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From Headlines to Policy: Exploring the Interplay between Media Salience, Interest Group Strategies and Policy - A Case Study of CCS in the Netherlands

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**From Headlines to Policy:
Exploring the Interplay between Media Salience, Interest Group Strategies
and Policy - A Case Study of CCS Policy in the Netherlands**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Literature review	6
Lobbying	6
Salience	7
Political agenda-setting	12
Interest groups	13
Case study	19
Methodology	21
Research results	26
Mentions of CCS in Dutch media	26
Contextual factors	28
Thematic factors	30
Mention of interest groups	32
Discussion	34
Period of EU debate on the CCS Directive from 2007-2009	34
Transposition period of CCS Directive into Dutch legislation from 2010-2011	36
Resurgence of debate on CCS policies on the EU and Dutch policy agenda from 2017-2019	37
Conclusion	41
Bibliography	43

Figures

Figure 1. Total amount of mentions per year	26
Figure 2 Total number of articles mentioning CCS per time period	27
Figure 3 Articles mentioning CCS divided by contextual factor per year	28
Figure 4 Articles mentioning CCS divided by contextual factor per time period	28
Figure 5 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per year	30
Figure 6 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per time period	30
Figure 7 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per quarter	31
Figure 8 Total number of articles categorised by mention of organised interests per year	32
Figure 9 Total number of articles categorised by mention of organised interests per time period	32

Introduction

As one of the largest in the world, the European Union's (EU) lobby industry has been at the centre of heated discussions on integrity and transparency for decades. One of the growing topics of concerns regarding lobbying is the role of the media. As the number of media platforms have dramatically increased after the introduction of the internet, EU lobbying and media have become increasingly intertwined.¹ The growing role of the media in EU lobbying has been at the root of several controversial issues, laying bare the controversial nature of lobbying and the pivotal role of the media in shaping policy outcomes in the EU.²

Being defined as “an exchange relationship between interest groups and the European institutions in which goods are exchanged”³, the academic field concerned with researching EU-lobbying has expanded significantly over the past decades. As the presence of the media has increased significantly, one of the more recent trends within the field of EU lobby research focuses on the concept of political agenda setting.⁴ Based on the concept of agenda setting from communicational sciences, the concept has evolved from explaining the contingent relationship between media and public opinion to the influence media has on the political decision-making process.⁵ Within the context of political agenda setting, one of the core independent variables is media salience. This concept is generally defined as the amount of media coverage a specific topic or issue receives.⁶

Political agenda-setting forms one of interest groups' main tactics, as getting an issue on the EU's political agenda is one of the first steps in getting to the decision-making stage of the policy process. Therefore, political agenda-setting is of pivotal importance and forms one of the main strategies interest groups pursue in the EU.⁷ As media salience is a crucial

¹ Iskander De Bruycker, “Blessing or Curse for Advocacy? How News Media Attention Helps Advocacy Groups to Achieve Their Policy Goals,” *Political Communication* 36, no. 1 (2019): 103–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1493007>.

² S. Walgrave and P. Van Aelst, “The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory,” *Journal of Communication* 56, no. 1 (2006): 88–109, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00005.x>.

³ Heike Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change* (Oxford University Press, 2013), <https://academic.oup.com/book/11574>.

⁴ Walgrave and Van Aelst, “The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory.”

⁵ Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972), <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>; Walgrave and Van Aelst, “The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory.”

⁶ Andreas Dür and Gemma Mateo, “Public Opinion and Interest Group Influence: How Citizen Groups Derailed the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 21, no. 8 (2014): 1199–1217, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2014.900893>.

⁷ De Bruycker, “Blessing or Curse for Advocacy? How News Media Attention Helps Advocacy Groups to Achieve Their Policy Goals.”

independent variable within the theory of political agenda-setting, interest groups are engaged with influencing media salience in order to increase topic or issue salience on the EU political agenda.⁸

Further exploring the correlation between media salience and interest groups, this thesis will be using policy developments on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) as a case study. CCS technology has been established as a promising technology regarding the reductions of emissions in the EU. Therefore, it has the potential to significantly contribute to achieving the EU's climate goals.⁹ However, the possibility of CCS deployment in the EU has been subject to significant scrutiny. While some perceive the technology as the best solution to combat climate change, critics argue that CCS is used as an excuse to keep filling the pockets of the fossil industry.¹⁰ Additionally, CCS technology is capital intensive and critics argue that the long-term environmental effects of CCS are overlooked.¹¹ Despite prevalent criticism, CCS has been on the EU agenda on and off since 2007. With environmental change becoming a pressing issue globally, CCS policy makes an interesting case study to examine. More specifically, examining how media and interest groups are involved in the process. In order to make the research more specific, this thesis will focus on the Netherlands. The Netherlands holds a pivotal position regarding the future of CCS in the EU, as it holds a remarkable geographical and economical position concerning large-scale CCS deployment.¹² Additionally, because of its favourable characteristics regarding CCS, general awareness and discussion on the topic have been more prevalent in the Netherlands than in other EU member states.¹³ Therefore, the Netherlands makes an interesting case study in the context of researching CCS policy dynamics.

Building on the theory of political agenda-setting and media salience, this thesis will answer to the following research questions: “What is the correlation between EU and national CCS policy developments and media salience in the Netherlands, and in what way does media coverage interact with interest groups’ attempts to influence this debate?” Firstly, the

⁸ De Bruycker, “Blessing or Curse for Advocacy? How News Media Attention Helps Advocacy Groups to Achieve Their Policy Goals.”

⁹ Berstad et al., “Current State of CCS Technologies and the EU Policy Framework,” *Building Momentum for the Long-Term CCS Deployment in the CEE Region*, March 2022, <https://ccs4cee.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CCS4CEE-CCS-technology-and-policy-report.pdf>.

¹⁰ N. Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?,” in *Vying for Vision: Climate and Energy Policies between Local Ambitions, National Interests and International Realities* (Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2019), <http://hdl.handle.net/1765/114603>.

¹¹ Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?”

¹² Berstad et al., “Current State of CCS Technologies and the EU Policy Framework.”

¹³ Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?”

main trends and theories in literature regarding lobbying, salience, political agenda setting, and interest groups will be laid out, allowing for the contextualisation of the research. Secondly, further context of CCS in the EU will be discussed, in order to provide a foundation for the choices made in the case- and data selection. Thirdly, the methodology used to conduct the research will be elaborated upon. Subsequently, the results of the research will be demonstrated followed by a discussion of the results. Finally, the interpreted results will lead to a final chapter concluding the findings of this thesis and introducing suggestions for further research.

Literature review

Lobbying

Although the main focus of this thesis is not to discuss lobbying in-depth, the concept of lobbying is an important overarching theme for the research conducted in this thesis. Therefore, providing a brief overview of the concept of lobbying and its background in existing literature is crucial for the contextualization of this study. The concept of lobbying has been present in scholarly literature for over four decades, and its definition has evolved over time. One of the earliest and most widely known definitions of lobbying was established in 1963 by Milbraith, who defined lobbying as “the stimulation and transmission of a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his own behalf, directed to a governmental decision-maker with the hope of influencing his decision”.¹⁴ Based on this definition, the concept of lobbying is centred around an actor attempting to influence a decision-maker. Milbraith’s definition is currently still widely used as the primary definition of lobbying not only by scholars, but also governmental institutions. In line with Milbraith’s definition, the European Commission and the European Parliament define lobbying as “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”.¹⁵ Additionally, some scholars, such as Nownes, define lobbying as “an effort designed to affect what a government does”.¹⁶ Moreover, Koepll defines lobbying as “the attempted or successful influence of legislative-administrative decisions by public authorities through interested representatives”.¹⁷

As the scope of academic literature on the topic of lobbying is extensive, multiple scholars have added more dimension to the traditional definition of lobbying centred on an actor attempting to influence a decision-maker. Kluver and Beyer et al., for example, conceptualise lobbying as an exchange of information based on supply and demand, rather

¹⁴ Milbraith in Conor McGrath, “Framing Lobbying Messages: Defining and Communicating Political Issues Persuasively,” *Journal of Public Affairs* 7, no. 3 (August 1, 2007): 269–80, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1002/pa.267>.

¹⁵ “European Parliament Decision of 11 May 2011 on Conclusion of an Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission on a Common Transparency Register,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2011, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021Q0611\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021Q0611(01)).

¹⁶ Anthony J. Nownes, *Total Lobbying: What Lobbyists Want (and How They Try to Get It)* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/total-lobbying/6E2C3496A0E74718D9567F01DD3F5D89>.

¹⁷ Peter M. Koepll, “The Acceptance, Relevance and Dominance of Lobbying the EU Commission — a First-Time Survey of the EU Commission’s Civil Servants,” *Journal of Public Affairs* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 69–80, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1002/pa.51>.

than a one-sided dynamic focused on supply.¹⁸ Within this context, the supply side is based on the objectives of interest groups and the demand side on the needs of EU institutions.¹⁹ Subsequently, lobbying is defined as a strategic partnership in which non-state actors exchange information with policymakers in order to gain access to the policy-making process.²⁰ Within the context of EU policy-making, Kluver defines lobbying as “an exchange relationship between interest groups and the European institutions in which goods are exchanged”, where goods are defined as a specific type of information.²¹ Kluver’s definition is embedded in the context of EU policy-making, and as this study is also embedded in EU studies, it will use Kluver’s definition. Thus, lobbying is “an exchange relationship between interest groups and the European institutions in which goods are exchanged.”²²

Salience

Within the field of political science, salience is considered to be a core concept. Serving as a core concept to various fields of academia, the definition of the concept differs depending on the discipline. As this research is based in the context of EU-studies, this thesis will follow the definition of the concept of salience as it is generally known within this field. Therefore, the definition of salience can be understood as the “relative importance actors attribute to a specific political matter”.²³ According to Warntjen, the concept of salience consists of three main components that characterise the outcome of how salience is measured.²⁴ These are actor-specific, issue-specific and time-specific.²⁵ This implies that even if an issue is highly salient, the degree of salience can increase or decrease depending on the actor analysing the issue.²⁶ Additionally, there are different levels at which the assessment of salience takes

¹⁸ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change.*; Beyers et al., “Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know?,” *West European Politics* 31, no. 6 (November 1, 2008): 1103–28, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402380802370443?needAccess=true>.

¹⁹ Beyers, Eising, and Maloney, “Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know?”

²⁰ Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz, Helene Helboe Pedersen, and Jan Beyers, “What Is Access? A Discussion of the Definition and Measurement of Interest Group Access,” *European Political Science* 16, no. 3 (September 18, 2017): 306–21, <https://doi.org/10.1057/eps.2016.17>.

²¹ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change.*

²² Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*, 2013.

²³ Dirk Leuffen, Thomas Malang, and Sebastian Wörle, “Structure, Capacity or Power? Explaining Salience in EU Decision-Making,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, no. 3 (2014): 616–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12100>.

²⁴ Andreas Warntjen, “Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics,” *European Union Politics* 13, no. 1 (2012): 168–82, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511428495>.

²⁵ Warntjen, “Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*

place, meaning that an entire policy field can be perceived as salient, or merely a single specific proposal within this field.²⁷ Finally, Warntjen states that the salience of a particular issue or policy field changes and evolves over time. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how actors reacted to the given issue or policy proposal at the time it is being discussed or being implemented.²⁸ Warntjen's research exemplifies how the degree of salience can differ depending on the means of measurement. Other scholars have also researched the degree of salience in relation to methods of salience measurement. According to the research executed by Epstein and Segal, the assessment of issue salience is confined to either the retrospective or contemporaneous method.²⁹ In the latter case, the degree of salience is measured by the actors' perception of the issue's salience, and does not take into account the analyst's perspective whether the issue is considered salient in the present as justifiable.³⁰ The method of retrospective salience focuses on the analysts' judgement of salience in hindsight, regardless of the actor's view on the issue at the time.³¹ In the study of legislative politics, contemporaneous salience is generally considered as the primary assessment method.³²

Several academics have demonstrated that within the realm of EU policies, the issue of salience is particularly prevalent throughout the decision-making process.³³ Studies of EU decision-making implement a variety of models, such as the bargaining models or the 'log-rolling' model, to investigate the EU policy process.³⁴

Based on a bargaining model, Thomson et al. argues that the concept of salience is to be understood as "the extent to which actors experience utility loss from the occurrence of decision outcomes that differ from the decision outcomes they most favor".³⁵ Within this reasoning, salience is considered to be a significant weighted factor. Other scholars have used the bargaining compromise model to determine how legislative decisions are made, by for example concluding that the decision-making process and the outcome are dependent on the

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ L. Epstein and J.A. Segal, "Measuring Issue Salience," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 1 (2000): 66–83, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2669293?sid=primo&origin=crossref>.

