



Tracing a pathway to success: How competing interest groups influenced the 2013 EU Common Fisheries Policy reform



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ABSTRACT

Adaptation of environmental policies to often unexpected crises is an important function of sustainable governance arrangements. However the relationship between environmental change and policy is complicated. Much research has focused on understanding institutional dynamics or the role of specific participants in the policy process. This paper draws attention to interest groups and the mechanism through which they influence policy change. Existing research offers conflicting evidence in regards to the different ways in which interest groups may affect change. This paper provides an in-depth study of the 2013 European Union Common Fisheries Policy reform – a policy change characterized by active interest group participation. It traces the activity of interest group coalitions to understand how they achieved influence under a changing policy context. The study involves interviews with interest group representatives, policy experts and decision-makers, document analysis of interest group statements and EU legislative documents. Findings identify the important role of coalition-building and informational lobbying for environmental interest group success in exploiting favorable socio-political conditions and influencing reform outcomes. An insight on interest group influence and its conditions contributes to our understanding of the complex dynamics of the environmental policy process as well as its implications for policy adaptation to environmental change.

“Luck Is What Happens When Preparation Meets Opportunity”

1. Introduction

Effectively managing the environment requires dealing with the complexity, change, and uncertainty that characterize interconnected social-ecological systems (SES) (Berkes et al., 2000; Holling, 2001; Liu et al., 2007). To address these challenges, SES scholars argue that; environmental governance systems need to be adaptive to rapid and slow change processes, match the spatial and organizational levels of social-ecological dynamics and involve polycentric networks (Chaffin et al., 2014; Chaffin and Gunderson, 2016; Folke et al., 2005; Galaz et al., 2008). Existing governance arrangements, however, are often bound by path-dependent institutions, framings and power relations that influence adaptation and can lead to maladaptive lock-ins (Voß and Bornemann, 2011). Evidence for this can be seen in regional and global policy responses to climate change (Breunig et al., 2016), over-fishing (Aps et al., 2007), biodiversity loss (Smith et al., 2003) and other coupled social-ecological issues. Despite awareness and availability of information about social-ecological change and environmental crises, political decisions have often been slow in adapting to

such change and taking on sustainable approaches (Stål, 2015). At the same time research has shown examples of successful policy adaptations (e.g. Armitage et al., 2011; Hahn et al., 2006; Huitema and Meijerink, 2010). Understanding why and how policy responds and adapts to environmental change in some cases but not in others remains a major challenge.

The adaptation of policy to social-ecological change is greatly affected by institutional and social structures, beliefs, aims and strategies of political actors (Voß and Bornemann, 2011). Recent work has highlighted the importance of political processes within SES for understanding governance adaptation (Chaffin et al., 2014; Duit, 2015; Galaz et al., 2008; Sjöstedt, 2015; Voß and Bornemann, 2011). Focus has been put on drivers of and barriers to adaptation such as the structures that determine political and social interactions (e.g. institutions or social networks) (e.g. Brondizio et al., 2009; Cash et al., 2006; Folke et al., 2007; Galaz et al., 2008; Young, 2010) or the role of agency of actors that interact within such structures to bring about change (e.g. Berkes, 2009; Bodin and Crona, 2008; Huitema and Meijerink, 2010; Olsson, 2003; Westley et al., 2013). The interactions between individual agency and structural responses to change have been identified as crucial for policy adaptation (Galaz et al., 2008) yet less studied and

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understood. Though adaptation can occur through a change in governance structure or through changes in behavior or perceptions of actors or groups of actors, the two are closely interlinked in the policy process.

A policy process is a realization of SES governance: it reflects interactions between diverse political actors (state and non-state) and institutions, as they define social-ecological problems and adopt solutions (Hill and Varone, 2014). Policy outcomes, such as a rule or institution that regulates social-ecological interactions (Ostrom, 2011), arise from the interplay of multiple individual actions of competing actors (on the micro-level) with macro-level processes such as socio-political or environmental change. Whether a new policy is adapted to a new social-ecological reality or not thus depends on how these complex interactions play out. A better understanding of the mechanisms and conditions that enable (non-state) actors to influence a policy processes towards change or stasis can provide insight on political barriers and opportunities for governance adaptation.

With this paper we unravel one mechanism through which non-state actors can influence policy change with the aim to contribute to disentangling the interactions between political actors and their socio-political environment that may lead to policy adaptation. We focus on interest groups (IG), i.e. organized non-state actors that aim to influence policy outcomes (Hojnacki et al., 2012), because of their increasing involvement and importance for environmental policy making on the global (Arts, 2006; Betsill and Corell, 2001), regional (Hallstrom, 2004; Klüver, 2013; Michaelowa, 1998) and national levels (Cheon and Urpelainen, 2013). IG are both widely present in policy (Falkner, 2000; Rhodes, 2007, 1996) and have the potential to influence policy processes. Moreover, they can engage in promoting as well as blocking policy change (Kingdon, 1990), and support or destroy entrenched policy monopolies (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Boushey, 2012). They are tightly connected with parts of the social-ecological system and can thus play important roles in enabling or preventing policy adaptation to social-ecological change. Their influence however is highly conditional on a range of factors, such as IG properties and tactics, institutional conditions or characteristics of the policy issue (Klüver, 2013; Mahoney, 2008, 2007a; Dür and De Bièvre, 2007). Given both their increasing presence and potential to influence environmental policy, it is particularly interesting to examine how IG participation may contribute to policy change or stasis.

We investigate potential causal mechanisms of IG influence on policy by tracing the process of a major policy change that occurred during the 2013 reform of the European Union Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). A causal mechanism is a ‘pathway’ through which a cause brings about an outcome. It consists of entities and their properties that engage in activities that bring about change (Hedström, 2005). The interactions between IG agency and the structures in which they operate in order to influence policy are understood as mechanisms of policy change.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the case of the EU CFP reform. In Section 3 we describe our theoretical framework and explain how we conceptualize macro-level processes (policy dynamics) and changes on the meso- (coalition dynamics) and micro- levels (IG lobbying tactics) through the combination of the Advocacy Coalition (Sabatier, 1987) and Multiple Streams (Kingdon, 1990) frameworks. Section 4 summarizes the method used in the paper. Section 5 presents the results of the case by looking at preference attainment, IG activities and the conditions under which they took part in the reform process. Finally we discuss our results in Section 6, present the mechanism of IG influence found in this paper and briefly elaborate on the relevance of our results for understanding the capacity of policy to adapt to social-ecological change.

2. Case of the EU common fisheries policy reform

The EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform process represents a

case of a major policy change characterized by a high presence of IG. Contextually, the reform occurred under changing social and ecological dynamics in European fisheries. A study by the European Commission concluded that 88% of European fish stocks were overfished (European Commission, 2009). At the same time the number of fishermen has increased significantly over the past decades. The growing fleet in combination with technological advances have resulted in an increase in fishing effort that has been deemed unsustainable (Self, 2015). Consequently, the economic viability of many European fisheries is threatened by declining stocks. The state of European Fisheries has been recognized as critical by all policy actors, while the mismanaged stocks were perceived by many as an outcome of a dysfunctional CFP (Österblom et al., 2011; Peñas Lado, 2016; Salomon et al., 2014). Finally, the changes adopted by the CFP reform in 2013 have been recognized as major advancements in responding to the overfishing problem (although the implementation of decisions is still on-going) (Peñas Lado, 2016).

