EUROPEAN LOBBYING

AN OCCUPATIONAL FIELD BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND ACTIVISM

Christian Lahusen

Routledge

European Lobbying

Lobbying is an integral part of the political reality of the European Union and a highly competitive and dynamic field of interest groups. This book takes a systematic look at lobbyists in order to broaden our understanding of the staff entrusted with the responsibility of influencing European politics. Who are the European lobbyists? What are their professional backgrounds, career patterns, practices, and beliefs? The study uses a sociological framework to explore the professionalisation and professionalism of the field across national proveniences, policy fields and interest groups, and develops a systematic analysis that considers three different dimensions: occupational patterns, shared knowledge and common convictions. Based on original research that combines in-depth interviews with survey data, *European Lobbying* demonstrates that European lobbying is a firmly established and highly professionalised métier. In an organisational field characterised by growth, pluralisation and increasing competition, the professional staff contributes to the homogenisation of European lobbying and the marginalisation of other, non-professionalised forms of interest representation. It will therefore appeal to scholars and students of sociology and politics with interest in European studies, European Union politics and the sociology of the professions.

Christian Lahusen is Professor of Sociology at the University of Siegen, Germany. He is the author of *Political Attitudes of Divided European Citizens* and the co-author of *Solidarity in the Media and Public Contention over Refugees in Europe* and *Young People and Long-Term Unemployment*.

Routledge Studies in Political Sociology

This series presents the latest research in political sociology. It welcomes both theoretical and empirical studies that pay close attention to the dynamics of power, popular protest and social movements, as well as work that engages in debates surrounding globalisation, democracy and political economy.

Titles in this series

European Lobbying

An Occupational Field between Professionalism and Activism

Christian Lahusen

Contents

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgements

1   Introduction

Lobbying is part of political life in the European Union (EU). It is particularly striking how much the political representation of interests is a normal part of what happens in Brussels. A large number of associations, companies, and federations maintain their own offices in Brussels so they can track and influence European policy at close quarters. The opportunities they seize to articulate their interests are equally abundant, since European legislative procedures provide for various forms of consultation; nevertheless, European lobby groups also seek to engage with members of the European institutions (Commission, Parliament, and Council of Ministers) even outside formal procedures. This forms the basis for lasting contacts that the actors involved consider to be an integral part of political consultations and legislative decision-making.

This profound insertion of European lobbying into the arena of European politics cannot conceal the considerable dynamism that has characterised the field of interest representation since its early days. The field has grown steadily since the founding of the European Communities in the 1950 and 1960s, and has experienced significant waves of expansion since the 1980s and 1990s. This has incited competition between lobbyists and stimulated the professionalisation of their work (Klüver and Saurugger 2013). What is particularly intriguing about this dynamism is the simultaneity of two different developments. On the one hand, research has provided ample evidence that the growth of the organisational field of interest groups has had considerable effects on the pluralisation of the represented interests, the fragmentation of organisational forms, the volatility of alliances and coalitions, and the competitiveness of interest representation (Greenwood 2017; Dür and Matteo 2016; Beyers and de Bruycker 2018; Kastner 2018; Keller 2018). One the other hand, there is agreement that European lobbying has a distinct approach that is specific to the EU and is persistently applied across interest group sectors (Woll 2006; Coen and Richardson 2009; Mazey and Richardson 2015; Coen et al. 2021).

This means that there is an apparent paradox between the heterogenisation of the field of interest groups and the homogenisation of the field of professional activity. Lobby groups do diverge considerably with regard to their interests, resources, missions, and orientations, but lobbyists tend to employ

similar repertoires of action and develop similar professional skills. This homogenisation of practices and skills has been demonstrated with regard to interest groups moving into the arena of EU politics, such as in lobby groups from the US or Eastern European Member States (Coen 2004; Sallai 2013; Vargovčíková 2015; Coen et al. 2021). The same also applies to civic groups, grassroots initiatives, and social movement organisations, whose action repertoires focused on public campaigning, mass mobilisation, and street protests. More often than not, the scale shift of their activities towards the EU also implied a move from confrontational public protest mobilisation to conventional and institutionalised forms of interest representation (Bursens 1997; Lahusen 2004; Balme and Chabanet 2008; della Porta and Parks 2013).

