EU Think Tanks' Lobbying Strategies

- Think Tanks' Strategic Choices to Influence Public Policy -

Héloïse Robino

s1518941

Master Thesis

MSc Public Administration, Leiden University

Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs

Supervisor: Dr. Bert Fraussen

2nd Reader: Dr. Valérie Pattyn

The Hague, 11th of June 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

1.1 Topic Definition and Research Question

Over the last decades, think tanks have become increasingly important actors in the field of public policy. They have also become a global phenomenon, having influence not only at the national level but also at the international level (McGann, 2017). In a broad sense, think tanks can be defined as "public policy research analysis and engagement organizations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues, thereby enabling policy makers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy" (McGann, 2017, p. 8). Based on this definition, it can be understood that there are two main target audiences for think tank activities: policy makers and the public. This raises a crucial question: How do think tanks reach these target audiences? Think tanks often try to influence policy making with their research. In that way, they can be considered as a type of interest group, as their main interest is indeed having an impact on public policy. Therefore, think tanks tend to engage in different types of lobbying tactics. These tactics can range from contacting policy makers directly and having meetings with high-level public officials (inside strategy) to organizing public conferences and gaining media attention (outside strategy) (Abelson, 2000; Binderkrantz, 2005). Previous research has looked at the lobbying strategies of interest groups in general, as well as the factors that affect the choice of strategy (Binderkrantz, 2005; Dür & Mateo, 2013; Hanegraaff, Beyers, & De Bruycker, 2016; Weiler & Brändli, 2015). However, literature on the factors that influence the choice of lobbying strategy of think tanks in particular is still scarce. This thesis thus aims at addressing that specific question.

Lobbying strategies are an extremely useful tool of interest groups. Through these strategies, interest groups are able to reach their main goal of influencing public policy. Think tanks, which this study considers as an example of interest groups, have similar broad goals but differ in many aspects. By using the framework of knowledge regime actors proposed by Campbell and Pedersen (2015), think tank are classified as private research organizations, advocacy research organizations, party research organizations, and state research organizations. Each of these categories of actors aim to produce expert knowledge for the purpose of policy making. However, an interesting question to investigate is through which way(s) this expert knowledge reaches its target audience.

For the purpose of this thesis, the scope of the research will focus on think tanks operating at the EU-level and based in Brussels. Brussels is home to various prominent and well-known think tanks, such as for example the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), the European Policy Centre (EPC) or Bruegel. Furthermore, the structure the EU policy environment allows for increased participation of a wide range of actors, including think tanks (Sherrington, 2000). Many EU institutions are located in Brussels, and this gives think tanks numerous lobbying opportunities. The EU provides a particularly interesting case study for research on lobbying strategies, as many types of non-state actors are involved in lobbying for the EU policy agenda. Furthermore, as the EU aims to improve the transparency of its policy process as much as possible, it has created a Transparency Register in which every lobbying organization can register itself and is then checked by the administration. This facilitates the data collection for this thesis, as the data is available, reliable, and recent. The research focuses on data from 2014-2018, as that is the most up to date information to be found.

Various factors are taken into account in the analysis of the lobbying strategy choice. These factors are all based on think tank characteristics that are assumed to have an influence on the choice of strategy. The chosen factors are the following: the type of think tank, the policy capacity of the think tank, the level of financial resources (budget) of the think tank, and the policy focus (specialist or generalist) of the think tank. All of these possible determinants are expected to have an impact on the think tank's choice of an inside lobbying strategy, an outside lobbying strategy, or a mixed lobbying strategy.

This thesis is thus centered on the following research question: **Which factors have an influence on a think tank's choice of lobbying strategy?**

1.2 Academic and Social Relevance

This research aims to contribute to the literature on think tanks, which has been proliferating in the last decades. First of all, it can be said that the number of think tanks has increased sharply in the second half of the 20th century, with 90.5% of all think tanks located in North America and Europe having been established after 1951 (McGann, 2017). Their influence and impact on policy making has also grown exponentially, mostly due to factors such as "globalization and the growth of non-state actors", the "end of national governments' monopoly on information", as well as "the increasing complexity and technical nature of policy problems" (McGann, 2017, p. 11). This hike in think tanks' prominence has pushed scholars and experts to analyze their role and try to measure their influence. This significant interest of

public administration scholars regarding think tanks underlines their important position in public policy making. Based on this, one can affirm that think tanks have become important external stakeholder in the policy making process. While their role is often analyzed in terms of outcome (actual impact on public policies), it is also important to look at the concrete process of influencing policy making. Therefore, it is substantial to understand how think tanks make strategic choices in order to be successful in that process.

Currently, it can be said that there is a certain gap in the literature when it comes to think tank lobbying strategy choice. Some scholars do conceptualize the lobbying activities of think tanks, but without expanding on the factors that influence the choice of activity (Abelson, 2000). Looking at the different influence and strategic activities think tanks engage in listed by Abelson (2000), it is noticeable that there is a wide range of similarities with the activities that interest groups engage in. While the literature on think tanks strategies is still underdeveloped, there is, however, a coherent base of literature which looks at the choice of lobbying strategy of interest groups in general. That literature categorizes lobbying strategies of interest groups in inside strategies and outside strategies. Due to the similar activities and general goals of think tanks and interest groups, this categorization can also be applied to think tanks. Therefore, this thesis aims to adapt the interest group lobbying strategy framework to the case of think tanks in an attempt to understand their lobbying choice, and that way adding to the think tank literature.

Furthermore, this research also adds to the present literature on EU think tanks. There is currently an ample amount of literature on interest groups in the European Union, as well as some literature on think tanks in the European Union (Beyers, 2004; Dür, 2008; Saurugger, 2008; Stone & Ullrich, 2003). The EU context is interesting to look at because it is characterized by a multi-level structure, and thus encompasses various target audiences which think tanks can influence with their expert advice (Sherrington, 2000). Moreover, the European Union's multi-level governance model includes many policy actors, often in the form of networks, which contribute to the policy making process through formal and informal channels. By means of a quantitative research method, this thesis provides a thorough insight on how these channels are exploited by one particular type of policy actor, namely think tanks. This research can thus serve as an initial assessment of the strategic choices of EU think tanks and allows for further study of those strategies.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis is the following: Chapter two will establish the theoretical framework for this research. It starts by giving a definition and examples of an inside lobbying strategy, followed by a definition and examples of an outside lobbying strategy. The relevant theories and literature on the subject are explained and reviewed. At the end of the chapter, potential answers to the research question will be given in the form of hypotheses. Next, Chapter 3 will outline the complete research design, including an operationalization of the independent and dependent variables, as well as information about the research sample and the method of analysis. The chosen method of analysis is a quantitative research, including two negative binomial regressions and a binary logistic regression. Chapter 4 shows the actual results of the data analysis, and an interpretation of these results is given. Lastly, this thesis will end with Chapter 5 which includes a discussion of the results and their relevance, as well as a final conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

It can be said that a wide range of actors are involved in policy-making at the EU-level. All of these actors represent different stakeholders who aim to influence the policy cycle in some way. These actors can take the shape of, for example, business lobbies, civil society organizations, but also epistemic communities such as think tanks. This thesis focuses on think tanks and their lobbying strategies. The following definition of think tanks was developed and used for this thesis: "research organizations comprised of experts who produce knowledge in order to influence public policy". This research thus includes think tanks that are independent (non-governmental and non-partisan), but also think tanks that are party-affiliated or state-affiliated. In their attempt to influence public policy, think tanks use different types of lobbying strategies: inside strategies, outside strategies, or a mix of both. The different types of think tanks, as well as the strategies they use, will be described in this chapter.

One can distinguish four categories of knowledge producing actors to which think tanks can belong: *private academic research organizations*, which are usually politically neutral and carry out research in an academic style; *advocacy research organizations*, which are motivated by certain interests and values and aim to use their research to influence policy makers according to those interests and values; *party research organizations*, which are directly associated with certain political parties and carry out research on behalf of those parties, and are thus politically partisan; and lastly, *state research organizations*, which do not include the participation of civil society but are directly part of different government departments and ministries (Campbell & Pedersen, 2015). It is thus understood that knowledge is produced differently by these different types of research organizations, resulting in different levels of importance on the political agenda. As stated by Campbell and Petersen (2005), "on the one hand, organizations can disseminate knowledge directly to policy makers through position papers and reports written explicitly for them, through testimony provided by organizational representatives to government ministries, committees, and commissions, and by moving personnel from these organizations into government positions" (p. 8). On the other hand, the research carried out by these organizations can influence policy makers indirectly, through its publication in journals or its diffusion by the media, for instance. Think tanks can belong to any of these four types of knowledge regime actors, depending on their type and mission.

Depending on their category, think tanks can use various strategies to achieve their goal of influencing policy making. When it comes to these strategies, a distinction can be made between "insider strategies" vs. "outsider strategies" (Binderkrantz, 2005). In broad terms, insider strategies refer to strategies through which the organization aims at influencing policy makers directly (by having meetings with them, for instance), while outsider strategies refer to less direct approaches (influencing the media, for instance). In other words, inside strategies aim to "gain access", while outside strategies aim to "go public" (Weiler & Brändli, 2015). These types of strategies supposedly determine the access to policy making to different groups. Insider groups might be privileged due to the strategies they use. However, nowadays, organizations and groups tend to use a combination of strategies in order to influence policy making, including at the EU-level. In this chapter, existing literature on think tanks' and interest groups' influence strategies, as well as on the distinction between inside and outside strategies will be reviewed.

2.2 Inside Strategies

The divergence between insider and outsider groups in the policy making process was initially made by Schattschneider, who argued that some groups (insider groups) had privileged access to policy making as well as privileged contact with policy makers, while other groups (outsider groups) didn't (Schattschneider, 1935). However, the actual division between inside and outside *strategies* used by interest groups was made by Grant (1978) in the British context.

> The basic distinction in this paper between insider groups and outsider groups, is a distinction based on interest group strategies, by which is meant the combination of modes of action used by an interest group to attain its goals. It must be emphasised that the acquisition of insider or outsider status by a group involves both a decision by government and a decision by the group concerned. The basic aim of such insider groups is to establish a consultative relationship whereby their views on particular legislative proposals will be sought prior to the crystallisation of the Government's position. (Grant, 1978, p. 2).

In general, inside strategies relate to the direct participation of interest groups in the consultation process of policy making (Maloney, Jordan, & McLaughlin, 1994). Insider interest groups are in direct contact with the policy makers and make use of this direct contact to try to gain support from them. Weiler and Brändli (2015) state that "the aim of [insider strategies] is to influence policy makers directly such that support – and if possible adopt – the policy preferred by the interest group" (p. 746). However, while interest groups usually strive

to make their voice heard in the policy making process, it can also be said that policy makers themselves sometimes ask for the help and the involvement of a certain interest group in that process (Maloney et al., 1994).

Policy makers tend to request the involvement of interest groups when their field of advocacy coincides with the policy theme, since the group will be able to provide relevant information and knowledge on the topic. It is thus important for interest groups to have the capability of producing and providing valuable knowledge and expertise in that policy field. This knowledge and expertise are then used by the policy makers in the creation of a new policy. In certain policy fields, especially highly technical ones, policy makers may lack the required knowledge to fully assess all aspects of a policy, and therefore require expert knowledge from relevant external groups. As mentioned by Beyers (2004), "it is in closed settings such as expert committees, agencies or advisory bodies that the technical pros and cons of policies are scrutinized in detail" (p. 213). Through inside strategies, such as parliamentary meetings, the highly operational and technical information needed and relevant for the policy context will be transmitted to policy makers. It can therefore be said that the relationship between policy makers and insider interest groups is mainly characterized by principles of exchange and reciprocity; on the one hand, policy makers rely upon relevant interest groups for their expertise and knowledge in a certain policy area, while on the other hand those interest groups rely on policy makers' support and inclusion in the policy making process in order to push for their cause.

