why certain types of coalitions conduct certain strategies (RQ3) across EU environmental policy processes. The typology thus enables the systematic comparative analysis of coalitions within and across policy processes, required for RQ2 and RQ3.

The dissertation requires an abductive approach to overcome conceptual shortcomings of the ACF and explain the variation pertaining to the formation and strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes. The ACF proposes broad conceptualizations of factors shaping

the contexts of policy processes, namely long-term coalition opportunity structures and short-term opportunities and constraints, which may affect the formation and strategies of coalitions. This has resulted in the development of some preliminary insights (Fischer, 2015; He et al., 2025; Ingold et al., 2025, 2017; Satoh et al., 2025). The conceptualization of policymaking contexts, and primarily the short-term constraints highlighted in the ACF has, however, not yet been sufficiently developed, comparatively tested on different types of coalitions, or applied in the context of EU environmental policy processes. To further aid insight into the concept of short-term opportunities and constraints, the literature on interest groups is drawn on and complemented by policy design literature. The interest group literature has established relations between the characteristics of legislative proposals and interest group and interest group coalition mobilization, formation, coordination, and strategies (Junk, 2016; Kluver et al., 2015). Hence, the complementarity between the ACF and interest group literature, on the one hand, partially helps shape expectations of policymaking contexts driving the formation of varying types of coalitions and their strategy selection. On the other hand, the need for further conceptual clarity and the generation of causal explanations of the phenomenon requires additional insights uncovered in the empirics.

Fitting with the abductive approach, the dissertation adopts a pragmatic methodological pluralist epistemology. Methodological pluralism contends that there are many legitimate types and sources of knowledge. Thus, it goes beyond the idea that that only qualitative or quantitative research is a legitimate approach for precise, accurate, and reliable social scientific inquiry. Methodological pluralism thus sits in between interpretivist and positivist epistemologies and posits that the most suitable method is chosen based on the research question and data at hand (Furlon & Marsh, 2010; Giraud & Maggetti, 2015). Remaining pragmatic and being guided by the research questions and data rather than a certain methodological camp, methodological pluralism remains responsive to the abductive approach of the dissertation. The epistemology has also reflexively guided the subsequent three-stage mixed-method approach developed to answer the three research questions (Popa & Guillermin, 2017).

2.1 Three-stage sequential mixed-method explanatory approach

Following the three research questions, the dissertation is constructed in three sequential stages adopting a mixed-methods approach. The sequential mixed-methods design posits that a first quantitative or qualitative analysis is complemented by a second analysis employing the other type of method. Such a design is thus grounded in a methodological pluralist epistemology as it utilizes and integrates both quantitative and qualitative data and methods of analysis (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Moseholm & Feters, 2017). This approach has proven vital to gain a

comprehensive understanding of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, a phenomenon with many different aspects.

Stage one of the dissertation aims to identify, measure, and characterize coalitions in five EU environmental policy processes, resulting in the creation of a coalition typology. It does so by drawing on social network analysis (SNA), content analysis, and principal component analysis (PCA). Stage two aims to explain the formation of the types of coalitions identified in stage one through qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). Stage three aims to explain why types of coalitions carry out certain strategies through a two-step comparative analysis. The research questions and corresponding stages and approaches taken for each are presented below in table 4.1.

Stage	Research Question	Cases	Data Collection	Method of Analysis	Intended Outcome
1	What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policymaking processes within the EGD?	• Climate Law, CBAM, RED, Batteries Regulation, JTF	• Specialized press reports • Policy documents • EU sources • Secondary literature & websites • Semi-structured interviews	• Social network analysis • Content analysis • Principal component analysis	• Coalition identification: communities of policy actors with shared issue preferences • Coalition measurement and typology • Additional information of case knowledge
2	How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the EGD drive the formation of different coalition types?	• Coalition types uncovered in stage 1 (outcome) • All coalitions identified in stage 1 (cases)	• Semi-structured interviews • Specialized press reports • Official documents • EUPLEX database • Secondary literature	• Qualitative comparative analysis	• Calibration of conditions for each csQCA conducted. • Truth table • Minimization process & causal paths (condition sets)
3	Why do varying types of coalitions employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the EGD?	• All coalition types identified in stage 1	• Semi-structured interviews • Specialized press reports • Policy documents	• Content analysis • Two-step comparative analysis	• Comparison of coalition strategies and activities • Correlations between coalition dimensions, legislative characteristics and strategies/activities of coalition types

Table 4.1: Three stage sequential mixed-methods research design.

The three stages are separate, yet stages two and three build on the results of stage one, reflecting the sequential and abductive nature of the research. The methods of data collection and analysis, in particular, have been selected as complementary approaches due to the limitations of the preceding stages methods. The analytical approach taken in stage one, particularly around the methods of SNA and PCA, presents difficulties in analyzing the complex casual paths driving the formation and strategies of coalitions. To overcome such limitations, stage one is complemented by QCA in stage two, which can help explain medium-N cross-case comparisons. Similarly, a two-step comparative analysis, in stage three, complements QCA as it assists in making small-N across case and within-case comparisons (Fischer, 2011; Rihoux, 2020).

2.2 The abductive approach

Underpinning the three-stages is the abductive approach applied to the dissertation. Demonstrated in the conceptual framework, elements from the ACF and interest group literature are insightful in guiding likely expectations pertaining to the possible conditions driving the formation of different coalition types and the strategies that coalition types carry out. Due to the complexity of policy processes and the complex interactions among interrelated factors (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017), the dissertation does not start from a top-down deductive or bottom-up inductive logic of reasoning to answer the research questions. Rather, it postulates an iterative logic of inquiry, drawing expectations from multiple theoretical backgrounds and insights from empirical observations to help derive explanations to the phenomena.

This iterative logic between deduction and induction is coined abduction (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014; Timmermans & Tavory, 2022). Abduction starts with novel observations and seeks tentative hypotheses since current theories cannot fully account for the findings. The likely hypotheses formed from abductive reasoning, however, are only considered provisional. This is where the iterative logic comes into play. Starting from the tentative expectations, abduction seeks to test them by gathering more observations. Through this process, the likely expectations are then refined or changed to incorporate new insights from the observations. The refined or changed expectations are then again tested. It is through the continual refinement of such hypotheses that abductive inferences are formed, and the revision of an existing theory or development of a new theory takes place (Brandt & Timmermans, 2021; Timmermans & Tavory, 2022; Vila-Henninger et al., 2022). As such, the objective of abductive analysis is to develop theoretical insights derived through observations that are framed in existing theoretical knowledge. Given this, the developed theory sits as an intermediary between something that is case specific and generalizable, which assists in explaining the phenomena of interest and can be empirically tested in other contexts

(Beach & Kaas, 2020). In this dissertation, the abductive logic of inquiry seeks to explain the phenomenon under examination and to then be empirically tested in other contexts.

Abduction is initially applied to the dissertation by drawing from existing knowledge and theoretical insights. The dissertation originally started with a deductive logic, drawing on the ACF to conceptualize plausible explanations linked to the formation of coalitions and the strategies they conduct. The ACF indicates that coalition opportunity structures and short-term opportunities and constraints are shaped by stable parameters and external events, which in turn influence the formation and strategies of coalitions. To complement the ACF perspective, rational choice institutionalism was applied to guide early tentative expectations. It was originally conceived that the formation of coalitions and the strategies and activities they conduct can be explained by certain institutional arrangements of EU policymaking, given institutions shape the behavior of policy actors and develop patterns and procedures that induce/prohibit coordination. Additional explanations were further guided by historical institutionalism, which suggest that changes in contextual factors can alter EU policy processes and the interactions of and encounters between policy actors. Gaining familiarity with the cases through a round of exploratory interviews and related data (press reports and policy documents), it became clear that the expectations derived from rational choice and historical institutionalism did not seem to fit with the empirics and explaining the phenomenon. It appeared to be factors that were finer grained than the expected macro-institutions that were affecting the dynamics of coalitions within EU environmental policy processes.

The mismatch led to reflecting on and updating the theoretical framework and approach of the research. The expectations tied to rational choice institutionalism and historical institutionalism were put to the side and new expectations, derived from interest group literature, were formed. Interest group literature offers the necessary finer grained insights and has strong conceptual similarities with the ACF, discussed in chapter 3. As a result, the tentative explanations driving the formation of coalitions and the selection of strategies were updated and relatedly, the data collection strategy was adjusted to be more open-ended. Going forward, the objective was to remain open-ended and reflective during and after data collection, considering how the tentative expectations fit with the updated theoretical framework.

For the explanations regarding the formation of coalitions, certain factors were drawn from the interest group literature, namely key legislative characteristics such as the newness, the public salience, and complexity of the legislation. These three factors were specifically tested during data collection, whilst remaining open to other possible factors, which might have been overlooked

theoretically. As the data collection progressed, it became apparent that additional factors may also play a role in explaining the phenomenon, particularly the regulatory addressee scope of the proposal, the stringency of the primary instrument, and the role of exceptional policy actors. As such factors emerged from the interviews and were seen to play an increasingly prominent role, they were added as direct questions in future interviews. Similarly, the strategies and activities that coalitions conduct and the plausible explanations as to why they do so, are approached open-endedly during data collection and analysis. Although some tentative explanations were initially developed, it was through the interviews and analysis that certain factors became evident of their effect. Hence, explanations of the formation of coalitions and the strategies and activities they conduct are derived at the final analytical moment. The next sub-section outlines the three core research questions that guide the dissertation.

2.3 Research questions

This subsection presents the three main research questions and associated sub-questions. Justifications for the methodological approaches needed to answer each question are provided, which are further developed later in the chapter.

2.3.1 RQ1: What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

The first research question is descriptive in nature and is linked to the exploratory element of the research design. The primary objective in answering RQ1 is to reveal the types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes. The types of coalitions uncovered provide the impetus for RQ2 and RQ3. Three sub-questions are developed to answer RQ1.

The first sub-question seeks to identify coalitions in EU environmental policy processes by asking:

RQ1.1 What are the coalitions present in environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

This sub-question provides the basis as to which the typology of coalitions is developed from. Through an initial mapping of the policy actors participating during environmental policy processes, their issue preferences, and how they coordinate through joint activities with one another, coalitions are identified. Given the need to examine the preferences of policy actors and the coordination between each other, social network analysis (SNA) and qualitative content analysis are utilized. SNA is used to create policy networks for each of the five policy processes by identifying policy actors who coordinate with other actors through joint activities, such as through meetings or publishing and/or co-signing position papers. Qualitative content analysis assists in identifying the issue preferences of the policy actors in the policy networks. Paired

together, SNA captures coordination between policy actors and qualitative content analysis captures policy actors' preferences, the two core components to identifying coalitions.

The following sub-question sequentially proceeds from RQ1.1 and asks:

RQ1.2 How are the identified coalitions in EU environmental policy processes structurally configured?

The objective is to measure the identified coalitions from RQ1.1 along the five core structural dimensions that were uncovered in the literature and developed in the conceptual framework. Measuring the identified coalitions across the five dimensions enables for the discovery of patterns between coalitions. To measure the coalitions, results from the identification of the coalitions as well as additional SNA measures are utilized. Finally, RQ1.3 builds on RQ1.2 by using the measured coalitions as inputs and asks:

RQ1.3 How are the structural configurations of coalitions similar and different?

The resulting objective of uncovering of similarities and differences among the coalitions' structural configurations is the creation of a coalition typology. Given the complexity of the dataset, principal component analysis and hierarchical clustering are used. This approach allows for the structural relations between coalition dimensions to be identified. It then assists in clustering the coalitions with distinct structures, based on such relations. The creation of the coalition typology is used for the RQ2 and RQ3.

2.3.2 RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?

The types of coalitions uncovered in RQ1 serve as the focus of RQ2. The objective is to explain the formation of the coalition types across the five EU environmental policy processes by drawing on the ACF and interest group literatures. In line with the conceptual framework, the character of EU environmental policy processes is assumed to be shaped by the characteristics of the legislative proposal being negotiated and the agency of exceptional policy actors within the process. This theory-driven approach reflects the explanatory element of the dissertation.

The question seeks the identification of conditions, or combinations thereof, that shape the character of the policy process and can account for the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes. This question is inherently cross-case in nature given the focus on the formation of certain types of coalitions across policy processes and assumes causal complexity. Hence, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is employed. QCA is a set-theoretic approach and is case-oriented. It is a method specifically designed for comparing a small to

medium number of cases and identifying configurations of conditions that explain a given outcome (Oana et al. 2021; Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Answering this question provides a high-level explanation for the formation of coalition types. Given the different structural configurations of the coalitions, it is likely that different combinations of conditions may drive the formation of some types and not others. As such, each type of coalition will be analyzed individually. Two sub-questions are developed to answer RQ2.

RQ2.1 What types of coalitions are present in each of the five EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

The aim of this sub-question is to map the presence of each coalition type across the five environmental policy processes. The mapping reveals in which processes each coalition type is present. It is informed by the coalition typology developed in from RQ1 and develops the outcome variable for the QCA. After determining the outcome, the conditions which shape the policy processes and drive the formation of coalitions need to be determined. This leads to the next sub-question.

RQ2.2 What combinations of legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors drive the formation of each coalition in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

The objective of the second sub-question is to calibrate the conditions and map them to the coalitions. This establishes the conditions under which each identified coalition has formed. As such, it serves as the condition sets for the QCA. The results should provide combinations of conditions, or pathways, that explain the formation of each coalition type, resulting in the answering of RQ2.

2.3.3 RQ3: Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

Like RQ2, RQ3 draws on the coalition typology from RQ1 to examine why coalition types employ certain strategies and conduct certain activities during a given EU environmental policy process. Drawing again on the ACF and interest group literatures, the objective is to map the strategies and activities deployed by the different coalitions, and explain such choices based on the two categories of factors developed in the conceptual framework, namely their structural dimensions and differences in the characteristics of each legislative proposal. Given this case-based focus on coalition types, a two-step comparative analysis approach is utilized. Specifically, across coalition type and within coalition type comparisons are made. This approach assists in examining micro-

level developments, such as the activities that underpin a coalition's strategy, and simultaneously control for variables that are not of interest and alternative contextual explanations. As such, it allows for stronger and more reliable findings and broader scopes of generalizations than single case studies (Panke, 2018; Yin, 2018).

To answer this question, four sub-questions are developed, following a two-step hierarchical and nested logic in which the second analytical step builds directly on the first. The first step, related to RQ3.1 and RQ3.2, maps and compares strategies across coalition types to identify how structural dimensions enable or constrain the activities and strategies associated with each type. In doing so, it holds contextual variables constant. The second step, related to RQ3.3 and RQ 3.4, examines how legislative characteristics affect the strategies of the same coalition type across legislative processes, holding the structural dimensions of coalition types constant. The hierarchical approach follows the theoretical logic of the ACF and interest group literature, whereby the strategies of coalitions are determined by their core dimensions and the context in which the coalition is embedded in (Binderkrantz, 2005; Weible et al., 2020). The nested analysis is therefore appropriate as the dissertation is primarily concerned with explaining the strategies of coalition types, rather than treating each of the identified coalitions as independent units.

RQ3.1 What kinds of activities and strategies does each type of coalition favor across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

This sub-question provides the impetus for the comparison between the strategies each coalition type employs across all five EU environmental policy processes. The objective of the question is to map the activities that each coalition conducts through content analysis and visualize the activities of each coalition in a heatmap. The activities serve as the basis for the strategies. Given this, the activities of each coalition are then aggregated at the strategy and coalition type levels. The aggregation reveals the overarching strategies of each coalition type, holding the legislative characteristics constant, which serves as the entry point for the next sub-question.

RQ3.2 How do the structural dimensions of coalition types enable or constrain their favored strategies?

This sub-question aims to compare the strategies across each coalition type uncovered in RQ3.1. The objective is to identify how the structural dimensions of coalitions enable or constrain the activities and strategies each coalition type employs. In doing so, the question aims to establish correlations between the structural dimensions of coalition types and the strategies they employ. The next questions then (RQ3.3 and 3.4) then focus on the within coalition type variation.

RQ3.3 What kinds of strategies do coalitions of the same type employ across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

Following the initial mapping from RQ3.1, the objective of this sub-question is to map the activities and strategies of identified coalitions within the same coalition type. The activities are then aggregated to the strategy level per policy process. By focusing on the variation of activities and strategies of coalitions of the same type, the structural dimensions are held constant and changes in legislative characteristics are able to be correlated to the strategies.

RQ3.4 How do the legislative characteristics of the proposals enable or constrain the employment of strategies among coalitions of the same type?

Building on RQ3.3, this sub-question aims to compare the strategies of coalitions of the same type across policy processes. The objective is to identify how legislative characteristics enable or constrain the activities and strategies that coalitions of the same type employ. In doing so, the objective is to uncover correlations between the legislative characteristics of proposals and the strategies of each coalition type.

Following the presentation of the research questions and the methodological choices behind each question, the next section presents the approach used to select the five environmental policy processes that inform the dissertation and subsequent analysis of coalitions.

3. Selecting EU environmental policy processes in the European Green Deal

This section outlines the approach resulting in the selection of five EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal (EGD). The five processes are linked to the European Climate Law, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). The five policy processes set the focus of the dissertation as it is within the five processes that coalitions are identified and further analyzed.

3.1 Selection strategy

As the research questions show, the dissertation is interested in the formation of coalition types and the strategies and activities they employ in EU environmental policy processes within the EGD. To identify coalition types and examine such dynamics, environmental policy processes within the EGD need to first be selected. To do so, legislative proposals which the policy processes are connected to are selected by fusing a top-down policy centered sampling strategy (Beyers et al., 2014) and a diverse selection strategy (Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

A top-down policy-centered sampling strategy starts from the assumption that variation in substantive policies shapes the nature of politics within policy processes including who, how, and where policy actors participate, how issues are decided on and resolved, and how much influence a range of policy actors have. Generally, the top-down policy-centered sampling strategy starts with the universe of legislative proposals that were on the policy agenda during a particular time. Then a set of proposals with sufficient diversity between them are selected by focusing on certain variables related to the set of legislative proposals, like the salience, complexity, or stringency of the proposals (Beyers et al. 2014). Fusing the objectives of the diverse selection strategy with the top-down policy-centered sampling strategy further assists the selection of policy processes guided by legislative proposals. The objective of the diverse selection strategy is two-fold. First, it aims to achieve maximum variation along relevant and readily observable variables of the policy processes. Whilst, secondly, also aiming at being representative of the population of policy processes, to a minimal extent (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). It is important to note that policy processes are not entirely independent of one another and many of the structural features are unknown. This context of interdependence thus poses unavoidable complications (Beyers et al., 2014; Gilardi, 2014). Yet, by carefully constructing the different steps of the sampling process and remaining reflective during the entirety of the research, these challenges can be adequately addressed.

The hybrid strategy aims for the selection of policy processes that are highly diverse along several readily observable variables pertaining to the legislative proposal which frames the process. Such diversity is key in capturing the participation of a wide range of policy actors, their preferences, and patterns of coordination. In turn, the hybrid strategy enables the creation of a generalizable typology by identifying as many different coalition types as possible, ensuring a representative sample that can travel to other EU (environmental) policy processes.

3.2 The universe of legislative proposals in the European Green Deal

The dissertation starts with the universe of legislative proposals in the EGD, as indicated by the top-down policy centered strategy, in which the policy processes follow. From the outset, the dissertation is interested in legislative proposals (directives and regulations), which make up most EU legislative proposals, including environmental legislation, and proceed through the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP) (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Hurka & Steinebach, 2026). This ensures that commonalities between the policy processes are maintained for representativeness and generalizability.

Given the dissertation seeks to examine coalitions in the policymaking segments of the policy process, legislation that had been decided on up until the end-2023 are considered due to the timing of the dissertation and selection of processes. The time frame of the analyses, therefore, starts in June 2019, when the strategic agenda by the incoming European Commission was adopted, until the end of 2023. Following the initial selection criteria, the EP legislative train indicates that 36 legislative proposals have been published into the Official Journal and another nine that have been politically agreed on in interinstitutional negotiations. Of these 45, the proposals had to be tabled by the Commission following the presentation of the EGD in December 2019 (EP Legislative Train, 2023). This makes a total of 31 legislative proposals to select the cases from.

3.3 Selecting the five diverse proposals guiding the policy processes

To select the five legislative proposals in which the policy processes follow, the 31 legislative proposals are differentiated along seven readily observable variables: the lead Directorate-General, the institutional arenas which the legislation passes through (the lead council and EP committee), the regulatory addressee scope of the legislation, whether the proposal is new or revised, the primary legal instrument (regulation or directive), the duration of the policymaking process, and the level of media attention of the proposal. Following the top-down policy centered strategy, it is thought that the composition of a legislative proposal can alter the participation of and coordination among policy actors, mobilize different policy actors and bring about contestation among varying policy preferences. Before presenting the five legislative proposals, each of the seven variables and their possible effect on coalitions is discussed.

3.3.1 *Lead Directorate-General*

From the outset of the policy process, the Commission and the Directorate-Generals (DGs) coordinate internally with other DGs and externally with other policy actors, such as NGOs, interest associations, businesses, and research organizations to set the agenda and formulate legislative proposals (Blom-Hansen & Finke, 2020; Hartlapp et al. 2013; Haverland et al. 2018). Internally, lead DGs have been shown to control the number and constellation of other intra-Commission actors that may have a say on the drafting of the legislation and in what arena disagreements can be resolved (Hartlapp et al. 2013). Externally, DGs can be NGO-oriented or business-oriented in their issue framing. Such orientations change the receptivity of the DG to either economic or public interests, affecting how and who DGs coordinate with (Haverland et al. 2018). Based on this, legislative proposals led by different DGs should result in varying coordination patterns between

DGs and between DGs and other policy actors, affecting the structure of coalitions, particularly during the early stages of the policy process.

Of the 31 legislative proposals, nine different DGs led the drafting of the legislation. These included: Climate Action (11), Environment (5), Regional and Urban Policy (2), Financial Stability, Financial Services, and Capital Markets Union (FISMA) (1), Taxation and Customs Union (1), Agriculture (2), Energy (5), Secretariat-General (1), and Mobility and Transport (3).

3.3.2 The institutional venues of the EU

Once the legislative proposal, subject to the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP), has been formulated by the Commission DG, it is then passed to the EP committee and certain configurations in the Council. Both the committees in the EP and the configurations in the Council have their own ways of operating, conferring varying levels of access to and consultation with different types of policy actors (Coen & Katsaitis, 2019a, 2019b; Eising, 2007). The passing of the legislative proposals through the EP committees and the Council configurations, where they are initially negotiated, therefore, presents additional opportunities and constraints for policy actors to participate and coordinate with others as they seek to intervene and pursue their policy preferences (Ingold, 2022). Hence, the institutional venues which the legislative proposal passes through are also considered to affect the participation of policy actors, coordination patterns between actors and thus the structure of coalitions.

In the Council seven Council configurations took the lead on at least one of the 31 legislative proposals. These configurations included: the Environment Council (16), The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (1), Special Committee of Agriculture (2), the Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy Council, which was divided into the Energy Council (5) and the Transport Council (5), the Competitiveness Council (1), and finally the General Affairs Council (1).

In the European Parliament, nine different committees took the lead, either individually or jointly, on at least one of the 31 proposals. These included: Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (15), Regional Development (1), Legal Affairs (1), Budgets (2), Economic and Monetary Affairs (2), Agriculture and Rural Development (2), Industry, Research and Energy (5), Employment and Social Affairs (1), Transport and Tourism (5). Three legislative proposals had joint lead Committees. The Public Sector Loan Facility regulation was led by both the Budgets and Economic and Monetary Affairs Committees. The Social Climate Fund regulation was led by the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee. Lastly, the Recovery and Resilience Facility regulation was led by the Budgets and Economic and Monetary Affairs Committees.

3.3.3 Regulatory addressee scope

The scope of regulatory addressees refers to the breadth of governmental and societal groups affected by and expected to comply with the legislative proposal. The scope can confer incentives or constraints on policy actors to participate and coordinate to influence the policy process (Howlett et al., 2020; Junk, 2016). When the scope of the policy is narrow, the benefits to be maintained or costs to be avoided are concentrated on only a small group of affected policy actors. The small group of policy actors may be rather homogenous, share a broad number of preferences, and mobilize and coordinate more intensely to enhance the benefits or reduce the costs imposed by the legislation. Conversely, when the scope is broad and the benefits or costs of the legislation are more diffused across several groups, a rather heterogenous set of policy actors may mobilize with more sparsely shared preferences, making coordination difficult due to such diverging differences. Thus, the regulatory addressee scope of the legislation, being broad or narrow, is thought to have an impact on the participation of and coordination among policy actors and thus the presence and absence of structurally varying coalitions. Based on the legislative proposals and their intended recipients, 10 proposals are broad in scope and 21 are considered narrow in scope.

3.3.4 New or revised proposal

Whether the legislative proposal is new or revised may also lead to changes in the participation and coordination patterns among policy actors. In processes on revised legislative proposals, policy actors may already have established relations, policy preferences, know the preferences of others and who they coordinate with, as well as knowledge of the venues in which negotiations are conducted. Such grasp on revised proposals may guide the way policy actors participate and coordinate. Conversely, in new legislative proposals, policy actors only have vaguely formulated policy preferences, which are not well-known to other policy actors, no pre-established coordination channels, and generally less pre-established knowledge (Ingold et al., 2017). As a result, actors deal with uncertainty, unlike in revised legislation, potentially impacting who participates and how they coordinate with others. Of the 31 legislative six legislative proposals are new regulations or directives and the remaining 25 proposals are revisions of previously established regulations or directives.

3.3.5 Primary legal instrument

The two most central legal instruments of EU legislation are directives and regulations (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016; Hurka & Steinebach, 2021). It is assumed that different types of coalitions will emerge based on the primary legal instrument of the legislation due to the different implications each propose. Directives are implemented through national laws in the member states. In

essence, the implementation of directives is left to the national authorities. Regulations, on the other hand, are binding in their entirety and directly applicable in all member states. This implies that member states enjoy greater discretion when transposing directives into law, while the national level is essentially skipped for regulations (Hurka & Steinebach, 2021). Thus, negotiations on directives and regulations may impact the extent to which different types of policy actors participate and coordinate at different stages of the policy process (Beyers et al. 2014). For example, a proposal that is a directive may result in lower levels of participation and advocacy of national interest groups as they may spend less resources and efforts lobbying a directive at the EU-level. Rather, they may utilize such resources and efforts at the national level. Conversely, given there is less leeway for member states in transposing regulations, a higher rate of participation and advocacy efforts not only from member states but also interest groups are expected at the EU-level. Decisions, another instrument, have been omitted due to their irregularity. Including both directives and regulations is important so that both instrument types are represented, and commonalities for generalizability can be achieved. Of the 31 proposals, 19 are regulations, 9 are directives, and three are decisions.

3.3.6 Duration of the policy process

The duration of the policy process captures the extent to which the legislative proposal is contested and accounts for the dynamics that occur at each stage of the policy process (Hurka & Haag, 2020). Hence, the longer the duration of the policy process, the more time policy actors should have to learn, coordinate or change coordination partners, and update their preferences. Moreover, as new opportunities arise as policy processes carry on, new policy actors can enter, and old actors may leave. This, in turn, may affect the participation and coordination of policy actors throughout the policy process, impacting the types of coalitions that emerge (Chen et al., 2022; Konig, 2007).

Of the 31 proposals, the longest duration is 32 months, being the Sustainable Batteries Directive. The Gas Storage Regulation process was negotiated in the shortest duration of 3 months. Although, this is somewhat of an outlier as it was introduced under the expedited procedure. The next shortest was the Recovery and Resilience Facility regulation, which took 9.5 months to publish. Again, however, this was a legislation brought in as a response to the revolving crises (COVID-19 and the Russian invasion) and is a temporary instrument. Thus, the third shortest duration was the revision of Annexes IV and V of the Regulation on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which took 14 months. Omitting the two shortest processes, the average policy process duration for legislative proposals to go from introduction to publication was 20 months.

3.3.7 *Media attention*

Media attention is fundamental to the policy process and is tied to effects on attention, issue salience, and conflict, which can influence policy actor participation and coordination during policymaking processes (Beyers et al. 2018; Giordano, 2020; Warntjen, 2012). Media attention can redefine how policy actors understand the legislation under negotiation and/or produce positive or negative feedback loops. This can lead to the introduction of new policy actors in the policy process as legislation deemed important may lead to increased mobilization, participation, and influence among policy actors (Leuffen et al. 2014; Warntjen, 2012). Hence, the level of media attention that legislative proposals attract may affect the number of policy actors participating in a process, their coordination patterns, and advocacy efforts, which, in effect, is considered to alter the presence of coalitions.

To measure the media attention of each of the 31 legislative proposals, the frequency of articles published in Agence Europe and ENDSEurope from the date it is proposed by the Commission until it is published in the Official Journal is accounted for. Search terms included the key terms of the legislative proposals. The mean average of all 31 legislative proposals is 68.5 articles. For cases to have functional utility to examine coalitions, they need to be somewhat politically controversial (Nohrstedt, 2011). Thus, cases with a media attention score just below the average to the highest are considered for selection.

3.3.8 *The five policy processes*

Based on the hybrid selection strategy and the seven legislative variables discussed, five proposals have been selected to examine coalitions: 1) the European Climate Law (Regulation (EU) 2021/1119), 2) the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (Regulation (EU) 2023/956), 3) the Renewable Energy Directive (Directive (EU) 2023/2413), 4) the Batteries Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2023/1542), and 5) the Just Transition Fund (Regulation (EU) 2021/1056). The breakdown of the observable characteristics of each legislative proposal is presented in table 4.2. Each legislative proposal was drafted by a different Commission DG and passed through different combinations of institutional venues, apart from the Climate Law and Sustainable Batteries regulations. These two proposals, however, differ on all other variables except for the instrument type. Of the five proposals, three are broad in scope and two are narrow. Similarly, two proposals are revised and three are new. The most skewed of the variables is the instrument type, with four of the five proposals being a regulation, yet it remains representative of the 31 proposals. Lastly, all five proposals differ in their duration and media attention. The full universe of legislative proposals and their measurements are in the chapter 4 supplementary information.

The five proposals seek to capture a diverse range of coalitions in which their formation as well as their strategies and activities can be examined, whilst also remaining representative of EU environmental policy processes. Such representativeness, however, must be made with careful consideration as the inclusion of a full range of variation may distort the actual distribution of environmental legislative proposals (Seawright & Gerring, 2008).

Proposal	Lead DG	Institutional Venues	Legislative scope	New / Revised	Instrument	Duration	Media
<i>Climate Law</i>	DG Climate Action	Environment / ENVI	Broad (Framework)	New	Regulation	16 months	150
<i>CBAM</i>	DG Taxation and Customs Union	ECOFIN / ENVI	Narrow (covers 6 sectors)	New	Regulation	23 months	225
<i>RED</i>	DG Energy	Energy / ITRE	Broad (Energy)	Revised	Directive	27 months	264
<i>Batteries Regulation</i>	DG Environment	Environment / ENVI	Narrow (Batteries)	Revised	Regulation	32 months	68
<i>JTF</i>	Regional and Urban Policy	Environment / REGI	Broad	New	Regulation	18 months	139

Table 4.2: Legislative processes selected for the dissertation

Following the selection of the legislative proposals, the policy processes are divided into the policy preparation (agenda-setting and policy formulation) and the decision-making stages. As discussed in chapter 3, the agenda-setting and policy formulation stages are combined due to the unclear separation between the two stages and to ensure comparability. The policy preparation stage begins when the European Council sets the strategic agenda for the incoming von der Leyen (2019-2024) Commission. The decision-making stage is then initiated when the Commission submits the proposal to the EP and the Council in parallel and concluded when the proposal is agreed upon and signed by both the Council and the EP (Heidbreder & Brandsma, 2018). Separating the stages aids in disentangling the variety of venues involved in EU policy processes and the different institutional dynamics that occur within these venues. It also seeks to capture shifts in institutional authority between EU actors, which is assumed to affect the structural configuration of coalitions. During the policy preparation stage, the Commission has the formal right to initiate policy and the drafting of the legislation, which serves as the basis for the subsequent policy-making process. In the decision-making stage, the formal authority shifts to the political groups in the EP and the Member States in the Council, which both have formal voting rights and the final say on the legislation (Laloux & Delreux, 2021; Leppänen & Liefferink, 2022).

Such changes in venue and authority can therefore have implications for the structural dimensions of coalitions, which need to be accounted for.

4. Data

The dissertation triangulates a variety of data sources. It is primarily informed by specialized press reports, formal and informal policy documents, and interviews. Complementing the three core sources, the dissertation also draws on the EUPLEX dataset, secondary literature, and websites. Data collection took place according to the principles established by the ISPOLE Ethics Committee.

Data collection reflects the abductive approach of the dissertation. The primary focus is to collect data relating to the phenomenon under study and engage with it repeatedly to identify potential explanations (Timmermans & Tavory, 2022). Through the data, the logic is to find empirical evidence of coalitions, the conditions explaining their formation, and the strategies and activities they conduct. Below, each source of data is discussed followed by a brief explanation of the triangulation strategy undertaken to ensure data validity.

4.1 Press reports

Specialized press reports were used to uncover the main contested issues of each process, identify the policy actors who actively participated in each process, as well as their issue preferences, and the joint activities they conducted. Moreover, the press reports offered detailed insights into each of the processes, highlighting possible conditions for explaining the formation of coalitions and the strategies they employed. Finally, the press reports assisted in the identification and selection of interviewees by revealing some of the most active policy actors in each process.

Specialized press reports from Agence Europe, Euractiv, and ENDSEurope, which closely follow EU policymaking and report frequently, were systematically collected. The search for the press reports was based on keywords pertaining to the legislative proposal (eg. 'climate law' for the European Climate Law), ensuring all articles directly mentioning the policy processes were collected. Press reports published between June 2019, when the strategic agenda was adopted by the European Council for the incoming von der Leyen Commission, until the legislative file had been formally adopted were included. A total of 1,241 press reports were collected (see table 4.3).

Legislative Proposal	Media Source	Number of press reports	Total
<i>Climate Law</i>	Agence Europe	70	209
	Euractiv	61	
	ENDSEurope	78	
<i>CBAM</i>	Agence Europe	140	311
	Euractiv	90	
	ENDSEurope	81	
<i>RED</i>	Agence Europe	150	370
	Euractiv	82	
	ENDSEurope	138	
<i>Batteries Regulation</i>	Agence Europe	30	111
	Euractiv	46	
	ENDSEurope	35	
<i>JTF</i>	Agence Europe	52	240
	Euractiv	111	
	ENDSEurope	77	
Total			1,241

Table 4.3: Specialised press reports collected for each process.

4.2 Formal and informal policy documents

Formal and informal policy documents are examined to identify the issue preferences between a broad range of actors in each of the policy processes (ie. NGOs, interest associations, businesses, member states), and a variety of joint activities including reports of meetings between policy actors, the co-authoring of joint amendments between Members of European Parliament, and the co-authoring/signing of informal documents.

Formal policy documents are collected via publicly available means or the relevant request channels. Legislative proposal amendment documents are collected from the European Parliament's legislative observatory (i.e. the EU's database monitoring the different steps in the EU's legislative policymaking processes). Documents related to the Commission's electronic database, called CIS-net, are also collected. CIS-net is used to circulate draft proposals and draft decisions to concerned DGs during the inter-service consultation phase of the policy preparation stage. The system registers which DG is responsible, which DGs are consulted, as well as the DGs' exchange of written documents, their agreement, opposition, and comments (Blom-Hansen & Finke, 2020). Reports of meetings are utilized to uncover additional forms of coordination and policy actors not found in the press reports or policy documents. The reports were collected for each policy process from the EU's transparency register using the same key words as the press reports. This resulted in the identification of organizations on the register and their reported meetings on the selected cases with both the Commission and the EP. The EU public consultations

for each policy process are also used to identify the issue preferences of policy actors. Informal policy documents (e.g. non-papers, letters, position papers) were collected when indicated in the press reports. The informal documents were used to identify coordination patterns between policy actors, their preferences, as well as to inform the strategies of coalitions.

4.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews serve as the principal data source for the dissertation and are relied on due to their open-endedness and comparability across cases (Panke, 2018). Interview data is depended on to gather information about the experiences of the policy actors within coalitions that are involved in the policy processes, which cannot be obtained through publicly accessible documents and other sources. Therefore, interviews can provide important and fine-grained details about the dynamics within coalitions, the conditions driving or impeding their formation, and the strategies and activities they employ.

The interviews informed answers to all three research questions. Regarding RQ1, interviews were used to (dis)confirm identified coalitions and gain additional insight into the coordination patterns and preferences among policy actors. As for RQ2, the interviews were utilized to ascertain a clearer picture of the conditions driving the formation of coalitions across policy processes. For RQ3, the interviews shed light on the strategies and activities of the coalitions and offer more in-depth insights into the inner workings of the processes.

A total of 49 interviews between 2024 and 2025 were conducted with EU policymakers, representatives from EU interest associations, and representatives from civil society involved in each of the policy processes. The aim of the interviews was to gain a balanced perspective of each policy process. Hence, a wide variety of actor types relevant to the dissertation were contacted and interviewed. The interviews are listed below in tables 4.4 – 4.8. The tables are split by policy process.

Interviewees were initially selected using a purposive sampling strategy based on the policy actors most frequently identified from the coding of the press reports. The purposive sampling is combined with a snowball sampling through the interviews to augment the purposive sampling (Heikkila & Weible, 2017; You et al., 2023). Interviews for the Climate Law, Sustainable Batteries, and the JTF were mainly conducted between October and December 2024. Interviews for the CBAM were primarily conducted in November 2024. Interviews on the RED were carried out between December 2024 and March 2025. Based on the abductive approach of the research,

questions in the interviews were continuously reflected upon and updated in light of the discussions.

<u>Climate Law</u>			
<i>Interview</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
1	Commission DG	Brussels	15/10/2024
2	ENGO	Brussels	17/10/2024
3	EP	Online	24/10/2024
4	Commission DG	Online	28/10/2024
5	ENGO	Online	14/11/2024
6	Think Tank	Brussels	15/11/2024
7	EP	Brussels	18/11/2024
8	Commission DG	Online	19/11/2024
9	EP	Online	13/12/2024

Table 4.4: Interviews for Climate Law process

<u>CBAM</u>			
<i>Interview</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
10	Interest Association	Brussels	17/10/2024
11	Interest Association	Online	4/11/2024
12	ENGO	Brussels	6/11/2024
13	Interest Association	Online	7/11/2024
14	ENGO	Online	7/11/2024
15	Interest Association	Brussels	8/11/2024
16	ENGO	Online	15/11/2024
17	Commission DG	Brussels	7/02/2025

Table 4.5: Interviews for CBAM process

RED			
<i>Interview</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
18	Interest Association	Online	19/12/2024
19	ENGO	Online	24/01/2025
20	ENGO	Brussels	30/01/2025
21	Interest Association	Brussels	4/02/2025
22	ENGO	Online	12/02/2025
23	Business	Online	13/02/2025
24	Commission DG	Brussels	13/02/2025
25	Business	Online	24/02/2025
26	ENGO / EP	Brussels	26/02/2025
27	Interest Association	Online	28/02/2025
28	EP Political Group	Online	21/03/2025
29	Interest Association	Online	31/03/2025

Table 4.6: Interviews for RED process

<u>Sustainable Batteries</u>			
<i>Interview</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
30	EP Political Group	Online	18/10/2024
31	ENGO	Brussels	25/10/2024
32	Interest Association	Brussels	30/10/2024
33	ENGO	Online	7/11/2024
34	Interest Association	Brussels	8/11/2024
35	Consultancy	Online	4/12/2024
36	Interest Association	Online	6/12/2024
37	Interest Association	Online	18/12/2024
38	ENGO	Online	20/01/2025
39	Commission DG	Online	21/01/2025
40	Commission DG	Brussels	7/02/2025

Table 4.7: Interviews for Sustainable Batteries process

JTF			
<i>Interview</i>	<i>Type of Organization</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
41	Commission DG	Online	10/10/2024
42	EP	Brussels	18/10/2024
43	ENGO	Brussels	22/10/2024
44	ENGO	Online	22/10/2024
45	Commission DG	Brussels	23/10/2024
46	ENGO	Brussels	14/11/2024
47	Commission DG	Brussels	24/11/2024
48	Commission DG	Online	6/12/2024
49	Climate Think tank	Online	18/12/2024

Table 4.8: Interviews for JTF process

4.3.1 Format of interviews

For each policy process, an initial list of interviewees was developed, including people from the three EU institutions and non-EU actors, such as NGOs and interest associations. The list was determined based on affiliation to prominent organizations identified in each policy process. Such organizations were uncovered by their high frequency of mentions in the press reports and their membership in identified coalitions. Starting from the initial list, a snowball strategy was also adopted to find other relevant interviewees. At the end of each interview, I would ask the interviewees if there was anyone they would recommend I should reach out to. The period of the interviews, however, was implicated by the European elections and the subsequent starting of the new European Commission and tenth EP term. This created challenges in gaining access to many interviewees in the European institutions mainly due to staff turnover. Table 4.9 shows the breakdown of the interview response rate for each policy process.

Policy Process	No. of Interviews Requested	Interviews Completed	Interviews declined	Non-response
<i>Climate Law</i>	30	9 (30%)	9 (30%)	12 (40%)
<i>CBAM</i>	33	8 (24%)	12 (36%)	13 (39%)
<i>RED</i>	37	12 (32%)	9 (24%)	16 (43%)
<i>Batteries</i>	41	11 (26%)	16 (39%)	14 (34%)
<i>JTF</i>	22	9 (40%)	5 (22%)	8 (36%)

Table 4.9: Interview Response Rates

There was a preference for in-person interviews. Many interviewees, however, opted for an online format. Additionally, between December 2024 and January 2025 interviews were conducted online due to a trip to Perth, Australia for personal/family reasons. Online interviews took place mainly via Microsoft teams (UCLouvain video-meeting platform) and WebEx (EU institutions video-meeting platform). Interviews generally lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. Upon consent from the interviewees, interviews were recorded and transcribed, with notes simultaneously taken during the interview. The transcripts were anonymized by referencing interviewees based on their affiliation to the corresponding organization type. Each interviewee is given an identifier based on the sequential number pertaining to the policy process followed by the date of the interview.

4.3.2 Interview guide

Two interview guides were prepared for the dissertation, each reviewed by the supervisor. The first guide was developed for the purpose of exploratory interviews and to test the tentative expectations developed from the initial theoretical framework. This first guide sought to gain insights about the most influential policy actors, who they primarily coordinated with, how such coordination came to be, and how these actors influenced, if at all, the policy processes; when and why during the processes these coalitions formed; and the activities that were conducted by these coalitions, and if they changed over the course of the process. For this purpose, journalists from specialized EU press were initially contacted. In total six exploratory interviews were conducted. One interview on each of the processes related to Climate Law, CBAM, Sustainable Batteries, and JTF were carried out. Two interviews on the process related to the RED were also conducted. Journalists were selected because of their constant reporting, and their closeness to and broad view on each of the processes. Through these exploratory interviews, understandings of the key policy actors and coalitions, as well as the dynamics of these coalitions could be advanced. Upon reflection of these understandings, the theoretical framework was updated. In light of such updates and progress in the research project, the second interview guide was established.

The second guide was created with several visual aids to complement the interview. Following the abductive approach, the interview guide and visual aids were continually adjusted when several interviewees indicated similar responses. This interview guide was constructed in four parts. The first part sought to (dis)confirm the most contentious issues that arose during the policy process of each legislative proposal and to gather data on the preferences of policy actors, which could not be gained elsewhere. The second part then sought to (dis)confirm the preliminary identification of coalitions in each policy process, as well as indicate which coalitions were the most influential

in the process. The third part asked a series of more open questions pertaining to the strategies and activities of the identified coalitions. The fourth part sought to uncover the conditions impacting coordination between policy actors and the formation of coalitions. Initially, three core conditions were discussed. But, based on the responses, the three conditions were updated and revised, which were to be tested in future interviews. Parts one, two and three were paired with visual aids, which were also updated during the interview period. The interview guides and visual aids are included in chapter 4 supplementary information.

The design of the interview guide had four key implications for the analysis. First, the detailed research and production of preliminary results meant that lists of contested issues and graphics of coalitions, preliminary identified, could be presented and tested during the interviews. This enabled the initial results to be validated and for additional coalitions to be uncovered. Moreover, the visual aids assisted in interviewee recall for each policy process. Second and relatedly, because of the prior research, I was able to systemically invite interviewees that were seen as relevant to each of the processes and had participated in the identified coalitions. This ensured that the initial mapping of coalitions reflected the interviewees' own depiction of the process under question. Additionally, reflections on the conditions impacting coordination and coalition formation could be gained as well as deeper insights into the activities and strategies of the coalitions. Third, the open-ended questions on the activities and strategies meant that a pre-determined list of activities and strategies did not shape the interviewees responses. This ensured that responses captured a variety of strategies and activities among a diversity of policy actors and coalitions, and no strategies or activities were sidelined. Fourth, the mixed approach taken to uncover the factors affecting coordination and coalition formation ensured that responses were guided theoretically. Remaining open to additional factors also led to other factors not theoretically expected to be uncovered.

4.3.3 Saturation

There was not a pre-determined number of interviews that needed to be obtained, but the aim was to reach a point of saturation. Saturation is said to have been reached when: 1) no new information emerges from each new interview, 2) there is (predictable) (dis)agreement across interviewees, and 3) if recommendations for further interviewees mirror the list of interviewees that have already been interviewed (Bleich & Pekkanen, 2013).

Based on these criteria, overall saturation has mostly been met. Across all interviews, saturation was reached regarding the contested issues, coalitions identified (RQ1), and the possible conditions affecting the formation of coalition types (RQ2). Saturation regarding the strategies and

activities of the coalitions (RQ3) across all processes has only been partially met because of the broad perspectives that need to be covered in each policy process. Due to this broadness, some perspectives were not obtainable. In terms of the Climate Law, saturation was partially met except for businesses and climate activists. Saturation in the CBAM was only reached for non-EU policy actors. Of the 33 interviews requested on the CBAM, 20 were sent to people in the EP and the European Commission. After contacting each potential interviewee two or more times, only the insights of one EU policy actor from the Commission were attained. A similar challenge arose with interviews on the RED. Here, saturation was met with non-EU policy actors. However, perspectives from the EU were minimal. Like the CBAM, 19 individuals from the EP, the Commission, and the Council were contacted. Eight declined and nine did not respond to the requests. Again, partial saturation has been achieved in the Sustainable Batteries process. Saturation was reached with non-EU policy actors but only three interviews with EU policy actors were conducted. 17 interviewees from the EP, Commission and the Council were contacted. Of which seven declined and another seven did not respond. As for the JTF, saturation was reached apart from insights from the EP.

4.4 EUPLEX dataset

The EUPLEX dataset (Hurka et al., 2022) is utilized as an input to measure the complexity of legislative proposals. Hurka et al. (2022, p. 1515) conceptualize the complexity of legislation across three dimensions: structural, linguistic, and relational. Each dimension consists of two components related to the legislative proposal. Table 4.10 illustrates the conceptualization and operationalization of the EUPLEX dataset.

Dimension	Component	Indicator	Operationalization	Text
Structural	Size	Structural size	Sum of policy elements	Recitals, enacting terms
Structural	Depth	Average depth	Hierarchical level of the average policy element	Enacting terms
Linguistic/Structural	Signal uniformity	Word entropy	Shannon information entropy	Recitals, citations, enacting terms
Linguistic	Readability	Lix score	Lix readability score	Recital, citations, enacting terms
Relational	Embeddedness	External references	Avg. number of external references per article	Enacting terms
Relational	Interdependence	Internal references	Avg. number of internal references per article	Enacting terms

Table 4.10: Policy complexity: concept and operationalisation reproduced from Hurka et al. (2022)

The structural dimension of the legislative proposal is determined by the proposal's size and depth. To measure the size, the number of policy elements (recitals, paragraphs, points, and indents) are counted. Unlike other measures of size, like the number of words, this measure is independent of the text's language. The depth of the text, taken as an average score, is measured based on three levels within the enacting terms: single paragraph articles on level 1, numbered paragraphs in an article on level 2, and points within paragraphs on level 3 and divided by the total number of policy elements. Low average values will indicate that a proposal is composed of rather general provisions and high values indicate more detailed and specific provisions.

The linguistic complexity of the text is measured along two components: signal uniformity and readability. Signal uniformity is related to the semantic diversity of the terminology. The readability is related to the text's syntactical properties (ie. sentences and word length). To measure the linguistic dimension, word entropy scores are taken to measure the text's uniformity. This measure captures the variety of the terminology employed in a text. Simple texts with little conceptual diversity are seen as less linguistically complex and texts with more diversity are considered more complex. To measure the text's readability, the Lix score is used as a measure.

The relational dimension of a legislative proposal is measured through its external and internal relational complexity. External relational complexity considers the embeddedness of the legislative proposal within the existing legal order. It is measured by the average number of external cross-references per article in the underlying legislative text. The internal relational complexity, conversely, accounts for the interdependence between legal provisions within the legislative text. This is measured by the average amount of internal cross-references per article in the legislative text (see Hurka et al., 2022 for more in-depth information).

4.5 Other sources: secondary literature & websites

Secondary literature and organization websites are consulted where additional information was required, such as the policy actor type or the issue preferences of the organizations.

4.6 Triangulation

The dissertation triangulates data within and across sources in each stage of the research to determine validity. Triangulation of data means that two or more sources of data are used to complement and cross-check other obtained data (Panke, 2018). Cross-checking sources is therefore vital in reducing biases that each data source may inherit. Throughout the dissertation, data is included in the analysis if it is consistent with data from at least one other source.

Given the centrality of interviews, extra consideration was given from the selection of interviewees. Regarding the interviews, the selection of potential interviewees was intended to be as balanced as possible, by inviting interviewees from EU institutions and non-EU organizations that were identified as key actors in the SNA and frequently arising in the press reports. Gaining a diverse range of both EU and non-EU perspectives was sought to reduce bias and ensure a balanced understanding of the policy process from the perspective of the coalitions. Gathering interviewees across all EU institutions and non-EU organizations, however, was not always possible due to staff allocation, staff turnover, and the availability of interviewees during data collection. The triangulation of each stage is outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

In stage one, which identifies coalitions and creates a coalition typology, data is triangulated across four sources: press reports, policy documents, interviews, and websites. The press reports, policy documents, and websites are first used to identify coalitions. Interviews then inform missing data, namely the issue preferences of policy actors, and to (dis)confirm the identified coalitions in each policy process. The cross-checking of the identified coalitions during interviews enabled the initial results to be tested against what interviewees witnessed as participants of the corresponding policy processes. This exercise resulted in some coalitions being merged, some being removed, or some added to the results. Coalitions were merged if three or more interviewees mentioned that policy actors in two or more separate coalitions were coordinating with one another and that the corresponding network also indicated coordination between said policy actors. Coalitions were removed if three or more interviewees mentioned that such coalition was not noticed or mobilized. Similarly, coalitions, mostly between EP groups or member states, were added if interviewees mentioned that such coalition was active. To double check, the policy networks were further examined to ensure coordination between actors were present.

The second stage, which explains the formation of coalition types, triangulates data sources particularly for the measuring and calibration of conditions for the QCA, given the cases and outcome is determined in stage one. In measuring and calibrating the conditions of the QCA, each condition is measured from at least two or more data sources. Generally, each condition is measured by either press reports, policy documents, or the EUPLEX dataset, and cross-checked by interviews.

The third stage, which examines the strategies and activities of coalitions, primarily draws on insights from interviews, which are cross-checked and supplemented by press reports and policy documents. Given the primary reliance on interviews in this stage, the interviews are also cross-checked across respondents during the analysis. To follow, sections five, six, and seven outline in

detail the three-stage sequential mixed-method approach presented at the beginning of the chapter.

5. Stage one: creating a coalition typology

This section outlines stage one of the research design, which is built to answer RQ1. The objective of stage one is to identify and characterize coalitions in EU environmental policy processes to create a coalition typology. The typology is developed in four sequential steps as shown in table 4.11. Steps one and two answer RQ1.1 by drawing on social network analysis and content analysis to identify coalitions in each of the five policy processes. Step three then characterizes the identified coalitions across five structural dimensions to analyze how each coalition is structurally configured, and in doing so answers RQ1.2. Step four answers RQ1.3 by utilizing the characterized coalitions and drawing on principal component analysis and hierarchical clustering on the principal components. In this step, distinct structural patterns among the coalitions are detected and types of coalitions are uncovered. The four steps are expanded upon in the following sub-sections.

Step	Aim	Data	Method of Analysis	Result
1	Identify communities of policy actors that coordinate more closely	Specialized press reports, policy documents, reports of meetings, interviews	Social Network Analysis: Walktrap Community Detection Algorithm	Communities of policy actors that coordinate more closely than with others
2	Identify contested issues, develop a codebook, and code issue preferences of policy actors within each community	Specialized press reports, policy documents, reports of meetings, websites, interviews	Content analysis of issue preferences (visualized in heatmaps)	Identification of coalitions
3	Characterize the identified coalitions across five structural dimensions	Policy networks, coded preferences, specialized press reports	SNA (size, diversity, structural network authority, coordination intensity); coded preferences (number of shared preferences); descriptive statistics (decision-making authority)	Characterization of each identified coalition across five structural dimensions
4	Develop a coalition typology based on similar and different structural dimensions of characterized coalitions	Identified and measured coalitions (step 3 results)	Principal Component Analysis & Clustering	Coalition Typology

Table 4.11: Creating a coalition typology

5.1 Social network analysis: mapping communities

The first step draws on Social Network Analysis (SNA) to detect communities of policy actors that coordinate closely with one another. Policy networks are created for each of the five policy processes at the policy preparation and decision-making stages. The networks are constructed as edge and node lists. The nodes are policy actors (see table 4.12 for examples). The ties are coordinated joint activities between two policy actors. An edge list is a two-column matrix, where a row, with policy actor *a*, in column one, and policy actor *b*, in column two, represent a tie. The existence of a tie and the date of the tie being recorded in the data is coded if policy actor *a* is identified as conducting a joint activity with policy actor *b* at a given point in time during the policy process. Due to the reciprocated nature of joint activities, the networks are undirected. For example, if policy actor *a* co-authors a policy position paper (joint activity), published on a specific date, with policy actor *b*, policy actor *b* has also co-authored with policy actor *a* (a tie (*a*, *b*) is the same as a tie (*b*, *a*)), with the date of publication recorded. The node list is a table that contains identifiers and attributes about the nodes in the edge list (node ID, organization name and policy actor type). The node list was developed simultaneously to the edge list. A policy actor was included in the node list when it was coded as conducting a joint activity in the edge list. The policy actor type attribute data was obtained from the press reports and organization websites.

Policy Actor Type	Examples of Policy Actors
<i>European Parliament Political Group</i>	S&D, EPP, The Greens, Renew
<i>Member State</i>	Germany, France, Italy
<i>Commission Directorate General</i>	DG Climate Action, DG Environment, DG Grow
<i>EU Agency</i>	European Investment Bank, European Environment Agency
<i>EU Council Secretariat</i>	General Secretariat of the Council
<i>EU Parliament Secretariat</i>	Secretariat-General of the European Parliament
<i>EU Committee</i>	Committee of the Regions
<i>Non-governmental organization</i>	WWF, Greenpeace, European Environmental Bureau
<i>Interest Association</i>	Eurelectric, Bioenergy Europe, CEFIC, Eurofer
<i>Business</i>	Aviva, Drax Group, E.On, Enel
<i>Research Organization</i>	Sandbag, Jacques Delors Energy Centre, Real Instituto Elcano
<i>Activist Group</i>	Fridays for Future
<i>Climate Advisory Council</i>	Danish Council on Climate Change, Swedish Climate Policy Council
<i>Non-EU States</i>	China, India
<i>Public Authority</i>	Port of Rotterdam
<i>Regional Organization</i>	Assembly of European Regions, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Association of European Border Regions
<i>Municipalities</i>	Prague, Warsaw, Budapest

Table 4.12: Example of policy actor types and policy actors

For each resulting network, a SNA community detection analysis is conducted. The Walktrap community detection algorithm (Pons & Latapy, 2005) in the igraph package is used in R. The Walktrap algorithm is a hierarchical community detection algorithm. It identifies communities of policy actors that coordinate closely with one another based on short distance random walks. It is assumed that policy actors connected by short random walks tend to stay in the same community (Pons & Latapy, 2005; Yang et al., 2016). The Walktrap community detection algorithm was selected based primarily on its ability to deal with large and small networks, its relatively high modularity score (see table 4.13 for modularity measures of community detection algorithms), and the closeness of the communities detected based on knowledge of each policy process relative to the other communities. The number and size of the communities detected in each of the policy networks are included in the chapter 4 supplementary information.

Legislative File	Policy Stage	Closeness Edge Betweenness	Fast-Greedy	Leading Eigenvector	Walktrap	Infomap	Louvain	Leiden
<i>Climate Law</i>	Policy preparation	0.1676	0.1888	0.1888	<i>0.1649</i>	0.1806	0.1888	NA
	Decision-making	0.1006	0.1579	0.1584	<i>0.1036</i>	0.0875	0.1589	NA
<i>CBAM</i>	Policy preparation	0.4878	0.4932	0.5127	<i>0.5171</i>	0.5259	0.5241	NA
	Decision-making	0.0815	0.1336	0.1339	<i>0.1021</i>	0.0915	0.1334	NA
<i>RED</i>	Policy preparation	0.4743	0.4642	0.4928	<i>0.4808</i>	0.4812	0.5044	NA
	Decision-making	0.4726	0.4721	0.4906	<i>0.4775</i>	0.4825	0.5001	NA
<i>Batteries</i>	Policy preparation	0.545	0.545	0.545	<i>0.545</i>	0.525	0.545	NA
	Decision-making	0.0606	0.0897	0.0811	<i>0.0581</i>	0.0551	0.0959	NA
<i>JTF</i>	Policy preparation	0.0283	0.0339	0.0328	<i>0.03</i>	0.0279	0.0339	NA
	Decision-making	0.1677	0.1949	0.2138	<i>0.1781</i>	0.1785	0.226	NA

Table 4.13: Modularity measures of community detection algorithms.

5.2 Content analysis of policy preferences

The second step identifies contested issues for each legislative proposal, develops a codebook and uses content analysis to code the issue preferences for each policy actor within the detected communities. Contested issues of the legislative proposals are identified by examining EU Commission consultation documents, press reports, and interviews. Codebooks for each legislative proposal are developed based on the contested issues of the given policy process. The preferences for each actor within the detected communities are coded from interviews, press

reports, official and non-official policy documents, and websites. Depending on the issue, actors' preferences were coded either dichotomously or on a scale of environmental ambition. For example, in the European Climate Law, the issue of the 2030 target is scaled based on the ambition of the target to be set (ie. 70% target = 4, 60% target = 3, 55% target = 2). Whereas the issue of establishing a scientific advisory council was dichotomous (ie. yes or no). The codebooks for the contested issues for each policy process are included in chapter 4 supplementary information.

Steps one and two result in the identification of coalitions and follow the conceptualization of a coalition. Highlighted in figure 4.1, coalitions are uncovered when policy actors within communities who coordinate closely with one another (step one) and share one or more preferences (step two) are identified. As such, the coalitions are nested within communities of policy actors that coordinate more closely with one another. And it is the communities which make up the policy networks, as indicated in figure 4.1. It must be noted that a community is not a coalition. Given that detected communities only indicate policy actors who coordinate closely but do not necessarily share preferences, some communities may not be coalitions. Along that same logic, there may be more than one coalition within a community, given some policy actors within a community may share preferences and coordinate closely, whilst simultaneously coordinating with other policy actors that they do not share preferences with. Finally, when two or more coalitions share the same issue preferences and cross-coalition coordination is identified, the coalitions are merged. The identified coalitions are triangulated through interviews.

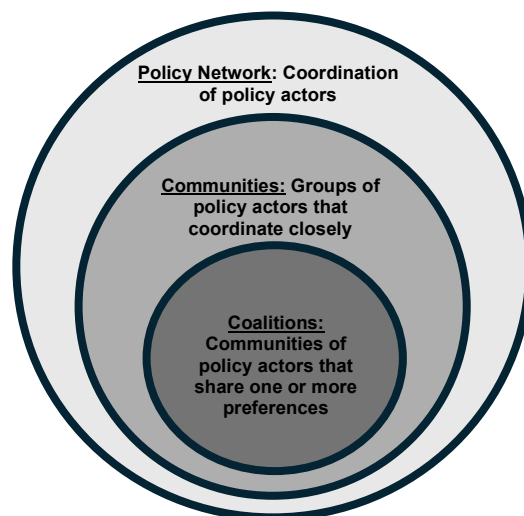


Figure 4.1: Identification of coalitions

5.3 Characterizing coalitions

The third step characterizes the identified coalitions along the five structural dimensions outlined in chapter 3. Each dimension results in a continuous measurement (table 4.14). Characterizing each of the coalitions across the five structural dimensions reveals how each coalition is configured. Then, comparing the configuration of each coalition, patterns are discerned.

Dimension	Characteristic
<i>Number of Shared Issue Preferences</i>	<i>The sum of shared issue preferences among policy actors within a coalition.</i>
<i>Coalition size</i>	<i>Number of policy actors within a coalition.</i>
<i>Membership diversity</i>	<i>The number of different types of policy actors within a coalition.</i>
<i>Authority</i>	<i>Formal Decision-making Authority: Aggregate sum of institutional authority among actors in a coalition.</i>
	<i>Structural Network Authority: Sum of policy actors' betweenness centrality</i>
<i>Intra-coalition coordination intensity</i>	<i>The total number of activities conducted among policy actors within a coalition during the given policymaking stage.</i>

Table 4.14: Coalition dimension and characteristics

The *number of shared issue preferences* of a coalition is characterized by the sum of shared issue preferences among policy actors within a coalition. This is measured from the coding of preferences.

The *size* of a coalition is assessed by the total number of policy actors in each coalition. The number of policy actors is taken from the community detection. The *membership diversity* of a coalition is measured by the total number of policy actor types in a coalition. Both the size and the membership diversity is determined by network analysis and community detection.

The coalition's *authority* is characterized at the policy actor level and aggregated to the coalition level. The formal decision-making authority is measured by the sum of all actors' formal legislative authority in each coalition during the policy preparation and decision-making stages. The EU Commission DGs, the European Parliament Political Groups and the Member States are considered to hold formal legislative authority. To measure the formal authority of a coalition, a 5-point scale is created for the policy preparation and decision-making stages because the formal authority of EU institutional actors alters depending on the policymaking stage (Laloux & Delreux, 2021). At the policy preparation stage, the following scores were given: 5 - the lead DG(s), 4 - the

non-lead DGs, 3 - Large member states ², 2 - Small member states and the EPP and S&D political groups, 1 - Other EP political groups, 0 - All other actors. At the decision-making stage the following scores were given: 5 - Rapporteur Political Group and large member states, 4 - small member states, EPP and S&D, 3 - other EP groups, 2 - Lead DG(s), 1 - Non-lead DG(s), 0 - All other actors.

The structural network authority of a coalition is measured by the sum of policy actors' betweenness centrality within the network. Betweenness centrality is one of the most prominent centrality measures used to study authority and is defined as the number of shortest paths between any two actors in a network on which an actor is situated. It can also be thought of as the number of times an actor's position between two other actors is not otherwise linked without them. The greater number of exclusive shortest paths an actor occupies, the more structural authority an actor possesses (Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Therefore, coalitions with higher sums of betweenness centrality scores are considered to hold more structural network authority.

The formal decision-making authority and structural network authority scores for each coalition are standardized and summed together. Given formal authority accounts for formal rights of initiative, the drafting of the legislative proposal (policy preparation), and voting rights (decision-making), it is considered twice as important as structural network authority because formal authority provides power to make authoritative decisions about the policy under negotiation (Nohrstedt, 2011). To account for this difference, formal decision-making authority is given a weight of 0.7 and structural network authority is given a weight of 0.3. Standardizing the scores enables comparisons across policy processes. Such characterizations were further tested in interviews, with interviewees confirming that coalitions of member states held much more authority relative to other coalitions.

The *intra-coalition coordination intensity* is measured by the sum of activities conducted among policy actors within a coalition during the policy preparation or decision-making stage. A coalition identified as conducting one activity has a score of 1 and a coalition identified as conducting three activities has a score of 3 (ie. 1 letter = 1 activity or 2 meetings and 1 letter = 3 activities). The activities are identified from the network analysis.

5.4 Principal component analysis & hierarchical clustering

The fourth step uses the characterizations of the identified coalitions to create a coalition typology. A principal component analysis (PCA) and hierarchical clustering on the principal components is

² The large member states are Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Poland. They are determined based off their percentage of population among all EU member states.

conducted in R to uncover coalitions that are similar and different in their structure, resulting in coalitions of distinct types. PCA is effective for exploring high-dimensional datasets to identify patterns and relationships (Bolognesi et al., 2024). Unlike factor analysis³, PCA considers all variance among coalition dimensions. Hence, it does not assume that coalition dimensions are correlated because they are influenced by a latent construct (Watkins, 2018). The input variables of the PCA are the coalitions' dimensions. The PCA then standardizes the range of continuous variables and identifies relationships between coalition dimensions. This reduces the coalition dimensions into new independent variables called components, which are linear combinations of the initial structural dimensions of coalitions. Following, hierarchical clustering is applied on the newly constructed components to uncover coalition types based on the coalitions' position vis-a-vis the components. The clustering objectively uncovers coalition types by grouping coalitions with similar structural configurations together while keeping them distinct from other coalitions with differing configurations.

6. Stage two: the formation of coalition types

This section outlines the second stage of the research design. Stage two aligns with RQ2. Through multiple qualitative comparative analyses (QCA), the stage aims to systematically uncover and comparatively examine the sets of conditions, here legislative characteristics and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors, that drive the formation of given coalition types uncovered in stage one. To follow, the method of QCA is outlined, along with a discussion on the cases and outcomes of the QCA and the calibrating of conditions.

6.1 Qualitative comparative analysis

To explain the formation of different types of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, QCA is used (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Like SNA, QCA stems from the notion of complexity, where a complex combination of conditions, and not just a single condition, explains an outcome of a social phenomenon (Fischer, 2011; Oana et al., 2021; Thomann et al., 2022). QCA is a set-theoretic approach and is case-oriented, distinguishing cases into sets. A set is a group of cases that share certain characteristics representing concepts, such as legislative characteristics. As QCA is steeped in set-theory, it is concerned with the presence or absence of a specific outcome, in this case the formation of a coalition type. QCA uses Boolean algebra to analyze what conditions are necessary and sufficient for the presence and absence of the outcome. Necessary conditions mean that the outcome does not occur without the presence of a condition. Sufficient conditions

³ Factor analysis was considered, however, the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy resulted in scores unacceptable for factor analysis. The Bartlett's test produced a chi-square = 83.43, p-value = 1.064953e-13, degree of freedom = 10. The KMO score = 0.55.

means that the outcome occurs when the condition is present (Oana et al., 2021). QCA is used to model causal complexity or instances in which complex combinations of conditions drive the formation of coalitions types (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017; Thomann & Ege, 2020).

Causal complexity in QCA is reflected via three elements: equifinality, conjunctural causation, and asymmetric causation. Equifinality implies that there are multiple non-mutually exclusive explanations for a given phenomenon. Conjunctural causation means that a condition might be dependent on the presence of another condition to enact its causal role. Asymmetric causation assumes that any solution of conditions only refers to one specific outcome. The absence of those conditions in the solution does not necessarily imply the absence of the outcome (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017; Oana et al., 2021). The logic of causal complexity aligns with the theoretical expectation and the exploratory nature of the research. Individual conditions expected to drive the formation of coalition types are identified, yet it is assumed that such conditions are not individually sufficient and that it is the interaction of conditions, which are unknown, that contribute to the emergence of coalition types.

QCA uses truth table analysis to detect (combinations of) necessary and sufficient conditions, known as pathways, to explain an outcome of interest. Hence, the creation of a truth table is vital in the QCA process. A truth table includes rows of all logically possible combinations between the conditions and outcomes, with the observed cases distributed across the rows. The truth table serves as a means of finding the simplest possible expression of combinations of conditions that are sufficient for an outcome by removing redundant conditions. Solutions, comprised of pathways, are then derived using AND (*) and OR (+) operating logic. As part of the solution the presence of a condition is reflected in CAPITAL letters. The absence of a condition is in lowercase letters.

The explanatory power and empirical relevance of solutions are evaluated through measures of consistency and coverage. Consistency ranges from 0 to 1 and indicates the extent to which a pathway consistently leads to a specific outcome across cases. A completely consistent pathway (score of 1) always produces the same outcome whenever it occurs. Coverage articulates the proportion of outcome-set cases explained by a specific pathway. Coverage also ranges from 0 to 1. Higher coverage indicates the pathway's comprehensiveness, whereby a greater share of cases displaying the outcome can be explained. Relevance of Necessity (RoN) is another score but is only drawn on when analyzing necessary conditions to account for trivialness. Coverage and RoN are meaningless to interpret if the consistency threshold is not met (Oana et al., 2021).

Applying QCA to the dissertation enables the identification of various combinations of conditions driving the formation of coalition types across EU environmental policy processes. As such, QCA assists in accounting for causal complexity, inherent to policy processes (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017). This dissertation adopts a crisp-set QCA (csQCA). Crisp-set QCA is a specific type of QCA. It is binary and distinguishes between cases that are members of a set (1), or where a condition is present, and cases that are not members of a set (0), or where a condition is absent (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021).

6.2 QCA process

QCA comprises of three distinct steps, which this dissertation follows. Step one involves transforming and calibrating the empirical data. Step two tests for necessity and sufficiency. Step three involves the interpretation of the solutions (Oana et al., 2021).

In step one, the empirical data is transformed and calibrated into the cases, outcome(s), and conditions. Here, the cases and outcomes of the QCA are uncovered in stage 1 of the research. The cases comprise of the identified coalitions in the five EU environmental policy processes (stage 1: steps 1 & 2). The outcome is the types of coalitions uncovered (stage 1: steps 3 & 4). The calibration of conditions, which represent concepts, entails measuring the identified conditions and converting them into binary values of 1 or 0. This is referred to as set calibration. Set calibration includes three sub-steps. The first sub-step defines the condition sets to which cases will be assigned values. The next sub-step determines how to measure membership to the condition sets, that is linking the concepts to observations. The third sub-step creates calibration anchors, also known as cut-off points, that constitute differences in kind and are highly consequential. These cut-off points establish the dividing line in the raw data that denotes whether a case should be a member of a set or not ie. 1 or 0. Set calibration can significantly impact the analysis as changes in the calibration can lead to different solutions of necessity and sufficiency. The criteria for calibration should be clearly justified, particularly regarding the cut-off points (Oana et al., 2021).

The second step analyzes the necessity and sufficiency of conditions and combinations thereof. The necessity of conditions is tested both individually and when conditions are combined with a logical OR (+). Combined necessary conditions are also known as necessary disjunctions or SUIN conditions. Necessity for both individual and SUIN conditions is determined by three sub-steps. The first sub-step involves assessing empirical consistency. The second sub-step assesses the empirical relevance or trivialness of the necessary condition. The third sub-step accounts for the conceptual meaningfulness, whereby a condition must illustrate a theoretically plausible

mechanism that makes the condition necessary for the outcome. If a condition does not pass the consistency check, sub-steps two and three are not required (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021).

Sufficiency is assessed via the construction of the truth table. The rows of the truth table consist of all logically possible combinations between the specified conditions. The number of rows equals the number of possible configurations. The cases are distributed across the rows, based on which row the case best belongs to derived from the set calibration. Depending on the distribution of cases, truth table rows can be either considered sufficient for the outcome, not sufficient for the outcome, or a logical remainder, which indicates that no case is present in that given row. Rows are then deemed sufficient if they consistently lead to the outcome, where each case with the respective combination shows the phenomenon of interest. The rows deemed sufficient for the outcome are then minimized. Minimization is a procedure where configurations of conditions are compared and minimized to less-complex expressions, following the rules of Boolean algebra. As part of the minimization procedure, three types of solutions are possible: the conservative, parsimonious, and intermediate. The conservative solution is generated based only on the rows that are supported by empirical cases. The parsimonious solution also incorporates rows with no empirical cases (empirical remainders). The intermediate solution includes the researchers theoretically derived directional expectations about empirical remainders (Mello, 2021; Oana et al., 2021).

The third step entails assessing the solution's explanatory power, empirical relevance, and robustness, relating it back to the cases and theory (Oana et al., 2021). This step increases the confidence in the results of the solution and determines to what extent the results are applicable to other settings. The primary task is to check for both the consistency and empirical relevance of the solution. Consistency is determined via the calculated consistency score. The empirical relevance is calculated via the parameters of fit. For necessity, parameters of fit include the coverage and relevance of necessity. For sufficiency, parameters of fit include solution coverage and unique coverage. When analyzing necessary conditions for csQCA, the threshold for the consistency score is 1, and both the coverage and relevance of necessity (RoN) scores should be above 0.6. When analyzing the csQCA solutions the consistency score should be at least 0.75, the solution coverage should be above 0.5, and unique coverage should be above 0. There is, however, no strict cut-off for coverage of solutions. Since csQCA is used, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) score, which accounts for simultaneous subset relations, is not accounted for as it always produces the same score as the consistency (Oana et al., 2021). Should the solutions meet the thresholds, the research then engages with theory and knowledge acquired

from the cases to determine if the results are meaningful and can be exported to other contexts (Oana et al., 2021).