The CFP is a European Union-level framework for regulating the fishing activity of member states in the EU seas as well as abroad. The CFP includes a variety of mechanisms for regulating fleet capacity and composition, access to fish stocks, various technical measures and enforcement of these regulations. The CFP is reformed approximately every 10 years, which means that a window for potential policy changes opens up on a regular basis. During each reform the European Commission initiates the process by setting the agenda in a “green paper” and then releases a draft version of the reform, which is then reviewed, amended and adopted in the Council and Parliament according to the co-decision procedure (see Box 1 for a description of the role of EU institutions in the reform). The inclusion of Parliament as a co-decision maker is a relatively new development, which followed from the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. This was a very important institutional change that has been described as re-shaping the dynamics of the CFP reform negotiations (Peñas Lado, 2016).

In previous CFP reforms, IG were active through Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) as well as the EU-level Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA). Non-formal interactions and lobbying generally took place on the member state level (especially in the case of the fishing industry groups) and to an extent, at the EU level in the Commission. Strengthening of the EU Parliament’s role in the 2013 reform has drawn IG attention to Brussels. As a consequence, reform negotiations saw intense campaigning efforts from environmental IG coalitions as well as to some extent – from fishing industry, processing and consumer organizations (Peñas Lado, 2016). At the same time, the process was characterized by a considerable increase in public attention – with public campaigns against fish discards, consumer concern with the sustainability of fish products and increased transparency of the decision making process (Peñas Lado, 2016).

The key changes to the CFP adopted during the 2013 reform can be summarized in the following way (Peñas Lado, 2016; Self, 2015; EU, 2013):

- Legal obligation for member states to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) levels in all fished stocks at the latest by 2020
- Adoption of long-term management plans as a main management instrument
- Instituting a discard ban to be phased in by 2019
- Changing distribution of quotas to be based on sustainability criteria
- Further steps towards regionalization and decentralization of the policy
- Adoption of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) as funding for CFP and specification on how the funding should be used

3. Theoretical framework

IG influence and contribution to policy change or stability is highly

Box 1

EU decision-making institutions.

European Commission

The European Commission sets the agenda for the CFP reform and is the executive body of the EU. It ‘kickstarts’ the reform process by presenting a Green paper, which outlines major changes that need to be made in the new CFP and runs an open consultation process with all interested stakeholders. After the consultations, the Commission develops a draft proposal which is adopted and then received by the Parliament and the Council. Work on the Common Fisheries Policy within the Commission is carried out within Directorate General (DG) MARE which employs civil servants who hold expertise on a particular policy issue. DGs report to the Commissioner in the relevant policy area.

European Parliament

After the Lisbon treaty, the European Parliament became an important lobbying venue during the CFP reform process. The reform took place according to the ordinary legislative procedure, which made the EU Parliament a co-legislator (while yearly allocation of fishing quotas remained the exclusive domain of the EU Council).

In the Parliament the draft legislation of the CFP (as amendments to the Commission’s proposal) is produced by the Fisheries Committee, which consists of Members of European Parliament (MEP) with fisheries as a core constituency. The Environment Committee does not take lead on the draft, yet also has the chance to formally comment on the proposal and its opinion had to be taken into consideration. Within the Committees an especially important role is assigned to the rapporteur, who takes charge of the draft, leads draft negotiations and thus takes up a position of power in drafting the proposal. The proposal then has to be ratified or amended during the Parliament’s plenary session.

Council of the European Union

Although sharing the decision-making power with the Parliament after the Lisbon treaty, the Council nevertheless remained a key policy venue during the CFP reform process. Traditionally, the Council is more receptive towards the position of industry groups as well as more likely to place emphasis on socioeconomic benefits of proposed policy changes. During the CFP reform process, the key negotiations on the formal Council position happened in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of Ministers, with working parties of technical experts and committees of EU member state permanent representatives (COREPER).

dependent on the institutional and contextual conditions such as the prevailing political institutions, the issue salience, the type of groups and their resources (Dür and De Bièvre, 2007). Studies of interest politics and interest group power and influence are theoretically grounded in the classical works of Truman (1951), Latham (1952), Dahl (1961), Lowi (1969), Lindblom (1977). Dahl (1961) and Truman (1951) who represent the pluralist school of thought, suggest that interest groups mobilize when policy issues cause disturbance, motivating individuals to organize and pursue policy change. Lobbying then occurs as interest groups inform decision-makers about their stance on the policy issue and other policy-relevant information. Decision-makers have the incentive to listen to interest groups due to their interest in reelection, while interest groups have relatively equal lobbying resources and access. However, as an objection to pluralism other perspectives have emphasized inequalities among interest groups, difficulties in overcoming the collective action problem of mobilization and structural hurdles for participation in policy (Olson, 1965; Salamon and Siegfried, 1977). These problems have been recognized by proponents of the pluralist approach as well (Dahl and Lindblom, 1976).

We conceptualize the role of IG in the policy process using a neo-pluralist approach that builds on the pluralist school of thought yet takes into account the importance of political context and diverse properties of interest groups (Lowery and Gray, 2004; McFarland, 2007). The neo-pluralist approach assumes that the policy process includes a diverse population of IG. These groups compete with each other for the attention of decision-makers. They use different tactics to achieve influence, depending on the context; the stage of the policy process, the institutional structure, or the behavior of other actors (Lowery and Gray, 2004; McFarland, 2007). This context, however, is highly uncertain for policy actors (Lowery and Gray, 2004). In this way, the neo-pluralist perspective claims that IG participation may be a central part of the linkage between the issue (as it is perceived by multiple stakeholders that surround it) and the policy process. Nevertheless this linkage is imperfect and depends on the environment in which IG operate.

A broad variety of factors including both context and IG characteristics and actions have been suggested to determine when and

which groups are powerful and to what extent (Hojnacki et al., 2012). There are a myriad of factors that relate to the context of IG activity. These factors include; political institutions which determine the access of IG to decision-making, the positions and incentives of political actors (presence or lack of veto players, directly elected or appointed public actors, etc.) and, the process of policy adoption, particularly its complexity, the presence or absence of alternative lobbying venues, etc. (Dür, 2008). Issue characteristics can also be framed as part of the context in which IG operate, for example; the type of policy and its complexity and importance for the public could influence which type of group would potentially be more powerful or which tactics would be more appropriate for engaging on a given issue (Dür, 2008; Mahoney, 2007a).

At the same time, not all IG are endowed with sufficient resources and make the most of their context to maximize impact – which makes individual characteristics of IG and their activities another important factor for understanding influence. For example, financial and administrative resources enable IG to lobby more often and more effectively, while the group type determines their perceived legitimacy in a given policy context (does the IG represent the public or industry?) (Mahoney, 2007a).