Binnenkrantz (2005) provides a clear overview of both inside and outside influence strategies and activities used by interest groups. These include various actions that interest groups will undertake to have a certain influence and to include their own policy goals in the policy making process. In this paragraph, inside influence tactics will be described, and outside influence tactics will be explained in the next section. Binnenkrantz (2005) uses the term "direct strategies" to refer to inside strategies, and "indirect strategies" to refer to outside strategies. The direct strategies are divided in two categories, namely administrative strategy, which are "actions directed toward bureaucratic actors" and parliamentary strategy, which refer to "actions targeting politicians and parties" (Binnenkrantz, 2005, p. 696). The following administrative strategies can be identified: "Contacting the relevant minister"; "Contacting national public servants"; "Actively using public committees, etc."; "Responding to requests for comments" (Binnenkrantz, 2005, p. 696). When looking at examples for parliamentary strategies, the following actions can be identified: "Contacting parliamentary committees;

Contacting party spokespersons; Contacting other members of parliament; Contacting party organizations" (Binnenkrantz, 2005, p. 696).

As most scholars argue, interest groups tend to strive for an insider status and the use of inside strategies, as those are considered to give a privileged access and a higher level of involvement in the policy making process (Binnenkrantz, 2005; Grant, 1989; Maloney et al., 1994). Binnenkrantz (2005) states that in the existing literature "the policy process is described as highly structured, providing some groups with insider status, which enables them to be continually involved in decision-making processes" (p. 697). Many interest groups thus try to achieve influence through direct contact with policy makers, since it is believed that this will increase their access to the policy making process. However, it has been noted by some scholars that interest groups increasingly make use of a combination of tactics, and their choice of tactics and strategies is not only based on their policy goals but also on the group type (Binnenkrantz, 2005; Dür & Mateo, 2013).

2.3 Outside Strategies

Oppositely to inside strategies, which focus on achieving direct influence on policy making, outside strategies concentrate on indirect influence. As stated by Hanegraaff, Beyers and De Bruycker (2016), "while inside lobbying privatises conflict and restricts its scope, outside lobbying aims to socialise conflict by involving a broad audience of stakeholders" (p. 569). Instead of trying to gain access to policy making through direct, inside tactics and keeping the policy issue discreet, interest groups might choose to prioritize outside tactics which publicize the issue, aiming to gain a lot of attention. This can be done for example through media campaigns. Outside strategies can be seen as indirect ways to influence the policy issue because they also put pressure on the policy makers not through direct contact but by using external approaches and tools, such as the media and the public. It can thus be said the most common tactics in outside strategies are targeting the media as well as mobilizing the general public.

In addition to providing examples of direct influence strategies and activities, Binnenkrantz (2005) also provides a table of examples of indirect strategies. In this case, the indirect strategies are also divided in two subcategories, namely media strategies and mobilization strategies. As the category labels suggest, media strategies focus on targeting the media, while mobilization strategies focus on mobilization group members or citizens (Binnenkrantz, 2005). Examples of media strategies mentioned by Binnenkrantz (2005)

include "contacting reporters, writing letters to the editor and columns, issuing press releases and holding press conferences, and publicizing analyses and research reports" (p. 696). Regarding mobilization strategies, Binnenkrantz (2005) provides the following examples: "arranging public meetings and conferences, organizing letter-writing campaigns, arranging strikes, civil disobedience, direct action and public demonstrations, and conducting petitions" (p. 696). These methods might be used by interest groups out of necessity, in the case where the group hasn't managed to achieve an insider status and is trying to gain political and media attention. However, interest groups can also use these tactics by choice, if their goal is to obtain high public attention and support for a policy issue (Binnenkrantz, 2005).

There are different circumstances under which interest groups will choose outside influence strategies. Kollman (1998) states that "interest group leaders want to shore up their popular support, because the more support they can credibly demonstrate, the more influence the groups have among policy makers" and that "group leaders try to expand the very thing that they are trying to signal to policy makers" (Preface section, para. 1). Furthermore, through the outside influence strategies mentioned earlier, interest group can manage to "foster citizen engagement" (Deschouwer & Jans, 2007, p. 109). Interest groups that engage in these types of tactics can be for instance cause groups, which are groups that advocate on behalf on the public and defend the general interest (Weiler & Brändli, 2015). As the policy goals of these groups directly involve the public, "only constant discussion and a build-up of peer pressure can solve the collective action problem" (Weiler & Brändli, 2015, p. 748). On the contrary, specific interest groups such as business lobbies usually defend one particular, individual cause relating to a specific group of people who is usually already well-informed about this cause. Therefore, these interests groups don't rely on the support of the large public and will prioritize inside strategies over outside strategies (Dür & Mateo, 2013; Weiler & Brändli, 2015).

In the previous section, it was established that reliable and precise expert knowledge was often needed from interest group using inside strategies, for instance in the form of scientific reports presented to the policymakers. In the case of outside lobbying, which takes place in the public arena, the expert knowledge of interest groups remains important, but the information provided by the groups does not have to be as extensive and highly technical as it does for inside strategies. Thus, while the same core information is also transmitted by the interest groups, it has to be presented, framed, and publicized in a different manner. As argued by Beyers (2004), "public strategies almost inevitably force actors to select and frame information in a way that fits with their values" (p. 214). This means that the information has to be framed

in a way that will attract the large public's attention. Rather than through lengthy and detailed scientific reports on the policy issue, this can be done for instance through media campaigns which then lead to public demonstrations and slogans. These public demonstrations also "inform public officials about potential support or opposition" (Beyers, 2004, p. 215).

2.4 Interest Groups and their Choice of Strategy

It can be said that there is a wide range of different interest group types. The one thing that these groups have in common, however, is their main objective, which is to influence the policy making process and outcome. As a result of the European Union's multilevel governance structure, interest groups have been able to proliferate in that context. Indeed, Dür (2008) states that "the number of interest groups that are active in the European Union increased sharply from the mid-1980s onwards" (p. 1212). This phenomenon can be directly linked to the growing debate regarding the EU's democratic deficit. The current literature on interest groups in the EU "stresses the inherent possibilities of interest groups and 'civil society organisations' to redress, partially at least, the democratic deficit of the EU" (Saurugger, 2008, p. 1275). This can be done by interest groups because they increase citizen involvement in the policy making process, and they aim to defend the interests of different groups or of the general public, depending on their type. Among other things, interest groups can also help mobilizing the public on certain policy issues, which increases citizen participation on the political arena. According to Schlozman (2015), "interest groups are a feature of every functioning democracy" (p. 368).

Based on the type of group they represent, interest group leaders tend to choose different influence strategies (Dür & Mateo, 2013). Dür and Mateo (2013) argue that "group type – namely whether a group is composed of firms, has professionals as members or acts on behalf of a potentially large number of individuals that can only expect diffuse benefits from the group's activities – is the main determinant of interest group strategy" (p. 661). "Material resources" and "issue context" also play a certain role in this choice of strategy (Dür & Mateo, 2013, p. 661). Furthermore, research has shown that the type of policy goals of a certain group is also a determinant of influence strategy (Binderkrantz & Krøyer, 2012). The last important factor in deciding which strategy to use is the institutional structure and context (Weiler & Brändli, 2015). Based on these different factors, interest groups will choose their tactics to influence policy making and make their way into the political sphere. Both inside and outside strategies can be used by interest groups. Often, the most effective way to influence policy making is to use a combination of inside and outside tactics (Weiler & Brändli, 2015). Interest

groups can thus decide to use both inside and outside tactics, since this way they can exert both direct and indirect pressure on the policy makers. However, it should also be noted that "the pursuit of objectives other than influencing public policy – such as maintaining or enlarging the group's membership – may lead groups to adopt specific tactics even if these are ineffective in shaping policies" (Dür, 2008, p. 1218).

2.5 Interest Groups in the European Union

In order to make the EU policy making process as transparent as possible and to avoid any unfair or privileged access to it by certain groups, the European Commission and the European Parliament have set up a transparency register (Transparency and the EU, n.d.). According to the Transparency Register's website, "transparency is also a key part of encouraging European citizens to participate more actively in the democratic life of the EU" (Transparency and the EU, n.d., para. 1). The scope of the Register is defined as follows:

> Activities covered by the Register include lobbying, interest representation and advocacy. It covers all activities designed to influence – directly or indirectly – policy making, policy implementation and decision-making in the EU institutions, not matter where they are carried out or which channel or method of communication is used. The emphasis in on "what you do" rather than "who you are". ("Who is expected to register", n.d.).

This Transparency Register is publicly accessible and contains the interest groups that are involved in the EU policy making process. Interest groups are classified in the following categories: I. Professional consultancies/law firms/self-employed consultants; II. In-house lobbyists and trade/business/professional associations; III. Non-governmental organizations; IV. Think tanks, research and academic institutions; V. Organizations representing churches and religious communities; VI. Organizations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc. (Transparency and the EU, n.d.). As of the 27th of April 2018, there are a total of 11.742 different groups registered in the Transparency Register. In August 2016, this number amounted to 9.752 (Greenwood, 2017). This reflects the rapid boost of interest groups in the European Union. The following table shows the current number of groups and organizations for each category and subcategory:

(Sub)categories		*Total*
I. Professional consultancies/law firms/self-employed consultants		**1.286**
	Professional consultancies	763
	Law firms	140
	Self-employed consultants	383
II. In-house lobbyists and trade/business/professional associations		**5.799**
	Companies & groups	2.211
	Trade and business associations	2.372
	Trade unions and professional associations	883
	Other organisations	333
III. Non-governmental organisations		**3.100**
	Non-governmental organisations, platforms and networks and similar	3.100
IV. Think tanks, research and academic institutions		**920**
	Think tanks and research institutions	589
	Academic institutions	331
V. Organisations representing churches and religious communities		**50**
	Organisations representing churches and religious communities	50
VI. Organisations representing local, regional and municipal authorities, other public or mixed entities, etc.		**587**
	Regional structures	114
	Other sub-national public authorities	105
	Transnational associations and networks of public regional or other sub-national authorities	83

Other public or mixed entities, created by law whose purpose is to act in the public interest	285

Table 1: EU Transparency Register organizations, 2018

2.6 Think Tanks at the EU-Level

Think tanks can be considered as a type of interest group since their mission is often to influence policy making through their research and expert knowledge. The organizations and groups responsible for carrying out policy research and attempting to influence new policies can be divided in different knowledge regimes. There are various ways to differentiate and characterize knowledge regimes, such as by "the content of the knowledge it produces, how knowledge production is organized, and how it functions" (Campbell & Pedersen, 2005, p. 6). It can be said that knowledge regimes play an important role on influencing which policy ideas and themes are set on the political agenda.

It has been shown that think tanks operate differently in distinct political and institutional systems (Kelstrup, 2017). After comparing think tanks in Germany, the UK, and Denmark, Kelstrup (2017) states that "the quantitative comparison indicates that there is variation in the dissemination activities of think tanks in the three policy advisory systems" (p. 126). Some think tanks decided to prioritize publications and organizing events, while others focus on getting media attention, for instance, and these differences correlate to the different political environments the think tanks operate in. Another example is France, which has traditionally been a strong statist political economy. Independent think tanks tend to play a much smaller role in providing public policy research than state research organizations such as for instance the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Independent think tanks are mostly operating in the fields of defense and foreign relations. (Monange, 2008). In the case of EU think tanks, it can be said that the European political system is quite complex and therefore makes an interesting case study. The multi-level structure of the EU allows for an increased role of non-state actors, including think tanks (Sherrington, 2000). According to Monange (2008), "European policymakers, as well as journalists and members of civil society, rely heavily on expert advice" (p. 909). This gives think tanks the opportunity to engage intensively in both inside and outside lobbying. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that "given the multi-level nature of EU policy making, there are also a variety of access points, or target audiences for think tanks, with some providing financial support" (Sherrington, 2000, p. 175).