This homogenisation of lobbying, which is described also as a process of professionalisation, has been attributed to the gradual accommodation of interest groups by the institutions of the EU (McLaughling and Greenwood 1995; Mazey and Richardson 1999; Greenwood 2007; Berkhout et al. 2015). The EU institutions have not only encouraged and supported a wide array of lobby and advocacy groups to engage in legislative processes, but were also able to accommodate them within the consultative bodies and processes of the various policy domains, exposing them to the regulatory approach and collaborative style of policy deliberation (Woll 2012; Michalowitz 2019). The homogenisation of European lobbying within an organisational field marked by fragmentation and competition thus seems to be demand-driven.

This interpretation has its merits, as it helps identify accommodative pressures firmly established within the institutional architecture of the EU. However, its explanatory power is limited because it downplays the institutional complexity of the EU. The EU Commission and the European Parliament are known to attract and tolerate different forms of advocacy (Bouwen 2007; Dionigi 2017), and the European Council also adds complexity to the field, even though it is less exposed to direct forms of lobbying (Hayes-Renshaw 2009). It builds on intergovernmental negotiations and many specialised working groups that provide access points for national lobby groups with their distinct interests and practices. Finally, the deepening of European integration has widened the range of policy domains, encouraging an increasing number of different groups to engage in European lobbying. This pluralisation has also increased the variety of advocacy approaches (Balme and Chabanet 2008; Imig and Tarrow 2001; della Porta and Parks 2013; della Porta 2022). All in all, scholars conclude that the EU might be able to accommodate a wide array of interests, but its ability to manage and streamline the highly populated and fragmented field of interest groups is rather limited. The relations between the organisational field and the EU institutions are deeply shaped by uncertainty, flexibility, and dynamism (Mazey and Richardson 2006a and 2015), which means that the institutional architecture of the EU can only have a limited impact on the homogenisation of the professional field of lobbying practices.

1.1 European lobbyists: a fruitful object of study

Against this background, it is therefore necessary to be more attentive to those forces and actors that play an active role in the formation and homogenisation of European lobbying. This book wishes to direct the attention to a collective actor that is receiving more attention lately (e.g. Michel 2005a and 2013; Laurens 2018; Coen et al. 2021; Beauvallet et al. 2002), because it can help to better understand the paradox outlined so far: European lobbyists. A stronger commitment to the study of lobbying professionals seems overdue, because sociological research has convincingly and recurrently testified that professions are a decisive factor in patterning, integrating, and streamlining occupational and organisational fields. Microsociological and interactionist studies have shown that occupational groups engage in defining shared practices, norms, and identities across their different employees (Hughes 1958), neo-institutionalist studies have insisted on the role of professions in driving isomorphism within organisational fields (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 2008; Saks 2016), and research about epistemic communities, communities of practices, and instrument constituencies have confirmed this observation for the field of policy domains (Bicchi 2011; Zito 2018; Howlett and Saguin 2021).

A study about European lobbyists can rely only on limited knowledge. Previous research about European interest representation has addressed the staff of interest groups repeatedly, but there is a lack of comprehensive data and systematic analysis. Investigations in the realm of political science relegate this actor to the backstage, because these studies privilege institutional and organisational actors. They have taken professionalisation processes more seriously lately, but they are interested in professionals only indirectly, because they treat them as an organisational option or resource that might have an impact on internal functioning, government relations or lobbying success (Klüver 2012; Rudy et al., 2019; Albareda 2020; Heylen et al. 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 162–167). The staff has also made its appearance in studies inquiring into the relations between interest groups and EU institutions, particularly with regard to the recruitment of personnel and the revolving doors between the private and public sector (Coen and Vannon 2016). Professionals were furthermore targeted by research that was interested in strategies and practices of lobbying (Woll 2007; Barron and Trouille 2015). The focus has been primarily on business interests and corporate political action, presumably because these actors are more actively involved in professionalising lobbying (Rudy et al. 2019; Coen and Vannoni 2020), even though separate analyses have corroborated similar processes among civic groups and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) (Brusens 1997; Eberwein and Saurugger 2013; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020; Heylen et al. 2020).