To link conditions of IG influence and the policy process, we use a combination of public policy frameworks, namely Multiple Streams, Policy Cycle and Advocacy Coalition frameworks, following the approach of Howlett et al. (2016). The synthesis framework maintains the idea of Kingdon’s (1990) independent streams – problem (policy issues that require attention), politics (public opinion, interest group demands, elections) and policy (available or proposed solutions) – but adds the process stream which contains policy deliberations and the pathway of the policy process itself (Howlett et al., 2016). On the macro-level (policy process), when streams are joined (issue gets attention, solutions are picked up under suitable political environment), a ‘window of opportunity’ for policy change opens (Kingdon, 1990). The direction of streams is to some degree shaped at the meso-level through the interactions of competing coalitions (which include interest groups, public servants, scientists and other actors) (Sabatier, 1987). The coalitional struggle determines the political environment, defines issues

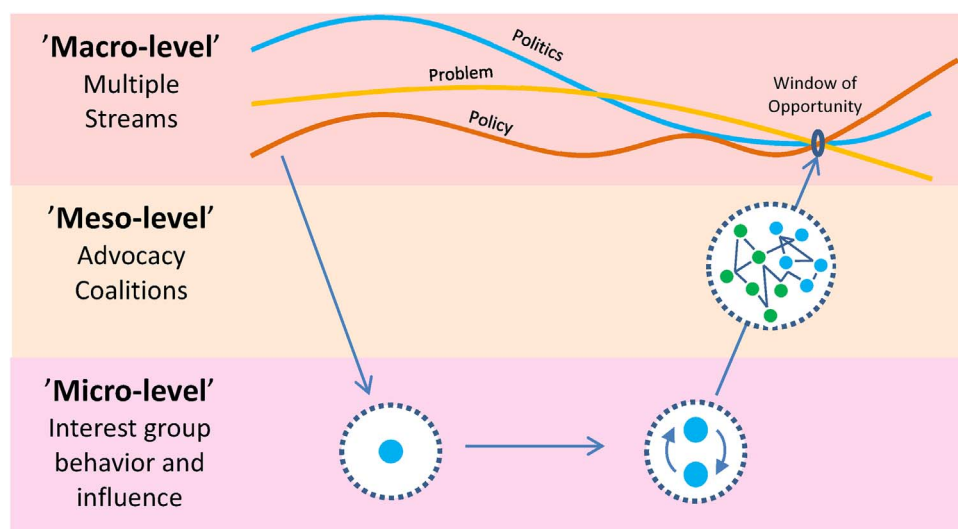


Fig. 1. Synthesis of theoretical frameworks used to conceptualize interest group influence on the dynamics of the policy process.

and solutions, and selects for the appropriate process pathway. This framework extends the focus of Kingdon’s Multiple Streams from the agenda-setting stage to the rest of the policy process and accounts for the role of interest coalitions in shaping the streams (Howlett et al., 2016).

By combining assumptions on IG influence (e.g. Dür, 2008; Hojnacki et al., 2012; Klüver, 2013; Mahoney, 2008, 2007a) with the synthesized policy process framework, we can outline the key variables and processes important for our analysis. Fig. 1 provides a depiction of how the frameworks come together to conceptualize IG influence in the policy process. IG influence on the streams occurs through their interactions within advocacy coalitions with other political actors. IG, as suggested by theoretical and empirical research on their influence (Dür, 2008; Mahoney, 2007a, 2007b), interact with decision-makers, trading information or other resources for influence. Depending on their individual characteristics and the motivations and demands of actors they engage with, IG may succeed or fail in pushing for their issues and preferred solutions. While engaged in the politics stream, IG could directly influence public opinion to create concern around issues, or even attempt to shift the political positions of more ‘neutral’ actors within competing advocacy coalitions.

4. Methods and data collection

We selected the CFP reform for an in-depth analysis because it is a very recent example of a major policy change, characterized by active participation of both public and private IG. EU policy processes are particularly interesting for studying IG participation, specifically with respect to their role in supplying information to decision makers (Klüver, 2012). This is because these processes are often conducive to IG influence and key institutions such as the European Commission or the EU Parliament have a high demand for policy-related information and sense-making, especially concerning complex issues like the CFP. We focus here on the basic regulation of the CFP related to fish stock management and analyze the reform process starting from the ‘green paper’ released by the Commission in 2009 until the adoption of the final text of the basic regulation in 2013.

We do not aim to assess influence of different IG on the reform process but depart from the assumption that they had a certain degree of influence on the reform (e.g. Peñas Lado, 2016). Instead we are interested in *how* influence was achieved. This means that we are not as much interested in *whether* the cause (i.e. IG participation) led to an outcome, but in the *black box* that explains *how* the outcome was caused. By analyzing a single case we have access to a rich amount of information about the process and are able to analyze it in-depth.

We use process tracing to identify the causal mechanism in place. Process-tracing is a within-case method of analysis that examines a hypothetical sequence of processes (the causal mechanism) with the purpose of developing or testing hypotheses about the causal mechanism of interest (see Beach and Pedersen, 2013; Bennett and Checkel, 2012). It is thus a suitable method to analyze IG participation in the CFP reform case with the aim of identifying which processes have enabled them to influence the reform. We follow a ‘theory-building’ approach to process tracing by first using our theoretical framing to identify relevant components of the mechanism and then analyzing empirical data of our case to determine causal links between the parts. By contrast, a theory testing approach would start with a theoretical mechanism with the aim of find evidence for it.

4.1. Expert and interest groups interviews

We first conducted five semi-structured interviews with experts – policy analysts, political advisors or ex-interest group lobbyists who were involved with the CFP reform. These interviews provided us with a general picture of the process, key events and influential actors – IG as well as politicians. Based on the interviews, the scientific literature on the reform and lists of stakeholder advisory groups to the European Commission (ACFA as well as RACs) an initial list of IG that lobbied the reform on the European level was developed. Next, we consulted experts and IG reports, letters and statements to identify IG members that were knowledgeable of the CFP reform and actively involved throughout the whole process. Based on the expert interviews and the initial list of stakeholder advisory groups, we narrowed down the list of IG to the 10 groups which were selected because of their visibility, perceived influence (by other actors and experts) and active participation in the CFP reform process (Table 1). We then conducted 11

Table 1
Interest groups included in the interview study.

Interest group	Type
European Fish Processors Association (AIPCE-CEP)	fish processing industry
Euro Coop	consumer cooperatives
Europêche	fishing industry
New Economics Foundation (NEF)	think tank
The Pew Charitable Trusts	NGO
BirdLife Europe	eNGO
Greenpeace EU	eNGO
Oceana	eNGO
Seas at Risk	eNGO
WWF	eNGO

interviews with representatives of 10 IG, which were involved in the CFP reform process at the time. In case of one interest group we conducted interviews with two representatives, as they were both involved with different aspects of the reform. Thus two interviews were conducted for the sake of a more complete picture of the interest group's activities. Additionally we identified two policy officers who worked on the reform in the Commission and three actors in the Parliament (Members of European Parliament (MEP) and assistants to MEPs) with insider knowledge of the CFP reform process. The decision-makers in the Commission and Parliament were selected using the contacts provided by experts due to convenience and difficulties in accessing actors in EU institutions.

Semi-structured interviews with IG representatives and decision-makers were done in person and in several cases (when it was difficult to access the person in question) – over skype or phone. Interviews generally took around 1–1.5 h (interest group) or 30–40 min (decision maker) and were carried out using an interview guide (see Appendix A and B).

4.2. Document analysis of major reform related documents

We carried out a preference attainment analysis in order to identify which IG preferences were reflected in the final reform outcomes. The method provides an assessment of the distance between an adopted policy and actors' preferences by analyzing both the preferences of actors for certain policy outcomes as well as the adopted policy. We used document data. These documents included EU legislative documents, as well as IG position papers, letters, briefings and press releases (see Appendix C for the list of documents). Documents produced by IG were analyzed by coding their contents according to IG positions on the four critical reform issues (see Table 2). The EU legislative documents were then coded according to adopted changes on the critical reform issues. The data was then analyzed to get a better understanding of how the adopted policy reflected the IG positions.

5. Results

We present the results of the preference attainment analysis and the process tracing following our analytical framework, i.e. we first discuss the three streams (policy, politics and problem streams) and then present how IG shaped and joined the streams through coalition building and informational lobbying.

5.1. Policy stream – environmental group preferences were favored

Environmental IG coalitions were more successful in introducing their ideas and preferences into the CFP reform than industry groups, as can be seen from the preference attainment analysis (Table 2). During the course of the reform, environmental groups managed to self-organize and present a common opinion. Our interviews suggest that this was critical for their ability to influence the process. Industry groups had more internal disagreements throughout the process yet were also able to formulate a joint opinion in several key position papers.