There are other factors that make EU think tanks different from national think tanks in the way they operate. First of all, it is interesting to note that a wide range of EU-centered think tanks are located in Brussels. This gives them an advantage regarding direct lobbying, as they are located close to the main EU institutions and are able to communicate directly with an important target audience, namely high-level EU officials and policy makers. Furthermore, as stated by Stone and Ullrich (2003), "their independence from any member-state government means that they are relatively immune from the influence of national political and policy agendas, which may in turn enhance their credibility at the EU level" (p. 17). Thus, in some aspects, their positions gives them a certain advantage. Moreover, while Brussels-based EU think tanks do not receive state funding like most national think tanks, they generally receive funding from the European Commission itself (Stone & Ullrich, 2003). Despite this funding, however, many EU think tanks are self-proclaimed independent institutions.

2.7 Think Tanks as a Type of Interest Group: Inside and Outside Strategies

Just as interest groups, think tanks will also engage in different types of influence and lobbying strategies. Studies have shown that the extent to which a think tank's influence in policymaking is effective or not is based on various factors, namely "how these institutions define their missions, the directors who lead them and the resources and strategies they employ to achieve their stated goals, as with the political environment they inhabit" (Abelson, 2000, p. 215). Just as other types of interest groups such as business lobbies or civil society organizations, think tanks try to attract policy makers' attention in order to gain access to the policy making process. Therefore, think tanks, just as other types of interest groups, may choose inside tactics, outside tactics, or, as it often the case, a combination of both. The tactics need to be based on the target. Some influencing methods and strategies are more adapted to certain audiences, and that is why think tanks need to define their target in order to get their attention.

If a think tank wants to be effective in influencing the policy making process, its "objective should be to capture [policy makers'] attention so they direct their staff to read the 300-page book or report" (McGann, 2017, p. 15). This can be achieved by adopting a thorough and adequate communication and influence strategy. All types of interest groups need to have a clear idea of their own mission and goals. This is also valid for think tanks. Accordingly, based on their mission and goals, think tanks should develop and plan their strategy. The previous section looked at the choice of influence strategies for interest groups in general. However, it can be said that think tanks differ from other types of interest groups in various

ways, and this will also affect their choice of strategies. For instance, think tanks tend to have a stronger focus on research than other types of organizations. Indeed, as stated by Sherrington (2000), think tanks' "primary aim is to disseminate that research as widely as possible with the intention of influencing policy making processes" (p. 174).

The research carried out by think tanks thus aims at producing expert knowledge, which in turn will possibly be incorporated in the policy making process. Furthermore, think tanks' missions often state that this research has the goal of improving public policy and is in the general interest of the population. Thus, in addition influencing public policy making, think thanks also intend to influence the public opinion (Sherrington, 2000). Therefore, the result their work and research tend to be publicized and shared with a wider audience, for example through publications, and different types of events such as conferences, lectures, and seminars. One might thus assume that think tanks allocate an important part of their influence strategy budget for outside tactics, since the goal of their research might also be to educate the public. In this case, think tanks might prioritize an indirect communication and influence strategy. However, think tanks might also prioritize a direct, inside strategy if the think tank already has strong connections to high-level policy makers. If high-level officials are the main target audience of the think tank, an effective tactic to reach them and present them the research would be through direct meetings. But this can't be done by any think tank, as an extensive network is needed, and not all think tanks are in that position.

Based on this, it could be assumed that a think tank with a higher *policy capacity* (measured as the number of lobbyists within the think tank) might opt for an inside strategy rather than an outside strategy, since a higher number of lobbyists is linked to a broader network. In this research, the policy capacity is defined as the extent to which the organization can utilize the relevant policy knowledge in order to influence the policy making process, for instance through skilled lobbyists. A high level of policy capacity might lead the think tank to opt for an inside strategy since the think tank will have highly-skilled lobbyists that can easily engage in inside lobbying through direct contact with the policy makers. Through extended contact with policy makers and other officials, think tank lobbyists can build an important network which facilitates inside lobbying. Another assumption that could be made is that think tanks with a higher *level of financial resources* might on the one hand do outside strategies since they can afford to engage in public outreach activities, but on the other hand they might engage in inside strategies since their high amount of resources allow them to do that too. Some scholars have argued that resource-rich organizations tend to rely more on inside strategies,

since these are usually more costly (Dür & Mateo, 2013). However, depending on the type of outside lobbying tactic, these can also be quite costly. For instance, publishing press releases is a cheap tactic that might be useful for resource-poor groups; other outside tactics though, such as organizing a collective public demonstration, or producing information of high quality and high interest that will be covered by the media, can be more costly and can't be achieved by resource-poor organizations (Trevor Thrall, 2006). Therefore, think tanks with a high level of resources might opt for an inside strategy or a mixed strategy, while think tanks with a low level of resources tend to opt for an outside strategy. Furthermore, an additional characteristic that might influence the choice of strategy of a think tank is its *policy focus*. EU think tanks may either be specialist, i.e. carrying out extensive research in only one policy area, or generalist, i.e. carrying out research in a wide range of policy areas. A specialist think tank might engage more in inside lobbying activities, such as meetings with policy makers, since it has high level of expertise in one specific area and "[is] seen by policy makers as a reliable and authoritative source of information" in that area (Maloney et al., 1994, p. 30). Policy makers will thus be tempted to consult this highly specialized think tank on specific issues within this policy areas. Lastly, the *type* of think tank could also be a determinant in the choice of lobbying strategy. Think tanks can be categorized into four aforementioned types of research organizations: private academic research organizations; advocacy research organizations; party research organizations; and state research organizations. Based on the descriptions of each of these categories, one could assume that private academic research organizations would opt for outside strategies, since they are politically neutral and thus probably wouldn't engage in active, direct lobbying because that isn't their main goal. Advocacy research organizations might opt for a mixed strategy, since they are motivated by some interests and try to actively influence policy makers, but they might not have the required network to only engage in inside lobbying and require public support too, and therefore engage in public outreach activities (outside strategies) too. Party research organizations might prioritize inside lobbying since their extended network allow them to come into contact with policy makers more easily. Lastly, state research organizations might engage in an outside strategy in order to educate and influence the public, and they do not really need to engage in inside lobbying since they are already directly affiliated with the state. Based on these assumptions, the following hypotheses can be drawn:

H1: Think tanks with a higher policy capacity tend to engage in inside lobbying strategies, while think tanks with a lower policy capacity are less likely to engage in inside lobbying strategies.

H2: Think tanks with a higher level of financial resources tend to engage in inside (and possibly also outside) lobbying strategies; think tanks with a lower level of financial resources tend to engage in outside strategies.

H3: Specialist think tanks tend to engage in inside lobbying strategies while generalist think tanks tend to engage in outside lobbying strategies.

H4: The type of think tank has an impact on its lobbying strategy choice: PRAOs tend to engage in outside lobbying; AROs tend engage in both inside and outside strategies; PROs tend to engage in inside lobbying; SROs tend to engage in outside lobbying.

The following figure provides an overview of all those assumptions:

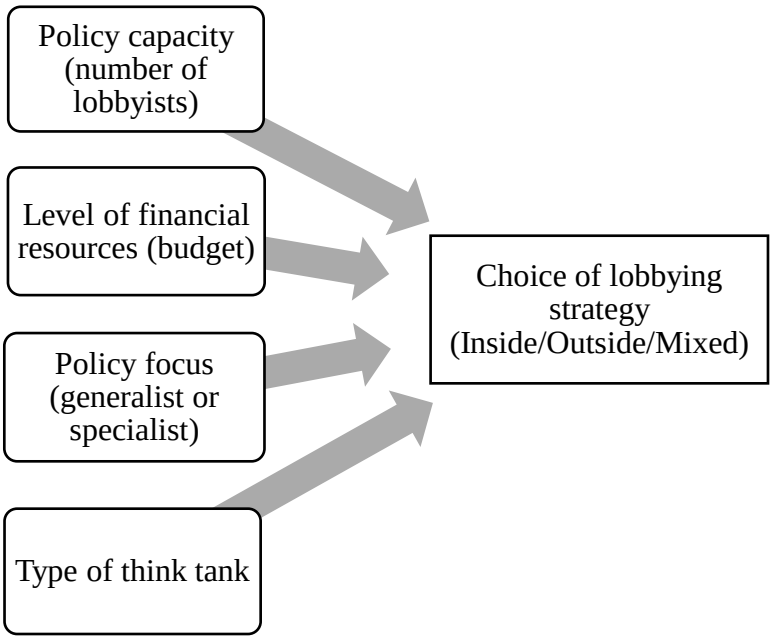

Figure 1: Overview of Assumptions

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this thesis research was introduced. First, the relevance of expert knowledge was explained and linked to the role of interest groups in policy making. Four different types of knowledge regime actors were identified – private academic research organizations, advocacy research organizations, party research organizations, state research organizations – and it was made clear that interest groups, in particular think tanks, can belong to any of these categories. Second, the influence strategies of interest groups were described and analyzed. An important distinction is made between inside influence strategies (direct strategies), which include contacting party officials, contacting national public servants, and contacting parliamentary committees; and outside influence strategies (indirect strategies), which include arranging public meetings, arranging public demonstrations, and conducting petitions. As was explained previously, the choice of strategies is made by leaders based on various factors. Since this research focuses on think tanks at the EU-level (involved in EU-policy making), an insight of interest groups in the European Union was presented. It was made clear that interest groups play an important role in the EU. Out of the current 11.742 interest groups registered in the EU Transparency Register, 920 belong to the category of think tank, research and academic institutions; out of these, 589 belong to the subcategory of think tanks and research institutions. These EU think tanks can be considered an interesting case study to look at lobbying strategies due to the EU's institutional context. Lobbying strategies choices of think tanks in particular were looked at. Different assumptions were made between the choice of lobbying strategies and various characteristics of the think tanks, namely the policy capacity, the level of financial resources, the policy focus, and the type. The following research aims at testing those assumptions in order to identify the factors influencing the choice of lobbying strategies of think tanks in EU policy making.

3. Research Design and Data Collection

3.1 Introduction

The goal of this research is to test the aforementioned hypotheses and to identify the factors influencing lobbying strategy choice among think tanks based on their characteristics. This chapter will describe how the research was designed, including the research sample, the dependent and independent variables and the relating indicators. The research sample is based on the relevant population which is EU think tanks. The dependent variables are based on the lobbying strategies described in the Theoretical Framework: inside strategy vs. outside strategy. Lastly, the independent variables are based on the factors mentioned in Section 2.7, which are assumed to affect the choice of strategy.

3.2 Selected Think Tanks

In order to carry out this research, a list containing information on 75 EU think tanks (i.e. think tanks concerned with EU-level policy making) was established. This list was made by selecting all institutions and organizations registered in the EU Transparency Register under the subcategory of "think tanks and research institutions", and subsequently filtering the results to keep only the ones that are based in Brussels, Belgium. The focus of this thesis is on EU think tanks, since, as was explained previously, the institutional structure and context of the EU makes a very interesting case regarding lobbying strategies. Brussels is considered the capital of the European Union, since most of its main institutions are located there. It is thus in Brussels that EU-policies are discussed and implemented, and therefore it is also there that lobbying strategies and attempts to influence the policy making process are most prominent and effective. Proximity to European institutions is an advantage in lobbying for EU policies. Therefore, only EU think tanks based in Brussels were chosen for this research, as they are located in the heart of the European Union and can be expected to be strongly involved in EU-policy making.