³⁰ Epstein and Segal, "Measuring Issue Salience."

³¹ Ibid.

³² Epstein and Segal, "Measuring Issue Salience." ; Warntjen, "Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics."

³³ Robert R. Thomson and Frans Stokman, "Research Design: Measuring Actors' Positions, Saliences and Capabilities," in *The European Union Decides* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 25–53, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511492082.003>. ; Christian Rauh and Pieter De Wilde, "The Opposition Deficit in EU Accountability: Evidence from over 20 Years of Plenary Debate in Four Member States," *European Journal of Political Research* 57, no. 1 (2018): 194–216, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12222>.

³⁴ Thomson and Stokman, "Research Design: Measuring Actors' Positions, Saliences and Capabilities."

³⁵ Ibid.

“weighted mean of actor preferences”.³⁶ In this example from Achen’s research, the weights are salience and voting power.³⁷ Subsequently, the more salient an issue is to an actor, the degree of their influence on the decision outcome increases. According to Warntjen, the position of the actors involved and the subsequent salience attached to the issue is best interpreted as “a consequence of a higher mobilisation of the bargaining resources or as a consequence of the willingness of other actors to give the lead on a topic to the actors that are most concerned about it.”³⁸

These previous examples which demonstrate the use of models in research to analyse EU legislative process exemplify that salience is of considerable significance in various contexts of EU policy making. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that within the scope of literature examined, the concept of salience is observed quite statically, as opposed to it being perceived as a dynamic factor which can be influenced to different degrees. Achen and Thomson et al. elaborate extensively on salience as a crucial concept in the decision-making process, but overlook to what extent salience can be influenced.

The examples given in this previous section of scholars using models to interpret and draw conclusions from the EU decision-making process demonstrate that salience weighs in significantly in the various contexts of EU policy making. This provides a solid foundation for the thesis, which is based on the measuring of media salience in context of a specific policy.

An important theme in the academic realm of salience and its influence on decision-making is the question on how to measure it. Many researchers have contributed to answering this question, demonstrating how salience can be measured in a myriad of ways, including the analysis of legal documents, (expert) interviews, and public surveys.³⁹ In addition to these methods, one of the main recurring methods that is used to measure salience in the context of policy-making is the measuring of media coverage.⁴⁰ Using this form of measurement,

³⁶ C.H. Achen, “Institutional Realism and Bargaining Models,” in *The European Union Decides* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 86–123, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511492082.005>.

³⁷ Achen, “Institutional Realism and Bargaining Models.”

³⁸ Warntjen, “Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics,” 169.

³⁹ Cornelia Woll, “Lobbying under Pressure: The Effect of Salience on European Union Hedge Fund Regulation,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 555–72, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2012.02314.x>.

⁴⁰ Epstein and Segal, “Measuring Issue Salience.” ; Warntjen, “Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics.” ; M. Helbling and A. Tresch, “Measuring Party Positions and Issue Salience from Media Coverage: Discussing and Cross-Validating New Indicators,” *Electoral Studies* 30, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 174–83, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2010.12.001>. ; R. Koopmans, “Who Inhabits the European Public Sphere? Winners and Losers, Supporters and Opponents in Europeanised Political Debates,” *European Journal of*

scholars count the number of times a particular issue or topic is mentioned in one or several media outlets. The media is considered to be a key variable in the creation of issue salience, and therefore several scholars have investigated the concept and impact of media salience.⁴¹ Within this field of research, the general hypothesis is that topics or issues that receive persistent attention in the media influence the awareness and concern of the public on the given topic or issue.⁴² This phenomenon is referred to as object salience.⁴³ Additionally, by portraying the issue in a particular fashion or by emphasising certain aspects, the media also plays a role in shaping the public's perception of the issue.⁴⁴ This is referred to in research as attribute salience.⁴⁵ When measuring media salience, there are several properties that need to be considered.

Several scholars have attributed to research elaborating on the properties of media salience, but one of the most elaborate and renowned accounts is Kiouisis' research. In his study on the measurement of media salience in the 2000 U.S. presidential election, he established that external properties of media salience include the indicators of 'attention' and 'prominence', while internal properties include 'valence'.⁴⁶ Attention is the indicator that measures media awareness of the object, i.e. the issue, by the number of stories dedicated to the issue in the media (e.g. newspapers and digital media).⁴⁷ Prominence refers to the positioning of the story within media context which establishes importance. These include presentational and structural components of the story; e.g. placement and size of the topic or issue.⁴⁸ The external indicators of attention and prominence capture the salience of the object by emphasising whether the issue has received continuous attention.

According to Kiouisis, attribute salience is measured through the indicator of 'valence'.⁴⁹ Also known as tonality, valence focuses on if the public is thinking about the

Political Research 46, no. 2 (March 1, 2007): 183–210, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00691.x>; C.M. Mahoney, "Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union," *Journal of Public Policy* 27, no. 1 (May 1, 2007): 35–56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0143814x07000608>.

⁴¹ S. Kiouisis, "Explicating Media Salience: A Factor Analysis of New York Times Issue Coverage During the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election," *Journal of Communication* 54, no. 1 (2004): 71–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02614.x>.

⁴² Yeojin Kim, Youngju Kim, and Shuhua Zhou, "Theoretical and Methodological Trends of Agenda-Setting Theory: A Thematic Analysis of the Last Four Decades of Research," *The Agenda Setting Journal* 1, no. 1 (2017): 5–22, <https://doi.org/10.1075/asj.1.1.03kim>.

⁴³ Kim, Kim, and Zhou, "Theoretical and Methodological Trends of Agenda-Setting Theory: A Thematic Analysis of the Last Four Decades of Research."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kiouisis, "Explicating Media Salience: A Factor Analysis of New York Times Issue Coverage During the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

issue and how they are thinking about it as a result of object salience. An efficient way to measure valence in order to establish media salience is to code media coverage as having a positive, negative, or neutral tone towards the issue or topic at hand.⁵⁰ Even though valence is a crucial component in measuring media salience according to Kiouisis, other scholars have deemed it as problematic.⁵¹ The reason for this is that valence is based on a subjective assessment to determine whether a topic or issue is deemed as positive or negative. Subsequently, determining valence includes a crucial emotional component. Nevertheless, valence remains important in measuring media salience, and by acknowledging the limitations of valence one can still use the concept to establish patterns between media and policy.

The justification methods used throughout scholarly research on measuring salience via media coverage generally complement each other. In his research, Koopmans argues that media attention is crucial for the analysis of policy issues as the media essentially imposes accountability upon decision makers, which consequently influences the outcome of the decision-making process.⁵² Therefore, Koopmans argues that the degree of media coverage is contingent upon the salience of the issue.⁵³ Mahoney supports Koopmans' arguments in her comparative research on the success of lobbying in the U.S. and the EU, by arguing that the degree of media coverage is a direct indicator of the salience of an issue.⁵⁴ On a similar note, Warntjen establishes a continuous relationship between research on measuring political salience in terms of the degree of attention a topic receives in a public survey and in the media.⁵⁵ Warntjen states that the frequent mention of a topic in a survey correlates to the topic being important, which he then compares to media coverage; stating that the degree of media coverage a topic receives is a direct reflection of how salient the topic is politically.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Warntjen also argues that the demand for information on a specific topic determines the use of media coverage as a measuring tool for salience. Therefore, Warntjen states that the coverage of a topic in the media can simply reflect the controversy or intricate nature of a topic rather than the salience.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Kim, Kim, and Zhou, "Theoretical and Methodological Trends of Agenda-Setting Theory: A Thematic Analysis of the Last Four Decades of Research."

⁵² Koopmans, "Who Inhabits the European Public Sphere? Winners and Losers, Supporters and Opponents in Europeanised Political Debates."

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Mahoney, "Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union."

⁵⁵ Warntjen, "Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Political agenda-setting

As previously demonstrated, several scholars have established a correlation between media coverage and the salience of a given topic. Within the field of political science, the correlation between media salience and political processes is theorised in relation to the concept of political agenda-setting. The concept of political agenda-setting is related to the agenda-setting in the field of communication science, which theorises that media coverage influences the issue priorities of the public and subsequently their voting preferences.⁵⁸

Originated in a study of McCombs and Shaw, agenda-setting theory has grown significantly and is considered to be one of the most prevalent media effect concepts.⁵⁹ In political science, the theory of political agenda-setting entails the set of processes through which issues enter the political agenda.⁶⁰ More specifically, political agenda setting aims to explain how political actors determine their priorities.⁶¹ As the theory has been developed over the years, scholars have increasingly investigated the connection between the concept of agenda setting in communication sciences and political agenda-setting. As a result, the concept of political agenda-setting has evolved to be understood as the influence mass media has on politics.⁶² For the purpose of this study, the theory of political agenda-setting will serve as the primary theoretical foundation and not the theory of agenda-setting as it is known in communication sciences.

The concept of political agenda-setting can be understood as the beginning stage of the general policy-making process. In their research, Cobb and Elder conceptualised the policy making process as a sequence of various phases: problem identification, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation and evaluation.⁶³ The concept of political agenda-setting overlaps mostly with the first phase. Other scholars have built on the conceptualisation presented by Cobb and Elder by establishing the correlation between media and the agenda-setting phase. Generally, scholars agree that within political agenda-setting,

⁵⁸ Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972), <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>.

⁵⁹ Walgrave and Van Aelst, "The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory."

⁶⁰ Bryan D. Jones and Frank R. Baumgartner, "Representation and Agenda Setting," *Policy Studies Journal* 32, no. 1 (2004): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0190-292x.2004.00050.x>.

⁶¹ Walgrave and Van Aelst, "The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory."

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ R.W. Cobb and C.D. Elder, "Communication and Public Policy," in *Handbook of Political Communication*, ed. D.D. Nimmo and K.R. Sanders (Sage, 1981), 391–415.

the influence of media is perceived as relatively high due to its ability to focus attention.⁶⁴ Within this context, issues that are high on the agenda of the media can obtain an important position on the political agenda. Building on this theory, Baumgartner et al. found that negative media coverage has an increased effect on political agenda setting.⁶⁵ Because politics is a ‘business’ that revolves around problem-solving, negative news coverage raises the attention of political actors.⁶⁶ Within the context of political agenda-setting, many actors are involved that aim to influence the ‘setting of the agenda’. In literature, one of the main actors that is often discussed in relation to political agenda-setting and the media are interest groups. In the next section, the concept of interest groups and its relevance to this study will be explained and discussed.

Interest groups

The term ‘interest group’ is subject to an abundance of neologisms, e.g. political interest groups, interest organisations, citizen groups, civil society organisations, and social movement groups.⁶⁷ The plural nature of the term ‘interest group’ forms a core issue in the ongoing discussion within the academic field.⁶⁸ However, as this thesis does not aim to contribute to the discussion on the definition of interest groups, it will use a ‘simple’ definition found in literature. In their research consisting of reviewing various approaches to interest group research, Hojnacki et al. define interest groups as “organised non-state actors that aim to influence policy outcomes”.⁶⁹ This definition encompasses the broad and inclusive nature of the term while still remaining relatively simple. Therefore, in this study, interest groups are as defined by Hojnacki et al.