Table 2 includes 4 dimensions of the CFP reform, focusing specifically on:

Stock management. The 2013 CFP reform has adopted an objective of restoring harvested stocks to the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level by a given deadline as legally binding. The introduction of MSY concept is not new by itself, but adopting it as an objective with binding commitment has been a significant change to the previous reform. Such change would mean that all long-term management plans will be decided on the basis of the objective (Peñas Lado, 2016).

Multi-annual plans. The plans take into account long-term considerations in fish stock management and have been suggested as an alternative to myopic yearly quota system.

Discard ban. Discarding refers to a practice of throwing caught fish

Table 2

Preference attainment analysis of interest group demands across key reform issues and final decisions implemented in the reform.

	Alliance for CFP reform	OCEAN 2012	eNGO Super-coalition	Industry (Europeche + EAPO)	Implemented in CFP reform (EU, 2013)
Stock management: objective for restoring fish stocks	Populations of harvested species at MSY by 2015.	MSY by 2015—an intermediate target. Need to develop alternative conservative and precautionary objectives. Long-term management objectives in line with relevant Directives & Conventions.	At least MSY by 2015 – binding. Recover stocks to sustainable level by 2020.	Stocks above MSY – a political commitment. Achieved gradually, no later than 2020	Legally binding commitment to secure stocks above MSY by 2015 where possible but no later than 2020
Multi-annual plans: long-term fish stock management goals	Ecosystem-based MAPs with clear timeframes, with stakeholder engagement, based on scientific advice	Long-term plans, with stakeholder engagement, based on scientific advice, with strict provisions to prevent exceeding it.	Ecosystem-based MAPs, with firm timelines	MAPs with measures and deadlines, stakeholder engagement, based on reliable research.	Ecosystem-based multi-annual plans, with clear management objectives, developed in consultations with stakeholders
Discard ban: phasing out the practice of throwing fish overboard because of its size, quota limitations, etc.	No immediate discard ban. Instead – elimination of discards on fishery-by-fishery basis, adoption of selective practices and techniques within multiannual plan framework	Support discard ban, unless there is adequate justification. Transition from landing quotas to catch quotas (include all caught fish in quotas). Measures for preventing discards (selective gear), ensuring compliance (on-board observation).	Support discard ban, together with supporting measures for monitoring, enforcement and selective fishing practices. No de-minimis.	Reject discard ban. Instead – gradual, fishery-by-fishery reduction in discards. Allow for de-minimis level of discards.	Discard ban on fishery-by-fishery basis from 2015, for all fisheries by 2019. State can introduce de-minimis if ban unviability is supported by sci evidence.
Access to quota: rules based on which the fishing quota is distributed	Member states flexible in deciding on access allocation. Distribution of quota based on sustainability criteria.	Reject TFCs scheme as mandatory. Give member states flexibility in deciding on access allocation. Distribution of quota based on sustainability criteria.	Reject TFCs scheme as mandatory. Give member states flexibility in deciding on access allocation. Distribution of quota based on sustainability criteria.	(divided opinion on TFC) TFC on voluntary basis, under responsibility of member states.	Member states may introduce TFCs, but not required to do so. Preferential access to small scale and artisanal fleets. Distribution of quota based on sustainability criteria.

overboard when it is unwanted because of its size, price or quota limitations. Discards of unwanted catches have been referred to as problematic by the Commission in 1992 (Peñas Lado, 2016), yet were not identified among the key challenges for the 2013 reform. Nevertheless the issue of discards has been largely picked up by interest groups and societal movements.

Access to quota. CFP determines the rules, which regulate how fishing opportunities are allocated to fisheries. For example, the Transferrable Fishing Concessions (TFC) proposed by the Commission establish a system of quota distribution that assigns proportions of total quota to individual fishermen or groups of fishermen for long-term use. Quota shares then can be bought, leased or sold under particular conditions.

Environmental IG were partially successful in arguing for a legally binding goal for restoring stocks at levels above maximum sustainable yield (MSY), adoption of multi-annual plans with clear objectives, introduction of a discard ban, avoiding compulsory transferable fishing concessions (TFCs) and adopting sustainability criteria for quota allocation. However environmental groups also argued for more substantial changes, which did not make it to the final document. Those included for instance a binding ‘deadline’ in the year 2015 by which MSY levels should be achieved (in line with EU commitments to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2003). The MSY itself was seen as a ‘first step’ and additional precautionary objectives were proposed to make fisheries less susceptible to environmental change. In the CFP, MSY was adopted as a legally binding goal and 2015 was set as the deadline; however it allowed a more gradual adjustment (extending the deadline to 2020 in cases where such delays could be justified).

Industry groups did not succeed in preventing these major changes to the CFP, but their conservative position has nevertheless affected some of its outcomes. For example, in the CFP a gradual approach to the discard ban was adopted and a minimum amount of discards (de minimis) was accepted for fisheries where selectivity is difficult or disproportionately costly.

5.2. Politics stream – large scale institutional change and increased public attention played a critical role in determining interest group influence

The involvement of Parliament in the reform through co-decision has been the most important change in the politics stream (Box 1). This was actively exploited by environmental IG, and played a major role in their success in influencing the CFP reform. An additional factor in their success was the pro-environmental orientation of actors in key positions in the EU Parliament (see below). Industry groups did not sufficiently adapt their lobbying strategy to this change, which ultimately made it difficult for them to advance their agenda. This CFP reform has also been accompanied by more public attention than usual, with calls for adopting strict measures towards sustainability (such as the discards ban). This benefitted environmental groups and assisted them in getting the EU Parliament’s attention.

All IG representatives and policy experts interviewed acknowledged the new co-legislator role for the EU Parliament. The EU Parliament has been important for environmental group success as an alternative policy venue to counter-balance the influence of the Council, which was more prone to take the fishing sector position. Being directly elected, members of Parliament are more likely to pay attention to public opinion, and thus listen to public IG and civil society organizations. Parliament’s inclusiveness and transparency also means that it is accessible to a broader variety of groups and private interests may find it more difficult to take hold. One of the interviewed environmental group representatives also mentioned that Parliament has been easier to lobby at the European level, while the Council represents national governments that are more sensitive to domestic lobbying and often more likely to listen to the voice of the domestic fishing industry. These arguments have been revealed in the responses of the interviewed environmental IG representatives:

“The Commission usually came out with good proposals, ensuring sustainability, but the Council would then put a different reality onto it. They are the member state governments, they are under pressure from the fishing sector and there is a lot of money at stake, so they would usually water the policies down ... But at the same time the Lisbon treaty was about to come into force, so for the first time we would have the Parliament involved in the fisheries reform as well [...] Suddenly you have two political players as co-decision makers and the MEPs are directly elected, so they are much more open to having public speak to them because they are looking at their votes.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

“The big news in Brussels was the involvement of the European Parliament [in CFP reform]. That was the game changer. Involvement of Parliament means that the process is more open, transparent, more inclusive.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

“We focused quite a lot of our action in the Parliament because obviously engaging with the Parliament is much easier than engaging with the Council. Council has to be engaged on the national level.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

However, while the inclusion of the EU Parliament in decision-making has been identified as an opportunity for environmental groups to influence the CFP reform, the positions of Parliament members on the extent of the reform have been divided. As stated by two environmental IG representatives, a more conservative position on the reform was taken by MEPs from the EPP (European People’s Party Group) and ECR (European Conservatives and Reformists). The Environment Committee in the EU Parliament was seen as pro-environmental, but one of the interviewed processing industry group representatives argued that the Fisheries Committee has been strongly influenced by members with fishing constituencies which aimed to preserve the status quo.