Recent research, however, is recognising that lobbyists merit more direct attention and a closer and comprehensive analysis (Michel 2005a; Beauvallet et al. 2022). Previous research treated them as mere representatives and

executors strictly tied to the mandates of the interest groups (Heinz et al. 1997; Healy 2016). However, there is growing evidence that lobbyists are policy intermediaries or brokers that adapt and shape their groups' agendas (Stephenson and Jackson 2010; Lowery and Marchetti 2012; Tyllström and Murray 2021), strive to defend and even expand their work-related autonomy within their organisations (Vargovčíková 2015; Avril 2018; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022), and also pressure their headquarters, clients, or members to step up professionalisation processes. Research devoted to the sociological dimension of European lobbying has added that lobbyists are not only individually an active player in the formation of the field, but also collectively, because they share similar social backgrounds (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Michon 2022), are professionally mobile across employers, and engage in forming a set of skills and practices (Courty and Michel 2013; Avril 2018; Cheynis 2022). Hence, lobbyists are important actors in their own right. They translate the opportunities and constraints of their institutional and organisational environment into factual actions; they develop and establish shared practices, skills, and convictions of professional labour; and they engage in networking and professional socialisation, thus integrating, homogenising, and stabilising a field of activities across societal interests, policy domains and countries.

These studies thus provide sufficient indications that lobbying professionals are a homogenising force within an organisational field marked by diversity, fragmentation, and contentiousness. Previous research, however, does not allow to assess this assumption critically, due to two limitations. First, studies addressing professionals are limited to individual sectors (Albareda 2020; Heylen et al. 2020; Coen et al. 2021; Beauvallet et al. 2022), thus obscuring the view on the professional field itself. A critical assessment of the professionalisation of lobbying has to take into consideration that the professional field of European lobbyists is differentiated and fragmented (Courty and Michel 2013). Lobbyists are rarely trained lobbying professionals; they have different educational backgrounds; they work for different interest groups and thus have diverse work descriptions; they do not speak about themselves as lobbyists; and they do not necessarily agree on ethical standards and policies (Michel 2005b; Offerlé 2005; Michel 2013; Bunea and Gross 2019; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020). The analysis not only has to validate whether and to what extent professionalisation has affected the field, but it also needs to provide a more precise understanding of the main manifestations and driving forces.

In this regard, this book is confronted with a second limitation of previous research. Due to the marginal role of lobbying professionals within scholarly writing, the concept of professionalism or professionalisation has been used in an undifferentiated and ambiguous manner. It has been employed to address aspects as diverse as employment patterns, organisational structures, professional activities, and attitudes (Bursens 1997; McGrath 2005; van Deth and Maloney 2011; Klüver and Saurugger 2013; Coen and Vannoni 2016; Heylen et al. 2020). Additionally, this research strand assumes that

professionalisation is about increasing organisational capacities and improving the effectiveness of lobbying (Eberwein and Saurugger 2013; Albareda 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 15f.), even though this process might have side effects for the organisations (Bursens 1997; Heylen et al. 2020). Ultimately, there is a functional understanding of professionalisation and professionalism.

A systematic analysis of European lobbying as a professional field needs to work with a more precise and nuanced approach that makes research assumptions explicit and paves the way for a comprehensive and systematic analysis. Following sociological research on professions, the book proposes to understand professionalisation as a multilayered process driven by institutional, organisational and professional forces. In empirical terms, it proposes a conceptualisation that distinguishes between three different components – professionalism as an occupation, as a knowledge and as a value – in order to systematically map the field of European lobbying.

First, the aim is to empirically assess the extent to which European lobbying has become a full-fledged occupation, and in this regard, the aim will be to measure the degree of occupationalisation. For this purpose, the analyses will make use of data about the employment status of lobbying staff (e.g. contractual relations, remuneration, staff positions, job satisfaction, and aspirations); the sectoral permeability of the field (e.g. work experiences in different sectors and within the EU institutions); and occupational paths (e.g. points of access to the field, career histories, occupational requirements). This will make it possible to ascertain the degree to which forms of full-time, remunerated, and long-term (career-oriented) employment have replaced voluntary or part-time activities, thus establishing clear boundaries and access points to the professional field, and homogenising it internally.