The field of study concerned with EU policy-making and the role of interest groups has expanded significantly over the past three decades. Starting off with research providing

⁶⁴ Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1993) ; Frank Esser and Barbara Pfetsch, *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases, and Challenges* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶⁵ F.R. Baumgartner, B.D. Jones, and B.L. Leech, “Media Attention and Congressional Agendas,” in *Do the Media Govern? Politicians, Voters and Reporters in America*, ed. S. Iyengar and R. Reeves (Sage, 1997), 349–63.

⁶⁶ Baumgartner, Jones, and Leech, “Media Attention and Congressional Agendas.”

⁶⁷ Beyers, Eising, and Mahoney, “Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know?” ; Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*.

⁶⁸ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*.”

⁶⁹ Marie Hojnacki et al., “Studying Organizational Advocacy and Influence: Reexamining Interest Group Research,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (2012): 379–99, 10.1146/annurev-polisci-070910-104051.

mainly general accounts of EU lobbying and its dynamics (e.g. Schendelen, Wallace and Young, Greenwood), over the years the focus of academia has shifted to more in-depth studies on interest group dynamics in the EU.⁷⁰ A substantial part of literature within this growing field of research is concerned with the lobbying strategies interest groups employ in order to influence the EU policy-making process.⁷¹ Within this specific field of research, the literature generally defines two types of lobbying strategies that interest groups can employ: inside and outside lobbying strategies.⁷² Inside strategies refer to the exchange of information by establishing a contact with decision-makers through private communication channels.⁷³ Outside lobbying strategies consist of tactics that address decision-makers indirectly, through the mobilisation of a wider audience. This strategy focuses on the use of public communication channels rather than private communication with policymakers, and involves tactics such as organising demonstrations, contacting journalists, and establishing public campaigns.⁷⁴ Therefore, the effects of these strategies differ. While inside lobbying limits the scope of an issue by privatising a conflict, outside tactics seek to socialise a conflict by openly involving a broader audience of stakeholders.⁷⁵ Milbraith, one of the first to define and research lobbying tactics, argued in his research that inside strategies are universally preferred by lobbyists over outside tactics.⁷⁶ Milbraith's argument is widely supported as common wisdom and in the study field of interest group strategies.⁷⁷ In the context of EU policy-making, scholars such as Eising support Milbraith's statement by arguing that the infamous complex and technocratic nature of the policy making procedures in the EU lead to

⁷⁰ M.P.C.M. Van Schendelen, *National Public and Private EC Lobbying*, Dartmouth EBooks (Dartmouth, 1994). ; H. Wallace, "Introduction," in *Participation and Policy-Making in the European Union*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1997), 1–16. ; Justin Greenwood and Ruth Webster, "Are EU Business Associations Governable?," *European Integration Online Papers* 4, no. 3 (2000), <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-003.htm>.

⁷¹ Sebastiaan Princen, "Agenda-Setting Strategies in EU Policy Processes," *Journal of European Public Policy* 18, no. 7 (2011): 927–43. ; Pieter Bouwen and Margaret McCown, "Lobbying versus Litigation: Political and Legal Strategies of Interest Representation in the European Union," *Journal of European Public Policy* 14, no. 3 (2007): 422–43. ; Patrick Bernhagen and Neil C. Mitchell, "The Determinants of Direct Corporate Lobbying in the European Union," *European Union Politics* 10, no. 2 (2009): 155–76, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116509103366>.

⁷² Iskander De Bruycker and Jan Beyers, "Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics," *European Political Science Review* 11, no. 1 (2019): 57–74, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773918000218>.

⁷³ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*.

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Milbraith in Conor McGrath, "Framing Lobbying Messages: Defining and Communicating Political Issues Persuasively."

⁷⁷ P.D. Culpepper, *Quiet Politics and Business Power: Corporate Control in Europe and Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). ; De Bruycker and Beyers, "Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics."

lobbyist's preference for direct contact with policy-makers to influence decisions.⁷⁸ Moreover, some scholars have argued that outside lobbying tactics are considered a measure of last resort, and even a 'weapon of the weak'.⁷⁹ However, several studies on EU lobbying tactics have established that multiple interest groups depend on outside tactics in different circumstances.⁸⁰ Mahoney theorised in her research that outside lobbying tactics should increase the chance interest groups have to influence EU policy-making.⁸¹ However, the empirical evidence presented in her research demonstrated that her hypothesis was not correct, and that there is a negative correlation between interest group influence on policy-making and outside lobbying strategies.⁸² On the contrary, Beyers demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between outside tactics and interest group access to the EU institutions.⁸³ Moreover, other scholars have argued that due to the increased public scrutiny and politicisation of the EU policy making process, outside lobbying strategies have become an increasingly effective tactic to influence policy decisions.⁸⁴ In addition to the discussion on the effectiveness of lobbying strategies, scholars have also contributed to research on which interest groups tend to employ which lobbying strategies.⁸⁵ The research within this field predominantly focuses on two explanatory factors: group type and resources.⁸⁶ Group type refers to whether an interest group represents citizen interests or specific economic

⁷⁸ R. Eising, "Institutional Context, Organizational Resources and Strategic Choices: Explaining Interest Group Access in the European Union," *European Union Politics* 8, no. 3 (2007): 329–62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116507079542>.

⁷⁹ T. Gais and J. Walker, "Pathways to Influence in American Politics," in *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*, ed. Jack Jr. Walker and Ann Arbor (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 104–11, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2132241>. ; Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

⁸⁰ Jan Beyers, "Voice and Access: Political Practices of European Interest Associations," *European Union Politics* 5, no. 2 (2004): 211–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116504042442>. ; Adam William Chalmers, "Trading Information for Access: Informational Lobbying Strategies and Interest Group Access to the European Union," *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no. 1 (2013): 39–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2012.693411>.

⁸¹ Mahoney, "Lobbying Success in the United States and the European Union."

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Beyers, "Voice and Access: Political Practices of European Interest Associations."

⁸⁴ H. Kriesi and A. Tresch, "Going Public in the European Union: Action Repertoires of Western European Collective Political Actors," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 48–74, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24969971>. ; Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "A Postfunctional Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus," *British Journal of Political Science* 39, no. 1 (2009): 1–23, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science>

⁸⁵ Marcel Hanegraaff, Jan Beyers, and Iskander De Bruycker, "Balancing inside and Outside Lobbying: The Political Strategies of Lobbyists at Global Diplomatic Conferences," *European Journal of Political Research* 55, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 568–88, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12145>. ; Jonas Tallberg et al., "NGO Influence in International Organizations: Information, Access and Exchange," *British Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 1 (2018): 213–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s000712341500037x>.

⁸⁶ Hanegraaff, Beyers, and De Bruycker, "Balancing inside and Outside Lobbying: The Political Strategies of Lobbyists at Global Diplomatic Conferences."

interests.⁸⁷ Resources usually refer to financial means or policy expertise.⁸⁸ Interest groups representing economic interests, especially those with elaborate resources, rely more on inside lobbying tactics than organised interest representing citizen or environmental interests, i.e. NGOs.⁸⁹ NGOs generally need to target a broader audience in order to obtain financial resources, and are therefore more inclined towards employing outside lobbying strategies.⁹⁰ According to Junk's research on NGO lobbying tactics regarding EU environmental policies, the degree of outside lobbying tactics employed by NGOs is contingent upon the salience and complexity of the issue at hand.⁹¹ More specifically, Junk argues that issues of high salience and low complexity are more likely to be linked to outside lobbying tactics.⁹²

As mentioned previously, outside lobbying tactics rely on public forms of communication in order to influence policy-makers decisions. Within the academic realm of lobbying strategies and interest groups, media attention is considered to serve as a crucial outside tactic for interest groups to impact political decision-making.⁹³ As de Bruycker states in his research on the correlation between media attention and the success of interest groups, the media establishes a framework in which the size and scope of opposition and support provide a signal to elites whether to change the course of action.⁹⁴ If an issue or topic is widely reported upon, it is difficult for policy-makers to overlook these demands. Therefore, if an interest group manages to attach its own goals to those of the wider audience, the political leverage of their demands increases. Subsequently, this increases the chances of attaining interest groups policy goals.⁹⁵ De Bruycker's research builds on previous findings that emphasise the impact that media has on political actors. According to Schudson, the power that mass media holds over the public does not lie in the direct impact of media, but in the perception that the public receives from media outlets about decision-makers.⁹⁶ Other

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Junk, "Two Logics of NGO Advocacy: Understanding inside and Outside Lobbying on EU Environmental Policies."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ De Bruycker and Beyers, "Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics."

⁹¹ Wiebke Marie Junk, "Two Logics of NGO Advocacy: Understanding inside and Outside Lobbying on EU Environmental Policies," *Journal of European Public Policy* 23, no. 2 (2016): 236–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2015.1041416>.

⁹² Junk, "Two Logics of NGO Advocacy: Understanding inside and Outside Lobbying on EU Environmental Policies."

⁹³ Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz, Laura Chaqués Bonafont, and Darren Halpin, "Diversity in the News? A Study of Interest Groups in the Media in the UK, Spain and Denmark," *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (April 1, 2017): 313–28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123415000599>.

⁹⁴ De Bruycker, "Blessing or Curse for Advocacy? How News Media Attention Helps Advocacy Groups to Achieve Their Policy Goals."

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Michael Schudson, *The Power of News* (Harvard University Press, 1996).

scholars such as Walgrave and Peters corroborate this statement by arguing that whether media coverage is perceived as a cause or consequence of public opinion is not important, as long as decision-makers consider media coverage as a reflection of the public's wishes.⁹⁷ Going back to de Bruycker's research, he further concludes that increased media attention is most remarkable concerning interest groups that oppose a proposed policy.⁹⁸ This is an interesting observation as these opposing interests correlate with the earlier observation made by Warntjen, who argued that the media coverage of an issue or topic can merely be a reflection of the controversy or complexity of a topic.⁹⁹ Bruycker's and Warntjen's observations are corroborated by Schuck et al., who concluded in their study on the 2009 European Parliament election that media coverage is intrinsically focused on the election being contested. Thus, Schuck et al.'s research confirms the general pull of the media towards sensationalism instead of salience.¹⁰⁰ In earlier research, scholars such as Kingdon also highlighted the correlation between media coverage and sensationalism, by stating that the weakness of the media lies in its tendency to highlight the most spectacular stories.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the studies seem to demonstrate a pattern where interest groups seem to be more successful regarding influencing attention of opposing policies in the media than they would if they tried to boost awareness on policies that do not oppose. Additionally, interest groups attract the media's attention on particular policy issues by making statements that are not technical, but rather political and antagonistic.¹⁰² By doing so, media is more likely to focus their attention on the issue at hand, further supporting the narrative that media coverage is contingent on sensationalism and controversy.

These studies further support the argument that media coverage is perceived as a significant tool for interest groups to pursue as a lobbying tactic. As mentioned previously, the influence of media is perceived to be relatively high within the political agenda-setting phase. Connecting this argument to the use of media as an outside lobbying strategy for interest groups, it can be stated that interest groups especially seek out media coverage during

⁹⁷ Walgrave and Van Aelst, "The Contingency of the Mass Media's Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory."

⁹⁸ Iskander De Bruycker, "Pressure and Expertise: Explaining the Information Supply of Interest Groups in EU Legislative Lobbying," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, no. 3 (2015): 599–616, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12298>.

⁹⁹ Warntjen, "Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics."

¹⁰⁰ Andreas Schuck et al., "Party Contestation and Europe on the News Agenda: The 2009 European Parliamentary Elections," *Electoral Studies* 30, no. 1 (2011): 41–52, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2010.09.021>.

¹⁰¹ John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁰² De Bruycker, "Pressure and Expertise: Explaining the Information Supply of Interest Groups in EU Legislative Lobbying."

the agenda-setting stage.¹⁰³ Additionally, Junk's research demonstrates that especially NGOs are likely to employ outside lobbying strategies such as seeking out media coverage.