6.3 Operationalizing the QCA for the dissertation

The csQCA is conducted in line with the three-step process outlined above. Each of the three steps is briefly discussed below.

6.3.1 Step one: transforming and calibrating empirical data

The cases of the QCA comprise the coalitions identified in stage 1 (steps 1 and 2). The outcome(s) of the QCA are the coalition types, which are also uncovered from stage 1 (steps 3 and 4). The QCA includes five conditions. The conditions were developed in the conceptual framework chapter and through abduction as well as based on the suggested ration of cases per condition (Mello, 2021, p. 28; Oana et al., 2021). It is expected that a combination of these conditions (legislative characteristics and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors in coalitions) drive the formation of different coalition types. The conditions include legislative complexity, scope of regulatory addressees, the stringency of the primary legislative instrument, shifts between policy stages, and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors (see table 4.15). Due to the csQCA, each condition is calibrated dichotomously. To follow, the data and calibration of the conditions are outlined. The exact calibration table (table 4.16) can be found at the end of the section. The raw data from the calibration is included in the chapter 4 supplementary information.

Condition	QCA
Legislative complexity	COMPLEX
Regulatory addressee scope	SCOPE
Stringency	REG
Shift between policy stage	DM
Inclusion of exceptional policy actor(s)	ROLE
Outcome	QCA
Coalition type	CT

Table 4.15: Abbreviations of conditions and outcome

Complexity

The complexity of the legislation is operationalized using the EUPLEX dataset (Hurka et al., 2022) and supplemented with interviews. To create a relative complexity score for each proposal, each of the six complexity indicators used in the dataset are standardized and the average score across

the six standardized measures is used. The Climate Law proposal has a complexity score of -0.05; the CBAM proposal has a complexity score of 0.18; the RED proposal has a complexity score of 0.62; the Sustainable Batteries proposal has a complexity score of 1.57 and the JTF has a complexity score of -0.25. After corroborating with interviewees, the RED and Sustainable Batteries proposals are measured as complex. The Climate Law, CBAM, and JTF proposals are measured as not complex. Hence, coalitions present in processes where the legislative proposals are complex are coded as a 1. Coalitions present in processes where the legislative proposals have low complexity are coded as 0.

Scope of Regulatory Addressee

The regulatory addressee scope is measured by examining the communication published by the Commission proposing a regulation/directive and the legislative proposal for a regulation/directive. Interviews are drawn on to triangulate with documents. A legislative proposal with a broad scope is considered to affect a wide range of societal groups/industries. A legislative proposal with a narrow scope affects only a few societal groups/industries (Junk, 2016). The Climate Law, RED, and JTF proposals are measured as having a broad regulatory addressee scope, given they deal with whole of society transitions. The CBAM and Sustainable Batteries proposals are measured as having a narrow scope given they target select industries. Coalitions present in processes where the legislative proposals have a broad regulatory addressee scope are coded a 1. Coalitions present in processes where the legislative proposals has a narrow scope are coded with a 0.

Stringency

The stringency of each legislative proposal is initially drawn from Oberthür and von Homeyer (2022) and complemented by formal policy documents and interviews. EU environmental policy instruments are commonly distinguished into regulatory instruments, economic instruments, procedural instruments, and informational instruments. The four instruments vary in their degree of stringency and were dichotomized into regulatory instruments and new environmental policy instruments (NEPI) (economic, informational, procedural) (Steinebach, 2022). This was due to the dominance of regulatory instruments in EU environmental legislation and the level of coerciveness of regulatory instruments relative to the other instruments (Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2022; Pacheco-Vega, 2020). The Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries proposals are considered to have a primary regulatory instrument and are therefore considered stringent. The CBAM and JTF are considered to have NEPI instruments and are deemed less stringent. Coalitions present in policy processes where the primary legislative instrument is regulatory is

coded 1. Coalitions present in policy processes where the primary legislative instrument is non-regulatory is coded a 0.

Shift Between Policy Stages

The shift between policy stages is operationalized by examining the press reports, the network analysis and coalition identification. The press reports indicate the dates when the legislative proposal is published by the Commission and sent to the Council and the EP. Through the coalition identification process, each of the coalitions is uncovered either in the policy preparation or decision-making stages. Coalitions present in the policy preparation stage are coded as 0. Coalitions present in the decision-making stage are coded as 1.

Inclusion of exceptional policy actor(s)

To determine whether a coalition included an exceptional policy actor (policy entrepreneur, policy broker, or an actor that exhibits both roles), a variety of SNA measures were conducted on each policy network following the approach laid out by Christopolous and Ingold (2015). The betweenness centrality measure is first used to identify actors with structural advantages within the networks. The top 15 actors were focused on as these are considered most likely to be exceptional policy actors. From there, each actor was measured across both positive and negative Bonacich scores, Burt effective size and constraint scores, and the honest broker score. Each policy actors' scores were ranked, and the top five scores were deemed positive. Entrepreneurs are considered actors that had a positive score in the positive Bonacich power and Burt's effective size, as a minimum, but did not score positively in the honest broker measure. Policy brokers are deemed to have a positive score in the negative Bonancich power measure, Burt constraint measure, and the honest broker measure. Policy actors that showed positive scores across four or more measures were considered to play a dual role. The identification of these exceptional policy actors was complemented by interviews and press reports, whereby, such actors were discussed as exhibiting or carrying out exceptional policy actor strategies. The exceptional policy actors were then located in each of the identified coalitions. Given their position in the networks, not all exceptional policy actors are coalition members. Of the identified coalitions, those that included an exceptional policy actor were coded as 1. Those coalitions that did not include an exceptional policy actor were coded 0. The identified exceptional policy actors are included in the chapter 4 supplementary information.

Condition	Full Membership (1)	Fully Out (0)
<i>Legislative complexity</i>	Coalition is present during a policy process when a legislative proposal is highly complex.	Coalition is present during a policy process when a legislative proposal is not complex.
<i>Regulatory addressee scope</i>	Coalition is present during policy process when a legislative proposal has a broad regulatory addressee scope.	Coalition is present during policy process when a legislative proposal has a narrow regulatory addressee scope.
<i>Stringency</i>	Coalition is present during policy process when a legislative proposal's primary instrument is regulatory.	Coalition is present during a policy process when a legislative proposal's primary instrument is not regulatory.
<i>Shift between policy stages</i>	Coalition is present during the decision-making stage of the policy process.	Coalition is present during the policy preparation stage of the policy process.
<i>Inclusion of exceptional policy actor(s)</i>	Coalition includes at least one exceptional policy actor (policy entrepreneur or policy broker).	Coalition does not include any type of exceptional policy actor.

Table 4.16: Calibration table

6.3.2 Step two: testing for necessity and sufficiency

For conducting the csQCA, the 'QCA' (Duşa, 2019) and 'SetMethods' (Oana & Schneider, 2018) packages in R are used. Data was imported via .csv files. Necessity and sufficiency are examined for each coalition type uncovered in the first stage of analysis, depending on the number of coalitions that are characterized as that given type. Following best practices, the negated outcomes are also examined (Thomann & Maggetti, 2020). As the objective of the dissertation is to determine why certain coalition types form, the negated solutions are only considered to ensure that there are no contradictions with the observed outcomes. Conservative, parsimonious, and intermediate solutions are all considered when assessing sufficiency.

6.3.3 Step three: interpreting the solutions

For all set relations, the thresholds for consistency and coverage described by Oana et al. (2021) are utilized. The consistency score should be at least 0.75 and the coverage should be above 0.5. Since csQCA is used, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) score, which accounts for simultaneous subset relations, is not accounted for as it always produces the same score as the consistency. Robustness checks on all solutions are conducted in line with best practices proposed by Oana and Schneider (2024).

7. Stage three: comparing the strategies of coalitions

This section outlines the third stage of the research design, which aligns with answering RQ3. This stage aims to explain why each type of coalition conducts certain strategies across EU environmental processes. To do so, a two-step comparative analysis of all types of coalitions

uncovered in stage 1 is utilized. The two-step comparative analysis follows on from the nested and hierarchical logic underpinning the conceptual framework guiding the analysis, that assumes the structural dimensions first alter the activities and strategies of coalitions. And under these structural limits, coalitions may then adapt their activities and strategies to contextual differences across policy processes. To follow, the two-step comparative analysis approach is outlined, including the case selection and data analysis method.

7.1 Comparative analysis

A comparative analysis allows systematic empirical examination and comparison of all coalition types' strategies. It therefore sheds light on the plausibility of the developed expectations and the answering of the research question. More specifically, the two-step comparative analysis assists in examining micro-level developments, in this case, the activities that underpin a coalition's strategy, as well as the effect of a coalition's structural dimensions and the legislative characteristics on the strategy choice. Simultaneously, it also allows for variables that are not of interest and alternative contextual explanations to be controlled. In turn, it allows for stronger and more reliable findings and broader scopes of generalizations than single case studies (Panke, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The comparative analysis approach complements and builds on the results of the QCA. Both the comparative analysis and QCA are case-oriented methods, yet QCA only allows for cross-case explanations pertaining to the formation of coalition types. Insights into the dynamics of coalition types within policy processes are, therefore, not uncovered by the QCA. As a result, a comparative analysis can complement the limitations of the QCA by developing insights within the policy processes (Mello, 2021).

To answer RQ3, a two-step comparative analysis is conducted, combining across-type and within type comparison. This approach follows the hierarchical and nested logic of the research and core focus on the coalition types, rather than the individual coalitions. The first step focuses on cross-coalition type variation. Concretely, it maps and compares strategies across coalition types. This enables patterns between the strategies of coalition types and the enabling and constraining effect of structural dimensions to be identified. The second step focuses on within coalition type variation. In doing so, it holds the structural dimensions of coalitions constant and examines how legislative characteristics affect the strategies of the same coalition type across legislative processes.

Following this logic, the analysis is carried out in three steps. Step one involves the case selection. Step two relates to the collection of data. In step three, the data is analyzed. The three steps are discussed in more detail in the following sub-sections.

7.2 Selecting the coalitions

This sub-section outlines the selection of cases for the two-step comparative analysis following the hierarchical and nested logic. Both case selections adopt a most similar systems design (MSSD) to infer how 1) different types of coalitions, which have varying structural configurations, carry out certain strategies; and 2) how coalitions of the same type carry out certain strategies when the characteristics of legislative proposals vary. Through an MSSD, the structural dimensions of coalition types and the characteristics of legislative proposals are isolated and vary whilst keeping all other variables constant. By isolating the structural dimensions and legislative characteristics and holding other variables constant, the expectations can be tested (Panke, 2018).

The cases for the first step are the coalition types. This is because the first step is interested in examining the variation in the strategies across coalition types. By focusing on the coalition types as the cases, the dissertation can uncover variation and correlations in the structural dimensions of the coalition types and the strategies that each coalition type employs. Simultaneously, it allows for contextual factors, namely the legislative characteristics, to be controlled.

The cases for the second step are the identified coalitions of each type. Within-coalition type comparison allows the structural dimensions of coalitions to remain constant and for the legislative characteristics to vary. This enables the analysis to establish relations between the characteristics of legislative proposals and the strategies of coalition types by providing insights into how coalitions of the same type respond to changes in legislative characteristics.

7.3 Data collection and data analysis

The two-step comparative analysis primarily relies on the semi-structured interviews as well as policy documents, press reports, and official EU documents, including consultations and reports of meeting. Informed by the data, the analysis proceeds in three steps and follows an abductive approach.

7.3.1 Mapping the strategies of coalitions and coalition types

To map and identify the strategies of coalitions and coalition types, the activities conducted by each identified coalition (stage one) are abductively coded from the content of the press reports, policy documents, consultation, meetings, and interviews. Nvivo software is used to code the data.

Following the abductive process, initial codes of activities are devised from the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policy, as well as the ACF and interest group literature. This guided the initial coding of the data, whilst simultaneously remaining open to uncovering other potential activities and strategies. Through this process, the coding scheme is constantly updated.

Instead of a dichotomous coding of activities, the frequency of activity usage was recorded. To record the frequency of activity usage, a relative 5-point scale was developed, with 4 being very high usage and 0 being no usage. A score of 4 was given if a coalition used the activity at least 10 times throughout the policy process. A score of 3, deemed high usage, was given if a coalition conducted the activity between 6 – 9 times. Medium activity usage, or a score of 2, was given when a coalition used an activity 3 – 5 times. A score of 1, considered low usage, was offered when a coalition conducted an activity 1 – 2 times. A zero was recorded when the coalition did not engage in that given activity.

The activities that each coalition conducts and the frequency at which they are conducted are then plotted in a matrix and visualized in heatmaps. Several heatmaps are developed. All heatmaps classify each of the coded activities into one of three strategies: inside, outside, orchestration, following the conceptualization of each strategy. The first heatmap groups each identified coalition by their type. This allows for the overall strategies of each type to be analyzed and determined, without accounting for changes in legislative characteristics. As such, the first heatmap relates to the across-coalition type comparison. The second set of heatmaps seek to examine the variation of strategies among coalitions of the same type to uncover the effect of legislative characteristics. To do so, a heatmap is produced for each coalition type, and groups the coalitions of each type based on the legislative process they are present in. The second set of heatmaps thus relates to the within-coalition type comparison. Through the visualization of a heatmap, patterns of activity usage and thus the strategies conducted by each coalition are unearthed. These patterns determine the dependent variable for the two-step comparative case study. The variation between the strategies of each coalition type is then systematically compared, looking for patterns between the structural configuration of coalitions, the legislative characteristics and the strategies of coalition types.

7.3.2 Measuring the structural dimensions of coalition types

The first step of the two-step comparative analysis aims to analyze the enabling and constraining effects of the structural dimensions of coalitions with the strategies that different coalition types employ. Following the MSSD approach, the structural dimensions of the coalition types need to be accounted for to establish relations between them and the types of coalitions' strategies, whilst

holding differences in the legislative characteristics constant. To this end, the variation across the five structural dimensions of the coalition types is determined from the results of the typology, uncovered in stage 1. It is expected that a combination of structural dimensions will interact in certain ways enabling and constraining a coalition types' strategy selection.

7.3.3 Measuring the legislative characteristics

The second step of the comparative analysis seeks to examine the legislative characteristics conditioning the strategies of coalitions of the same type. As such, the structural dimensions of coalitions are held constant and the legislative characteristics vary. This enables relations between legislative characteristics and the strategies of coalitions of the same type to be developed, in line with the MSSD approach. The within-coalition type comparative analysis includes five legislative characteristics. All four characteristics from the QCA (stage 2) are carried over and are operationalized in the same way. The fifth characteristic, public salience, emerged through the abductive process. The public salience is operationalized by the number of collected specialized press reports and supplemented with interviews, resulting in a continuous variable. The number of press reports for each proposal ranges from 370 to 111, with the average number of press reports per proposal being 248.2. The RED received the highest level of public salience, with 370 press reports. This is followed by the CBAM with 311 press reports, the JTF with 240 press reports, the Climate Law with 209 press reports, and the Sustainable Batteries with 111 press reports. It is expected that a combination of these characteristics will provide opportunities and impose constraints on coalitions of the same type to employ certain strategies.

8. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research design and sequential mixed method approach for the dissertation. Abduction is utilized throughout the dissertation, bouncing between the empirics and existing theory. The research design and methodological approach structure the answering of the three research questions. The dissertation and analysis benefit from robust data, including substantive number of semi-structured interviews and documents.

The research design is built in three sequential stages to answer the three research questions. A summary of the three-stage sequential mixed-methods design is presented in table 4.17. Stage one answers RQ1, utilizing SNA and content analysis to first identify coalitions, which is then followed by characterizing coalitions and a PCA to create a coalition typology. The typology is then used in stage two to answer RQ2 and stage three to answer RQ3. Stage two draws on QCA to explain the formation of coalition types across policy processes. Stage three applies a two-step comparative analysis to uncover why different types of coalitions conduct certain strategies.

Across all stages, data is triangulated to determine validity and reduce biases inherent in each data source.

Stages	Research Question	Variables of Interest		Data	Method of Analysis	Intended Result
		DV	IV			
1	<i>What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?</i>	Coalition Types	Structural dimensions of coalitions	- Specialized press reports - policy documents - reports of meetings - interviews - websites	- Social Network Analysis - Content Analysis - Principal Component Analysis	Reveal typology of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal.
2	<i>How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?</i>	Presence of coalition type	- Legislative characteristics - inclusion of exceptional policy actors	- Coalition typology - policy networks - interviews - specialized press reports - policy documents - EUPLEX dataset - secondary literature	QCA	Explain the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal.
3	<i>Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?</i>	Strategies of coalition types	- Structural dimensions of coalitions - legislative characteristics	- Coalition typology - interviews - policy documents - EUPLEX dataset - consultations - meetings	Two-step comparative case study: 1) Across-coalition type analysis 2) Within-coalition type analysis	Map and explain the strategies employed by each coalition type.

Table 4.17: Overview of three stage sequential mixed-method research design

The stepwise and practical research design, developed to examine coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, could also be applied to other EU policy processes and in non-EU contexts. The abductive approach and focus on coalitions in EU environmental policy processes does impact the generalizability of the dissertation. Yet, the dissertation can make a novel contribution to the understanding of coalitions in policy processes. Findings could be a point of departure for studying coalitions in other EU (environmental) policy processes, under the OLP or other procedures, or in

non-EU policy process contexts and at different levels of governance. Hence, by applying the research design to other processes, the characteristics of coalitions, the typology, as well as the findings of the QCA and comparative analysis could be refined and tested in other contexts. The research design elaborated above provides a path for doing so. The next chapters delve into the empirical findings related to stage one of the research, namely the identification of coalitions and the creation of the coalition typology.

Chapter 5: Coalitions Across EU Environmental Policy Processes

1. Introduction

This chapter presents the identification of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes within the context of the European Green Deal (EGD). Aligned with the conceptualization of coalitions and the method of coalition identification, 59 coalitions are identified across the policy preparation and decision-making stages of the European Climate Law, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), the Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund (JTF).

The purpose of the chapter is three-fold. First, it contributes to an understanding of how EU environmental policy processes are structured by coalitions. Second, through the identification, the chapter describes the composition of the coalitions. Third, the identification of coalitions informs the analyses in the subsequent chapter and the creation of a coalition typology (chapter 6).

In this chapter, the five policy processes and policy networks are presented, subsequently followed by descriptions of each identified coalition at the policy preparation and decision-making stages. After combing through each of the five processes, networks, and coalitions, the chapter concludes.

2. Coalitions across European Green Deal policy processes

This section presents the mapping of coalitions identified across the Climate Law, the CBAM, RED, Sustainable Batteries, and the JTF policy processes. For each legislative proposal, the policy process is briefly outlined, the policy networks are presented, and each coalition identified in the policy preparation and decision-making stages are described.

2.1. Climate Law

The Climate Law proposal sets out to anchor a framework intentionally designed to provide stable strategic direction for EU environmental policymaking. The framework is aligned with reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the entirety of the EU, mitigating the threat posed by climate change, and delivering on the implementation of the Paris Agreement (Inderberg & Bailey, 2025). To reach its overarching aim, the Climate Law creates a legally binding objective of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and an interim 55% emissions reduction by 2030. A review process for setting an emission reduction target for 2040 is also included (Pollex & Lenschow, 2024). In addition, the Climate Law establishes the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate

Change, which serves as a point of reference for the EU to instill scientific knowledge related to climate change into its decision-making.

The proposal was drafted by the Directorate General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) and published by the European Commission in March 2020, not long after the introduction of the EGD and the European Council's endorsement of a climate-neutrality objective for 2050. The proposal was referred to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) in the EP and the Environment Council in the Council. The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) was made an associated committee. On 11 September 2020, the ENVI Committee adopted its report. In October 2020 the EP plenary adopted its position and the Environment Council agreed to a partial general approach. The general approach was agreed to on in December 2020. Trilogues between the EP and the Council subsequently began in the same month. In April 2021, the Council and the EP reached an agreement on the proposal. The legislation was published in the EU's Official Journal in July 2021 (see figure 5.1).

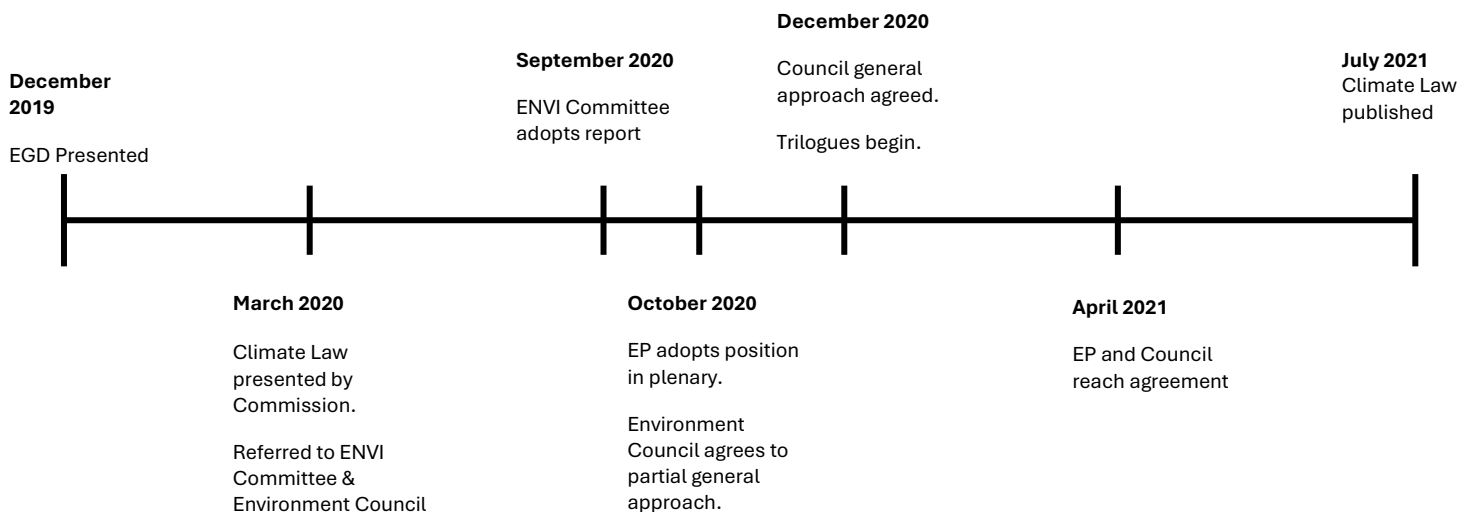


Figure 5.1: Policy process of the Climate Law

Throughout the process, three core issues of the proposal proved highly contested, shaping much of the cooperation and conflict between policy actors. The first contested issue related to the 2050 climate neutrality goal. Specifically, the challenge lied in whether the target should be an absolute target or a 'net-zero' target. The net-zero target means that the target accounts for the balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are produced and removed. In that sense,

policy actors, particularly environmental NGOs, research organizations, and climate activists advocated against the 'net-zero' target as it was foreseen to be less ambitious than an absolute target (interview 1, 2, 3, 5). The second issue surrounded the 2030 emissions reduction target. On one side of the fence, many ambitious member states, left leaning political groups, ambitious businesses, environmental NGOs, and interest associations, among others, pushed for an ambitious 2030 target of 55% or more. Of these actors, some also advocated for higher targets. On the other side, laggard member states, particularly the Visegrad countries, along with right leaning political groups, favored a less ambitious target (interview 1, 2, 7, 9). The third contested issue related to the establishment of the European scientific advisory board. Initially, the advisory board was not included in the Commission's proposal and was pushed back by DG CLIMA. Yet, the need for an advisory board was heavily advocated by environmental NGOs from the outset of the process. The issue picked up support from ambitious member states and other non-EU institutional actors. Finally, the idea of the advisory board made its way into the proposal via an amendment from the rapporteur representing the S&D political group, amid opposition from the right leaning political groups (interview 3, 5, 8). Due to this, discussions around the advisory board lasted until the very end of the negotiation (interview 1). Other issues were also highlighted by several interviewees as contentious. These included the method of future target setting, namely the use of the greenhouse gas budget and whether the target should be set via the ordinary legislative procedure or delegated acts (interviews: 1-9).

3.1.1 Climate Law policy networks

Figure 5.2 depicts the policy network visualizations showing coordination between policy actors in the process related to the Climate Law. The networks are not coalitions, but coalitions are identified within the networks as communities of policy actors that coordinate closer with one another and share preferences.

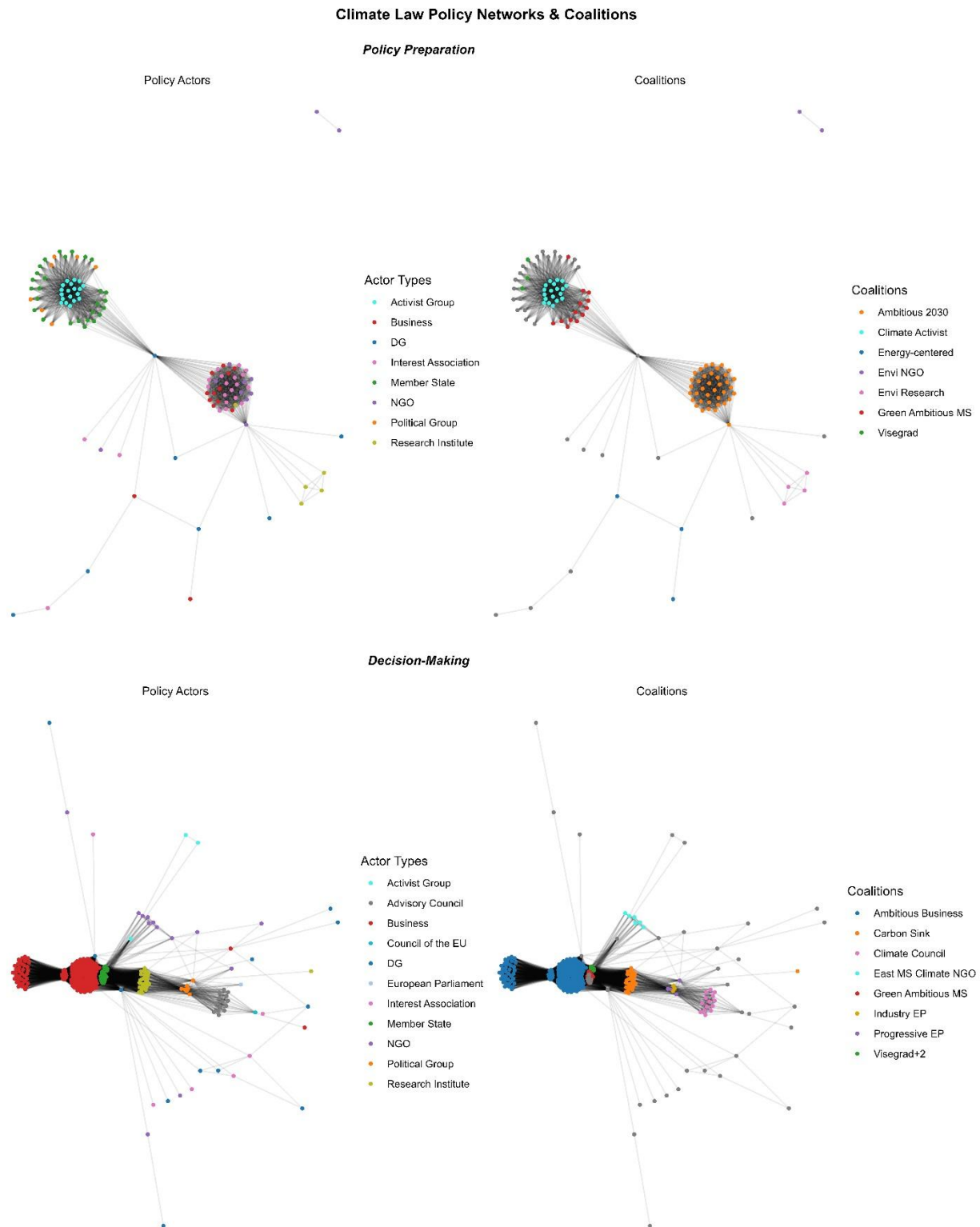


Figure 5.2: Climate Law policy network visualizations. Note: Networks presented on the left are the original networks depicting the policy actors. Networks on the right indicate the coalitions identified. Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm is used for visualization.

From the policy networks, patterns of participation and coordination among policy actors and how they change overtime can be derived. The network depicting the policy preparation stage contains 110 policy actors and eight policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.28. The degree of clustering among policy actors in the network is 0.82 and 6 communities are revealed. The network representing the decision-making stage contains 347 policy actors and 11 policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.46. The clustering of policy actors in the network is 0.93 with 11 communities of policy actors uncovered (see table 5.1). Relatively speaking, the Climate Law policy preparation stage highlights that policy actors are moderately connected and that there are well defined communities of policy actors that have formed. The changes between the policy preparation and decision-making networks indicate that the Climate Law process has become much more inclusive and interconnected overtime. This is illustrated by the increase in the number and type of policy actors, paired with the growing density within the network. Yet, there is also an increasing level of fragmentation due to the increasing number of communities.

Policy Stage	Size	No. of policy actor types	Density	Clustering	No. of communities
<i>Policy preparation</i>	110	8	0.28	0.82	6
<i>Decision-making</i>	347	11	0.46	0.93	11

Table 5.1: Descriptive network measures for the Climate Law process.

3.1.2 Coalitions in the policy preparation stage

During the policy preparation stage of the Climate Law, seven coalitions are identified (see table 5.2). These include an ambitious 2030 coalition, a climate law NGO coalition, an energy-centered coalition, climate activist coalition, climate law research coalition, the Visegrad coalition, and a green ambition member state coalition.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Ambitious 2030</i> (38)	- Business: Rockwool, Schneider Electric, Siemens - NGO: ECF, Client Earth, Fern - IA: WindEurope, ePURE, EHPA	2050 Climate Neutrality - At least 55% emissions reduction by 2030 - Inclusion of energy efficiency first principal	Joint letter
<i>Climate Law NGO</i> (3)	NGO: WWF, Greenpeace, CAN Europe	- Negative emission reduction by 2050 or earlier and exclusion of Carbon sinks in the 2050 target 60% emissions reduction by 2030 - Establish Scientific Advisory Board	- Joint position paper - Shared position in media
<i>Energy-centered</i> (3)	- DG: DG Energy - Business: EDF, Naturgy Energy Group	2050 Climate Neutrality	Meetings
<i>Climate Activist</i> (19)	Activist Group: FFF (Greta Thunberg), FFF Croatia, FFF Czech Republic, FFF Denmark, FFF England, FFF Greece, FFF Hungary, FFF Germany, FFF Belgium	- Negative emissions by 2050 - GHG budget to set future targets	Joint letter
<i>Climate Law Research</i> (4)	RI: Real Instituto Elcano, International Institute for Law and Environment, Ecologic Institute, Dublin City University	2050 climate neutrality - Establish scientific advisory board - Target review mechanism - GHG budget for future targets	Joint report
<i>Visegrad</i> (3)	MS: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland	- Oppose 2050 climate neutrality 50% emissions reduction or less by 2030 - Additional financial assistance for transition - Future reviews under OLP - Principal of technological neutrality	- Meetings - Shared position in Council
<i>Green ambition MS</i> (13)	MS: France, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Slovenia	2050 climate neutrality 55% emissions reduction by 2030 - Future reviews under OLP <u>Partial</u> - Target reached at MS level - GHG budget for target setting - Establish Scientific Advisory Board	- Joint letter - Shared position in Council

Table 5.2: Coalitions in the policy preparation stage of the European Climate Law. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Only key actors named. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest associations, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research institutes.

The ambitious 2030 coalition involves a mix of 38 actors including business such as Rockwool, Schneider Electric, and Siemens; NGOs including European Climate Foundation (ECF), Client Earth, and Fern; the research institute E3G; as well as interest associations like ePure, WindEurope, and European Heat Pump Association (EHPA). The coalition advocates for the 2050 climate neutrality target, a 2030 target of at least a 55 per cent emissions reduction, and the need for the inclusion of the energy efficiency first principle. The coalition coordinated by drafting and sending a joint letter to Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans to advocate for the preferences (interview 1, 2, 5; Agence Europe, 2020b).

Intricately linked to the ambitious 2030 coalition (interview 5), the climate law NGO coalition includes three NGOs, namely the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, and Climate Action Network Europe (CANEurope). This coalition is also highly ambitious in its preferences. It advocates supporting negative emissions by 2050 or earlier which includes the exclusion of carbon sinks in the 2050 target, a 60 per cent emissions reduction target by 2030 or earlier, and the establishment of a scientific advisory board. To advocate for the preferences, the coalition published a joint position paper during the consultations and jointly shared its position in the media shortly before Frans Timmermans presented the Climate Law proposal (interview 1; ENDS Europe, 2020e).

The energy centered coalition comprises of DG Energy, Électricité de France (EDF), and Naturgy Energy Group. The coalition also supports the 2050 climate neutrality target, but with less ambition than the climate law NGO coalition. The coalition coordinated its positions via several meetings identified in the EU's transparency register.

The climate activist coalition comprises of 19 Friday's for the Future national delegations. The coalition pushes for an ambitious 2050 negative emissions reduction target and the need to include a greenhouse gas budget for setting future emission reduction targets. The coalition sent a joint letter addressed to the European Commission, the EP, and the member states to advocate for their preferences (Euractiv, 2020e).

The environmental research coalition includes four research institutions, notably Real Instituto Elcano, International Institute for Law and Environment, Ecologic Institute, and Dublin City University. The coalition advocates for several preferences including the 2050 climate neutrality target, the establishment of a scientific advisory board, the need for a target review mechanism, and the inclusion of a greenhouse gas budget to guide the setting of future targets. The coalition

published a joint report examining long-term climate laws in nine European countries and proposed its preferences as key recommendations (ENDS Europe, 2020c).

The Visegrad coalition includes three member states: the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. This coalition has a low ambition regarding the Climate Law. During the early stage of the policy process, the coalition was not in support of the 2050 target and advocated for a rather low 2030 target of 50 per cent emissions reduction or less. Moreover, it requested additional financial assistance for the transition in light of the 2050 goal, preferred future reviews of the emission reduction targets go through the ordinary legislative procedure, and that the principle of technological neutrality be upheld. To push for these preferences, the coalition coordinated through joint meetings and sharing positions during the European Council Summit in October 2019 (interview 1, 4, 8; Euractiv, 2019c).

The green ambition member state coalition includes 13 member states namely France, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, and Slovenia (interview 1, 4, 8). Early in negotiations, this coalition supported the 2050 climate neutrality target, with some also preferring a negative emissions target by 2050 or earlier, a 2030 emissions reduction target of 55 per cent, and that the 2040 target be decided by the ordinary legislative procedure. A subset of highly ambitious member states also aligned on preferences whereby the target should not be cumulative but reached by each member state, the inclusion of a greenhouse gas budget to guide target setting, and that a scientific advisory board should be established. The coalition coordinated its preferences through the drafting of a joint letter that was sent to Frans Timmermans (Euractiv, 2020d) and the sharing of positions during the European Council summit in December 2019 (Euractiv, 2019e).

3.1.3 Coalitions in the decision-making stage

During the decision-making stage the number of coalitions increased from seven to eight. These include an ambitious business coalition, a carbon sink coalition, a climate council coalition, an eastern member state climate NGO coalition, a green ambition member state coalition, a Visegrad+2 coalition, as well as a progressive EP coalition and an industry EP coalition (see table 5.3). Among the coalitions in the decision-making stage, the green ambition member state coalition, identified in the policy preparation stage, remains, and the Visegrad coalition expanded. The ambitious business coalition also contains some businesses that are members of the ambitious 2030 coalition, indicating a split away from the NGOs and interest associations.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Ambitious business</i> (232)	Business: Coca Cola, Schneider Electric, Microsoft, Rockwool, Google, H&M Group, Orsted	- At least 55% emissions reduction by 2030 <i>Partial</i> - Negative emissions by 2050 - Financial assistance for transition	- Joint letter - Meeting
<i>Carbon Sink</i> (26)	RI: University of Oxford, Potsdam Institute, ETH Zurich, University of Cal. Berkley	Excluding accounting of carbon sinks in targets	Joint letter
<i>Climate Council</i> (12)	AB: EEAC Network, Danish Council on Climate Change, Finnish Climate Change Panel, French High Court Council on Climate	2050 carbon neutrality - Establish scientific advisory board	Joint letter
<i>Eastern member state climate NGO</i> (6)	NGO: 2Celsuis, Friends of the Earth Bulgaria, Friends of the Earth Hungary, Polish Climate Coalition, Slovak Climate Initiative, Czech Climate Coalition	60% emission reduction by 2030 or earlier	Joint letter
<i>Green ambition member state</i> (13)	MS: France, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Slovenia	2050 climate neutrality 55% emissions reduction by 2030 - Future reviews under OLP <i>Partial</i> - Target reached at MS level - GHG budget for target setting - Establish Scientific Advisory Board	Shared position in Council
<i>Visegrad+2</i> (6)	Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania	50% emissions reduction or less by 2030 - Additional financial assistance for transition - Future reviews under OLP - Principal of technological neutrality	- Shared position in Council - Joint letter
<i>Progressive EP</i> (4)	EP Groups: S&D, Renew, the Greens, the Left	- At least 55% emissions reduction by 2030 - GHG budget to set targets - Establish scientific advisory board	- Joint amendments - Shared position
<i>Industry EP</i> (3)	EP Groups: EPP, ECR, ID	50% emission reduction target by 2030 - Exclusion of GHG budget - Exclude establishing scientific advisory board	- Joint amendments - Shared positions

Table 5.3: Coalitions in the Decision-making Stage of the European Climate Law. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute.

The Ambitious business coalition contains 232 businesses from a wide array of sectors such as technology, finance, industry, retail, and energy. Some of the notable actors include Coca Cola, Schneider Electric, Microsoft, Rockwool, Google, H&M Group, and Orsted. Several of these actors were detected in the ambitious 2030 coalition in the policy preparation stage. This coalition supports an ambitious 2030 emissions reduction target of at least 55 per cent by 2030. Within this coalition, there are two sub-groups of actors. The first advocate for negative emissions by 2050 or earlier. The second set shares the preference for the need for transition assistance, including an enabling framework. The coalition coordinated through two joint letters addressed to the member states and European Commissioners and Frans Timmermans (Euractiv, 2020i), as well as a series of meetings (interview 2).

The carbon sink coalition includes 26 research institutes primarily from Europe as well as the United States, including the University of Oxford, Potsdam Institute, ETH Zurich, and University of California, Berkley. This coalition prefers that the accounting of carbon sinks in the targets is excluded and a separate target for carbon removals should be determined. Such preference speaks directly to the issue of 'net-zero'. The coalition advocates for this preference through a joint letter which was sent to EU co-legislators during the sixth round of trilogue negotiations (Agence Europe, 2021f).

The climate council coalition includes 12 national level climate advisory boards, the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils Network (EEAC), and the EEAC's climate and energy working group. This coalition supported the 2050 carbon neutrality target and specifically advocated for the establishment of a scientific advisory board. The coalition coordinated and raised its preference through a joint letter sent to EU co-legislators during the trilogues (ENDS Europe, 2021d).

The eastern member state climate NGO coalition includes an NGO each from Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. This coalition shares the preference on setting an ambitious 2030 target of at least 60 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 or earlier. The coalition sent a letter to Central Eastern European member state ministers during the October 2020 European Council to advocate for its preference (ENDS Europe, 2020k).

The green ambition member state coalition uncovered in the policy preparation stage persisted in the decision-making stage (interview 1, 4, 8). The coalition held the same preferences, although some actors prefer more ambitious targets, and continued to advocate for them by continually sharing and supporting the positions during Council negotiations (Agence, 2020f, 2020g).

Going up against the green ambition member state coalition was the Visegrad+2 coalition. This coalition expanded from the smaller Visegrad coalition identified in the policy preparation stage, through the inclusion of Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, in addition to its previous three members. As in the earlier stages, the coalition advocated the same preferences. They did so by coordinating through sharing preferences during deliberations in Council meetings and even sending a joint letter to the Commission leading up to the agreement of the partial general approach (interview 1, 4, 8; ENDS Europe, 2020I).

Two coalitions within the EP are uncovered through interviews (interview 3, 6, 7, 9). The progressive EP coalition includes the S&D, Renew, the Greens, and the Left and aligned with many of the NGO and research institute coalitions presented. The coalition advocated for a higher 2030 target, the use of a greenhouse gas budget to set future targets, and the establishment of a scientific advisory board. Such an alignment between the green EP coalition, NGOs and activists was supported by interviewees, highlighting the intricate connections between the coalitions (interview 6, 7, 9). The coalition pushed for its position through the drafting of joint amendments and the sharing of positions in EP negotiations.

Up against the progressive EP coalition is the industry EP coalition includes the EPP, ECR and ID. The coalition pushed for a 50% emission reduction by 2030, the exclusion of a greenhouse gas budget, and opposed the establishment of a scientific advisory board. The coalition advocated for its preferences through writing joint amendments and sharing positions during negotiations in the EP.

3.2 Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism's (CBAM) primary objective is to prevent carbon leakage. Carbon leakage occurs when companies in the EU relocate their production to jurisdictions outside of the EU with less strict climate-policies to dodge climate costs (Wettestad, 2024b). The CBAM proposal is a climate-related unilateral trade instrument. The CBAM introduces a price on the embedded greenhouse gas emissions of imported goods from jurisdictions that lack carbon pricing mechanisms, particularly to overcome the carbon leakage challenge. The CBAM requires that exporters from non-EU countries pay a carbon price at the EU border that corresponds to what European producers have to pay for an EU ETS allowance. If that non-EU producer has already paid a 'carbon price' domestically, that price is considered in the calculation of what needs to be paid. The CBAM proposal covers select emissions-intensive industries, namely cement, iron, steel, aluminum, fertilizers, hydrogen and electricity production. The CBAM, therefore, complements the EU ETS with the aim of accelerating the domestic decarbonization of

these sectors while maintaining their competitiveness and preventing carbon leakage (Delreux & Crellin, 2026). By increasing the cost of emissions-intensive imports to the EU, the CBAM also creates an external dimension by incentivizing the uptake of climate policies in third countries (Otto, 2025; Smith et al., 2024).

The newly developed CBAM legislative proposal was drafted by the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD) and presented by the Commission in July 2021 under the 'Fit for 55' package. Prior to this, the ENVI Committee published its own report titled "Towards a WTO compatible EU CBAM" in October 2020, which was later adopted as a resolution by the EP in March 2021. Having DG TAXUD lead on the proposal created unusual dynamics during the policy preparation stage. DG TAXUD had limited knowledge about drafting environmental legislation, which was further exacerbated by the close interlinkages between CBAM and the EU ETS. Because of this lack of institutional knowledge around emissions trading and carbon leakage, DG TAXUD closely collaborated with DG CLIMA. This created many challenges and uncertainties during the preparation of the legislative proposal, particularly in understanding who to contact and the direction in which the proposal was going to take (interview 10, 11, 12, 17). The CBAM proposal was referred to the ENVI Committee and the Environment Council in September 2021. The Environment Council adopted its general approach in March 2022. The ENVI Committee adopted its report in May 2022, and in June 2022 adopted its position in plenary. Trilogues between the EP and the Council started in July. In December 2022, a provisional political agreement was reached. The final CBAM legislation was then published in the EU's Official Journal in May 2023 (see figure 5.3).

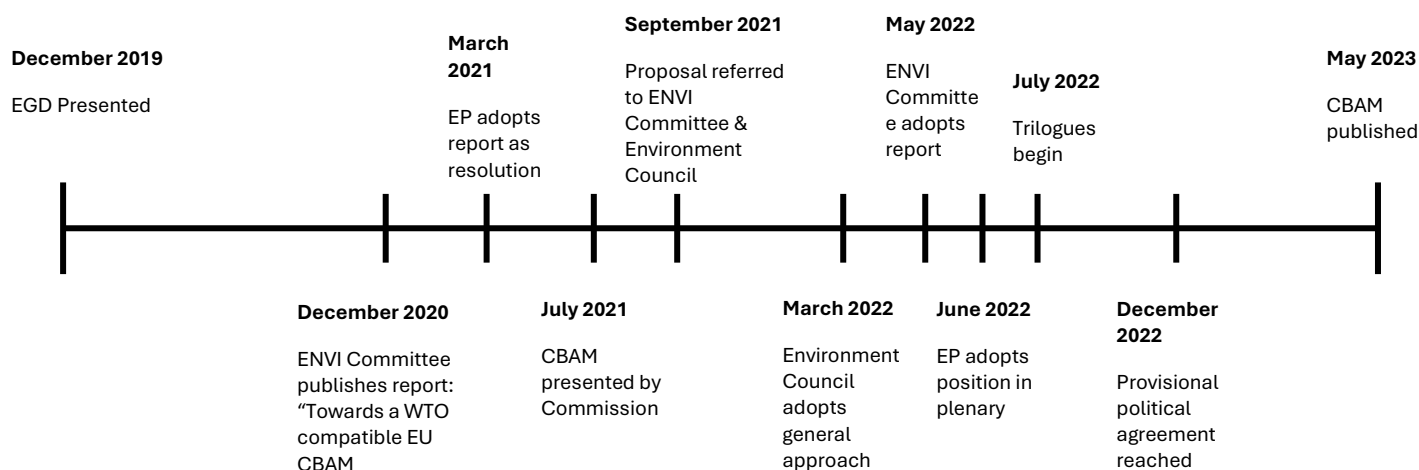


Figure 5.3: Policy process of the CBAM

The policy process linked to the CBAM proposal presented many contentious issues, particularly around emissions allowances, the industries and type of emissions included the use of CBAM revenues, and exemptions (interviews 10 – 17). One of the most contested issues of the CBAM was the phasing out of free emissions allowances, which was closely linked to the EU ETS. Under the EU ETS, certain energy intensive industries receive free allowances. The allowances allow the carbon intense industries to emit a certain amount of CO₂ without having to pay for the emissions and subsequently help the sectors avoid carbon leakage. As the CBAM aims to replace the EU ETS and prevent carbon leakage, the phasing out of free allowances is required in tandem with the phasing in of the CBAM. This issue became controversial as the energy intensive industries and the EPP preferred that the free allowances were not phased out, which was opposed by environmentally ambitious policy actors, including left-wing political groups and environmental NGOs. This issue was also closely related to the implementation timeline of the CBAM, with ambitious policy actors wanting a rapid phase in, with opposition preferring a rather long phase-in after 2030 (interview 10, 16; Wettstad, 2024b). Another key issue that played out in the CBAM policy process related to the sectors that were to be initially covered by the CBAM. The CBAM at first set out to focus on a core number of energy intensive industries, such as iron and steel, cement, and fertilizers, mirroring key industries in the EU ETS. Given the select few industries, ambitious policy actors such as environmental NGOs and some political groups pushed for a broadening of industries to be included, such as hydrogen and polymers. Conversely, energy intensive industries and some member states opposed the broadening of the CBAM's scope of

industries to be included (interview 10, 15, 16). The type of emissions, namely direct or indirect emissions, to be covered by the CBAM also raised some lines of contention. Direct emissions account for those directly emitted during the production process of a product. Indirect emissions are associated with the electricity consumption used in producing the product. The proposal initially included direct emissions due to the ease of calculations, which was advocated against by environmental NGOs and some political groups in the EP (Wettestad, 2024b). Finally, conflict emerged around how the revenues of the CBAM were to be used and who should be exempt from the CBAM. Lines were drawn in the sand regarding whether revenues should be directed to international climate action, and specifically least developed countries (LDCs), or reinvested into green investments within the EU. Relatedly, the issue of CBAM exemptions also arose, whereby some policy actors advocated for EU exporters to be exempt or receive some form of compensation. Others, particularly some member states and environmental NGOs, preferred that LDCs remain exempt from the CBAM to ensure that such countries did not have to bear additional costs negatively affecting their competitiveness and development progress (interview 14, 16).

3.2.1 CBAM policy networks

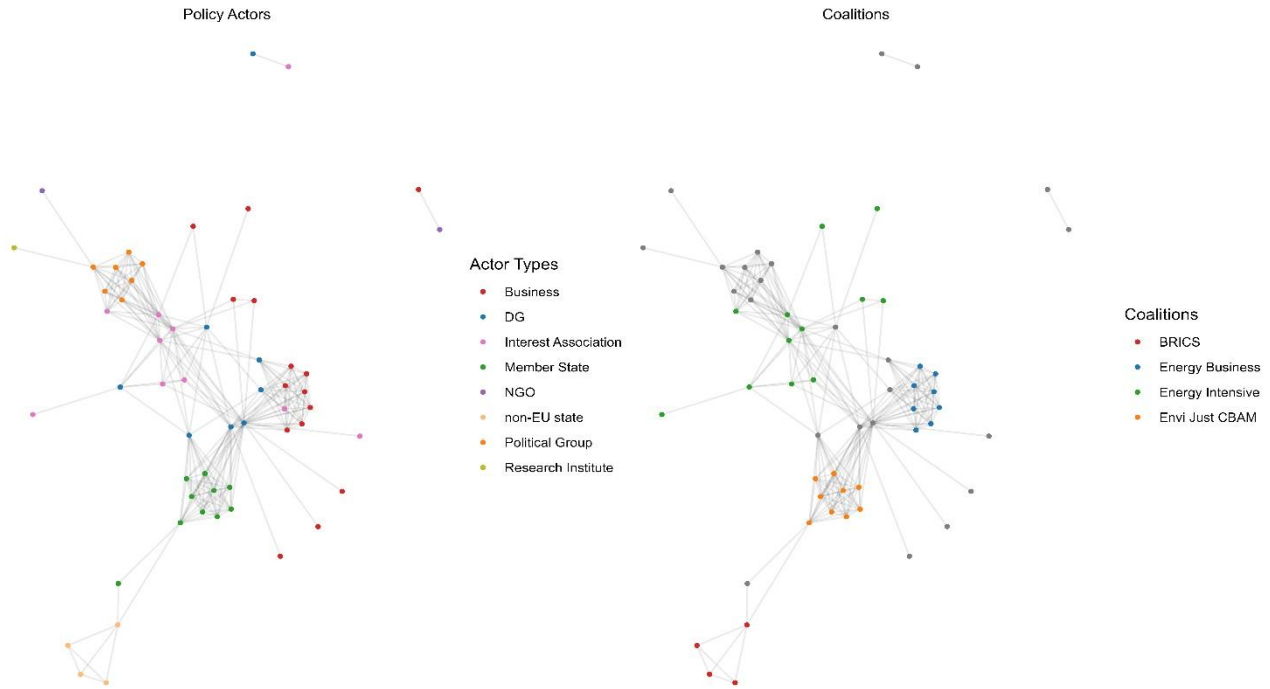
The CBAM policy networks and coalitions within the networks are presented in figure 5.4. The network depicting the policy preparation stage contains 57 policy actors and eight policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.15. The degree of clustering among policy actors is 0.65 and six communities are uncovered. The network illustrating the decision-making stage contains 411 policy actors and 10 policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.53. The clustering in the network is 0.96 and 11 communities are identified (see table 5.4). The increase in the number and type of policy actors as well as the increase in the density, clustering, and number of communities from the CBAM policy preparation to the decision-making stage highlights similarities with that of the Climate Law process. The increases, however, are much larger. The policy preparation stage is marked by less connectivity between policy actors and less defined communities comprised of a small number of interested policy actors. This completely shifts during the decision-making stage. A much larger number of policy actors enter the network and actively engage during the decision-making stage, resulting in a more connected network and the formation of distinct communities.

Policy Stage	Size	No. policy actor type	Density	Clustering	No. of communities
<i>Policy preparation</i>	57	8	0.15	0.65	6
<i>Decision-making</i>	411	10	0.53	0.96	11

Table 5.4: Descriptive network measures for the CBAM process.

CBAM Policy Networks & Coalitions

Policy Preparation



Decision-Making

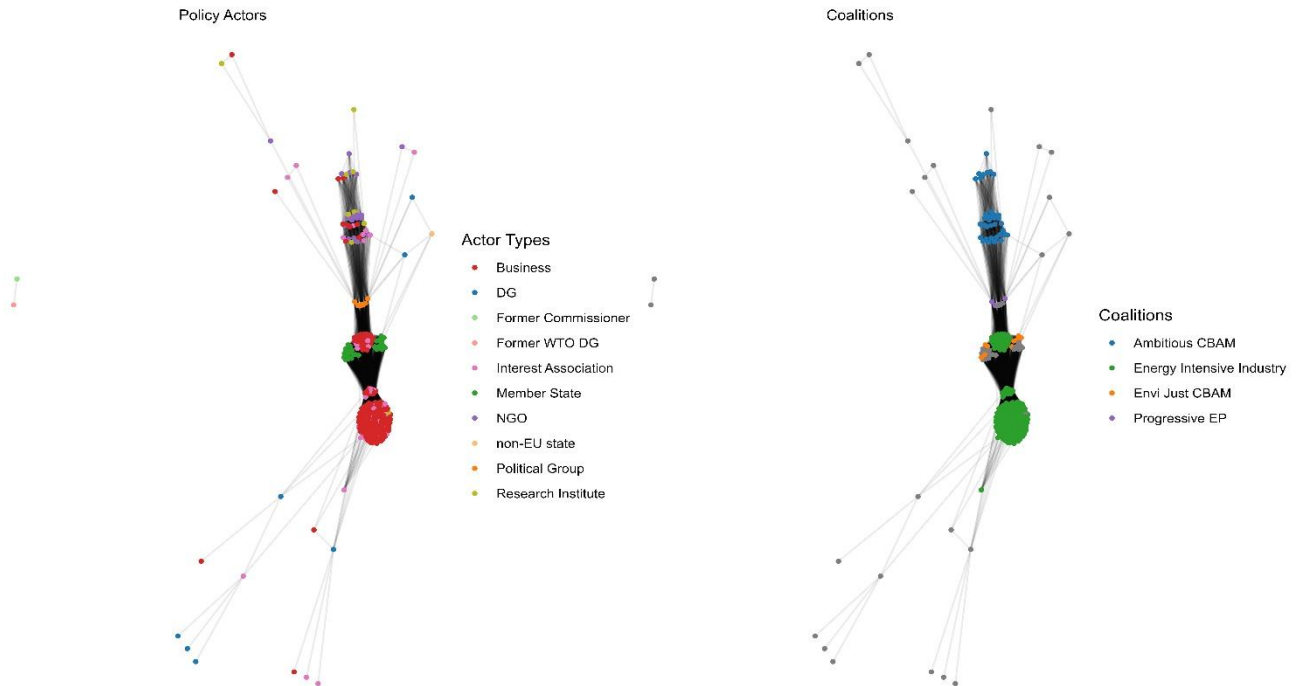


Figure 5.4: CBAM policy network visualizations. Note: Networks presented on the left are the original networks depicting the policy actors. Networks on the right indicate the coalitions identified. Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm is used for visualizations.

3.2.2 Coalitions in the policy preparation stage

During the policy preparation stage of the CBAM, four coalitions are identified (see table 5.5). These include an energy-intensive coalition, an energy business coalition, an environmentally just CBAM EU member state coalition, and the BRICS coalition.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Energy-intensive</i> (13)	• IA: Fertilizer Europe, Eurofer, CEFIC, Cembureau, AEGIS • DG: DG TAXUD • Business: Titan Cement, US Steel Košice	• No phase out of free allowances • Revenues: Green industry investments in EU • Compensate EU exporters <i>Partial</i> • Scope to not be expanded	• Meeting • Joint email
<i>Energy Business coalition</i> (9)	• Business: EDF, Iberdrola, Enel, Orsted, edp, McPhy, ESB • IA: EASE	• Pro-CBAM as instrument for carbon leakage • Hydrogen included in scope	• Joint Letter
<i>Environmentally Just CBAM MS</i> (9)	• MS: France, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia	• Pro-CBAM instrument for carbon leakage • WTO compatibility • Cement, fertilizer, aluminum, steel included in scope • Scope should not be further expanded • Revenues: support LDCs • LDCs exemption	• Non-paper • Meeting • Joint article
<i>BRICS</i> (5)	• Non-MS: Brazil, China, South Africa, India, Russia	• Against CBAM as an instrument	• Joint Statement

Table 5.5: Coalitions in the policy preparation stage of the CBAM. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute, Non-MS = non-EU states.

The energy-intensive coalition contains 13 policy actors that represent many of the industries covered by the CBAM. In this coalition are interest associations including Fertilizer Europe, the European Steel Association (Eurofer), the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), the European Cement Association (Cembureau), European Aluminum, AEGIS Europe; the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD); and several businesses including US Steel Košice, Vítkovice Steel and Titan Cement. The coalition was driven by a core set of members, namely CEFIC, Cembureau, Fertilizer Europe, and Eurofer. The coalition prefers that free allowances should co-exist with the Emissions Trading System until 2030 and therefore should not be phased out, revenues from the CBAM should be used to support green investments for EU industry, and that a compensatory mechanism for EU exporters is established. A smaller

number of actors in the coalition also prefer that the scope of the CBAM should not be expanded to other industries. The coalition coordinated through several meetings and a joint email that was sent to MEPs (interview 10, 11, 13, 15; Agence Europe, 2021a).

The energy business coalition comprises of 8 energy businesses including EDF, Iberdrola, Enel, Orsted, Energias de Portugal (edp), McPhy, and the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), as well as an interest association, the European Association for the Storage of Energy (EASE). This coalition advocates for the CBAM as the preferred instrument to deal with carbon leakage and that hydrogen should be included within the scope of the CBAM. The coalition coordinated and advocated for its preferences by drafting a joint letter and sending it to the Commission (Euractiv, 2021d).

The Environmentally Just CBAM member state coalition is composed of 9 member states including France, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Slovakia. The coalition considers the CBAM as the right instrument to address the issue of carbon leakage and should be WTO compatible. The coalition also supports the notion that cement, fertilizer, aluminum, and steel should be included within the scope of the CBAM, but that the scope of the CBAM should not be further expanded. Finally, the coalition also prefers that the revenues should be used to support vulnerable third countries in their transition to carbon neutrality and that least developed countries (LDCs) should be exempt from the CBAM. The coalition coordinated through meetings, the drafting of a non-paper (ENDS Europe, 2020g), and a joint article published in Politico (interview 17; Agence Europe, 2021c).

Against this more favorable pro-CBAM coalition, the BRICs coalition includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (interview 17). The coalition primarily aims to block the introduction of the CBAM noting that it is a discriminatory and unfair measure for developing nations. The coalition coordinated through the drafting of a joint statement (Euractiv, 2021b).

3.2.3 Coalitions in the decision-making stage

During the decision-making stage of the CBAM, four coalitions are uncovered (see table 5.6). These include the Ambitious CBAM coalition, an energy-intensive industry coalition, a progressive EP coalition, and an environmentally just CBAM member state coalition. The energy intensive coalition in the policy preparation stage of the CBAM has expanded into a larger energy intensive industry coalition, with the core members from the original coalition remaining. The environmentally just CBAM member state coalition in the policy preparation stage has also been maintained during the decision-making stage.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Ambitious CBAM</i> (37)	• NGO: CANEurope, EEB, T&E, WWF, CarbonMarketWatch, BankWatchNetwork, Bellona Foundation • IA: ECOS, Cleantech Europe • RI: E3G, Sandbag • Business: CemInEU, Ecocem, H2Green Steel	• Phase-out of free allowances before 2032 • Phase in of CBAM by 2026 <i>Partial</i> • Revenues: Support LDCs & Green industry investments in EU • LDCs exempt • Exclude compensation for exporters	• Meeting • Joint statement • Joint report • Joint letter
<i>Energy-intensive Industry</i> (316)	• IA: Eurofer, Fertilizers Europe, Cembureau, CEFIC, Eurometaux, CEPI, Cerame-Unie • Business: Tata Steel, thyssenkrupp steel, ArcelorMittal, SSAB	• CBAM implemented after 2030 • No phase-out of free allowances • Revenues: Green industry investment in EU • Compensation for EU exporters	• Joint letter • Joint statement
<i>Progressive EP</i> (4)	• EP: S&D, Renew, the Greens, the Left	• Phase out of free allowances before 2032 • Phase in of CBAM by at least 2027 • Revenues: Support LDCs	• Shared preferences in negotiations • Joint amendments
<i>Environmentally Just CBAM MS</i> (9)	• MS: France, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Slovakia	• Pro-CBAM instrument for carbon leakage • WTO compatibility • Cement, fertilizer, aluminum, steel included in scope • Scope should not be further expanded • Revenues: support LDCs • LDCs exemption	• Shared preferences in negotiations

Table 5.6: Coalitions in the decision-making stage of the CBAM. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute, EP = European Parliament political group.

The ambitious CBAM coalition comprises a mix of 37 policy actors. It includes NGOs such as CANEurope, European Environment Bureau (EEB), Transport and Environment (T&E), World Wildlife Fund Europe (WWF Europe), and CarbonMarket Watch; interest associations such as the Environmental Coalition on Standards (ECOS) and Cleantech for Europe; research institutes notably Third Generation Environmentalism (E3G) and Sandbag; and green-industry businesses including CemInEU, Ecocem, and H2Green Steel. The coalition pushes for the rapid phase-out of free allowances before 2032 and the rapid implementation of CBAM, by 2026 at the latest. Within this coalition, there is also a sub-group of actors, such as WWF, Sandbag, E3G, and CarbonMarketWatch, that advocate for CBAM revenues to be allocated towards both vulnerable third countries and green investments within the EU, the exemption of LDCs from the CBAM, and the exclusion of an export mechanism (interviews 10, 11, 12, 14, 16). The coalition coordinated

through meetings, as well as the drafting and publication of a joint statement (ENDS Europe, 2022b), report, and a series of letters sent to the European Parliament and Council (ENDS Europe, 2022d; Agence Europe, 2022k).

Up against these ambitious coalitions is the energy-intensive industry coalition. The coalition comprises of 316 businesses and interest associations. It includes actors from the CBAM industry coalition identified in the policy preparation stage, such as Eurofer, Fertilizers Europe, Cembureau, and CEFIC. Yet, this larger coalition also includes additional key interest associations including the European non-ferrous metals association (Eurometaux), the European association representing the paper industry (CEPI), and the European Ceramic Industry Association (CERAME-UNIE), plus a vast range of business from the industries and fringe industries covered by the CBAM. Like the CBAM industry coalition, the energy-intensive industry coalition primarily advocates for free emissions allowances to remain alongside the EU ETS, that CBAM revenues should be used to support green investments within Europe, and that a mechanism to compensate and support EU exporters should be included. There are additional actors within the coalition that push for the CBAM to be implemented from 2030 onwards. To advocate for its preferences, the coalition published a series of letters and several joint statements (interview 10, 11, 13; Agence Europe, 2022i; Euractiv, 2021c; ENDS Europe, 2022f).

The progressive EP coalition is composed of the S&D, Renew, the Greens, and the Left. Like the ambitious CBAM coalition, this coalition advocates for a phase-out of free emissions allowances, that revenues should be sent to vulnerable third countries, and for a rather fast implementation of CBAM, by at least 2027, if not 2026. The coalition coordinated through the sharing and supporting of preferences in EP negotiations as well as the formation of joint amendments (Agence Europe, 2021h, 2021i, 2021j, 2022c; ENDS Europe, 2022f).

The Environmentally Just CBAM member state coalition uncovered in the policy preparation stage, sustained itself during the decision-making stage, but with the inclusion of Germany in place of the Czech Republic. The coalition preferred the CBAM as the most suited instrument for dealing with carbon leakage, that the CBAM should be WTO compatible, cement, fertilizer, steel, and aluminum should be included within the scope of the CBAM and that the scope should not be expanded, that revenues should be used to support vulnerable third countries, and that LDCs should be exempt from the CBAM. The coalition coordinated by sharing positions in Council negotiations (interview 17).

3.3 Renewable Energy Directive

The objective of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) is to increase the EU's overall uptake and consumption of renewable energy and subsequently reduce the EU's reliance on energy from fossil fuels and its overall greenhouse gas emissions. In doing so, the RED revision aims to bring the EU's policy efforts in line with the new 2030 goal of 55% emissions reduction and 2050 goal of net-zero emissions, outlined in the Climate Law (Buzogány et al., 2023). Originally adopted in 2009, this revision of the RED sets binding targets of renewable energy use in the EU's overall energy consumption. Most notably, the revision of the RED sets a binding target of 42.5% renewable energy in EU final energy consumption by 2030, increased from 32.5%. The RED also introduces a mix of binding and non-binding renewable energy sub-targets in several sectors, including industry, heating and cooling, and buildings and transport. Furthermore, the revision sought to modify the bioenergy sustainability criteria, and introduce delegated acts related to whether Renewable Fuels of Non-Biological Origin, including renewable hydrogen produced from locally-sourced renewable energy or fossil-derived hydrogen, can contribute to the renewable energy targets (Bocquillon, 2024; Buzogány et al., 2023).

The revision of the RED was drafted by the Directorate-General for Energy (DG ENER) and presented under the 'Fit for 55' package in July 2021. The RED was referred to the ITRE Committee in the EP and the Energy Council in the Council. The ENVI Committee was made an associate member and was given the lead in negotiating certain articles that focused on issues related to the sustainability and emissions saving criteria of biofuels. This created two arenas in the EP where negotiations took place, creating additional challenges to find a common position (interview 26). In June 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the publication of the REPowerEU communication by the European Commission, the Energy Council adopted its position. The ITRE report was adopted the following month, in July 2022. The EP adopted its position in plenary in September 2022. Trilogues between the EP and the Council began in October 2022. A provisional political agreement was reached in March 2023, and the revised RED was published in October 2023 (see figure 5.5).

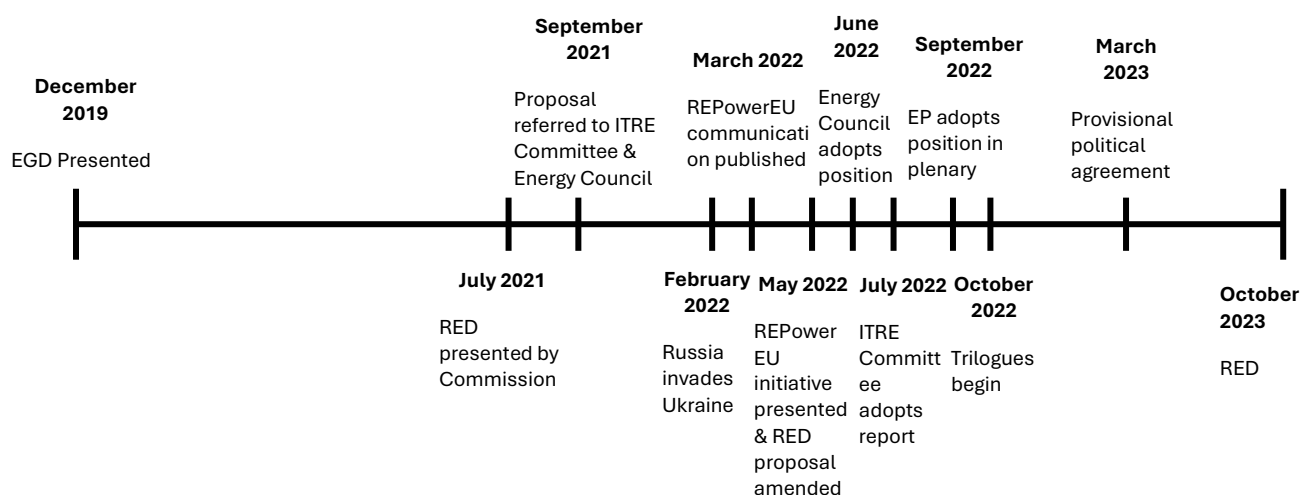


Figure 5.5: Policy process of the RED

During the policy process, three core issues among many others, emerged which defined much of the cooperation and conflict among policy actors (interviews 18 – 29). These issues revolved around the overall renewable energy target, the sustainability criteria of biofuels, and the inclusion and contribution of non-renewable low carbon fuels to renewable energy targets. The initial renewable energy target proposed was to increase the target from 32.5% to 40%. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, calls were made for the target to be increased to 45%. Some policy actors, including environmentally ambitious member states, left-wing political groups, environmental NGOs, and renewable energy associations and businesses, pushed for the 45% target. Whereas others, including some environmental laggard member states, right-wing political groups, and heavy industry interest associations and businesses were either not ready to back a target of 45% or pushed for a 40% target (interview 20, 25, 28; Buzogány et al., 2023). A similar line of conflict among policy actors also formed around the inclusion and contribution of low carbon fuels, such as renewable gas and low carbon hydrogen, to renewable energy targets. On one side, laggard member states, right-wing political groups, heavy industry interest associations, and businesses advocated for the inclusion of low carbon hydrogen and renewable gas. On the other side, environmentally ambitious member states, left-wing political groups, environmental NGOs, and renewable energy associations and businesses wanted only green hydrogen to be included in the proposal. Lastly, battles pertaining to biofuel sustainability criteria and subsidies surfaced, with policy actors such as interest associations, businesses representing agricultural and forestry

industry, and some EU institutional policy actors opposed the phasing out of subsidies and tightening of sustainability criteria. Environmentally ambitious policy actors across EU institutions as well as non-EU institutional actors, conversely, greatly pushed for the phasing out of subsidies and the tightening of sustainability criteria.

3.3.1 RED policy networks

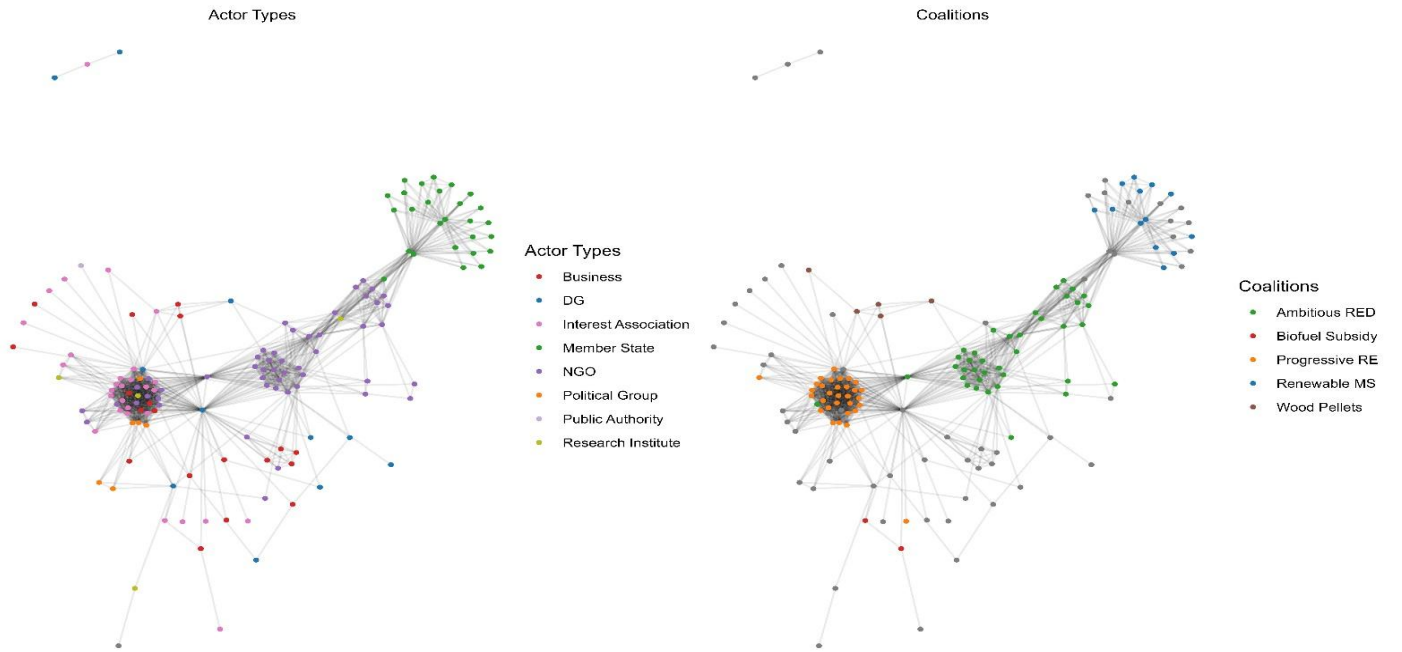
The policy networks of the RED and the coalitions identified within the networks are presented in figure 5.6. The network depicting the policy preparation stage of the RED contains 148 policy actors and eight policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.11. The clustering among policy actors is 0.75. Following the community detection, 12 communities are found. The network portraying the decision-making stage contains 457 policy actors and eight policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.15. The clustering of the network is 0.88 and 14 communities are revealed (see table 5.7). Like the Climate Law and CBAM network, the RED network also increases in size, degree of connectivity, and clustering, but it does not increase in the diversity of policy actor types. The policy preparation stage of the RED indicates that there is sparse connectivity between policy actors and that there are also some moderately defined communities. Relative to the policy preparation stage, the decision-making stage sees a major jump in the number of policy actors in the network, but the connectivity, clustering, and number of communities remain at a similar level. This shows that the RED process has a high number of actors participating in the process and that communities within the network are quite prominent. The connectivity between policy actors, however, is very low.