The formation of a specialised labour market, however, does not necessarily imply that European lobbyists form an occupational group. The analysis will thus centre on the second and additional dimension of analysis – the professional knowledge – by looking at the educational background of European lobbyists (e.g. educational attainment, disciplinary background), their professional know-how (e.g. exclusivity claims, required skills), and professional capitals (e.g. networks, expertise, reputation, belonging). It will be necessary to determine the extent to which lobbyists share common skills and knowledge-based practices, and thus contribute to the constitution of the occupation as a professional group both internally and vis-à-vis the broader field of actors who populate the public affairs arena.

Third, the analysis will focus on the importance of professionalism as a value in order to assess the extent to which European lobbyists are engaged in a shared discourse of professional legitimacy. This aspect is particularly important in the professionalisation process, because professions are known to depend on the public recognition of their societal mission and commitment to general welfare. The analysis will need to identify whether lobbying professionals support similar ideas of public acceptance and political legitimacy across interest sectors, academic, and national backgrounds. Particular

emphasis will be placed on the value of professionalism in general, and the political legitimacy of professional interest representation in particular.

Based on the empirical mapping of the professional field, the analyses will also be devoted to the identification of those social forces that are responsible for stimulating and/or limiting the professional formation and homogenisation of the field in its three dimensions. In this respect, two analytical approaches and methods will be combined. On the one hand, the aim will be to uncover the driving forces behind the professionalisation of the field on the basis of standardised survey data, and thus also to name the relevant actors that are actively engaged as drivers of professionalisation. In this regard, the analyses will review the competing assumptions that professionalisation depends on the organisations for which lobbyists work, varies according to the proximity to the EU institutions and/or is conditioned by the social profile and class affiliation of EU affairs professionals. On the other hand, the examination will take a closer look at the European lobbyists' perceptions, practices, and experiences on the basis of qualitative interviews, because they help reconstruct the structures and dynamics of the professional field from the inside. Through their accounts it will be possible to reconstruct the ways in which the institutional and organisational arenas pattern professional work, and to show how lobbyists participate in reproducing the practices, skills, networks, and convictions that prevail within the field.

1.2 European Lobbying: a challenging research phenomenon

The research objectives of this book are not without challenges, because European lobbying is a field of activity with internal diversities and blurred boundaries. With regard to organisations, it is not immediately apparent which are part of European lobbying, as, depending on their mandate and objectives, associations, corporate representations, NGOs, non-profit foundations, public bodies, professional associations, think tanks, PR agencies, or law firms may carry out activities that could be described as direct or indirect lobbying. The same applies to the staff, since not all people who work for lobby groups are involved in interest representation. In some cases, they perform routine tasks within the organisation, in others they work on specific aspects that may or may not be related to interest representation (such as research and monitoring, public relations (PR), legal review, contact maintenance). At the same time, the spectrum of individuals involved can be very broad. Interest groups can not only draw on their own lobbyists but also on other people around them: members of the company's board of directors, employees in a specialist department with specific expertise, PR staff, the members or support base of their individual associations, national member associations and their constituencies, external lawyers, scientific experts or representatives of professional associations.

The empirical and conceptual demarcation of the field of European lobbying is challenging, but seems feasible when focusing on activities and

practices. This approach promises to solve problems related to the complexity and fuzziness of the field because it helps to centre on the core mission, around which the professional field is organised. But it is also required for an analysis that focuses on professionalisation and thus assumes that a specific set of tasks and activities has been delimited, standardised and monopolised in terms of a specialised labour market and occupational group. In this regard, a strict definition of European lobbying referring to specific activities is the most plausible option to conceptualise and demarcate the field. According to this definition, European lobbying comprises all active efforts to influence the voting preferences and behaviours of office holders and decision makers related to policy issues processed within the institutions of the EU. These efforts include a wide range of activities such as mobilising one's own membership base, conducting public campaigns, participating in hearings or committee meetings and presenting drafting proposals for upcoming legislative procedures.