The summary of relevant literature demonstrated in this section has provided several interesting trends that this thesis aims to contribute to. Firstly, the literature has demonstrated that there is the traditional narrative of agenda-setting establishing a contingent relationship between media attention on political topics such as EU policies and the salience of the policy issue. Secondly, a trend in literature can be observed where there is a shift from the traditional idea towards the observation that media attention is not per se contingent on the salience of a specific issue, but rather reflects the controversial and sensationalist tendencies of the media. Finally, from the literature on interest groups and strategies arises the argument that interest groups representing citizen interests, i.e. NGOs, are more likely to seek out the media as an outside lobbying tactic during the agenda-setting stage. On the contrary, interest groups representing economic interests, i.e. businesses, rely more on inside lobbying tactics, and would therefore be significantly less present in the media.

Based on these three main findings in literature, this thesis examines the dichotomy between the two narratives on agenda-setting and media coverage through the case study of CCS. Additionally, this thesis demonstrates whether interest groups representing citizen interests are indeed more present in media than interest groups representing economic interests, therefore confirming Junk's argument that NGOs rely more on outside lobbying tactics. The expected outcome of the research is that in line with the trend of current academic literature, the coverage of CCS in the media and the salience of the policy developments are not contingent, as media coverage is contingent upon controversy and sensationalism surrounding CCS. In addition, the expectation is that NGOs are consistently more present in the media than interest groups representing economic interests, i.e. businesses.

¹⁰³ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*. ; Chalmers, "Trading Information for Access: Informational Lobbying Strategies and Interest Group Access to the European Union." ; De Bruycker, "Pressure and Expertise: Explaining the Information Supply of Interest Groups in EU Legislative Lobbying."

Case study

Before elaborating on the methodology and research results of the study, this chapter provides a condensed overview of CCS development in the EU, in order to further contextualise the next methodology chapter and the results of the research.

The EU is one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG), accounting for approximately 8% of global emissions.¹⁰⁴ In order to significantly reduce GHG emissions and slow down climate change, the EU has mapped out a strategy containing targets to significantly reduce GHG emissions and even achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The EU's policy framework for climate and energy, with the European Green Deal as its flagship strategy, has established a clear roadmap for decarbonization of the economy and facilitating the transition to a low-carbon future. As part of this framework, Carbon Capture and Storage has been identified as a key technology for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from large-scale industries, particularly in fossil energy industries.¹⁰⁵

CCS is a technology aimed to mitigate climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted into the atmosphere from industrial processes and power generation. CCS involves capturing CO₂ from the point of emission, such as power plants or industrial facilities, transporting it to a storage site, and then storing it underground in geological formations or other secure storage locations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) have established that CCS technology is essential in achieving international climate goals and reducing global emissions.¹⁰⁶ In the IEA's sustainable development scenario, which outlines the global transition to net zero, the importance of CCS is highlighted. CCS technology alone accounts for up to 15% of cumulative emissions reductions to meet the 2050 global target, following renewables and energy efficiency methods. To achieve these goals, the expectation is that around 5.6 gigatonnes (Gt) of CO₂ per year will need to be captured and stored by 2050.¹⁰⁷ It is within this context that the EU and member states have started to develop policies and

¹⁰⁴ IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways."

¹⁰⁵ IEA, "Energy Technology Perspectives 2020," *International Energy Agency (IEA)*, September 2020, <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-technology-perspectives-2020>.

¹⁰⁶ IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways."

¹⁰⁷ Berstad et al., "Current State of CCS Technologies and the EU Policy Framework."

strategies to promote the large-scale deployment of CCS, with the first landmark initiative being the 2009 CCS Directive. Whereas CCS seemed to be headed in a promising direction within the EU from 2007 to 2011, it lost its accumulated momentum due to several unfortunate circumstances in the context of the financial crisis of 2010.¹⁰⁸ CCS was backtracked on the EU and national policy agendas for roughly 6 years. Then it suddenly reappeared in a report from the IPCC in the aftermath of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris.¹⁰⁹ In their report, the IPCC restated the importance of CCS as a tool to significantly reduce global emissions. The IPCC's report had a significant impact in the EU and put CCS back on the policy agenda of the EU and its member states, reigniting the discussion on whether and how CCS should be included in policy.

¹⁰⁸ Rijk, "CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?"

¹⁰⁹ IPCC, "Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming of 1.5°C above Pre-Industrial Levels and Related Global Greenhouse Gas Emission Pathways."

Methodology

This chapter defines the method used in this research to come to a conclusive answer to the research question. The first part of the chapter will focus on explaining the choice of case study, followed by an explanation of how media salience will be measured in the case study. Subsequently, the method of analysis will be elaborated upon followed by the shortcomings of the chosen methodology.

In order to define the correlation between media salience and policy development, this thesis will use a qualitative case-study. Within the academic field of research on media salience within legislative or policy context, the use of case studies is often employed as a contextualising factor for the explanation of larger theoretical concepts, such as agenda-setting, salience, or interest groups.¹¹⁰ For this thesis, a case study has been chosen in order to demonstrate the concept of media salience in a political context. The chosen case study has to adhere to some general criteria. First of all, it is important that the case study includes policy- or legislative procedures on EU level that have been included and/or transposed into national legislation or policy of a specific member state. This is important as this allows for the demarcation of a timeframe of discussion, implementation, and transposition. Additionally, the demarcation of time periods can then more easily be linked to periods of media coverage. By choosing a case study that also pertains to a specific EU member state, the research becomes more issue- and case specific, which will allow for more concrete results as to which degree media salience is contingent upon legislation- and policy developments. Moreover, focusing on a specific country will also allow for results reflecting the dynamics between the EU and its member states, and draw conclusions based on media salience of EU decision-making on a national level.

The case study that has been chosen is CCS. More specifically, this study will focus on the policy developments of CCS in the Netherlands. It is important to clarify that in this case; policy developments include legislation. The European Commission defines the development and implementation of policies as an umbrella term that includes the proposing and amending

¹¹⁰ Klüver, *Lobbying in the European Union: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions, and Policy Change*. ; Beyers, Eising, and Mahoney, "Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know?" ; Dür and Mateo, "Public Opinion and Interest Group Influence: How Citizen Groups Derailed the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement." ; De Bruycker and Beyers, "Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics."

of legislation.¹¹¹ Therefore, this thesis will use the term ‘CCS policy developments’ to include CCS-related legislation. The Netherlands holds a pivotal position in the development of large-scale CCS in the EU, as it has geographical and economic advantages with regards to CCS. Due to the energy-intensive nature of the Dutch economy and the geographic concentration of a few industrial areas, transport and capture can profit from economies of scale, scope, and agglomeration.¹¹² Subsequently, CCS has always been a more prevalent topic of discussion in the Netherlands as opposed to EU member states who do not possess these favourable economic and geographical characteristics. Therefore, the Netherlands makes a compelling case study, as the general awareness of CCS and the discussion on CCS developments precede the policy developments on EU level.¹¹³

To understand what the correlation is between the discussion on CCS policy development and media salience, the latter concept has to be measured. As the literature study has demonstrated, measuring salience can be done in various ways, of which media coverage is one prominent method. To measure the level of media salience this thesis will, in line with Kiouisis’ method, analyse the level of media coverage.¹¹⁴ The research on media coverage in the Netherlands has been divided into three time periods:

1. Period of EU debate on the CCS Directive from 2007-2009
2. Transposition period of CCS Directive into Dutch legislation from 2010-2011
3. Resurgence of debate on CCS policies on EU and Dutch policy agenda from 2017-2019

It is demonstrated that the CCS Directive was the first landmark policy initiated by the EU to include CCS in national legislations. Therefore, it is the most logical choice to include the period leading up to the CCS Directive and the transposition period into national legislation as the first two time frames. The third time frame has been chosen for two reasons specifically. First, this time frame demarcates the resurgence of CCS on the EU political agenda in the aftermath of the IPCC’s report on climate change. Moreover, this time frame is especially interesting as simultaneously to the resurgence on the EU’s agenda, CCS was also

¹¹¹ “Policy, Law – Decision-Making Process | European Union,” European Union, n.d., https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/law/how-eu-policy-decided_en.

¹¹² Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?”

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Kiouisis, “Explicating Media Salience: A Factor Analysis of New York Times Issue Coverage During the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election.”

boosted on the Dutch political agenda due to a change in the government.¹¹⁵ The time frame chosen for the third period has been limited to 2019, as this marks the ‘end’ of the substantial changes in the Dutch political landscape with the completion of the Dutch Climate Agreement (Klimaatakkoord). Moreover, the limitation to 2019 was also chosen in order to keep the research feasible within the time limit imposed within the context of this thesis.

In addition to these three specific time periods, the results have been displayed in the research findings divided into quarters of each year as well. As the results have been displayed in graphs, providing additional specific time frames would demonstrate a clearer correlation between specific milestones of the policy making process regarding CCS and media coverage. However, for the sake of the clarity and structure of the research, the three mentioned time frames above are leading, as they provide a clear general overview of the relevant time periods. The three different time periods are fit to demonstrate possible differences between media coverage on Dutch policy developments and European policy developments regarding CCS. This has aided in constructing a solid conclusion as distinctions have become clear from which a correlation has been derived.

The research method for this study has been based on a mixed research method, meaning that the research includes both quantitative and qualitative elements. The data sample for the three mentioned time frames was gathered from the online database Factiva. This online platform is an international news database that assembles a wide range of news articles and publications. While there are other online news databases available, Factiva offers one of the most substantial ranges of news articles and publications. Therefore, it is one of the most reliable sources for gathering data in context of this research. Although the Factiva database does not include all sources or articles, it was chosen to be the best match within the framework of this research. As the research for this thesis is limited in terms of time and workload, gathering data samples through manual research of individual newspapers was not realistic. Thus, what needs to be kept in mind is that the study’s findings cannot be interpreted as covering all Dutch media coverage on the topic of CCS within the three demarcated time frames.

In addition to the gathering of quantitative data through Factiva, qualitative research has also formed a substantial part of this research. The previous chapter has laid out a

¹¹⁵ E. Ter Mors et al., “Media Coverage of Carbon Capture and Storage: An Analysis of Established and Emerging Themes in Dutch National Newspapers,” *Energies* 16, no. 4 (February 20, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.3390/en16042056>.

comprehensive theoretical framework in which this research is embedded. During the interpretation of the research results, this contextual framework is crucial in order to come to a comprehensive conclusion that will further contextualise and add on to the existing research. The use of quantitative research elements allows for systematic patterns or trends to be scrutinised, which is crucial for this study as the degree of media coverage needed to be conceptualised. Additionally, the quantitative data results allow for this data to be used for potential further research.

As stated previously, three demarcated time frames have formed the baseline of the data sample in Factiva. In order to establish which factors are relevant in determining media salience, this study has included Kiousis' established method of research.¹¹⁶ More specifically, Kiousis' measures of attention and valence have been applied in order to structure the research results. In order to determine the level of media coverage concerning CCS, the Factiva search has been conducted by defining the quantity of articles mentioning the term CCS in Dutch, which corresponds to the measure of attention. Within the search criteria of the Factiva database, this corresponded to the following terminology: (CO2 OR kooldioxide OR koolstofdioxide OR CCS) AND (afvang OR opslag).

To expand the relevance of the results, the articles corresponding to these search terms were also defined by the context in which they are mentioned. The term context is further defined in this study as 'contextual factors', which divides the articles into three specific categories: positive, of the article towards the object of the story. The reason the categories of positive, negative, and descriptive have been included is because they are crucial for the contextualisation of the results. As mentioned in the literature study, influencing the media is a prominent outside lobbying tactic. Interest groups aim to influence the media by conveying a particular narrative, which includes the tone towards the issue. Therefore, including the measure of valence is necessary as it allows for contextualisation of the correlation.