Policy Stage	Size	No. policy actor types	Density	Clustering	No. of communities
<i>Policy preparation</i>	148	8	0.11	0.75	12
<i>Decision-making</i>	457	8	0.15	0.88	14

Table 5.7: Descriptive network measures of the RED process.

RED Policy Networks & Coalitions

Policy Preparation



Decision-Making

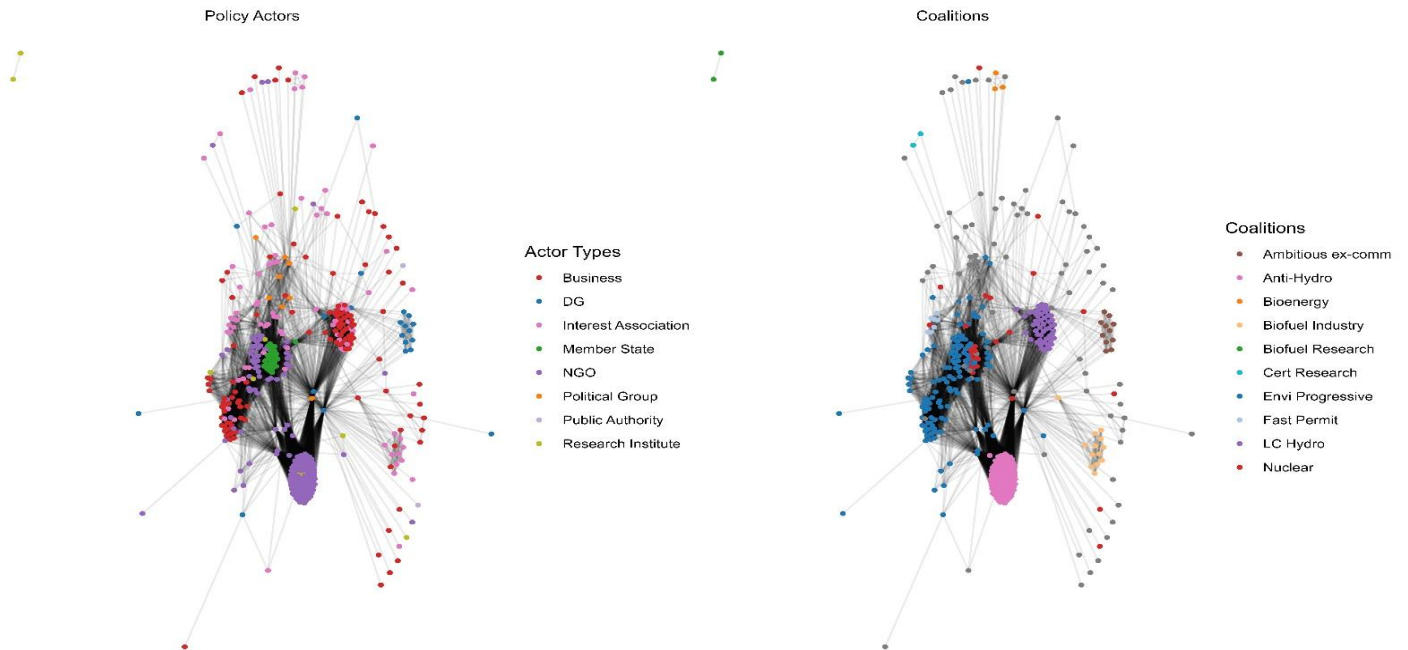


Figure 5.6: RED policy network visualizations. Note: Networks presented on the left are the original networks depicting the policy actors. Networks on the right indicate the coalitions identified. Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm is used for visualizations.

3.3.2 Coalitions in the policy preparation stage

During the policy preparation stage, five coalitions are identified within the RED. These include an ambitious RED NGO coalition, a progressive renewable energy coalition, a biofuel subsidy coalition, a wood pellets trade coalition, and a renewables member state coalition (see table 5.8).

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Ambitious RED</i> (38)	• NGO: WWF, Greenpeace, Birdlife, Fern, T&E, CANEurope, BiofuelWatch • RI: PFPI • DG: DG ENVI	• Phase-out of biofuel subsidies • Stricter biomass sustainability criteria • Inclusion of green hydrogen only	• Meetings • Joint letter • Joint statement • Joint petition • Joint Report • Protest
<i>Progressive Renewable Energy</i> (30)	• EP: S&D, Renew, the Greens, the Left • IA: EHPA, ECOS, SolarPower Europe, Wind Europe • NGO: EEB, Bellona, Climate Bonds • RI: E3G, Sandbag • Business: Iberdrola, Negative Emissions Platform, Turboden	• Inclusion of green hydrogen only • 2030 target of at least 45% <i>Partial</i> • Faster permitting procedures • Phase-out of biofuel subsidies	• Joint letter
<i>Biofuel Subsidy</i> (2)	• Business: Guidehouse • IA: Liquid Gas Europe	• Keep biofuel subsidies	• Joint report
<i>Wood Pellets Trade</i> (6)	• DG: DG Trade • Business: Drax Group, Enviva • IA: Bioenergy Europe, World Bioenergy Association, USIPA	• Keep biofuel subsidies • Maintain current biomass sustainability criteria	• Meeting • Joint statement
<i>Renewables MS</i> (13)	• MS: Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, Latvia, Portugal, Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta	• 2030 target of at least 45% • Exclusion of low carbon fuels in transport & industry targets • Phase-out of biofuel subsidies • Inclusion of green hydrogen only	• Joint statement • Joint non-paper • Shared positions

Table 5.8: Coalitions in the policy preparation stage of the RED. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute.

The ambitious NGO coalition includes 38 policy actors including environmental NGOs, the Environment Directorate-General (DG ENVI), and the research institute Partnership for Policy Integrity (PFPI). Key NGOs in this coalition include WWF Europe, Greenpeace, Birdlife, Fern, T&E, CANEurope, EuroNatur, and Biofuelwatch (interview 19, 20, 25). The coalition advocated primarily for the phase-out of biofuel subsidies. Many of the actors within the coalition also supported the need for stricter sustainability criteria for biomass and for the inclusion of green hydrogen only. The coalition coordinated through a variety of joint activities to advocate its preferences. This included meetings, writing joint letters (ENDS Europe, 2021b), statements (Euractiv, 2020g; ENDS Europe, 2021f; ENDS Europe, 2022g), a report, and a petition (ENDS Europe, 2021a), and carrying out a protest (ENDS Europe, 2021e).

The progressive renewable energy coalition comprises of a mix of 30 policy actors from EP political groups including S&D, Renew, the Greens, and the Left; interest associations representing the energy sector such as EHPA, ECOS, SolarPower Europe, WindEurope, and the Renewable Heating and Cooling Alliance; NGOs including EEB, Bellona, and Climate Bonds; research institutes, namely E3G and Sandbag; and some businesses, such as Iberdrola, Negative Emissions Platform, and Turboden. Aligned with the Ambitious RED coalition, the coalition advocates for the inclusion of green hydrogen only and an ambitious 2030 renewable energy target of at least 45 per cent. Some actors within the coalition also support the need for faster permitting procedures and for biofuel subsidies to be phased out. The coalition coordinated by drafting a series of joint letters addressed to Frans Timmermans and DG ENER (interview 20, 26, 27, 28; ENDS Europe, 2021e; Agence Europe, 2021d, 2021e).

The biofuel subsidy coalition comprises Guidehouse, a business, and Liquid Gas Europe, an interest association. This coalition prefers that biomass subsidies remain within the RED. The coalition coordinated through a publishing of a report (Euractiv 22/04/2020).

The wood pellets trade coalition consists of Directorate-General for Trade (DG TRADE), Drax Group, Enviva, Bioenergy Europe, the World Bioenergy Association, and the United States Industrial Pellet Association (USIPA). Like the biofuel subsidy coalition, this coalition advocates for biofuel subsidies to remain under the RED and for biomass sustainability criteria to remain unchanged. The coalition coordinated through meetings registered on the transparency register and a joint statement (ENDS Europe, 2021a).

The renewables member state coalition consists of 13 member states including Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, Latvia, Portugal, Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, and Malta (interview 24, 26, 28). The renewables member state coalition is closely aligned with the ambitious NGO coalition and the progressive renewable energy coalition. The renewable member state coalition advocates for an ambitious 2030 target of at least 45 per cent, the exclusion of low-carbon fuels in the accounting of the sectoral transport and industry targets, the phase-out of biofuel subsidies, and for only green hydrogen to be included in the RED. The coalition coordinated by issuing a joint statement (Agence Europe, 2020h), drafting and sending a non-paper to other member states (Agence Europe, 2022f), and through shared positions (ENDS Europe, 2021g).

3.3.3 Coalitions in the decision-making stage

The decision-making stage of the RED saw an increase in the number of coalitions to 10 (see table 5.9). They include a nuclear coalition, a low-carbon hydrogen coalition, a biofuel industry

coalition, a bio-energy coalition, and a biofuel research coalition, an environmentally progressive coalition, a green industry coalition, an anti-hydropower coalition, an ambitious ex-commissioner coalition, the faster permitting coalition, and a certification research coalition. The environmentally progressive coalition is a result of the ambitious RED, the progressive renewable energy, and the renewable member state coalitions from the policy preparation stage merging. The wood pellets trade coalition in the policy preparation stage splits with Drax Group and Enviva becoming members of the nuclear coalition and the USPIA a member of the bioenergy coalition. The low carbon hydrogen coalition and the ambitious CBAM coalition both uncovered in the CBAM share close resemblances with the energy intensive and energy intensive industry coalitions, and the environmentally progressive coalition in the RED, respectively.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Nuclear</i> (27)	- MS: France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Croatia, Bulgaria - EP: EPP, ECR - IA: Euroheat & Power, Hydrogen Europe, GasNaturally - Business: Air Liquide, Drax Group, Enviva, Eni, BP, Naturgy Energy Group, Repsol	2030 target of 40-44% - Low sectoral target for industry, transport & heating and cooling - Low carbon fuels included in transport & industry targets - Inclusion of low carbon hydrogen - Faster permitting for RE projects - Maintain biofuel subsidies - Maintain biomass sustainability criteria - Exclude biomass cascading principle	- Meetings - Shared positions - Joint letter - Joint amendment - Joint statement - Joint position paper
<i>Low Carbon Hydrogen</i> (50)	- IA: Fertilizer Europe, Eurofer, CEFIC, Nuclear Europe, Cerame-Unie - Business: ArcelorMittal, France Chimie, A3M, EDF - DG: DG Grow	Inclusion of low carbon hydrogen	Joint letter
<i>Biofuel Industry</i> (13)	- IA: European Biogas Association, ePURE, Biodiesel Board, FEDIOL, Copa-Cogeca, CEFS, CIBE, Cocreal - Business: Neste, TotalEnergies, CEPM	- Maintain biofuel subsidies - Maintain biomass sustainability criteria	Meeting
<i>Bioenergy</i> (3)	IA: Bioenergy Europe, USIPA, Austrian Biomass Association	- Maintain biofuel subsidies - Maintain biomass sustainability criteria	Meeting
<i>Biofuel research</i> (2)	Business: Imperial College London Consultants, Concawe	Maintain biofuel subsidies	Meeting
<i>Environmentally Progressive</i> (131)	- MS: Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Ireland - EP: S&D, Renew, the Greens, the Left - DG: DG Clima, DG Envi, DG Trade - NGO: WWF, Greenpeace, Birdlife, Fern, T&E, CAN Europe, EEB, Canopee, Biofuelwatch, Bellona - RI: PFPI, Sandbag, E3G, Jacques Delors Energy Centre - IA: EHFA, SolarPower Europe, EGEC, EREF, SolarHeat Europe, WindEurope, ECOS - Business: Orsted, Siemens, Green Power Denmark, H2Green Steel	2030 target of at least 45% - Inclusion of green hydrogen only - Faster permitting procedures for RE projects - Phase-out of biofuel subsidies - Stricter biomass sustainability criteria	- Meeting - Shared positions - Joint letters - Joint statements - Joint amendments - Non-papers

<i>Anti-Hydropower</i> (129)	• NGO: Agent Green, Bankwatch Network, Riverwatch, Wetlands International Europe	• Disincentivizing hydropower	• Joint letter
<i>Ambitious ex-commissioner</i> (11)	• Former EU Commissioners: Pascal Lamy, Connie Hedegaard	• 2030 target of at least 45%	• Joint letter
<i>Faster Permitting</i> (7)	• IA: Eurelectric, AVERE, EASE, Eurometaux, Europacable, CurrENT, European Copper institute	• Faster permitting procedures for RE projects	• Joint letter
<i>Certification research</i> (2)	• NGO: I-track • IA: RECS Energy Certification Association	• Implementation of GO certificates that are traceable, transparent, and accessible	• Meeting

Table 5.9: Coalitions in the decision-making stage of the RED. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute.

The nuclear coalition comprises of 27 policy actors, including the 13 member states such as France, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Croatia, and Bulgaria; the EPP and ECR political groups from the EP; interest associations including Euroheat and Power, Hydrogen Europe, GasNaturally, eFuel Alliance, and Open Grid Europe; and energy businesses like Air Liquide; Enviva, Eni, BP, Naturgy Energy Group, and Repsol (interview 20, 29). The coalition advocates for a 2030 renewable energy target of 40 – 44 per cent, for lower sectoral targets including the industry target, the transport target, and the heating and cooling target, for low carbon hydrogen to be included in the RED, and subsequently the inclusion of low carbon fuels in the calculation of the transport and industry targets. The coalition also advocates the need for faster permitting of renewable energy projects, and prefers that subsidies for biomass remain, for the exclusion of the biomass cascading principle, and that the biomass sustainability criteria should not be made any stricter. The coalition coordinated and advocated for its preferences through meetings, letters (Agence Europe, 2021j, 2023a; Euractiv 2022a), shared positions (Agence Europe, 2022l), joint amendments (ENDS Europe, 2022f), joint statements (Agence Europe, 2023f; Euractiv, 2023b), and joint position papers (ENDS Europe, 2023b, 2023c).

The low-carbon hydrogen coalition comprises of 50 policy actors including key industry interest associations like Fertilizer Europe, Eurofer, CEFIC, Nuclear Europe, and CERAME-UNIE; businesses including Arcelor Mittal, France Chimie, A3M, and EDF; and the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship, and SMEs (DG GROW). The coalition advocates for low-carbon hydrogen to be included under the RED. The coalition coordinated by drafting and sending a joint letter to the European Commission (interview 21, 23, 27; Euractiv 10/03/2023).

The biofuel industry coalition involves 13 policy actors that represent biogas and the agricultural sectors. These include interest associations such as European Biogas Association, ePURE,

European Biodiesel Board, the EU vegetable oil and protein meal industry association (FEDIOL), Copa-Cogeca, an association representing farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU, the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers (CEFS), the International Confederation of European Beet Growers (CIBE), the European Association of trade in cereals, oilseeds, rice, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed, and agrosupply (Cocreal), and the Polish Biofuels Association; and businesses such as Neste, Bunge, TotalEnergies, and The Consorcio Energético Punta Cana-Macao (CEPM). This coalition prefers that subsidies for biofuels remain and that the sustainability criteria for biomass is not changed. The coalition coordinated through meetings indicated in the EU transparency register and interviews (interview 21, 29).

The bioenergy coalition is a smaller coalition made up of three interest associations, which were also members of the wood pellet trade coalition: Bioenergy Europe, USIPA, and the Austrian Biomass Association. Like the biofuel industry coalition, this coalition prefers that biofuel subsidies remain and that biomass sustainability criteria are not altered. The coalition coordinated through meetings (interview 21, 29).

The biofuel research coalition comprises of Imperial College London Consultants and Concawe. It advocates for biofuel subsidies to remain. The coalition coordinated and advocated its preference by publishing a joint report (Agence Europe, 2021h).

The environmentally progressive coalition is composed of 131 policy actors, including 11 member states such as Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland; the S&D, Renew, the Greens, and the Left political groups in the EP; DG ENVI and DG CLIMA from the European Commission; as well as several environmental NGOs, research institutes, interest associations, and businesses. This coalition stems from the merging of the ambitious RED, the progressive renewable energy, and the renewable member state coalitions identified in the policy preparation stage, in addition to the expansion of additional actors. Some notable NGOs include WWF, Greenpeace, Birdlife, Fern, T&E, CAN Europe, EEB, Canopee, Biofuelwatch, and Robin Wood; the research institutes include PFPI, Sandbag and E3G; some of the interest associations are EHPA, SolarPower Europe, the European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC), European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF), WindEurope, ECOS, and Solar Heat Europe; finally, businesses include Orsted, Siemens, Green Power Denmark, Enapter, and H2 Green Steel (interview 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28). This coalition advocates for an ambitious 2030 renewable energy target of at least 45 per cent, the inclusion of green hydrogen only, the need for faster permitting procedures, for the phase out of biofuel subsidies, and for stricter biomass sustainability criteria. The coalition coordinated through a variety of joint activities including meetings (Euractiv, 2023b,

2023c), sharing positions (ENDS Europe, 2021g; Agence Europe, 2022k), joint letters (Agence Europe, 2021j, 2022c, 2023b; ENDS Europe, 2023a), joint statements (Agence Europe, 2022f; Euractiv, 2022b; ENDS Europe, 2022f), joint amendments, non-papers (Agence Europe, 2022f).

The anti-hydropower coalition consists of 129 policy actors, mainly NGOs including Agent Green, Bankwatch Network, Riverwatch, and Wetlands International Europe, as well as several other national level NGOs that focus on water and wetlands. This coalition specifically advocates for the disincentivizing of hydropower in the RED and advocated its preference by publishing an open letter (ENDS Europe, 2023a).

The ambitious ex-commissioner coalition includes 11 former European Commissioners who advocate for an ambitious 2030 renewable energy target of at least 45 per cent. The coalition coordinated by drafting a joint letter and sending it to the European Commission (Agence Europe, 2022c).

The faster permitting coalition consists of 7 interest associations, including the Federation of European electricity industry (Eurelectric), the European Association for Electromobility (AVERE), EASE, Eurometaux, the European Association for wire, cables and cable accessories producers (Europacable), the association for grid technology providers (currENT), and the European Copper Institute (interview 18). The coalition advocates for the need to improve the permitting procedure for renewable energy projects in the EU and coordinated by drafting a letter which was sent to the Swedish council presidency (Agence Europe, 2023c).

The certification research coalition includes I-track, an NGO, and RECS Energy Certification Association, an interest association. This coalition supports the need for Guarantees of Origin certificates to be implemented and for their traceability, transparency and access to information be improved. The coalition coordinated and advocated its preference through meetings.

3.4 Sustainable Batteries

The Sustainable Batteries Regulation aims to make batteries placed on the EU market more sustainable throughout their entire life cycle and minimize the environmental impact of the growing surge of battery production and use in the EU. In doing so, the proposal seeks to foster the development of a competitive and sustainable battery industry, and support Europe's clean energy transition (interview 39; Barkhausen et al., 2023; Pollex & Lenschow, 2024). The Sustainable Batteries Regulation revises the Batteries Directive adopted in 2006. It sets standards for the production and recycling of portable batteries, automotive batteries, electric vehicle batteries, and industrial batteries. By focusing on the production and recycling of batteries, the regulation is

developed in two parts. The first focuses on battery production. It sets out rules on the sustainability, performance, and safety of batteries to establish harmonized rules across the EU and reduce internal market distortions. Concretely, the first part of the regulation puts forward restrictions for certain substances contained in batteries; provisions for information and labelling of the battery, including its carbon footprint; provisions for the durability of batteries; rules for the replaceability of batteries within products; and obligations for supply chain due diligence for critical raw materials. The second part focuses on the recycling of batteries. It sets targets for the collection, recovery, and recycling of batteries with specific goals for different types of batteries and the critical raw materials within the batteries (Pollex & Lenschow, 2024).

The proposal was drafted by DG ENVI and presented by the Commission in December 2020. Following the presentation, the proposal was referred to the ENVI Committee in the EP and the Environment Council in the Council in March 2021. The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and the ITRE Committee were made associated committees. In February 2022, the ENVI Committee report was adopted, and the EP adopted its position in March 2022. A week later the Environment Council also adopted a general approach. Trilogues between the EP and the Council begun a month later in April 2022. In December 2022, a provisional political agreement was reached. The regulation was published in July 2023. The timeline of the process is illustrated in figure 5.7.

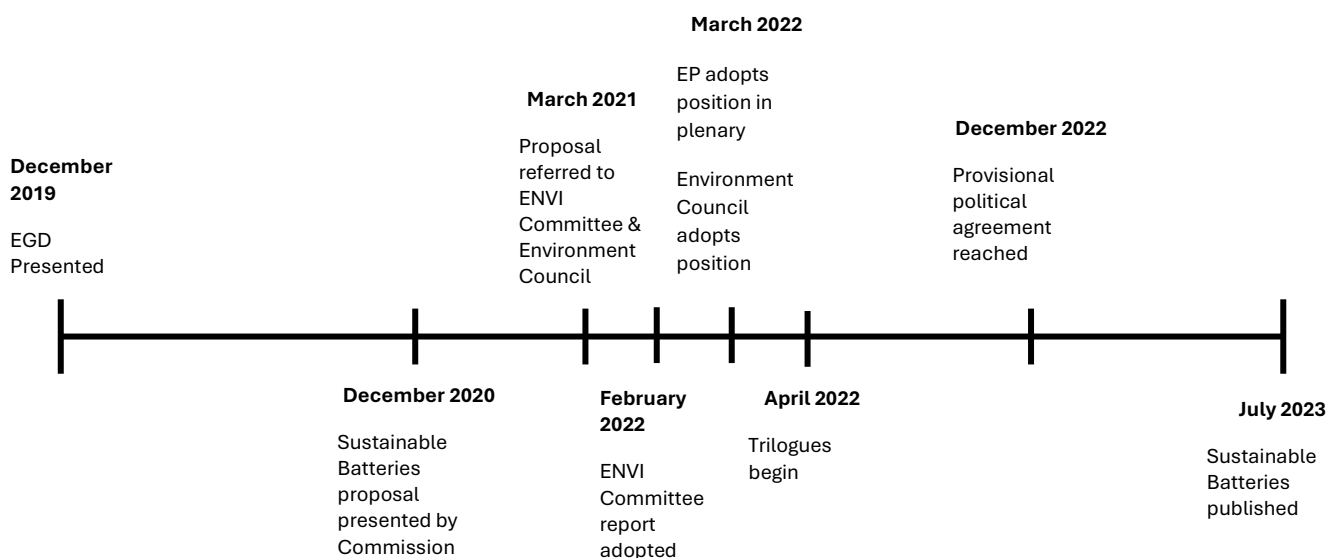


Figure 5.7: Policy process of the Sustainable Batteries

Throughout the policy process, many contested issues emerged between policy actors (interviews 29 – 39; Barkhausen et al., 2023). Among the several issues that arose, the major issues were related to the recycling targets for batteries, the recovery targets for critical raw materials, and targets related to the recycled content of batteries (interview 29). Here, key policy actors representing the battery industry in Europe plus laggard member states and right-wing political groups, all advocated for less ambition across the three issues. Opposing this was many environmental and social NGOs, ambitious member states, and left-wing political groups. Another key issue revolved around the due diligence principle in the production of batteries and the scope of critical raw materials to be covered by the principle. Supporting the inclusion of the principle and the widening of the scope of critical raw materials to be included were the environmental and social NGOs (interview 33, 34, 39). Two other key issues teased out during the policy process related to the scope of the batteries covered by the regulation and the implementation timeline of the regulation. Regarding the scope of batteries, the primary advocates for not extending the scope of batteries included the battery industry actors. These actors were in direct opposition primarily to the environmental NGOs. Finally, the implementation timeline for the regulation also saw divisions drawn, like those around the targets. On one side lay the laggard member states and battery industry policy actors pushing for an extended implementation timeline. On the other side, NGOs and ambitious member states advocated for a quick implementation (interview 39).

3.4.1 Sustainable Batteries policy networks

The policy networks of the Sustainable Batteries policy process and the coalitions within are presented in figure 5.8. The network of the policy preparation stage of the Sustainable Batteries process contains 12 policy actors and four policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.14. The clustering of communities among policy actors is 0.39 and from the community detection, five communities are identified. The network depicting the decision-making stage contains 111 policy actors and seven policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.39. The clustering of policy actors in the network is 0.8 and eight communities are present (see table 5.10). The policy preparation stage is marked by a relatively low number of policy actors and policy actor types, connectivity, and clustering of communities. Yet, in the decision-making stage there is a major increase in the number and type of policy actors involved as well as in the connectivity and clustering of communities. This indicates that, although the policy preparation stage is small with a low degree of representation and connectivity, the network evolves, and the decision-making stage involves a larger number and more diversified range of policy actors, which are moderately connected with higher degrees of clustering into communities.

Policy Stage	Size	No. policy actor types	Density	Clustering	No. of communities
Policy preparation	12	4	0.14	0.39	5
Decision-making	111	7	0.39	0.8	8

Table 5.10: Descriptive network measures for Sustainable Batteries process.

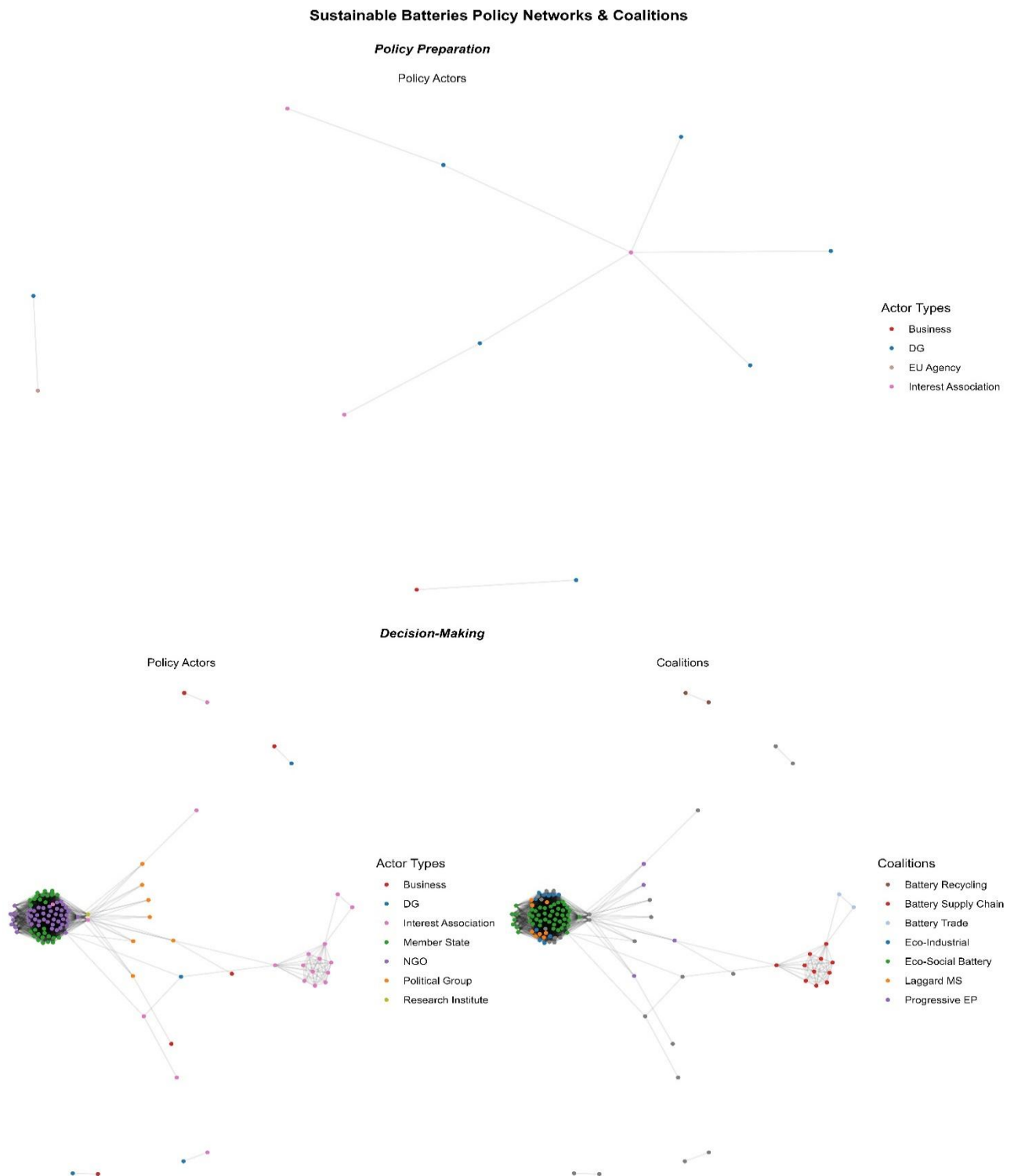


Figure 5.8: Sustainable Batteries policy network visualizations. Note: Networks presented on the left are the original networks depicting the policy actors. Networks on the right indicate the coalitions identified. Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm is used for visualizations.

3.4.2 Coalitions in the policy preparation stage

During the policy preparation stage of the Sustainable Batteries regulation, no coalitions were identified. Interviews raise two possible explanations for the non-existence of coalitions early in the process. First, interviewees suggested that the high complexity of the proposal, including the sheer number of issues to be negotiated and the high number of delegated acts embedded in the regulation, made it extremely difficult and time consuming for policy actors to develop their own preferences early on. Because of the sheer complexity and the resources needed to understand the proposal and develop preferences, policy actors had little space to spend additional time to find other policy actors to coordinate with based on shared preferences (interview 30, 36). The second explanation related to the nascency of the proposal. Although the proposal was a revision, it was the first proposal in which the Commission adopted a circular economic approach to a product on the EU market. This shift in legislative logic was said to be further exacerbated by the nascency of the EU battery industry and EU battery recycling market, making it difficult for these actors to engage with the proposal and coordinate with others very early on (interview 30, 39).

3.4.3 Coalitions in the decision-making stage

During the decision-making stage, seven coalitions are identified (see table 5.11). These include a battery supply chain coalition, a battery trade coalition, an eco-social battery coalition, a battery recycling coalition, a battery laggard member state coalition, an eco-industrial-battery member state coalition, and a progressive EP coalition. The progressive EP coalition identified is the same coalition that has also been uncovered during the Climate Law and CBAM policymaking processes.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Battery Supply Chain</i> (12)	• IA: ACEA, Recharge, Eurometaux, AVERE, CLEPA, EASE, EBRA, EGMF, EPTA, Eurobat • Business: Northvolt	• REACH regulation to be applied • Lower recycled content mandate • Lower battery recycle target • Lower CRM recovery targets • Limited scope of battery types included • Extend implementation timeline • Reduce administrative and financial burden	• Position paper
<i>Battery Trade</i> (2)	• IA: American Chamber of Commerce, APPLiA	• Lower recycled content mandate • Not all batteries should be replaceable • Maintain non-rechargeable batteries • Extend implementation timeline	• Position paper

<i>Eco-Social Battery (48)</i>	• NGO: EEB, T&E, DUH, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Bellona • IA: ECOS	• Rapid implementation of regulation • Incorporation of due diligence principle • Carbon footprint reporting • Maintain or increase battery recycling target • Maintain or increase recovery targets for CRMs • All products with batteries covered by regulation • Batteries be made replaceable in all products • Phase-out of non-rechargeable batteries • Widen scope of CRMs included under due diligence principle	• Position paper • Joint letter • Joint call • Shared positions
<i>Battery recycling (2)</i>	• IA: FEAD • Business: Saubermacher Dienstleistungs	• Increase battery recycling targets	• Shared positions
<i>Battery laggard MS (8)</i>	• MS: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Greece, Slovenia	• Lower battery recovery targets • Extend implementation of regulation	• Shared positions
<i>Eco-industrial battery MS (10)</i>	• MS: Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Poland, Denmark, Hungary	• REACH regulation to be applied • Higher battery recycling targets • Assessment and due diligence checks carried out at MS level • Reduce administrative and financial burden • Regulation implemented by 2022 at the latest	• Shared positions
<i>Progressive EP</i>	• EP: S&D, Renew, the Greens, the Left	• Recycling content mandate required • Higher recovery targets for CRMs	• Shared positions

Table 5.11: Coalitions in the decision-making stage of the Sustainable Batteries Regulation. Note: Size of the coalitions indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, DG = directorate generals, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute.

The battery supply chain coalition comprises of 11 interest associations and a business, representing the interests of the battery supply chain in Europe. The coalition includes interest associations such as European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), the Advanced rechargeable and lithium batteries industry association (Recharge), Eurometaux, AVERE, the European Association of Automotive Suppliers (CLEPA), EASE, the European Battery Recycling Association (EBRA), the European Garden Machinery industry federation (EGMF), the European Power Tool Association (EPTA), SolarPower Europe, the Association of European Automotive and Industrial Battery Manufacturers (Eurobat). It also includes the business Northvolt. This coalition advocated for the EU's REACH regulation to be applied to the durability and safety requirements of batteries, that the recycled content mandate, and target for battery recycling, the target of recycled content within batteries, and the recovery targets of critical raw materials in batteries is too high and should be reduced or re-assessed, the scope of types of batteries to be included

should be limited and thus not all products containing batteries should be included in the regulation, that the implementation of the regulation needs to be extended, and that the administrative and financial burden of the regulation must be minimized to ensure competitiveness and innovation. The coalition coordinated and advocated its preferences by drafting and publishing two position papers (interview 32, 35, 37; Agence, 2022a; ENDS Europe 2022a).

The battery trade coalition consists of the interest associations, the American Chamber of Commerce to the EU and the European Association for the Home Appliance Industry (APPLiA). The coalition shows concern for the inclusion of the recycled content mandate, that not all batteries should be made replaceable, that non-rechargeable batteries should not be phase-out, and that the implementation of the regulation should be extended. Closely linked with the Battery supply chain coalition, the coalition, with Eurobat, coordinated by drafting and publishing a position paper (ENDS Europe, 2021h).

The eco-social battery coalition includes 47 NGOs and one interest association. Some of the primary actors in this coalition include EEB, T&E, Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, ECOS, and Bellona Foundation. This coalition focuses on the social and environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Battery Regulation. All members advocate for the rapid implementation of the Regulation. Within this coalition are two sub-groups which share preferences on a wider range of issues and are linked primarily by the agency of T&E and Amnesty International (interview 31, 33). The first sub-group consists of EEB, ECOS, T&E, and DUH. This sub-group advocates for the incorporation of a due diligence principle, the carbon footprint of batteries to be reported on, an ambitious recycling target for batteries (70 per cent), that the recovery targets for the critical raw materials (CRMs) within batteries should be either maintained or increased, the regulation should cover all products containing batteries, batteries within products should be made replaceable, and for non-rechargeable batteries to be phased-out. The second sub-group includes Amnesty International, 11.11.11, Finnwatch, Germanwatch, Centre d'Aide juridico-judiciaire, Powershift, SOMO, Collectif des organisations de la Société Civile pour la défense des droits des communautés, Earthworks, Human Rights Watch, RAID, and Inclusive Development International. This sub-group has a clear preference for the regulation to have a wider scope of CRMs included under the due diligence principle. The coalition coordinated and advocated its preferences through several joint publications including a position paper, a joint letter sent to member state environment ministers (ENDS Europe, 2021h), a joint call to all member states (ENDS Europe, 2021c; Agence Europe, 2022d, 2022g), and the sharing of positions in the media (ENDS Europe, 2022e).

The battery recycling coalition includes the European Waste Management Association (FEAD), an interest association, and Saubermacher Dienstleistungs, a business. The coalition pushes for more ambition in battery recycling targets, particularly the need for the overall recycling target to be maintained or increased. The coalition coordinated by supporting each other's positions in the media (Euractiv, 2021a).

The battery laggard member state coalition comprises of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Greece, and Slovenia. This coalition prefers lower recovery targets for batteries and the need for the implementation of the regulation to be extended, particularly because these member states consider the imposed targets unrealistic to keep up with (interview 40). The coalition coordinated by sharing preferences and supporting them during negotiations (Agence Europe, 2021b, 2022e; Euractiv, 2021d).

The eco-industrial battery member state coalition consists of Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Poland, Denmark, and Hungary. The coalition advocates for the established REACH legislation to be applied to the durability and safety requirements of batteries, ambitious recycling targets, assessment and due diligence checks of batteries to be carried out at the member state level, the need for the regulation to be simplified or made less strict to reduce administrative burden, and for rapid implementation. The coalition coordinated and advocated by sharing preferences and supporting them during negotiations (interview 40; Agence Europe, 2022e). The eco-industrial battery member state coalition was further divided into two sub-groups. On one hand is the Scandinavian member states, which are considered environmentally ambitious regarding the Sustainable Batteries policy process. On the other hand, there was Germany, France, Poland, Hungary, and Sweden who prioritized competitiveness in hopes of attracting the main bulk of the investment of this new industry, which the proposal was seeking to establish (interview 39).

The progressive EP coalition includes the S&D, Renew, the Greens, and the Left (interview 35, 40). The coalition advocates for the inclusion of a recycling content mandate and for ambitious CRM recovery targets of recycled batteries. The coalition coordinated and advocated its preferences by sharing and supporting the preferences during negotiations in the EP (Agence Europe, 2022b).

3.5 Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund (JTF) seeks to account for the negative social consequences of the transition to net-zero by 2050 and the subsequent greening of the economy. At its core, the JTF

is a financing mechanism. It establishes financial support for carbon-intensive regions in Europe that are the most economically affected by the transition to climate neutrality, particularly those regions where coal mining is still an important economic activity. To this end, the JTF integrates environmental and social policy, and adheres to the element of 'leave no one behind' enshrined in the EGD (Delreux & Crellin, 2026; Crespy & Munta, 2023).

To support the transition of carbon intensive regions, the proposal sets a budget of 17.5 billion EUR (10bn EUR from NextGenEU and 7.5bn EUR from the Multiannual Financial Framework). The JTF funds two categories of activities: green investments that foster the modernization of local economies; and social investments that address the negative impacts of the transition on workers and employment (Crespy & Munta, 2023). The allocation of JTF funds to member states is determined by the member states' levels of industrial emissions in carbon-intensive regions, employment figures in fossil fuel industries, and degrees of economic development. To access the funds, member states need to devise Territorial Just Transition Plans outlining how they intend to use the funds (Delreux & Crellin, 2026; Kyriazi & Miro, 2022).

The drafting of the JTF proposal was led by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). The proposal was published by the Commission in January 2020, not long after the presentation of the EGD. As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commission amended the proposal to increase the funding size of the JTF in May 2020. Once presented, the proposal was referred to the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) in the EP and the Structural Measures Working Party in the Council. The Structural Measures Working Party submitted a partial mandate to the Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States to the European Union (COREPER) for approval in June 2020. The REGI Committee report was adopted in July 2020 with the EP adopting its position in September of the same year. In October the Council issued an updated partial mandate following the European Council conclusions in July 2020. A political agreement was settled in December 2020. The legislation was published in the Official Journal in June 2021 (see figure 5.9).

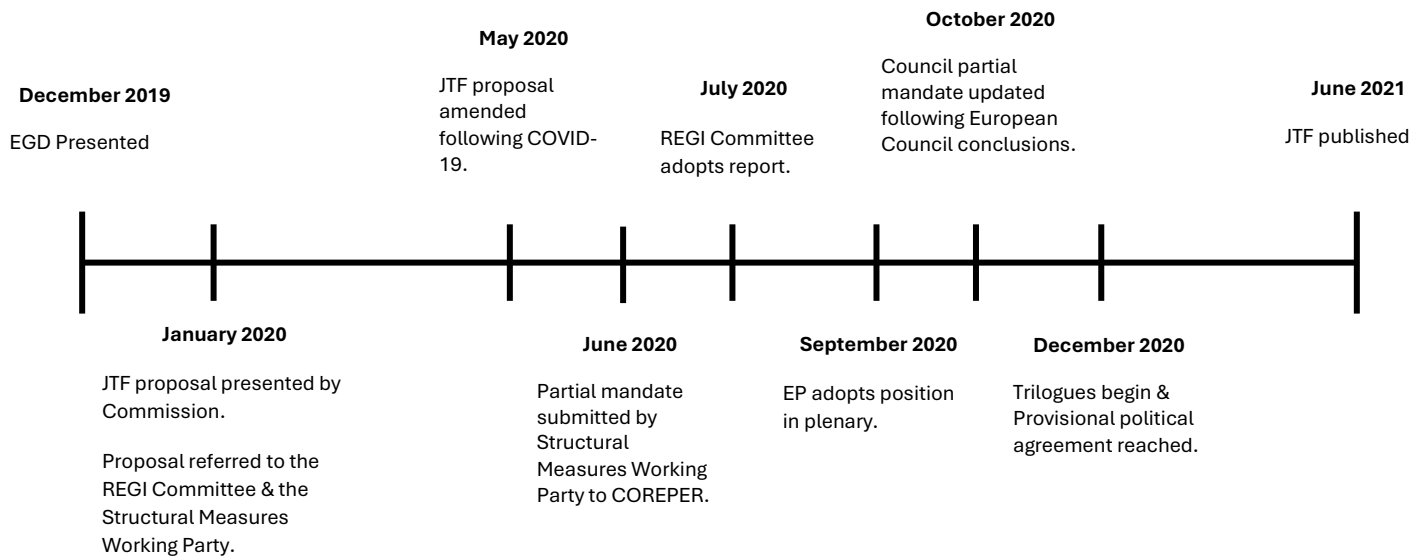


Figure 5.9: Policy process of the JTF

The policy process of the JTF was marked by several conflicting issues. In particular, the size of the JTF, the scope of activities covered, the funding of fossil fuel and nuclear energy projects, and the conditionalities in accessing the funds (interview 40 – 48; Crespy & Munta, 2023; Kyriazi & Miro, 2022). Beginning with the size, divisions emerged between policy actors who supported a large envelope and greater generosity and those who opposed a larger JTF. Policy actors supporting a larger JTF included Eastern European member states, carbon-intense municipalities, renewable energy interest associations, and environmental NGOs. Opposing the larger JTF was member states that are net contributors to the EU budget, particularly the ‘Frugal’ member states. Relatedly, a similar line of division emerged around whether the funds should come from new money or existing money. The scope of activities covered by the JTF also proved controversial. On one hand, some policy actors advocated for a broadening of eligible activities to be covered by the JTF, such as investments in training centers and digital innovation. On the other hand, and plausibly one of the most contentious issues, was the division around whether JTF funds could be used for investments in fossil fuel and nuclear projects. Here, the Visegrad and other Eastern European member states, and right-leaning political groups were the main proponents advocating for the JTF to enable investments into fossil-fuel and nuclear projects. In opposition was environmental NGOs, left-leaning political groups, renewable energy interest associations and

clean-tech businesses. Regarding the conditionality of accessing funds, issues arose around the need to have committed to the 2050 climate neutrality target and have fossil fuel phase-out plans, as well as the Territorial Just Transition Plans, which member states need to develop to show how the funds will be spent.

3.5.1 JTF policy networks

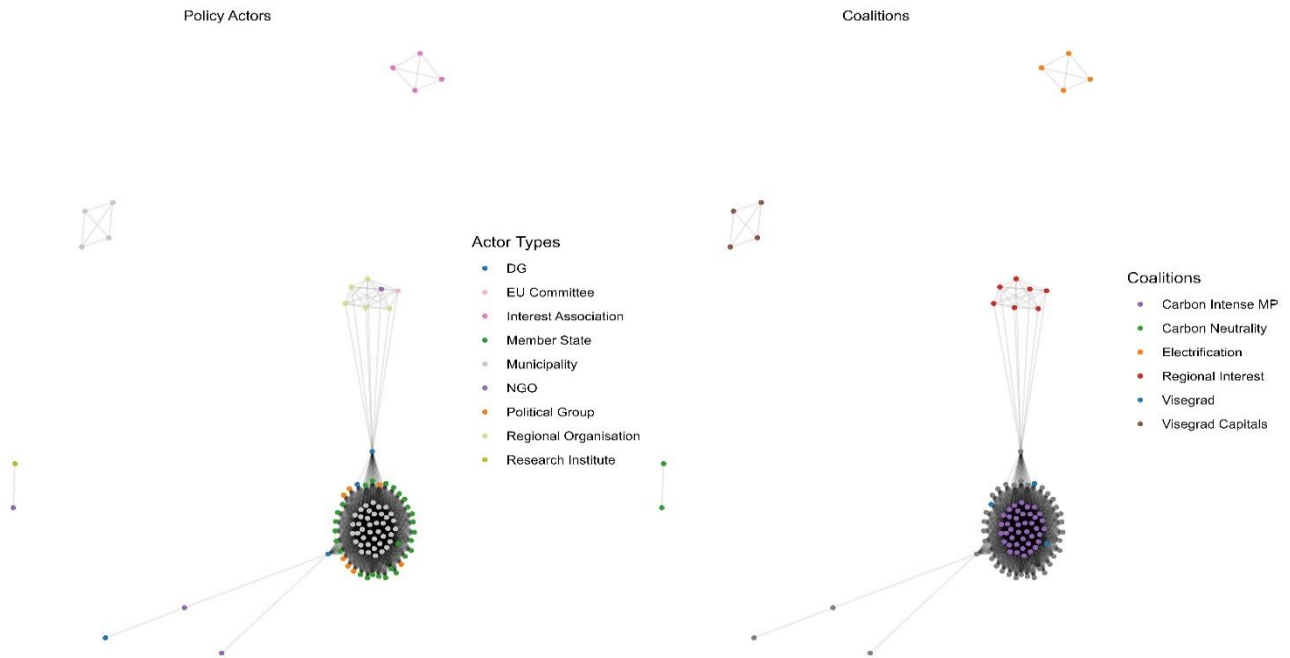
The policy networks of the JTF policy process and the coalitions within are presented in figure 5.10. The network depicting the policy preparation stage of the JTF contains 98 policy actors and nine policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.51. The degree of clustering among policy actors into distinct communities is 0.83. Five communities were uncovered in the community detection. The network depicting the decision-making stage contains 165 policy actors and eight policy actor types. The density of coordination among policy actors within the network is 0.32 and the clustering of communities is 0.87. Following the community detection, 14 communities were discovered (see table 5.12). The policy preparation stage of the JTF is characterized by a moderately connected network of policy actors and a high degree of clustering among policy actors. Like the other processes, the size, clustering, and number of communities all increase between the policy preparation and decision-making stages. The number of policy actor types and the density, however, decreases. This suggests that, despite the increased number of policy actors in the network, the decision-making stage becomes more fragmented whilst distinct communities of policy actors remain.

Policy Stage	Size	No. of policy actor types	Density	Clustering	No. of communities
<i>Policy preparation</i>	98	9	0.51	0.83	5
<i>Decision-making</i>	165	8	0.32	0.87	14

Table 5.12: Descriptive network measures for the JTF process.

JTF Policy Networks & Coalitions

Policy Preparation



Decision-Making

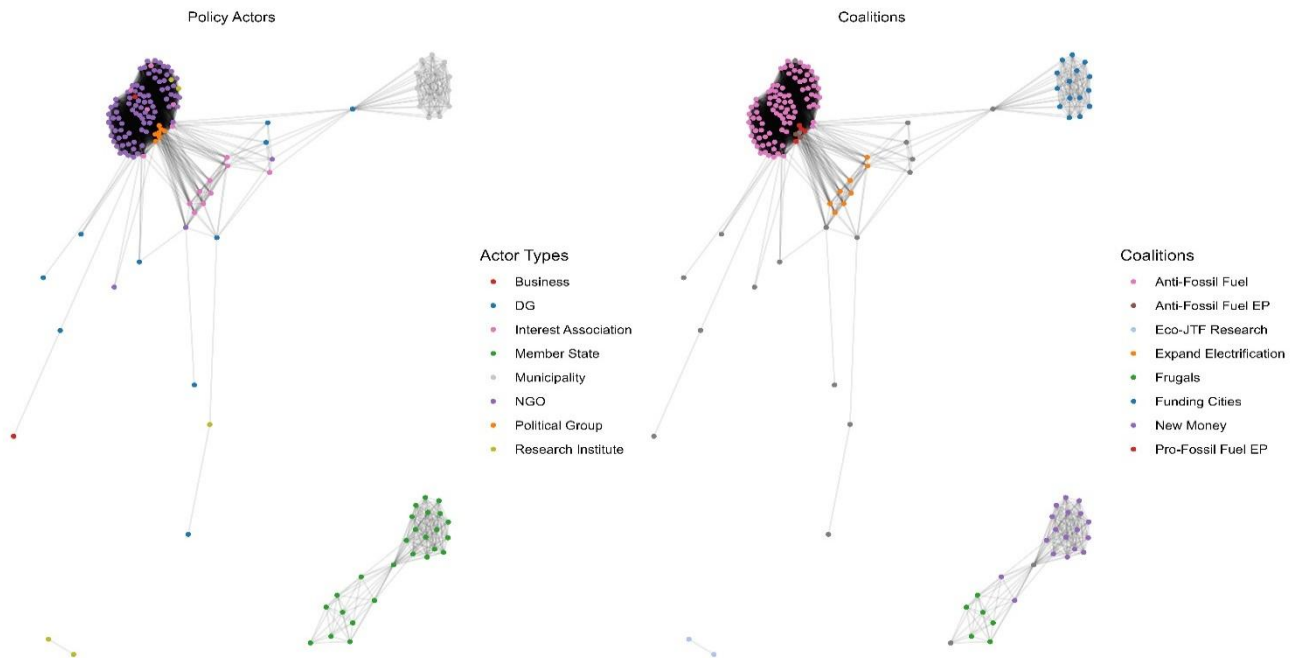


Figure 5.10: JTF policy network visualizations. Note: Networks presented on the left are the original networks depicting the policy actors. Networks on the right indicate the coalitions identified. Fruchterman-Reingold algorithm is used for visualizations.

3.5.2 Coalitions in the policy preparation stage

In the policy preparation stage of the JTF, six coalitions are identified (see table 5.13). These include a carbon-intense municipality coalition, a Visegrad capitals coalition, an electrification coalition, a carbon neutrality coalition, a regional interest coalition, and a Visegrad coalition. Interestingly, the electrification coalition contains similar members to the faster permitting coalition found in the RED process and the Visegrad coalition is also uncovered in the Climate Law process.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Carbon-intense municipality</i> (41)	• MP: Bytom, Forst, Gliwice, Lupeni, Kolkwitz, Boxberg	• Pro-JTF instrument • Increase size of JTF • JTF target high-carbon regions • Funding to bypass national governments • Include partnership principal	• Joint declaration
<i>Visegrad capitals</i> (4)	• MP: Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest	• Funding to bypass national governments • Include partnership principal	• Joint declaration
<i>Electrification</i> (4)	• IA: WindEurope, AVERE, Europe On, Eurelectric	• Increase size of JTF • JTF financed through new money • JTF target high-carbon regions • Exclude financing of fossil fuel projects	• Joint statement
<i>Regional interest</i> (7)	• NGO: Eurocities • RO: Assembly of European Regions, Association of European Border Regions, Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Council of European Municipalities and Regions • EUC: European Committee of the Regions	• JTF financed through new money • JTF target high-carbon regions • Include partnership principal	• Meeting
<i>Carbon neutrality</i> (2)	• NGO: CAN Europe • RI: Sandbag	• Access to JTF conditional on 2050 carbon neutrality target • Access conditional on coal phase-out plans	• Joint report
<i>Visegrad</i> (3)	• MS: Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary	• Pro-JTF instrument • JTF financed through new money • JTF target high-carbon regions • Including financing of fossil fuel projects	• Shared positions

Table 5.13: Coalitions in the policy preparation stage of the JTF. Note: Size of the coalitions is indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute, MP = Municipalities, RO = Regional Organization, EUC = EU Committee.

The carbon-intense municipality coalition involves 41 municipalities primarily from high carbon intense regions in central and eastern member states. The coalition advocates the need for the JTF to assist in the transition to climate neutrality, the JTF to be increased in size, that the JTF

should target high carbon intense regions, that funds from the JTF should be able to bypass national member state governments, and for the partnership principal to be included in the proposal. The coalition coordinated by drafting and signing a joint declaration calling on the European Council, the EP, the European Commission and the Energy Community (ENDS Europe, 2019b).

The Visegrad capitals coalition comprises of the municipalities of Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest. The coalition also advocates for funding to bypass national governments and for the inclusion of the partnership principle. The coalition coordinated and advocated for its preferences by signing the declaration titles the “Pact of Free Cities” (ENDS Europe, 2020c).

The electrification coalition includes interest associations WindEurope, AVERE, Europe On, and Eurelectric, all of which represent certain renewable electricity industry sectors. The coalition advocates for the size of the JTF to be increased, that the JTF is to be financed through new money, that the JTF should primarily target high carbon intensity regions, and that the financing of fossil fuels projects should be excluded. The coalition coordinated through the drafting and publishing of a joint statement (Euractiv, 2019d).

The regional interest coalition comprises of the NGO, EUROCITIES, the EU Committee of the Regions, as well as several regional organizations such as the Assembly of European Regions, the Association of European Border Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies, and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions. Like the carbon-intense municipality coalition and the Visegrad capitals coalition, this coalition prefers the JTF to target high carbon intensity regions and that the partnership principle must be included. The coalition coordinated thought meetings (Agence Europe, 2019a; Euractiv, 2020a).

The carbon neutrality coalition includes the NGO, CANEurope and the research institute, Sandbag. The coalition advocates for member states to commit to the 2050 neutrality target and have coal phase-out plans to access JTF funds. The coalition coordinated and proposed these preferences by publishing a joint report (ENDS Europe, 2019a).

The Visegrad coalition, also uncovered in the Climate Law process, includes the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland (interview 42, 46, 48). The coalition supports the notion that the JTF should be financed by new additional money instead of through existing funds, such as the cohesion fund, that the JTF should target only high carbon intensity regions, and that projects which include fossil

fuels should be eligible for JTF financing. The coalition coordinated by sharing preferences and supporting these preferences in events and discussions (Euractiv, 2019a, 2109b).

3.5.3 Coalitions in the decision-making stage

In the decision-making stage of the JTF, eight coalitions are detected (see table 5.14). These include an anti-fossil fuel coalition, an expanded electrification coalition, an eco-JTF research coalition, a funding bypass cities coalition, pro- and anti-fossil fuel coalitions in the EP, a frugal member state coalition, and a new money member state coalition. Four of the coalitions identified in the decision-making stage have expanded from four coalitions in the policy preparation stage. The expanded electrification coalition has evolved from the electrification coalition. The anti-fossil fuel coalition is a major expansion and diversification stemming from the carbon neutrality coalition. The funding bypass cities coalition is an expansion of the Visegrad capitals coalition. Finally, the new money member state coalition stems from the Visegrad coalition.

Coalition Name	Membership	Preferences	Joint Activities
<i>Anti-Fossil Fuel</i> (91)	• NGO: CAN Europe, Bellona, CarbonMarketWatch, BankwatchNetwork, EEB, Greenpeace • IA: SolarHeat Europe, ECOS, Energy Cities, Citizens' Climate Europe • RI: E3G, Sandbag, Green Tank • Business: Reclaim Finance	• Exclude financing of fossil fuel projects <i>Partial</i> • Access to JTF conditional on 2050 carbon neutrality target • Access conditional on coal phase-out plans	• Meeting • Joint letter
<i>Expanded electrification</i> (8)	• IA: EHPA, AVERE, WindEurope, SolarPower Europe, Europe On, SmartEN, Eurelectric, European Copper Institute	• Increase size of JTF • JTF financed through new money • JTF target high-carbon regions • Exclude financing of fossil fuel projects	• Joint letter
<i>Eco-JTF research</i> (2)	• RI: IEEP, FEPS	• Increase size of JTF • Access to JTF conditional on coal phase-out plans • Funding to bypass national governments • Expand scope of projects to be funded	• Joint report
<i>Funding bypass cities</i> (15)	• MP: Berlin, Vienna, Athens, Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Riga, Milan, Tallin, Frankfurt, Strasbourg	• Funding to bypass national governments	• Meeting • Joint letter
<i>Pro-fossil fuel EP</i> (4)	• EP: EPP, Renew, ECR, ID	• Increase size of JTF • JTF financed through new money • Include financing of fossil fuel projects	• Joint amendments
<i>Anti-fossil fuel EP</i> (2)	• EP: the Greens, the Left	• Increase size of JTF • JTF financed through new money • Exclude financing of fossil fuel projects	• Joint amendments
<i>Frugal MS</i> (6)	• MS: Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands	• JTF financed through existing funds	• Shared positions

		• Maintain or narrow scope of projects to be funded	
<i>New Money MS (18)</i>	• MS: France, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Croatia, Romania	• JTF financed through new money <i>Partial</i> • Include financing of fossil fuel projects	• Meeting • Joint proposal • Joint declaration • Shared positions

Table 5.14: Coalitions in the decision-making stage of the JTF. Note: Size of the coalitions in indicated in (). Not all policy actors in the coalitions are named due to space limitations. MS = member states, IA = Interest Association, NGO = non-governmental organization, RI = Research Institute, MP = Municipalities, RO = Regional Organization, EUC = EU Committee.

The anti-fossil fuel coalition includes 91 actors, primarily involving NGOs, but also interest associations, research institutes, and a business. Some notable NGOs include CAN Europe, Bellona, Carbon Market Watch, Bankwatch Network, EEB, and Greenpeace. Interest associations include Solar Heat Europe, ECOS, Energy Cities, and Citizens' Climate Europe. There are three research institutes including E3G, Sandbag, and the Green Tank. Finally, the business, Reclaim Finance, was also involved. The anti-fossil fuel coalition advocates for the JTF not to finance fossil fuel related projects. Within this coalition, several NGOs and research institutes including E3G, CAN Europe, EEB, Greenpeace, Sandbag, Bankwatch Network, Friends of the Earth Europe, Ember, Europe Beyond Coal, and the Polish Green Network further advocate for access to JTF funds be conditional on member states having coal phase-out plans and that they commit to the 2050 neutrality target. The coalition coordinated through several meetings and advocated its preferences by drafting and sending a series of joint letters to the EP (interview 44, 46, 49; ENDS Europe, 2020h, 2020i).

The expanded electrification coalition includes eight interest associations, including the actors in the electrification coalition in the policy preparation stage as well as SolarPower Europe, SmartEn, European Copper Institute, and EHPA. This coalition, like the electrification coalition in the policy preparation stage, advocates for the financing of fossil fuel projects to be excluded and for the JTF to focus on high carbon intensity regions. Moreover, WindEurope, Europe On, Eurelectric, and AVERE also align on the need for the size of the JTF to be increased and that the JTF should be financed through new funds. The coalition coordinated by drafting and sending a joint letter to the Regional Development Committee in the EP (interview 41, 47, 49; ENDS Europe, 2020i).

The eco-JTF research coalition comprises of two research institutes, namely the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). This coalition prefers that the size of the JTF should be increased and that member states need phase-out plans to gain access to JTF funds. In addition, the coalition also stresses that JTF

funding should bypass MS governments, and that the scope of projects funded by the JTF should be expanded. The coalition advocated for its preferences by drafting and publishing a policy report (ENDS Europe, 2020f).

The funding bypass cities coalition, an expansion of the Visegrad capitals coalition identified in the policy preparation stage, comprises of 15 European cities, including the Visegrad capitals, as well as Berlin, Vienna, the Hague, Athens, Riga, Milan, Vilnius, Tallin, Frankfurt, Kosice, and Strasbourg. Like the Visegrad capital coalition, the coalition advocates for JTF funds to be directly accessed by sub-national governments and thus bypass national governments. To coordinate and advocate for its preference, the coalition drafted and sent a letter to Commission President von der Leyen (ENDS Europe, 2020d) and held meetings (Euractiv, 2020h).

The pro-fossil fuel EP coalition includes EPP, Renew, ECR, and the ID. The coalition prefers that the size of the JTF should be increased, the JTF should be financed through new money, and for the JTF to finance fossil fuel projects. The coalition coordinates through the drafting of joint amendments (interview 42).

The anti-fossil fuel EP coalition includes the Greens and the Left political groups from the EP. The coalition advocates for increasing the size of the fund, for the JTF to be financed through new money, and for the JTF to exclude the financing of fossil fuel projects. The coalition coordinated through the drafting of joint amendments (interview 42).

The Frugal member state coalition consists of Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, and the Netherlands. The coalition prefers that the JTF is to be financed through pre-existing funds and that the scope of projects to be financed by the JTF should not be broadened. The coalition coordinated by sharing and supporting the shared preferences during negotiations (interview 45, 47; Agence Europe, 2020a, 2020d, 2020e; ENDS Europe, 2020a).

The new money member state coalition comprises of 18 eastern and southern member states including France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Croatia, and Romania (interview 41, 45). Opposing the Frugal member state coalition, the coalition advocates for the JTF to be financed by new funds and not by established funds. Moreover, a sub-group of actors within this coalition involving Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Greece, Romania, also prefer that fossil fuel projects should be made eligible for financing. The coalition coordinated through meetings, the signing of a joint declaration (Euractiv, 2020b), submission of a joint proposal (Agence, 2020c), and sharing and supporting members preferences (ENDS Europe, 2020b; Euractiv, 2020c).

4. Conclusion

The chapter maps the coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the EGD. In doing so, the chapter sequentially outlined the policy processes and policy networks before describing each of the coalitions identified in the European Climate Law, CBAM, RED, Sustainable Batteries, and the JTF.

The results of the coalition mapping reveal 59 coalitions. The number of coalitions vary across policy stages and processes. In the policy preparation stage, 22 coalitions are identified. In the decision-making stage, 37 coalitions are identified. The RED policy process is structured by 15 coalitions, where five and 10 coalitions are uncovered in the policy preparation and decision-making stages, respectively. This is followed by the Climate Law process which contains 15 coalitions, of which seven are present in the policy preparation stage and eight are present in the decision-making stage. In the JTF process, 14 coalitions are identified, with the policy preparation stage structured by six coalitions and the decision-making stage structured by eight. The CBAM is structured by eight coalitions in total, with four coalitions both the policy preparation and decision-making stages. The Sustainable Batteries process contains seven coalitions, all of which are uncovered during the decision-making stage.

The mapping of the coalitions illustrates the centrality of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, corroborating past research (Abel & Mertens, 2023; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; von Malmberg, 2021; Wurzel et al., 2019). As such, it suggests that coalitions are a core phenomenon in understanding EU environmental policy and the EU's environmental progress as an environmental leader. An additional five insights can be derived from the mapping.

First, from a comparative perspective the results show that each policy process and stage is structured by the presence of a variety of coalitions and that each process differs in terms of the power dynamics within. Second, and relatedly, it is evident that the identified coalitions share similar characteristics and differ in others. For example, coalitions may have similar number of policy actors in the coalition yet may differ in the range of policy actor types that make up the coalition, as well as the range of preferences they share. Third, the mapping shows that most coalitions are short-lived. Yet, some coalitions remain stable, some expand or split and others emerge across several processes, such as the Progressive EP coalition present across a number of processes, the environmentally just CBAM member state coalition in the CBAM process, the green ambition member state and Visegrad coalitions in the Climate Law process, or the (expanded) electrification coalition in the JTF. Fourth, the mapping also directs attention towards a core set of policy actors, including political groups in the EP, ambitious and Visegrad member

states, as well as several interest associations and environmental NGOs, such as CANEurope, WWF, EEB, E3G, and Eurelectric among others, that are active across most, if not all, policy processes. Fifth, the mapping illustrates the widespread participation of green industrial policy actors, such as renewable energy interest associations and clean-tech businesses, and their ties with environmental NGOs in coalitions. This shows that EU environmental policy and its feedback effects may be, intentionally or not, fostering and emphasizing the role of green industry policy actors, leading to the building of broad and potentially powerful pro-climate coalitions (Meckling et al., 2015; Trachtman et al., 2024).

The variation in the number of coalitions and their shifting dynamics across processes and stage, and how the coalitions are structured, suggest that certain contextual conditions linked to the policy processes, or combination thereof, plus the role of exceptional actors, as seen with the agency of T&E and Amnesty International in the Sustainable Batteries process, may drive the formation of structurally distinct coalitions. For example, it is found that no coalitions are present during the policy preparation stage of the Sustainable Batteries regulation. Hence, there may be certain conditions at play impeding coalition formation. Such conditions may include the newness or nascency of the regulation (interview 30, 39; Ingold, 2017; Pozzi et al., 2024), or the sheer complexity of the file, which was also mentioned as a “de-coalition-izing” piece of legislation (interview 35). The next chapter takes stock of and measures the dimensions of the identified coalitions to present a coalition typology based on the similarities and differences of the coalitions.

Chapter 6: Coalition Types in EU Environmental Policy Processes of the European Green Deal

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a typology of coalitions. The typology is informed by the 59 coalitions presented in the previous chapter. The typology uncovers six coalition types: peripheral, moderate authoritative, fragmented, colossal, policy generalist, and commanding.

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. First, the descriptive measurements of the five structural dimensions among all identified coalitions, outlined in chapter three and four, are presented. Second, based on a principal component analysis and hierarchical cluster analysis, the typology of the six coalition types is described. Third, the typology informs the analyses in the subsequent chapters, including explanations of the formation of coalition types (chapter 7), and the strategies and activities they conduct (chapter 8).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, the descriptive measurements of the identified coalitions across the five structural dimensions are presented. Following, the results of the PCA and cluster analyses are outlined, leading to the detection of six coalition types. The six coalition types are then described. Finally, the chapter concludes.

2. Measuring coalition across five structural dimensions

This section presents the basic descriptive measurements of the five structural dimensions among all identified coalitions. The individual measurements for each of the 59 coalitions are outlined in section 4 and in the chapter 6 supplementary information. Table 6.1 shows the mean, median, minimum and maximum of the five structural dimensions of all identified coalitions.

Coalition dimension	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.
<i>No. shared issue preferences</i>	3	3	1	9
<i>Size</i>	26.2	8	2	316
<i>Membership diversity</i>	1.73	1	1	7
<i>Authority</i>	0	-0.26	-0.78	2.39
<i>Intra-coalition coordination intensity</i>	3.73	1	1	50

Table 6.1: Descriptive measures of coalition dimensions.

The 59 identified coalitions tend to share a small number of issue preferences, although there is variability as indicated in table 6.1. The mean average number of issue preferences and the

median among all coalitions is 3, which highlights that the distribution among the shared preferences of coalitions is relatively symmetrical and is not heavily skewed by any outliers. The range of 8, however, indicates that some coalitions share many more issues and others share less.

The size of the identified coalitions demonstrates that, on average, coalitions are composed of 26 policy actors. This, however, is much higher than the median of 8 policy actors. The difference between the mean average and the median indicates that the distribution is highly skewed as the average size is being altered by some very large coalitions. The skewness is confirmed by the large range of 314. Nevertheless, the descriptive results highlight much variability.

The membership diversity of the identified coalitions tends to be rather homogenous. The mean average coalition is comprised of 1.73 different types of policy actors. Similarly, the median number of policy actor types in a coalition is 1. The closeness between the mean and median averages indicates that the homogeneity of coalitions is not skewed by any extremely heterogeneous coalitions. This is confirmed by the range of 6, whereby the most heterogeneous coalition is comprised of 7 policy actor types. Put together, although most coalitions are homogenous, the mean average and range suggest that some of the identified coalitions tend to be more heterogeneous.

The authority of identified coalitions tends to be relatively low but does vary. The mean average authority of a coalition is 0. Since this is a standardized score, a 0 indicates there is a balance of coalitions that have higher and lower degrees of authority. Yet, the median authority score of -0.26 illustrates that coalitions may tend to have lower degrees of authority overall. The range of 3.17 supports the variability of authority among the coalitions.

The intra-coalition coordination intensity shows that most of the identified coalitions coordinate with a low level of intensity. Yet, there is high variability. The mean average denotes that coalitions tend to conduct 3.73 joint activities during the policy process. The median of 1 joint activity, however, suggests that coalitions coordinate less so. In this case, the mean average seems to be skewed, highlighted by the large range of 49. The large range, however, shows that there are some coalitions that coordinate much more intensely than the average.

In sum, the results illustrate that on average the identified coalitions across the five EU environmental policy processes tend to advocate for a small number of issue preferences, are small and homogenous, have relatively low levels of authority, and coordinate with low intensity. The differences in the minimum and maximum scores, however, indicate variability across all

dimensions. Moreover, the large difference in the minimum and maximum scores for coordination and size signify that there are some coalitions that are highly active and/or large, skewing the mean average scores for both dimensions. The next section utilizes the measures for each coalition to conduct PCA and cluster analysis and identify certain types of coalitions that share similarities in their structural dimensions.

3. Identifying coalition types

This section presents the identification of six distinct types of coalitions based on the results of a hierarchical cluster on principal component analysis (HCPC). The PCA is informed by the 59 coalitions presented in chapter five and measured against the five structural dimensions of coalitions.

The PCA results in two main components that define and explain most of the structural variation among the coalitions (see table 6.2). A third component was identified, however, the first two have been selected based on the scree plot and the percentage of variance explained. Moreover, robustness and sensitivity checks show that the PCA axes were sensitive to a small number of influential coalitions. The full PCA solution, however, was retained as it serves as a descriptive mapping tool to simplify and make sense of the structure of coalitions. Hence, the instability of the axes does not undermine the substantive goal of identifying structural similarities and differences among the coalitions (see chapter 6 supplementary information for full PCA results and robustness checks).

The first component, labelled *strategic capacity*, covers most of the variation (46.19%) among the coalitions. The strategic capacity component groups three structural dimensions: membership diversity, authority, and coordination intensity. This component primarily relates to a coalition's capacity to act strategically because of its diverse membership, strength in authority, and coordination intensity. Coalitions that coordinate intensely are highly authoritative and have a very diverse membership will score higher on this component.

The second component, labelled *specialized broadness*, is the component covering the second most variation (22.38%) among coalitions. The specialized broadness component mixes three structural dimensions: the number of shared issue preferences, size, and membership diversity, where the size and diversity are negative. This component relates to a coalition's broadness in the number of issue preferences it advocates for and how specialized the coalition's membership base (size and diversity) is. Given the negative scores for diversity and size, coalitions that advocate

for a broad number of issue preferences and are small and homogenous will score high on this component.

Coalition Dimensions	Strategic Capacity			Specialized Broadness		
	Component 1	ctr	Cos2	Component 2	ctr	Cos2
<i>Issue pref specificity</i>	0.480	9.965	0.230	0.700	43.770	0.490
<i>Size</i>	0.431	8.031	0.185	-0.465	19.347	0.217
<i>Diversity</i>	0.726	22.853	0.528	-0.499	22.269	0.249
<i>Authority</i>	0.731	23.128	0.534	0.398	14.176	0.159
<i>Coordination</i>	0.912	36.024	0.832	-0.070	0.437	0.005
<i>Variance explained</i>	46.19%			22.38%		

Table 6.2: PCA Results. Note: boldened figures indicate the most important structural dimensions and in which direction each dimension contributes to the respective factor. Contribution (ctr) indicates how much each coalition dimension contributes to explaining the variance of a given factor. Cos2 measures the quality of representation of the coalition dimension.

Figure 6.1 plots the PCA estimates for each coalition along the two components and separates each of the coalitions by the corresponding coalition type based on hierarchical clustering. Each dot on the plot corresponds to a coalition and is located depending on the coalition's score on each of the two components. The two axes of the plot represent the two components that explain most of the variance among coalitions: *strategic capacity* and *specialized broadness*. For each axis, the value of zero corresponds to the average coalition structure on that component. Hence, a coalition that is closer to zero is positioned closer to the average coalition on that dimension. In figure 6.1, the horizontal axis relates to component one emphasizing coalitions based on their strategic capacity. Coalitions that coordinate intensely, have high authority, and have a very diverse membership are positioned towards the right side of the plot. Coalitions that coordinate less intensely, have less authority, and are more homogeneous are positioned towards the left side of the plot. The vertical axis relates to component two, highlighting the specialized broadness of coalitions. Coalitions that advocate for a broad number of issue preferences and are small and homogenous are positioned towards the top of the plot. Alternatively, coalitions that share a narrower number of issue preferences and have a wider membership are positioned towards the bottom of the plot.

Within figure 6.1 some distinct and some less defined groupings of coalitions based on the two components are signaled, particularly towards the bottom left of the plot. Focusing on the strategic

capacity component, there are two coalitions that take extreme positions on the right side of the plot. These are the Nuclear coalition and Environmentally Progressive coalition uncovered in the RED. Apart from the two extreme positions, the coalitions tend to have less strategic capacity, yet some distinct groupings of coalitions are formed based on differences along this component. Turning to the specialized broadness component, no coalitions have extreme positions and there are clear differences in the distribution of coalitions.

Since there are some indiscernible groupings of coalitions, hierarchical clustering on the two components from the PCA is applied. The clustering objectively uncovers coalition types by grouping coalitions with similar defining structures together while keeping them distinct from other coalitions with differing structures. The number of clusters determining the coalition types is selected by examining the scree plot, the silhouette scores for each number of clusters, and incorporating empirical knowledge of the coalitions and their structures (the scree plot and silhouette score are presented in the chapter 6 supplementary information). Some identified coalitions were also found to slightly diverge in some of their structural dimensions from the other coalitions of the same type. The diverging coalitions may be anomalies as there are only a few coalitions that slightly differ in one or two dimensions and align in all others.