This approach helps identify the core of the field with reference to the ultimate mission of interest representation, but requires further clarification when it comes to the boundaries of the field. In fact, influencing political decisions within the European Commission and Parliament requires collecting a great deal of information and facts, preparing reports and analyses, commissioning scientific studies, or consulting experts. These activities can be described as lobbying whenever they are carried out by groups with the aim of influencing the legislative process politically. Lobby groups are likely to use the information, analyses, and studies for specific purposes, and it can therefore be assumed that they represent selective perspectives and opinions. The picture is less clear when it comes to defining the role of experts, think tanks or scientific institutes in general. Although they do not necessarily pursue policy objectives that can be explicitly described as interest representation, their reports, analyses or opinions may have this effect or be used by interested circles accordingly. Similar observations apply to other areas of work, as they are related to European lobbying, but do not necessarily comprise explicit efforts to influence office holders and policymakers in regard to pending policymaking decisions. This is true for PR and image campaigning, policy monitoring and legal counselling, and association and event management, among others. Depending on job titles and work descriptions, these tasks can belong to the portfolio of European lobbyists. They might also be externalised and delegated to specialised groups or companies, but they might also have other purposes than influencing political legislation.

Any attempt to demarcate the field of European lobbying is thus confronted with the problem of fluid boundaries. A practice-related approach, however, allows this fluidity to be addressed and grasped adequately. In fact, lobbying in its strict sense is a professional practice that is often interrelated with a broader sphere of public affairs activities, which are not necessarily related to political interest representation, but are either required, functional or helpful in reaching its goal. European lobbyists might thus diverge in their position

within the field, depending on whether their tasks are more or less centred on exerting legislative political influence and/or other, complementary or supplementary public affairs activities. But the focus on complex activity portfolios makes it possible to reconstruct the structure and shape of the professional field, and the place of strict lobbying practices therein. This approach implies that initiatives and organisations not necessarily distinguishable as lobby groups might be part of the professional field, as long as their staff is involved in lobbying activities in the strict sense.

This practice-related conceptualisation of European lobbying will prove its merits also because the field is institutionally formed and regulated in this manner (European Parliament 2003; Holman and Luneburg 2012). The European Commission and the European Parliament are themselves confronted with the problem of determining exactly which groups, persons, and activities can be considered to be part of European lobbying. The main objective, however, is to keep institutional barriers to entry low in order to ensure broad participation. Their measures aim essentially at regulating working relations between the European institutions and civic, expert, and interest groups. Transparency obligations are imposed on both sides, without regulating the field of European lobbying itself. According to the European Commission, it is important to avoid discouraging sections of society from putting forward their expertise, concerns, and demands, irrespective of the issues, groups, and interests involved (Commission of the European Communities 1992; European Commission 2016). At the same time, the EU institutions show considerable willingness to provide non-material, logistical, and financial support for societal interests that are weak or difficult to organise (Persson and Edholm 2018; Sanchez Salgado 2019), in order to enable them to establish themselves as a European association and to participate in political decision-making.

The inclusiveness of this regulatory approach has encouraged the growth and diversification of the field of European lobbying, without diminishing its openness and fluidity. This development is responsible for the conceptional problems indicated before, but also implies considerable troubles in empirically mapping the field. In fact, the EU institutions, watchdog NGOs, and scientific studies all struggle with the difficulty of providing precise data on the number of European lobby groups (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Courty 2010; Beyers et al. 2014; and 2020; Hanegraaff and Poletti 2021). In addition to the aforementioned fuzziness of lobbying, there are also the challenges of drawing clear boundaries between European and national interest groups and lobbying activities. It can furthermore be assumed that the number of active interest groups is subject to considerable fluctuations over time, depending on which policy measures are discussed within the EU and how broad the circle of groups affected by regulation is. The available data are even less precise when it comes to determining the number of active lobbyists. It is not possible to determine exactly how many people in the respective organisations are entrusted with lobbying tasks and to what extent.

For the reasons mentioned above, most studies use estimates, some of which, however, diverge considerably (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Wonka et al. 2010; Hanegraaff and Poletti 2021). The greatest increase was recorded in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, the number of active interest groups was stated as 3,000, which is significantly below what is known for the USA, where the field grew to over 16,000 groups by 1998 (Woll 2005). The European field continued to grow in the following years: In 2013, over 5,500 interest groups were listed in the EU Transparency Register (Greenwood and Dreger 2013); in 2016, over 9,700 organisations were counted (Greenwood 2017: 13). However, the EU does not come close to the US situation. As expected, the number of active lobbyists exceeds the number of interest groups. In 2010, this was estimated at over 15,000 individuals (Alter-EU 2010: 23), but there are also estimates that suggest between 30,000 and 50,000 full-time workers (Corporate Europe Observatory 2011: 6; European Parliament 2018).