In addition to the contextual factors, the data sample was also divided by 'thematic factors', which divides the articles into policy or external events. More specifically, this factor indicates whether an article contains information regarding CCS policy development or external events. In this research, external events are defined as any mention of CCS outside a legislative context, e.g. controversies. Furthermore, the data sample was also divided by

¹¹⁶ Kiousis, "Explicating Media Salience: A Factor Analysis of New York Times Issue Coverage During the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election."

mentions of interest groups. In the context of CCS, two of the most prevalent interest groups are fossil industry stakeholders and NGOs.¹¹⁷ Therefore, for the purpose of this study the interest groups included are NGOs and fossil industry stakeholders. Subsequently, the data sample has been divided by mentions of NGOs and fossil industry stakeholders, in order to assess the presence of these interest groups in the Dutch media. Providing specific context and highlighting mentions of interest groups has led to detailed conclusions from which a correlation has been deduced in order to answer the research question. Without providing additional context, it would have been possible to establish a correlation, but not what that correlation entails.

Providing context by using the contextual and thematic factors listed above are part of the conduction of a deductive thematic analysis, as the existing literature has provided two main observations to which the research results are expected to lean towards. A drawback of using the method of embedding the quantitative data in qualitative research is that the results can be conflicting, and lead to an inconclusive answer to the research question. By having clarified that the research will lead to confirmation of one of the two trends established in the literature review, the idea is that drawback will be minimised, since there is not merely one narrative this research seeks to validate or refute. Nevertheless, the risk of an inconclusive answer being produced remains. In the next section, the results based on the explained research methods will be presented.

¹¹⁷ Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?”

Research results

In order to provide a clear overview of the research findings, this chapter will follow a specific structure. The results of the research will be divided into four sections, all consisting of two or three graphs. Firstly, this chapter will display the number of articles that were found from the data sample in Factiva to provide a general overview of the volume of articles mentioning CCS in Dutch media. Then, two graphs will display the articles divided by contextual factors (positive, negative, and descriptive) per year and per time frame.

Furthermore, three graphs will display the articles divided by thematic factor. In addition to display of the thematic factors per year and time frame, there will be a third graph displaying the results in quarters. Within the context of thematic factors, this is relevant as it will allow to establish possible correlations between media coverage and policy developments more clearly. Finally, two graphs will display the total number of articles divided by the mention of relevant interest groups to the case study, which are NGOs and fossil industry stakeholders. These results will aid in providing a conclusion on whether NGOs or fossil industry stakeholders (i.e. organised business interests) are more present in the media.

Mentions of CCS in Dutch media

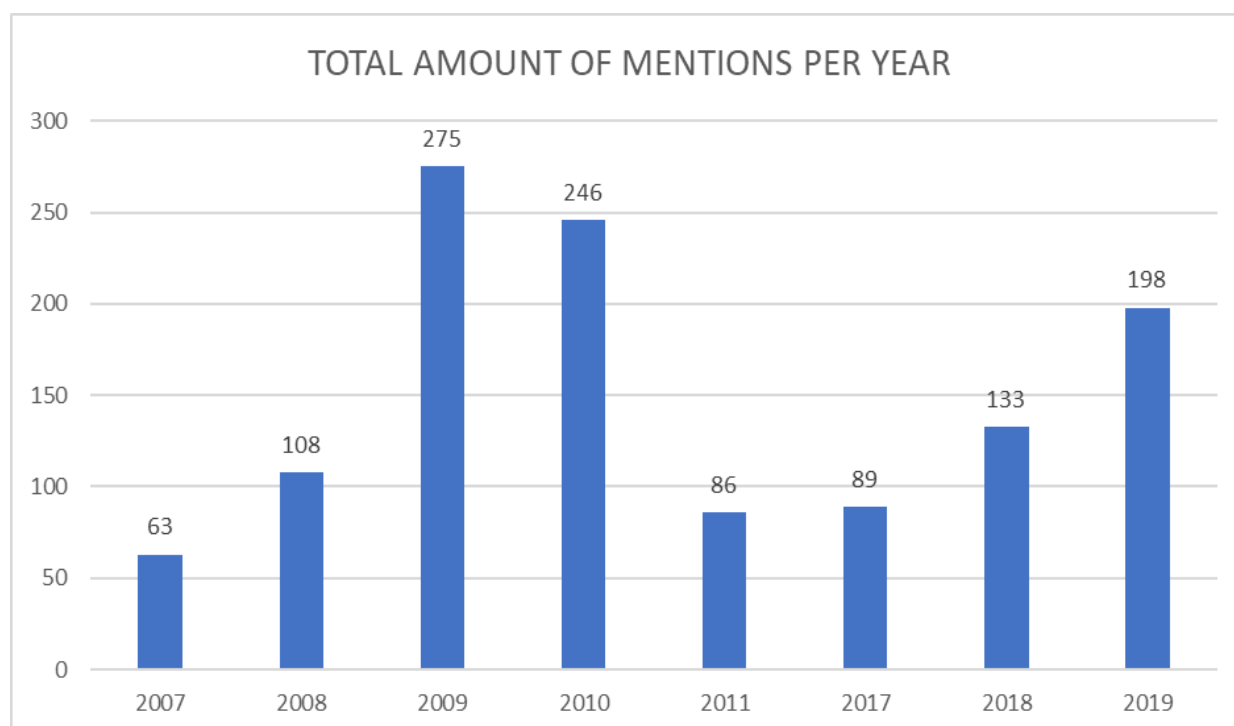


Figure 1. Total amount of mentions per year

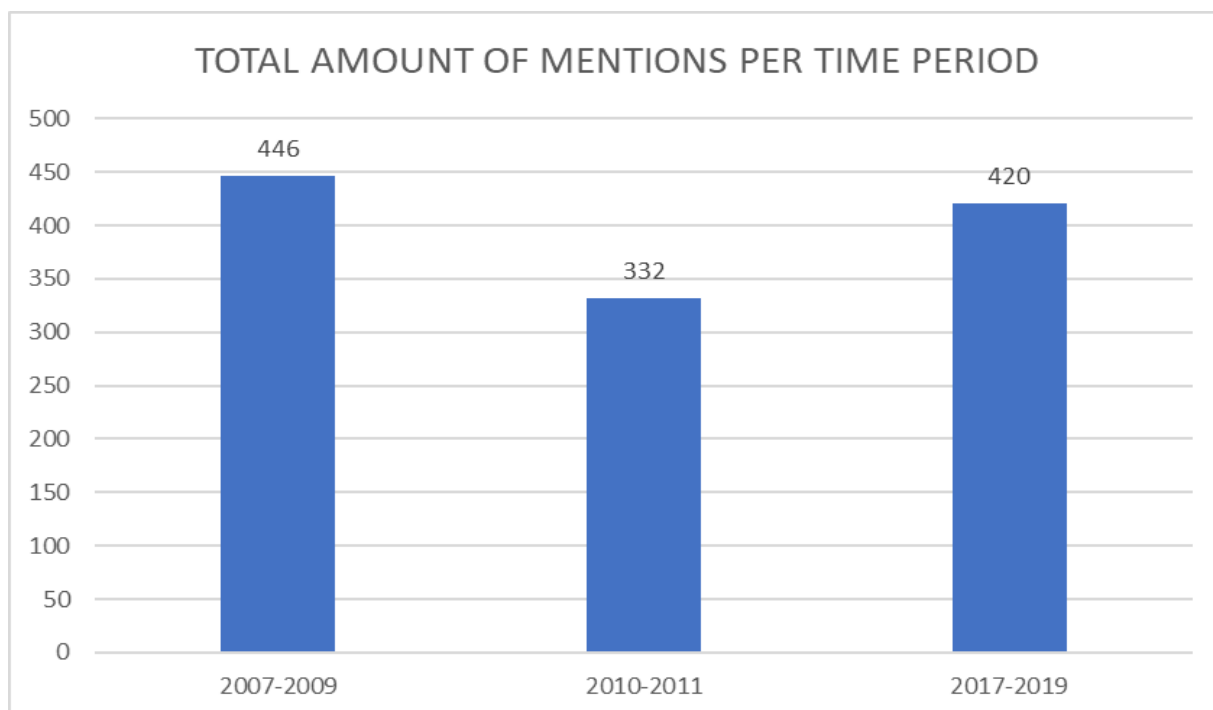


Figure 2 Total number of articles mentioning CCS per time period

To provide a baseline for further specialisation of the research results, the first step in categorising the data sample from Factiva was to tally the number of articles per year within the pre-sorted time frames. The results of this can be observed in Figure 1 and 2. Within the first time frame, from 2007 to 2009, it was found that there was a steady increase regarding the number of articles mentioning CCS. Starting at 63 articles in 2007, the number increased to 108 articles in 2008 and saw an even more significant increase in 2009, with 275 articles. From 2009 to 2010, the number of articles significantly decreased, with 246 articles mentioning CCS in 2010 to 86 in 2011. Moving onto the third time frame (2017 to 2019), the number of articles steadily increases over the course of three years, which is similar to the trend established in the first time frame. Overall, the research presented in Figure 1 has demonstrated that the year where the highest volume of articles was established has been in 2009, whereas the lowest volume of articles has been established to be 2007. Figure 2 displays a clear comparison between the three different time frames, which demonstrates that from 2010 to 2011, the volume of articles was the lowest in comparison to the other time frames, whereas the time frame from 2007 to 2009 has demonstrated the highest number of articles.