This criteria selection provided the following list of think tanks (together with the date they registered to the Transparency Register):

Registration date:	**Name of the organization:**
04/06/2015	ACM EUROPE (ACM-E)

01/12/2014	Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE)
19/11/2011	Association of European-level Research Infrastructure Facilities (ERF-AISBL)
09/02/2016	BELGIAN BRAIN COUNCIL (BBC)
27/09/2011	Bruegel
25/01/2013	Buildings Performance Institute Europe (BPIE)
24/09/2015	Carnegie Europe
24/11/2016	Centre de Recherches Métallurgiques (CRM asbl)
29/09/2016	Centre DEV Attitude (CDA)
16/09/2011	Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)
15/02/2011	Centre Maurits Coppieters (CMC)
21/08/2013	Centre on Regulation in Europe (CERRE)
16/09/2016	CENTRE SCIENTIFIQUE & TECHNIQUE DE L'INDUSTRIE TEXTILE BELGE (Centexbel)
21/10/2016	Cercle Athenagora
31/03/2017	Club des Organismes de Recherche Associés (CLORA)
26/07/2011	Concawe (Concawe)
21/12/2012	EU-Asia Centre (EAC)
13/01/2015	EuroComment
02/07/2015	Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA)
07/02/2012	European Association for Negotiation and Mediation (EANAM)
19/10/2012	European Bitumen Association (Eurobitume)
23/11/2011	European Capital Markets Institute (ECMI)
28/05/2014	European Centre for Public Affairs 2.0 (ecpa2.0)
16/02/2015	European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)
01/11/2014	European Federation for Investment Law and Arbitration (EFILA)
02/03/2017	European Forum for Animal Welfare Councils (EuroFAWC)
15/09/2011	European Foundation for Democracy (EFD)
12/03/2018	European Health Parliament (EHP)
02/09/2014	European Heritage Heads Forum (EHHF)
03/07/2013	European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS)
05/12/2011	European Institute for Export Compliance (EIFEC)

21/04/2015	European Institute for Health (EIH)
29/02/2016	EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR POLICY AND ANALYSIS (ERIPA)
28/06/2016	European Institute for Political Initiative and Strategic Analysis (EIPISA)
19/09/2016	European Neighbourhood Council (ENC)
22/01/2009	European Policy Centre (EPC)
04/05/2016	European Policy Information Center (EPICENTER)
23/07/2009	European Privacy Association (EPA)
03/04/2017	European Research Institute of Catalysis a.i.s.b.l. (ERIC a.i.s.b.l.)
18/11/2010	European Risk Forum (ERF)
18/11/2009	European Road Transport Telematics Implementation Coordination Organisation-Intelligent Transport Systems & Services Europe (ERTICO-ITS Europe)
22/12/2016	European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)
11/08/2009	EUROSIF A.I.S.B.L (EUROPEAN SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT FORUM) (EUROSIF)
24/05/2017	Farm Europe (FE)
10/09/2009	Forum of European National Highway Research Laboratories (FEHRL)
23/09/2011	Friends of Europe (FoE)
05/06/2013	Fundamental Rights European Experts Group (FREE Group)
30/01/2017	Global Cyber Alliance Belgium (GCA)
07/07/2015	Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la sécurité (GRIP)
08/04/2016	Impact Assessment Institute (IAI)
08/12/2011	Institut Européen de Bioéthique-European Institute of Bioethics (IEB-EIB)
15/01/2018	Instituut Natuur- en Bosonderzoek/Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO)
16/03/2018	International Committee In Search of Justice (ISJ)
30/04/2015	Joint Institute for Innovation Policy (JIIP)

12/12/2011	Kangaroo Group
04/03/2015	Mazungumzo - The African Forum in Brussels (Mazungumzo)
24/02/2015	Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI Europe)
28/07/2015	Observatoire social européen (OSE)
07/12/2014	PubAffairsBruxelles ASBL (PABXL)
05/10/2017	Re-Imagine Europa (RIE)
25/04/2017	Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels Office
30/04/2012	Science Europe (SE)
24/11/2017	SCOPE Europe (Self and Co-Regulation for an Optimized Policy Environment in Europe) (SCOPE Europe)
03/06/2015	Service de lutte contre la pauvreté, la précarité et l'exclusion sociale
29/11/2011	South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)
13/03/2017	Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy Europe (TIMEP Europe)
20/09/2017	The Democratic Society (Demsoc)
19/05/2017	The Friday Group (VGV)
27/11/2015	The German Marshall Fund of the United States - Transatlantic Center (GMF)
05/12/2014	The Institute of International and European Affairs, Brussels (IIEA Brussels)
05/10/2008	The Lisbon Council for Economic Competitiveness and Social Renewal asbl (The Lisbon Council)
19/07/2013	ThinkYoung (TY)
03/01/2014	Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)
18/02/2013	VoteWatch Europe AISBL (VoteWatch)
19/02/2015	Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES)

Table 2: List of Brussels-based EU Think Tanks

In the EU Transparency Register, organizations register themselves and choose which category their organization belong to and should be registered as. It can thus be said that the organizations in the table above define themselves as think tanks. In order to make sure that the Transparency Register stays as accurate and precise as possible, the Joint Transparency Register Secretariat (JTRS), which is a team of officials from the European Parliament and the European Commission, was set up (Joint Transparency Register Secretariat, 2016). Its tasks

include performing a quality check of all registered organizations in the Transparency Register, to ensure that the entered data is correct, up to date and complete. When choosing the category in which to register, the organization should consider its own objectives, mission, structure, legal status, but most importantly its activities. An organization can only register under one category. It can thus be assumed that all the organizations mentioned in the table above belong primarily to the category of think tanks, according to their own activities and status. This table therefore displays the relevant population for this research. Furthermore, organizations who wish to engage in direct lobbying at the European Parliament and the European Commission are obligated to register to the TR.

3.3 Dependent Variables

In this research, the dependent variables are the types of strategy used by the think tanks. This can be either an inside strategy, an outside strategy, or a mix of both strategies. Two indicators have been chosen in order to assess and analyze the influence tactics and strategies chosen by EU think tanks. These strategies are reflected in a certain think tank's activities. The collected data for both inside and outside strategy indicators aims to show which type of activities are prioritized by a particular think tank. As was explained previously, think tanks tend to engage in different kinds of activities based on the targeted audiences. The main task of a think tank is to conduct research, but in addition to that the think tank can be involved in plethora of activities which are meant to share this research with different types of audiences, ranging from the general public to policy makers, but also journalists, scholars, and business executives. As stated by Stone (2000), "think tanks provide an organizational link and communication bridge between their different audiences" (p. 156). The goal is thus often to address different audiences rather than only one. However, some activities are prioritized by the think tanks. Often, a certain balance is found in order to connect both the general public and high-level policy officials, while also including other groups such as journalists, academics, activists, etc. The strategic plan that encompasses the think tank's activities aims to create impact – among policy makers and among the general public. For the purpose of this research, all the collected data for the selected indicators is quantitative.

3.4 Inside Strategy Indicator

To measure inside strategy, the following indicator is looked at:

	Meetings with the European Commission
Metric	Number of high-level lobby meetings with the European Commission per lobby organization.
Time range	2014-2018
Source	*EU Integrity Watch website/Transparency Register*

Table 3: Inside Strategies Indicator

This variable aims at assessing the level of direct lobbying activities carried out by the different think tanks. The target audience is comprised of policy makers, political decision makers, and any other high-level official who is directly concerned with policy making at the EU-level. The indicator refers to the number of meeting held between EU officials and representatives of the think tank. This data can easily be found on the EU Integrity Watch database, which is an initiative of Transparency International EU allowing any member of the public to monitor lobbying practices in the EU. The Commission Decisions 2014/838/EU and 2014/839/EU have made it mandatory for Commissioners, their Cabinet, and Director-Generals to publish their lobby meetings (European Commission, 2014). These decisions aimed to increase the level of transparency and integrity of the European Commission. Since these decision came into effect in 2014, the most recent available accurate data dates from that year. For this reason, the time range chosen for this indicator is from 2014 to 2018, which allows for up to date, relevant data. The number of private meetings between EU policy makers and think tank officials is a clear measure of a direct lobbying tactic. As was explained earlier, direct tactics aim to come in contact with policy makers through direct channels. By engaging in meetings with decision makers, think tank representatives are able to present their research and their expertise in a straightforward manner. This is also an opportunity for think tanks to increase their networking ability, and to strengthen their connection with policy makers themselves in order to build up their own influence. The EU Integrity Watch database allows users to search for Commission meetings and gives the date of the meeting, the name of the European Commission host, the name of the lobbying organization, and the subject of the meeting, among other things. The data collected for this indicators was found by looking up each think tank and looking at the total number of meetings with the EC since 2014.

3.5 Outside Strategy Indicator

In order to assess and analyze the outside strategies and tactics of EU think tanks, the following indicator has been chosen:

	Media citations		
Metric	Number of mentions of the organization in the **Financial Times**	Number of mentions of the organization in **Agence Europe**	Number of mentions of the organization in the **Wall Street Journal**
Time range	2014-2018	2014-2018	2014-2018
Source	*Factiva (from Dow Jones)*		

Table 4: Outside Strategies Indicator

This indicator assesses how think tanks target the broad public rather than high-level policy makers. Computing the number of media citations is a commonly used quantitative indicator to measure think tank performance (Clark & Roodman, 2013). As stated by Clark and Roodman (2013), "this metric has the benefit of being low-cost and relatively easy to collect" (p. 1). The data for this indicator was collected via the global news database Factiva.com, which allows users to browse from a wide number of international newspapers online. The three chosen newspapers are the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal, and Agence Europe. The Financial Times was chosen because it is one of the biggest English-language newspaper, and it is based in the UK (based in a European country). The second chosen newspaper is the Wall Street Journal, which is also one of the biggest English-language newspaper, but based in the United States. This allows for a comparison between media citations of EU think tanks in a European newspaper and in an American newspaper. Lastly, the third chosen media is Agence Europe, which is a European-wide press agency that publishes a daily news issue covering European economic and political integration. It can be considered one of the main press publication on EU-wide topics. Hence, the three chosen newspapers are expected to provide an overview of the global outreach of the think tanks in terms of outside strategy. The indicator includes not only European-based media but also an US-based news outlet, which widens the research by looking at those think tanks from a global perspective. Indeed, it has been previously noted that think tanks are an increasingly global phenomenon, and even EU think tanks might target a global audience through their outside activities (McGann, 2017). The time range chosen for the collected data is from 2014 to 2018, which coincides with the data from the inside strategy indicator. In order to find the relevant data, the full name of the think tank

in quotation marks was typed into the Factiva search engine and the results were filtered by years and publication. In the case of some think tanks, the keywords had to be a little be more precise to make sure that the results were indeed about the think tank. For instance, Bruegel is also the name of a painter, so in order to have relevant results, the following keywords were entered: "Bruegel" think tank. The resulting number is the number of articles in the given publication which contains the name of the think tank at least once. Looking at how many times a certain think tank has been cited in traditional media gives us an idea of the extent to which the think tank's research is disseminated to the general public.

3.6 Independent Variables

In order to find out what factors can influence the choice of strategy of the think tanks, four different variables have been selected. The variables are the following: *Level of resources*; *Policy Focus*; *Policy Capacity*; and *Think Tank Type*. The indicators in the table below are used to measure these variables. These indicators are based on different characteristics of think tanks that are assumed to have an impact in their choice of lobbying strategy. The chosen indicators are the following:

	Level of Resources	**Policy Focus**	**Policy Capacity**	**Think Tank Type**
Metric	Total budget of the organization	Policy focus of the organization: Generalist or Specialist	Total number of lobbyists within the organization	Type of think tank based on Campbell and Pedersen's (2015) categorization
Time Range	Most recent available data since 2014	Not applicable	Most recent available data since 2014	Not applicable
Source	*EU Integrity Watch website/Transparency Register*	*Transparency Register/Think tank website (mission & focus)*	*EU Integrity Watch website/Transparency Register*	*Think tank website (mission & focus)*

Table 5: Possible Determinants of Strategy

These possible determinants are based on the last paragraph of Section 2.7. In that paragraph, assumptions were made on which different think tank characteristics could have an impact on the choice of lobbying strategy of think tanks.

The first variable is the level of resources of a certain think tank, which is assessed by looking at the total budget of the think tank for the most recent financial year. This information is available on the Transparency Register. The second variable is the policy focus, which can be either specialist or generalist. The indicator for this variable can be measured by looking at the policy fields in which the think tank is implicated. This information can be found on the Transparency Register and on the websites of the think tanks. If a think tank carries out research in one general policy field, for example the environment (including subfields such as climate change; sustainability; CO2 emissions), it will be categorized as a specialist think tank. If a think tank carries out research in various general policy fields, such as security; economics; foreign affairs; trade; and education, it will be categorized as a generalist think tank. The third variable is the policy capacity of a think tank. The policy capacity will be measured as the total number of lobbyists within the think tank. This measure represents the capacity of the think tank to engage in influence strategies through its organizational capital. This number of lobbyists was taken directly from the data available on the Transparency Register. The specific title for this data in the Register is "Number of persons [from the organization] involved in the activities [covered by the Register]", which are activities "carried out with the objective of directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and the decision-making processes of the EU institutions, irrespective of where they are undertaken and of the channel or medium of communication used" (Joint Transparency Register Secretariat, 2015, p. 9). Lastly, the fourth variable will be the type of think tank. This can be either private research organization, advocacy research organization, party research organization, or state research organization. The categorization is made by looking at the think tanks' descriptions and mission statements, which inform the reader of the think tanks' goals (advocating for certain interests or not), and affiliation (with a political party, a business, etc.), and allows for categorization into one of the four types.