Six types of coalitions are revealed: the peripheral coalition, the moderate authoritative coalition, the fragmented coalition, the policy generalist coalition, the colossal coalition, and the commanding coalition. The color of each dot denotes the type of coalition in which the identified coalition falls under. The larger dots represent the average position for that coalition type and are not coalitions. In the following section, the six types of coalitions are outlined.

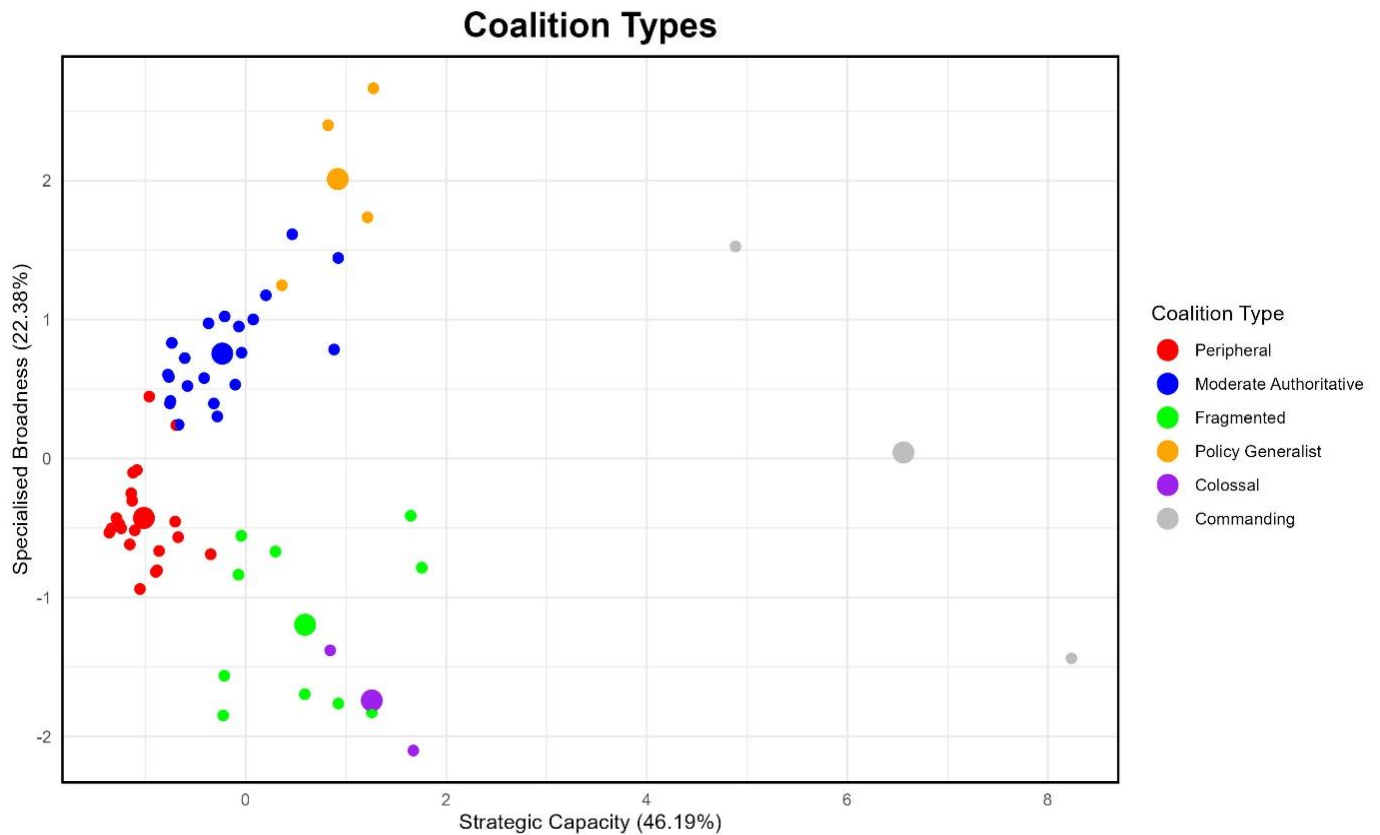


Figure 6.1: Coalitions plotted along PCA components and coalition types based HCPC

4. A typology of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking

This section presents and describes each of the six coalition types uncovered in EU environmental policymaking within the context of the EGD. The structural dimensions derived from the PCA and hierarchical clustering are reintroduced to understand how each coalition type is generally structured, relative to the other coalition types. Table 6.3 indicates the average structure of each coalition type based on the five structural dimensions, with the key dimensions that partition the coalition types, derived from the clustering results, **boldened**. To follow, the six coalition types are presented including each identified coalitions' measurements that are grouped within each coalition type in table format.

Coalition Type	No. issue preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coordination intensity
<i>Peripheral</i>	Narrow (1.5)	Small (7.79)	Very Low (1.4)	Very Low (-0.54)	Very Low (1.25)
<i>Moderate authoritative</i>	Moderate (3.41)	Small (8)	Very Low (1)	High (0.3)	Low (2.14)
<i>Fragmented</i>	Narrow (2.22)	Large (34.44)	High (3.55)	Low (-0.14)	Moderate (5.44)
<i>Colossal</i>	Moderate (3.5)	Very Large (274)	Very Low (1.5)	Moderate (0.06)	Low (3)
<i>Policy generalist</i>	Very Broad (8.5)	Small (10)	Very Low (1.5)	High (0.38)	Low (3.75)
<i>Commanding</i>	Broad (6.5)	Large (79)	High (5.5)	Very High (2.15)	Very High (39)

Table 6.3: Defining dimensions of coalition types. Note: average of each dimension is in parentheses.

4.1 Peripheral coalitions

Peripheral coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of the policy process. They primarily advocate for a narrow number of issue preferences, tend to be small, have a homogenous membership base, a very low degree of authority, and coordinate with very low intensity (see table 6.4). Such characteristics suggest that peripheral coalitions are formed by a small number of similar policy actor types to advocate for a specific or narrow set of issues and tend to not coordinate intensely, carry out many activities, or hold much authority. Of the 59 coalitions identified, 20 are peripheral, making peripheral coalitions the second most populous coalition type in the five EU environmental policy processes.

Peripheral Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
Climate Law	PP	<i>Energy Centered</i>	1	3	2	-0.13	5
		<i>Climate Activist</i>	2	19	1	-0.60	1
	DM	<i>Carbon Sink</i>	1	26	1	-0.45	1
		<i>Climate Council</i>	2	14	1	-0.58	1
		<i>East MS Climate NGO</i>	1	6	1	-0.60	1
CBAM	PP	<i>BRICS</i>	1	5	1	-0.62	1
		<i>Energy Business</i>	2	9	2	-0.78	1
RED	PP	<i>Biofuel Subsidy</i>	1	2	2	-0.50	1
	DM	<i>Faster Permitting</i>	1	7	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Biofuel Industry</i>	2	13	2	-0.53	1
		<i>Anti-Hydropower</i>	1	129	2	-0.51	1
		<i>Bioenergy</i>	2	3	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Biofuel Research</i>	1	2	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Ambitious Ex-commission</i>	1	11	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Certification Research</i>	1	2	2	-0.52	1
Batteries	DM	<i>Battery Trade</i>	4	3	1	-0.77	1
		<i>Battery Recycling</i>	1	2	2	-0.77	1
JTF	PP	<i>Visegrad Capitals</i>	2	4	1	-0.47	1
		<i>Carbon Neutrality</i>	2	2	2	-0.47	1
	DM	<i>Funding Bypass Cities</i>	1	15	1	-0.47	2
Mean Avg.			1.5	7.79	1.4	-0.54	1.25

Table 6.4: Peripheral coalitions and measurements in EU environmental policy processes. Note: average size does not include outlier. Including the outlier the average size = 13.85.

4.2 Moderate authoritative coalitions

Moderate authoritative coalitions exemplify coalitions that share a moderate range of issues, have a small number of homogenous members, a high degree of authority, and coordinate with low intensity (see table 6.5). Given the high level of authority, moderate authoritative coalitions hold a latent level of power, which may be mobilized to advocate for their moderate range of preferences. Yet, their authority may be challenged or hindered because of the coalitions' small and homogenous membership and low levels of coordination intensity. Hence, although moderate authoritative coalitions possess a high level of authority, they may not convert this into influence in the policy process. The moderate authoritative coalition is the most frequently detected coalition type. Of the 59 coalitions, 22 fall under this type.

Moderate Authoritative Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
Climate Law	PP	Visegrad	5	3	1	-0.35	3
		Green Ambition MS	3	13	1	0.71	2
		Climate Law NGO	5	3	1	-0.67	1
		Climate Law Research	4	4	1	0.39	1
	DM	Green Ambition MS	3	13	1	2.08	3
		Visegrad+2	4	6	1	0.77	3
		Progressive EP	3	4	1	0.07	3
		Industry EP	3	3	1	-0.19	1
CBAM	DM	Progressive EP	3	4	1	0.18	6
RED	PP	Renewables MS	4	13	1	0.42	2
Batteries	DM	Battery Laggard MS	2	8	1	0.57	2
		Eco-industrial MS	5	10	1	1.02	2
		Progressive EP	2	4	1	0.18	1
JTF	PP	Carbon-intense Municipality	5	41	1	0.29	1
		Visegrad	4	3	1	-0.22	1
		Electrification	4	4	1	-0.47	1
	DM	Frugal MS	2	6	1	0.38	4
		Pro-fossil fuel EP	3	4	1	0.2	2
		Anti-fossil fuel EP	3	2	1	-0.18	1
		New Money MS	1	18	1	2.22	5
		Expanded Electrification	3	8	1	-0.39	1
		Eco-JTF Research	4	2	1	-0.47	1
Mean Avg.			3.41	8	1	0.3	2.14

Table 6.5: Moderate authoritative coalitions and measurements in EU environmental policy processes.

4.3 Fragmented coalitions

Fragmented coalitions are comprised of a large and heterogenous set of members that do not share many preferences, have low levels of authority, and coordinate to a moderate degree of intensity (see table 6.6). Such coalitions are viewed as fragmented, whereby a heterogenous set of members are loosely held together by a low number of preferences and moderate levels of

coordination. This fragmented nature may potentially impede the coalition's ability to share information among members, broaden the number of preferences members share, and the degree to which members efficiently coordinate and employ strategies with coherent targets because of the varying ideological and functional differences among members. However, having a diverse membership may enable the coalition to overcome such impediments by signaling broad support for their preferences to policymakers and engaging in a diversified advocacy strategy that may target a variety of actors. In turn, it may also assist such coalitions in overcoming their low level of authority. The success of a fragmented coalition's advocacy on a policy process may, therefore, deviate from one process to another. Fragmented coalitions are the third most frequently detected coalition type. Of the 59 coalitions, 9 are identified as fragmented coalitions.

Fragmented Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
Climate Law	PP	<i>Ambitious 2030</i>	3	38	3	-0.19	2
CBAM	PP	<i>Energy Intensive Industry</i>	3	13	4	0.16	14
	DM	<i>Ambitious CBAM</i>	2	37	4	-0.72	7
RED	PP	<i>Ambitious RED</i>	3	38	3	0.52	13
		<i>Progressive RE</i>	2	30	5	-0.26	3
		<i>Wood Pellets Trade</i>	2	6	3	-0.37	3
	DM	<i>Low-Carbon Hydrogen</i>	1	50	3	-0.46	1
JTF	PP	<i>Regional Interest</i>	3	7	3	-0.47	2
	DM	<i>Anti-Fossil Fuel</i>	1	91	4	0.51	4
Mean Avg.			2.22	34.44	3.55	-0.14	5.44

Table 6.6: Fragmented coalitions and measurements in EU environmental policy processes.

4.4 Colossal coalitions

Colossal coalitions advocate for a moderate number of issue preferences, have an extremely large and homogenous membership, a moderate level of authority, and internally coordinate with low intensity (see table 6.7). Due to their very large size, colossal coalitions are considered to occupy a vast space within the policy process. The very large membership may show a strong signal for its shared preferences towards EU-institutional policymakers. The homogenous membership of a colossal coalition may, however, only reflect those of a certain industry or societal group, and thus not a broadly shared preference that spans several industries or societal groups. The very large size may also increase the coordination costs among the members. This could potentially constrain a colossal coalition's ability to broaden its number of shared preferences and its ability to efficiently advocate and influence policymakers in a unified way. Colossal coalitions are one of the least frequent coalition types uncovered. Of the 59 coalitions identified, 2 are characterized as colossal coalitions.

Colossal Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
Climate Law	DM	<i>Ambitious Business</i>	3	232	1	0.04	4
CBAM	DM	<i>Energy Intensive Industry</i>	4	316	2	0.04	2
Mean Avg.			3.5	274	1.5	0.04	3

Table 6.7: Colossal coalitions and measurements in EU environmental policy processes.

4.5 Policy generalist coalitions

Policy generalist coalitions tend to advocate for a very broad number of shared preferences, comprise of a small number of homogenous policy actors, hold a high degree of authority, and coordinate with a low degree of intensity (see table 6.8). Policy generalist coalitions are therefore considered to represent a strong unified understanding of the legislative proposal. The small and homogenous membership, paired with a high level of authority and broad number of shared issue preferences may enhance the efficiency of a policy generalist coalitions' ability to signal a coherent and broad position on the proposal and simultaneously gain access to EU-institutional policymakers. Policy generalist coalitions may, therefore, be able to successfully instill their preferences and steer policy processes. The low degree of coordination intensity, however, may constrain their effectiveness in such endeavors. Policy generalist coalitions are the fourth most frequently identified coalition type. Of the 59 coalitions identified, 4 are policy generalists.

Policy Generalist Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
CBAM	PP	Environmentally Just CBAM MS	9	9	1	0.54	8
	DM	Environmentally Just CBAM MS	9	9	1	1.22	1
Batteries	DM	Battery Supply Chain	7	12	2	-0.26	2
		Eco-Social Battery	9	48	2	0.02	4
Mean Avg.			8.5	19.5	1.5	0.38	3.75

Table 6.8: Policy generalist coalitions in EU environmental policy processes.

4.6 Commanding coalitions

Commanding coalitions are conceived as the most focal or dominant coalition type in EU environmental policy processes. They advocate for a broad range of issues, have a large and highly diverse membership, a very high level of authority, and very intense intra-coalition coordination (see table 6.9). The broad number of shared issues are supported by a diversity of policy actor types signals wide support and acceptance for each issue to policymakers. Further compounding this broad acceptance, commanding coalitions also possess high levels of authority

and internally coordinate intensely. Together, the high authority and intense coordination may enable such coalitions to push their broad set of shared preferences, gain access to EU-institutional policymakers and venues, and ultimately influence the process by translating their preferences into the proposal under negotiation. Of the 59 coalitions identified, 2 are characterized as commanding coalitions, making them one of the least frequently identified coalition types.

Commanding Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
RED	DM	<i>Nuclear</i>	8	27	4	1.90	28
	DM	<i>Environmentally Progressive</i>	5	131	7	2.40	50
	Mean Avg.		6.5	79	5.5	2.15	39

Table 6.9: Commanding coalitions and measurements in EU environmental policy processes.

5. Conclusion

Following from the identification of coalitions across five EU environmental policy processes within the EGD, the chapter presented an exploratory typology of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. The identified coalitions' structural dimensions were first measured and described. Then, an exploratory PCA and hierarchical clustering was conducted. This resulted in the discovery and presentation of six coalition types: peripheral coalitions, moderate authoritative coalitions, fragmented coalitions, colossal coalitions, policy generalist coalitions, and commanding coalitions.

The *peripheral* coalition supports a very narrow set of issue preferences, has a small and homogenous membership, very low levels of authority, and very low degree of coordination intensity. The *moderate authoritative* coalition advocates for a moderate range of issue preferences, has a small and homogenous membership, high authority, and a low level of coordination intensity. The *fragmented* coalition advocates for a narrow set of issue preferences, has a large and heterogenous membership, low authority, and a moderately level of intra-coalition coordination intensity. The *colossal* coalition backs a moderate number of issue preferences, has a very large and homogenous membership, moderate authority, and a low level of intra-coalition coordination intensity. The *policy generalist* coalition advocates for a very broad set of issue preferences, has a moderate size and homogenous membership, high authority, and low intra-coalition coordination intensity. The *commanding* coalition pushes for a broad set of issue preferences, has a large and highly diverse membership, very high authority, and very intense intra-coalition coordination.

Although all legislative proposals were introduced within the context of the EGD, it is revealed that the number of coalition types differs and that each of the five EU environmental policy processes is structured by a variety of coalition types. Moderate authoritative coalitions are found to be the most occurring coalitions. This is followed by peripheral coalitions, fragmented coalitions, policy generalist coalitions, and colossal and commanding coalitions, respectively. Regarding the policy processes, the Climate Law is structured by five peripheral coalitions, eight moderate authoritative coalitions, and one fragmented and colossal coalition. The process related to the CBAM involves two peripheral, fragmented, and policy generalist coalitions, as well as one moderate authoritative and colossal coalition. The process linked to the RED includes eight peripheral coalitions, four fragmented coalitions, two commanding coalitions, and one moderate authoritative coalition. The Sustainable Batteries process is structured by three moderate authoritative coalitions, and two peripheral and policy generalist coalitions. Lastly, the JTF policy process involves nine moderate authoritative coalitions, three peripheral coalitions, and two fragmented coalitions. Put together, the typology illustrates that not all types of coalitions form in every environmental policy process, and that each policy process is structured by altering compositions of coalition types. The coalition typology, therefore, demonstrates the complexity and altering power structures between individual EU environmental policy processes.

Limitations did persist in developing the typology. First, due to the use of press reports, the data may indicate some biases towards reporting on certain actors and identifying coordination. Specifically, the more salient legislative proposals may lead to over reporting compared to other proposals that are less salient. This was, however, attempted to be mitigated with more formal data, including EU policy documents, the records of meetings on the transparency register, and interviews. Second, the typology was informed by coalitions that were only identified in five policy processes. Hence, additional coalition types may still not be discovered. This raises the question of the internal and external validity of the typology. The internal validity of the typology is sought to be strengthened through the diverse case selection (discussed in chapter 4), which accounts for a variety of participation and coordination dynamics. Yet, the specificities of EU environmental policymaking and the EGD, particularly the kinds of policy actors participating in EU environmental policy processes, may hinder the external validity of the typology. It is highly likely that the typology may not have captured other coalition types present in policy processes outside of environmental policy. The typology should, therefore, be further refined and tested by applying it to other EU policy processes that focus on environmental policy or other policy areas.

Building on the recommendations proposed by others (Fischer, 2015; Pierce et al., 2017; Weible et al., 2020), the typology developed in this chapter captures the structural variation among coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. By uncovering types of coalitions across policy processes, it highlights how contextual features may enable and constrain the formation of coalition types (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025). Simultaneously, the typology provides a framework for unravelling the inner workings of coalitions, including the links to their strategies as well as how they evolve overtime (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024; Weible et al., 2020). Together, the typology offers the basis for the following chapters which set out to examine why different types of coalitions form and employ certain strategies across EU environmental policy processes.

Chapter 7: Explaining the Formation of Coalition Types in EU Environmental Policy Processes

1. Introduction

The previous chapters mapped and identified 59 coalitions across five EU environmental policy processes, characterized them across five structural dimensions, and uncovered six different types of coalitions: the peripheral coalition, the moderate authoritative coalition, the fragmented coalition, the colossal coalition, the policy generalist coalition, and the commanding coalition. Moreover, the past chapters have also provided the cases (identified coalitions) and the outcomes (coalition types) to be explained in this chapter.

This chapter aims to explain the combinations of conditions that drive the formation of the six types of coalitions, answering the second research question: *(RQ2) How does the character of EU environmental policy processes drive the formation of different coalition types?* As discussed in chapter 3, the dissertation considers EU environmental policy processes to be shaped by the characteristics of the legislative proposal being negotiated and the agency of exceptional policy actors within the process. Put together, the combination of legislative characteristics paired with the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors within a coalition is expected to drive the formation of different coalition types. Fitting with this assumption and the research design, this chapter utilizes qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to explain the combinations of conditions driving the formation of each coalition type.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the QCA for the 6 types of coalitions uncovered in chapter 6. Section 3 summarizes the findings. Section 4 concludes.

2. QCA

As outlined in the research design (chapter 4), crisp-set QCA (csQCA) is used to determine which conditions (or combinations thereof) could potentially explain the formation of the peripheral, moderate authoritative, fragmented, colossal, policy generalist, and commanding coalition types. Given there are six distinct types of coalitions, six separate QCAs are conducted. The conceptual framework and operationalization of the research design identified five specific conditions that are considered to drive the formation of different coalition types. Four conditions relate to the character of a legislative proposal: legislative complexity, scope of regulatory addressees, legislative stringency, and the shifts between policy stages. The fifth condition relates to the internal functioning of a coalition, namely the inclusion or exclusion of an exceptional policy actor within a coalition.

To follow, subsection 2.1 presents the cases and outcomes used for each of the six csQCAs. Subsection 2.2 presents the results, including the assessment of necessity and sufficiency, of the six csQCAs.

2.1 Cases and outcomes for QCA

Across the five policy processes, 59 coalitions are identified and characterized into six different coalition types (chapters 5 and 6). The 59 identified coalitions make up the cases for each of the csQCAs. The outcome for each csQCA is the presence of a coalition type. Given a coalition of a given type can either be present or not, the outcome is dichotomized. Among the 59 coalitions, 20 are characterized as peripheral coalitions, 22 are moderate authoritative coalitions, 9 are fragmented coalitions, 2 are colossal coalitions, 4 are policy generalist coalitions, and 2 are commanding coalitions.

2.2 QCA results

A separate csQCA is conducted for each coalition type due to the differing structural compositions of each. The QCA requires looking for the necessity and sufficiency of conditions, or combinations thereof (known as pathways), that explain the formation of such coalition types. The explanatory power and empirical relevance of the QCA solutions, which comprise of pathways, are evaluated through measures of consistency, coverage, and relevance of necessity (RoN). Consistency ranges from 0 to 1 and indicates the extent to which a pathway consistently leads to a specific outcome across cases. A completely consistent pathway (score of 1) always produces the same outcome whenever it occurs. Since csQCA is used, the proportional reduction in inconsistency (PRI) score, which accounts for simultaneous subset relations, is not accounted for as it always produces the same score as the consistency. Coverage articulates the proportion of outcome-set cases explained by a specific pathway. Coverage also ranges from 0 to 1. Higher coverage indicates the pathway's comprehensiveness, whereby a greater share of cases displaying the outcome can be explained. RoN is only drawn on when analyzing necessary conditions and accounts for sources of trivialness. Coverage and RoN are meaningless to interpret if the consistency threshold are not met (Oana et al., 2021).

When analyzing necessary conditions for each of the csQCA, the threshold for the consistency score is set to 1 because a deviation of consistency from 1 indicates there are cases present that display the outcome but do not display the alleged necessary condition. To ensure that the condition is not trivial, both the coverage and relevance of necessity (RoN) scores should be above 0.6. Conditions are considered trivial when there is a big difference in size between the outcome set and the condition set. The first source of trivialness occurs when the outcome is very small

and very few cases are members (coverage necessity). The second source is due to the condition set being very big and is almost constant with almost all cases being members. The coverage necessity score covers the first source of trivialness and the RoN accounts for both sources of trivialness. As a final step, any potential necessary condition must also be conceptually meaningful, whereby there is an interpretable relation between the condition and the outcome (Oana et al., 2021).

Due to the assumption of causal complexity, necessary relations may be present through SUIN conditions. SUIN conditions, or disjunctions of conditions, represent logical OR combinations of conditions which may or may not be necessary on their own, but when combined via a logical OR become large enough to be necessary for the outcome. For such SUIN conditions to not be trivial, they must be meaningfully interpreted into a higher order concept. It is this higher-order concept that becomes the necessary condition (Oana et al., 2021).

When analyzing the QCA solutions the consistency score should be at least 0.75. The coverage should be above 0.5, however, there is no strict cut off for coverage of solutions (Oana et al., 2021).

The low number of colossal, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions identified gives rise to issues of limited diversity and a low number of positive cases. To overcome these challenges and ensure that each coalition type is systemically examined through QCA, the thresholds for the QCA related to these three coalition types are shifted to produce a solution that can be identified and interpreted. More specifically, the threshold for the inclusion and PRI are set to 0.1. This enables the pathways for each of the three coalition types to be captured in the truth table. However, because of these modifications, the degree of explainability and the subsequent conclusions regarding the formation of these three coalition types is constrained.

For each QCA, the conservative solution is reported. The conservative solution only includes empirically observed configurations and excludes logical remainders, staying close to the empirical evidence. As such, the conservative solution produces the most detailed results that require more qualitative contextualization to interpret. Nevertheless, the conservative solution adheres to the exploratory nature of the research, assists in overcoming the limited theoretical assumptions of the research, and ensures that all QCAs remain consistent in the face of limited diversity (Glaesser, 2023). Robustness checks can be found in the chapter 7 supplementary information. Robustness checks are only carried out for the peripheral, moderate authoritative,

and fragmented coalition types. Robustness checks for colossal, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions are not conducted because of the limited diversity and altered thresholds.

Solutions are derived using the AND (*) and OR(+) operating logic. The presence of a condition in a solution is indicated in CAPITAL letters. The absence of a condition is in lower case letters.

2.2.1 Peripheral coalitions

In this subsection, the formation of peripheral coalitions is examined and explained. To briefly recap, peripheral coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of a policy process. They primarily advocate for a narrow number of issue preferences and have very low authority. They also tend to be small, have a homogenous membership base, and coordinate with very low intensity. Next, the analysis of necessity is outlined, followed by the analysis of sufficiency and subsequent explanations of the formation of peripheral coalitions.

Analysis of necessity

The analysis of necessity identified no conditions that are necessary for a peripheral coalition to form (table 7.1). Moreover, no necessary disjunctions of conditions, or SUIN conditions, are identified.

Conditions	Nec. Consistency	Nec. Coverage	RoN
<i>COMPLEX</i>	0.5	0.4545	0.75
<i>SCOPE</i>	0.8	0.3721	0.3571
<i>REG</i>	0.75	0.4167	0.5116
<i>DM</i>	0.65	0.3611	0.4889
<i>ROLE</i>	0.05	0.0625	0.7368
<i>complex</i>	0.5	0.2778	0.4583
<i>scope</i>	0.2	0.2667	0.7963
<i>reg</i>	0.25	0.2273	0.6792
<i>dm</i>	0.35	0.3182	0.7059
<i>role</i>	0.95	0.4524	0.4103

Table 7.1: Analysis of necessary conditions for the formation of peripheral coalitions

Analysis of sufficiency

The combination of five conditions results in 32 possible configurations. Figure 7.1 shows the truth table with the two configurations that are empirically observed to drive the formation of peripheral coalitions, as shown by rows 1 and 31.

Formation of Peripheral Coalition Truthtable										
	Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI	cases
1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	BRICS, EnerBus
31	1	1	1	1	0	1	8	0.875	0.875	Permit, BioInd, Anti-Hydro, BioEner, BioRes, Ex-Comm, CertRe, LC-Hy
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0.500	0.500	BattTra, BattRecy, BattLag, Eco-Ind
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0.500	0.500	Activist, Amb2030
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.400	0.400	Vcaps, CONeu, Vise_JTF, Electric, RegInter
23	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0.375	0.375	COSink, Ccouncil, EMSClimate, GA-MS-CLDM, Visegrad2, ProgEP-CL, Ind-EP, AmbBus
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.333	0.333	BioSub, RenewMS, Pellets
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0.200	0.200	EnerCe, Vise_CL, GA-MS-CLPP, CLNGO, CLRes
19	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	0.143	0.143	Bypass, Frugals, Pro-FF-EP, Anti-FF-EP, NewMon, ExpandEle, Eco-JTF
4	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	ProgEP-CBAM, EnerIntInd, EnviJust_DM
16	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	ProgEP-B, BattSup, EcoSocBatt
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	EnerInt, EnviJust_PP
30	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	AmbRED, ProgressRE
32	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	Nuclear, EnviProg
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	AmbCBAM
18	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	CIMuni
20	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	Anti-FF
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0			
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0			
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0			
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0			
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0			
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0			
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0			
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0			
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0			
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0			
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0			
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0			
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0			
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0			
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0			

Figure 7.1: Truth table for formation of peripheral coalitions

After minimizing the truth table, the complex solution provides two pathways of conditions that drive the formation of peripheral coalitions in EU environmental policy processes (see table 7.2). The overall consistency of the solution is 0.9 and the coverage is 0.45, explaining the presence of nine out of 20 peripheral coalitions. The solution meets the thresholds for consistency but has a coverage score under, albeit close to, the desired threshold. This means that the solution does not cover the formation of all peripheral coalitions, and other pathways driving the formation of these coalitions may still be uncovered.

Pathways	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanation
1. role*scope*complex*reg*dm	1.00	0.100	0.100	BRICS, EnerBus	<i>Emergence of early convenience</i>
2. role*SCOPE*COMPLEX*REG*DM	0.875	0.350	0.350	Permit, BioInd, Anti-Hydro, BioEner, BioRes, Ex-Comm, CertRe	<i>Late attempt to narrowly influence</i>
Solution					
$[role] * ((scope * complex * reg * dm) + (SCOPE * COMPLEX * REG * DM)) \rightarrow LID$	0.900	0.450			

Table 7.2: Analysis of sufficiency for formation of peripheral coalitions.

Pathway one outlines that peripheral coalitions form in the policy preparation stage without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor when a policy process is shaped by a legislative proposal that has a narrow regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and low stringency. Pathway two illustrates that peripheral coalitions form in the decision-making stage without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor when the policy process is characterized by a legislative proposal that has a broad scope, is complex, and stringent.

The two pathways completely oppose one another in terms of the legislative proposal's characteristics and in which policy stage peripheral coalitions form in. As indicated by pathway one, peripheral coalitions are found to form early in policy processes that are molded by relatively simple proposals that do not widely impact many and are not overly stringent. Hence, policy actors may form a peripheral coalition to push a single preference early in a process without having to expend many resources to do so. Alternatively, and as illustrated by pathway two, peripheral coalitions also form in the later stages of a policy process when the proposal creates a much more challenging process, marked by a proposal that is complex, broad in scope, and stringent. Because of this landscape, policy actors may not initially be interested in participating and spending resources but may decide to form a peripheral coalition to try and influence a single issue later in the process. Notably, each pathway highlights the absence of an exceptional policy actor. Without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor engaging in coalition building, policy actors forming a coalition may be constrained in framing issues convincingly, findings compromise between actors across several issues or finding and connecting with diverse policy actors (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Christopolous & Ingold, 2015). As a result, policy actors entered coalition building may only be able to form a peripheral coalition, that tends to be limited in advocating for a broader range of preferences, expanding in size, diversifying its membership base, or gaining authority. This, in turn, may constrain the influence of peripheral coalitions in the policy process. Starting from this notion of the non-inclusion of exceptional policy actors, the two pathways correspond to two explanations that drive the formation of peripheral coalitions. Explanation one is labelled *emergence of early convenience* and explanation two is labelled *late attempt to narrowly influence*, which are subsequently outlined below.

The explanation *emergence of early convenience* covers peripheral coalitions that form in the policy preparation stage of a policy process characterized by a legislative proposal that has a narrow scope, low complexity, and low stringency. The combination of conditions in this pathway indicates that a rather simple landscape is created for policy actors to navigate but it may not incentivize numerous policy actors to mobilize or expend resources to influence the process.

Given the narrow scope and potential targeted impact of the proposal, only those policy actors targeted by the proposal may be willing to mobilize and spend resources (Howlett et al., 2020; Hurka et al., 2025). The costs of participating in this less populated process could be enhanced by the proposal's low complexity, which reduces the costs for policy actors to understand the proposal and makes it easier for them to form preferences and identify others with similar preferences (Hurka et al., 2023; Junk, 2016). The less stringent non-regulatory instrument, however, means that the potential impact of the legislation is eased, disincentivizing policy actors to mobilize or use many resources to heavily influence the proposal. Due to the simpler landscape and without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor, it is thought that peripheral coalitions may emerge out of convenience early in the policy process, particularly as policy actors coordinate with others without much pressure and trouble in understanding the proposal.

The explanation covers two peripheral coalitions, the BRICS coalition and the Energy Business (EnerBus) coalition. To illuminate this explanation, the formation of the BRICS coalition is drawn on. The BRICS coalition formed early in the CBAM policy process due to the members shared opposition to the proposal (interview 10, 17). The low complexity and narrow regulatory scope of the CBAM ensured that the potential impacts of the legislation and its potential externalities were easily identifiable among the targeted regulatory addressees and other interested policy actors. Given the identifiable effects and shared concern of the CBAM, the policy actors within the coalition could easily identify one another, and due to the members' interactions in non-EU fora bringing each other together, the coalition was able to emerge out of convenience and without the agency of an exceptional policy actor (Euractiv, 2021b; Otto, 2025). The presence of this coalition, however, was short-lived as opposition to the CBAM partially subsided as the policy process unraveled and more information became available, particularly regarding the CBAM's non-regulatory stringency (Otto, 2025; Wettstad, 2024b).

The second explanation, *late attempt to narrowly influence*, illustrates that peripheral coalitions, in addition to the absence of an exceptional policy actor, may also form in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal that has a broad regulatory addressee scope, is complex, and stringent. The combination of conditions suggests that the policy process may be much more difficult for policy actors to navigate, and at the same time conveys a sense of urgency for policy actors to try and influence the proposal. Due to the difficulties of understanding a complex proposal (Junk, 2016) and the possibility that many actors may crowd the process given the broad scope (Hurka et al., 2025; Schneider & Ingram, 1993), the costs for policy actors to coordinate with like-minded others may be increased. In turn, this may result in the inability for

policy actors to easily form coalitions, particularly without the agency of an exceptional policy actor, early in the process. Yet, due to the high stringency, a sense of urgency may be taken up by policy actors to try and form a coalition and influence the proposal before it is too late. Hence, under these conditions, peripheral coalitions may emerge late in a policy process as policy actors attempt to influence a narrow number of issues related to the legislative proposal.

This explanation captures seven peripheral coalitions including the Faster Permitting coalition, the Biofuel Industry coalition, the Anti-Hydro coalition, the Bioenergy coalition, the Biofuel research coalition, the Ambitious Ex-Commission coalition, and the Certification Research coalition. To give reference to the second explanation, the formation of the Biofuel Industry coalition in the RED policy process is elaborated on. The RED legislative proposal is characterized by a broad regulatory addressee scope, which resulted in the mobilization of many policy actors. The high complexity of the proposal meant that those actors who mobilized tended to also understand and deal with highly specialized topics within the RED proposal, such as biofuel. Because of this, the policy process became heavily siloed as policy actors were divided by the topics and issues they advocated for (interview 20, 28). The technical nature and specificity of the biofuel topic within the RED meant that there was only a small number of policy actors dealing with the niche topic, making it easy for the small pool of actors to identify one another. Yet, many of the biofuel policy actors were reluctant to coordinate with each other early in the process and opted to advocate for their varying preferences individually, particularly due to the technicalities around biofuel. Given the proposal's high stringency, the members of the Biofuel Industry coalition decided to change track and coordinate with each other towards the end of the process in a late attempt to try and influence proposal on the low number of shared preferences (interview 29). As one interviewee from the coalition put it "I think we were very much doing like a solo kind of game, which doesn't mean that we did not have overlapping interests with others also in alternative fuels.... But because we are more of a gaseous biofuel, we are in some areas more like closer to hydrogen, for instance. Obviously, then we also compete when it comes to green gas... The definition of CO₂ neutral fuels in the CO₂ standards, however, this is something that we worked together because there was an interest to have a coalition that will ask for a definition that will be encompassing all alternative fuels" (interview 29).

Summary

The analysis illustrates that the formation of peripheral coalitions almost always occurs without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor. Without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor within the coalition, the formation of peripheral coalitions is driven by two explanations. First,

peripheral coalitions are driven out of convenience early in the policy process, particularly when legislation is simple and easy to navigate, which reduces the costs of mobilization and coordination, but when the incentives are reduced. Second, peripheral coalitions are also found to be driven in a late attempt to influence a policy process, particularly when legislation is stringent and much more intricate and thornier to navigate. In turn, this makes it costlier to mobilize and coordinate, but more beneficial if advocacy is successful.

2.2.2 Moderate authoritative coalitions

In this subsection, the drivers associated with the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions are analyzed. Moderate authoritative coalitions are principally characterized by a high level of authority and very low diversity. To a lesser extent, they also tend to advocate for a moderate range of issues, have a small number of members, and coordinate less intensely. Such characteristics imply that moderate authoritative coalitions have the possibility to advocate and instill their moderate range of issue preferences into a policy process due to their authority. Yet, because of the small size and low level of coordination intensity, utilizing and exercising authority may be hampered. To follow, the analysis of necessity and sufficiency are presented along with explanations related to the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions.

Analysis of necessity

There are no single or SUIN conditions identified that are necessary for the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions (see table 7.3).

Conditions	Nec. Cons	Nec. Cov	RoN
<i>COMPLEX</i>	0.182	0.182	0.673
<i>SCOPE</i>	0.818	0.409	0.366
<i>REG</i>	0.545	0.324	0.468
<i>DM</i>	0.636	0.378	0.489
<i>ROLE</i>	0.136	0.188	0.768
<i>complex</i>	0.818	0.486	0.537
<i>scope</i>	0.182	0.267	0.8
<i>reg</i>	0.455	0.455	0.755
<i>dm</i>	0.364	0.364	0.725
<i>role</i>	0.864	0.442	0.4

Table 7.3: Analysis of necessity for the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions

Analysis of sufficiency

Upon the creation of the truth table for the analysis of sufficiency, three combinations of conditions that drive the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions are empirically uncovered. They are shown in rows 18, 19, and 21 in figure 2.

	Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI	cases
18	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	CIMuni
19	1	0	0	1	0	1	7	0.857	0.857	Bypass,FrugaIs,Pro-FF-EP,Anti-FF-EP,NewMon,ExpandEle,Eco-JTF
21	1	0	1	0	0	1	5	0.800	0.800	EnerCe,Vise_CL,GA-MS-CLPP,CLNGO,CLRes
23	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0.500	0.500	COSink,Ccouncil,EMSClimate,GA-MS-CLDM,Visegrad2,ProgEP-CL,Ind-EP,AmbBus
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0.500	0.500	BattTra,BattRecy,BattLag,Eco-Ind
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.400	0.400	Vcaps,CONEu,Vise_JTF,Electric,RegInter
4	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0.333	0.333	ProgEP-CBAM,EnerIntInd,EnviJust_DM
16	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0.333	0.333	ProgEP-B,BattSup,EcoSocBatt
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.333	0.333	BioSub,RenewMS,Pellets
31	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	0	0	Permit,BioInd,Anti-Hydro,BioEner,BioRes,Ex-Comm,CertRe,LC-Hy
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	BRICS,EnerBus
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	EnerInt,EnviJust_PP
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	Activist,Amb2030
30	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	AmbRED,ProgressRE
32	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	Nuclear,EnviProg
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	AmbCBAM
20	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	Anti-FF
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0			
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0			
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0			
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0			
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0			
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0			
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0			
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0			
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0			
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0			
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0			
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0			
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0			
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0			
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0			

Figure 7.2: Truth table for formation of moderate authoritative coalitions.

Following the minimization of the truth table, the sufficiency analysis provides a complex solution, illustrating three pathways that drive the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions (see table 7.4). The overall consistency of the solution is 0.846 and the coverage is 0.500, explaining the formation of 11 out of 22 moderate authoritative coalitions. The solution meets the thresholds for consistency and coverage scores and is thus considered non-trivial and applicable across the broader case set.

Pathways	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanation
1. SCOPE*complex*ROLE*reg*dm*	1.000	0.045	0.045	CIMuni	<i>Internal opportunism</i>
2. SCOPE*complex*role*reg*DM	0.857	0.273	0.273	Frugals, Pro-FF-EP, Anti-FF-EP, NewMon, ExpandEle, Eco-JTF	<i>Pressurizing policy procedures</i>
3. SCOPE*complex*role*REG*dm	0.800	0.182	0.182	ViseCL, GA-MS-CLPP, CLNGO, CLRes.	
Solution					
$[SCOPE*complex]*((ROLE*reg*dm) + (role*(reg*DM) +(REG*dm))) \rightarrow MA$	0.846	0.500			

Table 7.4: Analysis of sufficiency for formation of moderate authoritative coalitions.

Pathway one outlines that moderate authoritative coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor is included in a coalition during the policy preparation stage of a process characterized by a legislative proposal with a broad regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and low stringency. Pathway two proposes that moderate authoritative coalitions form in the decision-making stage when an exceptional policy actor is not included in the coalition of a policy process shaped by a proposal that has a broad regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and low stringency. Pathway three illustrates that moderate authoritative coalitions form without an exceptional policy actor in the policy preparation stage of a process molded by a proposal that has a broad regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and is stringent.

The three pathways indicate that moderate authoritative coalitions emerge in processes marked by a legislative proposal that has a broad regulatory addressee scope and low complexity. This combination of legislative characteristics suggests that moderate authoritative coalitions form primarily when EU environmental legislative proposals affect many policy actors and societal groups and are quite simple. Because of the broad scope, many policy actors may be incentivized to mobilize and influence the legislative proposal, particularly due to the high payoffs of influencing a proposal with such wide-ranging impacts (Howlett et al., 2020; Hurka et al., 2025; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). The proposal's simplicity, moreover, may reduce the resources policy actors need to participate and coordinate because of the ease with which the proposal can be understood (Hurka et al., 2023). With the heightened incentives and reduced costs to understand the proposal, policy actors may be incentivized to form a moderate authoritative coalition due to the relatively high level of authority and very low membership diversity, which keeps coordination costs low but may also assist in successfully advocating for a moderate range of preferences. Diverging from pathway 1, pathways 2 and 3 also indicate that most moderate authoritative coalitions covered by the solution do not require the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor to form. This suggests that

moderate authoritative coalitions may form due to pressures within the policy process that create a need to try and influence the proposal. Accounting for the shared characteristics, two explanations driving the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions are proposed. The first is labelled *internal opportunism* and the second is labelled *pressurizing policy procedures*.

The explanation of *internal opportunism* covers moderate authoritative coalitions that include an exceptional policy actor and have formed in the policy preparation stage of a process shaped by a legislative proposal with a broad scope, low complexity, and is not overly stringent. Under these broadly impactful, but less costly and stringent legislative characteristics, exceptional policy actors may identify and exploit opportunities to build a coalition early in the process. Because of the incentives and plausibly high payoffs derived from the broad scope and low costs, exceptional policy actors may seek to build a coalition with a relatively small and homogenous set of policy actors that possess a high degree of authority. By doing so, the exceptional actors may seek to maximize their potential influence on the proposal, particularly in the early stages of the process, whilst ensuring low coordination costs within the coalition.

This explanation captures one moderate authoritative coalition, the Carbon Intense Municipality coalition, which emerged in the policy preparation stage of the JTF policy process. The JTF proposal's broad regulatory addressee scope incentivized many potentially impacted policy actors, particularly key beneficiaries of the fund that range across governance levels, to mobilize, participate, and try to influence the policy process. As an interviewee stated, "the local and regional level have to be involved, they have to sit around the table and talk to each other in order to agree, for example, on the JTP, changes of the programme, or design of the selection criteria" (interview 41). Moreover, participation among policy actors was further incentivized because of the proposal's low complexity, making it easier for policy actors to easily understand the implications of the JTF and develop a wide range of preferences. Yet, the low stringency of the proposal hampered policy actor's urgency or desire to spend much effort early in the process to try and influence the proposal (interview 41, 43). Together, these legislative characteristics created a fluid process early on whereby the costs of participating were low and the incentives for successfully influencing the proposal were somewhat high. Among this landscape, the emergence of the Carbon Intense Municipality coalition was enabled by some municipalities within the coalition that acted as exceptional policy actors. These exceptional actors were embedded in a broader web of interactions with others, such as DG REGIO and environmental NGOs. This manifested in the key municipalities "organizing a number of meetings linked to the Just Transition process. Such meetings have also resulted in exchange programs... So [through these meetings and programs]

they got to know each other, and they find out that they have a lot of similarities and are facing the same challenges” (interview 43). As a result, these exceptional actors held a central role that enabled them access to policymakers and privileged them with social capital. Because of this, the exceptional municipalities were able to identify opportunities that could be gained from the legislation, particularly the economic benefits which would be conferred to municipalities, from the outset. With this opportunity in mind, the exceptional municipalities brought together other likeminded municipalities that were also seen to benefit from the proposal and form a coalition in the policy preparation stage to pursue their policy goal (interview 43, 44, 46).

The explanation *pressurizing policy procedures* captures the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions that do not include an exceptional policy actor and when a policy process is shaped by a legislative proposal with a broad regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and when policy actors are pressured to coordinate and build a coalition either as the policy process nears its end or the instrument is stringent. When there is time pressure, moderate authoritative coalitions emerge in the later stages of the policy process as policy actors attempt to capitalize on the wide-ranging impact and low complexity of the proposal. When a proposal that is still broad in scope and simple but becomes coercive due to a highly stringent regulatory instrument, the incentives for policy actors to try and influence such a proposal increase, driving them to gain an advantage and capitalize on the high payoffs early on by forming a moderate authoritative.

The explanation accounts for the presence of 10 moderate authoritative coalitions. These include the Frugal Member State coalition, the Pro-fossil fuel EP coalition, the Anti-fossil fuel EP coalition, the New Money Member State coalition, the Expanded Electric coalition, and the Eco-JTF Research coalition, the Visegrad coalition in the Climate Law, the Green Ambition Member State coalition, the Climate Law NGO coalition, and the Climate Law Research coalition. To illuminate the moderate authoritative coalitions that form in the decision-making stage when the legislation is broad and simple but not stringent, the Anti-Fossil Fuel EP coalition in the JTF proposal is drawn on. During the JTF process, negotiations among the political groups within the EP were rather fluid as the proposal’s low stringency, broad scope, and low complexity rendered a rather collaborative landscape. This fluidity in negotiations resulted in no distinct lines drawn between the political groups, especially because of the low stringency and diffused benefits. As such, EP political groups found it rather difficult to form any kind of coalition early in the process (interview 42). Yet, as the policy process continued through to the decision-making stage, very often the Greens and the Left were found supporting one another in many of the technical meetings. As an interviewee pointed out “we would see this [anti-fossil fuel] coalition very often forming. Whenever

the Greens would take the floor and say, we are in favour of this, the Left would say, yeah, we agree. And very often even at the level of amendments table, we'd see the similar wording or the similar spirit, the similar direction" (interview 42). Accordingly, through the technical meetings and the time pressure of the policy process slowly coming to an end, the Greens and The Left were driven together to form a small and moderately authoritative coalition to try and impact the legislative proposal in their favor, without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor (interview 42, 43, 47).

To demonstrate the moderate authoritative coalitions that form without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor in the policy preparation stage of a process molded by a proposal that is broad, simple, and stringent, the Green Ambition Member State coalition in the Climate Law is drawn on. The broad scope of the Climate Law proposal sought to impact the whole of society. The pervasive effect of the proposal, therefore, incentivized an extensive range of policy actors to mobilize and participate in the policy process. Given the proposals relative simplicity, guided by its target setting objective, participation was also less costly for policy actors, particularly as developing preferences early on was relatively easy. Such context was discussed by an interviewee. They outlined that "the climate law was not a technically complex piece of legislation" and resultingly it "lowered the threshold for actors to be active, because obviously, if it's an easy enough thing to understand, you don't need to spend a lot of time to get into it and develop positions. Also, the fact that compared to all the other ones [legislative proposals], it's a very comprehensive and macro level legislation. I mean, it really sets out the flagship objective of the entire green transition somehow. So, it covers all of society, which also maybe makes it very relevant for many societal actors to be more vocal on it" (interview 9). This, in turn, freed up resources for policy actors to start coordinating with others across a moderate range of policy issues (interview 2, 9). The need to identify and coordinate with like-minded others was accelerated due to the stringency of the regulatory instrument and further magnified by growing pressures for the EU to push for ambitious climate targets ahead of the 2020 EU-China summit and UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow. Hence, due to the wide scope and simplicity of the proposal, paired with a growingly stringent instrument, ambitious member states were pressured to form a coalition early in the policy process, without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor. Early engagement was markedly key for these policy actors as they attempted to increase the overall ambition of the Climate Law. As such, the stringency of the regulatory instrument paired with external time pressure of the EU-China summit drove the formation of the coalition to influence the legislative proposal early in the process (interview 2; Agence, 2020f, 2020g).

Summary

The solution explaining the conditions driving the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions uncovers three pathways and two overarching explanations. Across all pathways, moderate authoritative coalitions are found to primarily form when legislative proposals have a broad regulatory addressee scope and low complexity. This commonality indicates that many policy actors, particularly those that hold some degree of authority, are incentivized to mobilize, engage in coalition building, and influence EU environmental policy processes when a proposal has wide-reaching impacts and there are low costs required to understand the proposal. Under these overarching conditions, it is identified that moderate authoritative coalitions are further driven by *internal opportunism* or *pressurizing policy procedures*. When environmental legislative proposals are less stringent and simple, but have wider ranging impacts, moderate authoritative coalitions emerge when exceptional policy actors identify opportunities to influence a proposal early in the process and engage in coalition building in pursuit of their specific policy goals. Alternatively, moderate authoritative coalitions also emerge without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor but when there is some degree of time or coercive pressure which drives policy actors together.

2.2.3 Fragmented coalitions

This subsection examines the formation of fragmented coalitions. Fragmented coalitions are predominately differentiated by a highly diverse membership but also tend to advocate for a narrow set of issue preferences, are relatively large, have low levels of authority, and coordinate at a moderate level of intensity. As such, a fragmented coalition can show broad representation and acceptance of a given preference due to its diverse membership. Yet, this diversity may also impede the coalition's ability to share a broad set of preferences and coordinate effectively. Next, the analysis of necessity is presented, which is followed by the presentation of the analysis of sufficiency and explanations related to the formation of fragmented coalitions.

Analysis of necessity

From the analysis of necessity, no single or SUIN conditions are identified that are necessary for the formation of fragmented coalitions (see table 7.5).

Conditions	Nec. Consistency	Nec. Coverage	RoN
COMPLEX	0.4444	0.1818	0.6727
SCOPE	0.7778	0.1591	0.2885
REG	0.5556	0.1351	0.4074
DM	0.3333	0.0811	0.3929
ROLE	0.5556	0.3125	0.7963
complex	0.5556	0.1351	0.4074
scope	0.2222	0.1333	0.7719
reg	0.4444	0.1818	0.6727
dm	0.6667	0.2727	0.6981
role	0.4444	0.0930	0.2909

Table 7.5: Analysis of necessity for the formation of fragmented coalitions.

Analysis of sufficiency

The truth table for the analysis of sufficiency for the formation of fragmented coalitions proposes three combinations of conditions, as shown by rows 30, 3, and 20 in figure 7.3.

Formation of Fragmented Coalition Truthtable											
Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI		cases	
30	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	AmbRED,ProgressRE	
3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	AmbCBAM	
20	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	Anti-FF	
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.500	0.500	EnerInt,EnviJust_PP	
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0.500	0.500	Activist,Amb2030	
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.333	0.333	BioSub,RenewMS,Pellets	
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.200	0.200	Vcaps,CONEu,Vise_JTF,Electric,RegInter	
31	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	0.125	0.125	Permit,BioInd,Anti-Hydro,BioEner,BioRes,Ex-Comm,CertRe,LC-Hy	
23	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	0	COSink,Council,EMSClimate,GA-MS-CLDM,Visegrad2,ProgEP-CL,Ind-EP,AmbBus	
19	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	Bypass,Frugals,Pro-FF-EP,Anti-FF-EP,NewMon,ExpandEle,Eco-JTF	
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	EnerCe,Vise_CL,GA-MS-CLPP,CLNGO,CLRes	
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	BattTra,BattRecy,BattLag,Eco-Ind	
4	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	ProgEP-CBAM,EnerIntInd,EnviJust_DM	
16	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	ProgEP-B,BattSup,EcoSocBatt	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	BRICS,EnerBus	
32	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	Nuclear,EnviProg	
18	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	CIMuni	
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0				
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0				
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0				
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0				
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0				
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0				
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0				
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0				
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0				
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0				
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0				
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0				
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0				
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0				
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0				

Figure 7.3: Truth table for formation of fragmented coalitions.

Minimizing the truth table, the sufficiency analysis provides a complex solution comprised of three pathways driving the formation of fragmented coalitions (table 7.6). The three pathways capture four of the nine fragmented coalitions, producing a solution with a consistency score of 1.00 and

a coverage score of 0.444. The solution meets the thresholds for consistency but falls slightly short on coverage. The perfect consistency highlights the preciseness of the solution, whereby such combinations of conditions may always lead to the formation of a fragmented coalition. The low coverage, however, indicates that other pathways may still be uncovered that drive the formation of fragmented coalitions.

Pathway one suggests that fragmented coalitions emerge without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor during the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal that has a narrow regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and low stringency. Pathway two indicates that fragmented coalitions may also form during the decision-making stage of a process altered by a legislative proposal with a broad scope, low complexity, and low stringency, and when an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition building. Pathway three proposes that fragmented coalitions that include an exceptional policy actor also form in the policy preparation stage of a process shaped by a legislative proposal that has a broad scope, high complexity, and high stringency.

Pathways	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanations
1. complex*reg*DM*scope*role	1.000	0.111	0.111	AmbCBAM	<i>Diversifying consensus</i>
2. complex*reg*DM*SCOPE*ROLE	1.000	0.111	0.111	Anti-FF	
3. COMPLEX*REG*dm*SCOPE*ROLE	1.000	0.222	0.222	AmbRED, ProgressRE	<i>Challenging first move</i>
Solution					
(complex*reg*DM*((scope*role) + (SCOPE*ROLE))) + (COMPLEX*REG*dm*SCOPE*ROLE) → CMS	1.000	0.444			

Table 7.6: Analysis of sufficiency for the formation of fragmented coalitions.

The three pathways indicate some key similarities and differences. Pathway one and two share three common conditions driving the formation of fragmented coalitions, namely a legislative proposal that is not very complex nor stringent and is being negotiated in the decision-making stage. The formation of fragmented coalitions covered by pathways one and two therefore occur in the later stages of a policy process when a proposal is simpler to understand and less coercive. As a first instance, these conditions may result in a diversity of policy actors participating in the process because of the low cost required to understand the proposal. Yet, since it is not very stringent, mobilized policy actors may not want to spend many resources to coordinate and form a coalition early in the process. Because of the low costs, however, policy actors may be incentivized to coordinate diversely with many types of policy actors to indicate broad support for a

set of shared preferences (Junk, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015). What sets these two pathways apart, however, is that fragmented coalitions either form when the scope is narrow and no exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition or when the legislative proposal's scope is broad and an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition. As such, in addition to the low complexity and stringency, when a legislative proposal is targeted at a small set of actors, less policy actors are considered to mobilize resulting in a relatively simple landscape for participating policy actors to navigate. Therefore, under these conditions a fragmented coalition does not necessarily require the inclusion of an exceptional policy to form as policy actors targeted by the proposal and have shared preferences should be easily identifiable. Alternatively, when the scope of the proposal becomes broad and implicates many more policy actors, the landscape becomes increasingly populated and difficult for policy actors to transverse (Hurka et al., 2025). Here, fragmented coalitions require the agency of an exceptional policy actor to assist in navigating this landscape, connecting diverse actors, and to ultimately emerge. Moreover, pathway three is completely opposite to pathway one. Here, exceptional policy actors may see and take advantage of a window of opportunity because of the challenging process to build a fragmented coalition and signal broad acceptance for its preferences, particularly due to the proposal's broad and coercive impact. This assists in building a coalition early in a process that is challenging to navigate and that may have a very broad and coercive impact (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Mintrom, 2019). Finally, pathways two and three share the commonality of a broad scope and the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor. Hence, relative to pathway one, this indicates that for a fragmented coalition to form an exceptional policy actor needs to be included to navigate an increasingly onerous and more challenging policy process. Stemming from these commonalities, two explanations are derived: *diversifying consensus* (pathways 1 and 2) and *challenging first move* (pathway 3).

The first explanation *diversifying consensus* captures fragmented coalitions that form in the decision-making stage of a policy process that exemplifies a relatively low cost to participate because of the low complexity and stringency of the proposal under negotiation. In addition to these conditions, fragmented coalitions are further driven either when coordination is made rather straightforward due to the narrow scope or when coordination becomes increasingly challenging and is prompted by an exceptional policy actor. The low complexity of the proposal may mobilize a diversity of policy actors because of the low costs required to understand the proposal, making it easier for policy actors to engage in the process (Hurka et al., 2023; Klüver et al., 2015). Because of the low costs and ease of participating, policy actors should have additional resources to engage in extra coordination efforts and therefore seek to coordinate with a diverse range of policy actors to signal broad acceptance of the preferences shared among the actors. The low stringency

of the proposal could further incentivize actors to coordinate with a diversity of others. This is because the competition among policy actors is potentially reduced due to the alleviated pressure that the proposal imposes on policy actors (Metz, 2017). Because of the low costs and reduced pressure, policy actors may be further incentivized to diversify their coordination by forging a fragmented coalition, whilst also differentiating themselves from other homogenous coalitions. The ability to build a large and heterogenous coalition and signal a diverse consensus, however, may take some time as there is a need for the policy actors involved to overcome their functional differences and find a set of shared preferences. The desire to build such a costly coalition may also be lessened because policy actors may not wish to spend resources early on due to the low stringency of the proposal.

Paired with these overarching conditions, when the proposal has a narrow scope, less policy actors are considered to be impacted and thought to participate in the process (Howlett et al., 2020; Hurka et al., 2025). The less crowded policy process and targeted nature of the proposal, in turn, should make it easier for policy actors to identify and coordinate with like-minded others. Hence, the need for an exceptional actor to assist in building a fragmented coalition is limited. Alternatively, when a proposal has a broad scope with potential wide-ranging impacts, the policy process may become increasingly crowded and difficult to navigate. Under these conditions, an exceptional policy actor should be able to navigate the crowded process and build a fragmented coalition to signal broad and diversified support for the coalition's shared preferences (Mintrom, 2019).

This explanation covers two fragmented coalitions, namely the Ambitious CBAM coalition and the Anti-Fossil Fuel coalition. The Ambitious CBAM coalition is covered by pathway one. It emerged during the decision-making stage of a process characterized by a CBAM proposal that was not very complex and had a narrow regulatory addressee scope. The low complexity meant that policy actors targeted by the legislation were able to understand the proposal and its implications, form preferences and participate and try to influence the process. Because of the proposal's narrow scope, in addition to the low complexity, policy actors could also easily identify others that were similarly impacted by the legislation and shared similar preferences. Due to the less stringent instrument, the policy actors engaged were able to easily navigate the policy process and coordinate with a diverse range of other policy actors similarly impacted by the proposal in an ad-hoc way to signal and push for their broadly accepted and shared preferences. Because of the easily navigable policy process, the building of the coalition did not require the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor (interview 14, 16). Managing the diversity of members, however, proved

difficult and led to instances of horse-trading and finding common ground among coalition members. Because of this, it took quite some time for the coalition to settle on a minimal number of shared preferences which it could then advocate for coherently. As stated by a member of the coalition, “we had a lot of conversation, and we saw that basically we share the same assessment of why we should face up to free allocation. For them [green industrial actors], it was because of it was a market issue. Basically, they could not enter the market because they felt like incumbents receive those free allocations and they don’t. And so, we started to discuss and we decided to do a joint later, which was the first one of a kind. It never happened that we [environmental NGO] co-signed something with any type of industry on the revision of ETS, for instance, because it’s so controversial. But it happened because we talked to them a lot and we realized that we could do that together. It was not something we thought at the beginning, but then we saw it was possible” (interview 16). Subsequently the coalition emerged in the decision-making stage, particularly pressured around key moments, such as votes in the EP or council meetings, and the challenge of competing coalitions to show a diverse consensus on a small number of preferences (interview 14).

The Anti-Fossil Fuel coalition is covered by pathway two and emerged in the decision-making stage of the policy process related to the JTF proposal. The broad scope of the JTF implicated a variety of policy actors from different sectors and governance levels. Because of the JTF proposal’s simple and non-technical character, the impacted actors were able to understand the proposal and form preferences, primarily around the size of the fund and how they were to be used. In addition, the low stringency of the non-regulatory instrument guided policy actors to engage with diverse others who also had developed several other preferences (interview 43, 44). Within this broadened and less coercive process, exceptional policy actors, particularly WWF and Bankwatch Network, sought to build a diversified coalition by directing coordination between a wide variety of different policy actors, particularly through instances of information sharing. This dynamic was raised by a member of the coalition who outlined that “we had this Just Transition Working Group which was bringing together those who were interested in Just Transition. That gave us a hook to work around, and we quickly digested what was in the legislation. A lot of local NGOs saw it as useful to just meet and learn what was being proposed, and from that they brought in their expertise. WWF was co-coordinating this Just Transition Group with Bankwatch at the time. So, we had this kind of tandem going on, and people really gathered around it because they saw the power of it and we pulled together a clear message” (interview 46). Over time, such efforts led to the formation of the coalition which sought to signal a diverse consensus for its preferences

and make a late push in the decision-making stage to influence the policy process during core moments, such as Committee voting in the European Parliament (interview 43, 44, 46).

The second explanation labelled the *challenging first move* covers fragmented coalitions that include an exceptional policy actor and form in the policy preparation stage of a process characterized by a legislative proposal that is broad in scope, highly complex, and stringent. The combination of these conditions creates a challenging policy process, which requires the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor to assist in identifying opportunities and bring together a variety of policy actors to form a fragmented coalition (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Mintrom, 2019). By forming a fragmented coalition that visibly signals broad support for shared preferences, actors may secure a first-mover advantage and seek to shape the legislative proposal at an early stage of the policy process.

The second explanation captures the formation of two fragmented coalitions, the Ambitious RED coalition and the Progressive Renewable Energy coalition. To highlight this pathway, the Ambitious RED coalition is drawn on. In the policy process of the RED, the broad regulatory addressee scope paired with the high complexity that characterized the proposal meant that a diversity of policy actors, working on very technical aspects of the RED, were implicated and as a result mobilized. The broad scope and high complexity, however, heavily fragmented the policy process. “Overall, looking at the RED, you get a lot more players because a lot more people come at the RED from very different angles. They can be against it, like the nuclear lobby. You may have the grid people. You get people who hate windmills. You get others who love windmills. You have a really broad spectrum of persons who would get involved with such a broad directive. But you would still not have all of those people in one coalition. You get actors working on different issues because of their very technical nature” (interview 25). The stringency and the potentially wide-ranging impacts of the proposal further incentivized policy actors to spend resources to coordinate with others in attempts to influence the proposal early in the policy process (interview 25; Euractiv, 2020g). Amidst this fragmented and challenging landscape, exceptional policy actors, namely WWF, Birdlife, and T&E, identified a diverse set of likeminded others advocating for similar specialized issues. From here, the exceptional actors began to coordinate and share information with these likeminded policy actors. This was to improve the understanding of the complex proposal and form a set of shared, albeit limited, preferences. Through such coordination, the Ambitious RED coalition formed early in the policy process and became a first mover in trying to influence the proposal (interview 19, 23, 25).

Summary

The analysis on the formation of fragmented coalitions uncovers three pathways that make up two broader explanations. The first explanation suggests that fragmented coalitions emerge in policy processes with low participation, low coordination costs, and limited stringency. In such contexts, like-minded actors are driven to coordinate and build a coalition with a diverse range of partners to signal heterogeneous support for the coalition's shared preferences, typically in the decision-making stage of the process. However, when the legislative proposal broadens in scope and the policy process becomes more demanding to navigate, the formation of fragmented coalitions depends on the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor who seeks opportunities to connect otherwise dispersed actors. The second explanation suggests that fragmented coalitions also form when an exceptional policy actor aims to exploit a first mover advantage in a challenging policy process. Here, an exceptional policy actor directs coordination among a diverse range of like-minded policy actors to signal broad acceptance of shared preferences in attempts to shape the proposal early in the process. Put together, the findings suggest that as legislative proposals become increasingly onerous, marked by a widened scope, increased complexity, or more stringency, the formation of fragmented coalitions relies on the agency of an exceptional policy actor.

2.2.4 Colossal coalitions

This subsection presents the results related to the formation of colossal coalitions. Colossal coalitions are primarily characterized by their very large size and tend to advocate for a moderate number of issue preferences, have a very homogeneous membership, a moderate level of authority, and a low level of intra-coalition coordination intensity. Given their size, colossal coalitions signify a broad acceptance or position for their preference(s). However, such a large membership may constrain the coalition's ability to coordinate intensely, creating adverse implications on the coalition's agency. To follow, the analysis of necessity and sufficiency, along with explanations driving the formation of colossal coalitions are subsequently presented.

Analysis of necessity

The analysis of necessity uncovers two potential conditions that are necessary for a colossal coalition to form. The first condition proposes that colossal coalitions form in the decision-making stage of a policy process. The second necessary condition suggests that colossal coalitions form when the legislative proposal is not complex (table 7.7). Due to the small number of identified colossal coalitions, however, the coverage scores for both conditions are very low, indicating trivialness in the two plausible necessary conditions. Because of this, it is considered that there

are no necessary conditions for the formation of colossal coalitions. Moreover, no necessary disjunctions of conditions or SUIN conditions are identified.

Conditions	Cons.Nec	Cov.Nec	RoN
<i>COMPLEX</i>	0	0	0.6271
<i>SCOPE</i>	0.5	0.0227	0.2586
<i>REG</i>	0.5	0.0270	0.3793
<i>DM</i>	1	0.0541	0.3860
<i>ROLE</i>	0.5	0.0625	0.7414
<i>complex</i>	1	0.0541	0.3860
<i>scope</i>	0.5	0.0667	0.7586
<i>reg</i>	0.5	0.0455	0.6379
<i>dm</i>	0	0	0.6271
<i>role</i>	0.5	0.0233	0.2759

Table 7.7: Analysis of necessity for the formation of colossal coalitions.

Analysis of sufficiency

The truth table proposes two combinations of conditions driving the formation of colossal coalitions, as shown by rows 4 and 23 in figure 7.4. Because only two colossal coalitions are identified out of 59 coalitions, the challenge of limited diversity of positive outcomes arises. As such, the threshold for inclusion and PRI are set to 0.1. This ensures that both colossal coalitions and their pathways are captured in the truth table.

Formation of Colossal Coalition Truthtable										
	Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI	cases
4	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0.333	0.333	ProgEP-CBAM,EnerIntInd,EnviJust_DM
23	1	0	1	1	0	1	8	0.125	0.125	COSink,Ccouncil,EMSClimate,GA-MS-CLDM,Visegrad2,ProgEP-CL,Ind-EP,AmbBus
31	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	0	0	Permit,BioInd,Anti-Hydro,BioEner,BioRes,Ex-Comm,CertRe,LC-Hy
19	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	Bypass,Frugals,Pro-FF-EP,Anti-FF-EP,NewMon,ExpandEle,Eco-JTF
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	Vcaps,CONeu,Vise_JTF,Electric,RegInter
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	EnerCe,Vise_CL,GA-MS-CLPP,CLNGO,CLRes
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	BattTra,BattRecy,BattLag,Eco-Ind
16	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	ProgEP-B,BattSup,EcoSocBatt
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	BioSub,RenewMS,Pellets
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	BRICS,EnerBus
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	EnerInt,EnviJust_PP
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	Activist,Amb2030
30	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	AmbRED,ProgressRE
32	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	Nuclear,EnviProg
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	AmbCBAM
18	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	CIMuni
20	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	Anti-FF
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0			
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0			
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0			
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0			
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0			
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0			
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0			
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0			
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0			
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0			
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0			
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0			
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0			
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0			
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0			

Figure 7.4: Truth table for the formation of colossal coalitions.

Following the minimization of the truth table, the complex solution identifies two pathways driving the formation of colossal coalitions (see table 7.8). The consistency of the solution is 0.182 and the coverage is 1.00. Because of the low diversity and number of positive outcomes, the solution score does not meet the threshold for consistency but does meet the threshold for coverage. The low consistency and high coverage reflect the rarity of colossal coalitions. As such, consistency is highly sensitive to the large number of negative cases (non-colossal coalitions) in which similar combinations of conditions occur. The coverage is also inflated due to the changes in the inclusion and PRI scores. Rather than identifying sufficient combinations of conditions, the following analysis highlights combinations of conditions associated with the formation of colossal coalitions without making claims about their sufficiency.

Pathway	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanation
1. complex*DM*SCOPE*REG*role	0.125	0.500	0.500	AmbBus	<i>Simply broad and coercively driven</i>
2. complex*DM*scope*reg*ROLE	0.333	0.500	0.500	EnerIntInd	<i>Soft and delayed expansionism</i>
Solution					
<i>[complex*DM]*((SCOPE*REG*role) + (scope*reg*ROLE)) → colossal</i>	0.182	1.00			

Table 7.8: Analysis of sufficiency for the formation of colossal coalitions.

Pathway one illustrates that colossal coalitions form without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal with a broad regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and high stringency. Pathway two proposes that when an exceptional policy actor is included, colossal coalitions form in the decision-making stage of a process molded by a legislative proposal that is characterized by a narrow scope, low complexity, and low stringency. Both pathways indicate that colossal coalitions primarily form in the decision-making stage of policy processes shaped by a simple legislative proposal. The combination of these two overarching conditions indicates that the low complexity of the legislative proposal incentivizes many policy actors to participate because less costs are required to understand the proposal and formulate preferences (Hurka et al., 2022; Klüver et al., 2015; Junk, 2016). This in turn creates opportunities for participating policy actors to utilize their remaining resources to coordinate with many others. Yet, because it requires a lot of time for policy actors to coordinate with such a large number of others and arrive at a set of shared preferences, colossal coalitions only emerge in the decision-making stage of the process. Based off these common conditions and the two pathways, two explanations leading to the formation of colossal coalitions are proposed. The first is labelled *simply broad and coercively driven* and the second is labelled *soft and delayed expansionism*.

The first explanation, *simply broad and coercively driven*, implies that colossal coalitions form without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor in the later stages of a policy process which is marked by a simple but commanding legislative proposal, namely due to its broad scope and stringent regulatory instrument. Under this pathway, policy actors may initially be incentivized to participate in the process due to the simplicity of the proposal, making it easy to understand and form preferences on (Hurka et al., 2022). The broad scope of the proposal may further encourage a variety of different policy actors to engage in the policy process given the proposals potentially wide-reaching impact (Hurka et al., 2025; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). As many actors mobilize and begin to advocate for their preferences, the enhanced stringency of the proposal could

incentivize likeminded actors to search for their counterparts in the simple and broad process and coordinate with each other, particularly as the payoffs to influence such an impactful proposal increase (Metz, 2017). In this sense, there may not be the need for an exceptional policy actor to be included for a colossal coalition to emerge. Yet, due to the very high costs associated with coordinating and finding shared preferences among a vast number of policy actors, colossal coalitions emerge in the decision-making stage.

The first explanation includes one colossal coalition, the Ambitious Business coalition. The Ambitious Business coalition emerged in the decision-making stage of the policy process linked to the Climate Law. The Climate Law proposal created a rather encompassing yet simple policy process. Being a framework legislation with a broad impact, many businesses across sectors were eager to participate, particularly as the outcome of the process was foreseen to have implications on their operations long into the future. As such, a variety of businesses were incentivized to participate in the process to try and translate their preferences into the proposal. Simultaneously, the low complexity, guided by the setting of emission reduction targets, also meant that the costs of understanding the proposal and ability to establish preferences early on were reduced. Hence, the mobilization of numerous businesses and the low entry costs to participate and develop preferences meant that the businesses could use their resources to coordinate with similar others around a shared preference on an emissions reduction target (interview 1, 2, 6, 8). Amidst this broad and simple policy process, the members of this colossal coalition were initially coerced to work together late in the policy process due to the stringency and ‘game changing’ nature of the proposal (interview 1, 5, 6).

The second explanation *soft and delayed expansionism* outlines that the formation of colossal coalitions are driven by the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor that aims to create a large coalition in the later stages of a relatively soft policy process marked by a proposal with low complexity, a narrow scope, and low stringency. Like the first explanation, the low complexity incentivizes many policy actors to engage with the policy process as the number of resources required to understand the proposal and form preferences is low. The narrow scope and less stringent primary instrument, however, could mean that fewer policy actors are affected and less so (Hurka et al. 2025; Pacheco-Vega, 2020). Therefore, a smaller number of actors may be less willing to mobilize and spend resources trying to impact the proposal. Yet, exceptional policy actors may depict the character of the legislative proposal as an opportunity to easily identify and extensively coordinate with a variety of others that share preferences (Mintrom, 2019). This sense of expansionism obtained by an exceptional policy actor later in the policy process may be to

bolster their potential influence on the policy process by strengthening the support for their preferences.