Contextual factors

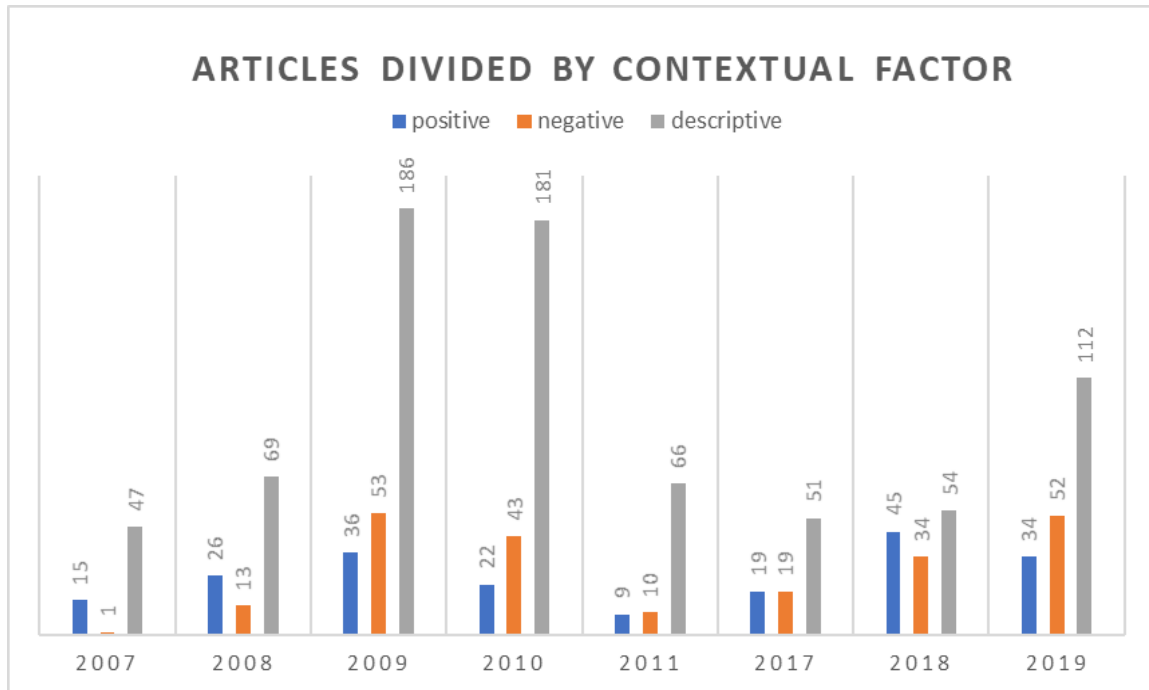


Figure 3 Articles mentioning CCS divided by contextual factor per year

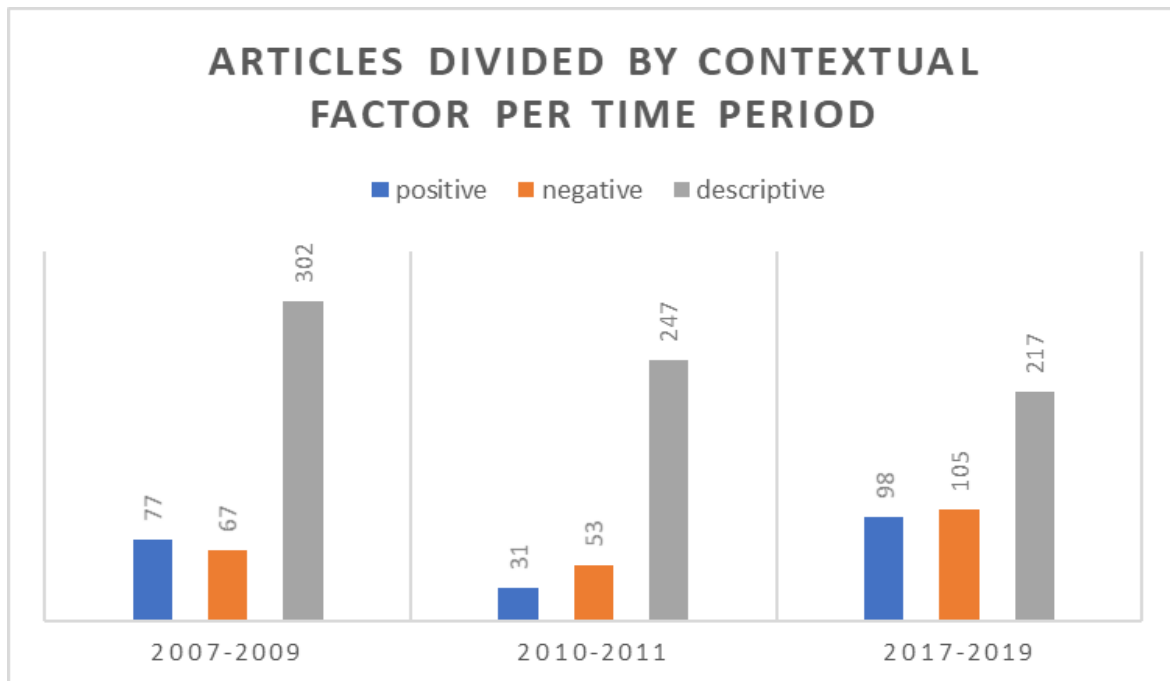


Figure 4 Articles mentioning CCS divided by contextual factor per time period

Having established the baseline of the data sample by tallying the total number of articles, the data sample has been further specialised by adding contextual factors. Figure 3 and 4 demonstrate the total number of articles categorised into the three predetermined contextual factors. From these results it has been established that for each year, the majority of the articles are descriptive towards the object (i.e. CCS). However, the results also demonstrate a trend where the number of descriptive articles has decreased over the course of the three time frames. Furthermore, in the first time period, the results demonstrate that there has been a steady increase in the number of negative articles. Moreover, the number of positive articles has also increased over the course of these three years. These results are in contrast with the second time period, where both the number of positive and negative articles decreased over the course of two years. Within the third time frame the results demonstrate an upward trend regarding negative articles, while positive articles peaked in 2018 and decreased again in 2019. Overall, the results show that the second time frame represented a decrease in both positive and negative articles in comparison to the first and third time frame, while the descriptive articles have shown a steady decrease over the course of the three time frames.

Thematic factors

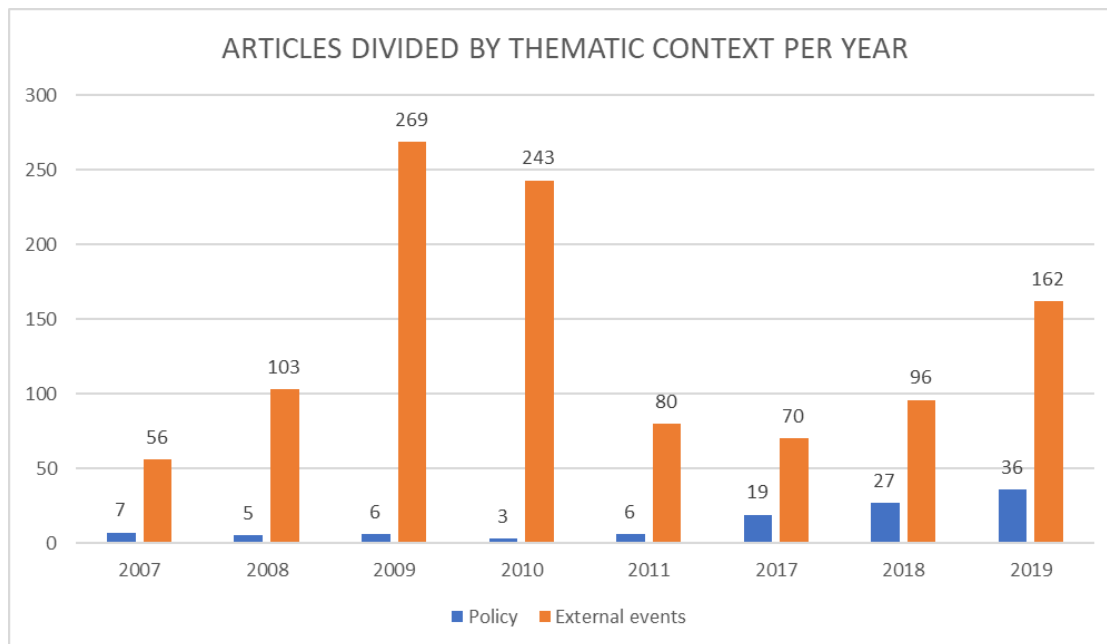


Figure 5 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per year

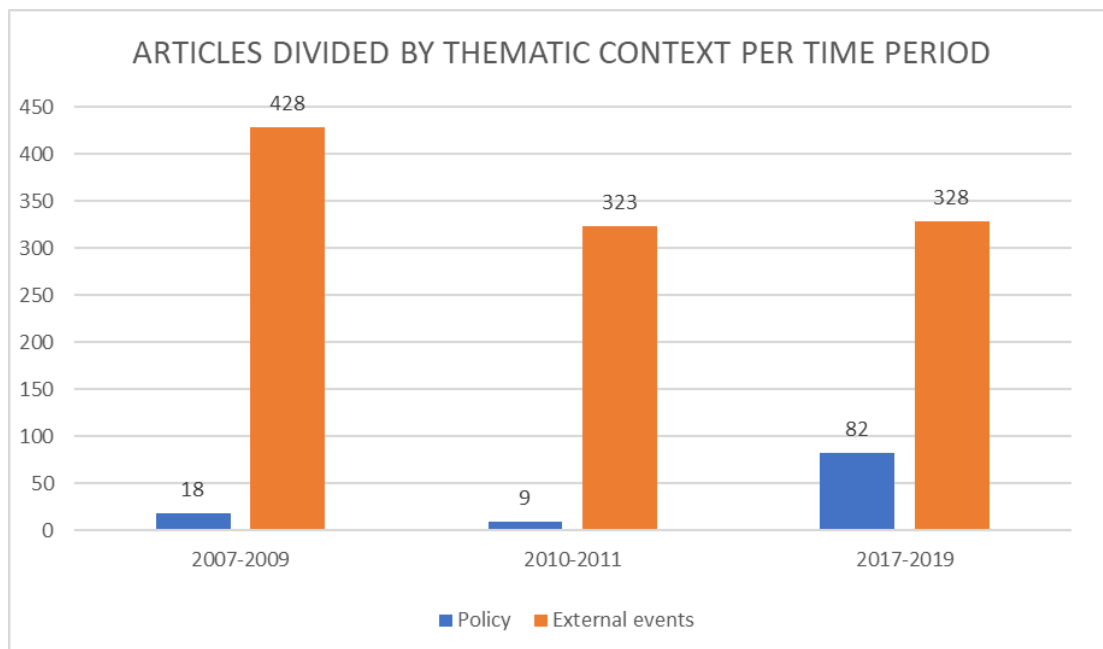


Figure 6 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per time period

Providing the thematic context in the form of categorising the articles by policy development or external events provide the most comprehensive results in order to conclude on the correlation between the discussion on policy developments and media salience. Figure 5 and 6 highlight the trend that the number of articles mentioning external events vastly exceeded the number of articles mentioning CCS policy developments, regardless of the year or time frame. Within the first two time frames, the results highlight that while the volume of articles is relatively high, the number of articles dedicated to policy developments was low in comparison to the third time frame. Within the third time frame, Figure 5 demonstrates a steady increase of articles on policy developments over the course of three years. These results provide a contrast with the volume of articles on policy developments in the first two time frames, where the number remained low and relatively steady over the course of the included years.

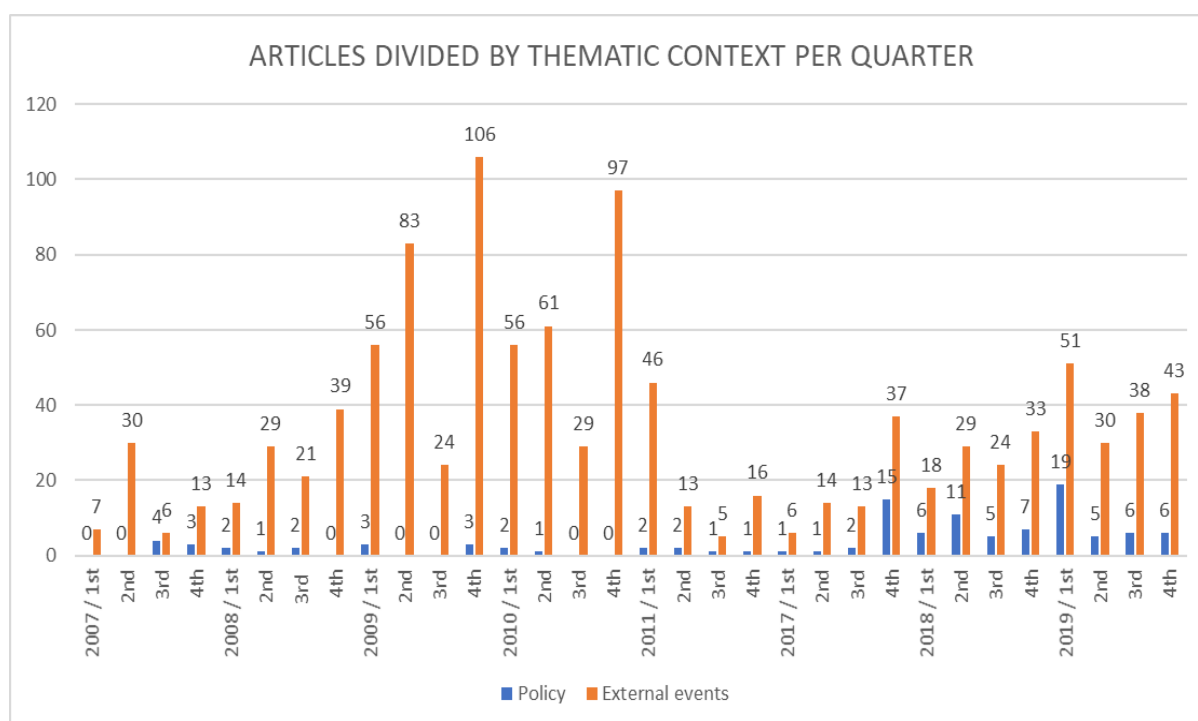


Figure 7 Articles mentioning CCS divided by thematic context per quarter

Figure 7 provides a more detailed reflection of the results presented in Figure 5 and 6, as this figure demonstrates the thematic context of the articles per quarter. This allows for a closer look into the policy development timeline and the thematic context of the articles. The details provided in Figure 7 serve as the foundation for establishing the correlation, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Mention of interest groups