Table 6 and Table 7 provide a descriptive overview of the four independent variables. The first variable, *PolicyFocus*, is a categorical variable that was coded based on the policy focus (generalist or specialist) of the think tank. The generalist think tanks were coded as 1 and the specialist think tanks were coded as 2. Think tanks carrying out research in one general policy field, for example the environment (including subfields such as climate change;

sustainability; CO2 emissions), were categorized as specialist think tanks. Think tanks carrying out research in various general policy fields, such as security; economics; foreign affairs; trade; and education, were categorized as generalist think tanks. In Table 9, the distribution of each category of the categorical variables is given. It can thus be seen that there are 34 specialist think tanks (46,6%) and 39 generalist think tanks (53,4%) in the sample, which is a rather equal distribution of the data.

The second variable, *Type*, is also a categorical variable, and it was coded based on the type of research organization the think tank belonged to, namely 1 for private academic research organizations (independent and not affiliated), 2 for advocacy research organizations (advocacy), 3 for party research organizations (political party affiliated), and 4 for state research organizations (state affiliated). Looking at Table 9, it can be seen that 33 think tanks (45,2%) belong to the first type, 27 think tanks (37,0%) belong to the second type, 7 think tanks (9,6%) belong to the third type, and 6 think tanks (8,2%) belong to the fourth type. While there is clearly a larger number of type 1 and 2 think tanks, the other two types are still significant and present, which makes the data relevant.

The third variable *Budget (ln)*, was computed by transforming the initial *Budget* (continuous) variable (which showed the total budget of each think tank in euro) and using its natural logarithm (ln) as the value. The natural logarithm is used instead of the initial value because the effects of an increase in the budget aren't linear. The data for the budget of two think tanks was not included, as it couldn't be found online and the think tanks didn't reply when contacted about this information. There are thus 73 values for *Budget (ln)*, ranging from 6,91 to 12,60.

Lastly, the fourth independent variable is *PolicyCapacity (ln)*. This variable was also transformed from the initial *PolicyCapacity* (continuous) variable (total number of lobbyists per think tank) by using its natural logarithm (ln). The values for *LNPolicyCapacity* range from 0,00 to 3,99.

Independent Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Type	75	1	4	1,81	,911
PolicyFocus	75	1	2	1,47	,502
PolicyCapacity (ln)	75	,00	3,99	1,4903	,99156
Budget (ln)	73	6,91	17,66	12,6013	2,31575
Valid N (listwise)	73				

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis of Independent Variables

			N	Percent
Factor	***Type***	4	6	8,2%
		3	7	9,6%
		2	27	37,0%
		1	33	45,2%
		Total	73	100,0%
	Policy Focus	2	34	46,6%
		1	39	53,4%
		Total	73	100,0%

Table 7: Distribution of Categorical Variables

4. Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data that was described and collected in chapter 3 is analyzed. The chapter starts off with a descriptive analysis, using histograms to give a clear overview of the distribution of the data, and providing some key examples to illustrate the analysis. In Section 4.3, the relationship between the independent variables and the first dependent variable (inside strategy) is analyzed using a negative binomial regression model. In Section 4.4, the same method is used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and the second dependent variable (outside strategy). Section 4.5 provides an analysis of the relationship between the independent variables and the third dependent variable (mixed strategy) using a binary logistic regression model. The results are discussed in each section. Lastly, Section 4.6 provides a general discussion of all the results in relation to the hypotheses; the hypotheses are evaluated accordingly.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The number of observations in the sample is 75 (N=75). The mean number of meetings with the European Commission per think tank is 3,33 and the mean number of media mentions per think tank is 21,68. Regarding the outside strategy indicator we see a high standard deviation of 79,683, meaning that the data is more spread from the mean. The standard deviation for the inside strategy indicator is 7,830. It can also be observed that the number of meetings per think tank ranges from 0 and 48, and the number of media citations per think tanks ranges from 0 to 613. The figures below provide an overview of the data.

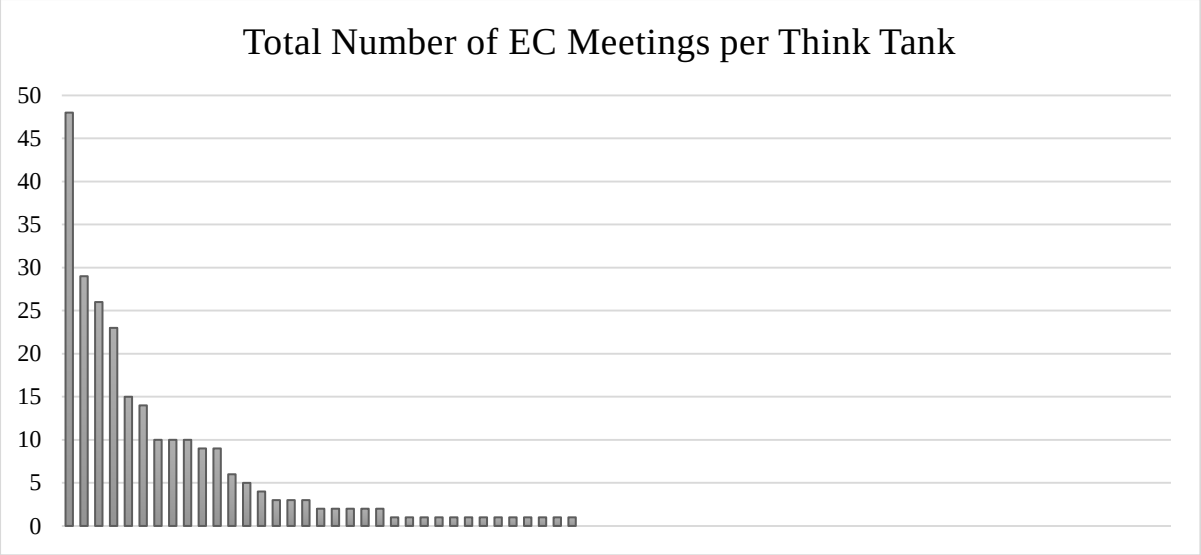

Figure 2: Inside Strategy Distribution

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the dependent variable "inside strategy". As explained in the previous chapter, the chosen indicator for this variable is the total number of meetings between think tank officials and members of the European Commission. It can be observed that about half (35 out of 75) of the total list of Brussels-based EU think tanks engages in inside strategy activities (but not necessarily exclusively). The date, topics, and main attendees of each meeting are made highly transparent online in order to promote integrity (Transparency Register). For instance, it can be observed that the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) has had a total of 48 meetings at the European Commission since 2014. The most recent meeting was held on the 7th of March, 2018, and was hosted by the First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans. It dealt with the topics of gender equality and the future of Europe. Another, less well-known, think tank that has had EC meetings is the European Risk Forum. The ERF has had a total of 5 meetings at the European Commission, including one on the 17th of March, 2017, with Marco Valletta (a Cabinet member of Commissioner Vytenis Andruikaitis), on the topics of the precaution principle and the European Food Safety Authority. A last example is the Democratic Society, which has had one meeting at the European Commission on the 22nd of January, 2018, with Maximilian Strotmann (Cabinet member of Vice-President Andrus Ansip), on the topic of eGovernment. It is thus noticeable that the topics discussed in EC meeting cover a wide range of policy fields.

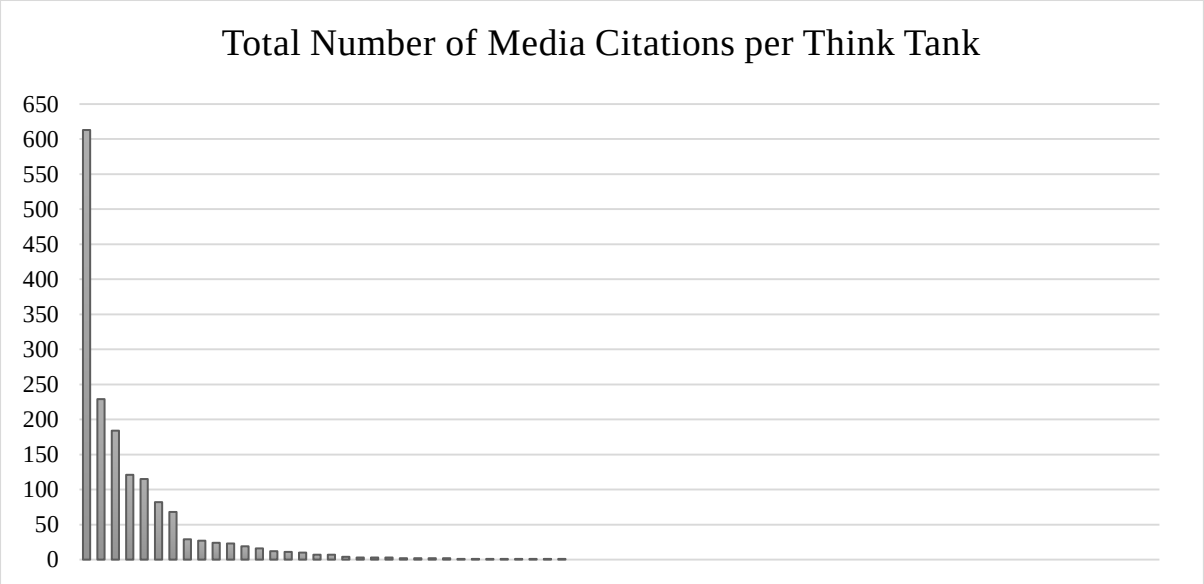

Figure 3: Outside Strategy Distribution

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the dependent variable "outside strategy", which is measured as the number of mentions of the think tank's name in mainstream media. The number of think tanks engaging in outside strategy activities (but not necessarily exclusively) is 34 out of 75. Looking at Figure 3, it can be noticed that a couple of think tanks are particularly prominent in terms of media mentions, having been mentioned more than 50. These are the following: the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES), the German Marshall Fund of the United States – Transatlantic Center (GMF), Friends of Europe (FoE), the European Policy Centre (EPC), the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Carnegie Europe, and Bruegel[1]. These five think tanks have a relatively level of financial resources (all of them have a budget above 1 million €). All of them are generalist think tanks, except for Bruegel which is a specialist think tank. They also all have a high level of policy capacity, with a number of lobbyists above 15, except for the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies. However, it should be noted that the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies is affiliated to a political party, as it is the official think tank of the European People's Party, which is the largest party in the European Parliament and the European Council (European Parliament, n.d.). It can thus be expected to have a large network and a large media presence. The main factors impacting the media presence and outside strategies of think tanks will be looked at in more details in the regression analysis in the sections below.

[1] It can be noted that Bruegel is also the name of a famous painter. In order to avoid any problems with the results of the data collection, the data was collected the following way: In Factiva, the name of the think tank was put in between quotation marks, and the key words "think tank" were added to make sure that the results would include media publications of the think tank itself (["Bruegel" think tank] was entered into the search engine).