These estimates illustrate how limited our knowledge about the field of European lobbying is. It is difficult to ascertain how many lobby groups and lobbyists are engaged in representing their interests towards the European institutions. Beyond this, there is a lack of systematic and comprehensive data about the professional field of lobbying with its internal structures and external boundaries. It is thus challenging to ascertain how and why the field is able to reproduce itself within an arena with open boundaries and a fluctuating number of interests, and how and why it is able to accommodate the many different societal interests from the many different countries. The data collected for this book will allow a differentiated analysis of this open and inclusive field. As will be shown in detail, a distinction between EU affairs and European lobbying will be necessary in order to show that the professional field is structured in concentric circles. European lobbying will be identified as a highly professionalised, integrated and homogenised field of activity, which expands into a wider area of European public affairs-related work. As will be explained in more detail, the estimate proposed here assumes more than 18,000 EU affairs professionals, while the total population in the field of EU lobbying is probably around 13,000 individuals (see Section 4.1). Against this background, the analyses of this book will show that European lobbying has been formed as an integrated field of professional labour that has accommodated a highly diversified number of groups in terms of societal sectors and national provenances. However, they will also highlight internal divisions and conflicts, thus indicating that the professionalisation and professionalism is contested within the field itself.

1.3 The focus on lobbyists: research approach and structure of the book

Since the 1970s, research in the social sciences has dealt extensively with European lobbying. So far, most studies have been interested in the organisational field of European interest groups and have explored a variety of topics,

dimensions, and developments in this respect (e.g. Pedler and van Schendelen 1994; Greenwood 2002; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013; Bitonti and Harris 2017). The focus was, and still is, on the scope and structure of the organisational field (Berkhout and Lowery 2010; Berkhout et al. 2015; Beyers et al. 2020), the strategies of organised lobbying (Green Cowles et al. 2001; Dür and Mateo 2016; Keller 2018), and effects and conditions of successful lobbying (Dür 2008; Dionigi 2017; de Bruycker and Beyer 2019) as well as communication forms and framing strategies (Klüver et al. 2015b; Eising et al. 2015; Rasch 2018).

In contrast, European lobbyists have received muss less attention. Previous research has collected evidence, as described above, showing that an occupational field and a professional group with distinct tasks, skills, and identities has been established (for example, McGrath 2005; Michel 2005b; Klüver 2010; Kohler-Koch and Buth 2013; Coen and Vannoni 2016; Heylen et al. 2020; Coen et al. 2021; Beauvallet et al. 2022). This evidence suggests that a specialised labour market and workforce is in place, thus contributing to the formation of European lobbying as a field of activity. However, findings are inconclusive, and it is questionable whether case- or sector-specific observations can be generalised to the entire professional field. Hence, there is need for a comprehensive analysis that critically assesses whether European lobbying is a professional field characterised by its own entry requirements, activity profiles, knowledge base, contact structures, and professional identities. Additionally, there is need for an analysis of those forces and actors that are influential in patterning the internal structure of the field and establishing boundaries between insiders and outsiders.

In order to meet these empirical and analytic objectives, the present book draws on a frame of reference that is based in the sociology of professions (such as Larson 1977; Freidson 1986; Abbott 1988; Burrage and Torstendahl 1990; Evetts 2013; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Saks 2016; Noordegraaf 2020). Essentially, the aim is to investigate whether processes of professionalisation have taken place which constitute, organise, and regulate the field of activity on the basis of employment, knowledge and values. The theoretical frame of reference provided by the sociology of professions promises new insights to the study of European lobbying, because professions are regarded in sociology as important collective actors in structuring fields of action and homogenising organisational fields (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott, 2008; Georgakakis 2002; Kauppi and Madsen 2013).