“It was very important to temper down some MEPs because of course there were Members who were willing to keep the status quo.”

(Processing industry interest group representative)

One interviewee mentioned that the EU lobbying organization that represented the European fishing industry did not consider Parliament as important during the CFP reform. Much of the industry lobbying activity was carried out at the national level, ultimately influencing the Council’s position. However influencing the Parliament required shifting resources to Brussels and lobbying at the EU level, where industry groups were relatively inactive during the CFP reform. An interview with a Commission official indicated that industry groups were active during the agenda setting stage and often approached the Commission with information and advice. This suggests that industry groups had the possibility to lobby in Brussels, but did not consider Parliament as an important policy arena or an efficient allocation of their resources.

5.2.1. The council as the ‘last stronghold’ for industry groups

Though the inclusion of the EU Parliament has been an important shift in the politics stream, the position of the Council still held weight. According to expert interviews and press releases, the Council’s position was influenced by the pro-industry coalition headed by French and Spanish ministers. Among their key aims was a gradual and flexible introduction of the discard ban, which included maintaining a minimal allowed discard percentage along with increased quotas to account for potentially discarded fish, and a delayed implementation of stock restoration to the MSY level to allow for gradual adjustment of the fisheries. The influential position of industry groups in the Council has been attributed in interviews particularly to their stronger presence in their

respective countries:

“The Council did quite a bit of damage in the end, from our perspective. I don’t think this is as a result of Europeche. If you are talking Brussels, I think the eNGO groups were more influential but one must not underestimate the individual lobby influence of industry in their home countries, and that’s what is more successful in the Council. I think that’s what brought the Council’s position to be quite distant to that of the Parliament.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

Nevertheless, though the Council could still be viewed as more receptive towards industry views, two of the interviewed environmental group representatives mentioned the important role of the Irish presidency in the fisheries council during the trilogue stage (tripartite meetings between the Commission, the EU Parliament and the Council representatives) of the reform. Interviewees stated that the minister was very open to their positions and met with environmental groups regularly. The Irish Presidency has been conducive to reaching a political agreement with the position of the Parliament during the trilogue negotiations.

“In the end when it came to trilogies it was Irish Presidency - the fisheries minister from Ireland, a very ambitious man – he wanted the result. So, we had a number of meetings with him – he was very open to the NGOs.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

5.2.2. Pro-environmental positions of key decision-makers

The process of the CFP reform was strongly influenced by decision-makers in powerful roles such as the Commissioner in the European Commission or rapporteurs in Parliamentary committees. As identified by both environmental and industry groups interviewed in our study, positions of key actors in the reform process have generally been in line with environmental group demands, although a few also mention influential conservative actors.

In particular, interviewed policy experts have attributed the commitment of the Commission to a significant CFP reform to the prominent role of the Commissioner for Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Her role was explicitly mentioned by environmental IG representatives as key throughout the whole reform process, especially in maintaining pressure on other European institutions to adopt significant changes to the CFP and keeping an open door to the ‘green groups’.

Emphasis has also been placed on the role of rapporteurs in the parliamentary committees. Four environmental group representatives identified rapporteurs in the Fisheries and Environment committees from the S & D Alliance (Socialists and Democrats) and UK ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) as playing a particularly important role. It has been stated that both have been open to environmental concerns and communicated with environmental IG during the course of the reform. Two interviewees also mentioned the importance of individual MEPs in organizing and facilitating a cross-party campaign group *Fish for the Future*. This group was founded to promote changes to the CFP focusing on protecting the fish stocks to improve sustainability of the European fisheries.

“During the time we were also very lucky. We had in a way a little bit better fisheries committee than we normally have because we had Isabella Lövin from Sweden, who was extremely engaged and outspoken. She actually changed, in my view, the whole feeling of the committee because before the MEPs just wouldn’t show up. If you came to a committee meeting, there were 2–3 MEPs there and then some assistants – and that was it. And then she was there. Ulrike Rodust, a German MEP who had the file, was very engaged, Chris Davies, an MEP from the UK, was also very engaged, setting up a cross-party group called Fish for the Future. Suddenly at each meeting there were 6–7 MEPs who spoke, who actually created a bit of a ‘critical mass’, and there were much better

reports coming out of the Committee than we had seen in the previous legislature.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

Finally, several interviewees also mention key decision-makers holding a conservative position on the reform. Particularly the European Peoples Party’s (EPP) shadow rapporteur and the Fisheries Committee chair have been actively involved in discussions. Shadow rapporteurs are assigned by a political group to monitor the issue and seek compromise with the rapporteur. Both, the rapporteur and the chair had a stance for adopting a reform which would be first and foremost workable for and accepted by the fishing sector.

5.2.3. Public attention and concern as factors for environmental group success

As argued by then Director of DG MARE in the EU Commission Ernesto Penas Lado (2016), public attention has been dramatically drawn to fisheries policy during the 2013 reform. This shift in attention is arguably due to a combination of factors – NGO campaigns, information distribution by the Commission and the transparent nature of some of the reform discussions which were made public (e.g. via web-streaming). The public opinion shift and increased attention to fisheries policy has created favorable conditions for the environmental groups to create a window of opportunity and promote their own solutions to discussed issues.

Though fisheries policy in Brussels is often ignored by the media and does not get as much attention as the Common Agricultural Policy, during the 2013 reform the situation changed. Certain aspects of the reform (particularly the discard ban) received both public attention and media spotlight. The majority of environmental and industry groups, as well as two decision-makers interviewed for this study identified increase in public attention to fisheries policy as beneficial to environmental interests.

“I think the Parliament’s position wouldn’t have been what it was without the NGOs but also the public concern. For example, the FishFight campaign in the UK which through the vehicle of TV, with motivation to go beyond just the TV shows and engage in direct communication with decision-makers, was also a big factor in raising concern.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

The FishFight campaign, launched by UK celebrity chef was highlighted by the interviewees. After having learned about the significance of the discard issue in European fisheries, the chef initiated a public campaign to raise awareness of the problem. The campaign involved gathering signatures in support of the ban, statements from other European celebrities, a FishFight tv-series, tweets and emails to the MEPs and Commissioner. Very soon, the issue became visible together with public pressure to do something about it.

“Discards were not such a big part of the proposal. I think this came out just before the proposal was out. So, he [Celebrity Chef] reinforced the idea of a discards ban and it really became a priority for the Commissioner because of this message. Because of this video that went viral, they heard complaints from the UK people: “why are you throwing fish overboard?” This made the discard ban, especially in the UK, politically hard to go against. Because there were already people signing up the petition ... This was a very big impact and it directly changed the proposal.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

It is difficult to discern how much of the public opinion shift can be attributed directly to the FishFight campaign and how much to the continuous work of eNGOs to exploit that phenomenon and use the momentum to create public concern. According to the interviews, Greenpeace in particular has been engaging in multiple public campaigns during the process – specifically targeting periods before votes

in the Parliament and the Council, to create a ‘media buzz’ around the issue. As stated by a Greenpeace representative, a campaign to inform the public has been on-going, even before CFP reform began – as it is very difficult to build up public concern within the relatively short period of the reform itself.

5.3. Problem stream – EU fisheries framed as in ‘critical’ condition, with strong need for change

The pro-environmental framing focusing on the critical state of the European fish stocks and their importance for social and economic performance was ultimately beneficial for environmental groups’ ability to access and influence the reform process. The agenda setting process and the drafting of the first reform proposal created a momentum for change which was used by environmental groups to propose major amendments to the CFP. Along with events in the two other streams, the problem stream gravitated towards a ‘window of opportunity’ for environmental IG to influence the adoption of a major policy change.