The second explanation captures one colossal coalition, the Energy Intensive coalition. The Energy Intensive coalition emerged in the decision-making stage of the CBAM policy process. From the outset, the narrow scope and relatively low stringency of the CBAM proposal meant less policy actors were initially incentivized to mobilize and participate in the process, particularly given the low payoff for doing so. However, as the CBAM proposal continued to move through the policy process, many actors began to develop an understanding of the new proposal's potential impacts and form preferences, bolstered by the proposal's low complexity. Because of this, the actors began to mobilize and find others that shared similar preferences to try and influence it. As this played out, core actors from the CBAM industry coalition, present in the policy preparation stage, took on exceptional policy actor roles to build a much larger coalition and signal even broader acceptance for the initial coalition's preferences (interview 10, 14). This was possible because the narrow and softer policy process enabled the exceptional policy actors to easily identify and coordinate with many others who had mobilized and that were similarly impacted by the legislation (interview 11). The expansionist actions resulted in the CBAM industry coalition extensively increasing in size. Yet, due to the policy actors taking on an exceptional policy actor role during the process and the sheer amount of time it took for so many policy actors to coordinate and act as a coalition, it was only later in the process that the Energy Intensive coalition emerged (interview 10).

Summary

To sum up, the analysis on the formation of colossal coalitions uncovers two pathways, each representing an explanation. Both explanations indicate that colossal coalitions form in the later stages of a policy process when the proposal is marked with low complexity. The low complexity stimulates the mobilization of many policy actors as it reduces the resources needed to grasp the proposal and therefore frees up resources that can be used for coordination. The low entry costs for participation and spare resources creates an opportunity for policy actors to coordinate broadly, creating a landscape conducive for colossal coalitions. But, due to the sheer size of such coalitions, much time is needed for them to emerge. Under these principal conditions, the first explanation suggests that colossal coalitions form without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor during the decision-making stage of a simple but commanding policy process shaped by a legislative proposal that is low in complexity, broad in scope, and stringent. The second explanation indicates that colossal coalitions emerge when an exceptional policy actor aims to

expand and create a large coalition in the decision-making stage of a relatively soft process, characterized by a proposal that is simple, has a narrow scope, and low stringency.

2.2.5 Policy generalist coalitions

This subsection presents the analysis pertaining to the formation of policy generalist coalitions. Policy generalist coalitions are primarily characterized by advocating for a very broad set of issue preferences. To a lesser extent, they also tend to be small, have a very homogenous membership base, a moderate to high level of authority, and low levels of coordination intensity. Indicated by the characteristics, policy generalist coalitions comprise of policy actors, usually of the same type, that represent a certain sector or generalized position and hold a high degree of authority. Hence, policy generalist coalitions may be able to instill their broad set of shared preferences and steer policy processes, with some degree of influence. However, low levels of coordination intensity may indicate that their ability to influence policy processes may be restricted. To follow, the analysis of necessity and sufficiency are presented along with explanations leading to the formation of policy generalist coalitions.

Analysis of necessity

The analysis of necessity proposes that two conditions are necessary for driving the formation of policy generalist coalitions: the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor and a legislative proposal with a narrow regulatory addressee scope (table 7.9). Yet, looking closer at the RoN and coverage scores, the necessity of the two conditions may not be so clear cut. Although the RoN scores are relatively high, the low coverage scores (exceptional policy actor (0.25) and narrow scope (0.2667)) indicate that the two conditions may be trivial, mostly because of the low number of identified policy generalist coalitions. Considering these unbalanced scores and limited diversity of positive outcomes, no claims of necessity are made. Finally, no disjunctions of conditions are identified.

Conditions	Cons.Nec	Cov.Nec	RoN
COMPLEX	0.5	0.0909	0.6491
SCOPE	0	0	0.2542
REG	0.5	0.0541	0.3860
DM	0.75	0.0811	0.3929
ROLE	1	0.2500	0.7818
complex	0.5	0.0541	0.3860
scope	1	0.2667	0.8000
reg	0.5	0.0909	0.6491
dm	0.25	0.0455	0.6379
role	0	0	0.2712

Table 7.9: Analysis of necessity for the formation of policy generalist coalitions.

Analysis of sufficiency

The truth table for the analysis of sufficiency uncovers three combinations of conditions driving the formation of policy generalist coalitions, indicated by rows 16, 2, and 4 (see figure 7.5). As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, because of the challenge of limited diversity, the threshold for inclusion and PRI are set to 0.1 to ensure that all policy generalist coalitions and their pathways are captured in the truth table for minimization.

	Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI	cases
16	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	0.667	0.667	ProgEP-B,BattSup,EcoSocBatt
2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.500	0.500	EnerInt,Envijust_PP
4	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0.333	0.333	ProgEP-CBAM,EnerIntInd,Envijust_DM
23	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	0	COSink,Ccouncil,EMSClimate,GA-MS-CLDM,Visegrad2,ProgEP-CL,Ind-EP,AmbBus
31	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	0	0	Permit,BioInd,Anti-Hydro,BioEner,BioRes,Ex-Comm,CertRe,LC-Hy
19	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	Bypass,Frugals,Pro-FF-EP,Anti-FF-EP,NewMon,ExpandEle,Eco-JTF
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	Vcaps,CONEu,Vise_JTF,Electric,RegInter
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	EnerCe,Vise_CL,GA-MS-CLPP,CLNGO,CLRes
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	BattTra,BattRecy,BattLag,Eco-Ind
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	BioSub,RenewMS,Pellets
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	BRICS,EnerBus
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	Activist,Amb2030
30	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	AmbRED,ProgressRE
32	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	Nuclear,Envipro
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	AmbCBAM
18	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	CIMuni
20	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	Anti-FF
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0			
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0			
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0			
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0			
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0			
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0			
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0			
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0			
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0			
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0			
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0			
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0			
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0			
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0			
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0			

Figure 7.5: Truth table for the formation of policy generalist coalitions.

Following minimization of the truth table, the complex solution detects two pathways that result in the formation of policy generalist coalitions (see table 7.10). The consistency of the solution is 0.5 and the coverage is 1.00. The low consistency score does not meet the threshold primarily due to the limited diversity of policy generalist coalitions. The coverage threshold is met. However, it is inflated due to changing the inclusion and PRI thresholds, again because of the limited diversity. Rather than identifying sufficient combinations of conditions, the following analysis highlights combinations of conditions associated with the formation of policy generalist coalitions without making claims about their sufficiency.

Pathway	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanation
1. scope*ROLE*complex*reg	0.400	0.500	0.500	Envi Just_PP, Envi Just_DM	Streamlined Agency
2. scope*ROLE*COMPLEX*REG*DM	0.667	0.500	0.500	BattSup, EcoSocBatt	Techno-Stringent Agency
Solution					
[scope*ROLE] * ((complex*reg) + (COMPLEX*REG*DM)) → PG	0.500	1.000			

Table 7.10: Analysis of sufficiency for formation of policy generalist coalitions.

The first pathway proposes that a policy generalist coalition forms when an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition during either stage of a policy process characterized by a legislative proposal that has a narrow regulatory addressee scope, low complexity, and low stringency. The second pathway suggests that a policy generalist coalition may also form when an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition during the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal with a narrow scope, high complexity, and high stringency. The two pathways highlight that policy generalist coalitions are principally driven by the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor in the coalition building process and when the legislative proposal has a narrow regulatory addressee scope. This implies that legislative proposals with a narrow and targeted impact may encourage a small number of policy actors to spend resources and participate in the policy process. Because of the narrow scope, the policy actors impacted and mobilized may also be rather homogenous and specialized in the domain that the legislation seeks to address (Hurka et al., 2025). Therefore, such actors may have a well-rounded understanding of the proposal and seek to enhance their influence by coordinating with similar others. Given this narrow scope, exceptional policy actors may seek opportunities to engage and coordinate with the homogenous and specialized policy actors that have a broad understanding of the proposal and hold some degree of authority (Boasson & Huitema, 2017), resulting in the formation of a policy generalist coalition.

Apart from the overarching conditions, the two pathways do slightly deviate from one another. Pathway one suggests that, in addition to the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor and the legislative proposal being narrow in scope, policy generalist coalitions may form in either stage of the policy process when the proposal is less complex and stringent, making it simple to understand and not coercive. Conversely, pathway two highlights that when the legislative proposal is technical and stringent, policy generalist coalitions also form but only in the later stages of a policy process. Stemming from the two pathways, two explanations are proposed. The first is labelled *streamlined agency* and the second explanation is labelled *techno-stringent agency*.

The first explanation *streamlined agency* highlights that policy generalist coalitions form when a legislative proposal creates a rather streamlined and simple policy process for exceptional policy actors to navigate and form knowledgeable broadly focused coalitions. The narrow regulatory scope streamlines the policy process as a lower number and less diverse range of policy actors are directly affected by the proposal and thus less policy actors may be incentivized to mobilize to try and influence the proposal (Hurka et al., 2025; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Additionally, the low complexity of the proposal reduces the costs for policy actors to participate as the effort required to understand the proposal and form a broad set of preferences is lessened (Klüver et al., 2015). This rather streamlined and simple process may hold given the low stringency of the proposal, reducing the potential payoffs for policy actors seeking to influence the proposal. Consequentially, exceptional policy actors may identify this streamlined policy process as an opportunity to easily navigate and build a knowledgeable and authoritative policy generalist coalition without spending many resources connecting policy actors to push its preferences.

The first explanation includes one policy generalist coalition: the Environmentally Just CBAM Member State coalition. This coalition is present during both the policy preparation and decision-making stages of the CBAM policy process. The Environmentally Just CBAM coalition initially emerged during the early stages of the CBAM negotiations. From the outset, France and its counterparts, namely the Netherlands and Sweden, actively pushed for a CBAM (interview 10, 13, 16, 17). In doing so, France, which assumed an exceptional policy actor role, identified the rather streamlined, fluid, and cohesive negotiating landscape, particularly because not many member states opposed the proposal, early on as an opportunity to gain an upper hand and influence the proposal in its desired direction. As an interviewee mentioned “they [France] were very active and also pushed very much during their presidency to have the proposal adopted. But the Netherlands also, they really wanted CBAM to go through and received support from Sweden” (interview 17). To capitalize on this opportunity of support, France engaged in building a coalition with other like-minded member states that had rather broad preferences, such as those that were generally more climate ambitious, advocated in favor of a CBAM, and were concerned about WTO compliance (interview 14, 17). Off the back of France’s early efforts to advocate for the CBAM and build consensus among likeminded others, the Environmentally Just CBAM Member State coalition emerged following the publication of the EP’s resolution on CBAM (Agence 2021c). As the policy process continued into the decision-making stage, France continued to take on an exceptional policy actor role and Germany replaced the Czech Republic as a member, increasing the coalitions authority. Yet, because of the rather smooth and cohesive negotiations during the decision-making

stage, the coalition remained active, supporting each other's positions withing Council discussions (interview 14).

The second explanation, *techno-stringent agency*, indicates that a policy generalist coalition forms when exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition during the decision-making stage of a highly technical and stringent policy process molded by a legislative proposal that is complex, stringent, and has a narrow scope. Given the narrow scope of the proposal, a lower number and less diverse range of policy actors may be incentivized to mobilize and participate in the policy process to enhance the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposal. The high complexity of the proposal further compounds the lessened participation of policy actors. On one hand, policy actors that do not have the required knowledge or resources to spend on understanding the proposal may be constrained in participating. On the other hand, those policy actors that have the technical knowledge or resources to put into understanding the proposal may be incentivized to participate (Hurka et al., 2022; Junk, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015). Given their technical knowledge and resources, the mobilized actors are foreseen to be able to establish a broad range of preferences and hold some authority in the process. The stringency of the proposal should further incentivize the abled policy actors to engage and expend more resources due to the potentially stringent impacts and higher payoffs for influencing the proposal (Metz, 2017; Pacheco-Vega, 2022). Against this technical and stringent backdrop, exceptional policy actors may depict a window of opportunity to build a policy generalist coalition and try to capitalize on the coalition's savviness and translate their preferences into the proposal. Such coalition building, however, may take some time as policy actors also require time to understand the proposal and form preferences before coordinating with likeminded others. Hence, under these conditions, policy generalist coalitions emerge in the decision-making stage of the process.

The second explanation includes two policy generalist coalitions: the Battery Supply Chain coalition and the Eco-Social Battery coalition, both of which formed in the process related to the Sustainable Batteries regulation. To shed light on this explanation the Eco-Social Battery coalition is drawn on. Due to the high complexity of the Sustainable Batteries proposal, numerous policy actors, particularly those that did not have the know-how or resources to understand the proposal and form preferences, were initially constrained in participating in the policy process. Simultaneously, the proposal's narrow scope and targeted focus on the battery industry in Europe meant that only very low number and homogenous range of policy actors mobilized, particularly those with specified knowledge on the battery industry. Moreover, since the proposal sought to stringently regulate the whole battery supply chain, from the sourcing of materials to the production

and recycling of batteries, those policy actors that were directly impacted by the proposal had further impetus to spend resources to try and influence the proposal and reduce the costs and increase the benefits imposed (interview 30, 31, 34). Because of the extremely high complexity of the proposal, nevertheless, those that did engage required ample time in the early stages of the process to understand the proposal's technicalities and determine their preferences before coordinating in a coalition (interview 35). Put together, these two conditions created a situation whereby it was simpler for actively participating policy actors to develop a broad range of preferences across technical issues and identify likeminded others (interview 30, 31). Within this narrow, technical, and stringent process, exceptional policy actors T&E and Amnesty International "started doing lobbying and advocacy together. But then as the legislative process gained momentum, there were like four or five organizations that were very active in the advocacy process. And that was T&E, Human Rights Watch, ECOS, SOMO, and Power Shift" (interview 33). As a result of the exceptional policy actors in developing this core group, the coalition emerged to push for their shared preferences, particularly because of the stringency of the regulation and its potential impacts on the battery industry and supply chains (interview 31, 32, 33, 34). As a member of the coalition put it, "it was of course a good moment to finally have this very encompassing piece of legislation... it was 100% a game changer" (interview 31). The building of the coalition, nevertheless, took a lot of time as the actors had to understand the proposal, develop their preferences, and find compromise between the two sets of NGOs, which spanned environment and social policy constituencies. As such, the coalition only emerged during the decision-making stage of the policy process (interview 30, 31, 34).

Summary

As the analysis has shown, the formation of policy generalist coalitions follows two pathways and explanations. Both pathways share two overarching conditions: the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor in the coalition and legislative proposals with a narrow regulatory addressee scope. Considering these shared conditions, the first explanation suggests that policy generalist coalitions emerge when an exceptional policy actor, within a coalition, identifies, coordinates, and builds a policy generalist coalition during a streamlined policy process characterized by a legislative proposal that is narrow in scope, less complex, and less stringent. The second explanation demonstrates that policy generalist coalitions also emerge in the decision-making stage when an exceptional policy actor(s) builds a coalition in a technical and stringent policy process marked by a legislative proposal that is narrow in scope, highly complex, and highly stringent.

2.2.6 Commanding coalitions

This subsection presents the analysis on the formation of commanding coalitions. Commanding coalitions are principally characterized by advocating for a broad number of issue preferences, having a large and highly diverse membership, a very high level of authority, and very intense intra-coalition coordination. The size of a commanding coalition is not considered a defining dimension, yet such coalitions tend to be moderate to large. Based on their characteristics, commanding coalitions may be the most focal and/or dominant coalitions. Next, the analysis of necessity is outlined, which is followed by the analysis of sufficiency and the presentation of explanations leading to the formation of commanding coalitions.

Analysis of necessity

The analysis of necessity initially suggests that all five conditions are necessary for commanding coalitions to form (table 7.11). Yet, inspecting the coverage and RoN scores, no conditions are deemed necessary. The coverage and RoN scores of all five conditions, apart from the condition 'inclusion of an exceptional policy actor', are very low. This indicates that the conditions are trivial. Such triviality is subject to the low number of commanding coalitions identified. Moreover, no SUIN conditions are uncovered.

Conditions	Cons.Nec	Cov.Nec	RoN
COMPLEX	1	0.0909	0.6491
SCOPE	1	0.0455	0.2632
REG	1	0.0541	0.3860
DM	1	0.0541	0.3860
ROLE	1	0.1250	0.7544
complex	0	0	0.3729
scope	0	0	0.7458
reg	0	0	0.6271
dm	0	0	0.6271
role	0	0	0.2712

Table 7.11: Analysis of necessity for the formation of commanding coalitions.

Analysis of sufficiency

The truth table analysis for the sufficiency related to the formation of commanding coalitions presents one combination of conditions shown by row 32 (see figure 7.6). As with the analysis of the colossal and policy generalist coalitions, the threshold for inclusion and PRI are set to 0.1 to mitigate the limited diversity and ensure that all commanding coalitions and their pathways are captured in the truth table for minimization.

Formation of Commanding Coalition Truthtable									
	Scope	Complex	Reg	Time	Role	OUT	n	incl	PRI
									cases
32	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
23	1	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	0
31	1	1	1	1	0	0	8	0	0
19	1	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0
17	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
21	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0
15	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	0	0
4	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
16	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	0
29	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
22	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
30	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
18	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
20	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
5	0	0	1	0	0	?	0		
6	0	0	1	0	1	?	0		
7	0	0	1	1	0	?	0		
8	0	0	1	1	1	?	0		
9	0	1	0	0	0	?	0		
10	0	1	0	0	1	?	0		
11	0	1	0	1	0	?	0		
12	0	1	0	1	1	?	0		
13	0	1	1	0	0	?	0		
14	0	1	1	0	1	?	0		
24	1	0	1	1	1	?	0		
25	1	1	0	0	0	?	0		
26	1	1	0	0	1	?	0		
27	1	1	0	1	0	?	0		
28	1	1	0	1	1	?	0		

Figure 7.6: Truth table for the formation of commanding coalitions.

The minimization of the truth table produces a complex solution with one pathway driving the formation of commanding coalitions (see table 7.12). The pathway shows that when an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition building, commanding coalitions emerge in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal which has a broad regulatory addressee scope, high complexity, and high stringency. Regardless of the low number commanding coalitions, the consistency and coverage of the solution are both 1.00. This indicates that the combination of conditions always leads to the formation of a commanding coalition without any other type of coalition being present. Based on this solution, one explanation is proposed: *fragmented exceptionalism*.

Pathway	Cons	CovS	CovU	Cases	Explanation
1. SCOPE*COMPLEX*REG*TIME*ROLE	1.000	1.000	1.000	Nuclear, EnviProg	Fragmented Exceptionalism
Solution					
SCOPE*COMPLEX*REG*TIME*ROLE → Commanding	1.000	1.000			

Table 7.12: Analysis of sufficiency for formation of commanding coalitions.

The explanation *fragmented exceptionalism* includes both commanding coalitions: the Nuclear coalition and the Environmentally Progressive coalition, which both emerged in the decision-making stage of the policy process related to the Renewable Energy Directive. When combined, the characteristics of the proposal create a fragmented policy process in which exceptional policy actors navigate and guide coordination to form commanding coalitions. The broad scope of the proposal means that several policy actors across societal groups are impacted, leading to the mobilization and participation of many policy actors (Hurka et al., 2025; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). This broad participation creates potential opportunities for policy actors to coordinate widely with several other policy actors and policy actor types. The high complexity of the proposal, on one hand, may constrain the broad participation of policy actors that are non-specialized or have low resources to develop preferences on the various technical issues within the proposal. On the other hand, the high complexity could also incentivize policy actors with greater capacity and technical knowledge to participate and form preferences. In doing so, the mobilized policy actors may also try to coordinate with a diverse range of policy actor types to further enhance their informational sources and understandings of the complex proposal (Junk, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015). The broad and complex character of a proposal, thus, is seen to generate a fragmented policy process because many policy actors may only engage and advocate on specific technical issues, creating silos of policy actors backing one or a few issues. The stringency of the proposal may compound this fragmented landscape. Because of the stringent instrument, participating actors may be more willing to spend resources to coordinate more intensely or with authoritative others to share information and try to instill their preferences in the proposal. Among the fragmented landscape, exceptional policy actors may see the fragmentation as an opportunity to build a coalition that bridges the silos by engaging and coordinating with various knowledgeable and authoritative policy actors. Doing so could increase the coalition's advocacy capacity and leverage vis-à-vis other coalitions to influence many of the stringent issues within the proposal. Because of the complex nature of the policy process and structure of a commanding coalition it takes time for such a coalition to form. Hence, commanding coalitions are found to only emerge later in the policy process.

To bring the conditions driving the formation of commanding coalitions to life, the Environmentally Progressive coalition is used as an example. From the outset, the broad regulatory addressee scope of the RED proposal and its aim to enhance the EU's renewable energy sources was considered to have a wide societal impact. A vast number of policy actors were, therefore, incentivized to mobilize and participate to influence the policy process. This was further enhanced by the stringency of the regulatory primary instrument. Because of the stringency and the foreseen

wide-ranging impacts of the proposal, policy actors were highly incentivized to increase the advocacy efforts to try and influence the proposal (interview 28). Concurrently, the high complexity made the proposal very complicated to work on because it covered a variety of very technical issues related to renewable energy. The negotiations on the proposal thus became very issue based. As a result, many of the participating policy actors only focused on very narrow and technical issues that they had specialized knowledge of. This created a policy process that was extremely fragmented as policy actors mobilized and sometimes coordinated in siloed issue-streams to exchange knowledge and information on the very technical topics (interview 20, 28). Exceptional policy actors, including the Greens political group and the NGO EEB among others, had a broader vision of the process and were therefore not in any particular issue silo. Because of this, the exceptional policy actors were able to navigate and traverse the fragmented landscape and band policy actors together across the siloes. They did so by framing the RED in a way that created an overarching preference for environmental progression. This enabled the coalition to form as members worked with one another despite their specialized focus. It also ensured that the preferences and advocacy efforts among members remained coherent across topics (interview 20, 28). Nevertheless, the joining of forces and the subsequent emergence of the coalition took time as the exceptional actors had to scope out the fragmented process and bring together diverse members which had to compromise, learn and develop a broad set of shared preferences (interview 28).

Summary

The analysis of the formation of commanding coalitions results in one pathway and explanation. The pathway and explanation indicate that commanding coalitions emerge when an exceptional policy actor seeks to traverse and connect policy actors from across a fragmented policy process guided by a legislative proposal that has broad regulatory addressee scope, high complexity, and a primary regulatory instrument.

3. Discussion: The role of legislative characteristics and exceptional actors

This section brings together and discusses the results from the six QCAs, which identified pathways and explanations that drive the formation of the six types of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes. Most notably, and what will be discussed below, is that the findings not only uncover key overarching conditions that, when paired with other conditions, drive the formation of most coalition types, but also illustrate the role of exceptional policy actors in building coalitions. Table 7.13 summarizes the analysis.

<u>Peripheral Coalition</u>		
<i>Necessary conditions</i>	None	
<i>Sufficient conditions</i>	[role]* ((scope*complex*reg*dm) + (SCOPE*COMPLEX*REG*DM)) → Peripheral	
<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Emergence of early convenience</i>	<i>Late attempt to narrowly influence</i>
<i>Summary</i>	Peripheral coalitions emerge out of convenience early in a policy process when the legislative proposal is rather simple and less stringent, without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor.	Peripheral coalitions form to narrowly influence a complex and stringent proposal late in the policy process without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor.
<u>Moderate Authoritative Coalition</u>		
<i>Necessary conditions</i>	None	
<i>Sufficient conditions</i>	[SCOPE*complex]*((reg*dm*ROLE) + (role*(reg*DM) +(REG*dm)) → MA	
<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Internal opportunism</i>	<i>Pressurizing policy procedures</i>
<i>Summary</i>	Moderate authoritative coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor, included in the coalition, seeks opportunities early on to build a coalition and influence a process characterized by a legislative proposal that has a wide scope, low complexity, and low stringency.	Moderate authoritative coalitions emerge without an exceptional policy actor when legislative proposals have a wide impact, are simple, and when the policy procedure pressures authoritative policy actors to form a coalition either later in a less coercive policy process or earlier during more coercive policy processes.
<u>Fragmented Coalition</u>		
<i>Necessary conditions</i>	None	
<i>Sufficient conditions</i>	(complex*reg*DM*((scope*role) + (SCOPE*ROLE))) + (COMPLEX*REG*dm*SCOPE*ROLE) → Fragmented	
<i>Explanation</i>	<i>Diversifying consensus</i>	<i>Challenging first move</i>
<i>Summary</i>	Fragmented coalitions form in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal with low complexity, low stringency, and either when policy actors aim to signal diverse consensus late in a policy process without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor and the proposal has a narrow scope or when an exceptional policy actor is included and the proposal has a broad scope.	Fragmented coalitions emerge when an exceptional policy actor seeks a first mover advantage by building a diverse coalition to signal broad acceptance of shared preferences and try to influence a proposal in the policy preparation stage of a challenging process characterized by a proposal with high complexity, a broad scope, and high stringency.

<u>Colossal Coalition</u>		
Necessary conditions	<i>None</i>	
Sufficient conditions	$[complex*DM]*((SCOPE*REG*role) + (scope*reg*ROLE)) \rightarrow colossal$	
Explanation	<i>Simply broad and coercively driven</i>	<i>Soft and delayed expansionism</i>
Summary	Colossal coalitions form during the decision-making stage during processes marked by a legislative proposal that is simple, broad and stringent, driving policy actors to coordinate with many others without the need of an exceptional policy actor.	Colossal coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor looks to greatly expand a coalition and signal strong acceptance of share preferences during the decision-making stage of a processes shaped by a soft legislative proposal that has low complexity, a narrow scope and is not very stringent.
<u>Policy Generalist Coalition</u>		
Necessary conditions	<i>None</i>	
Sufficient conditions	$[scope*ROLE] * ((complex*reg) + (COMPLEX*REG*DM)) \rightarrow PG$	
Explanation	<i>Streamlined agency</i>	<i>Techno-stringent agency</i>
Summary	Policy generalist coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor identifies an opportunity to try and influence a proposal and thus seeks to build a knowledgeable coalition in a streamlined process marked by a proposal that has a narrow scope, low complexity, and low stringency.	Policy generalist coalitions emerge when an exceptional policy actor develops a knowledgeable coalition in the decision-making stage of a technically challenging and stringent process shaped by a proposal with a narrow scope, high complexity and high stringency.
<u>Commanding Coalition</u>		
Necessary conditions	<i>None</i>	
Sufficient conditions	$SCOPE*COMPLEX*REG*TIME*ROLE \rightarrow Commanding$	
Explanation	<i>Fragmented exceptionalism</i>	
Summary	Commanding coalitions form in the decision-making stage of a policy process when an exceptional policy actor(s) navigates a fragmented process characterized by a proposal with a broad scope, high complexity, and high stringency, to build a coalition spanning across many silos.	

Table 7.13: Summary of QCA and comparative analysis for each coalition type.

Formation of peripheral coalitions

The analysis related to the formation of peripheral coalitions illustrates that they emerge primarily without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor. The absence of exceptional policy actors suggests that peripheral coalitions emerge by other means. For example, policy actors may interact in other venues outside of the policy process, such as the BRICS in exogenous fora. It is through these ad-hoc interactions, which build coordination patterns between policy actors and drive the formation of a coalition that emerges in the given EU environmental policy process. Alternatively, and as this chapter highlighted, other pressures, such as a temporal pressure, may

also force actors to try build a coalition and conjure up a joint action before the policy process is finalized and the actors miss out on trying to influence the proposal, as highlighted with the Biofuel Industry coalition.

Accounting for the relatively simple structure of peripheral coalitions, the absence of exceptional actors suggests that the structural development of a peripheral coalition may be limited or constrained. Policy entrepreneurs and policy brokers can identify opportunities within the policy process and strategically conduct strategies that frame issues in a certain way, bring policy actors together, and find compromises between actors (Mintrom, 2019; Petridou et al., 2025). Hence, their absence is thought to constrain the coalition's capacity to form in such a way that the number of shared preferences is broad, the size is large, the diversity is wide, the authority is high, and the intra-coalition coordination is intense. Given this, the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor should drive the formation of coalitions with more structurally complex features and that can potentially challenge other coalitions and have more success in translating their preferences into the legislative proposal (Boasson & Huitema, 2017).

Interestingly, when examining the truth table, the Activist coalition, which is characterized as a peripheral coalition, stands out as the only peripheral coalition that contains an exceptional policy actor. The formation of this coalition during the policy preparation stage of the Climate Law process may, therefore, be a special case, particularly regarding the specificity of the Climate Law policy process. This process was heavily framed against the backdrop of the youth climate strikes predominantly driven by the Fridays for the Future Movement. The central footing given to the Fridays for the Future movement enabled national Fridays for the Future delegations across Europe to come together to form a coalition that resembled the structure of a peripheral coalition. Yet, once the Climate Law was introduced and formulated, the Friday for the Future organizations, spearheaded by Greta Thunberg, were seen as quite entrepreneurial (interview 6; Pollex & Berker, 2024). The movement was able to frame the Climate Law as a necessary step for progressive climate action amidst the existential threat of climate change and climate inaction on future generations. Additionally, many of the youth activists also networked with political groups in the EP, and even carried out internships within the Greens, to gain inside access to key venues during negotiations on the Climate Law (interview 6, 9).

Formation of moderate authoritative coalitions

The analysis pertaining to the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions demonstrates that these types of coalitions tend to form in policy processes shaped by legislative proposals that are broad in scope and not overly complex. Combined, these two conditions suggest that moderate

authoritative coalitions emerge when policy actors identify a situation where the proposal may have a wide-ranging impact on society and the costs of understanding the proposal and developing preferences are low. Given this, policy actors may anticipate the potentially high return on trying to influence the proposal and build a coalition that resembles a moderate authoritative coalition to increase their chances of translating their shared preferences in the legislative proposal and benefit from the high impact and low-cost context. Under such conditions, like the Climate Law or the JTF, actors may be incentivized to form coalitions that are small, homogenous, and authoritative rather than large, diverse, or with little authority. The homogeneity and small size of such coalitions reduce the ideological distance and coordination costs among members (Junk, 2016; Nelson & Yackee, 2012), while the coalition's high degree of authority enhances its ability to gain access to EU-institutional policymakers and venues (Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). Despite their small size, this dual advantage may increase such coalitions' capacity to shape policy processes and successfully implant their preferences in the proposal. By contrast, without these two overarching conditions present, it may be that policy actors are less incentivized to invest resources in building a coalition. This is because the expected returns may no longer outweigh the costs required to influence a narrow targeted and highly complex proposal that requires much time to understand and develop preferences. As such, the overarching conditions suggest that moderate authoritative coalitions seem to form when policy processes offer high payoffs for trying to influence the proposal relative to the low costs required to participate.

Notably, like peripheral coalitions, the formation of moderate authoritative coalitions is also generally not driven by the inclusion of exceptional policy actors. The Carbon Intense Municipality coalition in the process linked to the JTF represents an exception and it is plausible that this coalition may be very specific to the JTF process. The JTF aims to reduce injustices in the EU's green transition. In doing so, it put regions and municipalities as central recipients of the allocated funds, giving special credence to such policy actors (Kyriazi & Miro, 2022). By putting regions and municipalities at the center of the proposal's beneficiaries, they became central to the process. Their central role not only pushed these actors to participate and try to influence the proposal, but it also placed them in exceptional policy actor roles. As such, some municipalities in the coalition were identified as being brokers, sitting between the EU institutions and environmental NGOs also active during the JTF policy process (interview 43, 44, 45). Given the JTF's function of reaching the EU's objective of leaving no one behind in the transition to climate neutrality, the formation of a moderate authoritative coalition that includes an exceptional policy actor may not occur in other policy processes.

Formation of fragmented coalitions

The analysis related to the formation of fragmented coalitions demonstrates that such coalitions do not emerge from a single overarching combination of conditions, unlike the other five coalition types. Instead, their formation follows distinct pathways. Although no overarching conditions were identified, the results illustrated that when a process becomes progressively more difficult to participate in and build coalitions, the emergence of a fragmented coalition requires the agency of an exceptional policy actor. When the policy process is relatively simple (pathway 1), policy actors can easily navigate the process to identify a diverse range of actors that share preferences to coordinate with, forming a fragmented coalition without the agency of an exceptional policy actor. As policy processes become more challenging to navigate, either by broadening in scope (pathway 2) or through the combination of a broadened scope, increased complexity, and increased stringency (pathway 3), the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor is required for the fragmented coalitions to form. Under these challenging conditions, policy actors may have difficulty in identifying and coordinating with a large and diverse range of policy actors. Hence, the ingenuity of an exceptional policy actor may be needed to traverse the difficult landscape and draw on key strategies to connect likeminded others and form a large and diverse fragmented coalition.

The results, particularly the differences of pathways two and three, further suggest the existence of a threshold in terms of the challenging nature of the policy process and an exceptional policy actor's opportunism. When the policy process becomes overly challenging most policy actors may be discouraged to build a coalition early on, lowering the potential competition within the policy process. Hence, exceptional policy actors may perceive a window of opportunity to build a fragmented coalition, signal broad support for certain preferences, and influence the proposal in the early stages of the process, especially before other policy actors have mobilized or other coalitions have formed. By contrast, when policy processes are marked by less challenging proposals, as depicted by pathways one and two, such windows of opportunity may be less visible or attractive. This in turn may reduce the incentives for exceptional policy actors to build a rather complex coalition early in the policy process.

Formation of colossal coalitions

The results on the formation of colossal coalitions show that such coalitions form mainly in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a legislative proposal that is relatively simple. The overarching combination of these conditions suggests that very large coalitions take time to emerge but only when the costs for policy actors to grasp an understanding of the proposal and develop preferences on the proposal are low. The low costs may result in the participation of large

number of policy actors in the policy process, creating an opportunity for a colossal coalition to potentially emerge. And because policy actors do not need to spend much effort in understanding a simple proposal, they have additional resources to continually find like-minded actors to coordinate with. Yet, due to the very large size of colossal coalitions, they require ample time for them to be built. Nevertheless, overtime and through continual interaction and coordination, colossal coalitions are likely to form under the low participation cost context. Conversely, proposals that are complex may deter policy actors from participating in the process due to the increased effort required to understand the proposal and develop preferences. For those that do participate in such a process, they may have less resources to engage in such wide-ranging coordination, limiting the building of a colossal coalition, such as in the process linked to the Sustainable Batteries or Renewable Energy proposals. In addition, given the time and effort required to pull so many policy actors together to form a colossal coalition, their presence in the policy preparation stage may be highly unlikely unless the coalition is or has been active in parallel or past policy processes.

In this light, the findings imply that there could be a trade-off between building a colossal coalition and the degree of a proposal's complexity, akin to the relationship between quiet versus loud politics and salience (Culpepper, 2010). On one hand, a proposal with low complexity, as suggested here, may incentivize policy actors to forge a large 'loud' colossal coalition later in the process. Doing so may be to highlight the policy actors' active involvement and bring others on board with their preferences given the simplicity of understanding the proposal. When the legislative proposal is less complex, such as in the process related to the Sustainable Batteries or RED proposals, policy actors may opt to build 'quieter' smaller coalitions due to policy actors' limited resources, making building a large coalition not feasible or warranted. Hence, it may be expected that complex proposals and those being negotiated in the earlier stages of a policy process may limit the growth and size of coalitions. Yet, given the low number of identified colossal coalitions, the exact mechanisms should be further explored.

Formation of policy generalist coalitions

The analysis of the formation of policy generalist coalitions indicates the combination of two overarching conditions, namely when the legislative proposal has a narrow scope and an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition. When legislative proposals are narrow in scope and target specific sectors, such as the CBAM or Sustainable Batteries regulation, it is likely that policy actors with a deep knowledge of at least one of the narrow sector(s) affected by the proposal will mobilize to try and influence the legislative proposal. Yet, despite not many policy actors are

expected to mobilize from the outset, making it easier for policy actors to identify like-minded others, a narrow scope is not enough for policy generalist coalitions to emerge. To this end, the agency of an exceptional policy actor is needed. Such actors can drive the formation of policy generalist coalitions by identifying opportunities to try and influence the proposal, particularly by bringing these very knowledgeable actors together to share information, enhance the collective knowledge of the coalition, and subsequently gain authority in doing so.

To this end, exceptional policy actors were a vital condition for the formation of a policy generalist coalition. Taken from the analysis, the exceptional policy actors in the policy generalist coalitions were found to seek opportunities within the policy processes of the CBAM and the Sustainable Batteries regulation by engaging in a range of entrepreneurial and brokerage strategies (Boasson & Huitema, 2017; Petridou et al., 2025). Specifically, their ability to identify and develop coordination ties across policy actors that have a broad acceptance and shared direction for the proposal, whilst simultaneously finding compromise across a broad range of issues, proved vital for the policy generalist coalition to form. Through their agency, the exceptional policy actors were able to build a homogenous but knowledgeable coalition comprised of policy actors that shared a very broad set of preferences and had a high degree of authority.

Without the two conditions present, it is difficult to foresee the emergence of a policy generalist coalition. Proposals with a broad scope, such as the Climate Law or the Renewable Energy Directive, lead to the mobilization of a higher number of policy actors spanning across multiple sectors and societal groups. In such instances, when an exceptional policy actor is included in a coalition, it might be expected that a different type of coalition would form such as a fragmented or commanding coalition. This is plausible, especially given that neither the fragmented or commanding coalitions formed in the process of the Sustainable Batteries, and only two of nine fragmented coalitions formed in the CBAM. Moreover, the absence of an exceptional policy actor during coalition building efforts may hinder the formation of a policy generalist coalition. As previously discussed, without an exceptional policy actor, the ability for a coalition to form with a more complex structure may be limited as non-exceptional policy actors may be challenged in traversing the policy process, and because of the additional resources need to take on such a role, may not seek to strategically form a more potent coalition. Yet, due to the small number of identified policy generalist coalitions, such overarching combinations of conditions could subside and should be further teased out.

Formation of commanding coalitions

The analysis on the formation of commanding coalitions shows they form in the decision-making stage of a process when an exceptional policy actor is included, and the legislative proposal is characterized by a broad scope, high complexity, and high stringency. This is an interesting finding. Considering the difficult and fragmented policy process of the RED, it would be expected that other coalition types with less structural intricacy would emerge. The high costs involved in participating in such a policy process would either deter participation or re-direct policy actor resources away from coordinating intensely and finding comprises across a range of preferences with such a large and diverse range of policy actors. Intuitively, the formation of commanding coalitions would rather be expected under less challenging legislative proposals. The process related to the Climate Law, for example, would provide a solid basis for commanding coalitions to form due to its broad scope, simplicity, and stringency. Yet, within such a unique process, exceptional policy actors may frame the challenging and fragmented process as an opportunity to build bridges between diverse policy actors and form a rather dominant coalition that is able to outcompete other less dominant coalition types. As such, it could be contended that the two commanding coalitions are unique to the RED policy process.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter set out to uncover and explain the formation of coalition types across EU environmental policy processes. The results show that the design of legislative proposals matters for the formation of each coalition type. But no single legislative characteristics or the in/exclusion of an exceptional policy actor is directly attributed to the formation of any coalition type. Rather, each coalition type emerges from distinct pathways made up of core and auxiliary conditions. As such, contextual variation across policy processes or the role of exceptional policy actors are not solely deterministic to coalition formation, but it is a combination of both contextual and agency factors that drive the formation of coalitions (Fischer, 2015).

Exploring the mechanisms between the sets of conditions, the chapter contends that policy processes are initially shaped by combinations of legislative characteristics, altering mobilization and participation patterns of policy actors within. Once mobilized, policy actors seek to coordinate with likeminded others in coalitions to try and influence the policy process. During this process, coalitions are found to emerge either when an exceptional policy actor, such as a policy entrepreneur or policy broker, is included within a coalition or through additional mechanisms. To this end, the results demonstrate that more structurally intricate coalition types, namely fragmented, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions, form when an exceptional policy actor

identifies opportunities throughout the policy process and engages in coalition building particularly under increasingly challenging processes. Conversely, less structurally intricate coalitions, such as the peripheral or moderate authoritative, do not require an exceptional policy actor for the coalition to form. Here, such coalition types are driven under conditions that either lower the costs for policy actors to participate and potentially influence the proposal or pressure policy actors to try and influence a process before it is too late. The drivers of colossal coalitions fall under each overarching dynamic. They are found to either form due to coercive contextual factors or the agency of exceptional policy actors. As such, the chapter provides a complementary perspective into the study of coalition formation by fusing contextual and agency conditions to explain coalition formation.

The findings provide two core promising insights into the drivers of coalition formation across EU environmental policy processes. First, the findings show that legislative proposals are multifaceted and composed of varying characteristics (Klüver et al., 2015). Some proposals, for example, are complex, broad and stringent. Others may be simple, narrow, and less stringent. Understanding the design of legislative proposals, in this sense, has important implications for which types of coalitions form, how policy processes are structured by coalitions, and how the processes and proposals evolve overtime. Second, and relatedly, the results underscore the importance of examining coalition formation and policy processes from a perspective of causal complexity. As the chapter demonstrates, the architecture of legislative proposals shapes the contours of the policy process, altering the mobilization and participation of policy actors within, and the formation of distinct coalition types. The contours of the policy process, however, are not always deterministic. Rather, it is the complex interplay between legislative characteristics and the inclusion of exceptional policy actors that help explain why certain coalitions types emerge instead of others (Fischer, 2015; Lubell et al., 2012). The prominence of causal complexity therefore challenges the conventional assumption that individual characteristics of a legislative proposal or the agency of exceptional actors exerts direct and independent effect on coalition formation (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017).

Now that we understand what drives the formation of different coalition types, it must be asked, what strategies do they employ to try and influence the policy processes they have emerged in? The next chapter seeks to engage with this question by comparatively examining and explaining the strategies that each coalition type employs.

Chapter 8: Explaining the Strategies of Coalition Types in EU Environmental Policy Processes within the European Green Deal

1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the drivers related to the formation of the six types of coalitions uncovered in EU environmental policy processes. Coalitions don't just lay idle once formed, but they employ strategies via a repertoire of activities in attempts to influence EU environmental legislative proposals (Elgin & Weible, 2013, Gupta, 2014, Pierce, 2016). This chapter, therefore, aims to map and explain the strategies and activities employed by coalition types across EU environmental policy processes by asking: *(RQ3) Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?*

Following the conceptual framework in chapter 3, two categories of factors are mobilized which are expected to affect the strategies of the coalition types. The first category includes the structural dimensions of the coalition types: the number of shared issue preferences, the size and diversity of a coalition's membership, the authority, and the intra-coalition coordination. The second category comprises of the legislative characteristics, including the salience, complexity, regulatory addressee scope, and the stringency of the proposal as well as the shifts between policy stages which the proposal passes through. The objective of the chapter is to uncover the relevance of these categories and to establish correlations between the coalition's structural dimensions, the characteristics of legislative proposals that shape the policy process, and the strategies they employ.

This chapter proposes that coalitions engage in three kinds of strategies that can be employed either individually or mixed together. Each of the three strategies is informed by a range of activities that have different targets and logics of use (see chapter 3). Inside strategies are conducted under a logic of influence and are informed by activities that are directed at EU policymakers, such as meetings with EU policymakers, sending joint letters, or drafting amendments, and attempting to affect decisions from inside EU venues. Outside strategies are employed under a logic of reputation and involve activities that target the public, like using the media or carrying out a protest, which seek to affect and pressure policymakers indirectly by raising the awareness, and mobilizing or changing public opinion (De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Orchestration strategies are utilized under a logic of expansion and seek to target, mobilize, support, and guide intermediaries that share broadly similar preferences to indirectly influence

policymakers through a chain of soft coordination (Abbott, 2018; Bäckstrand & Kuyper, 2017). Activities with an orchestration function include cross-coalition coordination, providing material and ideational support to other coalitions and policy actors, and engaging in multilevel games by mobilizing other coalitions and policy actors across governance levels.

The chapter relies on content analysis to map the six types of coalitions' strategies. To determine the strategy of each coalition type, the activities of the 59 coalitions are coded. The activities that each coalition conducts and the frequency at which they are conducted are plotted in a heatmap, aggregated by their type and across policy processes. Using the heatmap, patterns of activities are uncovered within each coalition type to determine each types' overarching strategy. Once the types of coalitions' strategies are revealed, the analysis proceeds in two steps and follows a hierarchical and nested logic in which the second analytical step builds directly on the first. The first step maps and compares strategies across coalition types to identify how structural dimensions enable or constrain the activities and strategies associated with each type. The second step examines how legislative characteristics affect the strategies of the same coalition type across policy processes. This nested logic contends that the structure of the coalition types first and foremost enables and constrains the strategies and activity profiles of the coalition types. The legislative characteristics then operate as the contextual conditions that may further amplify, dampen, or redirect the baseline strategic tendencies of coalition types.

The hierarchical approach follows the theoretical logic of the ACF and interest group literature, whereby the strategies of coalitions are determined by their core dimensions and the context in which the coalition is embedded in (Binderkrantz, 2005; Weible et al., 2020). The nested analysis is therefore appropriate as the dissertation is primarily concerned with explaining the strategies of coalition types, rather than treating each of the identified coalitions as independent units. If the strategies of each individual coalition were of interest, the analysis could examine the direct effect of structural dimensions and legislative characteristics on coalition activity, without reference to coalition types. However, such approach would remove the possibility of comparing the strategies of coalition types across legislative processes, making correlations between the strategies of coalition types, structural dimensions, and legislative characteristics ineligible.

The chapter is structured as follows. Next, the strategies and core activities of each coalition type are presented. Following, the strategies of each coalition type are compared against one another, establishing relations between the structural dimensions of coalitions and their strategies. Then, the chapter compares the strategies of coalitions within each type to examine the impact of legislative characteristics on the strategies of the coalition types. Finally, the chapter concludes.

2. Mapping the strategies of coalition types

This section presents the strategies and core activities each coalition type employs. From the coding of the data, 14 activities that coalitions conduct are uncovered. Of the 14 activities, six activities are grouped under an inside strategy as they target EU-institutional policymakers and have a logic of influence. Another six activities are grouped under an outside strategy as they target the public and have a logic of reputation. The final two activities are grouped under the orchestration strategy as they target intermediaries and have a logic of expansion (see table 8.1).

Target/Logic	Activity	Example
Inside	Meetings with EU-institutional policymakers	Members of a coalition meet with a Commission DG representative, MEP, or Member State representative.
	Using the Commission's consultation platform	Members of a coalition submit feedback on the Commission's consultation platform.
	Sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers	Members of a coalition send a joint letter to EU-institutional policymakers.
	Writing joint amendments	Members of a coalition jointly write and submit amendments to be included in the proposal.
	Using delay tactics	Members of a coalition use tactics to delay the policy process (ie. engaging with the legal services in the EP to request translations of documents or extending legislative timeline).
	Making statements in negotiations	Members of a coalition voice a statement during negotiations (ie. member states making statements in Council negotiations).
Outside	Using the media	Members of a coalition use the media to advocate for their preference(s).
	Publishing a policy report	Members of a coalition publish a policy report on the proposal, highlighting their preferences
	Present at an external event	Members of a coalition present at an event external to advocate for their preferences.
	Participate in a public action	Members of a coalition participate in a public action (ie. protests, distributing petitions)
	Publishing a position paper	Members of a coalition publish a position paper advocating for shared preferences on the proposal.
	Making a public statement	Members of a coalition make a joint public statement.
Orchestration	Engaging in cross-coalition coordination	Members of a coalition engage in cross-coalition coordination with other likeminded coalitions in the policy process (ie. sharing information, planning advocacy tactics).
	Mobilizing stakeholders	Members of a coalition mobilize stakeholders at different governance levels (ie. Mobilizing national level policy actors to lobby policymakers at national level to influence policymaking at EU-level).

Table 8.1: Identified activities of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking.

Figure 8.1 presents a heatmap plotting the activities each of the 59 coalitions conducted. The identified coalitions are on the left-vertical axis and are grouped by their type as signified on the right-vertical axis. The activities are shown on the bottom horizontal-axis and are grouped by strategy, indicated on the top-horizontal axis. Shaded squares correspond to a coalition using an

activity at different rates of usage. Darker squares mean that the coalition has used this activity at a high rate. Lighter colored squares mean that the coalition has used the activity at a low rate. A white square means that the coalition has not been identified to engage in this activity.

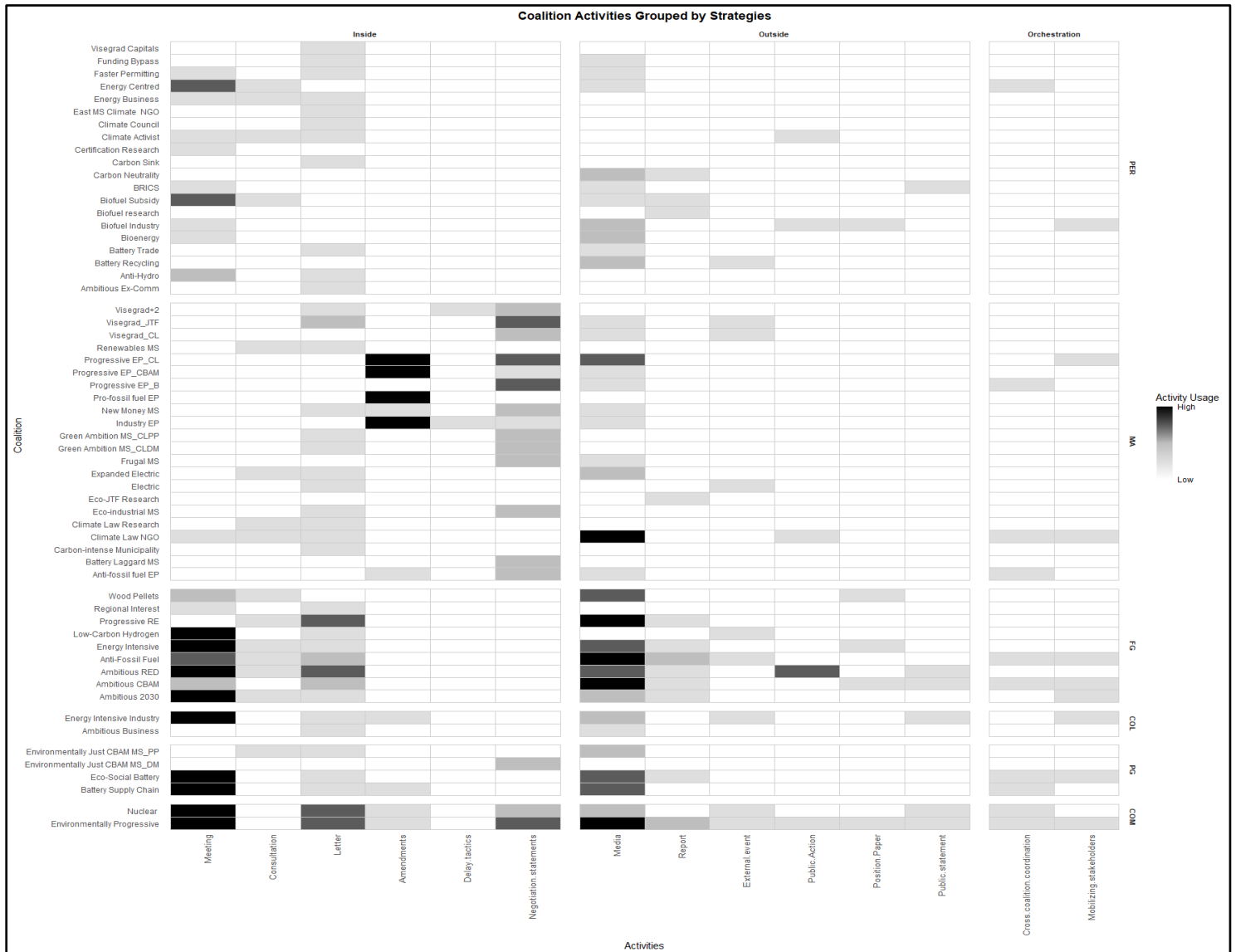


Figure 8.1: Activities of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes.

Upon initial inspection of the heatmap two initial overarching insights become clear. First, the heatmap indicates that, on average, coalitions tend to only use a small selection of activities. Therefore, they do not make the most out of the possible range of activities on offer. Second, observing the activities they do conduct, coalitions tend to primarily favor an insider strategy. There

is, however, considerable variation among each of the coalitions' activities and their frequency of use. The most used activities among all coalitions include meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, utilizing the Commission's consultation platform, and using the media to shape public opinion. To a lesser degree, coalitions also tend to make statements during negotiations and publish policy reports. The least utilized activities include using delay tactics, making public statements, engaging in public actions, and both orchestration activities. To follow, the overarching strategy of each coalition type is outlined and presented in table 8.2 at the end of the section.

2.1 Peripheral coalitions

Peripheral coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of the policy process. They primarily advocate for a narrow number of issue preferences, tend to be small, have a homogenous membership base, a very low degree of authority, and coordinate with very low intensity. Across all policy processes investigated, peripheral coalitions tend to favor an inside strategy that is very lightly implemented via a narrow range of activities and a low rate of use. Occasionally they also employ an outside strategy, and very rarely do they opt for any form of orchestration. Peripheral coalitions primarily conduct three kinds of activities: having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. Except for the Energy Centered and Biofuel Subsidy coalitions who conduct meetings at a moderately high rate, the overall usage of activities among peripheral coalitions is rather low. Peripheral coalitions are also found not to write joint amendments, engage in delay tactics, or make statements during negotiations. Moreover, peripheral coalitions very rarely speak at external events, engage in public actions, make public statements, publish position papers, or conduct any type of orchestrating activities.

2.2 Moderate authoritative coalitions

Moderate authoritative coalitions share a moderate range of issues, have a small number of homogenous members, a high degree of authority, and coordinate with low intensity. Given the high level of authority, moderate authoritative coalitions hold a latent degree of power, which may be mobilized to advocate for their moderate range of preferences. Taken from the heatmap, moderate authoritative coalitions tend to opt for an inside strategy. Some moderate authoritative coalitions also mix in an outside strategy. Very rarely do moderate authoritative coalitions adopt an orchestration strategy. To implement this strategy, moderate authoritative coalitions primarily carry out three core activities: sending letters to EU institutional policymakers, making statements in negotiations, and using the media. Although not employed pervasively, when moderate authoritative coalitions write joint amendments, it is done at a high rate. Put together, the activity

repertoire of moderate authoritative coalitions is rather limited, like that of the peripheral coalition. Yet, unlike peripheral coalitions, moderate authoritative coalitions tend to conduct activities at a higher usage rate, suggesting that moderate authoritative coalitions enjoy strong access to key policymakers and policymaking venues.

2.3 Fragmented coalitions

Fragmented coalitions are comprised of a large and heterogeneous set of members that are loosely held together by a low number of shared preferences, low levels of authority, and a moderate degree of coordination intensity. From the heatmap, fragmented coalitions are shown to favor an inside-outside strategy. Occasionally, some fragmented coalitions also mix in an orchestration strategy. To implement this mixed strategy, fragmented coalitions engage in five core activities, including having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, using consultations and the media, and publishing policy reports. The activities are also carried out at a high frequency, particularly meetings and using the media. As such, the activity profile and mixed strategy of fragmented coalitions somewhat diverge from the strategies of peripheral and moderate authoritative coalitions. Moreover, the mixed strategy suggests that fragmented coalitions, like moderate authoritative coalitions, may enjoy strong access to EU-institutional policymakers and venues, yet may seek to complement such access with more outward focusing actions.

2.4 Colossal coalitions

Colossal coalitions are considered to occupy a vast space within the policy process due to their very large size, in addition to advocating for a moderate number of issue preferences, having a homogenous membership, a moderate level of authority, and internally coordinating with low intensity. The mapping of a colossal coalition's strategy illustrates that they are found to employ an inside-outside strategy, engaging in two core activities: sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. Such strategy is strictly determined as only two colossal coalitions are identified, making detecting a consistent pattern difficult. Of the two colossal coalitions, the Energy Intensive Industry coalition was much more active and carried out additional activities including having meetings with EU-institutional policymakers, writing amendments, speaking at external events, making public statements, and mobilizing intermediaries. Generally, all activities were used at a low rate, apart from the energy intensive industry coalition's use of meetings with EU-institutional policymakers. Subsequently, colossal coalitions are considered to not engage in several activities or use them at a high rate to advocate for their preferences. The strategy of colossal coalitions is thus likened to the fragmented coalition strategy. Unlike

fragmented coalitions, however, the strategy of colossal coalitions is only based on one activity informing each strategy, and the usage of the deployed activities occurs at much lower rates. This indicates that colossal coalitions weakly implement the inside-outside strategy.

2.5 Policy generalist coalitions

Policy generalist coalitions tend to advocate for a very broad number of shared preferences, comprise of a small number of homogenous policy actors, hold a high degree of authority, and coordinate with a low degree of intensity. In that sense, policy generalist coalitions possess a strong grasp and represent a unified perspective on the proposal at hand. Derived from the coding, policy generalist coalitions are found to primarily favor an inside strategy. Yet, some policy generalist coalitions employ a mixed inside-outside-orchestration strategy. The inside strategy is mainly informed by two core activities: sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. When implementing their strategies, policy generalist coalitions tend to conduct activities at a moderate rate. Despite the mixed strategy conducted by two of the four policy generalist coalitions, the inside strategy is cautiously determined. This is because identifying a consistent pattern is difficult due to the low number of policy generalist coalitions. Accordingly, all four policy generalist coalitions conduct more than one inside-oriented activity but not all conduct outside or orchestration activities. Such strategy is closely related to the peripheral and moderate authoritative coalitions.

2.6 Commanding coalitions

Commanding coalitions advocate for a broad range of issues, have a large and highly diverse membership, a very high level of authority, and very intense intra-coalition coordination. As such, they are considered the most focal or dominant of the coalition types. From the analysis and heatmap, commanding coalitions employ a mixed inside-outside-orchestrating strategy, implemented through eight core activities including: having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, writing amendments, making statements in negotiations, using the media, speaking at external events, making public statements, and engaging in cross-coalition coordination. When conducting the activities, commanding coalitions tend to do so at a high rate. Together, the mapping demonstrates that commanding coalitions not only incorporate the broadest activity repertoire of all six coalition types, but they are also the most active. The breadth of activities and mixed strategy shows that commanding coalitions are closely related to but expand from the strategy of fragmented coalitions. Nevertheless, due to the small number of commanding coalitions, their strategy, although rather cohesive, is determined with caution.

2.7 Summary of coalition types' overarching strategy

In sum, the mapping of the strategies of each coalition type across all five EU environmental policy processes illustrates several similarities and differences among the coalition types (see table 8.2). The peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily favor an inside strategy. Yet, the core activities informing the strategies of the peripheral compared to the policy generalist and moderate authoritative coalitions somewhat diverge. Although all three coalitions implement their inside strategy via a limited portfolio of activities, the rate at which the activities are conducted differs. Whereas peripheral coalitions use activities at a low rate, moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions use their activities at a moderate rate. The fragmented and colossal coalitions conduct an inside-outside strategy. But compared to the colossal coalitions, fragmented coalitions draw on a wider range of activities and occasionally mix in an orchestration strategy. Moreover, the fragmented coalitions use these activities at a much higher rate. Closely related but expanding from the fragmented coalition, commanding coalitions favor a mixed inside-outside-orchestration strategy, which is implemented via a broad set of activities carried out at a very high rate. The similarities and differences suggest that the structural dimensions of the coalitions may enable or constrain the strategies they employ. To follow, the similarities and differences regarding the strategies of coalition types will be compared to uncover the relations between the structural dimensions and the strategies.

Coalition type	Strategy Intensity			Core activities
	Inside	Outside	Orchestrate	
<i>Peripheral</i>				Meetings; sending letters; using media
<i>Moderate Authoritative</i>				Sending letters; making statements in negotiations; using media
<i>Fragmented</i>				Meetings; sending letters; consultations; using media; publishing reports
<i>Colossal*</i>				Sending letters; using media
<i>Policy Generalist*</i>				Sending letters; using media
<i>Commanding*</i>				Meetings; sending letters; writing amendments; making statements in negotiations; using media; speaking at external events; making public statements; cross-coalition coordination

Table 8.2: Overall strategies of coalition types. Note. Black = more intense use; light grey = less intense use; white = very limited – no use. * indicates strategies that are cautiously determined due to low number of coalitions.

3. Comparing the strategies of coalition types

As presented in the previous section, the strategies employed by each coalition type reveal some similarities and differences. To understand why coalitions favor the identified strategies, this section sets out to compare the coalition types that employ similar strategies and correlate the strategies to the structural dimensions of each coalition type.

3.1 The inside strategy of peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions

Accounting for all five EU environmental policy processes, peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily favor an inside strategy. As shown below, the adoption of an inside strategy stems from a constraining combination of small and homogenous membership, and low levels of intra-coalition coordination intensity. To mitigate these structural constraints, the coalitions of these types operate under a logic of influence, concentrating their limited advocacy capacity on direct engagement with policymakers to improve their chances of success (Dür & Mateo, 2016). For the moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions, the more frequent use of inside-oriented activities is further enabled by their high authority, which facilitates access to EU-institutional venues and policymakers (see table 8.3). Whilst the inside strategies result from the combination of structural dimensions, the analysis disentangles the distinct constraining and enabling effects of each. Accordingly, the analysis first examines how the small and homogenous membership and low level of intra-coalition coordination intensity limit the coalition types' activity repertoires, guiding them to select an inside strategy before turning to the enabling role of authority.

Coalition Type	No. Issue Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coordination intensity
<i>Peripheral</i>	Narrow	Small	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
<i>Moderate Authoritative</i>	Moderate	Small	Very Low	High	Low
<i>Policy Generalist</i>	Very Broad	Small	Very Low	High	Low

Table 8.3: Structural dimensions of coalitions that employ an inside strategy.

3.1.1 An activity repertoire constrained by size, homogeneity, and lack of coordination

The small size, homogenous membership, and low level of coordination all constrain the range of activities that peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions carry out. The small membership base reduces the coalitions' capacity to pursue broad advocacy strategies, as fewer actors are available to distribute tasks, mobilize constituencies, or engage simultaneously

in multiple venues (Nelson & Yackee, 2012). As a result, the coalition types' initial activity portfolio is reduced, narrowing their plausible strategy selection. Amidst the reduced activity portfolio, their homogenous membership reinforces these constraints. Representing a limited range of constituencies and lacking access to a broader public audience, these coalitions are less equipped to engage in outside-oriented activities. As such, the desirability and potential effectiveness of employing outside-oriented activities is hindered, particularly considering their limited activity portfolio (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018; De Bruycker & Beyers, 2019). Moreover, homogenous coalitions may have less novel information sources and knowledge about the policy process (Junk, 2019). Hence, they may not have the ability to successfully map the policy landscape and conduct orchestration activities with other coalitions or policy actors. The low intensity of intra-coalition coordination heightens these structural constraints. By not coordinating internally with much intensity, the policy actors within the coalition do not share much information, resulting in the coalitions' inefficient planning and usage of a wide range of advocacy tactics that are attuned to the policy process (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). While these structural features constrain the breadth of the coalition types' activity portfolios, the moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions possess high levels of authority, enabling them to implement their inside strategies more intensely.

3.1.2 More authority, more inside activities

Building on these constraints, moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions engage more frequently in inside-oriented activities than peripheral coalitions. This variation is driven primarily by differences in authority. High levels of authority enable the moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions to control valuable information and gain privileged access to EU-institutional venues and policymakers (Ingold & Fischer, 2014; Ingold & Leifeld, 2016). The battery supply chain coalition, for example, enjoyed a high degree of authority due to its technical knowledge on the EU battery industry, resulting in the development of a sophisticated stance on the Sustainable Battery proposal. This high authority thus facilitated many direct interactions and exchanges of technical information with EU policymakers, where the coalition was able to explain its preferences. As a member of the coalition stated “we have an approach which is more technical. We start discussing first with the joint research centre about the technical aspect of placing batteries on the market and that's related to the real world of science, feasibility, techniques, and industry. We believe it is our role to really be the expert, be the specialist, that helps the regulation being built on the real world. We try to influence of course like everybody following the legislative process. We do it in a way to have the influence really on the content of the regulation, on the technical content of the regulation” (interview 35). Given this privileged access, these coalitions

locked-in to and increased the use of inside activities in attempts to enhance their potential advocacy success (interview 30, 32, 35).

3.1.3 Mitigating constraints to improve the odds of success

Despite the differences in authority, peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions favor an inside strategy as a deliberate response to their structurally constrained activity portfolios. Shaped by their small and homogenous membership and low intra-coalition coordination, the coalitions decide to concentrate their limited activity portfolios by directly engaging with EU-institutional policymakers via an inside strategy, allowing them to maximize their potential success (Dür & Mateo, 2016). For example, members of the policy generalist battery supply chain coalition emphasized that the coalition sought to improve its chances of influencing the Sustainable Batteries regulation by concentrating and directing most of its advocacy efforts towards key negotiators, including MEPs and member state representatives (interview 30, 32, 35, 37). With this goal in mind, the members of the coalition started out by “email[ing] each other. Then we went to a level of an oral exchange, set a list of the priorities and then somebody was designated to put the first draft paper for all of us together. When we were satisfied with the paper, we address the European Commission, the Parliament, and the Council, all three institutions at the same time. Our activity always evolves around the European institutions. Then, we organise meetings. Joint meetings, separate meetings. We did not have any severe activities like protesting against the Parliament. Not at all. Anything with us happens via the written positions or explaining our stance during stakeholder meetings” (interview 32). Similarly, the moderate authoritative eco-industrial member state coalition also favored an inside strategy directing most of the coalition’s capacity to developing a position paper in the sidelines of Council negotiations and sending it to all member states outlining the coalition’s preferences. The position paper subsequently anchored the coalition’s advocacy, enabling members to make coherent joint statements during Council negotiations (interview 40). The use of multiple inside-oriented activities reinforces the coalition’s selection of an inside strategy to improve the coalitions’ chances of successfully impacting the legislative process, rather than a thinly implemented mixed strategy.

In sum, the selection of an inside strategy emerges not as a default choice but as an adaptation to structural constraints. The activity repertoires of peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions are constrained by their small and homogenous membership and low levels of intra-coalition coordination intensity. Amid such constraints, moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions intensify their use of inside-oriented activities due to their high authority and privileged access to policymakers. Nevertheless, across all three coalition types, the adoption of

an inside strategy centered on direct engagement with EU-institutional policymakers emerges as a rational response aimed at maximizing the potential success under structural constraint.

3.2 The mixed strategies of fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalitions

In contrast to the peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions that concentrate their efforts on inside strategies under structural constraints, fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalitions possess the capacity to mix multiple advocacy strategies. As such, this subsection outlines why fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalitions favor a mixed strategy, either employing an inside-outside or inside-outside-orchestration strategy. Teased out below, the selection of a mixed strategy is found to primarily be enabled by the coalition types' large membership, which enhances their capacity to conduct multiple activities and operate under a dual logic of influence and reputation. Comparing the three coalitions further, however, the very large size of colossal coalitions is also considered to introduce substantial coordination costs, constraining their ability to efficiently select and strongly implement a mixed strategy. By contrast, the fragmented and commanding coalitions' stronger mixing of all three strategies is empowered by their heterogenous membership and higher levels of intra-coalition coordination intensity (see table 8.4). Considering this, the analysis untangles the enabling and constraining effects of each structural dimension by first examining how large membership enables the three coalition types to engage in both inside- and outside-oriented activities. It then discusses the constraining effect of a very large membership before turning to the enabling effect of a diverse membership and moderate to high intra-coalition coordination intensity enjoyed by the fragmented and commanding coalitions.

Coalition Type	No. Issue Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coordination intensity
<i>Fragmented</i>	Narrow	Large	High	Low	Moderate
<i>Colossal</i>	Moderate	Very Large	Very Low	Moderate	Low
<i>Commanding</i>	Broad	Large	High	Very High	Very High

Table 8.4: Structural dimensions of coalitions that employ a mixed strategy.

3.2.1 A mixed strategy enabled by a large membership

The mixed strategy employed by each of the three coalition types is primarily driven by the coalitions' large membership bases. Due to the large membership, each coalition type is able to

rely on the advocacy strengths of its numerous members (Nelson & Yackee, 2012). As such, the coalitions' preferences could be advocated through a portfolio of activities that spanned inside and outside strategies, facilitated by the coalition's members' ability to distribute tasks, mobilize constituencies, and engage simultaneously in multiple venues (interview 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 26, 28, 46). For example, the fragmented ambitious 2030 coalition in the process related to the Climate Law was able to benefit from its large size by creating sub-groups of policy actors that had specific advocacy strengths. The coalition was set up in "a sort of hub and spoke model. So, we had a kind of a monthly EU governance hub of actors that were brought together with a number of sub hubs that's kind of like a shop window for exchanging. And then you've got kind of sub hubs on different aspects like the scientific advisory board" (interview 5). By developing sub-groups, the coalition was able to divide up tasks and engage in a mixed strategy. As highlighted by another member, the coalition "normally would discuss how to divide the work between us members to then reach out to certain groups in the European Parliament, the Member States, and the Commission. We drafted together voting recommendations, amendments and other members gave interviews and made several op-eds and stuff" (interview 2). In that sense, some sub-groups were able to lobby MEPs directly, others opted to engage with the media and publish reports, and even another group was able to mobilize and coordinate with other coalitions to indirectly influence EU-institutional policymakers. Similarly, the fragmented ambitious RED coalition was capable of implementing a mixed strategy due to the sharing of knowledge across its large membership base. By sharing information, the coalition was able to gather much needed information on the politics transpiring in the process. Because of this enhanced information, the coalition could spread its advocacy across multiple venues, including informal meetings with EU-institutional policymakers, which other members may not have access to, and in the media to shift the public opinion (interview 20). Hence, due to the large size, the coalitions were able to draw on their members' advocacy strengths and gain vital access to information. Together, this allowed the coalitions to divide and conquer by targeting EU-institutional policymakers, the public, and occasionally other intermediaries when advocating for the coalition's preferences. Having such ability may be vital for the coalition's advocacy success. The advantages of a large membership, however, do not increase linearly, as coalitions that grow too large face escalating coordination costs (Nelson & Yackee, 2012).

3.2.2 When membership size becomes a constraint

Although the large size is deemed to enable coalitions to employ a mixed strategy, the very large size of colossal coalitions, relative to fragmented and commanding coalitions, illustrates that a very large size and low intra-coalition coordination intensity puts a limit on the implementation of

such strategy. The very large size of colossal coalitions drives up the coordination costs to a point where the coalitions' ability to efficiently select and strongly implement a mixed strategy is hindered (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018). This is evidenced by the colossal coalitions, which on average, use a very limited number of activities and at a low frequency. The ability for the colossal energy intensive industry coalition, for example, to decide on a strategic course of action was rendered highly inefficient. The extremely large size created several conflicting interests among its members, resulting in very inefficient internal decision-making. And despite the colossal coalition was able to conduct more activities and at a higher rate than the colossal ambitious business coalition, it was only able to do so because of a core set of actors, including CEFIC, Eurometaux, FertilizersEurope, and Cembureau, among others, that were advocating for the coalition's preferences. Without the core actors, the coalition was only able to send a letter to EU policymakers and have a small number of meetings with EU policymakers. Nevertheless, the core set of actors also found it increasingly difficult to internally coordinate overtime (interview 10, 13, 15). As a member of the coalition outlined, "to be honest, on CBAM we did not have a lot of joint meetings [with EU policymakers]. We were having a lot of joint statements, joint emails or letters. But then we had individual meetings because, you know, on top of these horizontal issues, we always have the sector specific topics. So, if you have a joint meeting, it's difficult then for you to have your sector specific issues to discuss" (interview 13). This contrast points to a limiting threshold beyond which coalition size constrains the effective implementation of a mixed strategy. In that sense, it also raises the question of why some large coalitions, such as the fragmented and commanding coalitions, can overcome coordination challenges, while others are not.