To this end, the results of many years of research work in the field will be presented. Findings stem from fieldwork that used a mixed-methods approach and gathered a unique set of data: a standardised survey of almost 700 European lobbyists, and a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with almost 50 European lobbyists and other relevant actors. The study concentrates solely on the European arena and considers lobbyists from individual Member States only insofar as they are involved in lobbying the European institutions. The analyses of these data sets are committed to two objectives: a descriptive

and an analytic one. On the one hand, this book pursues descriptive aims, because it wishes to empirically map the field of European lobbying in its internal structures and external boundaries across societal sectors, national provenances, and policy domains. At the same time, the development of the field will be reconstructed by contrasting interviews conducted during the late 1990s and mid-2010s, and by identifying cohort effects within the sample of the standardised survey. These empirical analyses are explorative, because previous research has only provided partial and segmented insights that do not allow to paint a systematic and comprehensive picture of the field at large.

On the other hand, the mixed-methods approach of data-gathering is complemented by a research design that makes use of structuralist and constructivist approaches of data analysis. Data from the standardised survey will be used to validate the impact of different structural determinants of professionalisation, which makes it possible to ascertain core drivers of this process. In particular, it is intended to identify the impact of the organisations for which lobbyists work, the proximity to the institutional field of European politics, and the social profiles and class hierarchies within the occupational field. The qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews will be devoted to ascertain the ways in which European lobbyists perceive and seize contextual opportunities and constraints, and how they participate in the formation and reproduction of the professional field. This inductive analysis is indebted to an interpretative and constructivist approach (Saks 2016), because it aims to identify the practices, skills, and capitals that European lobbyists consider to be integral part of their work, and because it strives to ascertain the shared professional rules, norms, and values that pattern the field. Both analytic approaches will take inspiration in the conflict-theoretical frame of reference that views professionalisation as an ongoing contention between different actors with different ideas of professional practice, expertise, and legitimacy (Larson 1977; Freidson 1986; Collins 1987; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Beauvallet et al. 2022). The triangulation of both approaches will help identify the internal dynamics patterning the professional field of European lobbying and the competing collective actors engaged therein.

The book presents the findings step by step. The *second chapter* looks back at available evidence and presents the research design of the study. It starts by reviewing three strands of research that are particularly significant for the aims of this book: available studies about European lobbying, scholarly writing about the sociology of occupational work and professions, and research about transnational expert groups. Against this background, it presents and discusses the research design by specifying research questions, core assumptions, and conceptual operationalisations. Moreover, it describes the methods and data on which the empirical findings of this book are based. Given the mixed-methods approach of the research design, it will elaborate on the two legs of the study: the standardised survey amongst a large sample of EU lobbyists, and two interview series among various EU actors and

lobbyists. Particular emphasis will be placed on the challenges of the field-work, the specificities of the gathered data and the methods of data analysis employed.

The following two chapters provide an introductory account of the field of European lobbying. The *third chapter* looks at the origins and development of the field, with the focus here being on the internal view of the interviewed actors. It is based on two series of qualitative interviews with EU lobbyists, experts, and stakeholders conducted in the late 1990s and mid-2010s. This dual data set makes it possible to describe and analyse the developments within the field. The findings not only show remarkable continuity in terms of activity profiles, but also highlight important changes, particularly in terms of occupationalisation and professionalisation. In the *fourth chapter*, a first attempt is made to reconstruct the occupational field in its internal structure. For this purpose, it makes use of the survey data and interviews with lobbying staff. The focus is on the personnel's socio-demographic characteristics, activity profiles, and professional self-image. The observations show that the occupational field is characterised by a marked heterogeneity clearly visible with regard to national and professional backgrounds. On closer inspection, however, the findings paint a picture of an occupational field that is homogeneous at its core area but increasingly blurred towards the edges. Lobbying activities in the strict sense and a set of complementary tasks are clearly a unifying element within this field of professional labour.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 look at the three dimensions of the professionalisation of European lobbying. The *fifth chapter* focuses on occupationalisation and illustrates that political representation of interests at EU level is an occupation in its own right in terms of full-time, paid employment, with a strong concentration of jobs at the senior or executive levels. Additionally, the analysis of career patterns helps identify mobility across sectors, which testifies to sectoral permeability and a considerable integration of the labour market. The labour market thus tends to streamline forms of employment across the various sectors. Career moves from the European institutions into the interest representation sector are common but not pervasive, indicating that the labour market is relatively autonomous from the EU itself. Income patterns are the only factor that introduce significant social inequalities into the field of European lobbying. Against this background, entry barriers, and career paths are reconstructed on the basis of the in-depth interviews, showing that European lobbying has become a competitive labour market supporting career advancement ambitions.