Although environmental and industry groups both assessed the condition of European fisheries as ‘problematic’, they framed the problem very differently. Green groups like Birdlife, Greenpeace, OCEANA, Pew, Seas at Risk and WWF emphasized the severe overfishing problem, but also raised concern about the global impact of the EU fleet, bycatch and impact on non-fish species, unsustainable subsidies and the strong divide between the environmental and industry interests. Representative of Europeche on the other hand highlighted the complexity of fisheries policy, the lack of flexibility and loss of jobs in the fisheries sector – partially due to strict regulations and solutions that overemphasize conservation and lack of attention to the perspective of fishermen.

“The main issues were that the fish stocks in Europe were overfished (at least 87% of fish stocks at the outset of the reform). The fleet capacity was simply too big and in a way – wrong. So not only a matter of quantity but also of quality: those fishers that fish sustainably were not at an advantage. Also subsidies were not necessarily aiding those that fish sustainably and the fishing limits were set too high.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

“I’m worried that in some cases the Council is going to be so ruthless and say: “we need to get to MSY by 2020”, and they just slash quotas. People will go out of business overnight. You know: “- 31st of December - 1st of January – this is the quota you’ve got. - Well I can’t live like this, what am I going to do?” And then you hear people, the green people in the Commission, saying things like: “You know, do tourism. Just take tourists out on your boat.” And the fishermen say: “I fish in a pool in the north of England, what tourism are you talking about?””

(Industry interest group representative)

The need for a significant reform had already been recognized before the green paper was adopted by the European Commission in 2009. An analysis of the previous reform requested by the European Commission highlighted that the existing policy was outdated and did not reflect the changing fishing sector and the growing EU (Sissenwine and Symes, 2007). The authors also pointed out that conservation needs were not met and scientific advice was only poorly incorporated. The failure to curb overfishing rates, reduce excessive capacity, improve profitability and implement an ecosystem-based approach was recognized as problematic (Sissenwine and Symes, 2007). With the 2009 Green Paper the Commission also put important social-ecological issues related to the CFP on the agenda. It particularly emphasized that European fish stocks have already been overfished for decades, while the fleet size remained unsustainable (European Commission, 2009).

“I think there was an acknowledgement - and the Green Paper was quite strong in this too - that we had really hit rock bottom in terms of the

stocks we knew about. There was a consensus that things cannot continue as they are. The economic figures showed this too. [...] That was clear from the starting point for the Commission. I think the Parliament was shaken by this also. [...] Even the Council had a starting point of “yes, this is going wrong.””

(Environmental interest group representative)

5.4. Diverse interest group activities shape and join the streams

“The political conditions for the reform were good, but without the NGO sector engaging it could easily have gone to the other side. It needed constant pressure [...] without the public engagement campaigns, meetings, et cetera, certain things would just not have happened.”

(Environmental interest group representative)

Our analysis of the politics and problem streams show that the political conditions were largely favoring environmental IG influence. Through the use of different tactics (from informational lobbying to public campaigns) environmental IG were able to exploit the new role of the Parliament and harness public attention in order to push their solutions (described in the policy stream) onto the agenda and influence their adoption. Coalition-building has been particularly important for the ability of environmental groups to pool and efficiently use resources, obtain a broad range of policy-relevant information, convey legitimacy through representing multiple stakeholders and access policy networks in European institutions. Further in this section we describe the processes through which self-organizing in coalitions has benefited environmental groups and outline tactics used by environmental groups to attain influence.

5.4.1. Coalition-building as key condition for environmental group influence

Both environmental and processing/consumer IG have argued that forming coalitions has been important for their lobbying success. Environmental groups in particular formed at least three major coalitions that to a large extent overlapped with each other. WWF together with fish processors (AIPCE-CEP), retail and consumer organizations (EUROCOMMERCE, EURO COOP) and professional cooks represented by EUROTOQUES formed the ‘Common Fisheries Policy Reform Alliance’. OCEAN 2012 was a lobbying coalition initially formed by Pew, CFFA, FISH Secretariat, NEF and Seas at Risk, which grew throughout the reform process to 193 members, including national-level organizations. Finally, to better achieve their goals in the EU Parliament, the major EU green groups (BirdLife Europe, Greenpeace, OCEANA and WWF) along with the newly established coalition OCEAN 2012 formed a green NGO ‘super-coalition’. The benefits of coalition-building, identified in the interview responses are listed further in Table 3.

On the opposite side, the interviewed industry group representative mentioned difficulties in building alliances across national fishery organizations that were present during the reform, which could have limited their ability to lobby effectively at the European level. As stated by the industry group representative, uncoordinated lobbying by national organizations could be less advantageous on the European level, as the issues raised by a national fishing federation could be perceived as a problem of that nation, not the industry in general.

5.4.2. Influencing CFP reform through informational lobbying

Among the diversity of tactics used by environmental IG (Table 4), provision of information has been extensively used to access decision-makers with the aim to influence problem framing and argue for the adoption of specific solutions. European institutions had a large demand for policy-relevant information, which was met by many interactions of environmental groups with the European Parliament. As stated by an environmental group representative; MEPs, Council ministers and permanent representatives provided IG with attention in

Table 3
Benefits obtained by interest groups through coalition-building.

Pooling of organizational resources	
Obtaining sufficient resources for lobbying	Groups like BirdLife do not necessarily place priority on the fisheries policy and thus may be limited in terms of resources and staff they can dedicate to lobbying effort in this issue, which is mitigated by joining a lobbying coalition.
Increasing efficiency in using existing resources	For Greenpeace, entering a coalition allowed it to focus resources on public campaigning and creative communication which they are experienced in. Through coalition OCEAN 2012 funding has been allocated to smaller national-level NGOs for working on the fisheries policy issue, while the coalition has managed to coordinate the work of their members which allowed for more effective lobbying.
Enhancing policy-relevant information	Involvement of NEF in OCEAN 2012 has allowed the coalition to use their research to link overfishing with economic and social impacts and show the economic and employment benefits of adopting their policy demands.
Increasing availability and diversity of expert information	
Increased legitimacy and access to decision-makers	
Showing broad support and unified message	Broad message is especially relevant for getting the attention of MEPs, fisheries and environment committees in the EU Parliament, which prefer to get a joint opinion and often lack the time to go through lengthy and technical statements. Several eNGO representatives mentioned that when approaching parliamentarians, their 'brand' did not matter as much – they were first and foremost perceived as an 'environmental NGO' and thus were expected to have a joint perspective on the issue.
Representing the underrepresented	Including voices of underrepresented stakeholders could be positively received by decision-makers. For example, Greenpeace has managed to act together with small-scale fishermen to express a common opinion on the CFP reform draft.
Sharing contacts and networks	Coalition OCEAN 2012 involved close to two hundred members from EU member states. Their national-level contacts allowed the coalition to lobby the Council representatives in their respective countries.

Table 4
Diversity of tactics used by environmental interest groups

Tactic	Type of activity
Informing decision-makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing policy-relevant information through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Formal and informal meetings – Emails, letters, phonecalls – Summarizing policy proposals – Providing with NGO recommendations to vote, factsheets, defining key concepts – Dinner dialogues, breakfast sessions with invited speakers from fishing industry/science/etc. – Providing information about public opinion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engaging through twitter – Through Brussels-based and national media – Photos and videos of public campaigns (e.g. 'fish shapes')
Public campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engaging civil society debate – Informing the public about the policy issue, reform process
Increasing capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Naming/shaming decision-makers – Building up coalition membership – Communicating with coalition partners

exchange for policy-relevant information – which could include data or technical information, or simply providing help with summarizing and interpreting proposed solutions. Alternatively, environmental IG informed policy makers about public attention to the issue thus incentivizing them to listen to pro-environmental demands.