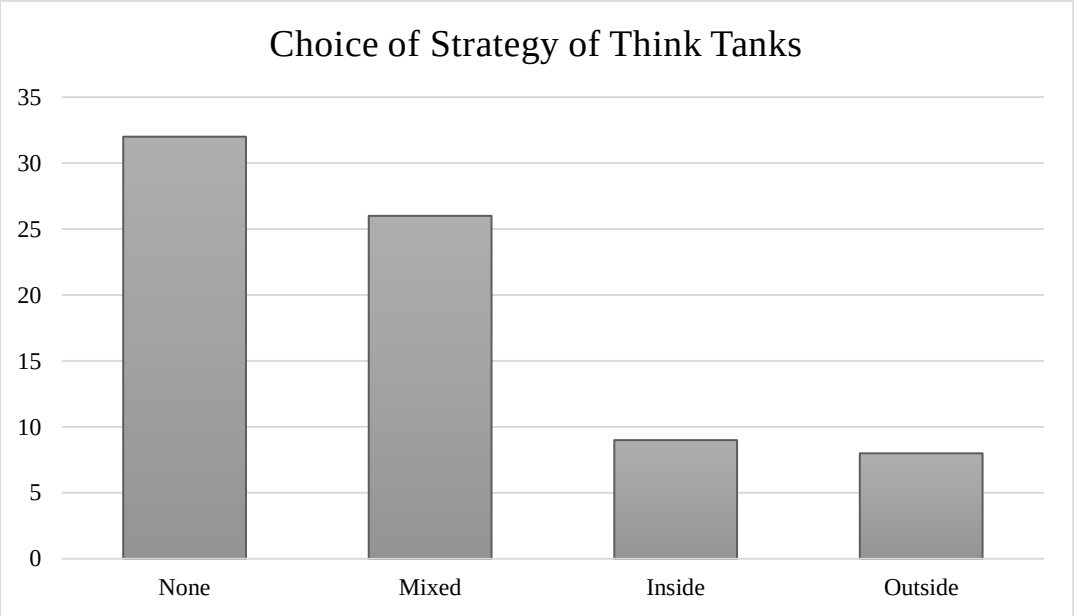

Figure 4: Choice of Strategy

Looking at Figure 4, it can be observed that a wide range of think tanks (32) did not show evidence of either lobbying strategy style based on the chosen indicators. This could be explained for instance by the year of establishment of the think tank: if it has been established too recently, it might not have engaged in lobbying strategies yet. Another possibility is that it didn't engage in the specific tactic chosen as indicators for the purpose of this study. However, the number of EC meetings is the most significant indicator of direct lobbying. Regarding the media mentions, three highly relevant newspaper were chosen, but other possible outside strategy indicators were not included in the research, such as organizing public events, for example. So, these think tanks might still engage in other types of lobbying activities, but these aren't easily measurable and were therefore not included. Most think tanks that do engage in lobbying strategy, choose to engage in both inside and outside strategies (mixed strategy, 26 think tanks). Only a select number of think tanks of the sample decide to specialize in only one of the two strategies (9 for inside strategy; 8 for outside strategy). A reason for think tanks not to engage in outside lobbying would be if the policy issue is of low importance and low saliency. In that case, outside strategies to get the public's attention would require a lot of effort, and would be very costly (Holyoke, 2003). Think tanks would then prefer not to engage in outside lobbying tactics. However, regarding the use of outside strategies exclusively, this might be influenced by the policy preferences of the think tanks (Hojnacki & Kimball, 1999). Indeed, Hojnacki and Kimball (1999) state that "groups that are working to change the status

quo are likely to lobby through the grassroots" (p. 1020). Thus, if the policy preferences of the think tank go against the political ideology of the policy makers, the think tank might engage in outside tactics, by mobilizing the public for instance, rather than engaging in inside strategy. Lastly, regarding the prevalence of mixed lobbying strategies among think tanks, it can be said that this coincides with previous research on interest groups' lobbying strategies choice: It had been demonstrated that interest groups are likely to engage in a combination of both direct and indirect strategies (Binderkrantz, 2005). Also in the specific context of the European Union, interest groups make extensive use of a mixed strategy (Beyers, 2004). As stated by Beyers (2004), "the claim that interest associations avoid public activism because this does not fit with the presumed technocratic nature of the European regulatory polity has been clearly rejected" (p.234). Thus, it is not surprising that a high number of EU think tanks opt for a mixed strategy.

4.3 Inside Strategy

We can observe from Figure 2: Inside Strategy Distribution that the data for inside strategy is highly skewed. The chosen method of analysis for the data is the negative binomial regression. This method is generally used to analyze over-dispersed count data (Long & Freese, 2006). Over-dispersed data refers to data for which the variance exceeds the mean, and this issue can be solved by using a negative binomial model (Ver Hoef & Boveng, 2007). As this is the case with the dependent count variables in this research, the negative binomial regression model is suited for this analysis.

First, the negative binomial regression was used to analyze the relationship between the four independent variables and the dependent variable "inside strategy".

Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	df	Sig.
87,348	6	,000***

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 8: Omnibus Test – Inside Strategy

Table 8 shows the Omnibus Test of the model. We can see that the p-value (Sig.) is lower than 0,05 ($p<0.0001$), meaning that the model is highly statistically significant.

Independent variables	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	16,913	1	,000
Type	10,633	3	,014*
PolicyFocus	1,977	1	,160
PolicyCapacity (ln)	2,564	1	,109
Budget (ln)	12,696	1	,000***

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 9: Test of Model Effects – Inside Strategy

Table 9 shows that as a whole, the variables *Type* and *Budget (ln)* are significant predictors of *Inside Strategy*.

Independent variables	Coefficient (Std. Error)	Hypothesis Test		
		Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig. (p value)
(Intercept)	-5,051 (1,3876)	13,252	1	,000
Type:				
4 = state research organizations	-2,893 (0,9650)	8,990	1	,003**
3 = party research organizations	-1,364 (0,6498)	4,407	1	,036*
2 = advocacy research organizations	-,609 (0,3746)	2,647	1	,104
1 = private academic research organizations (reference category)	0[a]	.	.	.
***Policy Focus**:*				
2 = specialist	-,472 (0,3357)	1,977	1	,160
1 = generalist (reference category)	0[a]	.	.	.
***Policy Capacity** (ln)*	,352 (0,2197)	2,564	1	,109
***Budget** (ln)*	,447 (0,1255)	12,696	1	,000***
(Scale)	1[b]			
(Negative binomial)	1[b]			
Goodness of Fit	AIC = 270,849			
	BIC = 286,883			
	Deviance (Value/df) = 1,428			
	Pearson Chi-Square (Value/df) = 1,745			

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 10: Negative Binomial Regression – Inside Strategy

Table 10 shows the parameter estimates for each independent variable. It also shows the Goodness of Fit of the negative binomial regression model with the dependent variable "inside strategy". Looking at the Value/df for the Pearson Chi-Square test, we see that the value is 1,745. A value above 0,05 means that the model fits the data well, which confirms the relevance of using this method of analysis. The Value/df for Deviance is 1,43, which is close to the ideal value of 1. For the categorical variables *Policy Type* and *Policy Focus*, the categories with the largest N respectively are chosen as the reference category for each variable (private academic research organizations for *Type*; and generalist think tanks for *Policy Focus*).

Based on these results of the parameter estimates, we can start by making assessments regarding two of the hypotheses. First, we see that the variable *Policy Focus 2* is negative, meaning that specialist think tanks might have a negative correlation with the dependent variable *Inside Strategy*. This goes against the first part of hypothesis (H3) that specialist think tanks tend to choose inside strategy more often. However, looking at the p-value for this variable, we can see that this result can't be considered as statistically significant, as it is higher than all significance levels. Second, the variable *Policy Capacity (ln)* isn't statistically significant either, as its p-value=0,109. Based on this, we cannot confirm the hypothesis (H1), which states that think tanks with a higher policy capacity tend to choose an inside strategy, as we see in the table that the total number of lobbyists generates no significant impact on the dependent variable.

Looking at the significance column, we see that the p-value for three variables is significant: For *Type 4*, which represents think tanks categorized as state affiliated research organizations, the p-value is 0,003, which is lower than the significance level of 0,01, meaning that it is statistically significant at 99%. The coefficient is -2,9. We can thus state that *Type 4* think tanks (state affiliated) are 2.9 times less likely to engage in inside lobbying than *Type 1* think tanks (which refers to private academic research organizations). For *Type 3*, which represents research organizations that are affiliated to political parties, the p-value is 0,036, which is lower than the significance level of 0,05, meaning that it is statistically significant at 95%. The coefficient is -1,4. We can thus observe that party affiliated think tanks are 1.4 times less likely to engage in inside lobbying compared to private academic research organizations (*Type 1*). Regarding the variable *Type 2*, which refers to advocacy research organizations, its p-value is 0,104, meaning that it is not statistically significant and should be omitted from tge interpretation of this model. Lastly, we can also see that the variable *Budget (ln)* has a p-value of $p<0.0001$, which means that it is statistically significant too. Its coefficient is 0,45. This means that for each 1-unit increase in *Budget (ln)*, there is an increase of 0,45 in the dependent variable inside strategy (number of meetings with the European Commission).

The correlation between a high level of financial resources can be explained in different ways. First of all, it has been shown that inside lobbying tactics tend to be costly (Dür & Mateo, 2013). In previous literature, it was argued that material and financial resources were necessary for interest groups to become insider groups, and thus to engage in inside lobbying (Grant, 2000). Also, as was stated before, inside lobbying often involves expertise and high quality research in order to be useful for policy makers. Being able to engage in and produce such

research also requires a certain level of financial resources. Regarding the types of think tanks, we see that political party affiliated research organizations are less likely to engage in inside lobbying. This could be explained by the fact that political parties might rely more on being publicly visible, advocating their political ideologies and policy opinions in order to "shape public opinion for electoral reasons" (Tresch & Fischer, 2015, p. 359). As this tend to be the primary goal of political parties, think tanks that are affiliated to them tend not to choose discreet tactics. Furthermore, if the political parties are in opposition to policy makers in power, it would be difficult to engage in inside strategies. Lastly, we see that think tanks affiliated with the state are also less likely to engage in inside lobbying. As stated before, these research organizations are already affiliated with the state and its policy makers, and they thus do not really need to engage in inside lobbying.

4.4 Outside Strategy

For the second dependent variable, which is "outside strategy", the same method of analysis as in Section 4.3 was used. We can see from Figure 3: Outside Strategy Distribution that the data is also skewed for the outside strategy variable, which means that the negative binomial regression model is also adapted for this analysis.

Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square	**df**	**Sig.**
224,270	6	,000

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 11: Omnibus Test – Outside Strategy

Independent variables	**Type III**		
	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.
(Intercept)	6,265	1	,012**
Type	32,667	3	,000***
PolicyFocus	13,674	1	,000***
PolicyCapacity (ln)	32,080	1	,000***
Budget (ln)	2,628	1	,105

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 12: Test of Model Effects – Outside Strategy

Again, we can see in Table 11 that the model fits the data well and is statistically significant as a whole. In Table 12 (Test of Model Effects), we can observe that the *Type*,

Policy Focus, and *Policy Capacity (ln)* are significant predictors of outside strategy. These three variables all have a highly statistically significant p-value of p<0,0001. However, it can be seen that one variable is not statistically significant in this model, namely the variable *Budget (ln)*, since its p-value is 0,105.

Independent variables	Coefficient (Std. Error)	Hypothesis Test		
		Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig. (p value)
(Intercept)	-1,469 (1,1741)	1,566	1	,211
Type:				
4 = state research organizations	-3,577 (0,9128)	15,354	1	,000***
3 = party research organizations	-0,393 (0,5689)	0,476	1	,490
2 = advocacy research organizations	-1,528 (0,33372)	20,516	1	,000***
1 = private academic research organizations (reference category)	0[a]	.	.	.
***Policy Focus**:*				
2 = specialist	-1,142 (0,3088)	13,674	1	,000***
1 = generalist (reference category)	0[a]	.	.	.
***Policy Capacity** (ln)*	1,203 (0,2125)	32,080	1	,000***
***Budget** (ln)*	,185 (0,1141)	2,628	1	,105
(Scale)	1[b]			
(Negative binomial)	1[b]			

Goodness of Fit
AIC = 391,971
BIC = 408,004
Deviance (Value/df) = 2,393
Pearson Chi-Square (Value/df) = 2,529

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Table 13: Negative Binomial Regression – Outside Strategy

Looking at the Table 13, we can see the results of the Parameter Estimates as well as the Goodness of Fit of the model. We can see that there are four statistically significant variables, and two variables that are not statistically significant. *Budget (ln)* has a p-value higher than 0,05, which means that it doesn't have a significant impact on the dependent variable outside strategy. Based on this, we can conclude that a change in the budget of a think tank will not have a significant impact in its choice of outside strategy. In addition, the variable *Type 3*, referring to research organizations affiliated with political parties, also has a p-value higher than all significance levels, meaning that we cannot establish a correlation between party research organization and the use of outside strategies. The fourth hypothesis (H4) stated that

party research organization would engage in inside lobbying rather than outside lobbying. Based on the results of Table 13 we can indeed assert there is no significant likelihood that party research organization would engage in outside lobbying.