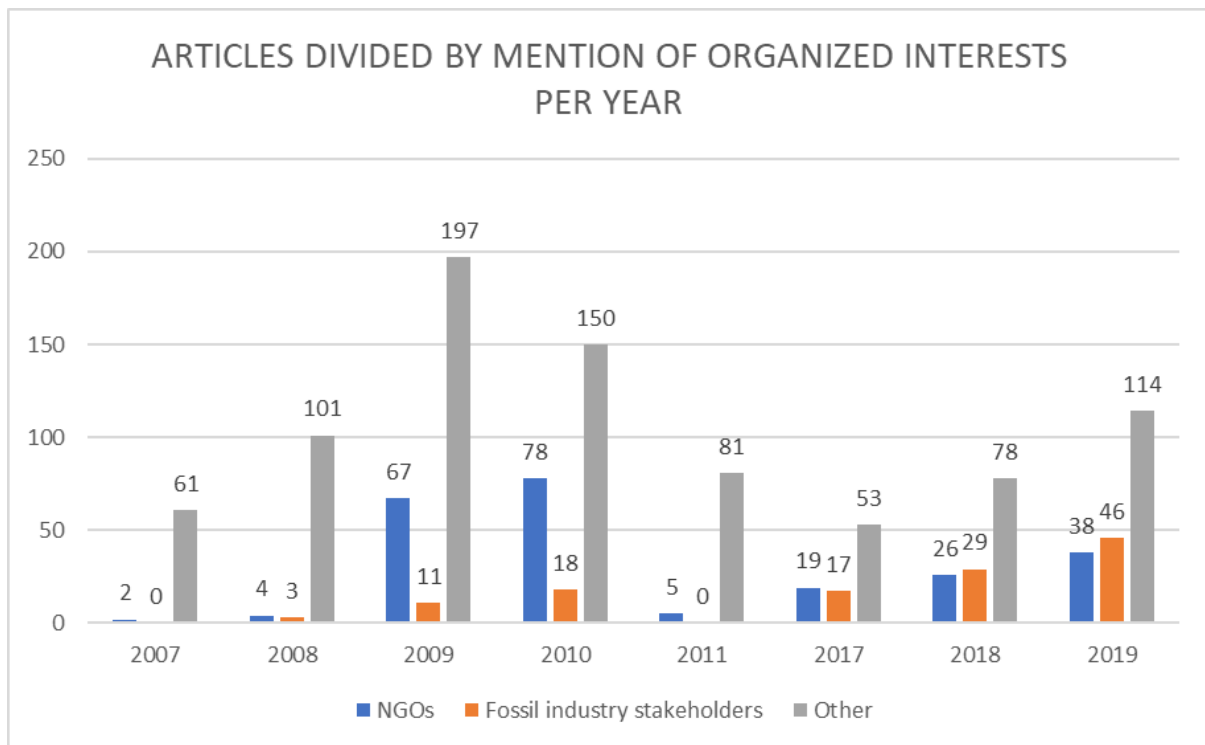


Figure 8 Total number of articles categorised by mention of organised interests per year

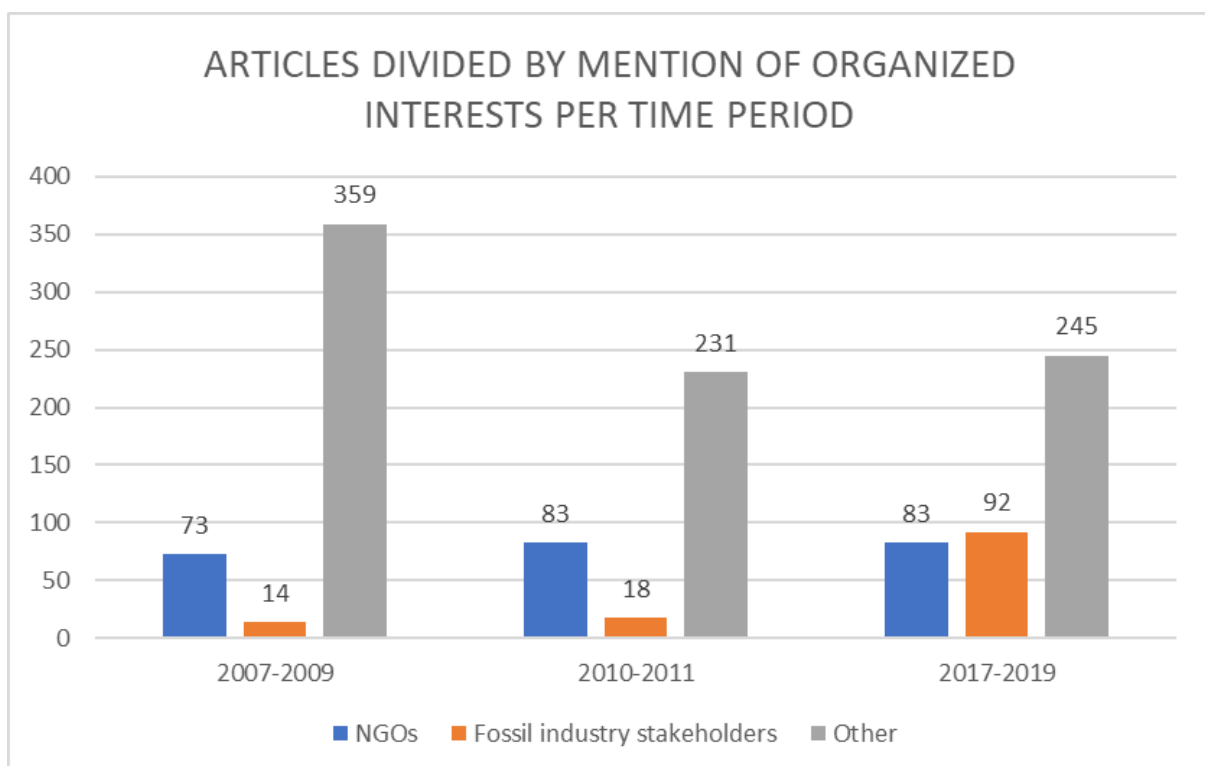


Figure 9 Total number of articles categorised by mention of organised interests per time period

Besides providing a conclusion on the correlation between the discussion on CCS policy developments and media salience, this study also highlights the presence of specific interest groups in the media within the data sample. As aforementioned, the main interest groups within the case study of CCS are NGOs and fossil industry actors. Within the results displayed, 'other' refers to articles where no interest groups were mentioned.

When comparing the three time frames, the observation is that within the first time frame, the presence of interest groups is negligible in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, there was a stark increase in the presence of NGOs and a light increase of fossil industry stakeholders in the media. Moving into the second time frame, the presence of NGOs continued to increase, with the presence of fossil industry stakeholders also slightly increasing, in line with the trend from 2008 to 2009. However, in 2011, the results demonstrate a significant decrease in the presence of interest groups, with fossil industry falling to 0 and NGOs to 5. In the last time frame, the observation is that the presence of interest groups demonstrates to be most persistent over the course of three years in comparison to the previous two time frames. However, looking at Figure 9, the presence of NGOs remains the same during the transposition period (2010-2011) and the resurgence period (2017-2019) while the presence of fossil industry stakeholders display a strong increase from 2010-2011 to 2017-2019. Overall, Figure 9 demonstrates that the presence of NGOs remained relatively steady over the course of the three time periods while the presence of fossil industry stakeholders significantly increased.

Discussion

Having presented the results of the research, this section will provide a more detailed explanation and contextualisation of the results to conclude on the research objectives. In order to keep the discussion structured, the results will be discussed per time frame.

Period of EU debate on the CCS Directive from 2007-2009

From the results of Figure 7, the observation is made that in 2007 articles on CCS policy development only started to appear in the third and fourth quarter. In January 2007, the European Commission published a Communication titled “Sustainable power generation from fossil fuels: aiming for near-zero emissions from coal after 2020.” This Communication marked the start of CCS policy advancements in the EU. The articles on policy advancements that start to emerge in the third and fourth quarter focus on Dutch policy advancements regarding CCS, which was arguably catalysed by the increased interest on EU level, as this raised the level of awareness among member states and incentivised interest in the subject. Within a national context, the interest on EU level was almost simultaneous with Dutch policy advancements as 2007 marked the year that the government began to consider the future of CCS in the Netherlands. As a result, the government adopted a policy package including CCS in December of 2007.¹¹⁸ Therefore, the increase in articles regarding policy in the third and fourth quarter coincide with Dutch policy advancements. Nevertheless, the number of articles covering external events clearly exceeds the articles covering policy advancements. In 2008, the first three quarters displayed in Figure 9 demonstrate that there were a few articles concerning policy developments, which corresponds with the efforts made by the Dutch government. Building on their efforts from 2007, the Dutch Parliament adopted another policy package facilitating the advancement of CCS in the Netherlands in June 2008.¹¹⁹ The articles on policy advancements in the first three quarters relate to the aftermath of the policy package established in December 2007 and the second policy package presented in June 2008. Apart from the few articles covering policy advancements, the number of articles covering external events increased when comparing 2007 to 2008. This increase can be related to the fact that a large onshore CCS project started to develop significantly over the

¹¹⁸ Feenstra, Mikunda, and Brunsting, “What Happened in Barendrecht? Case Study on the Planned Onshore Carbon Dioxide Storage in Barendrecht, the Netherlands.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

course of the year 2008. This project, called the Barendrecht project, was initiated by Shell. It caused considerable discussion and controversy as citizens and NGOs were strongly opposed to the development of this project.¹²⁰ The project was widely covered in media, which then relates to the increased number of articles on external events in 2008. Figure 3 demonstrates an increase in positive and negative articles, which correlates to the controversial nature of this new project, as the media covered the contrast of the opposition and the supporters.

In 2009, Figure 1 and 7 demonstrate that there is a significant increase in the total number of articles, but the number of articles regarding policy advancements remains relatively low. There is a stark increase in the number of articles covering external events, which has a strong correlation to the aforementioned controversial Barendrecht project as the discussion intensified as the project developed. Figure 7 demonstrates with the increased number of external events covered that the media focuses on the controversy surrounding this project. Additionally, it demonstrates that only the first and fourth quarter both contain three articles covering policy advancements. More specifically, the three articles covered in the first quarter of 2009 relate to EU policy advancements, with the draft for the CCS Directive being published for comment in January of 2009.¹²¹ Additionally, the Commission announced a renewed funding policy for CCS during the first quarter of 2009, which also correlates to the coverage of EU policy development in the first quarter.¹²² Interestingly enough, there is no mention of the adoption of the CCS Directive in June 2009, as there are no articles on policy developments in the third quarter. However, the fourth quarter does contain three articles that specifically focused on EU policy with mention of the new CCS Directive and its implications. Nevertheless, as Figure 7 demonstrates, the contrast between three articles on policy advancements and 106 articles on external events is significant, again leading to the observation that controversy (i.e. the Barendrecht project in this context) consistently overrules coverage of policy developments.

The mention of interest groups within this time frame also provides some interesting observations for discussion. While Figure 8 demonstrates that the mention of interest groups is practically negligible in 2007 and 2008, 2009 presents a significant increase regarding the involvement of interest groups in the media. In 2009, NGOs were clearly more prevalent than fossil industry stakeholders, confirming the previously stated narrative that NGOs are more

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Rijk, "CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?"

¹²² Ibid.

likely to engage in outside lobbying tactics such as media attention than interest groups representing economic interests.