We identified a broad variety of means through which environmental groups supplied policy-relevant information (Table 4): from the usual 'lobby work' which included formal and informal one-on-one meetings, sending out emails, calling decision-makers as well as their assistants to offer help and provide information that could be used for determining their position in the voting. The role of assistants has been particularly emphasized by two of the interviewed groups, which argued that engaging with MEP assistants has been very important for attaining influence in the Parliament. They argued that assistants go through large amounts of information to provide MEPs with summaries of policy proposals or identify opinions of key stakeholders. They are consequently often overworked and accept assistance of IG in providing and interpreting information.

Apart from such standard approaches, some environmental groups also mentioned organizing activities during which MEPs or permanent representatives were able to meet with scientists or key experts on

fisheries policy and listen to their presentations on different aspects of the CFP (e.g. the MSY concept). Such presentations usually took place as lunch or breakfast sessions – providing an opportunity for IG to engage with decision-makers during a less busy time.

All environmental groups mentioned engaging with media, with the purpose of both informing the public, but also to focus the attention of politicians. Twitter has been used for the same purpose – to attract public attention, but also to an extent to 'name and shame' the opposition. One group identified the importance of developing a common communication strategy across environmental coalitions, publishing joint reports and using them to inform the media and decision-makers. Finally, some unorthodox strategies have been applied to get decision-makers attention and inform them about public concern – such as engaging with national-level representatives to organize public photo-sessions and take pictures of crowds of activists standing in formation in the 'shape of a fish'. Such pictures from many European countries were then used to convey public concern and the need for a sustainable fisheries policy to the decision-makers.

Through interactions with the decision-makers in the three EU policy venues environmental IG influenced the three streams at the same time – by conveying new information, building alliances, informing about and advocating for their solutions and issue framings. Some IG (Greenpeace in particular) also carried out campaigning to influence public opinion and attract attention to the policy issue. Influencing the public opinion can on the one hand add legitimacy to IG position, while on the other hand increased public attention to the policy issue can make it difficult for politicians to respond to private interests represented by the industry. However, as mentioned by a representative of Greenpeace, influencing public opinion was a very long-term process that needed a significant amount of time in order to build reputation and create the desired impact.

6. Discussion

Our analysis of the three streams of the Common Fisheries Policy reform process has shown that the sociopolitical conditions were favorable for environmental group influence on the reform. At the same time, preference attainment analysis indicated that the outcome indeed reflected the majority of environmental group demands. The conditions and activities of the environmental IG can be linked together to form a causal mechanism that explains how the groups achieved influence on the reform. Coalition-building (Fig. 2, blue box) has been used by

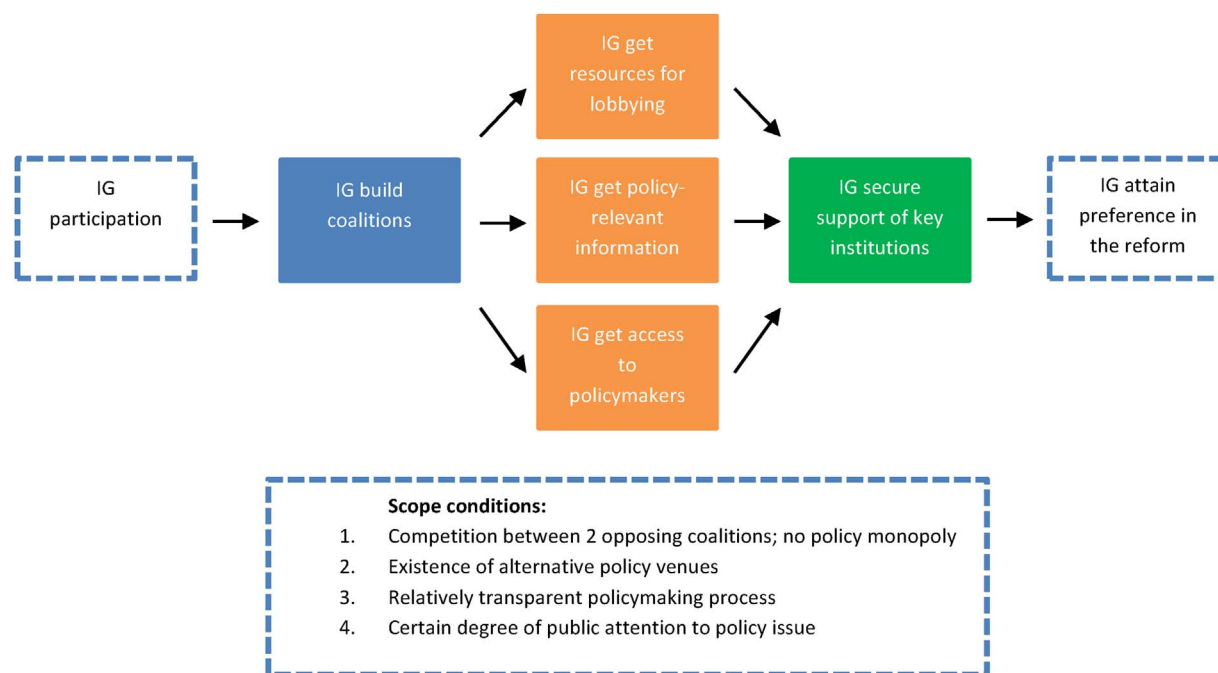


Fig. 2. Mechanism of environmental interest group influence on the Common Fisheries Policy reform.

environmental groups to pool and efficiently use resources, obtain a broad range of policy-relevant information, and access key policy actors (Fig. 2, orange boxes). The establishment of the EU Parliament as a new arena for lobbying meant that environmental groups could, for the first time challenge the influence of industry groups, which was concentrated in the EU Council. The Lisbon Treaty could thus be seen as a ‘focusing event,’ which triggered self-organization among environmental groups in coalitions, in order to mobilize resources and influence the reform through the European Parliament and in other European institutions. Additional conditions (increased public attention, favorable positions of key policy actors and a common understanding that the ‘status quo’ was not a viable option) primarily influenced the ability of environmental groups to access and get attention of policymakers. A major opportunity for success (institutional change) was perceived and responded to by environmental groups through coalitions and increasing capacity.

Our findings are in line with existing research about IG influence. For instance, our findings that policy-relevant information and citizen support was particularly important, have also been identified as key for IG influence on EU policymaking in other contexts (Klüver, 2013). Industry interests tend to possess more economic power, but we argue that the environmental groups in this case have been more successful in both conveying public support and supplying information to decision-makers. Previous research has argued about the importance of economic resources (Klüver, 2013), but we found that environmental IG benefited from the complex and technical nature of the CFP and the high demand for policy-relevant information in both the European Parliament and the European Commission. Indeed, as shown by Dür et al. (2015), non-business interests tend to be more successful in promoting policy change in EU policies that get public attention and involve European Parliament as a co-legislator.

We find that coalition-building played an important role in IG ability to obtain resources and gain access to decision-makers. It is important to mention however that allying via coalitions has not been linked to IG success in quantitative studies of IG lobbying across a broad range of policy issues (Mahoney, 2007a). However, research also stresses dependence of coalition-building effects on sociopolitical conditions. Engaging in coalitions can for instance pay off particularly well in cases when policy-makers are likely to respond to the magnitude and

breadth of support (Mahoney, 2007b). We find that conveying a common proposal from a ‘pro-environmental voice’ and including a diversity of stakeholders in a coalition has been beneficial for environmental coalitions’ success in getting attention of decision-makers.