Regarding the statistically significant correlations, we can first look at the *Policy Capacity (ln)* variable, which has a p-value of p<0,0001. For each 1-unit increase in *Policy Capacity (ln)*, we observe an increase of 1,2 in the dependent variable *Outside Strategy*. Based on this, it can be said that a higher level of policy capacity (higher number of lobbyists per think tank) leads to a more frequent choice of outside strategy. Next, we can look at the *Policy Focus* variable, which is also highly statistically significant (p<0,0001). We can see that specialist think tanks (*Policy Focus 2*) are 1,14 times less likely to engage in outside strategy compared to generalist think tanks (*Policy Focus 1*). According to this result, we can confirm the second part of H3 which expected generalist think tanks to tend to choose an outside strategy. Lastly, looking at the *type* of think tanks, we can observe two statistically significant results: First, the Type 4 variable has a p-value of p<0,0001 and its coefficient is -3,6. Thus, it can be said that *state affiliated research organizations* are 3,6 times less likely to engage in outside strategy compared to *private academic research organizations*. Second, the Type 2 variable also has a p-value of p<0,0001, and its coefficient is -1,5. Thus, *advocacy research organizations* are 1,5 times less likely to engage in outside strategy compared to *private academic research organizations*. This confirms the hypothesis that the type of think has a significant effect on the choice of outside strategy regarding three out of four types.

From these results, it is thus understood that generalist think tanks are more likely to engage in outside lobbying than specialist think tanks. This can be linked to Kollman's (1998) argument that interest groups involved in more salient policy fields tend to choose outside strategies. Generalist think tanks cover a wide range of policy topics. They are thus more likely to carry out research in at least one salient topic, while specialist think tanks focus on only one area, which is not necessarily salient. Due to the fact that generalist think tanks engage in many policy area, their research is less specialized and they probably have less expertise in all those different areas. As stated previously, a high level of expertise is needed to engage in inside lobbying (Maloney et al., 1994). Generalist would thus opt for outside strategies rather than inside strategies, since, to attract the attention of the general public, saliency is more important than expertise. Regarding the policy capacity, this indicator is based on the number of lobbyists of the think tanks. It was mentioned in Section 3.6 that this number includes all the persons that are involved in "directly or indirectly influencing the formulation or implementation of policy and the decision-making processes of the EU institutions, irrespective of where they are

undertaken and of the channel or medium of communication used" (Joint Transparency Register Secretariat, 2015, p. 9). Hence, this does not only include inside lobbying, but also outside lobbying, such as publishing reports or organizing seminars and conferences. Based on this, it can be said that a high policy capacity will lead to an increase in outside strategy, as the tactics used in an outside strategy require a large amount of organizational resources and human capital in this case in form of researchers, academics, speakers, etc. Next, it can be seen that state affiliated research organizations are less likely to engage in outside strategies. From the results of all regression analyses, it can be assumed that state research organizations aren't likely to engage in any type of lobbying strategies. This can probably be linked to the fact that these think tanks are directly affiliated with the state and aren't trying to change the status quo. They don't need to lobby, as they aren't trying to influence policy making from an external position. Rather, they might be hired directly by the state and will produce research directly for the state. Lastly, advocacy research organizations are also less likely to engage in outside lobbying. Previous research has shown that "public interest" groups tend to opt for outside strategies, while "private interest" groups might prefer direct lobbying due to their privileged access (Chalmers, 2013; Kollman, 1998). In line with the categorization framework used in this thesis, private academic research organizations would include "public interest" groups, as they don't advocate for a specific cause or defend a specific interest but rather produce research for the "general interest" (public interest). In contrast, the category of advocacy research organizations would encompass "private interest" groups, as those actually advocate for specific interests (for example business interests). Based on this, it makes sense that advocacy research organizations are less likely to engage in outside strategies than private academic research organizations.

4.5 Mixed Strategy

A third dependent variable, "mixed strategy", was created by looking at which think tanks use both strategies and which think tanks don't. It is thus a binary categorical variable (0=no mixed strategy; 1=mixed strategy). To test the effect of the independent variables on this dependent variable, the binary logistic regression can be used as a method of analysis.

Independent variables	Coefficient (Std. Error)	Wald	df	Sig. (p value)	Exp(B)
Type:		0,046	3	,997	
2 = advocacy research organizations	-0,088 (0,692)	0,016	1	0,898	0,915
3 = party research organizations	-0,153 (0,985)	0,024	1	0,877	0,858
4 = state research organizations	0,068 (1,286)	.0,003	.1	0,958	1,070
***Policy Focus**:*					
2 = specialist	-1,394 (0,638)	4,777	.1	0,029*	0,248
***Policy Capacity** (ln)*	0,787 (0,379)	4,313	1	0,038*	2,197
***Budget** (ln)*	0,234 (0,174)	1;806	1	0,179	1,264
Constant	-4,300 (1,980)	4,716	1	0,30	0,014

Omnibus Tests

		Chi-square	df	Sig. (p-value)
Step 1:	Step	20,835	6	0,002**
	Block	20,835	6	0,002**
	Model	20,835	6	0,002**

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log Likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	72,993	0,248	0,343

Levels of significance: *p = 0.05, **p = 0.01, ***p = 0.001.

Type 1 = private academic research organizations (reference category)
Policy Focus 1 = generalist (reference category)

Table 14: Binary Logistic Regression – Mixed Strategy

Table 14 shows the results of the logistic regression model. We can see that, according to the Omnibus Tests, the model is significant (p=0,002). Looking at the parameter estimates for the independent variables, it can be seen that various variables don't have a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable *Mixed Strategy*. None of the *Type* variables are significant when compared to the reference category of private academic research organizations (*Type 1*). The variable Budget (ln) isn't statistically significant either, as its p-value is 0,179. However, two statistically significant variables can be observed, namely *Policy Focus* and *Policy Capacity (ln)*.

The Exp(B), column, which shows the exponentiation of the B coefficient, can be looked at in order to assess the odds of the dependent variable based on a change in the independent variables (odds ratio). For instance, regarding the *Policy Focus* variable, we can expect a

decrease in the odds that a think tank engages in a mixed strategy if it a specialist think tank, compared to a generalist think tank. The Exp(B) value is 0,25, meaning that a specialist think tank is 75% less likely to engage in a mixed strategy than a generalist think tank. However, regarding the *Policy Capacity (ln)* variable, the Exp(B) value is 2,2. Thus, in this case, we can expect an increase in the odds that a think tank engage in a mixed strategy if its policy capacity increases. For every 1-unit increase in Policy Capacity, the odds of the think tank using a mixed strategy increases by 2,2. It can thus be stated that there is a positive significant correlation between the Policy Capacity of a think tank and the choice of mixed strategy. Regarding the Policy Focus of the think tank, there is a negative significant correlation between a specialist policy focus and the choice of mixed strategy (when compared to a generalist policy focus).

These results are mostly in line with what was said in the previous sections. First, it can be seen that a specialist think tank is less likely to engage in a mixed strategy compared to a generalist think tank. As stated previously, specialist think tanks tend to be less likely to engage in outside strategies. Their activities are more focused on acquire highly specialized expertise in one policy field rather than disseminating their research to the public. Thus, it can be said that they don't need to engage in a mixed strategy, while generalist think tanks do (since they prioritize gaining the attention of the public). Next, when it comes to policy capacity, we see a correlation between a high policy capacity and mixed strategies. An increase in the number of lobbyists of a think tank has a direct effect on the increased use of outside lobbying, as outside lobbying tactics such as organizing events and publishing reports require a high policy capacity, and in addition, the high number of lobbyists allows for a bigger network and thus easier direct access. Thus, it can lead to a combination of both strategies, leading think tanks to opt for a mixed strategy.

4.6 Discussion of the Results

Based on the results of the three regression analyses made in the previous sections, various conclusions can be made. The hypotheses that were elaborated in Chapter 2 can now be evaluated. The hypotheses are the following:

H1: Think tanks with a higher policy capacity tend to engage in inside lobbying strategies.

H2: Think tanks with a higher level of financial resources tend to engage in inside lobbying strategies, and possibly also outside lobbying strategies.

H3: Specialist think tanks tend to engage in inside lobbying strategies while generalist think tanks tend to engage in outside lobbying strategies.

H4: The type of think tank will have an impact on its lobbying strategy choice: PRAOs tend to engage in outside lobbying; AROs tend engage in both inside and outside strategies; PROs tend to engage in inside lobbying; SROs tend to engage in outside lobbying.

The first hypothesis (H1) can be rejected, as the results show no significant correlation between policy capacity and inside strategy, though they do show a significant positive correlation between policy capacity and outside strategy, as well as a significant positive correlation between policy capacity and mixed strategy. Thus, the policy capacity of a think tank (number of lobbyists) is a significant predictor of outside strategy and mixed strategy. A think tank is more likely to engage in outside strategies the high its policy capacity. It is also more likely to engage in mixed strategy, though the extent to which it engages in inside strategies does not increase in correlation with the policy capacity. However the use of inside strategies is combined to the use of outside strategies, in that case. The initial assumption that a higher number of lobbyists would lead to a broader network, pushing the think tank to engage in exclusively inside lobbying tactics was wrong. After analyzing the results, the relationship between a high policy capacity and the use of an outside strategy or a mixed strategy was explained by the fact that outside tactics require resources in the form of staff, and the increased number of staff engaging in all types of lobbying activities also allowed to think tank to combine its outside strategy with an inside strategy.

The second hypothesis (H2) can be confirmed (for the first part), as we can observe a significant positive correlation between a high level of financial resources and inside strategy (although not with mixed strategy). The second part of the hypothesis states that think tanks with a high level of financial resources would tend to combine their inside strategy with an outside strategy (thus mixed strategy). This can be rejected, as there is no correlation between the budget and a mixed strategy. The fact that a think tank with a higher budget tends to choose an inside lobbying strategy was explained, in line with previous literature, by the high costs engendered by inside lobbying tactics (Dür & Mateo, 2013).

The third hypothesis (H3) can also be partly confirmed: generalist think tanks do engage in outside lobbying more often than specialist think tanks. Generalist think tanks are also more likely to engage in a mixed lobbying strategy. This finding was attributed to the fact that generalist think tanks tend to prioritize targeting the public, as they might have less expertise

in a policy field (which is needed for inside lobbying), but cover more policy fields and are therefore able to include more salient topics. The public is more responsive to salient policy topics than to topics that require high expertise; it is thus a better target for generalist think tanks. This does not mean that generalist think tanks do not have any expertise; indeed, it can be seen that they are able to engage in an inside strategy in combination to their outside strategy (mixed strategy). However, the second part of the hypothesis (specialist think tanks engage in inside lobbying strategies) can't be fully confirmed, as there was not significant correlation in the inside strategy regression model.