3.2.3 Diversity and coordination enable the frequent use of many activities

For large coalitions to overcome the limiting effects of size and effectively implement mixed strategies, high membership diversity and increasingly intense intra-coalition coordination enhance the coalition types' capacity to conduct a wider range of activities at a higher frequency. This is captured by the fragmented and commanding coalition's high membership diversity and moderate to high intra-coalition coordination intensity, which departs from the colossal coalitions. On the one hand, a highly diverse membership not only enables these coalitions to widely source information on the policy process, but also build the coalitions' credibility for its preferences, increase their access to multiple venues, and remain reflexive throughout the process (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018). As a result, the diverse membership allows fragmented and commanding coalitions to mix and match inside, outside, and orchestration activities in a complementary way. On the other hand, the high intra-coalition coordination intensity reduces the internal conflict that diverse coalitions tend to face and further increases the coalition's capacity to efficiently select

and conduct several activities (Heaney & Leifeld, 2018; Junk, 2019; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). Specifically, to overcome their large and diverse membership, both fragmented and commanding coalitions internally decided to establish a core group of coordinating policy actors, which devised ‘playbooks’ to guide the coordination of the coalition members. The playbooks resulted in the efficient selection of strategies and enabled complementary activities to be conducted based on the coalition member’s strengths (interview 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 46). For example, as the ambitious CBAM coalition started advocating, CAN Europe was identified as taking a leading coordination role. Here, CANEurope organized the coalition’s strategy and its implementation through a set of planned activities. “When we started working in a coalition of NGOs, together with Carbon Market Watch, Sandbag, EAB, CANEurope, and E3G, if I remember well, the coordination was done by CANEurope for our network. So, all the sets of amendments that you saw, we did it all together, but there was one coordinator which guided the activities” (interview 16). Because of this, the coalition was able to pull together information from its diverse members, including both NGOs and business, to conduct a series of inside and outside-oriented activities based on each of the actor’s advocacy strengths. Due to the unique nature and ingenuity of the diverse NGO-business front, the coalitions advocacy was considered quite successful (interview 16). The very high intra-coalition coordination of the commanding coalitions, compared to the moderate coordination intensity exhibited by fragmented coalitions, further indicates that high coordination intensity may be vital for diverse coalitions to consistently engage in all three strategies. Put together, the high diversity and increase coordination enables the fragmented and commanding coalitions to efficiently and effectively implement a mixed strategy, initially driven by their large size (interview 5, 10, 15, 16, 20, 28, 46).

To sum up, the mixed strategies of fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalition types are primarily enabled by their large membership size. However, when a coalition becomes too large, as evidenced by the colossal coalition, the implementation of the mixed strategy is weakened. Considering this and identified from the fragmented and commanding coalitions’ activities, when high membership diversity is combined with increased levels of intra-coalition coordination intensity, coalitions further strengthen their strategy through a broader range of activities used at a high rate.

3.3 Summary: the role of structural dimensions on strategy selection

This section compared the strategies that coalition types conduct in efforts to influence EU environmental policy processes. The comparative analysis identifies that the size, membership diversity, and intra-coalition coordination intensity are key structural dimensions that each

constrain and enable a coalition's strategy selection, and the extent to which the strategy is implemented. To a lesser extent, authority is also identified to enable the increased use of inside activities. Table 8.5 provides an overview of the findings and explanations for the strategies of each type.

Strategy	Coalition Type	Shared Dimensions	Explanation
Inside	Peripheral	• Small membership • Very homogenous • Low – Very Low coordination intensity <u>Moderate & Policy Generalist:</u> • High authority	• Small and homogenous membership plus low coordination intensity constrain coalitions' ability to conduct many types of activities and at high frequency. • High authority enables higher usage of inside activities. • To mitigate constraints, coalitions push for inside strategy at best to try and directly influence EU policymakers.
	Moderate Authoritative		
	Policy Generalist		
Inside-Outside- (Orchestrate)	Fragmented	• Large – Very large membership <u>Fragmented & Commanding:</u> • Highly heterogenous • Increasing intra-coalition coordination intensity	• Large membership size enables mixed strategy. • Being too large limits the range of activities and their usage rate. • Diversity and coordination overcome issues of size and enable more activities to be used at a higher rate leading to the stronger implementation of inside-outside- (orchestration) strategy.
	Colossal		
	Commanding		

Table 8.5: Comparing coalition type strategies and structural dimensions.

The activity portfolios of peripheral, moderate authoritative, and the policy generalist coalitions are constrained by the coalitions' small and homogenous membership, and their low level of intra-coalition coordination. This constraining effect guides these coalitions to favor an inside strategy to enhance their chances of successfully impacting the policy process. Although still constrained, the high authority of the moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions allows the coalitions to implement their inside strategy more intensely. Conversely, the mixed strategies informed by a wider portfolio of activities employed by the fragmented, colossal, and commanding coalitions are enabled primarily by their large size. The very large size of the colossal coalitions, however, shows that being too large constrains the strength at which the mixed strategy is implemented. The high diversity and increased levels of intra-coalition coordination, exhibited by the fragmented and commanding coalitions, however, allows them to overcome the challenge of a large membership and implement their mixed strategies within increasing strength. The analysis finds no clear relations between the broadness of shared issue preferences and strategy selection.

The next section now turns to comparing the strategies and activities of coalitions of the same type across the five legislative processes. Doing so, inferences are made between the effects of legislative characteristics on the strategies and activities of each coalition type.

4. Comparing strategies of coalition types across environmental policy processes

This section aims to identify the legislative characteristics most relevant to explain why the strategies of coalitions of the same type differ across legislative processes. This section builds on section 3 and contends that in addition to their structure, the activities and strategies of coalition types are also shaped by the characteristics of the legislative proposal.

To quickly refresh, the five legislative proposals differ in their mix of legislative characteristics, namely salience, complexity, regulatory addressee scope, stringency, and duration (see chapter 4). Regarding the salience, the RED proposal is the most salient, followed by the CBAM, JTF, Climate Law and the Sustainable Batteries proposals, respectively. The most complex proposal is the Sustainable Batteries regulation followed by the RED, CBAM, Climate Law, and JTF proposals respectively. In terms of the regulatory addressee scope, the Climate Law, RED, and JTF proposals are all deemed to have a broad scope. The CBAM and the Sustainable Batteries proposals both have a narrow scope. The Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries proposals are all highly stringent as their primary instrument is regulatory, whereas the primary instruments of the CBAM and JTF are economic and deemed relatively less stringent. Finally, each proposal is prepared by the Commission in the policy preparation stage and is then discussed and negotiated in the EP and the Council in the decision-making stage. Considering the characteristics of each proposal, the following subsections examine the relevance of and correlations between the characteristics of the legislative proposals and the strategies each coalition type employs. To follow, the strategies of each coalition type within each process are mapped and compared across the five legislative proposals. Then the section is concluded by drawing inferences from the analysis of each coalition type.

4.1 The strategies of peripheral coalitions across policy processes

Discussed in section 3, peripheral coalitions generally favor an inside strategy. This slightly deviates across the five policy processes (see figure 8.2). In the Climate Law, peripheral coalitions employ an inside strategy, primarily implemented through meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, and using the Commissions consultation platform. In the CBAM process, peripheral coalitions also favor an inside strategy, where both peripheral coalitions advocate primarily through meetings with EU-institutional policymakers. During the RED process, peripheral coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy, primarily conducting meetings with EU-

institutional policymakers and using the media. Lesser so, peripheral coalitions also send letters to EU policymakers. In the process related to the Sustainable Batteries regulation, peripheral coalitions employ an outside strategy, primarily implemented by using the media. Finally, in the process of the JTF proposal, each peripheral coalition employs a different strategy, making an overall strategy within the JTF unidentifiable. But given the most used activity is using the media, peripheral coalitions are considered to favor an outside strategy.

The strategies of the peripheral coalitions across each of the five processes are outlined in table 8.6. As peripheral coalitions are present across all five legislative processes but not all stages, the analysis focuses on comparing the strategies and activities of peripheral coalitions across the policy processes and the stages in which the coalitions are identified.

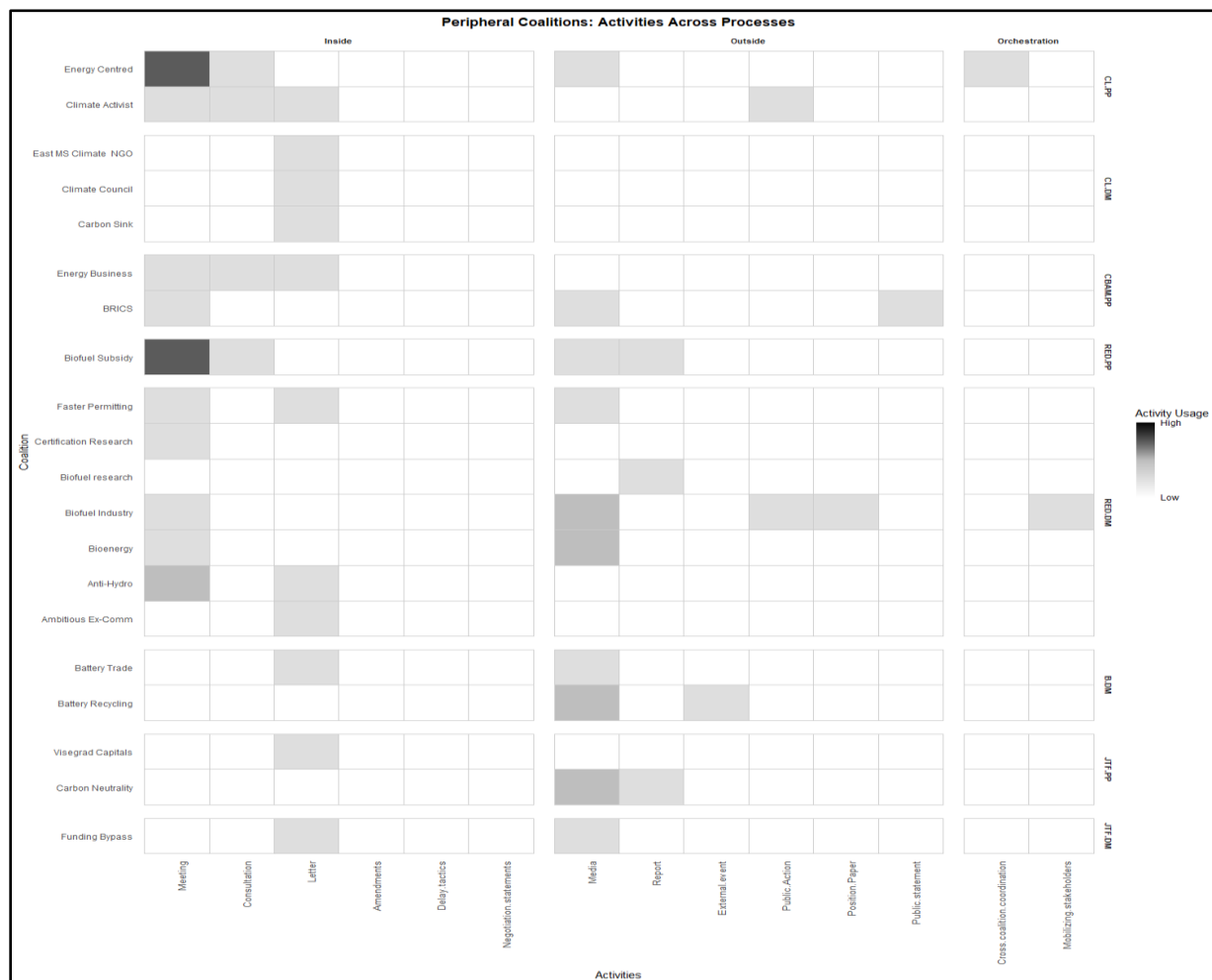


Figure 8.2: Activities of peripheral coalitions across processes. Note: policy processes and stages are indicated on right -vertical axis and denoted as follows Climate Law = CL; CBAM = CBAM; RED = RED; Sustainable Batteries = B; JTF = JTF. Each policy process is also divided by stage. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

Policy Process	Overall Strategy	Strategy / Stage		Core Activities
		Stage	Strategy	
<i>Climate Law</i>	Inside	PP	Inside	Meetings; Consultation
		DM	Inside	Letter
<i>CBAM</i>	Inside	PP	Inside	Meetings
<i>RED</i>	Inside-Outside	PP	Inside-Outside	Meetings; consultation; use of media; policy report
		DM	Inside-Outside	Meetings; sending letters; using media
<i>Sustainable Batteries</i>	Outside	DM	Outside	Using media
<i>JTF</i>	Outside	PP	Outside	Using media
		DM	Inside-Outside	Letter; using media

Table 8.6: Strategies of peripheral coalitions across processes and stages. Note. PP = policy preparation & DM = decision-making stage.

4.1.1 The inside strategies of peripheral coalitions in the Climate Law and CBAM

The peripheral coalitions in the policy processes of the Climate Law and CBAM generally employ an inside strategy. Yet, when comparing the two legislative proposals, they differ across all legislative characteristics. This indicates that the salience, complexity, scope, and stringency of the proposals do not heavily affect the inside strategy of peripheral coalitions in these two legislative processes. The shifts between the stages of the policy process, however, show that the activities of the coalitions slightly shift but their strategies remain stable. In the policy preparation stage of the Climate Law process, peripheral coalitions focus mainly on meetings with EU-institutional actors and utilizing the Commission's consultation platform, with some additional activities begin conducted including sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers, using the media, engaging in a public action, and cross-coalition coordination. In the decision-making stage, the activities shift to a sole focus on sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, with no other activities being conducted. This suggests that as the policy process draws closer to the final votes, peripheral coalitions increasingly act under a logic of influence with the aim of enhancing their chances of successfully instilling their preferences in the proposal. As a result, the coalitions favor direct engagement with EU-institutional policymakers as they hold the formal right of voting.

4.1.2 The inside-outside strategies of peripheral coalitions in the RED

The inside-outside strategy of peripheral coalitions in the RED stands out. Given the unique combination of the RED's high salience, high complexity, broad scope, and high stringency, it is considered that peripheral coalitions alter their baseline strategy by expending more effort to try and influence the policy process in multiple ways. Due to the high complexity, policymakers seek increased input from a range of policy actors. This opens avenues for peripheral coalitions to access and engage in activities directed at policymakers, albeit their limiting structure (Hurka et

al., 2022; Junk, 2016). With the inside strategy developed, the high saliency and broad scope heighten the societal interest on the proposal, driving peripheral coalitions to complement the inside strategy and conduct outside-activities targeting the public (Junk, 2016). The high stringency further enhances this mixed strategy. Given the high payoff for influencing stringent proposals, peripheral coalitions deploy all possible activities in their repertoire to increase their chance of success (Dür & Mateo, 2013).

The inside-outside strategy is not greatly impacted by shifts between the stages of the policy process. In the policy preparation and decision-making stages of the process related to the RED, peripheral coalitions employ the same strategy. During the policy preparation stage, the peripheral coalitions primarily conduct meetings with EU-institutional policymakers, utilize the consultation platform, use the media, and publish policy reports. In the decision-making stage, the activities become mostly inside-oriented, conducting meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, whilst still using the media but to a limited degree. Like that of the Climate Law, peripheral coalitions in the RED process shift from a balanced logic of influence and reputation to a logic centered on influence. Yet, because of the unique characteristics, the peripheral coalitions still conduct some outside activities to sustain, albeit to a lesser extent, their reputational image.

4.1.3 The outside strategies of peripheral coalitions in the Sustainable Batteries and the JTF

In the processes related to the Sustainable Batteries regulation and JTF, peripheral coalitions favor an outside strategy. Yet, there are no characteristics shared by the Sustainable Batteries and JTF proposals that shed light on this strategic choice. This is somewhat surprising since the outside strategy opposes the baseline inside strategy, but changes in the legislative characteristics do not offer any insight into explaining this shift. The contrasting complexity of the proposals, however, may drive the outside strategy, but through different mechanisms. Given that the Sustainable Battery proposal is so complex, EU-institutional policymakers may only exchange access with those coalitions that possess very technical knowledge, such as the policy generalist battery supply chain coalition. By prioritizing access to these coalitions, the demand and access offered to other policy actors and smaller coalitions, such as peripheral coalitions, is constrained. As a result, peripheral coalitions opt for an outside strategy. Conversely, the very simple JTF entices peripheral coalitions to engage in an outside strategy to try and multiply their voices since the wider public may be able to understand the proposal more easily (Junk, 2016; Junk et al., 2024). This pattern suggests that the relationship between the complexity of a legislative proposal and the strategies of coalitions is not linear and conveys different avenues to peripheral coalitions in their strategy selection.

The strategies of peripheral coalitions in the JTF demonstrate a shift from an outside strategy in the policy preparation stage to an inside-outside strategy in the decision-making stage. In the policy preparation stage of the JTF, peripheral coalitions used the media at a high rate, whilst also publishing a policy report and sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers but at a much lower rate. During the decision-making stage, the favored outside strategy shifted to a balanced inside-outside strategy, sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. Like the patterns detected in the Climate Law and RED policy processes, the results indicate that overtime peripheral coalitions act mainly under a logic of influence and favor inside-oriented activities.

4.1.4 Summary of peripheral coalitions

The comparison across policy processes finds that the characteristics of the legislative proposals are weakly correlated to the strategies of peripheral coalitions. There are no proposals with similar characteristics that drive the same strategies. Nevertheless, there are two weakly identifiable relationships. First, there is a non-linear relationship uncovered between the complexity of the proposal and the coalition's strategy, whereby the high complexity of the Sustainable Batteries proposal and the low complexity of the JTF proposal both drive peripheral coalitions to conduct an outside strategy. Second, peripheral coalitions tend to prioritize inside-oriented activities that directly target EU-institutional policymakers as the policy process shifts from the policy preparation to the decision-making stage. This shift is akin to what interviewees call the 'policy funnel'. As the policy process begins, the policy funnel starts very broadly where coalitions act under a logic of reputation and influence, trying to frame the narrative of the proposal and instill their preferences early in the Commission's draft proposal. As the process enters the decision-making stage, the policy funnel becomes narrower because the boundaries of the proposal are more established. Simultaneously, the number of venues and points of access to EU policymakers increases, lowering the barriers of accessing EU-institutional actors and enabling more inside-oriented activities (De Bruycker, 2016). Coalitions, therefore, adapt to try and influence the political groups and member states through more targeted activities, such as technical meetings and bilateral advocacy (interview 1, 2, 14, 25). Such inferences, however, are made cautiously due to the low number of peripheral coalitions identified across both stages. Table 8.7 outlines the strategies, legislative characteristics, and explanations driving the strategies of peripheral coalitions.

Strategy	Policy Process	Correlated Characteristics	Explanations
<i>Inside</i>	- Climate Law - CBAM	Shifts between policy stages	Peripheral coalitions favor an inside strategy in the decision-making stage due to increased access to EU policymakers and to try and directly influence their vote.
<i>Inside-Outside</i>	RED	- High Salience - High Complexity - Broad Scope - High Stringency	Mix of all characteristics drive peripheral coalitions to expend more effort and try to influence the proposal anyway possible.
<i>Outside</i>	- Sustainable Batteries - JTF	- High/Low complexity - Shifts between policy stages	- High complexity of Sustainable Batteries tightened access for peripheral coalitions to EU policymakers, driving them to employ an outside strategy. - Simplicity of JTF enabled peripheral coalitions to try and multiply their voice through public opinion and overcome constrained access to EU policymakers. - Peripheral coalitions shift to more inside activities in the decision-making stage of the JTF to increase their success through direct influence.

Table 8.7: Drivers of peripheral coalitions' strategies across policy processes.

4.2 The strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions across policy processes

Moderate authoritative coalitions generally employ an inside strategy, as discussed in section 2. This strategy does not substantially change between the five policy processes, but there is a slight shift between the stages of the process, particularly during the JTF (see figure 8.3). Like the peripheral coalitions, this implies that moderate authoritative coalitions may be constrained by their structure and not greatly responsive to variation in the characteristics of legislative proposals. During the process related to the Climate Law moderate authoritative coalitions favor an inside strategy by conducting activities that are primarily directed towards EU-institutional policymakers. In the process linked to the CBAM, moderate authoritative coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy by writing joint amendments, making statements in negotiations, and using the media. During the process related to the RED, the moderate authoritative coalition employ an inside strategy by using the Commission's consultation platform and sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers. Throughout the negotiations on the Sustainable Batteries regulation, moderate authoritative coalitions primarily carried out an inside strategy mainly by making statements during negotiations. Finally in the process on the JTF, moderate authoritative coalitions tend to use an inside-outside strategy by sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, making statements during negotiations, and using the media.

Table 8.8 presents the strategies and activities that moderate authoritative coalitions employ across the legislative processes and stages they are present in. To follow, the strategies and

activities of moderate authoritative coalitions are compared across the five policy processes accounting for variation in the legislative characteristics.

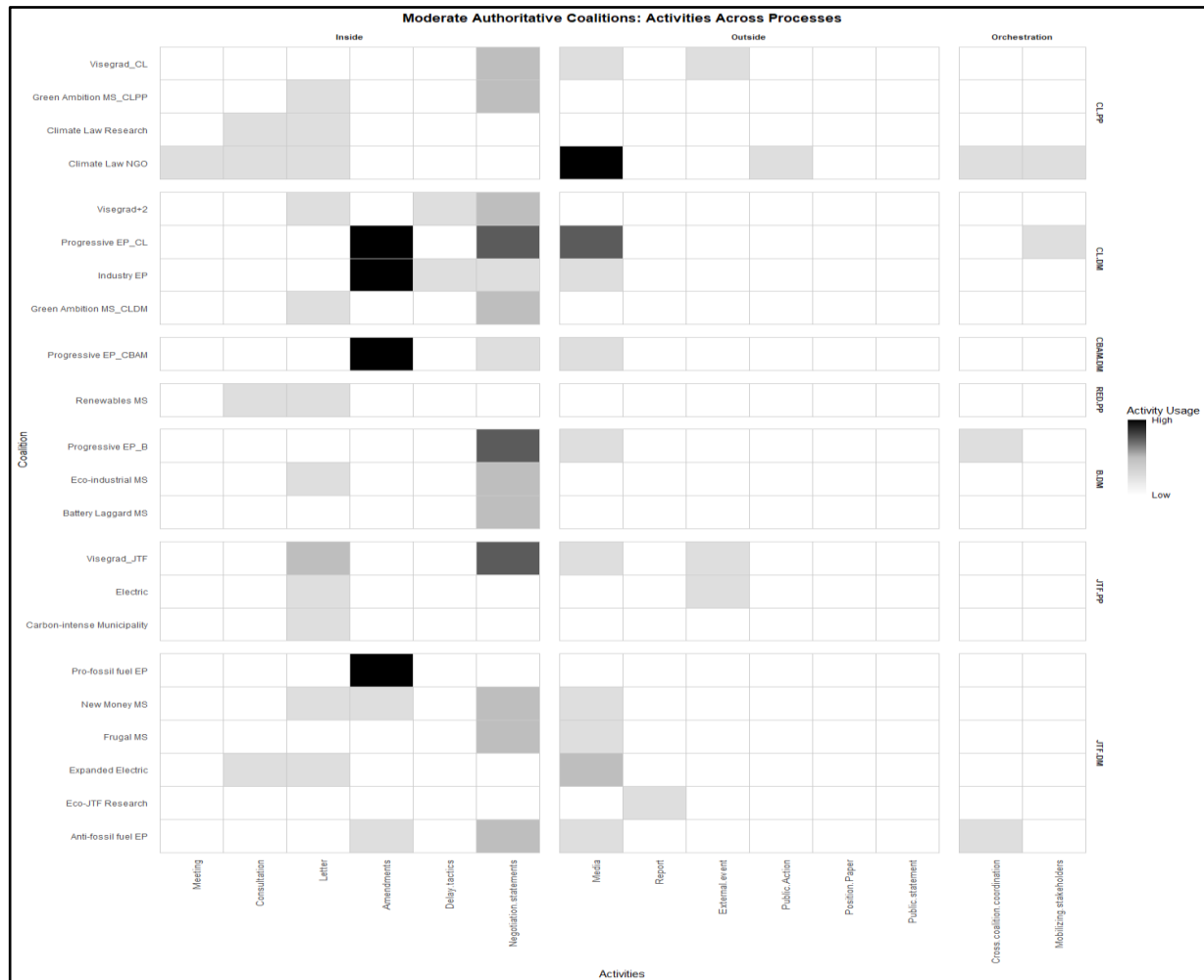


Figure 8.3: Activities of moderate authoritative coalitions across processes. Note: policy processes and stages are indicated on right-vertical axis and denoted as follows Climate Law = CL; CBAM = CBAM; RED = RED; Sustainable Batteries = B; JTF = JTF. Each policy process is also divided by stage. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

Policy Process	Overall Strategy	Strategy / Stage		Core Activities
		Stage	Strategy	
Climate Law	Inside	PP	Inside	Letters; consultations; statements in negotiations; media
		DM	Inside	Statements in negotiations; letters; joint amendments; delay tactics; media
CBAM	Inside-Outside	DM	Inside-outside	Joint amendments; statements in negotiations; media
RED	Inside	PP	Inside	Consultations; letters
Sustainable Batteries	Inside	DM	Inside	Statements in negotiations
JTF	Inside-Outside	PP	Inside-outside	Letters; presenting in external events
		DM	Inside-outside	Statements in negotiations; joint amendments; media

Table 8.8: Strategy of moderate authoritative coalitions across processes and stages. Note. PP = Policy preparation & DM = Decision-making stages.

4.2.1 The inside strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions in the Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries processes

In the processes linked to the Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries regulation, moderate authoritative coalitions primarily employ an inside strategy. Comparatively, the high stringency of the three legislative proposals is considered to shore up the inside strategy selection. The shifts between the stages also illustrate a shift in the activities that moderate authoritative coalitions conduct.

The Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries proposals are all highly stringent suggesting that this legislative characteristic primarily drives moderate authoritative coalitions to operate under a logic of influence and focus their attention on directly influencing policymakers (Dür & Mateo, 2013). The substantial obligations that these stringent policy proposals are foreseen to impose on their target groups increase the stakes for influencing the proposal. Because of this, the coalitions opt to take matters into their own hands and favor an inside strategy to try and directly enhance the benefits or diffuse the costs of the proposal. For example, the ‘game changing’ nature of the Climate Law, which was going to have lasting impacts on the EU’s transition to climate neutrality, was a key force leading the Climate Law NGO coalition to decided early on to directly engage with and try to influence EU policymakers (interview 1). A similar approach was taken by the eco-industrial member state coalition and the battery laggard member state coalition. During the process related to the Sustainable Batteries regulation, the eco-industrial member state coalition focused its efforts principally on directly influencing EU policymakers because the regulation was foreseen to have deep impacts on the investments into battery manufacturing and the EU’s battery market competitiveness vis-à-vis competitors such as China. The battery laggard member state coalition also operated under a logic of influence as the

coalition was nowhere near ready to accept such a strict regulation. As stipulated by an EU official, the Battery regulation “was replacing a directive, which needs to be transposed at national level applicable in all U27 member states. These [member states] are the laggards in terms of collecting waste batteries. In terms of recycling. And they were saying, oh, this is coming on to us. We're not ready. We don't have the recycling capacity. We don't have the capacity to collect all these waste batteries. This means trouble to us. So, they were trying to water down targets” (interview 40). Although the strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions are relatively stable across both stages of the Climate Law process, there is a distinct shift detected in the kinds of activities conducted and their rate of use. This indicates that shifts between the stages of the policy process may also affect the activities of moderate authoritative coalitions. Because it is the activities and not the strategies that alter, however, the effect is considered minimal. In the policy preparation stage, moderate authoritative coalitions primarily utilize inside activities, as well as carrying out a few outside and orchestration activities, but to a lesser extent. In the decision-making stage, moderate authoritative coalitions change to conducting almost only inside-oriented activities and increase their rate of use.

4.2.2 The inside-outside strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions in the CBAM and JTF processes

During the policy processes of the CBAM and the JTF, moderate authoritative coalitions adopt an inside-outside strategy. Whilst remaining true to their inside activities, the low stringency and moderate to low complexity of the CBAM and JTF proposals offers further insights into the selection of this strategy. The low stringency of the proposals guided moderate authoritative coalitions to not only act under a logic of influence by conducting inside activities, like in the processes of the Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries, but to also act under a logic of reputation. As the proposals became less stringent and the payoff for influencing them lowered, moderate authoritative coalitions redirect part of their efforts to engage in outside activities. By utilizing this opportunity, moderate authoritative coalitions sought to increase their reputation and complement their inside activities (Beyers, 2004; Kriesi et al., 2007).

The moderate to low complexity of the proposals reinforces moderate authoritative coalitions' inside-outside strategy. Due to the moderate complexity of the CBAM and the very low complexity of the JTF, EU policymakers seek information from a broad range of sources, such as the media, since less technical knowledge is required (Klüver et al., 2015). Hence, access to EU policymakers may be limited driving coalitions towards outside-oriented activities. Concurrently, the public do not need specialized knowledge and may understand the proposal more easily, further solidifying the attractiveness of conducting outside activities (Hurka et al., 2022; Junk, 2016). Both the anti-

fossil fuel coalition in the process on the JTF and the progressive EP coalition in the process of the CBAM, for example, both saw the low complexity of each proposal as an opportunity to engage with the public. In both cases, the coalitions sought to develop compelling stories through the media and attempt to shift the public's position towards their preferences. Doing so, the coalitions attempted to enhance their reputation and garner public support for their preferences by widening their gaze to the public and indirectly influencing EU policymakers (interview 17, 42, 47).

4.2.2 Summary of moderate authoritative coalitions

The comparison of the strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions across the five policy processes finds that their strategies are primarily influenced by the proposal's stringency, and to a lesser extent, the complexity and shifts between stages of the process. In the processes linked to the Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries proposals, moderate authoritative coalitions employed an inside strategy. It is uncovered that the inside strategy is driven primarily by the high stringency of the proposals. Shifts between the policy stages are also found to increase the frequency of inside activities in the decision-making stage of the Climate Law process. This suggests that moderate authoritative coalitions, like peripheral coalitions, are also affected by the 'policy funnel', shifting the focus towards inside-oriented activities in the later stages of the policy process. In the processes related to the CBAM and JTF proposals, moderate authoritative coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy, which is enabled by the proposals' low stringency and the moderate to low complexity. The combination of these characteristics creates space for the moderate authoritative coalitions to invest in outside-oriented activities to support their inside activities and build their reputation. Table 8.9 summarizes the results.

Strategy	Policy Process	Correlated Characteristics	Explanations
<i>Inside</i>	• Climate Law • RED • Sustainable Batteries	• High stringency • Shifts between policy stages	• High stringency drives moderate authoritative coalitions to focus primarily on inside strategies to enhance chances of directly altering proposals. • Shifts between policy stages direct moderate authoritative coalitions to favor inside activities and at a higher rate.
<i>Inside-Outside</i>	• CBAM • JTF	• Low stringency • Moderate to low complexity	• Low stringency creates an opportunity for moderate authoritative coalitions to conduct outside activities to complement inside activities and increase their reputation. • Moderate to low complexity further enables moderate authoritative coalitions to convey compelling narratives around preferences to public, driving the use of outside activities to complement their inside approach.

Table 8.9: Drivers of moderate authoritative coalitions' strategies across policy processes.

4.3 The strategies of fragmented coalitions across policy processes

Across all policy processes, fragmented coalitions favor an inside-outside strategy (see section 2). Intriguingly, the strategies and activities of fragmented coalitions vary across all policy processes and stages. This suggests that fragmented coalitions may be rather flexible and responsive to changes in legislative characteristics. In the policy process of the Climate Law, the fragmented coalition employs an inside-outside-orchestration strategy implemented through meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, using the Commission's consultation platform, using the media, publishing a policy report, and mobilizing stakeholders. During the process related to the CBAM, fragmented coalitions primarily conduct an inside-outside strategy as both coalitions have meetings with and send letters to EU-institutional policymakers, use the media, and publish policy reports and position papers. In the process of the RED, fragmented coalitions also opt for an inside-outside strategy, conducting core activities such as having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, utilizing the Commission's consultation platform, and engaging with the media. Notably, this is the only process where fragmented coalitions engage in public actions also at a high usage rate. Throughout the process linked to the JTF, the fragmented coalitions employ an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. Although the coalitions both conduct inside-oriented activities, the regional interest coalition in the process of the JTF is considered an outlier as it is the only fragmented coalition to conduct inside activities only and at a low rate of use. As such, because the anti-fossil fuel coalition employs an inside-outside-orchestration strategy and the other is a potential outlier, fragmented coalitions in the JTF are considered to conduct a mixed strategy. The strategies and activities of all fragmented coalitions are presented in figure 8.4 and Table 8.10 outlines the strategies and core activities of fragmented coalitions across the processes and stages in which they are identified. Due to the low number of fragmented coalitions, particularly in the Climate Law, CBAM, and JTF, and the diversity of the activities used among fragmented coalitions within the CBAM and JTF, these strategies are cautiously interpreted. Nevertheless, variation in the legislative characteristics across these five processes may offer some insights into the altering strategies of fragmented coalitions.

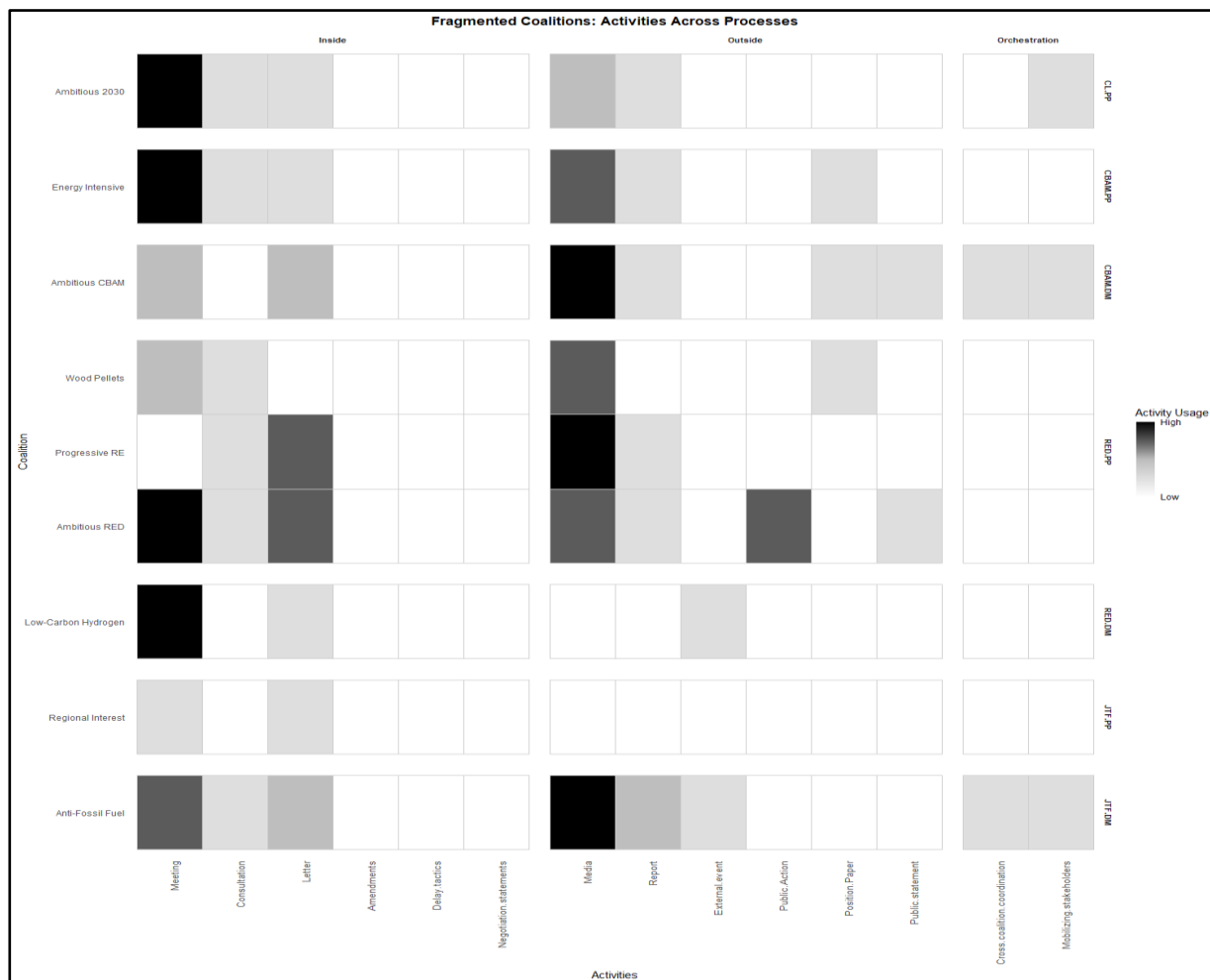


Figure 8.4: Activities of fragmented coalitions across processes. Note: policy processes and stages are indicated on right-vertical axis and denoted as follows Climate Law = CL; CBAM = CBAM; RED = RED; JTF = JTF. Each policy process is also divided by stage. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

Policy Process	Overall Strategy	Strategy / Stage		Core Activities
		Stage	Strategy	
<i>Climate Law</i>	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	PP	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	Meeting; media
<i>CBAM</i>	Inside-Outside	PP	Inside-Outside	Meeting; media
		DM	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	Meeting; letter; media
<i>RED</i>	Inside-Outside	PP	Inside-Outside	Meeting; consultation; letter; media
		DM	Inside	Meeting
<i>JTF</i>	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	PP	Inside	Meeting; letter
		DM	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	Meeting; letter; media; policy report

Table 8.10: Strategy of fragmented coalitions across processes and stages. Note. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

4.3.1 The inside-outside strategies of fragmented coalitions in the CBAM and RED processes

The inside-outside strategy that fragmented coalitions employ in the processes of the CBAM and RED are impacted by both proposals' high saliency and, to a lesser extent, the moderate to high complexity of the proposals. It is also found that the shifts between policy stages alter the strategies of fragmented coalitions, yet in contrasting directions.

The high saliency of the CBAM and the RED resulted in the mobilization of several policy actors in which many were trying to influence the proposal, creating a congested policy process. Because of this, fragmented coalitions opted for outside-oriented activities to circumvent the busy process to try and influence the proposal indirectly, capitalize on their membership diversity, and gain the attention of both the public and EU-institutional policymakers by building support around their preferences. The fragmented ambitious CBAM coalition, for example, specifically used the media and made joint public statements, where spokespeople from the NGOs and businesses within the coalition could be seen coordinating publicly with each other. Leading up to the Environment Committee vote on the CBAM proposal, the coalition “decided to co-sign a joint letter with a broader group of NGOs and some industries, like CemInEU and H2GreenSteel, on phasing out free allowances as soon as possible....” Alongside the letter, the coalition “also organized a media briefing on the need to phase out free allocation. And for this media briefing, there was someone from CemInEU who talked” (interview 16). Doing so, the coalition was able to benefit from the heightened attention surrounding the CBAM proposal, increase its visibility, and signal broad acceptance of and legitimacy for its preferences. This further enabled the coalition to differentiate itself from other coalitions amid the congested policy process (interview 14, 16). A similar approach was taken by the progressive renewable energy coalition in the process of the RED. Amid the jammed policy process, members of the coalition, representing the renewable energy industry and civil society, conducted joint public statements and used the media to signal broad acceptance of the coalitions preferences to the public (interview 22). By garnering public support, the coalitions aimed to indirectly influence EU policymakers and enhance their reputation by showing that their large and diverse coalition was advocating on the proposal (interview 10, 14, 16, 24).

The moderate complexity of the CBAM and the high complexity of the RED, which are the third and second most complex proposals among the five, respectively, presented opportunities to the fragmented coalitions to also pair their outside strategies with inside strategies. The difference in complexity between the two proposals, however, is somewhat wider than the saliency of the proposals, suggesting less of an effect. In each of the processes, EU policymakers were searching for and open to inputs from varying coalitions to inform their positions because of the proposals'

complexity. Such receptiveness among EU policymakers incentivized the coalitions to carry out inside activities as they tried to capitalize on such opening and directly influence the EU-institutional policymakers (interview 14, 16, 22).

The ambitious CBAM coalition, for example, selected an inside strategy once EU policymakers, particularly MEPs, started to think about the CBAM proposal early in the decision-making process. When they began crystallizing their preferences and positions, the MEPs became increasingly receptive and interested in the expertise and insights of several policy actors, specifically those that had experience with carbon trading and the EU emissions trading scheme. The ambitious CBAM coalition, therefore, jumped on this opportunity. Its members had worked for many years on the EU ETS and developed expertise in carbon trading and used this technical expertise to present their views on the CBAM to EU policymakers. As a member of the coalition put it, “we used the fact that maybe the CBAM was not so difficult to understand due to our work on the ETS. Then when people were asking about CBAM, we were like, yeah, OK, but you have to think through it also with the relationship with ETS. So, we were always leveraging the ETS angle in the CBAM discussions with policymakers” (interview 16). As the process progressed, the coalition members’ expertise was drawn on again in the trilogues. “During trilogues, engagement is interesting, because you have more technical meetings and sort of like bilateral advocacy meetings. And then through the trilogues, there's very little possibility to shape a narrative, because everything is, you know, sort of like political negotiations behind closed doors. And a lot of our influencing was through personal contacts, basically. Like if you have a trusted contact that is part of those negotiations you might still be able to share information and, you know, suggest some ideas” (interview 14). Likewise, because of the very high complexity of the RED, members from the progressive renewable energy coalition were able to meet with MEPs and informally with environment ministers as the EU-institutional policymakers were increasingly open to the insights and expertise of the coalition given that it represented many facets of the renewable energy industry and civil society (interview 22).

The shifts between policy stages of the policy processes uncover contrasting patterns regarding the coalition’s strategies. During the CBAM, the strategy of fragmented coalitions expands from an inside-outside strategy in the policy preparation stage to an inside-outside-orchestration strategy in the decision-making stage. During the policy preparation stage fragmented coalitions focus mainly on having meetings with EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. In the decision-making stage, fragmented coalitions increase the breadth of activities conducted by incorporating more outside and orchestration activities. Whilst increasing the breadth, the usage

of the activities shifts. Using the media becomes the most frequent activity, followed by sending letters to and having meetings with EU policymakers. The incorporation of the orchestration activities was employed so that the coalition could try to expand its footprint and double down on pushing for a much more ambitious CBAM, particularly to ensure the coalition could squeeze as much out of the proposal as possible towards the end of the process (interview 12, 16). In the process related to the RED, fragmented coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy in the policy preparation stage and shift to an inside-oriented strategy during the decision-making stage. During the policy preparation stage, fragmented coalitions primarily use the media at a high rate, followed by sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and having meetings with them. This changes to an almost sole focus on having meetings with EU-institutional policymakers in the decision-making process. As such, the shift is explained by the 'policy funnel' logic, whereby coalitions generally turn to an inside strategy in the decision-making stage to try and directly influence policymakers as the boundaries of what can be altered in a proposal narrow.

4.3.2 The inside-outside-orchestration strategy of fragmented coalitions in the Climate Law and JTF processes

Throughout the processes of the Climate Law and the JTF proposals, fragmented coalitions conduct an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, which is enabled by the proposals' moderate salience, broad scope, and low complexity. The shifts between stages in the policy processes also altered the fragmented coalitions' strategies.

The moderate saliency of the Climate Law and JTF created opportunities for the fragmented coalitions to deploy both inside and outside activities. The moderate salience of the proposals led to a rather modest crowd of participating policy actors trying to voice their preferences. Because the process was not overly crowded, there was a clearer path for fragmented coalitions to access EU policymakers. Using their diverse membership, the coalitions could operate under a logic of influence and capitalize on the direct access to EU-institutional policymakers offered to them (Junk, 2016). The moderate saliency also meant that the proposals received some level of public attention. Although not overly high, the public attention empowered fragmented coalitions to also carry out outside-oriented activities to try and exploit public opinion and support their inside strategy. The ambitious 2030 coalition in the Climate Law illustrates this inside and outside duality. Because the proposal attracted a moderate saliency, the coalition pushed for climate neutrality and ambitious targets to the public to build momentum for the coalition's preferences. Yet, this outside approach was only half of the strategy. The coalition also opted for inside activities, namely meetings, to advocate for these targets and their preferences around governance structures that

the proposal sought to develop but was not of interest to other policy actors or the public (interview 5).

In addition to the moderate salience of the proposals, the broad scope of the Climate Law and JTF proposals also enable fragmented coalitions to not only conduct inside activities, but orchestration activities too. During each process, the broad scope of each proposal sought to impose wide-ranging impacts to many segments of society. As a result of this, various types of policy actors mobilized to try and influence the proposals. Simultaneously, the receptiveness of EU policymakers increased as they sought to speak to several types of policy actors that represented many facets of society to reconcile their preferences and inform their own decisions (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Junk, 2016). This mobilization and receptiveness, together, created opportunities for the coalitions to try and directly influence EU-institutional policymakers through inside activities and gain an advantage over other competing coalitions (interview 5, 6). At the same time, the participation of a variety of actors also enabled fragmented coalitions to identify other like-minded coalitions. Hence, to gain a competitive advantage among the various preferences being represented, fragmented coalitions also carried out orchestration activities to expand their footprints in the policy process. This was particularly true for the anti-fossil fuel coalition, which was able to engage with local NGOs, mayors of municipalities, and other coalitions in an organic bottom-up fashion due to the ability to identify many actors across society with similar preferences. As a member of the coalition indicated, “we had those links with the mayors, and we had the core region mayors, it wasn't just environmental NGOs pushing, and that was very powerful for the Commission. We brought the mayors to them [Timmermans and Cabinet members], and they made the points for us, because we listened to them, and I think that was very important. And because we had such a wide coalition, different people were able to lobby MEPs in their countries, in their own languages, pushing for the same amendments” (interview 46).

The low complexity of the proposals opened opportunities for fragmented coalitions to conduct outside activities. It also reinforced the coalitions' appetite for conducting orchestration activities. The low complexity of the Climate Law and JTF meant that EU-institutional policymakers and the public did not require technical knowledge to understand the proposals and develop preferences. The relative simplicity of the proposals thus allowed the coalitions to complement their inside strategy. The reduced input EU-institutional policymakers required allowed the coalitions to develop simple narratives which assisted them in conveying their preferences to the public and to also indirectly influence EU policymakers (Junk, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015). This was a key strategic

choice made by the fragmented ambitious 2030 coalition in the Climate Law process. The coalition was prompted to start working on the Climate Law as it is “something that citizens can hear about in the street... the potential was high [for citizens to hear about the legislation] because it's very simple to understand. It's a high-level principle saying targets for the long term, we need to cut emissions, we need to plan this in an ordinate way. And then you try to get media attention. Generally, you would do outreach, you present your work, you send it to journalists, and you invite them to a meeting. You need to come to them, write to them” (interview 1). Because of the simplicity of the Climate Law proposal, the coalition was able to develop an overarching narrative and convey very simple messages to the public on issues including the 2030 targets and the need for a scientific advisory board. This enabled the coalition to build momentum around its preferences, especially for a scientific advisory board. Through this outside-oriented strategy and shifting the public's opinion, the coalition was also able to enhance its success, particularly because EU policymakers were growingly receptive to the public's opinion to inform their decisions (interview 1, 2, 5). Moreover, since less expert knowledge was required among policy actors to understand the proposal, the barriers for cross coalition coordination and mobilizing stakeholders were significantly reduced. The simplicity of the JTF, for example, allowed the anti-fossil fuel coalition to develop a straightforward preference, among others, of not including funding for projects that promoted fossil fuels. The simple message was then used to mobilize NGOs across governance levels and progressive mayors from coal regions, as well as coordinate with other coalitions, namely the regional interest and municipalities coalitions, to expand and strengthen the coalition's voice at the EU level (interview 43, 44, 48, 49). Similarly, the low complexity of the Climate Law ensured that the ambitious 2030 coalition's message of increasing the 2030 emissions reduction target was used to mobilize numerous national level NGOs across multiple member states. The simple yet concise message ensured that the orchestrated actors delivered it uniformly to member state governments, which created a bottom-up drive and shift in preferences among historically environmentally ambitious member states (interview 2).

The shifts between the stages of the JTF policy process demonstrate that fragmented coalitions expand their strategy overtime, like the fragmented coalition in the CBAM process. In the policy preparation stage, the fragmented coalition sends letters to and has meetings with EU-institutional policymakers at a low frequency. In the decision-making stage, the fragmented coalition broadens the activities carried out, shifting the attention to frequently using the media, followed by having meetings with EU-institutional policymakers, as well as sending policymakers letters, and publishing policy reports. As previously mentioned, the large difference between the two fragmented coalitions in the JTF may suggest that the regional interest coalition is an outlier.

Hence, the extent that shifts between policy stages leads to changes in the fragmented coalition's strategy in the process of the JTF is cautiously determined.

4.3.3 Summary of fragmented coalitions

To sum up, fragmented coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy in the policy processes related to the CBAM and the RED and an inside-outside-orchestration strategy in the processes related to the Climate Law and the JTF. It is uncovered that the saliency, complexity, and the shifts between policy stages of the process are key characteristics correlated to the strategies of fragmented coalitions.

In the processes CBAM and RED, the inside-outside strategy is enabled by the proposals' high saliency and, to a lesser extent, the medium to high complexity. The high saliency steered fragmented coalitions to conduct outside activities, capitalizing on the heightened public attention and building public support for the coalitions' preferences. The moderate to high complexity enabled the coalitions to also adopt inside activities as EU policymakers increased their openness to receiving technical information from knowledgeable coalitions. The shifts between policy stages was also found to alter the strategies of the fragmented coalitions, yet in contrasting ways. In the CBAM process, fragmented coalitions expand their strategy mix by increasing the breadth and usage of outside and orchestration activities in the decision-making stage. In the process linked to the RED, fragmented coalitions contract their strategy and use of activities from an inside-outside strategy to a sole inside activity, akin to the 'policy funnel' dynamics identified to also affect the peripheral and moderate authoritative coalitions.

The inside-outside-orchestration strategies of the fragmented coalitions in the processes of the Climate Law and JTF are steered by the proposals' medium saliency, broad scope, and low complexity. The moderate saliency favored both inside and outside activities. On one hand, the coalitions were able to engage in outside activities to leverage the public's attention. On the other hand, the coalitions were also able to conduct inside activities due to the lack of attention that policy actors attributed to the proposal, particularly around issues of governance. The broad scope further opened up opportunities for fragmented coalitions to conduct inside activities, particularly as EU policymakers became increasingly receptive to a broad range of preferences represented across society. Since many actors and societal groups were implicated, orchestration also proved viable as the coalitions sought to expand its footprint. The low complexity reinforced the coalitions outside and orchestration activities. Due to the ease of understanding the proposals, the coalitions developed simple concise messages that were used to shift public opinion and engage other policy actors across governance levels. Finally, in the JTF, fragmented coalitions expanded their strategy

overtime because of past coordination efforts and the creation of venues. The results are summarized in table 8.11.

Strategy	Policy Process	Correlated Characteristics	Explanations
<i>Inside-Outside</i>	• CBAM • RED	• High saliency • Moderate - High Complexity • Shifts between policy stages	• High saliency enticed outside activities to capitalize on public attention. • Moderate to high complexity increased receptiveness of EU policymakers, driving coalitions to engage in inside activities. • Coalitions expanded their activities between the policy stages in the CBAM and contracted their activities in the RED.
<i>Inside-Outside-Orchestrate</i>	• Climate Law • JTF	• Moderate saliency • Broad scope • Low complexity • Shifts between policy stages	• Moderate saliency drove coalitions to favor both inside and outside activities due to clear access to policymakers and public interest. • Broad scope drove coalitions to conduct inside and orchestration activities as EU policymakers became receptive of many societal voices and because of the varied coalitions present allowing for coalitions to expand their footprint. • Low complexity reinforced outside and orchestration activities as coalitions developed simple narratives to easily convey messages to the public and orchestrate other policy actors across governance levels. • Shifts between policy stages allowed the coalition to expand its strategy overtime.

Table 8.11: Drivers of fragmented coalitions' strategies across policy processes.

4.4 The strategies of colossal coalitions across policy processes

Across all legislative proposals, colossal coalitions favor an inside-out strategy, as discussed in section 2. This overarching strategy is cautiously defined as the two colossal coalitions both conduct at least one inside and one outside activity. Due to the low number of colossal coalitions, however, no substantial pattern is determined. Nonetheless, the strategies of the two identified colossal coalitions alter across processes, indicating some sort of flexibility in the face of varying legislative characteristics (see figure 8.5).

In the process related to the Climate Law, the colossal ambitious business coalition employs an inside-outside strategy. This strategy is weakly implemented by sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. In the process related to the CBAM proposal, the colossal energy intensive industry coalition employs an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. This strategy is implemented by primarily having meetings with EU-institutional policymakers and using the media, in addition to sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers, writing joint amendments, presenting at external events, making public statements, and mobilizing stakeholders. Table 8.12

outlines the strategy and core activities of the two colossal coalitions in the Climate Law and the CBAM processes.

To follow, the strategies and activities of colossal coalitions in the Climate Law and CBAM are compared against one. Due to the low number of colossal coalitions, the inferences made between the legislative characteristics and the strategies of colossal coalitions are done so with caution, particularly because of the vast differences in the range and frequency of activities conducted between the two colossal coalitions. Additionally, since colossal coalitions are not found in a single process across both stages, changes in their strategies over time are not examined.

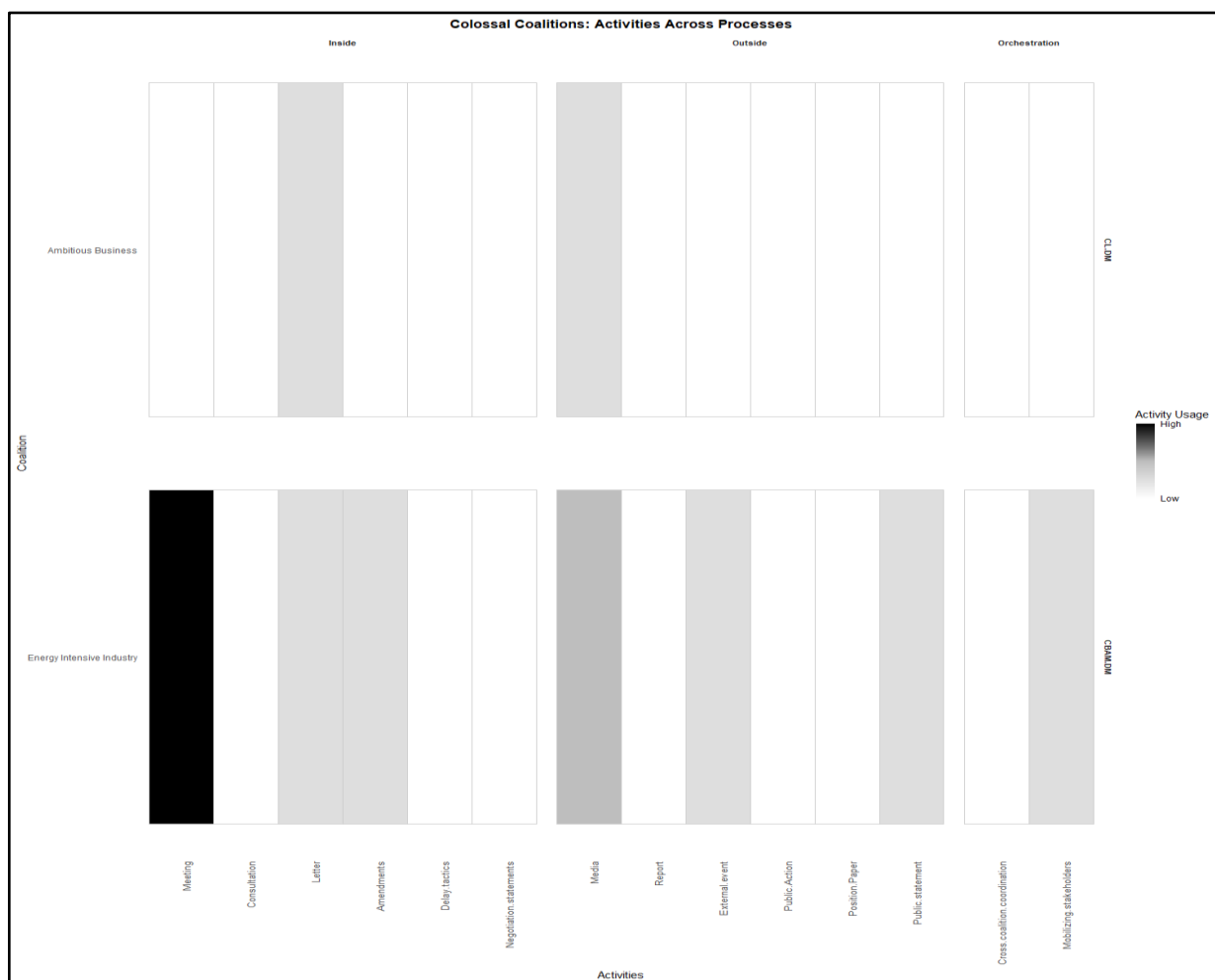


Figure 8.5: Activities of colossal coalitions across processes. Note: policy processes and stages are indicated on right-vertical axis and denoted as follows Climate Law = CL; CBAM = CBAM; RED = RED; Sustainable Batteries = B; JTF = JTF. Each policy process is also divided by stage. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

Policy Process	Overall Strategy	Strategy / Stage		Core Activities
		Stage	Strategy	
<i>Climate Law</i>	Inside-Outside	DM	Inside-Outside	Letter; Media
<i>CBAM</i>	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	DM	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	Meeting; media, mobilize stakeholders

Table 8.12: Strategy of colossal coalitions across processes and stages. Note. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

4.4.1 Contrasting the inside-outside-(orchestration) strategies of the colossal coalition in the *Climate Law* and *CBAM* processes

Throughout the process of the *Climate Law*, the colossal coalition employed an inside-outside strategy. Whereas in the process of the *CBAM*, the colossal coalition carried out an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. Against this backdrop, the moderate silence of the *Climate Law* and high salience of the *CBAM* proposals both initially drive the inside-outside strategies of the colossal coalitions. The orchestration strategy added by the colossal coalition in the *CBAM* is a result of the *CBAM*'s low stringency, relative to the high stringency of the *Climate Law*.

The moderate saliency and high stringency of the *Climate Law* steered the colossal coalition to conduct inside and outside activities. The moderate saliency made inside activities favorable because the process was not overly crowded by many policy actors trying to voice their preferences, unlike those with higher saliency such as in the processes of the *CBAM* and the *RED*. This created an opportunity and enticed the coalition to directly engage with EU policymakers and operate under a logic of influence, benefitting from their large size (interview 2, 5; Junk, 2016). Opportunities to conduct outside activities were simultaneously presented as the *Climate Law* gained some public attention which the colossal coalition could capitalize on. These opportunities were seized by the colossal coalition particularly so that it could benefit from its very large size and signal the vast acceptance of its preferences to the public and business community (interview 2, 5). The moderate salience plus the coalitions very large size and inability to efficiently decide on a course of action, however, constrained the frequency of using the media and the range of other outside the coalition decided to engage in. The *Climate Law*'s high degree of stringency reinforced the colossal coalition's keen advocacy focus on inside and outside activities, especially to ensure it maximized its potential influence on EU policymakers, without spending too much effort in trying to orchestrate with others (interview 2, 5).

The high saliency and lower stringency of the *CBAM*, compared to the *Climate Law*, guided the colossal coalition to carry out inside, outside, and orchestration activities. The high salience mobilized many policy actors and coalitions as well as garnered heightened public attention. This

drove the colossal coalition to attach much importance to the proposal. Because of this importance attached to the proposal, the colossal coalition primarily focused on an inside strategy. This was to ensure that the coalition was able to directly engage with EU policymakers. Yet, the high public attention also provided opportunities for the colossal coalition to rely on its large membership to complement its inside activities with an outside strategy, by trying to also influence EU policymakers indirectly via the public (interview 10, 13). Specifically, the coalition utilized a combination of advocacy tools due to the importance of the proposal, “it was one of the first times we used social media. But I would say the bulk of the work was still done with the traditional tools.... meetings, joint letters” (interview 13). In addition to these tools as many policy actors were also participating to express their preferences, the coalition sought to expand its footprint by mobilizing stakeholders with similar preferences across governance levels. This expansion allowed the coalition to piggyback on the inside and outside activities, which were the primary focus. The lessened stringency further enabled the colossal coalition to spread its advocacy efforts across all three strategies. Due to the less conflictual process shaped by the lower stringency, opportunities arose for the coalition to engage in orchestration, particularly because the other coalitions and policy actors interested in the process were also open to collaborating with the coalition (interview 10, 11, 13, 15).

4.4.2 Summary of Colossal Coalitions

In sum, the strategies of the two identified colossal coalitions are found to be correlated with the moderate to high salience and the different levels of stringency that characterized the Climate Law and CBAM proposals. The moderate saliency and high stringency of the Climate Law enabled the colossal coalition to conduct an inside-outside strategy. The moderate saliency lessened the noise created by a high number of policy actors trying to voice their preferences. This created a clearing for the colossal coalition to directly engage with EU policymakers. Since there was also some public attention on the proposal, the coalition also wanted to benefit from its very large size and signal its preferences for reputational purposes. The high stringency led to the coalition to solely focus its efforts on inside and outside activities, particularly because of its inefficient internal decision-making, constraining the coalition’s use of orchestration activities. The high saliency and lessened stringency of the CBAM steered the colossal coalition to employ an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. Because of the high saliency, the coalition attached very high importance on the proposal. This drove the coalition to engage in all three strategies and increase its chances of successfully influencing the proposal. The low stringency further provided opportunities for the coalition to spread its efforts across all three strategies and expand its footprint as other coalitions

and policy actors were interested in working collaboratively with the coalition. A summary of the strategies and the related legislative characteristics are outlined in table 8.13.

Strategy	Policy Process	Correlated Characteristics	Explanations
<i>Inside-Outside</i>	• Climate Law	• Moderate saliency • High stringency	• Moderate saliency enabled inside-outside strategy due to less noise from many policy actors and some interest from the public. • High stringency constrained use of orchestration activities as coalition focused on inside and outside activities.
<i>Inside-Outside-Orchestrate</i>	• CBAM	• High saliency • Low stringency	• High saliency drove the coalition to engage in all three strategies to increase chances of influence as it attached high importance to the proposal. • Low stringency reduced conflict within the process further enabling the coalition to orchestrate with other coalitions and expand its footprint, complementing inside and outside strategies.

Table 8.13: Drivers of colossal coalitions' strategies across policy processes.

4.5 The strategies of policy generalist coalitions across policy processes

Across all processes, policy generalist coalitions favor an inside strategy, which is conservatively determined (see section 2). Yet, during the processes of the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries, the strategies and activities of the policy generalist coalitions differ from one another (see figure 8.6). In the policy preparation stage of the CBAM process, the environmentally just CBAM coalition employs an inside-outside strategy, favoring inside activities, namely using the Commission's consultation platform, sending a letter to EU-institutional policymakers, and using the media. In the decision-making stage, the environmentally just CBAM coalition shifts to an inside strategy by making statements in negotiations. During the process related to the Sustainable Batteries proposal, policy generalist coalitions employ an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, primarily implemented through meetings with EU-institutional policymakers and using the media, as well as sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and engaging in cross coalition coordination. As such, the strategies of policy generalist coalitions across the two legislative processes greatly differ. Table 8.13 outlines the strategies and core activities of policy generalist coalitions across the processes of the CBAM and the Sustainable Batteries regulation. Next, the strategies and activities of policy generalist coalitions are contrasted against each other because they are only identified in two policy processes and employ different strategies. Due to the low number of policy generalist coalitions in each of the policy processes, the inferences made on the effects of legislative characteristics on the coalitions' choice of strategies are done so cautiously.

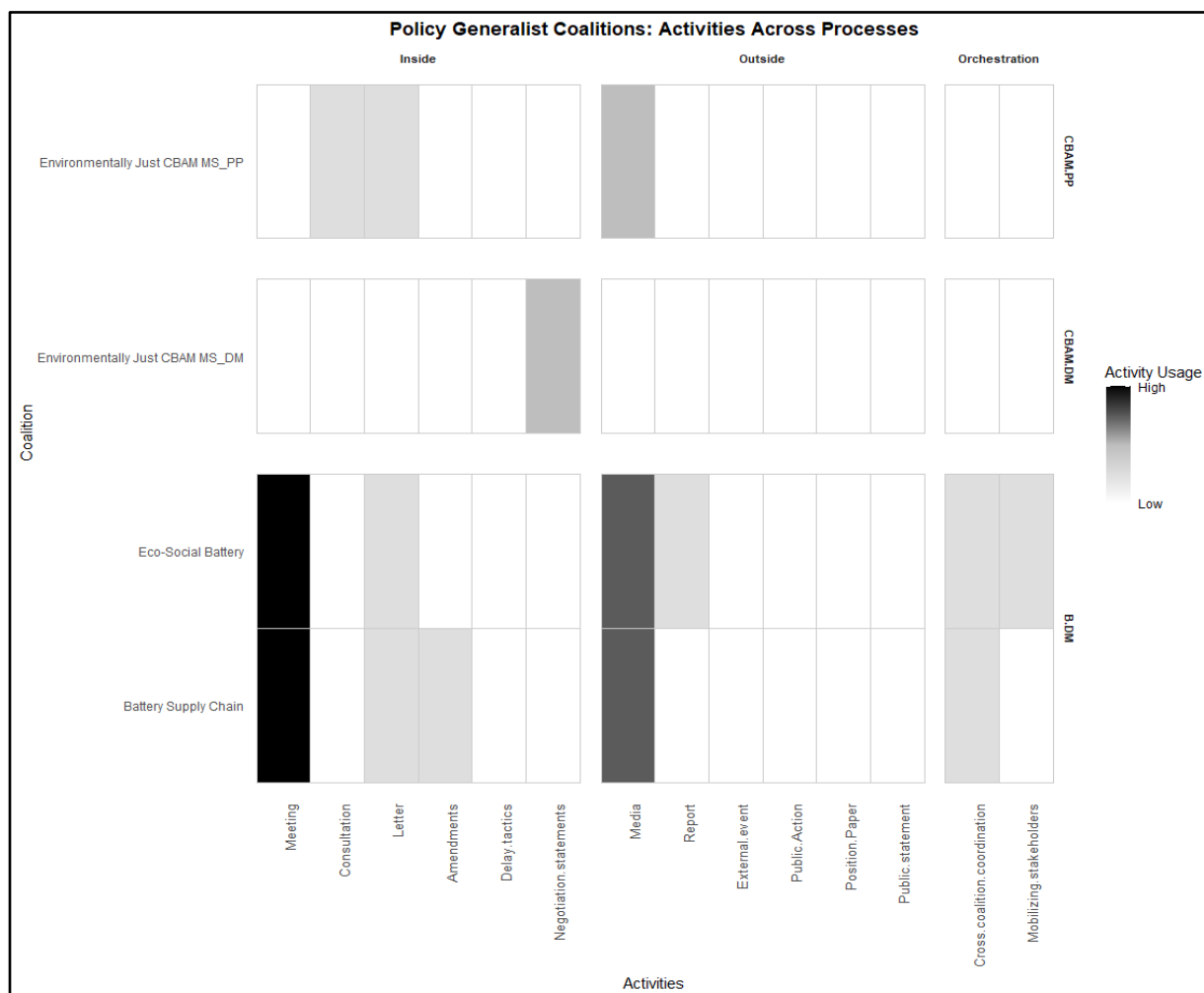


Figure 8.6: Activities of policy generalist coalitions across processes. Note: policy processes and stages are indicated on right-vertical axis and denoted as follows CBAM = CBAM; Sustainable Batteries = B. Each policy process is also divided by stage. Policy preparation stage = PP; decision-making stage = DM.

Policy Process	Overall Strategy	Strategy / Stage		Core Activities
		Stage	Strategy	
CBAM	Inside	PP	PP: Inside-Outside	Consultation, letter, media
		DM	DM: Inside	Statements in negotiations
Sustainable Batteries	Inside-Outside-Orchestration	DM	DM: Inside-Outside-Orchestration	Meetings, media

Table 8.14: Strategy of policy generalist coalitions across processes and stages. Note. PP = Policy preparation & DM = decision-making stage.

4.5.1 Contrasting the inside with the inside-outside-orchestration strategies of policy generalist coalitions in the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries processes

Between the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries proposals, there are no similar legislative characteristics. The CBAM is characterized by high salience, moderate complexity, a moderate regulatory addressee scope, and a low level of stringency. The Sustainable Batteries proposal is characterized by low salience, high complexity, a narrow scope, and a high level of stringency. The most contrasting characteristics and thus most considered to shape the highly diverging inside and inside-outside-orchestration strategies of the policy generalist coalitions are the salience, complexity, and stringency of the proposals. Moreover, there is a slight modification in the strategy of the policy generalist coalitions between the policy preparation and decision-making stages in the CBAM process, indicating that shifts between the policy stages also affects their strategies. To this end, the large difference in the legislative characteristics suggests that policy generalist coalitions are able to adapt to the shifting contexts of policy processes shaped by legislative proposals.

During the process of the CBAM, the high salience of the proposal led policy generalist coalitions to prioritize an inside strategy. When the CBAM proposal was announced by the Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, it was provided much attention from both policymakers and the public (interview 10, 12). This led members of the environmentally just CBAM member state coalition, namely France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, to mark the proposal with extremely high importance, with a desire to have an ambitious CBAM proposal adopted (interview 17). Because of this importance and need to successfully influence the proposal, the coalition operated under a logic of influence and favored inside activities. Doing so, the coalition targeted their advocacy towards other EU policymakers, in particular DG Taxation and Customs Union and other member states in the Council (interview 14, 17).

The moderate complexity of the CBAM further enabled the policy generalist coalitions to conduct inside activities due to the coalition's broad grasp and authority. It also constrained their desire for outside activities. During the CBAM, the moderate complexity created a muddled process for the policy generalist coalitions. EU policymakers were receptive and open to both the views and preferences of numerous policy actors and coalitions as well as the media and the public. The openness of EU policymakers towards policy actors and coalitions created some opportunities for the policy generalist coalition to continue engaging in inside activities, as their understanding and knowledge of the CBAM was well received (interview 10, 12, 17). However, the opportunities for coalitions to directly engage with EU policymakers were not overly abundant, limiting the policy generalist's ability to conduct a high frequency of inside activities. Such muddled process was

exemplified by the workings of the CBAM expert group. The expert group was set up by the Commission to engage with expert policy actors to guide the drafting of the proposal. Although established, the group became quite informal and was convened rather irregularly. “The CBAM expert group was not really one of those [that worked very well]. It was irregularly convened. It was very unclear when the next meeting will be, and what would be worked on next. We only had one meeting. And we haven't been really consulted on secondary legislation quite yet either. So, I think it's pretty apparent that there has been until now some difficulty from the Commission to really share what they had in mind. If they had a plan, what was the plan?” (interview 12). Resultingly, the confusion around what the Commission and DG TAXUD wanted made it further challenging for the policy generalist coalition to engage in outside activities to alter the public opinion on the proposal. Additionally, the proposal's moderate complexity further compounded this constraint of adopting an outside strategy. Because of the moderate complexity, the policy generalist coalitions found it, again, challenging to convincingly convey simpler messages towards the public, especially as there were several very technical aspects of the proposal, particularly the methodologies and benchmarks deemed to account for the carbon prices of products entering the EU, being sidelined and buried in secondary legislation. Relatedly, the low stringency of the economic instrument was further compounded by this influx of secondary legislation. Without knowing what these methodologies and benchmarks are, the implementation and implications of the proposal were still unknown (interview 10, 12). Hence, the moderate complexity and low stringency together created a blurred understanding of the proposal and the direction it was going to take. This disincentivized the coalitions in engaging in outside or orchestration activities and steered them to focus on influencing policymakers from the inside (interview 10, 12, 17).

The strategies of policy generalist coalitions also shifted between the policy preparation and the decision-making stages within the CBAM process. In the policy preparation stage, the environmentally just CBAM coalition conducted a rather balanced inside-outside strategy, which then shifted in the decision-making stage to an inside strategy. This shift supports the identified ‘policy funnel’ explanation, which accounts for most strategic changes among coalitions.

Although the low saliency of the Sustainable Batteries proposal differed to that of the CBAM proposal, it also steered the policy generalist coalitions towards conducting inside activities. Due to the low saliency, only those policy actors interested in the proposal and had stakes in the European battery industry mobilized to try and influence the proposal (interview 32, 34, 35, 37). When discussing the public salience, a member of the battery supply chain coalition outlined that public salience “has no implication in any case... So, who on earth is going to dwell on about the

fact that 1 percent of concentration of a given chemical will be allowed? We already know our steps” (interview 32). This resulted in a policy process that was not overly crowded, unlike the CBAM. The less populated process created an opportunity for the policy generalist coalitions to use their broad knowledge of the proposal and employ an inside strategy under a logic of influence. Because of this, the coalition was able to engage in ‘quite politics’ and try and capitalize on the ease of directly accessing EU policymakers by inviting them to meetings (interview 32, 33, 34, 37).

The highly complex Sustainable Batteries proposal further reinforced the policy generalist's adoption of an inside strategy. Due to the high complexity, policymakers were significantly receptive to receiving very specific and technical knowledge from key policy actors working on batteries (interview 30). This enabled the policy generalist coalitions to draw on their broad and technical knowledge of the proposal and directly engage with EU policymakers (interview 30, 31, 32, 34, 35). Highlighted by an EU policymaker, “the battery industry coalition and the recycling coalition were very, very advanced in their lobbying. They sent us like pure changes and amendments to the text, and they had policy papers that they did a long time in advance. So, everything was there when we started drafting our amendments, which I think was clever because that gave them a lot of influence” (interview 30). Simultaneously, the high complexity deterred policy generalist coalitions from putting much effort into an outside strategy and trying to influence the public's opinion. They did not want to spend time trying to publicly convey their preferences around technical issues such as the percentage of chemicals to be used in the battery manufacturing process (interview 32). Furthermore, due to the technical nature of the proposal and the difficulty in trying to convey complex preferences, the coalition were also fearful of being misinterpreted or misanalysed, making a technical issue become political. “Whatever you say or not say can be misinterpreted or misanalysed and everything can be read under a political view. Industry communication is very often not a political communication, it's more about the technical, about reality, and not about discussing politics, society, visions” (interview 35). It was only when trying to convey simple narratives, namely around due diligence and human rights, for example, did the coalitions engage in outside activities (interview 31).