The mechanism of IG influence found in the CFP reform case is thus dependent on the demand for information and public support among decision-makers and how well they respond to a breadth of interests representing a common goal. Success of coalition-building among IG is also highly dependent on their ability to self-organize, formulate shared demands and coordinate activities. We argue that our findings could be relevant for other institutional setting, apart from EU political system, given that the above scope conditions are met. Indeed, as shown by Mahoney (2008, 2007a), issue context in European Union and United States political systems often plays a more significant role in determining IG success than institutional differences.

In the case of the Common Fisheries Policy, the major policy change brought by the reform was pre-empted by social-ecological change. Although not ultimately perceived as a major crisis, it has been recognized by participants of the policy process and perceived as a problem that required a change from the status quo. However, previous experiences with reforming the Common Fisheries Policy have shown that proposals for changes can nevertheless be watered down significantly and policy may remain relatively static despite major changes in the issue (Peñas Lado, 2016). The 2013 reform occurred in a more conducive environment, which created a window of opportunity for policy adaptation. We argue that environmental IG participation in the reform process has been the necessary ‘push’ which assisted in overcoming the coalitional struggle and realizing the opportunities for major policy change. However, in order to link IG activity with social-ecological changes and make further conclusions about their role in policy adaptation, we need to go beyond understanding their role in policy change. Our future work will focus on exploring this link further, particularly through investigating IG contribution to information flows in the reform process and using agent-based modeling to further test the mechanism of IG influence under different contexts. The case of the 2013 EU Common Fisheries Policy reform has given an insight on how interest groups, under favorable conditions, working in coalitions are able to tip the policy towards a major change. Yet a remaining challenge for future research is to understand the interactions between

structural conditions and group characteristics under which interest groups can create barriers on the pathway to adaptive policy change.

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Appendix A. Interview guide – Interest Group

Interview guide – Interest Group

I. Issue & solution: Why? What?

- Why do you think the EU fisheries reform was needed?
- What were your key demands to the future reform?

II. Tactics: When? With whom? How?

- During which stages of the reform process your organization was most active?
- (*Green paper; Commission; P-C agreements, specific debates...?*)
- Which aspects of the reform, to your view, were most actively debated? (*briefly describe how debates occurred and what were the outcomes*)
- Were there any major events during the reform process, and how, to your opinion, they shaped the discussion and your organization's activity/tactics?

(*ecological, social, political change – collapses, elections, global conventions etc.*)

- Do you think that the reform of CFP was a conflictual issue?
- In what way? What were the sides of the conflict?
- Was your organization part of a coalition during the reform process? With which actors (non-state and policymakers)?

Why did you choose to act together?

What were the other coalitions?

!!! If you did not consider yourself part of a coalition, did you in any other way cooperate with other organizations during the reform process?

- To influence policy-making, organizations have to rely on various access channels. Which channels did you use most extensively during the reform process?

(*Parliament, Commission, EU Council, National level*) What about other channels? At different stages of the reform?

Which channels do you think your organizations have been able to successfully influence during the reform?

- Organizations use different strategies in their efforts to influence policymaking. Which ones did you have to rely most of all and in which situations?

(*participating in formal hearings, working groups; informal contacts with policymakers; media campaigns; demonstrations, protests*). Enquire in more detail about strategies mentioned!

Why did you use these strategies?

Which strategies do you think have been the most effective?

III. Information

Non-state actors are often considered important sources of policy-related information to policymakers. Providing relevant information is also a frequently used strategy for non-state actors to influence the issue of interest. At this stage I would like to ask you several questions about informational lobbying

- During your formal and informal contacts with policymakers, did you often inform them about the state of the issue, your position, positions of other participants?

(*other policy-relevant information?*)

- What kind of policy-relevant information did you provide to which actors? When?

- Where do you obtain policy-relevant information (*sources*)?

Did you use informational lobby to inform policymakers about changes in the state of the issue? Which ones and what kinds of information (examples)?

- Did you share policy-relevant information with other non-state actors in/outside your coalition?

IV. Perception of self and others

- How satisfied are you with the outcome of the reform?

Do you think you reached your initial aims?

Do you think your organization was influential during the reform process?

- Which other organizations did you perceive as influential during the reform?

Which policymakers/administrators do you think most affected the outcome of the reform process?

Appendix B. Interview guide – Policymaker

Interview guide – Policymaker

- What is your position at the institution, what were your responsibilities during the reform process?
- Why do you think the EU fisheries reform was needed?
- Which non-state actors do you perceive as key stakeholders in the issue?

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- Which non-state actors have been actively participating in the reform process: formally (committees, hearings) informally (protests, media campaigns, demonstrations, other means)
- Were there any coalitions between non-state actors/policymakers? Which ones?
- Which non-state actors/coalitions do you see as influential (if any)? Specifically in your institution? Why do you think they were influential? In what way?
- Does your institution rely on non-state actors for provision of policy-related information? What kind of information? Which actors?
- How did information provided by non-state actors shape the debate around the policy reform at your institution?

Appendix C

List of documents included in the preference attainment analysis:

Document name/title	Release date
Answers to the questions in the Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. Contribution to consultations by Europeche and COPA-COGECA	14.10.2009
WWF and its Allies call for Real Reform in European Fisheries. Alliance for CFP reform statement	28.04.2010
Transforming European fisheries – time for change. OCEAN 2012 briefing paper	01.05.2010
Focus on the environment – for people’s sake. OCEAN 2012 briefing paper	02.05.2010
OCEAN 2012 position on the elimination of discards in EU waters and for EU fishing activities in third countries waters	December 2010
A shared vision for sustainable European fisheries. Alliance for CFP reform	2011
The reform of the CFP: The essential demands of the sector. Joint statement of Europeche and COPA-COGECA	23.03.2011
Essential steps towards tackling the EU Discarding problem. Joint environmental NGO statement	03.05.2011
An initial reaction to the Commission’s package on reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. OCEAN 2012 briefing	01.07.2011
You can turn the tide for Europe’s fish stocks. Joint environmental NGO briefing	07.09.2011
Fleet overcapacity is driving overfishing. Joint environmental NGO statement.	14.11.2011
To MSY and beyond: achieving healthy stocks to achieve healthy seas. Joint environmental NGO statement	23.11.2011
Access criteria to reward responsible fishing. Joint environmental NGO briefing	January 2012
Tackling discards in EU fisheries. Joint environmental NGO briefing	01.01.2012
Transforming European fisheries. OCEAN 2012 statement	01.01.2012
Alternative approach to discards: Proposal by EU industry. Explanatory memorandum	18.09.2012
Letter to EU Ministers on European Fishing Industry Proposal on Discards	18.09.2012
Joint fishing sector press release on the proposal to address discards	18.09.2012
Recommendations on priority amendments in Fisheries Committee to Common Fisheries Policy Regulation. Alliance for CFP reform statement to Members of European Parliament	16.10.2012
Overfishing: you can end it! Joint environmental NGO briefing	23.01.2013
Joint fishing industry letter to President of European Parliament on the proposal on the Common Fisheries Policy	01.02.2013
Joint environmental NGO letter to Fisheries and Environment Ministers	09.04.2013
Discarding fish under the Common Fisheries Policy: Towards an end to mandated waste. Library of the European Parliament briefing	13.05.2013
Joint fishing sector press release on the Council position of Common Fisheries Policy reform	15.05.2013
Europeche and COPA-COGECA press release on the political agreement on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy	31.05.2013
REGULATION (EU) No 1380/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy	11.12.2013

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