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis (H4) expected the type of think tank to have an effect on the lobbying strategy. This can be confirmed, although the predicted relationship between the type and the choice of strategy was incorrect. First of all, advocacy research organizations were expected to engage in a mixed strategy. The results show that they are actually less likely to engage in an outside strategy (and no correlation with inside and mixed strategies). Their low likelihood to engage in outside tactics was explained by the fact that they are advocating for specific interests (in line with "private interest" groups), which makes them less connected to the general public. Next, party affiliated research organizations were expected to engage in inside lobbying. In reality, a negative correlation was found between party affiliated research organizations and inside lobbying (and no correlation with the other dependent variables). This can be explained by the fact that it is probably difficult for politically affiliated think tanks to engage in direct lobbying with policy makers if the policy makers are not allied to the same party. Opposing political affiliations would make inside strategies complicated. Finally, state affiliated research organization were found to have a negatively correlating relationship with the use of inside and outside strategies (and no correlation with mixed strategy). This was explained by the presumption that those think tanks do not engage in lobbying at all, since they are already on the "inside" of policy making, as they are already affiliated with the states and thus with the policy makers. In the next section, the broader implications of these findings will be discussed.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of the Main Results

The goal of this research was to gain insight into the strategic choices of think tanks. More specifically, the research aimed at analyzing the factors involved in those choices, by focusing on the following research question: **Which factors have an influence on a think tank's choice of lobbying strategy?** This research was done in the context of EU-level policy making, and encompassed think tanks that are based in Brussels. As was explained, those think tanks are particularly relevant actors in EU policy making, as they have a wide range of lobbying opportunities in the European political arena. The results of the research on Brussels-based EU think tanks have shown that out of the 75 think tanks whose strategies were analyzed, 26 engage in *both* inside and outside strategies, while only 17 engage in exclusively inside or exclusively outside lobbying (9 in inside lobbying and 8 in outside lobbying). By investigating the extent to which EU think tanks are involved in inside tactics, outside tactics, and mixed tactics and connecting this to certain characteristics (factors) of the think tanks, it was possible to develop an answer to the research question. In terms of methodology, the research analysis was moderately complex: the data included two count dependent variables and a binary dependent variable; and four independent variables (categorical and continuous). Due to this complexity, the analysis was carried out by means of negative binomial and binary logistic regression models.

The factors that were outlined were policy capacity, policy focus, budget, and type of think tank. These factors were designated based on previous theories and research, as well as on assumptions. The three regression analyses demonstrated that each of these factors had, to some extent, an effect on the choice of lobbying strategy. It was observed that the policy capacity had an impact on the use of an outside strategy and the use of a mixed strategy. The policy focus of think tanks also has an impact on the use of an outside strategy and the use of a mixed strategy. The budget of think tanks was found to have an impact on the use of an inside strategy. Finally, it was observed that the type of think tanks has an impact on the use of an inside strategy and on the use of an outside strategy. These findings contribute to the field of public policy by providing new evidence regarding think tanks' strategic lobbying choices.

Nevertheless, some of the findings did not coincide with the initial assumptions that were made, and some of the hypotheses had to be rejected. Predicting the exact influence that a certain factor will have on the choice of strategy is complicated. The predictions were mostly

based on previous literature concerned with interest groups strategies. In the context of interest groups, group type, budget and other resources, and issue/policy context, among others, were outlined and factors influencing the choice of lobbying strategies (Binderkrantz & Krøyer, 2012; Dür & Mateo, 2013, Kollman, 1998). This interest group framework was thus applied to think tanks. This could be reason why some of the assumptions made in the hypotheses were not accurate. While think tanks can be considered a type of interest groups, they might have some differences in the way they operate. Consequently, hypothesis H1 was fully rejected; hypothesis H2 was partly confirmed; hypothesis H3 was partly confirmed; and hypothesis H4 was partly confirmed. Despite this, it was still possible to explain and account for the findings based on previous research and studies, as was done in Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

5.2 Limitations of the Research

Some limitations can be outlined regarding the design of this research. For instance, it can be noted that the study sample can be considered as relatively small. The study included N=75 think tanks, which are all the think tanks based on Brussels registered on the EU Transparency Register at the current time. However, as the total budget could not be found for two of the think tanks, the valid N of this study is 73. Of course, it can be said that a bigger sample would have improved the accuracy of this study. Nonetheless, the chosen sample selection has the advantage of being highly legitimate, as all of the think tanks in the selection fit the definition of think tanks that was used for this study (introduced in Section 2.1). All of the organizations have register themselves as "think tanks and research institutions" based on their organizational activities, a categorization which is systematically checked and confirmed by the Joint Transparency Register Secretariat.

Still, there is an issue with the Transparency Register that can be highlighted: There has been a tendency for think tanks to refuse to sign up on the Register, although this tendency has started to decrease. In an official speech held at the European Policy Centre, then Vice-President of the European Commission and European Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud, Siim Kallas pushed EU think tanks to voluntarily sign up in the Transparency Register, as, he argued, their activities did include direct or indirect lobbying (European Commission, 2009). Presently, the number of registered think tanks has increased greatly, though some of them are still missing from the Transparency Register as they are reluctant to consider themselves lobbying organizations (Corporate Europe Observatory, n.d.). Furthermore, some of the lobby costs of the organizations that did register seem surprisingly low compared to the amount of lobbying activities they engage in (Corporate Europe

Observatory, n.d.). For this reason, the total budget of think tanks was chosen as an indicator rather than the total lobbying expenses declared in the Transparency Register.

Lastly, a notable limitation of the study is the fact that a large number of think tanks in the selected sample did not present any evidence of inside nor of outside strategy. This point was to some extent problematic, as it was not easy to explain, and it had a substantial impact on the results of the analysis. This issue possibly relates to the choice of indicators that were chosen to measure inside and outside tactics, though those indicators are assumed to be relevant and have been mentioned in previous studies (Clark & Roodman, 2013). Still, enough evidence and data were found for the indicators in order to adequately complete the research.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the limitations of this research mentioned above, a few suggestions can be made for future research on this particular topic. To begin with, a similar study could be carried out using a larger study sample. As was stated previously, the current study sample, though significant, could be enlarged in order to improve the accuracy and the validity of the results of the study. This could be done by including think tanks that are not registered in the Transparency Register, or by changing the geographical focus of the study. Think tanks are prominent actors in more and more countries, and their strategic choices could be analyzed in different geographical contexts. The United States, for instance, is home to 1835 think tanks (McGann, 2017). This would allow for a very interesting case study of think tanks' choices of lobbying strategies.

Further research on think tanks' strategic choices could also be done by including different factors and different indicators. This study included the policy focus as a predictor of lobbying strategy choice. However, another possibility would be to look at different policy fields of think tank research and if those have a different impact – for instance, think tanks engaging in social policy research; think tanks engaging in economic policy research; think tanks engaging in environmental policy research; think tanks engaging in security policy research, etc. Another factor that has been shown to impact the lobbying strategies of interest groups is the institutional context (Weiler & Brändli, 2015). The present study focused in the EU institutional context. In that regard, a comparative study could be done, contrasting the choices of lobbying strategies of think tanks in two different institutional contexts. This could be done by selecting two countries that differ in institutional context and with a sufficient

amount of think tank activity. These suggestions would provide more insight into the strategic choices of think tanks.

6. Bibliography

Abelson, D. E. (2000). Do think tanks matter? Opportunities, constraints and incentives for think tanks in Canada and the United States. *Global Society*, *14*(2), 213-236.

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

Binderkrantz, A. (2005). Interest group strategies: Navigating between privileged access and strategies of pressure. *Political studies*, *53*(4), 694-715.

Binderkrantz, A. S., & Krøyer, S. (2012). Customizing strategy: Policy goals and interest group strategies. *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, *1*(1), 115-138.

Campbell, J. L., & Pedersen, O. K. (2005). *Knowledge Regimes and the varieties of Capitalism* (Working Paper no. 20). Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School.

Campbell, J. L., & Pedersen, O. K. (2015). Policy ideas, knowledge regimes and comparative political economy. *Socio-Economic Review*, *1*, 23.

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

Clark, J., & Roodman, D. (2013). Measuring Think Tank Performance. *An index of Public Profile*, 1-2.

Corporate Europe Observatory. (n.d.). *EU lobby register still failing to live up to transparency promise*. Retrieved from https://corporateeurope.org/power-lobbies/2017/11/eu-lobby-register-still-failing-live-transparency-promise

Deschouwer, K., & Jans, M. T. (Eds.). (2007). *Politics beyond the state: Actors and policies in complex institutional settings* (Vol. 10). ASP/VUBPRESS/UPA.

Dür, A. (2008). Interest groups in the European Union: how powerful are they?. *West European Politics*, *31*(6), 1212-1230.

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

European Commission. (2009). *A more transparent and accountable Commission – And what about the Think Tanks?*. Brussels: Press Release Database.

European Commission. (2014). *Commission Decision of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Directors-General of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals (2014/838/EU)*. Strasbourg: Official Journal of the European Union.

European Commission. (2014). *Commission Decision of 25 November 2014 on the publication of information on meetings held between Members of the Commission and organisations or self-employed individuals (2014/839/EU)*. Strasbourg: Official Journal of the European Union.

Grant, Wyn (1978) Insider groups, outsider groups and interest group strategies in Britain. *University of Warwick Department of Politics Working Party no. 19.*

Grant, W. (2000). *Pressure groups and British politics*. Macmillan.

Greenwood, J. (2017). *Interest representation in the European Union*. Palgrave.

Hanegraaff, M., Beyers, J., & De Bruycker, I. (2016). Balancing inside and outside lobbying: The political strategies of lobbyists at global diplomatic conferences. *European Journal of Political Research*, *55*(3), 568-588.

Holyoke, T. T. (2003). Choosing battlegrounds: Interest group lobbying across multiple venues. *Political Research Quarterly*, *56*(3), 325-336.

Joint Transparency Register Secretariat. (2016). *Annual Report on the operations of the Transparency Register*. Secretaries-General of the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Joint Transparency Register Secretariat. (2015). *Transparency Register Implementing Guidelines* (Version 4.1). Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/openFile.do?fileName=guidelines_en.pdf

Kelstrup, J. D. (2017). Quantitative differences in think tank dissemination activities in Germany, Denmark and the UK. *Policy Sciences*, *50*(1), 125-137.

Kollman, K. (1998). *Outside lobbying: Public opinion and interest group strategies*. Princeton University Press.

Long, J. S., & Freese, J. (2006). *Regression models for categorical dependent variables using Stata*. Stata press.

Maloney, W. A., Jordan, G., & McLaughlin, A. M. (1994). Interest groups and public policy: the insider/outsider model revisited. *Journal of public policy*, *14*(1), 17-38.

McGann, James G. (2017). 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. *TTCSP Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports*, *12*.

Monange, B. F. (2008). Social science expertise and policymaking. Comparing US, French, and EU think tanks: Similar model different paths. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *41*(4), 909-909.

Repartition of seats | MEPs | European Parliament. (n.d.). Retrieved June 6, 2018, from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/hemicycle.html

Saurugger, S. (2008). Interest groups and democracy in the European Union. *West European Politics*, *31*(6), 1274-1291.

Schattschneider, E. E. (1935) Politics, Pressure and the Tariff. Hamden CT: Archon Books.

Schlozman, K. (2015). Interest Groups. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 368-370).

Sherrington, P. (2000). Shaping the policy agenda: Think tank activity in the European Union. *Global Society*, *14*(2), 173-189.

Stone, D. (2000). Think tank transnationalisation and non-profit analysis, advice and advocacy. *Global Society*, *14*(2), 153-172.

Stone, D., & Ullrich, H. (2003). *Policy research institutes and think tanks in Western Europe: development trends and perspectives*. Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute.

Tresch, A., & Fischer, M. (2015). In search of political influence: Outside lobbying behaviour and media coverage of social movements, interest groups and political parties in six Western European countries. *International Political Science Review*, *36*(4), 355-372.

Trevor Thrall, A. (2006). The myth of the outside strategy: Mass media news coverage of interest groups. *Political Communication*, *23*(4), 407-420.

Transparency and the EU. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2018, from http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do

Ver Hoef, J. M., & Boveng, P. L. (2007). Quasi-poisson Vs. Negative Binomial Regression: How Should We Model Overdispersed Count Data?. *Ecology*, *88*(11), 2766-2772.

Weiler, F., & Brändli, M. (2015). Inside versus outside lobbying: How the institutional framework shapes the lobbying behaviour of interest groups. *European Journal of Political Research*, *54*(4), 745-766.

Who is expected to register? (n.d.). Retrieved May 12, 2018, from http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=WHOS_IS_EXPECTED_TO_REGISTER