The high stringency of the Sustainable Batteries proposal was foreseen to have a heavy and lasting impact on the battery industry in the EU, driving the policy generalist coalitions to complement their favored inside strategy by broadening out and engaging in outside and orchestration activities (interview 35). Here, the policy generalist coalitions used the media to make press releases, public statements, and provide quotes and insights into the Sustainable

Battery process. In doing so, the coalitions were able to implant their preferences, mainly about simple topics like the need to consider human rights in the sourcing of critical raw materials used for the manufacturing of batteries (interview 31, 32, 33, 34). Policy generalist coalitions were also driven to orchestrate and expand their footprint in the process. For example, members of the eco-social battery coalition, such as T&E and ECOS, shared information and set up a platform to encourage information sharing and advocacy on electromobility with members of the battery supply chain coalition including SolarPower Europe, Recharge, and Eurometaux. The platform allowed the coalition to expand their preferences, get things moving on the negotiations, and to ultimately co-exist with industry players, all in efforts to influence and benefit as much as possible from the proposal (interview 31, 34).

4.5.2 Summary of policy generalist coalitions

To sum up, by comparing the legislative characteristics of the two proposals, it is uncovered that the diverging inside and inside-outside-orchestration strategies of the policy generalist coalitions are correlated to differences in the salience, complexity, and stringency of the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries proposals. It was also found that shifts between the policy stages of the CBAM process resulted in changes to the policy generalist coalition's strategy.

The high saliency, moderate complexity, and low stringency of the CBAM drove policy generalist coalitions to employ an inside strategy. The high saliency led the coalition to attach very high importance to the proposal and focus most of its efforts on directly influencing EU policymakers through inside activities. Because of the moderate complexity, EU policymakers directed their limited attention to both policy actors and public opinion. Moreover, conveying simple messages to the public proved tricky for the coalition due to the moderate complexity and large amount of secondary legislation. Together, this made it rather challenging for the coalition to increase its frequency of inside activities and constrained its desire to employ an outside strategy. The low stringency also diverted the coalitions interest away from conducting outside or orchestration activities, particularly as the coalition was not willing to invest much effort in other activities due to the unknown payoffs and murky implementation of the proposal. Finally, the strategy of the policy generalist coalition shifted from a mixed inside-outside strategy to a narrow inside strategy, resembling the policy funnel dynamics followed by most other coalitions.

Conversely, the low salience, high complexity, and high stringency of the Sustainable Batteries proposal enabled the policy generalist coalition to employ an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. The low salience provided opportunities for the coalitions to directly influence EU policymakers through quite politics and conduct an inside strategy rather easily. The high complexity further

enhanced this inside strategy as EU policymakers were growingly receptive to the insights of knowledgeable policy actors and coalitions, particularly policy generalist coalitions. Concurrently, the high complexity also slightly constrained the coalition's desire to carry out outside activities, unless the preference they wanted to convey was able to be simple. Finally, the high stringency and lasting impact of the proposal drove the coalitions to complement their inside strategy and expend their efforts by employing outside and orchestration activities to try and influence the proposal to their benefit and even coordinating with their counterpart coalition. The results are summarized in table 8.15.

Strategy	Policy Process	Correlated Characteristics	Explanations
<i>Inside</i>	• CBAM	• High salience • Moderate complexity • Low stringency • Shifts between policy stages	• High salience led coalitions to attach high importance on the proposal, driving them to engage in inside activities. • Moderate complexity created a restricted opening for coalitions to employ inside strategies but also constrained their desire for outside activities. • The low stringency constrained the coalition's ability to conduct outside or orchestration activities as they did not want to increase their advocacy efforts due to unknown impacts of the proposal. • Between the stages, coalitions narrow their strategy and focus predominately on inside activities.
<i>Inside-Outside-Orchestrate</i>	• Sustainable Batteries	• Low salience • High complexity • High stringency	• Low salience drove the coalition to an inside strategy through quite politics. • High complexity enabled the coalitions to continue employing an inside strategy, and slightly constrained the coalition's need for outside activities • High stringency of the proposal steered coalitions to support the inside strategy though outside and orchestration activities.

Table 8.15: Drivers of policy generalist coalitions' strategies across policy processes.

4.6 Summary of strategies and legislative characteristics

Section 4 has examined the correlation between the characteristics of legislative proposals and the strategies and activities that peripheral, moderate authoritative, fragmented, colossal, and policy generalist coalition types employ. Because the commanding coalitions were only uncovered in the same policy process and stage, they were not analyzed in this section. Put together, this analysis uncovers two overarching findings.

First, the analysis suggests that some of the most important legislative characteristics for understanding the strategies coalitions employ is the salience, complexity, stringency, and shifts between the policy stages. Salience is found to either enable or constrain the strategies of the

peripheral, fragmented, colossal, and policy generalist coalitions, but not the strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions. The complexity impacts all coalition types except for the colossal coalitions, although colossal coalitions are not identified in processes of high complexity. The stringency plays a role in shifting the strategies of all coalitions apart from the fragmented coalitions. Finally, the shifts between policy stages is found to almost always affect the strategies of coalitions. The scope is only found to play a role in shaping the strategy of fragmented coalitions in the processes of the Climate Law and JTF.

Second, and relatedly, the findings reveal that the characteristics of legislative proposals do not have the same directional effect on each type of coalition's strategy selection. On one hand, some coalition types are found to conduct similar strategies, but the selection of these strategies is driven by different (combinations of) legislative characteristics. For example, during the process of the CBAM, the moderate authoritative coalitions and the fragmented coalitions both employ an inside-outside strategy. Yet, the inside-outside strategy of the moderate authoritative coalitions is steered by the low stringency and moderate complexity. The inside-outside strategy of the fragmented coalitions, alternatively, is shaped by the high saliency and moderate complexity of the CBAM. On the other hand, the analysis identifies a non-linear relationship between legislative characteristics and the types of coalitions activities. Highlighted in the analysis on the strategies of peripheral coalitions in the processes of the Sustainable Batteries and JTF proposals, it is found that the high complexity of the Sustainable Batteries proposal and the low complexity of the JTF proposal both drove peripheral coalitions to adopt an outside strategy. Yet, the strategy resulted from differing mechanisms. As such, the findings emphasize that both the structural dimensions of coalitions and the characteristics of the legislative proposals interact and alter the strategies of the coalition types.

5. Conclusion

This chapter set out to identify and compare the strategies that coalition types employ and the activities they use across EU environmental policy processes in three analytical steps. Doing so, the chapter builds on literature that examines the strategies of coalitions by establishing correlations between the structural dimensions of coalition types, the characteristics of legislative proposals, and the strategies and activities they conduct.

The first analytical step mapped the activities and strategies of each coalition type across the five policy processes. The initial mapping uncovered 14 activities that coalitions conduct at different rates of use. The activities were then grouped into one of three strategies, namely inside, outside, and orchestration. Overall, coalitions in EU environmental policymaking favor inside oriented

activities. By uncovering that coalitions also employ an orchestration strategy, the chapter adds to a growing body of literature on the strategies of coalitions where the inside and outside strategies are already well established. Regarding the coalition types overarching strategies, the chapter shows that the peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily employ an inside strategy; the fragmented and colossal coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy; and the commanding coalitions conduct an inside-outside-orchestration strategy.

The second step compared coalition types that employ similar strategies, correlating the structural dimensions of a coalition and their strategy. It is uncovered that the combination of a coalition's size, membership diversity, and intra-coalition coordination intensity are the core dimensions enabling or constraining the strategy coalition types employ, and the range of and frequency at which activities are used. The analysis finds no clear relations between the broadness of shared issue preferences and only small effects related to the authority of a coalition and the strategies coalition conduct. The results establish new associations between coalition size and membership diversity with strategy selection, two under explored coalition dimensions (Nelson & Yackee, 2012; Weible et al., 2020), provide support for the effect of intra-coalition coordination on strategy selection (Weiler & Reißmann, 2019) and challenge findings linking authority and strategy selection (Vesa et al., 2020).

The third step compared the strategies of coalitions of the same type across policy processes, correlating legislative characteristics to the strategies of coalition types. It is found that the salience, complexity, stringency, and shift between policy stages are the primary legislative characteristics enabling and constraining the strategies of coalitions of the same type. The scope of regulatory addressee is found to play a limited role. Moreover, it is revealed that legislative characteristics each affect the strategies of coalition types differently. By developing correlations between legislative characteristics and the strategies of coalitions, the chapter complements findings on coalition opportunity structures (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025) by providing insights into a new set of contextual factors.

This chapter has now concluded the presentation and analysis of the empirical material in light of the three research questions central to the dissertation. The next and final chapter will conclude by summarizing the different elements of the dissertation and reflecting on the relevance and significance of the findings presented in chapter 5 to 8.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

1. Introduction

Coalitions are a prevalent phenomenon in EU environmental policymaking. The need for policy actors to engage in coalitions in EU environmental policy processes is vital given the inability of a single policy actor to decisively influence decision-making and the collective action problem inherent to environmental issues. As this dissertation has shown, many different types of coalitions form as policy actors, conditioned by the complexities of EU environmental policy processes, coordinate with others whom they share preferences with (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018; Weible et al., 2020). Once formed, coalitions conduct strategies, which are altered by their structural dimensions and the contours of the policy process, to cooperate and compete against other coalitions. Through such cooperation and competition, coalitions try to influence EU environmental policy processes and implant their preferences in legislative proposals. In this sense, coalitions play a key role in shaping the EU's progress on environmental action.

Coalitions are not homogenous groups, nor do they operate in the same way or have the same degree of influence. Although much attention has been given to examining the influence of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes, knowledge regarding the structure, formation, and strategies of coalitions is limited. This is despite considerable variation across these coalitional aspects. Accordingly, this dissertation aimed to advance insights into these blind spots by taking stock of the structural variation of coalitions, and building on this, examining the formation and strategies of the different types of coalitions across five diverse EU environmental policy processes. In doing so, the dissertation was structured around three overarching research questions:

RQ1: What are the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

RQ2: How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?

RQ3: Why do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal?

To unravel the coalition dynamics and answer the three research questions, the dissertation deployed a conceptual framework informed by the Advocacy Coalition Framework and interest group literature. The conceptual framework was operationalized through a sequential mixed-

methods research design. Focusing on the policy processes of the Climate Law, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, Renewable Energy Directive, Sustainable Batteries Regulation, and the Just Transition Fund, coalitions were first identified through social network analysis and content analysis (chapter 5). The identified coalitions were then characterized across five core structural dimensions (number of shared preferences, size, membership diversity, authority, and intra-coalition coordination intensity), and through a principal component analysis, a typology of coalitions was created (chapter 6). Drawing on the coalition typology, the dissertation set out to uncover the conditions driving the formation of each coalition type utilizing qualitative comparative analysis (chapter 7). Finally, a two-step comparative analysis first explained the effect of a coalition type's structural dimensions on their overall strategy selection across all five policy processes. The second analysis examined the effect of the characteristics of legislative proposals on coalitions of the same types' strategy selection (chapter 8). In answering these three research questions, the dissertation makes empirical, conceptual, methodological, and societal contributions.

The conclusion is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a summary of the answers to each of the research questions. Section 3 offers a reflection on the conceptual, empirical, methodological contributions the overall dissertation makes. Section 4 briefly summarizes the societal contributions the dissertation makes. Section 5 posits future avenues of research.

2. Findings

To solve the puzzle and identify, characterize, and explain the formation and strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes, the dissertation answered three research questions. This section presents a summary of the findings for each research question.

2.1 Research question 1: creating a typology of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes

Research question 1 set out to uncover the different types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes. A stepwise approach was taken to first identify coalitions through social network analysis and content analysis (chapter 5). Through the identification process, 59 coalitions were uncovered across the five policy processes. Then, characterizing the 59 coalitions along five core structural dimensions, namely the number of shared preferences, the size and diversity of membership, the degree of authority, and the intensity of intra-coalition coordination, six types of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes were revealed. The six types are labelled: peripheral, moderate authoritative, fragmented, colossal, policy generalist, and commanding (chapter 6).

Peripheral coalitions tend to sit on the periphery of the policy process. They support a very narrow set of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, very low levels of authority, and internally coordinate with very low levels of intensity. Of the 59 coalitions identified, 20 are peripheral coalitions, making them the second most occurring coalition type identified. More specifically, five are present in the Climate Law process, two are present in the CBAM process, eight are uncovered in the process related to the RED, another two are found in the Sustainable Batteries process, and three are present in the process of the JTF.

Moderate authoritative coalitions advocate for a moderate range of issue preferences, have a small and homogenous membership, high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of intensity. Given the high level of authority, moderate authoritative coalitions hold a latent degree of power, which may be mobilized to advocate for their moderate range of preferences. Moderate authoritative coalitions are the most populous type, with 22 of the 59 identified coalitions being of this type. Among the five policy processes, eight are present in the Climate Law, one is uncovered in both the CBAM and the RED, three are identified in the Sustainable Batteries, and nine are present in the JTF.

Fragmented coalitions advocate for a narrow set of issue preferences, have a large and heterogenous membership, low authority, and internally coordinate at a moderate level of intensity. Such coalitions are viewed as fragmented, whereby a heterogenous set of members are loosely held together by a low number of preferences and moderate levels of coordination. Nine of the 59 coalitions are characterized as fragmented coalitions, making them the third most identified coalition type. Of the nine fragmented coalitions, one is identified in the process related to the Climate Law, two are present in the CBAM, another four are uncovered in the RED process, and two are present in the JTF. No fragmented coalitions are present in the process of the Sustainable Batteries.

Colossal coalitions occupy a vast space within the policy process. They back a moderate number of issue preferences, have a very large and homogenous membership, possess a moderate level of authority, and coordinate at a low level of intensity. Only two colossal coalitions are uncovered, making them the least common coalition type. One colossal coalition is present in each of the processes related to the Climate Law and the CBAM.

Policy generalist coalitions hold a strong grasp and represent a unified perspective on the proposal at hand. They advocate for a very broad set of issue preferences, are moderate in size and have a homogenous membership, enjoy high authority, and internally coordinate at a low level of

intensity. Among the 59 coalitions, four policy generalist coalitions are identified. Two each are present in the processes linked to the CBAM and Sustainable Batteries proposals.

Commanding coalitions are considered the most focal or dominant coalition type. They push for a broad set of issue preferences, have a large and highly diverse membership, very high authority, and internally coordinate very intensely. As only two coalitions of 59 are commanding coalitions, they are the least common type of coalition uncovered alongside the colossal coalitions. Two commanding coalitions are uncovered and are both present in the negotiations of the RED proposal.

The findings derived from research question 1 show the pervasiveness and fluidity of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. The identification of coalitions demonstrates that coalitions are present across the diverse range of policy processes the dissertation has examined. Despite their ubiquity, most of the coalitions identified are quite short-lived and specific to a single policy process (Rozbicka, 2013; von Malmberg, 2025). Nevertheless, some coalitions sustain throughout the course of policy processes, others structurally evolve and change, and some emerge across several processes. Through the unveiling of the six types, the findings further indicate that coalitions tend to emerge in a limited number of types with distinct structural compositions. Together, the alternating presence of coalitions and coalition types across policy processes illustrate the underlying power dynamics that shift across each policy process, reflecting the complex and contested nature of EU environmental policymaking.

2.2 Research question 2: explaining the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes

Drawing on the typology, the dissertation then set out to examine the formation of the coalition types (chapter 7). Accordingly, it answered RQ2: *How does the character of EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal drive the formation of different coalition types?* To answer this question, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is drawn on to uncover and explain the conditions driving the formation of each coalition type. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the formation of each coalition type is not determined by any single legislative characteristic or the (non)-involvement of an exceptional policy actor alone. Rather, each type of coalition is driven by a distinct number of pathways made up of combinations of core and auxiliary conditions that include the characteristics of a legislative proposal and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors (Lubell et al., 2012).

More specifically, *peripheral coalitions* are driven by two pathways and explanations. Notably, both pathways detail that peripheral coalitions generally form without the inclusion of an exceptional

policy actor. The first pathway indicates that peripheral coalitions form out of early convenience in a process shaped by a legislative proposal that is rather simple and less stringent, without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor. The second pathway suggests that peripheral coalitions may also emerge to try and influence a complex and stringent proposal late in the processes as a last-ditch effort, also without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor.

Moderate authoritative coalitions are driven by three pathways that are grouped into two explanations. The three pathways and two explanations illustrate that moderate authoritative coalitions are principally driven by policy processes shaped by legislative proposals that are broad in scope and not overly complex. The first explanation suggests that moderate authoritative coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor seeks opportunities early on in the process to build a coalition and influence a process characterized by a legislative proposal that has a wide scope, low complexity, and is less stringent. The second explanation illustrates that moderate authoritative coalitions also form when legislative proposals have a wide impact and are less complex, and when the legislative characteristics create a process that pressures authoritative policy actors to form a coalition without an exceptional policy actor either later in a less coercive policy process or earlier during more coercive policy processes.

Fragmented coalitions emerge from three pathways grouped into two explanations. The first explanation indicates that fragmented coalitions form as policy actors seek to diversify the consensus of their preferences particularly in the decision-making stage of a policy process shaped by a proposal that has low complexity, low stringency, and either when a proposal has a narrow scope and an exceptional policy actor is not included or when the legislation has a broad scope and an exceptional policy actor is included. The second explanation suggests that fragmented coalitions may also form when an exceptional policy actor seeks a first mover advantage by building a diverse coalition during the policy preparation stage of a challenging process characterized by a proposal that has high complexity, a broad scope, and high stringency. Among the formation of all coalition types, the fragmented coalition is the only type to not be driven by an overarching condition(s).

Colossal coalitions emerge following two pathways and explanations. Most evidently, both pathways highlight that colossal coalitions tend to form in the decision-making stage of a legislative process when the proposal is not overly complex. The first explanation suggests that colossal coalitions emerge when policy actors are driven together, without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor, during the decision-making stage of a process that is shaped by a legislative proposal that is less complex, broad, and stringent. The second explanation outlines that colossal coalitions

also form when an exceptional policy actor, included in the coalition, looks to greatly expand the coalition in the decision-making stage of a rather soft process shaped by a legislative proposal that is low in complexity, narrow in scope, and is less stringent.

Policy generalist coalitions emerge under two pathways and explanations. Both pathways highlight that policy generalist coalitions emerge only when an exceptional policy actor is included and the legislative proposal has a narrow scope. The first explanation proposes that policy generalist coalitions form when an exceptional policy actor seeks to build a coalition in a streamlined process marked by a legislative proposal that is characterized by a narrow scope, low complexity, and low stringency. The second explanation demonstrates that policy generalist coalitions also form when an exceptional policy actor directs coordination to develop a coalition in the decision-making stage of a technical and stringent process, shaped by a legislative proposal with a narrow scope, high complexity and high stringency.

Commanding coalitions form from one pathway and explanation. This explanation shows that when an exceptional policy actor is included in the coalition and the process is fragmented, marked by a proposal that has a broad scope, high complexity, and high stringency, a commanding coalition is likely to form in the decision-making stage.

Examining the mechanisms linking the conditions of the distinct pathways, the key role of exceptional policy actors in the process of coalition formation is illuminated. As the findings show, when an exceptional policy actor is incorporated, relatively more structurally complex coalitions, namely fragmented, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions, emerge from strategic coalition building. This is particularly the case during policy processes that are increasingly challenging to navigate, such as the process linked to the Sustainable Batteries and Renewable Energy Directive. Conversely, when an exceptional policy actor is not involved in the building of the coalition, the coalition tends to form with less structural intricacy, as suggested by the pathways of the peripheral and moderate authoritative coalitions. Without the inclusion of an exceptional policy actor engaging in strategic coalition building, these less intricate coalitions form in a more ad-hoc fashion either when the costs for policy actors to participate are lowered, particularly when the proposal is not very complex, or when policy actors are pressured to form a coalition due to temporal concerns or potentially coercive impacts from the proposal.

2.3 Research question 3: explaining the strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes

After developing insights into the factors that drive the formation of each coalition type, the dissertation examined their strategy selection (chapter 8). To do so, it set out to answer RQ3: *Why*

do varying coalition types employ different strategies across EU environmental policy processes within the European Green Deal? To answer this question, an initial mapping of the activities and overarching strategies that each coalition and coalition type favored across all policy processes was conducted. The strategies of each type were then compared to establish the enabling and constraining relations between the structural dimensions of coalitions and their strategies. Following, the strategies of coalitions within each type were compared to examine the opportunities and constraints provided by legislative characteristics that shape the strategies of each coalition of the same type.

The initial mapping uncovered 14 activities that the 59 coalitions conducted at different rates of use. The 14 activities were grouped into inside, outside, and orchestration strategies to reveal the favored strategies of each coalition and coalition type. Following the two-step comparative analysis, the results showed that the strategies employed by coalition types are determined by both their structure and the context of the policy process. Yet, the way in which each coalition type responds to the same legislative characteristics differs. On one hand, the same legislative characteristic is found to drive each type of coalition to select different strategies. On the other hand, different degrees of the same characteristic, such as high and low complexity, drive coalitions to select the same strategy but via different mechanisms. This suggests that legislative characteristics create opportunities and constraints for coalitions to conduct strategies, but the structural dimensions of coalitions condition the feasible response.

More specifically, *peripheral coalitions* favor an inside strategy across all legislative process. The strategy is very lightly implemented via three core activities, including having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. The inside strategy is a result of peripheral coalitions operating under a logic of influence to overcome the constraining effect of their small and homogenous membership and low intra-coalition coordination. The strategies of peripheral coalitions also somewhat vary across legislative processes but are not overly affected by changes in legislative characteristics. In the Climate Law and CBAM processes, peripheral coalitions favor an inside strategy, slightly driven by the moderate to high saliency of the proposals. The strategy is also found to shift between policy stages, where peripheral coalitions narrow their efforts on inside activities in the decision-making stages. In the RED process peripheral coalitions opt for an inside-outside strategy. This is shown to be affected by the unique combination of the RED's high salience, high complexity, broad scope, and high stringency. During the Sustainable Batteries and JTF processes peripheral coalitions favor an outside strategy, altered by the contrasting complexity of each proposal. Both the high complexity of the Sustainable Batteries

proposal and the low complexity of the JTF drive the selection of an outside strategy. In both processes, peripheral coalitions shift to more inside activities when the process enters the decision-making stage.

Moderate authoritative coalitions generally employ an inside strategy, mainly implemented through three core activities: sending letters to EU institutional policymakers, making statements in negotiations, and using the media. Moderate authoritative coalitions use the activities at a high usage rate. Sometimes, they conduct outside-oriented activities, and very rarely do they adopt an orchestrating strategy. The inside strategy is due to moderate authoritative coalitions engaging in a logic of influence to mitigate the constraining effect of their small and homogenous membership and low intra-coalition coordination intensity. The high degree of authority enables these coalitions to implement their inside strategy more strongly. The strategies of moderate authoritative coalitions also slightly diverge from their overarching inside strategy across policy processes. During the Climate Law, RED, and Sustainable Batteries processes, moderate authoritative coalitions lean towards an inside strategy, enabled by the high stringency of each proposal. Shifts between the policy stages also drive moderate authoritative coalitions to engage in more inside activities. In the CBAM and JTF processes, moderate authoritative coalitions carry out an inside-outside strategy guided by the proposals' low stringency and moderate to low complexity.

Fragmented coalitions, overall, tend to favor an inside-outside strategy. The strategy is mainly implemented through five core activities used at a high degree of intensity, including having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, using the Commission's open consultation platform, using the media, and publishing policy reports. The mixed strategy is enabled by fragmented coalitions' large and diverse membership and high intra-coalition coordination intensity, allowing fragmented coalitions to operate under a logic of influence, reputation, and sometimes expansion. Fragmented coalitions also adapt their strategy to shifts in legislative characteristics. In the processes related to the CBAM and RED, fragmented coalitions employ an inside-outside strategy, enabled by the high saliency, and to a lesser extent, the medium to high complexity of the two proposals. Here, the strategies of the fragmented coalitions in both processes are altered by the shift between the policy stages, but in contrasting ways. In the process of the CBAM, fragmented coalitions expand their strategy from an inside-outside to an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. In the process of the RED, fragmented coalition's shift from an inside-outside strategy in the policy preparation stage to an inside strategy in the decision-making stage. During the Climate Law and JTF processes, fragmented coalitions employ an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, steered by the proposals' medium saliency, broad scope,

and low complexity. Shifts between policy stages in the JTF process also results in fragmented coalitions expanding their strategy.

Colossal coalitions tend to employ an inside-outside strategy, engaging in two primary activities used at a low rate. The two activities are sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media. The strategy is enabled by their large size, enhancing the colossal coalitions capacity to engage in a logic of influence and reputation. Nevertheless, the large size of colossal coalitions also weakened their ability to implement the strategy with more intensity. Within coalition type variation further indicates that the strategies of colossal coalitions are also affected by the characteristics of the legislative proposals. During the policy process of the Climate Law, the colossal coalition conducted an inside-outside strategy. This strategy was enabled by the moderate saliency and high stringency, driving the coalition to act under a logic of influence and reputation. In the process of the CBAM, the colossal coalition operated under a logic of influence, reputation, and expansion by conducting an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, which was steered by the proposal's high saliency and low stringency.

Policy generalist coalitions favor an inside strategy across all five policy processes. This strategy is mainly informed by two core activities: sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers and using the media, which are used at a high frequency. The predominant inside strategy of policy generalist coalitions is guided by a logic of influence to mitigate the constraining effect of their small and homogenous membership. The high usage of activities, however, is enabled by their high degree of authority. Although only four policy generalist coalitions are uncovered, their strategies also vary across policy processes. In the CBAM process, they employ an inside strategy driven by the high saliency, moderate complexity, and low stringency of the proposal. Shifts between the policy stages of the CBAM process also led to policy generalist coalitions to favor inside activities. Contrastingly, in the Sustainable Batteries process, the coalitions favored an inside-outside-orchestration strategy, shaped by the low salience, high complexity, and high stringency of the proposal.

Commanding coalitions employ a mixed inside-outside-orchestrating strategy, implemented through eight core activities which are used at very high rates. The activities include having meetings with and sending letters to EU-institutional policymakers, writing amendments, making statements in negotiations, using the media, speaking at external events, making public statements, and engaging in cross-coalition coordination. Commanding coalitions therefore have the broadest activity repertoire and are the most active coalitions. This general strategy is enabled by the coalitions' large and diverse membership, and high intra-coalition coordination intensity.

Like the fragmented coalitions, the combination of these structural dimensions enables commanding coalitions to operate under a logic of influence, reputation, and expansion. Because commanding coalitions were only uncovered in the same legislative process and stage, the effect of the characteristics of legislative proposals on their strategies were not analyzed.

By answering RQ3, the results provide insights into the activities and strategies of coalitions across EU environmental policymaking. Peripheral, moderate authoritative, and policy generalist coalitions primarily employ an inside strategy, implemented through a low range of activities. And, although moderate authoritative and policy generalist coalitions use the activities at a high rate, the peripheral coalitions do not. Fragmented and colossal coalitions both tend to select an inside-outside strategy. Yet, whereas fragmented coalitions draw on a broad range of activities and use them at a high rate, colossal coalitions implement their strategy via a much smaller arsenal of activities, used at a low rate. Commanding coalitions conduct an inside-outside-orchestration strategy. As the strategy suggests, commanding coalitions utilize the widest range of activities and do so at a high rate of intensity. Comparing the strategies across and within coalition types, findings demonstrate that the size, membership diversity, and intensity of intra-coalition coordination, are core structural dimensions that initially define the coalition type's activity portfolio. Then, legislative characteristics, namely the salience, complexity, stringency, and shifts between policy stages, shape the opportunities and constraints within which coalitions operate. Hence, coalitions adapt to the specific contours of each policy process, but the ability of and the way in which they adapt is not uniform. In this sense, the results advance scholarship that links coalition structure (Nelson & Yackee, 2012; Vesa et al., 2020; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019) and contextual factors shaping policy processes (Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025) to coalition strategy selection.

3. Reflections and contributions

This section reflects on the choices made in structuring the dissertation from a conceptual, empirical, and methodological perspective. It also discusses the contributions the dissertation makes to each of the perspectives and to the literature in general. Each perspective is discussed individually.

3.1 Conceptual reflections and contributions

Drawing on literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and scholarship centered on the ACF and interest group literature, the dissertation advanced a re-conceptualization of the structure of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Five structural dimensions inform the conceptualization: the number of shared preferences, size, membership diversity, authority, and intra-coalition coordination intensity. This conceptualization enabled the creation of a coalition

typology. The typology became the starting point for describing and comparing the varying manifestations and dynamics of coalitions across EU environmental policy processes.

To explain the formation of different coalition types, the dissertation again drew on insights from the ACF and interest group literature. Using these literature as the impetus for the abductive approach, five conditions likely to play a role in driving coalition formation are identified. Four of these conditions are related to the characteristics of the legislative proposal, labelled legislative characteristics. These conditions, drawn mainly from the interest group literature and supplemented from policy design studies, are the complexity, regulatory addressee scope, and stringency of the legislative proposal, and the shifts between the policy stages of the process. The fifth condition relates to individual agents in the policy process, namely exceptional policy actors, derived from the ACF.

To map the strategies of each coalition type, three strategies and their related activities are conceptualized. Inside and outside strategies were conceptualized from the ACF and interest group literature. The orchestration strategy was conceptualized from literature on international environmental politics. From the ACF and interest group scholarship, two conceptual categories were identified likely to affect the strategies that coalition types employ. The first category involved the structural dimensions of coalitions, derived from the initial re-conceptualization. The second category of factors accounted for the legislative characteristics, which are also thought to affect the formation of coalitions, plus the salience of the proposal, which emerged through abduction. The theoretical and conceptual choices made for this dissertation helped frame the analysis and answer the research questions. There are, however, five points regarding the choices made that require reflection.

First, the conceptualization of coalitions in this dissertation considers shared preferences as a core condition for a coalition to be present. Such choice diverges from the mantra of the ACF, whereby policy core beliefs are the 'glue' of coalitions (Jenkins-Smith & Weible, 2025). Yet, as has been discussed elsewhere, such assumption has been consistently questioned (Henry, 2011; Nohrstedt et al., 2023), particularly within the context of the EU (Nedergaard, 2008; Rozbicka, 2013; von Malmborg, 2025). Incorporating preferences rather than policy core beliefs into the conceptualization enabled the dissertation to remain flexible, particularly when examining coalitions within a single policy area. If the identification of coalitions and their structural dimensions centered on policy core beliefs, finer grained insights into the preferences of policy actors across environmental policy processes would have been lost. Such was the case, for example with France, who was found to prefer an ambitious CBAM but a rather less ambitious

RED. Resultingly, there may not have been much variation between coalitions along the shared preferences dimension as most coalitions may only have one or two shared policy core beliefs within the field of environmental policy. Nevertheless, given the hierarchical nature of the ACF belief system (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018), the issue preferences shared by actors in a coalition could be abstracted to the policy core level. This is because policy actors across policy areas and political systems prefer and advocate for certain issues regardless of issue area. And it is these preferences which are informed by their policy core beliefs, namely the policy goals and how the government should or should not respond to a given problem (Weible et al., 2020).

Second, the five dimensions included in the re-conceptualization of coalitions cover variation in the three key conditions of a coalition: policy actors, shared preferences, and coordination. The number of shared preferences among policy actors within a coalition gauge variation on the shared preferences condition. The size, diversity, and authority capture variation of the policy actors that are members of the coalition. And the intra-coalition coordination intensity accounts for changes in the rate of coordination among actors within the coalition. Although the five structural dimensions of coalitions provide a strong conceptualization, it is only a starting point to make sense of how coalitions are structured and how they are differentiated from one another. To this end, the five structural dimensions were selected as they emerged from the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and further strengthened by conceptualizations of coalitions from the ACF (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024; Weible et al., 2020) and interest group literature (Junk, 2016; Klüver, 2015; Nelson & Yackee, 2012). It is plausible, however, that other dimensions may have been overlooked. For example, coalitions in other policy areas or political systems might prominently feature other dimensions such as cohesion. Alternatively, dimensions used in this dissertation may not strongly feature in other contexts. It is unlikely, however, that other dimensions will overshadow the five selected given their broad conceptual underpinning. Yet, the structural dimensions would likely benefit from further fine tuning and revision.

Third, the category of concepts labelled legislative characteristics played a central part in understanding the formation and strategies of coalition types and assisted in overcoming the lack of conceptual development in the ACF. Nevertheless, proposing this conceptual category may lead to conceptual overload. However, its central place proved highly useful for probing and understanding the formation and strategies of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, particularly when coalition opportunity structures across political systems and policy areas remained relatively constant. Moreover, given the generic approach to the conceptual category, in that it dissects the characteristics of legislative proposals, the category may also prove useful in

other applications of the ACF and in explaining the dynamics of coalitions in other contexts. Lastly, as plausible a category, the legislative characteristics included in this dissertation should be tested and refined elsewhere. For example, other characteristics, such as the newness of the proposal, should be considered, and others included in this dissertation may be challenged.

Fourth, the concept of exceptional policy actors, in addition to legislative characteristics, played a decisive role in explaining the formation of the coalition types. Yet, this conceptualization merges three distinct exceptional actor roles: policy entrepreneurs, policy brokers, and actors that play both roles. Despite all three roles engage in coalition building, the strategies that each exceptional actor employs to do so are rather distinct. Policy entrepreneurs may push and frame ideas to create demand for their ideas and enlist actors within a coalition to advocate for such idea. Alternatively, policy brokers may engage in coalition building by promoting conciliatory policy solutions and subsequently connecting unlikely policy actors (Christopolous & Ingold, 2015). Such distinctive strategies may result in the formation of coalitions with specific structural dimensions. A coalition that includes a policy entrepreneur, for example, may be larger or have more authority. A coalition that involves a policy broker, on the other hand, may have more diverse members. Nevertheless, merging the three roles enabled meaningful results to be generated about the formation of coalition types (one of the core aims of the dissertation), whilst ensuring the number of concepts within the conceptual framework did not have diminishing effects on the QCA and number of conditions.

Fifth, and relatedly, although the evidence supports the relevance of legislative characteristics and exceptional policy actors for explaining the formation of coalition types; and the structural dimensions and legislative characteristics for explaining the selection of strategies, the precise relevance of the conceptual categories remains inherently ambiguous. The formation of coalition types is not solely determined by legislative characteristics, nor can it be attributed directly to the agency of exceptional policy actors. Rather the formation of most coalitions appears to result from the interplay between these factors. A similar pattern emerges with regards to coalition strategies. Although the structural dimensions of coalitions shape their overall strategy selection and strategic capacities, characteristics of legislative proposals also condition strategy selection. Yet, the findings in this dissertation do not allow for the explanatory power of these conceptual categories to be determined. Instead, they point to an interdependent relationship. This ambiguity reflects the complex nature of coalition dynamics in EU environmental policy processes and could be further disentangled, either through in-depth single case studies and process-tracing approaches or large-N approaches such as logistics regression. Doing so may highlight the interdependent

nature of the concepts, as suggested by this dissertation, or result in further conceptual refinement, principally how the concepts relate and interact with one another.

Overall, the dissertation makes three conceptual contributions to scholarship on coalitions in EU policymaking and the ACF. First, the dissertation proposes an updated conceptualization of the structure of coalitions, and utilizing the conceptualization, uncovers six types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes. To this end, it establishes a means to study the varied manifestations of coalitions under a single definition, leading to comparative insights regarding the formation, strategies, and influence of coalitions.

Second, the conceptual framework refines the ACF's conceptual category of short-term opportunities and constraints by introducing legislative characteristics. Within the ACF, coalition formation is typically explained through shared beliefs, exceptional policy actors, and coalition opportunity structures (Fischer, 2015; Henry, 2011; Ingold et al., 2025; Nohrstedt et al., 2023). Similarly, the ACF also stresses that the strategies of coalitions are implicated by the structural dimensions of coalitions and COS (Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025; Pierce, 2016; Nohrstedt, 2011). The overemphasis given to COS in explaining both the formation and strategies of coalitions, however, has led to the conceptual category of short-term opportunities and constraints, which is also considered to affect coalition dynamics, to be overlooked. Yet, since this dissertation examines coalitions within a single policy area of the same political system, COS in this dissertation is held relatively stable. To overcome the conceptual underdevelopment, the conceptual framework proposes a conceptualization of EU environmental legislation that accounts for their multiple characteristics. It is through this conceptualization that the dissertation specifies legislative characteristics, drawn primarily from interest group literature (Klüver et al., 2015; Mahoney, 2007), as a useful conceptual category that complements the ACF's short-term opportunities and constraints, which can be incorporated in future ACF studies. Subsequently, the conceptualization of the effect of legislative proposals on coalition dynamics advances a temporal logic, in which coalition dynamics are conditioned by contextual factors from the outset, here the characteristics of a drafted legislative text. In turn, the coalition dynamics then affect the final adopted legislation (Klüver, 2013). To this end, the findings contribute a finer-grained perspective to the notion that policies are the outcome of policymaking processes.

Third, and encasing the first two points, the conceptual framework is developed from a generic perspective of policy processes. It directs attention to the importance and interconnectedness of exceptional policy actors, the structural dimensions of coalitions, and legislative characteristics in unraveling the dynamics of coalitions (Lubell et al., 2012). To this end, the generic framework

implemented in this dissertation provides a strong starting point for the future study of coalitions within EU environmental policy processes, EU policy processes more broadly, and processes outside of the EU system.

3.2 Empirical reflections and contributions

Empirically, the findings sketch an animated landscape of coalition dynamics across five EU environmental policy processes. Nevertheless, four main reflections on the empirics are outlined.

First, the dissertation only sets out to explain the formation and strategies of coalition types. As a result, analyzing the influence of coalition types is beyond the scope of this research. This choice was made because the literature on coalitions in EU environmental policy processes tends to underrepresent such dynamics in favor of examining the influence of coalitions. Due to this inherent focus on influence, most studies to date are in-depth single case studies and identify coalitions to explain policy change, via their influence. What this means is that coalitions are very rarely the center of analytical focus or compared. Hence, there is still little understanding of what coalitions look like and how they are structurally composed, why they form, and why they employ certain strategies across EU environmental policy processes. This is where this dissertation fits in. Nevertheless, we still do not know which coalition types are the least and most influential and why. Despite being beyond the scope of the dissertation, throughout the analysis there are several indications that some coalition types, particularly the moderate authoritative, fragmented, and commanding coalitions, may be more influential. This is because the high authority and high level of activity that these coalition types exemplify are two key variables that have been highlighted as vital for coalitions to be influential in policy processes elsewhere (Elgin & Weible, 2013; Pierce, 2016; Nohrstedt, 2011). Hence, by understanding the structural dimensions of coalitions; the factors driving the formation of coalition types and thus the power dynamics within a policy process; the strategies employed and their rate of use as well as the enabling and constraining effect of contextual conditions outlined in the dissertation, initial expectations into the influence of each type can be generated and tested in future research.

Second, the five environmental policy processes provided a diverse foundation to identify coalitions and develop a coalition typology. The diverse set of policy processes, which guided the empirical analysis led to the identification of numerous coalitions, which strongly informed the coalition typology. In that sense, the typology is developed with confidence in that it captured many coalition types. Nevertheless, the creation of the typology is a first exploratory attempt. Hence, other coalition types in EU environmental policy may still be left undiscovered. Moreover, the rather unique context in which the EGD emerged may have also affected the participation and

coordination patterns among policy actors. The heightened ambition and momentum of the EGD, for example, may have led policy actors to coordinate with unlikely partners, resulting in the presence of certain coalitions not seen elsewhere. Relatedly, since the policy processes focused only on the environment policy area, it must be stressed that the typology is not a definitive taxonomy. Together, it would have been interesting to identify and examine coalitions in other EU environmental policy processes within the context of the EGD and under different contexts, such as the Eurozone crisis which sidelined environmental policy, as well as processes outside of the environment policy area or the EU political system.

Third, the exploratory nature guiding the dissertation and development of the typology provided challenges. Specifically, the low number of coalitions characterized as colossal, policy generalist, and commanding coalition gave rise to issues of limited diversity. This resulted in the empirical analyses related to the formation and strategies of these three coalition types to be constrained in their degree of explainability. Whilst remaining cognizant and adaptable to this challenge, the dissertation has still provided initial insights into explaining their formation and strategies, which can be further explored through additional in-depth case specific methods and tested in other policy processes.

Fourth, an interesting outcome from the analyses on the formation and strategies of coalition types related to the effect of public salience. Although tested for, public salience did not provide any meaningful effect on coalition formation in the QCA. Such non-effect was discussed by interviewees involved in the identified coalitions. Across the board, they denoted that their organization would participate in the policy process and engage in coalition building to influence the proposal if the proposal was going to affect them and their constituency, regardless of the public salience of the proposal. Yet, public salience emerged as a core factor in enabling and constraining the strategies employed by coalitions. This discrepancy sheds light on the varied levels of salience and its effects on the formation and strategies of coalition types. Whereby organizational salience seems to play a role in coalition formation and public salience alters coalition strategies. The diverging levels of salience is an aspect that has shown to have varying effects on the formation of interest group coalitions in EU policymaking (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018).

Despite these reflections, the dissertation contributes to building a comprehensive understanding of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes in three core ways. First and foremost, the identification of coalitions in five diverse EU environmental policy processes provides a systematic mapping of coalitions, illustrating their pervasiveness, fluidity, and in some instances, stability. In

doing so, the findings also highlight how EU environmental policy processes are structured by coalitions and demonstrate that EU environmental policy processes substantially vary regarding the range of policy actors, preferences, policy actor types, and coalitions active. To this end, a vibrant yet complex and contested landscape of EU environmental policymaking is painted. This landscape contributes to and builds upon existing scholarship on EU environmental policymaking. It complements research that tends to focus on the EU institutions (Burns & Tobin, 2020; Kreienkamp et al., 2022), including the Commission (Pollex & Lenschow, 2024; Steinebach & Knill, 2017), EP political groups (Burns, 2019; Buzogány & Četković, 2021), and member states (Bocquillon & Maltby, 2017; Rosamond & Dupont, 2021; Wurzel et al., 2019), as well as interest groups (Abel & Mertens, 2023; Fitch-Roy et al., 2020; Junk, 2016; Meckling, 2011) by providing a meso-level view to guide our understandings of EU environmental policymaking. Subsequently, the dissertation not only highlights the complex pluralistic nature of EU policymaking and broader balance of power beyond the auspices of the EU institutions, but also the legitimacy seeking efforts embedding in EU policy processes (Klüver, 2013).

Second, and relatedly, the dissertation shows that the structure of coalitions differs along several dimensions, resulting in distinct coalition types in EU environmental policy processes. Through these findings, the dissertation brings together the extant literature on coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, contributing insights into the types of coalitions in EU policymaking. The typology builds on the recommendations proposed by others (Fischer, 2015; Pierce et al., 2017; Weible et al., 2020). It is considered complementary to already established coalition typologies, such as the dominant and minority coalitions in the ACF (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2025), the strange bedfellow coalitions common to interest group literature (Beyers & De Bruycker, 2018), and the more traditional coalitions among member states (Huhe et al., 2018; Kaeding & Selck, 2005) and EP political groups (Hix et al., 2019). More concretely, the established typologies tend to dichotomize coalitions along a single dimension. Whereas dominant and minority coalitions are differentiated by their level of authority, strange bedfellow coalitions are determined by their membership diversity. Such dichotomization offers strong insights into the power balance of policy processes, in the case of dominant-minority coalitions and breadth of representation, particularly regarding strange bedfellow coalitions. The typology developed in this dissertation, however, aims to provide a finer grained description of coalitions under a single definition and provides analytical categories that can be mobilized for comparing coalition dynamics across policymaking contexts. Such descriptions can be leveraged to understand how moments of learning, policy change, and coalition behavior and interactions in the policy process, as well as changes in contextual conditions, for example, shape and reshape the structure and

dynamics of coalitions (Weible et al., 2020). Uncovering these structural similarities and differences and the types of coalitions present in EU environmental policy processes thus proposes a path forward for the comparative analysis of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and beyond (Fischer, 2015; Pierce et al., 2017; Weible et al., 2020).

Third, new evidence regarding the formation and strategies of coalition types is advanced. Through the QCA, it is uncovered that no single condition drives the formation of coalitions. Instead, coalitions of the same and different types emerge not only by overarching combinations of conditions, but intricate pathways comprised of legislative characteristics and the role of exceptional policy actors. As such, the results add to a growing body of literature on the drivers of coalition formation. By examining the combination of legislative characteristics and actor level drivers of coalition formation, the dissertation complements prior findings that show coalition formation is altered by institutional differences across policy areas within the same political system (Fischer, 2015) and across political systems (Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025). The dissertation also provides insights into the variety of strategies and array of activities coalitions conduct. Through the two-step comparative analysis, it suggests such strategies are enabled and constrained by both the coalitions structural dimensions and the characteristics of the legislative proposals. Accordingly, the findings build on scholarship examining the individual effects of the structural dimensions of coalitions (Nelson & Yackee, 2012; Vesa et al., 2020; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019) and contextual factors (Gupta, 2014; Gupta et al., 2025; He et al., 2025) on coalition strategy selection by bringing the two sets of concepts together into a single analysis. Together, the results build upon a nascent body of work examining coalitions in causally complex policy processes (Fischer, 2014, 2015; Fischer & Maggetti, 2017) and complement current insights into the influence of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes (Bosce, 2021; Szarka, 2010; van Overveld et al., 2010; von Malmborg, 2021, 2023; Ydersbond, 2018).

3.3 Methodological reflections and contributions

The dissertation developed a three-stage sequential mixed-method research design to identify coalitions, create a typology, and explain the formation and strategies of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes. In the first stage, SNA and content analysis enabled a structured approach to identify coalitions present in the processes related to the Climate Law, CBAM, RED, Sustainable Batteries, and JTF proposals. The identified coalitions were then characterized along the five structural dimensions, and through a PCA the coalitions were grouped into structurally differing coalition types. The typology informed stages two and three of the research, which employed an abductive approach to uncover plausible explanatory factors. The second stage

utilized QCA to uncover the combinations of conditions driving the formation of each coalition type. The third stage drew on a cross-coalition type and within-coalition type comparative analysis to identify and correlate the factors enabling and constraining the coalition types' capacity to employ certain strategies. This rather extensive and detailed design merits reflection and the contribution that it makes.

Overall, the research design enabled a thorough and integrated analysis of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. Nevertheless, three points require reflection. First, the choice of data needs to be acknowledged, especially regarding the SNA and the identification of coordination patterns between policy actors. The SNA conducted in the dissertation relied primarily on a variety of documents to identify instances of coordination between policy actors and their preferences. Nevertheless, another common and useful approach to identifying coordination patterns and preferences, as input for SNA, is via survey data. Here to identify coalitions the key actors in each of the processes would be identified and surveyed to map who they coordinated and which coalitions they were apart of. While a useful method of data collection, utilizing documents mitigated the challenges of accessing people affiliated with EU institutions and non-EU institutions (Princen, 2015) and the possibility of low responses rates and missing data. Documents also enabled the reconstruction of a fuller picture of each policy process, in terms of the participating policy actors and their coordination patterns, particularly overtime. Here, the use of interviews to (dis)confirm the coalition identification (outcome of the SNA), provided assurance in the documents as a data source.

Second, other methods could have been used for analyzing the formation of coalition types. Due to the exploratory identification and characterization of coalitions, an undetermined number of coalitions and coalition types were selected from the outset. Upon the completion of stage one, having identified 59 coalitions opened the possibility of using QCA or logistic regression to explain the formation of coalition types (Glaesser, 2024; Grofman & Schneider, 2009). Although logistic regression is useful for assessing correlations and the precise effects of independent variables on dependent variables, QCA provided a better fit for the dissertation. QCA offers a more detailed analysis of the data and produces a more nuanced picture regarding the role of conditions in producing an outcome. This serves itself particularly useful in the study of policy processes, which are inherently complex themselves (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017; Thomann & Ege, 2020). Teasing out the interaction effects for various combinations of the five conditions on the formation of coalition types through a regression would have proved challenging, particularly due to the modest number of coalitions identified. Nevertheless, due to the medium-N number of coalitions, gaining

a closeness to all cases of coalitions proved extremely challenging and limited the depth to which the pathways driving the formation of some coalition types could be unpacked. This raises questions around the trade-offs between QCA and more statistical approaches when faced with a medium-N number of cases (Grofman & Schneider, 2009). Additionally, SNA and QCA both stem from the notion of complexity and are techniques that sit in the middle of the quantitative/qualitative divide, reinforcing the pragmatic methodological pluralist epistemology adopted in the dissertation (Fischer, 2011; Giraud & Maggetti, 2015).

Third, choices made for the QCA to deal with the challenge of limited diversity that stemmed from the identification and typology require further elaboration. Crisp-set QCA was chosen over fuzzy-set QCA. This choice was made because all conditions, apart from the complexity and scope of a legislative proposal, and the outcome are conceived as dichotomous. Adopting a fuzzy-set QCA would, therefore, not have provided much additional benefit to the analysis. Moreover, the conservative solution was chosen over the intermediate or parsimonious solutions. The conservative solution offered detailed descriptive results and assisted in overcoming the under theorization of the relationship between the legislative characteristics and the in/exclusion of exceptional policy actors, or combinations thereof, and the formation of coalitions (Fischer & Maggetti, 2017; Glaesser, 2023). Yet, adopting the complex solution made it difficult for theoretical interpretation and abstraction to be made, and thus for external generalization (Oana et al., 2021). The results derived from the analysis should, therefore, be further tested and carefully generalized within EU policymaking processes as well as outside of the EU context.

Nonetheless, the research design and methodological choices made in the dissertation contribute to the ongoing scholarship on coalitions in EU environmental policy processes and coalitions more broadly. The dissertation advances a practical and transparent step-by-step guide for the identification and characterization of coalitions as well as for the analysis of the formation and strategies of coalitions (Fischer, 2014, 2015; Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025; Ingold, 2011; Pierce et al., 2016). The dissertation also sheds light on the complementarity of several analytical methods, such as the linkages between SNA and PCA to produce insights into the identification of coalitions and the types present, and between SNA and QCA to explain the formation of coalition types (Fischer, 2015). Both combinations of analytical methods, although not completely new, and the step-by-step guide provide a point of departure for studying coalitions in other EU (environmental) policy processes, in non-EU policy process contexts, and at different levels of governance.

3.4 Applicability & generalizability of findings

This subsection discusses the applicability of the typology (chapter 6) and the generalizability of the findings pertaining to the formation (chapter 7) and strategies (chapter 8) of coalition types. Three axes of generalizability are advanced: beyond the context of the EGD; beyond the field of EU environmental policy; and beyond the EU political system.

The typology developed and presented in chapter 6 is applicable to EU environmental policy processes embedded in contexts outside of the EGD, to other policy fields beyond environmental policy that engage with the EU OLP, and to other democratic political systems. The dimensions informing the typology are conceptually developed primarily from the ACF and literature on interest groups, which are not environment or EU specific. Hence, coalitions identified beyond each of the three axes may also be characterized along the same five structural dimensions advanced in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the typology is exploratory in nature. The coalitions identified to inform the construction of the typology were only uncovered in five EU environmental policy processes. Although the five processes were selected based on their diversity to capture as many coalitions and coalition types as possible, it is highly likely that other coalition types may have not yet been uncovered. Given this, the typology is not a definitive taxonomy. It should be further refined, tested, and potentially expanded upon by applying it to other policy processes within the EU and other democratic political systems.

The findings on the formation of coalition types are foreseen to travel to other EU environmental policy processes beyond the EGD context as well as to other EU policy fields that follow the OLP. The findings, however, may not carry to other political systems. First, there is no reason to believe that the factors driving the formation of coalition types uncovered in the findings will not travel to EU environmental policy processes embedded in different contexts, such as the current industrial competitiveness context. The driving factors, namely legislative characteristics and exceptional policy actors, are not considered to be of an entirely different nature across EU environmental policy processes. Hence, the drivers of coalition type formation should hold irrespective of the broader context. Second, the findings are relevant for the study of coalition formation in other EU policy fields. Building on the above argument, EU environmental policymaking involves multiple levels of governance and is mainly steered through the OLP. The OLP engages a multi-level constellation of actors and incorporates the key roles of the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament, and their interactions with agencies and non-state actors, such as environmental NGOs, interest associations, and businesses (Delreux & Happaerts, 2016). In that sense, EU environmental policy under the OLP captures similar policy process dynamics that

occur across several policy fields, including similar legislative proposal characteristics, institutional balances of power, and venues (Blom-Hansen et al., 2025; Heidbreder & Brandsma, 2017; Laloux & Delreux, 2021; von Malmborg, 2025). The ability for the findings to travel to all EU policy fields, nevertheless, may be constrained, to an extent. For example, in policy fields which have very close links to concerns of national sovereignty, such as migration policy, the institutional balance of power lie much more in the hands of the member states. Thus, the role of the Commission, the EP, and societal actors shifts (Ripoll Servent & Arnoux Bellavitis, 2026; Zaun, 2022; Zaun & Ripoll Servent, 2023). Given the centrality of member states, the formation of coalition types in such policy areas may be driven by factors other than legislative characteristics and exceptional policy actors. Third, due to the specificities of the OLP, as highlighted above, the constellation of policy actors and their coordination patterns may differ in political systems outside the EU. Thus, the impact of the drivers uncovered in this dissertation may not travel beyond the EU political system. Whether and how the results hold beyond the three axes remain to be explored in future studies.

The findings on the strategies of each coalition type are relevant for the study of these coalition types beyond each of the three axes. Given that the coalition type has formed in a policy process, the strategies that each type conducts is not foreseen to alter, irrespective of the EGD context or policy field, given that it follows the OLP. This is because the strategies adopted by the coalition types are primarily enabled and constrained by their structural dimensions and are provided similar opportunities regarding the kinds of venues and their relative openness throughout the policy process. What might alter their strategies, as also uncovered in the results, is the landscape of the policy process they have formed in. As the results illustrate, the coalition types do have the capacity to slightly adapt their strategy to the policy process as shaped by the character of the legislative proposal. Yet, they don't adapt too much. Given the primary enabling and constraining effects of a coalition types' structural dimensions for its advocacy strategy, the findings are also relevant beyond the EU political system. The EU has been touted as a 'hyperconsensual' polity (Gravey & Jordan, 2016) and likened to a federal and democratic systems (Kreisi et al., 2006). Therefore, the findings on the strategies of coalition types should also travel to other democratic systems such as Australia (Downie & Halpin, 2025; Hopkinson et al., 2025) or Switzerland (Fischer, 2015; Ingold & Fischer, 2014). In that sense, the findings may not be as relevant for understanding coalition strategies in non-democratic systems as the strategies coalition types adopted in this dissertation may not be as conducive to such settings.

3.5 Situating the dissertation in broader debates

This section has outlined key reflections on the choices made throughout the dissertation and several contributions that the dissertation makes. These contributions fit within the literature on coalitions in EU (environmental) policymaking, the ACF, and environmental policymaking and politics.

First, the dissertation adds a fresh perspective on coalitions in EU environmental policymaking and balances a literature that inherently focuses on the influence of coalitions and policy change. Accordingly, it brings together a rather fragmented literature, re-conceptualizes the structure of a coalition, and develops a typology. Applying the typology, the dissertation illustrates that coalitions are not homogenous but emerge in a limited range of types that structurally differ in meaningful ways. These structural differences are a result of complex combinations of contextual and agency conditions, and have implications on the formation of coalitions, the strategies they employ, and their potential influence.

Second, the dissertation situates itself within the ACF literature, particularly regarding coalition formation and coalition strategies. By comparing and explaining the formation of coalition types in policy processes within the same policy area, linkages between the characteristics of legislative proposals, the agency of exceptional policy actors, and coalition formation are uncovered. As such, the dissertation builds on current debates, which explain coalition formation through changes in macro-level institutions across countries (Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025) or policy areas (Fischer, 2015). Similarly, the dissertation provides a complementary perspective to the study of coalition strategies. By incorporating and correlating many structural dimensions and legislative characteristics to strategy choice, it expands the purview of the factors affecting a coalition's choice of strategy beyond coalition opportunity structures (Gupta, 2014; He et al., 2025) and certain individual structural dimensions (Pierce, 2016; Weiler & Reißmann, 2019). In establishing these linkages, the dissertation offers support to the complex interrelations between structure and agency when examining the meso-level of policymaking (Lubell et al., 2012) and provides a glimpse into the relationship between policy feedback effects on the formation of coalitions and the strategies they employ (Roberts et al., 2018; Schmid et al., 2020).

Third, the dissertation adds nuance to scholarship on EU environmental politics and contributes to broader discussions around the participation and legitimacy of environmental policymaking in and outside the EU. By adopting a meso-level analytical lens to study coalitions in EU environmental policy processes, the dissertation accompanies scholarship that adopts macro-institutional and actor-centric perspectives. It demonstrates that EU environmental policy

processes are not identical but involve the participation of a broad array of policy actors, and varying degrees of coalition building and advocacy tactics, which impact the EU's environmental policy progress. As such, the meso-level perspective paints a vibrant picture of EU environmental policymaking. It not only reacts to calls for more systematic comparative analysis on a wider range of actors across environmental policy processes (Boasson et al., 2022), but embeds itself in broader discussions on the legitimacy and democratic deficit of EU environmental policymaking (Buzogány et al., 2025; Rosamond & Dupont, 2025; Skjaerseth, 2010; Tosun et al., 2023) and the evolution of environmental policy participation in other political contexts (Downie & Halpin, 2025; Trachtman et al., 2024).

4. Societal contributions

The dissertation also provides four contributions to the public and practitioner's understanding of EU environmental policymaking. First, the systematic mapping of coalitions operating in EU environmental policy processes provides an insight into which policy actors have participated, who they are coordinating with, what coalitions have emerged, and what they have advocated for. Such knowledge enables the public and practitioners to understand and generate expectations as to who may participate and how in future EU environmental policy processes. To this end, practitioners aiming to participate in future EU environmental policymaking are able to reflect on these findings to guide their future advocacy strategies. For example, practitioners may seek to engage with likeminded others, aim to bridge across or merge coalitions to shift the balance of power, or even coordinate with unlikely partners.

Second, the findings on the formation of coalition types shed light on the conditions that shape the emergence of different coalition types. By highlighting these conditions driving the formation of certain coalition types, practitioners can generate expectations as to what types of coalitions should emerge in future processes that share similar legislative characteristics, and thus comprehend the underlying power dynamics structuring a policy process. For example, if similar conditions to that of the process linked to the RED are identified, it could be expected that one or more commanding coalitions will form and potentially dominate the policy process. With such an understanding, practitioners could shape their advocacy strategy around such power structures. The findings also highlight the key role of exceptional policy actors in coalition building, whereby coalitions that include an exceptional policy actor tend to emerge as relatively more structurally comprehensive. This, in turn, may result in such coalitions having more success in translating their preferences into the legislative proposal. Hence, practitioners should aim to form in and engage

with a coalition either by taking on an exceptional policy actor role themselves, if resources permit, or identifying and coordinating with like-minded exceptional policy actors.

Third, by uncovering the strategies and activities coalitions conduct, the findings show that coalitions have multiple activities lying in their arsenal which can be activated during the policy process. Yet, apart from the fragmented and commanding coalitions, most coalitions do not utilize the full range of activities available to them or use them at a high rate. Practitioners in coalitions developing an advocacy strategy should, therefore, draw on the insights of the dissertation to exploit a larger range of activities. Diversifying the range of activities and having a more extensive strategy may result in greater advocacy success. Relatedly, the findings also highlighted that coalitions that had a large and heterogeneous membership and internally coordinated more intensely were not only able to conduct a broader range of activities, but they were also able to do so with more intensity. In this regard, practitioners looking to build a coalition or are already in a coalition and that want to implement a diverse strategy via a high usage of activities should look to build a coalition that resembles the structure of a fragmented or commanding coalition. Moreover, the dissertation provides insights into the enabling and constraining conditions that shape the strategies of coalitions. By highlighting these conditions, practitioners are able to identify the characteristics of legislative proposals in current or future negotiations and create ways to benefit from and mitigate against such factors when planning their advocacy strategies.

Fourth, the findings of the dissertation illustrate that the design of proposals shape the contours of the policy process, affecting the participation and coordination of policy actors, as well as the formation and strategies of coalitions. Policymakers should, therefore, remain conscious when designing legislative proposals. Depending on their design, the proposals may not only have implications on the patterns of representation and the perceived legitimacy of the policy, among other impacts (Fernández-i-Marín et al., 2021; Fesenfeld, 2022; Hurka et al., 2025; Hurka & Steinebach, 2026), but it may also create policy processes conducive of driving a contested coalition landscape affecting the progress of the EU's environmental policy (Meckling et al., 2015; Trachtman et al., 2025).

5. Future research avenues

The findings of the dissertation suggest several avenues for future research. One of the core tenants of the dissertation is the development of a typology of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes. Yet, as a first exploratory attempt developed from coalitions identified in five EU environmental policy processes, the typology should be further tested and refined. To do so, the typology could be applied to other EU environmental policy processes either within or outside the

EGD context. Testing the typology in other environmental processes and with alternating contexts may solidify the current typology, uncover additional types of coalitions, and potentially expose types which are specific to the policy processes focused on in this dissertation. For instance, moderate authoritative coalitions are the most populous in these five processes. This, however, may change as other processes reveal the presence of additional coalition types. Likewise, commanding or colossal coalitions may end up being specific to only certain processes as only two of each coalition type are identified. The typology was also developed in a generic way with intentions for it to travel outside of EU environmental policy. As such, scholars should also aim to apply the typology to other policy areas of the EU, such as economic and monetary policy, technology policy, and trade policy, as well as to other political systems beyond the EU.

The typology also intends to assist in unravelling the formation and strategy selection of coalitions across policy processes. Nevertheless, the analysis of other coalition dynamics such as change overtime, influence, and success, were outside the scope of this dissertation. Given the typology enables systematic descriptions and comparisons of the structure of coalitions, scholars could analyze how and why certain coalitions change over time, across policy processes, and in response to internal or external events. For example, it may be identified that a coalition increases its coordination intensity, diversifies its membership, or enhances its authority, transforming from one type to another, overtime. Such changes may be found to be triggered by actors within a coalition engaging in policy-oriented learning or seeking to gain more influence during a policy process. Moreover, given recurring revisions and relations between EU legislative proposals, the typology could be deployed to examine the impact of policy feedback effects or the nested nature of policymaking processes on coalitions (Brandenberger et al., 2022; Meckling & Goedeking, 2023; Schmid et al., 2020). Similarly, the typology could also help examine how an external crisis or critical juncture may alter the structure of a coalition, and how and why coalitions adapt to such crisis. Finally, as previously mentioned, the dissertation provides the basis for developing preliminary hunches regarding the success of coalitions and their ability to invoke policy change. To this end, researchers could examine the degrees of success among coalition types, uncovering the interaction between the structural dimensions of coalitions, contextual factors, and influence (Nohrstedt & Heinmiller, 2024).

In applying the typology, the dissertation developed a generic conceptual framework and subsequently generated explanations pertaining to the formation and strategies of coalition types. Given the generic framework, the findings and underlying mechanisms identified are foreseen to travel beyond the five EU environmental policy processes. Accordingly, three avenues for future

research emerge from the results on coalition formation. First, researchers could test the applicability of the identified legislative characteristics on the formation of certain coalition types in other policy processes either within environmental policy or elsewhere. This could reinforce or challenge the findings of this dissertation and provide additional insights into the formation of coalition types. By testing the effect of legislative characteristics, additional theoretical insights that connect coalitions and their context may be developed. This could further enhance the conceptual framework and build on a nascent body of literature linking coalition formation and contextual conditions (Fischer, 2015; Ingold et al., 2017; Ingold et al., 2025; Satoh et al., 2025). Second, the pivotal role of exceptional policy actors in the formation of coalitions in EU environmental policy processes guides future research to unpack their agency in coalition building processes. Through in-depth case studies and process tracing approaches, for example, future studies could examine how and why exceptional policy actors precisely engage in coalition building. In doing so, mechanisms driving the formation of certain coalition types that require an exceptional policy actor can be uncovered. Such mechanisms could then be compared to identify how and why such actors may build a policy generalist coalition rather than a fragmented coalition, for example. This may also assist in disentangling the agency and strategies of policy brokers and policy entrepreneurs in the coalition building process, which was abstracted in the QCA. Through such analysis, contextual factors, such as the legislative characteristics should also be accounted for to link agency and context into the study of coalition formation (Lubell et al., 2012). Third, to explain the formation of coalitions, an innovative combination of methods, primarily focusing on SNA and QCA, was mobilized. This novel approach not only confirms the mutual benefit of SNA and QCA (Fischer, 2011, 2015), but paves the way forward for its future use, particularly in examining coalitions across contexts and accounting for the causal complexity of policy processes.

In terms of examining the strategies of coalition types, two related avenues for future research are posited. The results that emerged from the analysis on the strategies of coalitions uncovered key structural dimensions and legislative characteristics that enabled and constrained the activities and strategies of coalition types. Although the dissertation sought to bridge two conceptual categories, the dissertation does not fully integrate the two but shows that neither are deterministic to a coalition's strategy selection. To build on such insights, future research should conduct in-depth studies and apply statistical approaches to strengthen or challenge these findings. First, in-depth case studies of coalitions within a single policy process could link the mechanisms between the factors that enable and constrain coalitions to employ a given strategy. By linking the categories of factors, researchers can bridge the conceptual divide that stands out in the literature,

uncover the relations between the categories, and provide a more systematic understanding of coalition strategy selection. Second, because of the medium-N number of coalitions identified and limited diversity in the number of coalitions identified per coalition type, the dissertation was somewhat limited in applying statistical approaches. To establish systematic correlations between the categories of factors and coalition strategy selection, future researchers could identify additional coalitions of a given type and test the effect of the categories through statistical approaches such as QCA or logistic regressions. Through such approaches, the relevance of both sets of factors can be examined, resulting in further refinement of the conceptual framework the dissertation is guided by. In the end, the objective in developing the conceptual framework was to progress scholarship on understanding the formation and strategies of coalition types in and across EU environmental policy processes and hopefully beyond the auspices of EU environmental policy and the EU political system.

The shift from the pinnacles of environmental ambition embodied in the EGD to the current context marked by intensifying green backlash, heightened geopolitical competition over the energy transition, and the EU's reframing of environmental policy to industrial competitiveness, provides a fertile backdrop for the ongoing analysis of coalitions in EU environmental policymaking. Because of this shift, new policy actors may enter the policy process, others may fade away, and patterns of coordination and competition are likely to be reconfigured or hardened, giving rise to new coalitions and coalitional dynamics. Examining coalitional dynamics under this shifting context may provide key insights into how political contestation evolves and enables or constrains EU environmental policy change. The findings of this dissertation hopefully provide a useful perspective for future research to understand this changing context and shed light on the mechanisms through which ambitious environmental policy is championed or environmental policy obstruction prevail, within and beyond the EU.

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Supplementary Information

Chapter 4: Research Design

Legislative proposal selection: universe of legislative proposals and measures

Legislation	Lead DG	Lead Council	Lead EP Com	Scope	New/Rev	Reg/ Dir/ Dec	Length Months	Salience	Search terms
Just Transition Fund	Regional and Urban Policy	Environment	REGI	Narrow	New	Reg	18	164	"Just Transition Fund"
European Climate Law	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Broad	New	Reg	16	222	"Climate Law"
Corporate Sustainability Reporting	FISMA	Competitiveness Council	JURI	Narrow	Revised	Directive	20	47	"sustainability reporting"
8 th Environmental Action Programme	Environment	Environment	ENVI	Broad	Revised	Decision	18	24	"environmental action programme"
Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism	Taxation and Customs Union	ECOFIN	ENVI	Narrow	New	Reg	23	168	"carbon border adjustment mechanism"
Public Sector Loan Facility under the Joint Transition Mechanism	Regional and Urban Policy	Environment	BUDG & ECON	Narrow	New	Reg	14	7	"public sector loan facility"
LULUCF	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Reg	22	79	"lulucf"
Effort Sharing Regulation	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Broad	Revised	Reg	22	64	"effort sharing regulation"
CO2 emission performance standards for cars and vans	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Reg	23	82	"cars and vans"
Revision of ETS	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Broad	Revised	Directive	23	47	"revision of ETS" "ETS 2"
Aarhus Regulation on access to justice in environmental matters	Environment	Environment	ENVI	Broad	Revised	Reg	12	29	"aarhus regulation"
Revision of Annexes IV and V of the Regulations on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Environment	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Reg	14	44	"persistent organic pollutants"
Statistics on agricultural input and output	Agriculture	Special Committee on Agriculture	AGRI	Narrow	Revised	Reg	22	0	"statistics on agricultural input and output"
EU Batteries Regulation	Environment	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Regulation	32	60	"Batteries regulation"
Minimizing the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with products placed on the EU market	Environment	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Regulation	18	36	"global deforestation" (AE) & "anti-deforestation" (ENDS)

TEN-E for Energy Infrastructure	Energy	Energy	ITRE	Broad	Revised	Regulation	18.5	67	"TEN-E regulation"
Emissions Trading for aviation	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Directive	23	18	"aviation in the emissions trading system" "aviation emissions"
EU ETS Market Stability Reserve	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Decision	23.5	41	"Market Stability Reserve"
Social Climate Fund	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI & EMPL	Narrow	Revised	Regulation	22	94	"social climate fund"
Notification on the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme from International Aviation	Climate Action	Environment	ENVI	Narrow	Revised	Decision	18	80	"CORSA"
Inclusion of improved stability requirements for ro-ro passenger ships	Mobility and Transport	Transport	TRAN	Narrow	Revised	Directive	15	4	"passenger ships"
Gas Storage Regulation	Energy	Energy	ITRE	Narrow	New	Regulation	³ *expedited procedure	21	"gas storage regulation" "gas storage"
Recovery and Resilience Facility	Secretariat-General	General Affairs	BUDG & ECON	Broad	Revised	Regulation	9.5	73	"recovery and resilience facility"
Fuel EU Maritime - Sustainable maritime fuels	Climate Action	Transport	TRAN	Narrow	Revised	Regulation	26	48	"FuelEU Maritime"
ReFuelEU Aviation	Climate Action	Transport	TRAN	Narrow	New	Regulation	27.5	47	"refuelEU aviation"
Framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport	Mobility and Transport	Transport	TRAN	Narrow	Revised	Directive	23	40	"intelligent transport systems"
Revision of Energy Efficiency Directive	Energy	Energy	ITRE	Broad	Revised	Directive	26	79	"energy efficiency directive"
Revision of Renewable Energy Directive	Energy	Energy	ITRE	Broad	Revised	Directive	27.5	244	"renewable energy directive"
Revision of the Directive on Deployment of Alternative Fuels Infrastructure	Mobility and Transport	Transport	TRAN	Narrow	Revised	Directive	26	66	"alternative fuels" "alternative fuels infrastructure"
Conversion of the farm accountancy data network to a farm Sustainability Data Network	Agriculture and Rural Development	Special Committee on Agriculture	AGRI	Narrow	Revised	Regulation	17	1	"farm sustainability" "farm sustainability network"
REPowerEU plan legislative proposal	Energy	Energy	ITRE	Broad	To amend: RRF EPB EEF RED	Directive	23	129	"repowerEU" "repowerEU plan"

Interview guides and visual aids

Interview guide 1: exploratory interviews

Question 1

- a) From your experience of following the most recent revision of the [enter process here], can you recall who the most influential actors during the negotiations and outline who they worked with?
- b) From your perspective, how do you think these groups of policy actors came to work together?
- c) Thinking about these groups that you have identified, can you explain how they influenced the negotiations?

Question 2

I am also wanting to examine when during the policymaking process groups emerge.

- a) So, looking at the timeline of the revision of the [process], can you recall when, approximately, the groups you have mentioned worked together most intensely?
- b) Secondly, are there any other key events that you consider important in the [process]?

Question 3

My research is also trying to examine the types of activities that groups carry out together.

- a) From what you have witnessed in your reporting, can you explain some of the more public activities that these groups carried out?
- b) In addition to public activities, we know that policy actors also work together behind closed doors. From what you have covered, can you recall the types of private activities that were carried out between policy actors within these groups?
- c) When you were covering this, did you notice if the activities conducted by the groups changed?
- d) Can you recall how these changes may have come about?

Question 4

Finally, as I am at the start of the interviewing process for my project, I am trying to get an insight into the best word(s) used by policy actors regarding coordination/working together.

- a) So, I was wondering, when you interview or talk to such policy actors in your work, say someone in at an NGO or in the European Parliament, what have you found to be the best terms to use, when asking about with who they have worked with?

Question 5

- a) Can you recommend any other journalists who have followed the negotiations as closely as you, who you could put me in contact with or who I should reach out to?