Transposition period of CCS Directive into Dutch legislation from 2010-2011

From Figure 7 can be concluded that during the year 2010, only the first two quarters contain articles regarding policy developments. The two articles in the first quarter correspond to the transposition of the CCS Directive into the Dutch Mining Law, as the transposition period of the CCS Directive had to be completed by the 25th of June 2011.¹²³ An amendment proposal for the Mining Law was made on the 17th of March 2010 in the Dutch Parliament, which follows the time frame of the articles on policy development in the first quarter and second quarter of 2010.¹²⁴ The number of articles in 2010 on external events are again predominantly focused on the controversies surrounding the Barendrecht projects. The discussion and controversy surrounding the development of the project were still a prevalent topic in the media. Another correlation that can be made here is the surge of articles on external events in the last quarter of 2010 as opposed to the third quarter. This was caused by the final decision to cancel the Barendrecht project in November of 2010.¹²⁵ Therefore, the surge in media coverage on external events is arguably predominantly related to the strong sensationalist and controversial characteristics of this event. In the aftermath of this decision, the number of articles covering external events significantly decreased in 2011 in line with the total number of articles also diminishing. Figure 7 displays that in every quarter of 2011, at least one article regarding policy developments was present. In the first and third quarter, these articles relate to the amendment made to the Dutch Mining Act to accommodate the transposition of the CCS Directive. As mentioned previously, the proposal for amendment was established in March 2010. In the first quarter of 2011, the amendment was discussed in Parliament, hence the coverage in the media. In the third quarter of 2011, the official proposition was accepted by Parliament and the Mining Act was therefore officially amended, which was also covered in the media.¹²⁶ The articles on policy development displayed in Figure 7 from the second and fourth quarter correspond to developments on EU level, as the Commission made

¹²³ C. Van Der Weijden, "Implementation of the CCS Directive into the Dutch Mining Legislation," CMS, n.d., <https://cms.law/en/nld/publication/implementation-of-the-ccs-directive-into-the-dutch-mining-legislation-co2-storage>.

¹²⁴ Feenstra, Mikunda, and Brunsting, "What Happened in Barendrecht? Case Study on the Planned Onshore Carbon Dioxide Storage in Barendrecht, the Netherlands."

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

announcements on expanding the funding policy, which included plans for projects in the Netherlands.¹²⁷

Where the involvement of interest groups surged in 2010, as can be seen from Figure 8, the mention of interest groups diminished to practically zero in 2011. Therefore, there arguably seems to be a connection between the presence of controversial topics and the involvement of interest groups. When comparing 2010 and 2011, the context of the controversial Barendrecht project allows for the observation to be made that when the controversy died down with the cancellation of the project, media coverage also significantly diminished. Therefore, when there are less controversial topics to be covered, the amount of media coverage also seems to diminish.

Resurgence of debate on CCS policies on the EU and Dutch policy agenda from 2017-2019

When looking at Figure 1 and 7 the observation is that while the time frame from 2017-2019 does not contain the largest volume of articles, there is a consistent increase in articles covering policy developments in comparison to the previous years. As previously stated, from 2017 a renewed sense of urgency regarding climate change put CCS on the agenda again for both national and EU institutions. During the first quarter of 2017, the article on policy development relates to the amendment of the Dutch Energy Agreement, which was presented in March 2017.¹²⁸ In the second and third quarter, the articles on policy development are connected to the Dutch Energy Agreement. The Figure 7 demonstrates a significant increase in articles on policy advancements in the fourth quarter of 2017. In October 2017, the Netherlands had a change of government which highlighted its plans for the push of CCS policy in the coalition agreement.¹²⁹ The articles on policy development in the last quarter of 2017 connect to these renewed government plans. In 2018, there was a consistent presence of articles on policy development as demonstrated by Figure 7. This year marked pivotal in the development of CCS policy in the Netherlands, as preparations were made for the 2019 Climate Agreement. In the first quarter of 2018, the Dutch government announced its plans for a new Climate Law as part of the envisioned Climate Agreement, in

¹²⁷ Rijk, “CCS: A Case of EU Multi-Level Governance Failure?”

¹²⁸ “Ontstaan Klimaatbeleid,” *Klimaatverandering* | Rijksoverheid.nl, January 25, 2023, <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/klimaatverandering/klimaatbeleid/ontstaan-klimaatbeleid>.

¹²⁹ Ter Mors et al., “Media Coverage of Carbon Capture and Storage: An Analysis of Established and Emerging Themes in Dutch National Newspapers.”

which the need for CCS was highlighted.¹³⁰ The articles on policy development in the first quarter of 2018 relate to these developments in the Dutch CCS policy context. During the second quarter of 2018, decisive moments in the Dutch policy landscape started to intensify as the government announced the proposal for the Climate Law and the general guidelines for the future Climate Agreement. Consequently, highlighting the plans for CCS policy.¹³¹ The 11 articles on policy development in the second quarter of 2018 specifically connect to this context. The same context is applicable for the third quarter. During the fourth quarter of 2018, the Dutch Parliament officially accepted the new Climate Law, which is reflected in the articles on policy developments.¹³² Additionally, three of the articles on policy developments in the fourth quarter relate to developments on EU level. The Commission updated their long-term climate strategy in November 2018 to include their ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, strongly incentivising deployment of CCS.¹³³

The year 2019 was crucial in terms of CCS policy developments in the Netherlands as this was the year the Climate Agreement was signed. This context reflects in the volume of articles regarding policy developments, as can be observed from the Figure 7. The 19 articles in the first quarter of 2019 all relate to the negotiations that were going on at the time regarding the Climate Agreement, and how CCS was going to be included in the agreement according to various stakeholders. The articles on policy in the second quarter are arguably connected to the fact that the Climate Law was officially accepted by the Dutch Senate and the Parliament, further solidifying the future of CCS in the Netherlands.¹³⁴ Moreover, the Climate Agreement was finished in June 2019, which also contributes to the coverage of policy development during the second quarter of 2019. During the fourth quarter of 2019, the Climate Agreement was presented and the official national climate plan was turned in to the Commission, which is the context of the six articles on policy development in this quarter. Even though the number of articles covering policy was remarkable in comparison to the other time frames, Figure 7 highlights how the number of articles covering external events (i.e. controversies surrounding CCS and its deployment) was still considerably higher than the coverage of policy developments. Therefore, in the context of the third time frame, it can

¹³⁰ Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, “Ontstaan Klimaatbeleid.”

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ European Commission, “The Commission Calls for a Climate Neutral Europe by 2050,” Press release, November 28, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_6543.

¹³⁴ Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat, “Ontstaan Klimaatbeleid.”

be concluded that the Dutch media tends to focus on controversial or scandalous events instead of policy advancements.

As for the involvement of interest groups, Figure 8 demonstrates that while NGOs were also consistently present in the media, fossil industry stakeholders significantly increased their involvement in comparison to other time frames. This leads to the observation that contrary to the previously established narrative, interest groups representing economic interests have become increasingly involved with outside lobbying tactics in this specific context.

Overall, the discussion of the research results allows for some interesting observations. First of all, there is a clear and considerable difference between the number of articles covering external events and policy developments, with the former being significantly more prevalent in the Dutch media than the latter. Therefore, from the results it becomes clear that CCS policy development does not get a lot of coverage, if any at all. Nevertheless, CCS is consistently mentioned in the Dutch media. The media coverage stands in correlation to the controversial nature of CCS as a technology in general. Around the times that there were significant decision-making moments with regard to policy we do see that there is some amount of coverage. However, this does not outweigh the number of articles the results have demonstrated to cover external events. Thus, where the more traditional narrative states that political agenda-setting forms a contingent relationship between media attention on political topics and the salience of a particular policy, these results confirm another narrative. In this case, it can be established that in line with *inter alia* Warntjen's and de Bruycker's findings, media attention is in fact not contingent on the salience of the policy, but rather reflects the controversial and sensationalist tendencies of the media.¹³⁵

Additionally, the results of the research also allow for a second interesting observation. In terms of interest group involvement, Figure 8 and 9 have demonstrated that the general involvement of both interest groups was most prevalent during the transposition period of 2010-2011 and the resurgence period of 2017-2019. While the expectation was that NGOs would be more present in each time frame, the results show that while this has been the case during 2010-2011, fossil industry stakeholders became increasingly involved during 2017-2019. This does not necessarily debunk Junk's argument that NGOs rely more on

¹³⁵ Warntjen, "Measuring Salience in EU Legislative Politics." ; De Bruycker, "Blessing or Curse for Advocacy? How News Media Attention Helps Advocacy Groups to Achieve Their Policy Goals."

outside lobbying tactics than interest groups representing economic interests, but it does demonstrate that fossil industry stakeholders have increasingly engaged in outside lobbying tactics which defies the traditional idea.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Junk, “Two Logics of NGO Advocacy: Understanding inside and Outside Lobbying on EU Environmental Policies.”

Conclusion

This thesis developed a better understanding of the dynamics of political agenda-setting and interest groups by uncovering the relationship between media coverage in the Netherlands and policy developments on EU and national level. The research question that this study has been built upon was: “What is the correlation between EU and national CCS policy developments and media salience in the Netherlands, and in what way does media coverage interact with interest groups’ attempts to influence this debate?”

The research was undertaken by measuring the concept of media salience by analysing the level of media coverage in the Netherlands in three specific time frames related to the development of CCS policy in the Netherlands and in the EU. The results lead to the following conclusion: while CCS has been a prevalent topic in the Dutch media, the number of articles covering policy advancements are insignificant in comparison to the number of external events the media has covered. Therefore, in the Netherlands, media salience has little to no correlation to CCS policy developments. The attention of the media is mainly concentrated on external events which are of controversial and sensationalist nature. Nevertheless, the results have demonstrated that there was an increase in policy-related articles in comparison to the number of articles covering external events within the third time frame from 2017-2019. Therefore, it needs to be specified that while the main conclusion is that there is little to no correlation, a possible increase in correlation can be observed from the results of the third time frame. Generally, this research leads to the conclusion that the media focuses mainly on the salience of the topic and the controversy than on policy developments. Subsequently, we can speak of a capture of conflict rather than salience in this case, and there has not been a significant degree of media salience regarding CCS policy developments in the Netherlands.

Additionally, with regards to the second main theme of this study, this thesis has demonstrated that contrary to popular belief that outside lobbying tactics are primarily employed by NGOs, there has been an increase in fossil industry stakeholders seeking out media presence. Therefore, the results lead to the conclusion that there is a strong possibility that the relevant interest groups have increasingly sought out media attention in order to influence decision-making. This is especially remarkable in the case of fossil industry stakeholders, as their presence was expected to be insignificant as they classify as interest groups representing economic interests. Subsequently, they were expected to stick to inside-lobbying tactics, as the literature established.

The main limitation of this study has been the fact that it was centred around a case study. As the focus was one case study, the findings of this thesis are less generalisable than they would be if this study had used multiple case studies or a larger data set. Additionally, it is unfortunate that this study has not provided interviews with some of the interest group actors, as this would have strengthened the outcome and conclusions of this research. Despite its limitations, this study certainly adds on to the understanding of the role of the media in the dynamics of political agenda-setting. Moreover, this study contributes to the understanding of interest group dynamics in the context of lobbying tactics.

The research demonstrated in this study allows for many interesting suggestions for further research. If research and understanding of political agenda-setting and interest groups is to move forward, additional research should be developed in order to gain a better understanding of the underlying dynamics driving the use of outside and inside lobbying tactics. Additionally, while this thesis has provided some interesting conclusions by establishing the status of the correlation between media salience and policy making, further research is necessary to define the underlying reasons for the degree of attention to policy and decision-making in the media. Based on personal suggestions, further research should focus on expanding the data sample and the inclusion of multiple case studies. Subsequently, additional research could define whether the findings in this study persist as a sign of existing trends, or if new trends can be uncovered. All considered, the findings of this study provide a solid foundation for further research and contribute to the growing field of lobby- and interest group research in the EU.

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