Interview guide 2: explanatory interviews

Legislative Issues and Preferences (see handout 1)
1. From the list of the most contentious issues I have identified during the making of the [policy process] – do you agree with my assessment? Are there any issues you would add or remove? 2. For each of the contentious issues noted, can you please describe the positions of the following [DGs, EP Groups, Member States] that have been identified? 3. From your experience, could you explain the type of role these DGs played? Did they try to steer policy actors or act as a broker? Or did they side with any organizations or coalitions?
Coalitions Identified (see handout 2)
Considering coalitions are groups of policy actors that work together to influence policymaking. Based on this definition, I have mapped and identified varying coalitions. 1. Looking at the coalitions of policy actors that I have uncovered during the making of the [policy process] – do you agree with my assessment? Are there any coalitions missing? Or policy actors that should be included in the coalitions? 2. Could you please identify the most influential coalitions? And some of the least influential?
Activities and Strategies (see handout 3)
I would now like to know more about the activities and strategies of these coalitions identified above - 1. Can you describe some of the strategies and main joint activities that 1 or 2 of the identified coalitions conducted? Were they normal or unusual? 2. How do you think the coalition(s) decided on these strategies and activities? Did the size or the amount of resources the coalitions have enable certain activities or strategies more than others? 3. Looking at the timeline, when did the coalition(s) work together most intensely? Is there any key moment(s) that come to mind? 4. Did you notice if the coalition(s) changed how they worked together? Did the types of activities they conduct change, or the frequency of their activities change? 5. Can you recall any reasons as to why these changes may have occurred? (did the make-up of the coalitions change? Was it due to an extreme event - energy crisis or Covid-19; a vote in Parliament or Council; an MEP resigning)
Legislative Characteristics: Salience
I am also interested in understanding the impact of certain factors of the [policy process], such as the level of media attention the legislation receives, on how coalitions identified have formed (ie. has it influenced the size of the coalitions, frequency of working together, or seeking powerful/knowledgeable others). 1. The [policy process/proposal] is a file that is considered to have relatively low/high media attention – how do you think this has impacted the way the coalitions have formed?

- a) Do you think it has affected the size of the coalitions? Has it driven policy actors to work in larger groups? Or with greater numbers of other organizations?
- b) Do you think it has affected which types of organizations work together? Were there any unlikely partners or groups? (NGO – Business for example)
- c) Do you think it may have led policy actors to try and work with other powerful or knowledgeable organizations?
- d) To what extent do you think it has impacted how frequent policy actors within the coalitions worked with one another? Have they worked together more often?

Legislative Characteristics: Complexity

1. The [policy process/proposal] is a file that is considered low/high complex – how do you think this has impacted the way the coalitions have formed? (has it influenced the size of the coalitions, frequency of working together, or seeking powerful/knowledgeable others)
 - a) Do you think the high level of complexity has affected the size of the coalitions? Has it driven policy actors to work in larger groups? Or with more numbers of other organizations?
 - b) Do you think it has affected which types of organizations work together? Were there any unlikely partners or groups? (NGO – Business for example)
 - c) Do you think the high level of complexity has led policy actors to try and work with other powerful or knowledgeable organizations, with like-minded others, or with unlikely partners?
 - d) To what extent do you think the high level of complexity has impacted how frequently organizations within the coalitions worked with one another? Have they worked together more often?

Legislative Characteristics: Newness

1. The [policy process/proposal] is a new/revised file – how do you think that this has impacted the way the coalitions have formed? (has it influenced the size of the coalitions, frequency of working together, or seeking powerful/knowledgeable others)
 - a) Do you think the fact that the [process/proposal] is new/revised has affected the size of the coalitions? Has it driven policy actors to work in larger groups? Or with more numbers of other organizations?
 - b) Do you think it has affected which types of organizations work together? Were there any unlikely partners or groups? (NGO – Business for example)
 - c) Do you think that the fact that the file is revised may have led policy actors to try and work with other powerful or knowledgeable organizations, with like-minded others, or with unlikely partners?
 - d) To what extent do you think the newness of the file has impacted how frequent policy actors within the coalitions worked with one another? Have you noticed that they have worked more or less frequently?

Legislative Characteristics: Additional characteristics

Can you think of any other factors that may have impacted how the coalitions formed or how policy actors worked together during the negotiations?

(eg. Beneficiary scope – select group/public; Policy type – directive, regulatory, distributive, redistributive; Role of lead DG ENER or Council Presidencies)

Conclusion

1. Is there anything you would like to add?
2. Can you recommend someone else who has followed the negotiations as closely as you, who I should reach out to?

Visual aid 1: Contested issues

Climate Law

Climate Law: Contested Issues	Additional Issues
2050 Climate Neutrality	
2030 Target	
EU-wide or Individual MS target	
Target Review Mechanism – OLP or Delegated Acts	
Timeline for review of target (ie 5-years, 3-years)	
Use of greenhouse gas budget to set target	
Transition Assistance: Enabling Framework and/or additional funding	
Creating a Scientific Advisory Board	
Inclusion of the Energy Efficiency First Principle	

CBAM

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Contested Issues	Additional Issues
Preferred instrument for Carbon Leakage	
Phase out of Free Emissions Allowances	
Expand sectors covered in CBAM	
CBAM should include: - Chemicals - Fertilizer products - Hydrogen - Steel products - Electricity - Aluminum products	
CBAM revenues should be used towards: - vulnerable countries transitions - Green investments in Europe	
CBAM should exempt: - EU exporters - Least Developed Countries	
CBAM implementation timeline	
Monitoring, reporting, and verification system (centralized or member states)	
Compliance with WTO	

RED

Renewable Energy Directive: Contested Issues	Additional Issues
Overall RED target	
Sectoral targets: - Industry sector target - Building sector target - Transport sector target - Heating and cooling target	
EU-wide or member state level targets	
Permitting rules & Go-to areas	
Biofuels: - Biogas - Biomass ▪ Phase-out of biomass subsidies ▪ Sustainability criteria ▪ Cascading principle	
Hydro-power incentives	
Additionality principle	
Guarantees of origin implemented in directive	
Recycling and Waste	
Cross-border collaboration mechanism	

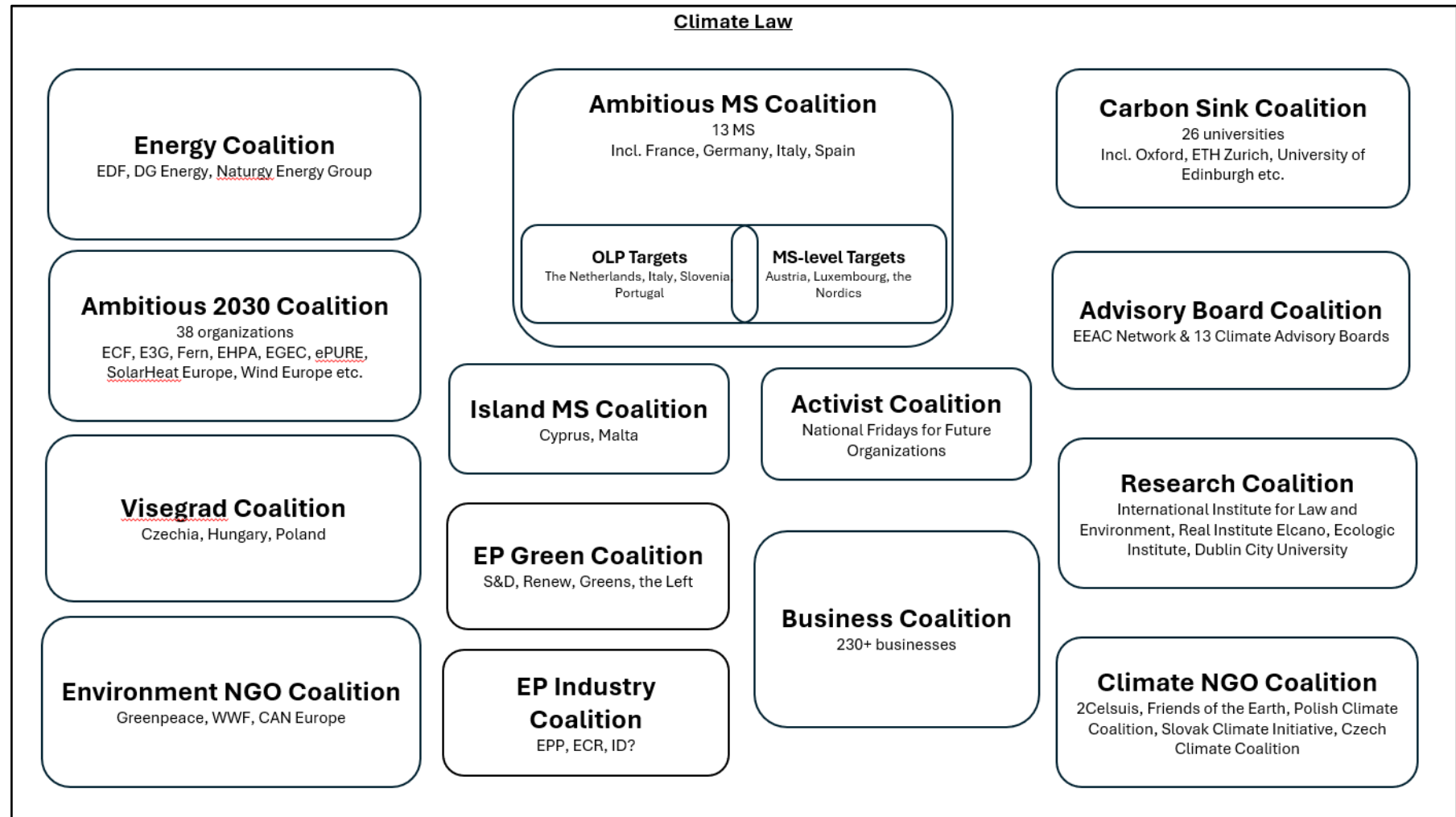
Sustainable Batteries

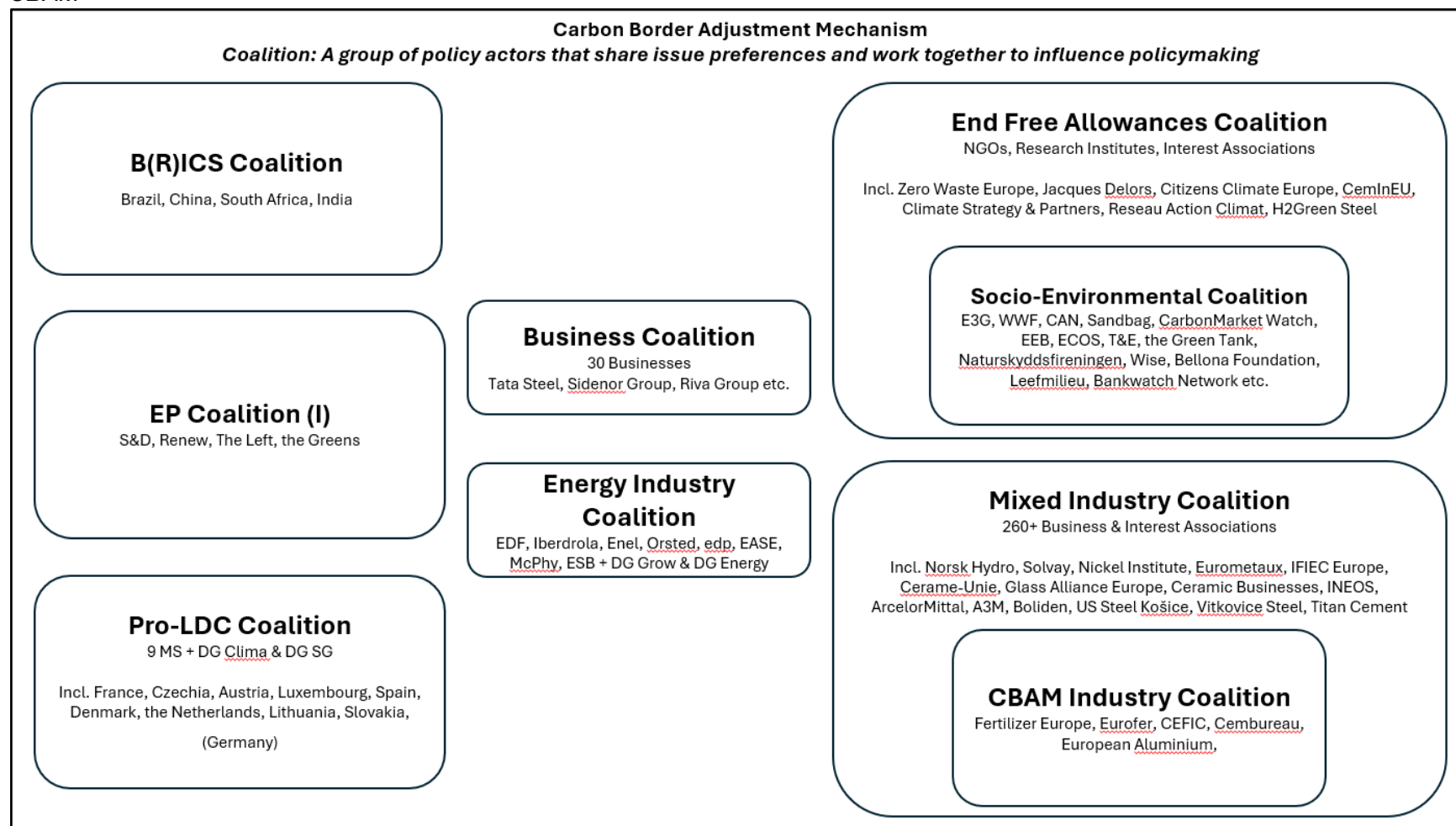
Sustainable Batteries Regulation: Contested Issues	Additional Issues
Scope of batteries included in the regulation	
Durability and Safety requirements (apply REACH regulation)	
Recycling target for batteries	
Recycled content mandate	
Recovery targets for critical raw materials in recycled batteries	
Information and labelling / battery passport	
Replaceability of batteries in products	
Due diligence principle	
Scope of critical raw materials covered under due diligence principle	
Phase-out of non-rechargeable batteries	
Assessment, due diligence and recycling competences	
Implementation timeline of the regulation	

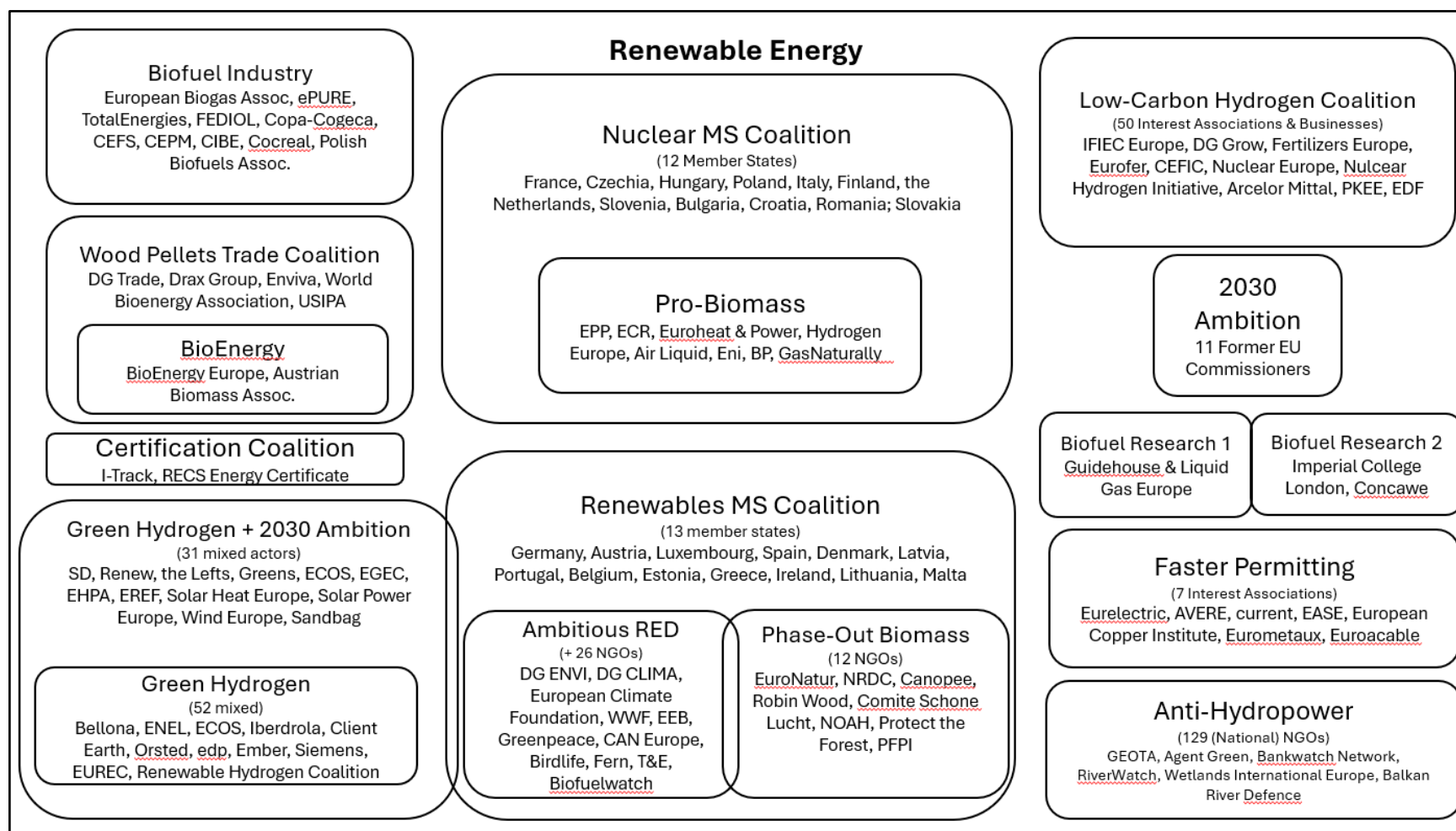
JTF

Just Transition Fund: Contested Issues	Additional Issues
Support for Just Transition Fund	
Size of JTF	
Fossil fuel phase-out plans needed to access JTF funds	
Commitment to 2050 climate neutrality to access JTF funds	
JTF financing (new or established funds)	
Recipients of JTF (all regions; high carbon intensive regions)	
Funds bypass national governments (direct access to regional/local governments)	
Inclusion of partnership principle	
Financing of fossil fuel projects	
Scope of projects funded	

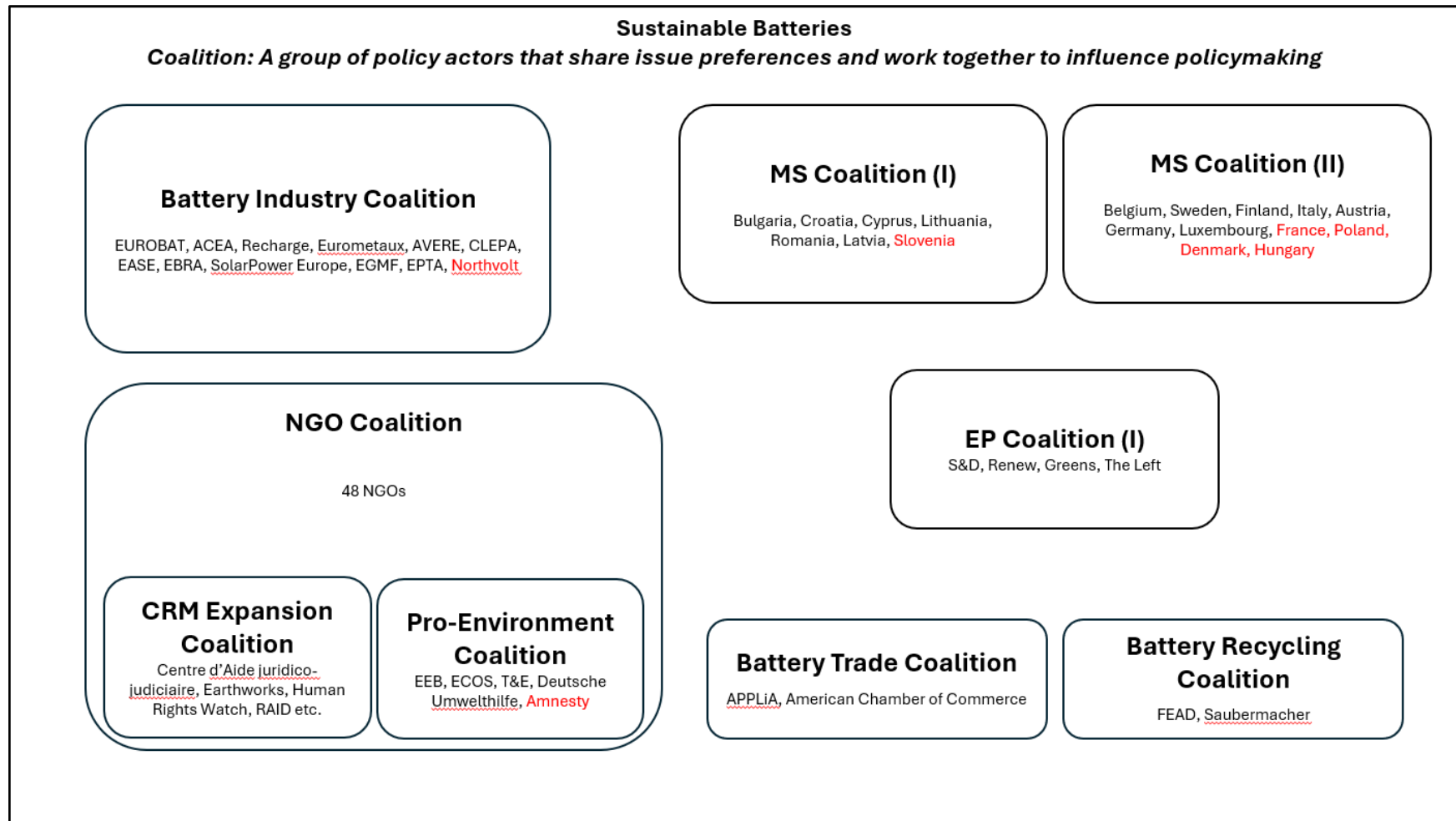
Visual aid 2: (dis)confirming coalitions
Climate Law

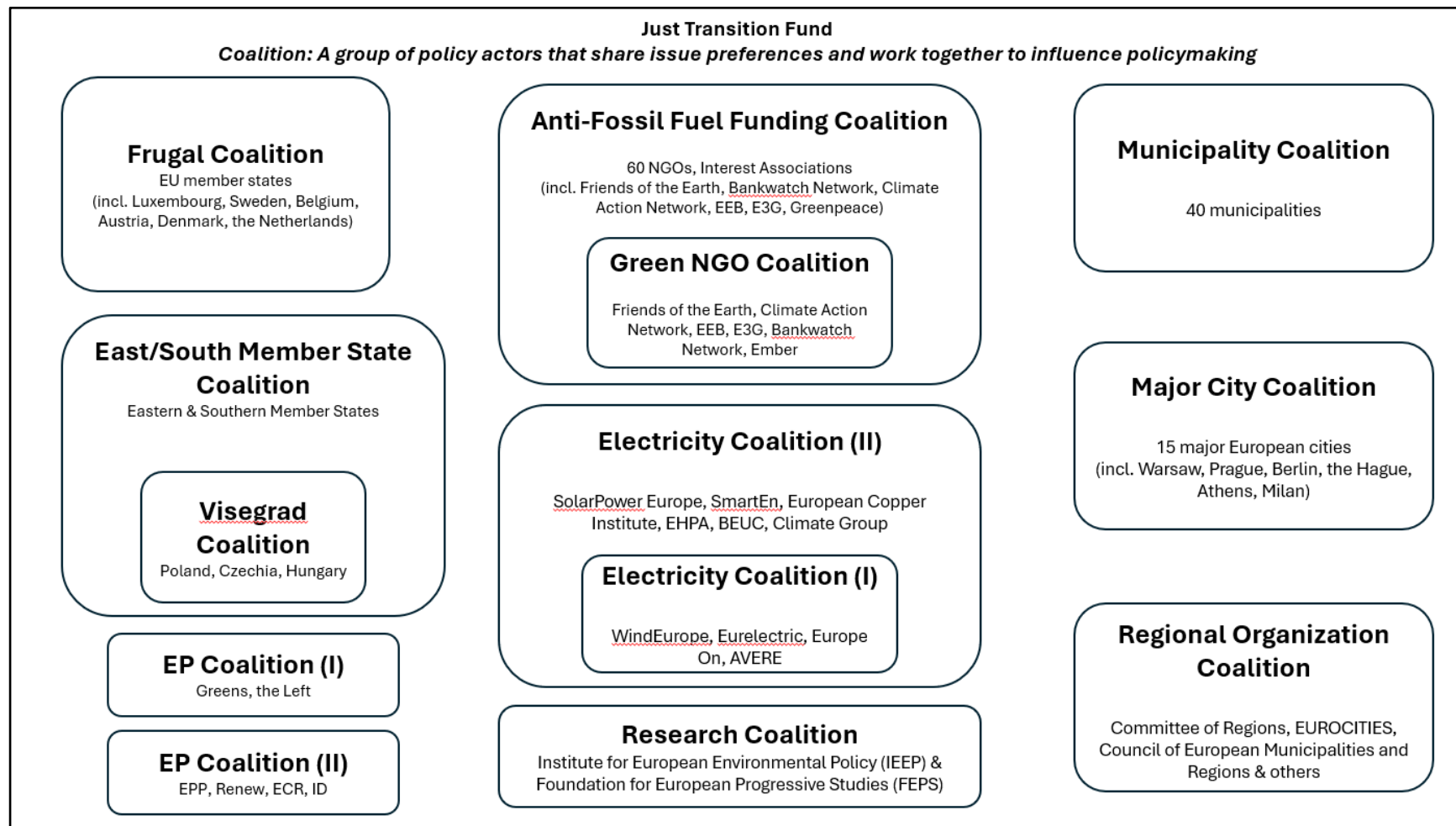






Sustainable Batteries





Visual aid 3: policy process timelines

Climate Law

European Climate Law												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	Romanian Presidency					Strategic agenda adopted by European Council	Finnish Presidency					European Green Deal communicatio n released
2020	Croatian Presidency		Climate Law proposal published by Commission Proposal presented to Council and EP. Greta Thunberg in EP				German Presidency		Commission amends proposal introduces 55% target by 2030. ENVI Committee adopted report.	Parliament's position adopted. Environment Council agreed a partial general approach		55% emissions reduction endorsed by European Council. Environment Council adopts general approach. Trilogues begin.
2021	Portuguese Presidency			Political agreement reached.	COREPER & ENVI Committee approved the agreement.	EP adopted proposal in plenary.	Climate Law published in the Official Journal.					

CBAM

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	Romanian Presidency					Strategic agenda adopted by European Council	Finnish Presidency					European Green Deal communicati on released
2020	Croatian Presidency		Impact assessment published			Public consultations open	German Presidency			ENVI Comm publish 'Towards a WTO- compatible EU CBAM		
2021	Portuguese Presidency		EP adopt resolution on WTO- compatible CBAM				Fit for 55 package presented Slovenian Presidency		CBAM referred to ENVI Committee & Environment Council			
2022	French Presidency		Environment Council adopt position		EP ENVI Committee adopts CBAM report	EP adopts CBAM position in plenary	Trilogues begin Czechia Presidency					Provisional political agreement reached
2023	Sweden Presidency	EP ENVI Committee adopts CBAM text		EP and Council approves CBAM	CBAM signed & published		Spain Presidency					

RED

Renewable Energy Directive												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	Romanian Presidency					Strategic agenda adopted by European Council	Finnish Presidency					European Green Deal communicati on released
2020	Croatian Presidency						German Presidency	Impact assessment published			Public consultation s open	
2021	Portuguese Presidency						Fit for 55 package presented.		RED proposal referred to ITRE Committee		COP26 Glasgow	
2022	French Presidency	Russia invades Ukraine	REPowerEU communicatio n published		REPower EU initiative presented by Commission & proposal amending RED	Energy Council adopts position on RED	EP ITRE report on RED adopted		EP adopt RED report in plenary	RED trilogues begin	COP27 Sharm El Sheikh	
2023	Swedish Presidency	Informal Energy Council. 1 st meeting of Nuclear Alliance & Friends of Renewables	Provisional political agreement reached on RED			Council endorses final text ITRE committee voted on provisional agreement	Spanish Presidency		EP Plenary voted on text	RED III published in Official Journal		

Sustainable Batteries

Sustainable Batteries Regulation												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019				Commission Ex-post evaluation report. Report on implementation of the strategic action plan on batteries		Strategic agenda adopted by European Council.				Council conclusion on 'More circularity – Transition to a sustainable society'		European Green Deal communication released. Council conclusion 'Making the recovery circular and green'
	Romanian Presidency						Finnish Presidency					
2020	EP Resolution on the Green Deal		Commission adopted the new Circular Economy Action Plan.		Impact assessment (IA) published		EP resolution comprehensive European approach to energy storage. IA closed					Commission presented batteries and waste batteries proposal
	Croatian Presidency						German Presidency					
2021		EP resolution on the new Circular Economy action plan	ENVI Committee made responsible.			ENVI Committee exchanged views with Commission. Council progress report published.	Fit for 55 package presented.			ENVI draft report considered.		Council progress report published
	Portuguese Presidency						Slovenian Presidency					
2022		ENVI Committee adopted report.	EP adopted report in Plenary. Council general approach adopted.	Trilogues started.		Trilogue #2				Trilogue #3 Rapporteur <u>Simona Bonafe</u> left the EP.	<u>Achille Variati</u> replaced <u>Simona Bonafe</u> .	Trilogue #4 provisional agreement reached.
2023	Council approved provisional agreement. ENVI Committee endorsed provisional agreement					Proposal endorsed by EP in Plenary.	Proposal endorsed by Council. Proposal published in Official Journal.					

Just Transition Fund												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	Romanian Presidency					Strategic agenda adopted by European Council	Finnish Presidency					European Council endorsed climate- neutrality by 2050. European Green Deal communicati on released
2020	Commission published Just Transition Fund proposal. Explanatory Memorandum published. Croatian Presidency				JTF proposal amended to increase funding due to Covid-19. REGI Committee EP report presented.	Partial mandate submitted to Coreper by WP Structural Measures. European Economic and Social Committee adopted opinion.	REGI vote on report. Committee of the Regions adopted an opinion on JTF. European Council conclusions German Presidency		EP Plenary vote.	Council partial mandate updated following European Council conclusions.		Political agreement reached on JTF regulation in trilogue. REGI committee approved proposal
2021	Portuguese Presidency				EP voted on JTF and approved in plenary.	Council approved JTF proposal. JTF published in the Official Journal.	Fit for 55 package presented. Slovenian Presidency					

Cluster Detection

	Climate Law		CBAM		RED		Batteries		JTF	
<i>Policy Stage</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>DM</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>DM</i>
Community 1	3	177	22	28	2	175	2	10	76	2
Community 2	3	18	5	7	26	52	2	6	7	3
Community 3	45	7	16	2	53	51	4	75	4	60
Community 4	3	26	10	57	14	5	2	2	4	9
Community 5	13	4	2	261	2	13	2	2	2	28
Community 6	2	14	2	8	4	2		2		2
Community 7		6		25	3	129		2		3
Community 8		4		2	4	11		2		15
Community 9		37		2	26	4				14
Community 10		19		2	5	2				2
Community 11		2		2	2	2				2
Community 12					6	2				6
Community 13						2				2
Community 14						5				2
Community 15										

Coordination communities based on Walktrap Algorithm and community size based on number of policy actors in each cluster. Only communities with 2 or more actors are presented

Codebook: preferences of contested issues

For each process, two tables are presented. The first table includes the possible issues stemming from press reports and consultation documents. The second table presents the coding scheme for each policy process, which is used to identify the preferences of policy actors. Not all identified issues were included in the final coding scheme. Identified issues were omitted during the coding process if the issue was not heavily contested among policy actors; if policy actor preferences on a given issue could not be determined; and if interviewees indicated that the issues were not heavily contested.

Climate Law

Legislative Issues Identified

Press Reports	Consultations
2050 Emissions Reduction Target	2050 Target
2030 Emissions Reduction Target	2030 Target
Scope of Target (EU-wide/Member State)	Review of targets based on NECPs
Reviewing of interim targets in 5 year intervals	
Carbon sink accounting	
Use of GHG budget to determine targets	
Use of delegated acts for target setting	
Establishing Scientific Advisory Board	
Technological neutrality principle for reaching targets	
Energy Efficiency First Principle	
Compatibility with Adaptation	
Enabling Framework	
Funding for Transition	

Issue Preferences Coding Scheme

Issue	Code type	Issue Preference (Explanation)
2050 Target – Climate Neutrality by 2050	Nominal	Ambitious (4) = supports negative emissions by 2050 or earlier Support (3) = supports the 2050 climate target Skeptical (2) = is not in support or against the target Not support (1) = does not support 2050 climate target
2030 Target	Nominal	Ambitious (4) = supports 60% + by 2030 or more Slightly Ambitious (3) = supports (at least) 55% + by 2030 Not Ambitious (2) = supports 50% - 55% by 2030 Little Change (1) = supports less than 50% by 2030
Target EU-wide or MS	Binary	Yes (1) = in favor of EU-wide target No (0) = not in favor of EU wide-target/ binding for all MS
Review/Setting Interim-Climate Targets via OLP or Delegated Acts	Binary	Yes (1) = supports reviews of climate target via OLP No (0) = does not support OLP review (supports delegated acts)
Account for Carbon sinks in target	Binary	Yes (1) = include carbon sinks No (0) = do not include

Use of GHG budget to determine future targets	Binary	Yes (1) = Supports the use of GHG budget to set future targets No (0) = Does not support the use of GHG budget
Transition Assistance	Binary	Yes (1) = enabling framework (additional guidance) should be included in the text/Member States should receive additional funding to assist in the transition No (0) = framework should not be included/ Additional funding is not necessary
Establishing a scientific climate advisory board	Binary	Yes (1) = in favor of establishing No (0) = not in favor
Inclusion of the technological neutrality principal	Binary	Yes (1) = to include the principal in the text No (0) = do not include the principal in the text
Review and Reporting	Nominal	Ambitious (4) = less than 5 years for reviews Support (3) = 5-year reviews Approval (2) = Mechanism needed No support (1) = mechanism not needed
Inclusion of the energy efficiency first principle	Binary	Yes (1) = include the principle in the text No (0) = do not include the principle in the text

CBAM

Legislative Issues Identified

Press Reports	Consultations
Competence of Administration and Monitoring (EU/MS)	Address carbon leakage
Keep Allowances and CBAM	Product carbon content verified by third party
Phase Out of Allowances	Carbon customs duty/tax on imports only or imports and domestic products
Allowance Trading of ETS market	Extend ETS to imports
Use of CBAM revenues	Purchase allowances outside of ETS pool
Exemptions from CBAM	Exemptions for third countries
Exporting	Preference towards CBAM
Phase-in of CBAM	Rebates for EU exporters
Preference towards CBAM	Calculation of carbon content
Scope of CBAM	Scope of CBAM
WTO compliant	WTO Compliant

Issue Preference Coding Scheme

Issue	Code type	Issue Preference (Explanation)
Is CBAM the preferred instrument for addressing carbon leakage?	Binary	Yes (1) = Is the CBAM the preferred instrument for addressing carbon leakage? No (0) = Is CBAM not the preferred instrument for addressing carbon leakage?
Phase Out of Free Emissions Allowances	Nominal	High Ambition (3) = supports rapid phase-out of allowance before 2032 Moderate Ambition (2) = supports moderate phase-out between 2033 and 2035 No Ambition (1) = Allowances co-exist with ETS until 2030, phase-out by 2036 (baseline) or no date mentioned
Should the CBAM tax imported products only or imports and domestic products	Binary	Yes (1) = only imported products should be taxed No (0) = imported and domestic products should be taxed
The sectoral scope of the CBAM should be expanded	Binary	Yes (1) = The sectoral scope of the CBAM should be expanded No (0) = The sectoral scope of the CBAM should not be expanded/limited to small number of products
CBAM should include agricultural sector	Binary	Yes (2) = Agriculture should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Agriculture should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Agriculture should not be included in the CBAM
CBAM should include cement	Binary	Yes (2) = Cement should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Cement should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Cement should not be included in the CBAM
CBAM should include Fertilizer	Binary	Yes (2) = Fertilizer should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Fertilizer should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Fertilizer should not be included in the CBAM
CBAM should include Hydrogen	Binary	Yes (2) = Hydrogen should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Hydrogen should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Hydrogen should not be included in the CBAM
CBAM should include Steel	Binary	Yes (2) = Steel should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Steel should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Steel should not be included in the CBAM
CBAM should include Electricity	Binary	Yes (2) = Electricity should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Electricity should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Electricity should not be included in the CBAM

CBAM should include Aluminum	Binary	Yes (2) = Aluminum should be included in the CBAM Later (1) = Aluminum should be included in 2 nd phase or later No (0) = Aluminum should not be included in the CBAM
Should the CBAM revenues be used for vulnerable countries	Binary	Yes (1) = The revenues from CBAM should be used for vulnerable countries to transition to net-zero. No (0) = The revenues from CBAM should not be used for vulnerable countries to transition to net-zero.
Should the CBAM revenues be used for Green Investments in Europe	Binary	Yes (1) = The revenues from CBAM should be used for green investments in Europe No (0) = The revenues from CBAM should not be used for green investments in Europe
EU (or MS) administration and monitoring	Binary	Yes (1) = The EU should administrate and monitor CBAM. No (0) = The EU should not administrate and monitor CBAM, but the member states should have control.
Should EU exporters be compensated?	Binary	Yes (1) = EU exporters should be compensated for cost of carbon No (0) = EU exporters should not be compensated
LDC should be exempt from CBAM	Binary	Yes (1) = the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) should be exempt from CBAM No (0) = The LDCs should not be exempt from CBAM
Monitoring, reporting and verification system	Binary	Centralized (1) = The EU should monitor, report and verify CBAM products. Decentralized (0) = Monitoring, reporting, and verification should be carried out at the national level.
CBAM Implementation	Binary	High ambition (3) = CBAM fully implemented by latest 2026 ie. 2–3-year transition period. Neither Ambitious or foot dragging (2) = CBAM fully implemented 2027 - 2029 ie. 4 – 6 year transition period. Low Ambition (1) = CBAM fully implemented from 2030 or after ie. 7+ year transition period.
CBAM must comply with WTO rules	Binary	Yes (1) = CBAM must comply with WTO rules No (0) = CBAM must not comply with WTO rules

Legislative Issues Identified

Press Reports	Consultations
Renewable Energy Target (overall target; bindingness of target)	Overall target
Sectoral RED targets	EU/MS-level targets
Permitting Rules for renewable energy (faster permitting, go-to areas)	Sectoral targets (industry, building, transport)
Biomass (inclusion, sustainability criteria; cascading principle for biomass)	Production of renewable liquid fuels
Hydrogen (inclusion; type of hydrogen; additionality for hydrogen; guarantee of origin)	Production of biogas
Production of biogas	Production of biomethane
Inclusion of Hydropower	Production of renewable hydrogen
Heating and Cooling Systems	Carbon Capture and Storage
Recycling and waste	Permitting procedures for RE projects
Cross-border collaboration mechanism	Heating and Cooling
	Waste Heat usage
	Production of bioenergy/biomass from forests
	Certification system

Issue Preferences Coding Scheme

Issue	Code type	Issue Preference (Explanation)
Overall Target 2030	Nominal	Ambitious (3) = supports a RED target of at least 45% + Not Ambitious (2) = support target of 40 - 44% Little Change (1) = supports target below 40%
Target in industry sector should be increased	Binary	Ambitious (1) = RE target for industrial sector should be increased Laggard (0) = RE target for industrial sector should be decreased
Target in Transport sector should be increased	Binary	Ambitious (2) = RE target for transport sector should be increased Status-quo (1) = RE target for transport sector should remain Laggard (0) = RE target for industrial sector should be decreased
Target for heating and cooling	Binary	Ambitious (1) = target should be made binding in legislation Laggard (0) = target should not be included in legislation
Account for low carbon fuels in industry and transport target calculations	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Low carbon fuels should not be allowed Laggard (0) = Low carbon fuel target should be included and/or increased
Target should be applied at the EU-level opposed to individual member states	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Overall target applied to MS-level Laggard (0) = Overall target applied to EU-level
Faster permitting rules are required	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Faster permitting rules are needed Laggard (0) = No changes needed for permitting rules
Biomass should be phased-out of RED	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Biomass should be phased-out of RED Laggard (0) = Biomass should remain in the RED
The cascading principle should be applied to biomass	Binary	Ambitious (1) = The cascading principle should be applied / strengthened to biomass in the RED. Laggard (0) = The cascading principle should not be applied / strengthened to biomass in the RED.
(Biomass) Sustainability Criteria should be made stricter/improved	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Sustainability criteria for biomass must be improved. Laggard (0) = Sustainability criteria for biomass should not be changed.
Guarantees of Origin should be implemented and improved (transparency)	Binary	Ambitious (1) = GOs should be implemented and improved (traceability, transparency, information) Laggard (0) = GOs should not be improved upon.
Type of hydrogen to be included in RED	Binary	Ambitious (3) = Green (renewable) Hydrogen only Slightly ambitious (2) = Low Carbon Hydrogen (blue/pink) Laggard (1) = All / Grey Hydrogen
RED must not incentive hydropower dams	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Hydropower must not be incentivized in the RED. Laggard (0) = Hydropower should be incentivized in the RED.

Cross-border collaboration mechanism should be promoted and improved	Binary	Ambitious (1) = cross-border collaboration for RED projects should be promoted and improved (clearer framework, regional cooperation) Laggard (0) = cross-border collaboration for RED projects does not need to be promoted or improved (clearer framework, regional cooperation)
Additionality Principle related to RFNBO	Binary	Ambitious (1) = the additionality principle for hydrogen production is supported. Laggard (0) = the additionality principle for hydrogen production is opposed.

Sustainable Batteries

Legislative Issues Identified

Press Reports	Consultations
Battery Design	Collection, Treatment and Recycling
Due diligence and sustainability	Information and Labelling
Implementation Times	Phasing out non-rechargeable batteries
Industry Competitiveness	Producer Responsibility
Recycling and Recovery	Sustainability Requirements
Competences	Updating concepts and definitions
Scope of Batteries included	

Issue Preferences Coding Scheme

Issue	Code Type	Issue Preference (explained)
Durability and Safety requirements	Binary	Apply established legislation (REACH) (1) = Apply REACH or other established legislation to Batteries Regulation for Durability and Safety requirements of batteries Create new legislation (0) = Do not apply established legislation (REACH) to Batteries Regulation for Durability and Safety requirements of batteries
Recycled content mandate	Binary	Include recycled content mandate (1) = the recycled content mandate should remain No mandate (0) = the recycled content mandate for batteries is of concern
Due diligence principle (human & labor rights compliant, Sustainability requirements for batteries placed on the EU market)	Binary	Pro Due Diligence (1) = Due diligence principle to be incorporated No due diligence (0) = due diligence principle not needed to be incorporated
Expand scope of CRMs in due diligence	Binary	Expand scope (1) = Include a broad range of CRMs in the scope of due diligence provisions (ie. Bauxite, copper, iron). Do not expand/reduce scope (0) = Include a limited range of CRMs in the scope of due diligence provisions.
Information and Labelling – carbon footprint	Binary	Yes (1) = the carbon footprint of batteries must be reported in the information and labelling of batteries. No (0) = the carbon footprint does not need to be reported on.
Recycling Target for Batteries on the market	Binary	Ambitious (1) = The recycling targets (70%) should be maintained or increased. Laggard (0) = The recycling targets are too ambitious/should be reduced/re-assessed.
Recovery Target of CRMs (Lithium, copper, cobalt, lead, nickel)	Binary	Ambitious (1) = The recovery targets should be maintained or increased Laggard (0) = The recovery targets are too ambitious/should be reduced/re-assessed.
Scope of batteries included	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Rules should cover all products containing batteries/Battery types. Laggard (0) = Not all products containing batteries or battery types should be included (ie. e-scooters, small vehicles, armed forces/military should be exempt).

Batteries must be made to be replaceable	Binary	Agree (1) = Batteries should be made replaceable (tablets, smartphones, laptops) Disagree (0) = Not all batteries should be replaceable
Implementation of regulation	Binary	Ambitious (1) = The implementation of the regulation should remain (2022) or needs to be implemented sooner. Laggard (0) = the timeline for implementation of the regulation needs to be extended/is too ambitious
Phasing Out of non-rechargeable batteries	Binary	Phase-out (1) = Non-rechargeable batteries are to be phased out No phase-out (0) = non-rechargeable batteries must be phased out
Competences (Recycling and Assessment)	Binary	EU-level (1) = Assessment checks of batteries and due diligence policies to be verified at the EU-level. MS-level (0) = Assessment checks of batteries and due diligence policies to be verified at the MS-level.
Competitiveness and Innovation: Need to reduce administrative and financial burden of the policy	Binary	Ambitious (1) = Administration and financial burden is not a burden and should remain. Competitive Focus (0) = Legislation needs to be simplified, less strict, reduce admin burden, rational approach.
Battery Passport	Binary	Pro-passport (1) = Battery passport is needed Anti-passport (0) = Battery passport is not needed/status quo

Legislative Issues Identified

Press Reports	Consultations
Eligibility criteria/Access to funds	Fund size
Endorsement of the fund	Allocation of funds
Fund financing	Financing the fund (MFF or cohesion fund)
Fund recipients	Fund recipients/disbursement
Scope of projects for investment	Scope of support
Size of fund	

Issue Preference Coding Scheme

Issue	Code Type	Issue Preference (explained)
Fossil fuel phase out plans needed for access to JTF funds	Binary	Yes (1) = member states need fossil fuel phase-out plans to access JTF funds No (0) = member states do not need fossil fuel phase-out plans to access JTF funds
Member states must commit to the climate neutrality target for access to funds	Binary	Yes (1) = member states must commit to the 2050 climate neutrality target to access JTF funds No (0) = member states do not need to commit to the 2050 climate neutrality target to access JTF funds
Support for/Endorsement of JTF mechanism/instrument	Binary	Yes (1) = A compensation mechanism is needed for a socially just transition to climate neutrality No (0) = There is no need to establish at JTF
JTF to be financed by the EU budget	Binary	Yes (1) = the JTF should be financed by new additional money through the MFF instead of from cohesion fund, for example No (0) = the JTF should be financed using existing funds (cohesion fund, European Globalization Adjustment Fund)
Coal mining/high carbon-intensive regions only vs. All member states/regions/cities should be eligible for JTF funds	Binary	Yes (1) = only high-carbon intensive regions are eligible for JTF funding No (0) = all member states and regions are eligible for JTF funding
Funding bypass MS governments	Binary	Yes (1) = JTF funds should bypass member state governments and go directly to low authorities (cities, regional, and local governments) No (0) = JTF funds should go to the MS governments to disperse to regional and local authorities
Funding Streams and Stakeholder inclusion/participation (partnership principal)	Binary	1 = Partnership principle to be fully applied 0 = Member states get funds
Exclude any support for fossil fuel projects (incl. gas, nuclear..)	Binary	Yes (1) = Fossil-fuel projects should not be funded by JTF funds No (0) = Fossil-fuel projects (gas, nuclear) should be funded by JTF funds
Expand scope of activities funded	Binary	Yes (1) = the scope of activities under the JTF should be expanded No (0) = the scope of activities under the JTF should not be expanded
Size of fund	Nominal	Ambitious (2) = increase the fund size of the JTF Moderate (1) = no increase to the fund size Laggard (0) = decrease/reduce the fund size

QCA calibration: exceptional policy actors

Process	Policy Stage	Policy Actor	Role Type	Coalition Member
Climate Law	PP	DG CLIMA	Exceptional	N/A
		European Climate Foundation	Broker	Ambitious 2030
		International Union for Conservation of Nature EU	Entrepreneur	N/A
		Fridays for Future	Entrepreneur	Climate Activist
	DM	DG CLIMA	Broker	N/A
		DG Secretariat General	Entrepreneur	N/A
		Adersgate	Entrepreneur	N/A
		Fridays for the Future	Entrepreneur	N/A
CBAM	PP	DG CLIMA	Broker	N/A
		DG ECFIN	Broker	N/A
		France	Entrepreneur	Environmentally Just CBAM
		Eurofer	Broker	N/A
		Cembureau	Exceptional	Energy Intensive
		DG Grow	Entrepreneur	N/A
		S&D	Entrepreneur	Progressive EP
	DM	Eurofer	Broker	Energy Intensive Industry
		The Left	Entrepreneur	Progressive EP
		DG TAXUD	Exceptional	N/A
		Aegis	Entrepreneur	N/A
		France	Entrepreneur	Environmentally Just CBAM
		Birdlife	Broker	Ambitious RED
		Transport & Environment	Broker	Ambitious RED
RED	PP	France	Entrepreneur	N/A
		WWF	Entrepreneur	Ambitious RED
		DG Secretariat General	Entrepreneur	N/A
		The Greens	Exceptional	Progressive RED
		SolarPower Europe	Broker	Progressive RED
	DM	DG CLIMA	Broker	Environmentally Progressive
		DG Energy	Broker	Environmentally Progressive
		EEB	Broker	Environmentally Progressive
		Birdlife	Broker	Environmentally Progressive
		Renew	Entrepreneur	Environmentally Progressive
		WWF	Entrepreneur	Environmentally Progressive
		The Greens	Entrepreneur	Environmentally Progressive
		France	Entrepreneur	Nuclear
Sustainable Batteries	PP	DG Energy	Exceptional	N/A
		DG Grow	Exceptional	N/A
		Eurobat	Exceptional	N/A
	DM	Transport & Environment	Broker	Eco-social Battery
		DG Grow	Exceptional	N/A
		The Greens	Broker	Progressive EP
		Amnesty International	Broker	Eco-social Battery
		Eurobat	Entrepreneur	Battery Supply Chain
JTF	PP	S&D	Broker	Progressive EP
		DG REGIO	Exceptional	N/A
		DG CLIMA	Entrepreneur	N/A
		WWF	Exceptional	N/A
		Kleine Elster	Broker	N/A
		Großräschen	Broker	Carbon-intense Municipality
	DM	Lukavac	Broker	Carbon-intense Municipality
		Spremberg	Broker	Carbon-intense Municipality
		WWF	Exceptional	Anti-Fossil Fuel
		DG CLIMA	Entrepreneur	N/A
		European Climate Foundation	Entrepreneur	N/A
		DG REGIO	Entrepreneur	N/A
		Bankwatch Network	Exceptional	Anti-Fossil Fuel

QCA raw calibration table

Col_ID	Coalition Name	File_Stage	Col_Type	Complex	Scope	Reg	DM	Role	Outcome
EnerCe	Energy Centred	CL_PP	LID	0	1	1	0	0	1
Activist	Climate Activist	CL_PP	LID	0	1	1	0	1	1
COSink	Carbon Sink	CL_DM	LID	0	1	1	1	0	1
Ccouncil	Climate Council	CL_DM	LID	0	1	1	1	0	1
EMSClimate	East MS Climate NGO	CL_DM	LID	0	1	1	1	0	1
BRICS	BRICS	CBAM_PP	LID	0	0	0	0	0	1
EnerBus	Energy Business	CBAM_PP	LID	0	0	0	0	0	1
BioSub	Biofuel Subsidy	RED_PP	LID	1	1	1	0	0	1
Permit	Faster Permitting	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
BioInd	Biofuel Industry	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
Anti-Hydro	Anti-Hydro	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
BioEner	Bioenergy	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
BioRes	Biofuel research	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
Ex-Comm	Ambitious Ex- Comm	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
CertRe	Certification Research	RED_DM	LID	1	1	1	1	0	1
BattTra	Battery Trade	B_DM	LID	1	0	1	1	0	1
BattRecy	Battery Recycling	B_DM	LID	1	0	1	1	0	1
Vcaps	Visegrad Capitals	JTF_PP	LID	0	1	0	0	0	1
CONeu	Carbon Neutrality	JTF_PP	LID	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bypass	Funding Bypass	JTF_DM	LID	0	1	0	1	0	1
Vise_CL	Visegrad_CL	CL_PP	MA	0	1	1	0	0	0
GA-MS- CLPP	Green Ambition MS_CLPP	CL_PP	MA	0	1	1	0	0	0
CLNGO	Climate Law NGO	CL_PP	MA	0	1	1	0	0	0
CLRes	Climate Law Research	CL_PP	MA	0	1	1	0	0	0
GA-MS- CLDM	Green Ambition MS_CLDM	CL_DM	MA	0	1	1	1	0	0
Visegrad2	Visegrad+2	CL_DM	MA	0	1	1	1	0	0
ProgEP-CL	Progressive EP_CL	CL_DM	MA	0	1	1	1	0	0
Ind-EP	Industry EP	CL_DM	MA	0	1	1	1	0	0
ProgEP- CBAM	Progressive EP_CBAM	CBAM_DM	MA	0	0	0	1	1	0
RenewMS	Renewables MS	RED_PP	MA	1	1	1	0	0	0
BattLag	Battery Laggard MS	B_DM	MA	1	0	1	1	0	0
Eco-Ind	Eco-industrial MS	B_DM	MA	1	0	1	1	0	0
ProgEP-B	Progressive EP_B	B_DM	MA	1	0	1	1	1	0
CIMuni	Carbon-intense Municipality	JTF_PP	MA	0	1	0	0	1	0
Vise_JTF	Visegrad_JTF	JTF_PP	MA	0	1	0	0	0	0
Electric	Electric	JTF_PP	MA	0	1	0	0	0	0

Frugals	Frugal MS	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
Pro-FF-EP	Pro-fossil fuel EP	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
Anti-FF-EP	Anti-fossil fuel EP	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
NewMon	New Money MS	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
ExpandEle	Expanded Electric	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
Eco-JTF	Eco-JTF Research	JTF_DM	MA	0	1	0	1	0	0
Amb2030	Ambitious 2030	CL_PP	CMS	0	1	1	0	1	0
EnerInt	Energy Intensive	CBAM_PP	CMS	0	0	0	0	1	0
AmbCBAM	Ambitious CBAM	CBAM_DM	CMS	0	0	0	1	0	0
AmbRED	Ambitious RED	RED_PP	CMS	1	1	1	0	1	0
ProgressRE	Progressive RE	RED_PP	CMS	1	1	1	0	1	0
Pellets	Wood Pellets	RED_PP	CMS	1	1	1	0	0	0
LC-Hy	Low-Carbon Hydrogen	RED_DM	CMS	1	1	1	1	0	0
RegInter	Regional Interest	JTF_PP	CMS	0	1	0	0	0	0
Anti-FF	Anti-Fossil Fuel	JTF_DM	CMS	0	1	0	1	1	0
AmbBus	Ambitious Business	CL_DM	Colo	0	1	1	1	0	0
EnerIntInd	Energy Intensive Industry	CBAM_DM	Colo	0	0	0	1	1	0
EnviJust_PP	Environmentally Just CBAM MS_PP	CBAM_PP	PG	0	0	0	0	1	0
EnviJust_DM	Environmentally Just CBAM MS_DM	CBAM_DM	PG	0	0	0	1	1	0
BattSup	Battery Supply Chain	B_DM	PG	1	0	1	1	1	0
EcoSocBatt	Eco-Social Battery	B_DM	PG	1	0	1	1	1	0
Nuclear	Nuclear	RED_DM	Comm	1	1	1	1	1	0
EnviProg	Environmentally Progressive	RED_DM	Comm	1	1	1	1	1	0

Note: The table above is the raw calibration table for the QCA. The table represents the table for the outcome of a peripheral coalition. Given 6 QCA are conducted (1 per coalition type), the conditions remain the same, but the outcome changes for each coalition type.

Chapter 6: Coalition Types in EU Environmental Policy Processes in the European Green Deal

Characterizing identified coalitions

This section presents the measurements for each of the identified coalitions.

Peripheral Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
Climate Law	PP	<i>Energy Centred</i>	1	3	2	-0.13	5
		<i>Climate Activist</i>	2	19	1	-0.60	1
	DM	<i>Carbon Sink</i>	1	26	1	-0.45	1
		<i>Climate Council</i>	2	14	1	-0.58	1
		<i>East MS Climate NGO</i>	1	6	1	-0.60	1
CBAM	PP	<i>BRICS</i>	1	5	1	-0.62	1
		<i>Energy Business</i>	2	9	2	-0.78	1
RED	PP	<i>Biofuel Subsidy</i>	1	2	2	-0.50	1
	DM	<i>Faster Permitting</i>	1	7	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Biofuel Industry</i>	2	13	2	-0.53	1
		<i>Anti-Hydropower</i>	1	129	2	-0.51	1
		<i>Bioenergy</i>	2	3	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Biofuel Research</i>	1	2	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Ambitious Ex-commission</i>	1	11	1	-0.52	1
		<i>Certification Research</i>	1	2	2	-0.52	1
Batteries	DM	<i>Battery Trade</i>	4	3	1	-0.77	1
		<i>Battery Recycling</i>	1	2	2	-0.77	1
JTF	PP	<i>Visegrad Capitals</i>	2	4	1	-0.47	1
		<i>Carbon Neutrality</i>	2	2	2	-0.47	1
	DM	<i>Funding Bypass Cities</i>	1	15	1	-0.47	2
Mean Avg.			1.5	13.85	1.4	-0.54	1.25

Moderate Authoritative Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
Climate Law	PP	Visegrad	5	3	1	-0.35	3
		Green Ambition MS	3	13	1	0.71	2
		Climate Law NGO	5	3	1	-0.67	1
		Climate Law Research	4	4	1	0.39	1
	DM	Green Ambition MS	3	13	1	2.08	3
		Visegrad+2	4	6	1	0.77	3
		Progressive EP	3	4	1	0.07	3
		Industry EP	3	3	1	-0.19	1
CBAM	DM	Progressive EP	3	4	1	0.18	6
RED	PP	Renewables MS	4	13	1	0.42	2
Batteries	DM	Battery Laggard MS	2	8	1	0.57	2
		Eco-industrial MS	5	10	1	1.02	2
		Progressive EP	2	4	1	0.18	1
JTF	PP	Carbon-intense Municipality	5	41	1	0.29	1
		Visegrad	4	3	1	-0.22	1
		Electrification	4	4	1	-0.47	1
	DM	Frugal MS	2	6	1	0.38	4
		Pro-fossil fuel EP	3	4	1	0.2	2
		Anti-fossil fuel EP	3	2	1	-0.18	1
		New Money MS	1	18	1	2.22	5
		Expanded Electrification	3	8	1	-0.39	1
		Eco-JTF Research	4	2	1	-0.47	1
Mean Avg.			3.41	8	1	0.3	2.14

Fragmented Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
Climate Law	PP	<i>Ambitious 2030</i>	3	38	3	-0.15	2
CBAM	PP	<i>Energy Intensive</i>	3	13	4	0.16	14
	DM	<i>Ambitious CBAM</i>	2	37	4	-0.72	7
RED	PP	<i>Ambitious RED</i>	3	38	3	0.52	13
		<i>Progressive RE</i>	2	31	5	-0.26	3
		<i>Wood Pellets Trade</i>	2	5	3	-0.37	3
	DM	<i>Low-Carbon Hydrogen</i>	1	50	3	-0.46	1
JTF	PP	<i>Regional Interest</i>	3	7	3	-0.47	2
	DM	<i>Anti-Fossil Fuel</i>	1	91	4	0.51	4
Mean Avg.			2.22	34.44	3.55	-0.14	5.44

Colossal Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
Climate Law	DM	<i>Ambitious Business</i>	3	232	1	0.0774	4
CBAM	DM	<i>Energy Intensive Industry</i>	4	316	2	0.0359	2
Mean Avg.			3.5	274	1.5	0.06	3

Policy Generalist Coalitions							
Process	Stage	Coalition	No. Preferences	Size	Diversity	Authority	Coord Intensity
CBAM	PP	Environmentally Just CBAM MS	9	9	1	0.5358	8
	DM	Environmentally Just CBAM MS	9	9	1	1.2163	1
Batteries	DM	Battery Supply Chain	7	12	2	-0.2565	2
		Eco-Social Battery	9	48	2	0.02	4
Mean Avg.			8.5	19.5	1.5	0.38	3.75

Commanding Coalitions							
<i>Process</i>	<i>Stage</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>No. Preferences</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Coord Intensity</i>
RED	DM	<i>Nuclear</i>	8	27	4	1.8982	28
	DM	<i>Environmentally Progressive</i>	5	131	7	2.3942	50
Mean Avg.			6.5	79	5.5	2.15	39

Principal component analysis

Factor Analysis or PCA?

Factor analysis was considered prior to conducting the PCA. Following, Bartlett's test of sphericity is carried out. This produces a statistically significant result:

- chi-square = 83.43
- p-value = 1.064953e-13
- degrees of freedom = 10.

Then, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy equates to an overall, score = 0.55. The score ranges from 0.00 to 1.00. A score of >0.5 is considered quite poor and unacceptable for factor analysis. Hence, the PCA is considered as it does not assume latent factors between variables but considers all variance among observed variables.

PCA variables

The input variables of the PCA are the characterized dimensions of each identified coalition. The PCA then standardizes the range of continuous variables and identifies relationships between coalition dimensions. This reduces the coalition dimensions into new independent variables called components. The number of components selected is determined by examining the scree-plot (see next sub-section).

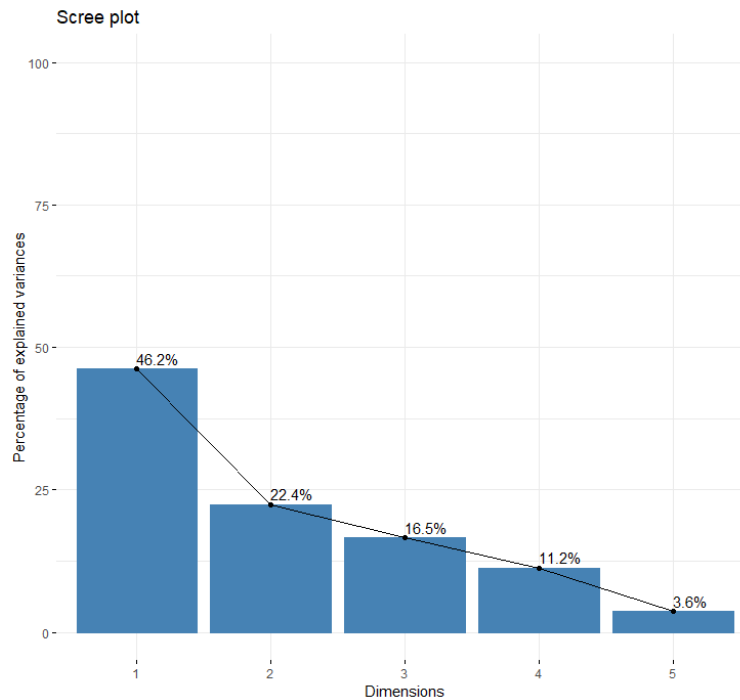
Coalition Dimensions	PC 1	ctr	Cos2	PC 2	ctr	Cos2	PC 3	ctr	Cos2
<i>Issue Pref Specificity</i>	0.480	9.965	0.230	0.700	43.770	0.490	0.270	8.785	0.073
<i>Size</i>	0.431	8.031	0.185	-0.465	19.347	0.217	0.771	71.870	0.594
<i>Diversity</i>	0.726	22.853	0.528	-0.499	22.269	0.249	-0.314	11.952	0.099
<i>Authority</i>	0.731	23.128	0.534	0.398	14.176	0.159	-0.010	0.013	0.000
<i>Coordination</i>	0.912	36.024	0.832	-0.070	0.437	0.005	-0.247	7.380	0.061
<i>Variance Explained</i>	46.19%			22.38%			16.51%		

PCA results

The coordinates (PC 1, PC 2 and PC 3) indicate how strong and in which direction each coalition dimension contributes to the respective principal component. Higher values mean a stronger influence. The contribution (ctr) illustrates how much each coalition dimension contributes to explaining the variance of a given principal component. Higher values mean the coalition dimension is more important. The Cos2 measures the quality of representation of the coalition

dimension. It ranges from 0-1. Higher scores mean the coalition dimension is well represented. Lower scores mean the variable is better explained elsewhere.

PCA Scree Plot



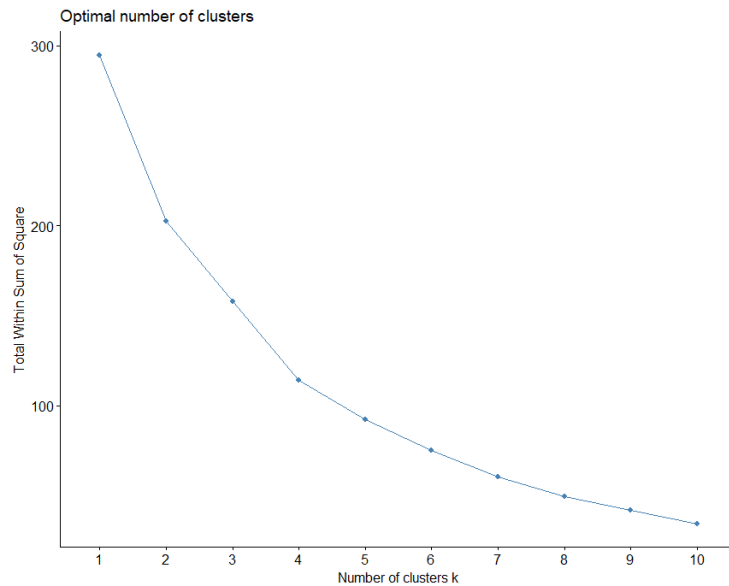
Hierarchical clustering on principal components

The primary dimensions illustrate those in which define the coalition type.

Coalition Type	Dimension	v-test	p-value
Peripheral	No. Shared Issues	-3.867	1.101
	Authority	-4.006	6.177
Moderate Authoritative	Diversity	-3.385	0.0007
	Authority	2.497	0.0125
Fragmented	Diversity	4.717	2.394 e-06
Policy Generalist	No. Shared Issues	5.201	1.981e-07
Colossal	Size	6.557	5.492e-11
Commanding	No. Shared Issues	2.529	1.144e-02
	Diversity	4.414	1.017e-05
	Authority	4.083	4.443e-05
	Coordination	6.816	9.389e-12

Primary dimensions of each coalition type

Scree Plot and Silhouette Score of number of clusters



# of Clusters	Silhouette score
4 clusters	0.308
5 clusters	0.366
6 clusters	0.327
7 clusters	0.376
8 clusters	0.369

The silhouette scores of the clustering on the PCA have low variability. Given the low variation, each clustering result was then checked by examining the coalitions attributed to each cluster. Doing so allowed for empirical knowledge of the coalitions to be brought into the analysis. Clustering of 4 was first removed as it had the lowest silhouette score. Clustering of 7 and 8 were also removed for parsimony as some coalitions in clusters 7 and 8 included very little coalitions and those coalitions closely resembled others in related clusters. Finally, clustering 5 was removed as certain coalitions within each of the clusters were structural outliers. When introducing an additional cluster (cluster 6), these outliers were grouped together.

PCA Robustness Checks

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted for exploratory purposes on all coalitions identified across five legislative processes. The results of the robustness tests show that the PCA solution is highly sensitive to outliers, leading to instability in the component orientations. While the PCA axes are not statistically robust, the PCA serves as a descriptive mapping tool for clustering. Hence, the instability of the axes does not undermine the substantive goal of identifying structural similarities and differences among the 59 coalitions. Because the core empirical findings rely on the hierarchical clusters derived from PCA scores, the interpretive focus remains on the

descriptive grouping of all 59 coalitions. The findings should therefore be interpreted as structural typologies, not inferential estimates of latent dimensions.

Accordingly, the full dataset (N = 59) was retained in the main analysis for the following reasons:

1. The aim is to map the *entire population* of coalitions and their structural similarities; excluding observations would obscure this population structure.
2. The component scores serve as descriptive coordinates defining the feature space for subsequent clustering.

Check 1: Data Scaling

Because the input variables operate on different measurement scales, PCA was conducted on standardized variables. A comparison using unscaled data showed that the first component captured 98.08 % of total variance, indicating dominance by a single large-scale variable. Standardization was therefore essential to ensure equal contribution of all dimensions.

Check 2: Influence of Outliers

An inspection of individual observation contributions to component variance revealed four extreme outliers:

Coalition	Contribution to PC1	Contribution to PC3	Impact
30	49.77 %	3.39 %	Primary driver of PC1
29	17.51 %	1.32 %	Major contributor to PC1
23	2.05 %	45.14 %	Primary driver of spurious PC3
8	0.52 %	24.14 %	Major contributor to spurious PC3

A reanalysis excluding these four outliers (N = 55) showed substantial shifts:

Component	Original Eigenvalue (N=59)	Clean Eigenvalue (N=55)	Interpretation
PC1	2.310	1.723	Strongly affected by outliers
PC2	1.119	1.480	Becomes stronger and better defined

After removal, the first two components were more balanced in strength, indicating that PC1 in the original model was disproportionately driven by a few extreme coalitions.

Check 3: Structural Stability

(a) Split-Sample Stability

To assess the reproducibility of component directions, the clean dataset ($N = 55$) was randomly split in half, and loading vectors were correlated across subsamples:

Component	Stability (N=59)	Stability (N=55)	Interpretation
PC1	$r = 0.465$ (Low)	$r = -0.222$ (Extremely Low)	Highly unstable
PC2	$r = 0.922$ (High)	$r = -0.561$ (Low)	Volatile after outlier removal

The extremely low (and negative) correlations confirm that the component orientations are not stable across resampling, indicating that small data changes can flip component directions.

(b) Variable Deletion Stability

Each variable was removed in turn, and the resulting loadings were correlated with the full model:

Variable Removed	r (Correlation with Full Model)	Interpretation
Issue Preference Specificity	-0.123	Structure flips/reorients
Diversity	0.028	Highly unstable
Coordination	0.059	Highly unstable
Size	0.199	Weakly related
Authority	0.295	Weakly related

The near-zero and negative correlations demonstrate that the PCA solution depends heavily on the full variable set; the underlying dimensions are not intrinsically stable.

Chapter 7: Explaining the formation of coalition types in EU environmental policy processes

QCA robustness checks

Robustness checks are only carried out for the peripheral, moderate authoritative, and fragmented coalition types. Robustness checks for colossal, policy generalist, and commanding coalitions are not conducted because of the limited diversity and altered thresholds.

Peripheral Coalitions				
Sensitivity Ranges				
		Lower	Threshold	Upper
	Raw Consistency	NA	0.87	0.87
	Frequency	1	1	NA
Robust Parameters				
Fit-oriented	RFcov: 1	RFcons: 1	RF_SC_minTS: 1	RF_SC_max_TS: 1
Case-oriented	RCRtyp: 1	RCRdev: 1	RCCRrank: 1	

Regarding the robustness of the QCA related to peripheral coalitions, the raw consistency is robust up to a threshold of 0.87, meaning that if consistency thresholds were increased to 0.88 or 0.9, the solution would change. This indicates limited robustness with respect to consistency. The frequency of 1 tells us that some solution terms are supported by only a single case, suggesting that the solution is fragile regarding cases. This is rather typical of small – medium-N studies, such as this. Put together, these checks show that the solution is empirically supported but sensitive to stricter threshold choices.

The fit-oriented scores of 1 illustrate that the solution does not change under perturbations to the data or internal recalculations. The case-oriented checks of 1 show that the solution is internally coherent, whereby there are no combinations of conditions that lead to the outcome and the absence of the outcome and do not hide counterfactual contradictions.

Moderate Authoritative Coalitions				
Sensitivity Ranges				
		Lower	Threshold	Upper
	Raw Consistency	0.81	0.85	0.85
	Frequency	2	2	7
Robust Parameters				

Fit-oriented	RFcov: 0.908	RFcons: 1.016	RF_SC_minTS: 0.923	RF_SC_max_TS: 1
Case-oriented	RCRtyp: 0.909	RCRdev: 1	RCCRrank: 3	

The scores of raw consistency indicate that the QCA solution would remain unchanged when thresholds are set between 0.81 to 0.85. Once the threshold increases above 0.85 the solution term changes. The frequency sensitivity tells us that the solution is not dependent on single cases and is therefore quite robust.

The fit-oriented checks are very close to 1, indicating that the solution is largely stable against changes to the data or recalculations. The case-oriented shows that moderate authoritative coalitions are supported by multiple comparably strong configurations and that there are no deviant consistency cases.

Fragmented Coalitions				
Sensitivity Ranges				
		Lower	Threshold	Upper
	Raw Consistency	0.51	0.85	0.99
	Frequency	2	2	2
Robust Parameters				
Fit-oriented	RFcov: 0.5	RFcons: 1	RF_SC_minTS: 0.5	RF_SC_max_TS: 1
Case-oriented	RCRtyp: 0.5	RCRdev: NA	RCCRrank: 3	

The robustness scores for fragmented coalitions do not show any stable patterns. This is mainly due to the limited number of positive cases, whereby the pathways are supported by only a few positive cases. Hence, changes in the thresholds would alter the solution. This is further reflected in the low fit-oriented and case-oriented checks.