With regard to professionalisation, the *sixth chapter* provides empirical evidence that confirms the formation of a professional group on the basis of shared professional knowledge. Findings underline that European lobbying is an increasingly streamlined professional group when considering its academic background, body of knowledge, and set of practices. EU lobbyists tend to vary with regard to the combination of skills they find essential to do their job, and they are not likely to support the idea of a joint corporate

mission, when asked about the relevance of a professional associations. These indications do not speak for an explicit professionalisation project among EU affairs professionals, but the data show that the occupational field is subject to latent processes of integration and closure. Particularly those who want to belong to the circle of professionally recognised and successful lobbyists would appear to be dependent on acquiring professionally relevant capital and the appropriate professional habitus.

The *seventh chapter* examines the assumption, intensively discussed in the sociology of professions, that professional work inevitably raises questions of legitimacy, as professional groups claim areas of responsibility and work for themselves. The arguments will demonstrate that European lobbying needs to be legitimised on two levels: as an activity and as an occupation. Most professionals share a common belief in legitimacy in both respects, which manifests itself in a fundamentally affirmative attitude to lobbying and an ethos of professionalism. Such a belief in legitimacy is particularly widespread in the core area of the profession. However, the question of legitimacy is a source of schisms and conflicts. It will become apparent that not all those actively involved in the profession believe that lobbying is a politically legitimate activity that is respected by society. Rather, conflicts between different groups with diverging interests and values erupt, as employees of different interest groups (business and trade versus NGOs and social movement organisations) have internalised divergent, sometimes incompatible, ideas of legitimacy and patterns of justification. The occupational field is therefore shaped by a conflict of legitimacy, which implies reciprocal attempts to justify own work and delegitimise political opponents.

The results paint the picture of an occupational field that is characterised by common and opposing forces. The *final chapter* aims to reflect the findings in the light of research to date. Lobbying is a politically divided but professionally highly homogenised field of activity. It can therefore only be grasped if European lobbying is seen simultaneously as both an organisational and an occupational field. In this respect, it is argued that more attention should be paid to research into staff in order to better understand the driving forces, forms, and consequences of a professionalisation of European lobbying. Additionally, this chapter reflects on the implications and consequences of a professionalisation of European lobbying for European politics and the EU. It argues that European lobbying will remain a highly normal but at the same time highly contentious field of professional labour. This is not only due to the raised attention of the general public, amongst them watchdog NGOs and the mass media, but also to the internal dynamism and latent conflicts within the field of European lobbying.

2 Lobbyists in the crosshairs of research

Evidence, assumptions, and data

European lobbying is a well-researched topic. Comprehensive insights on the organisational side of political lobbying are available, which is why it is known which interest groups lobby, and how. The question of how the field of European lobby groups has adapted to the structure and functioning of the EU and differentiated itself internally is also well explored. There are numerous findings on how lobbying is institutionally integrated and contained, whom the EU institutions listen to and to what extent, and who can exert influence on European policy. These numerous insights are an important reference point for a study of lobbying professionals, because interest groups and EU institutions shape their work decisively. Lobbyists act on behalf of their organisation, they use the knowledge and political influence accrued in the organisation, and they develop organisation-specific identifications and loyalties. EU institutions largely determine the way in which the professionals do their work, given that they define policy agendas, regulate access, and organise consultation procedures.

However, research is acknowledging that European lobbyists merit more attention (McGrath 2005; Michel 2005a; Klüver and Saurugger 2013; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Beauvallet et al. 2022). These professionals are not mere representatives of their organisations, but active participants in the formation and reproduction of the field. They are intermediaries or brokers who shape the agenda of their clients and the relations their interest groups maintain with the European institutions (Lowery and Marchetti 2012; Tyllström and Murray 2021). They gather practical knowledge and weave contact networks, they socialise with each other, and they develop professional self-images and identities (Vargovčíková 2015; Avril 2018; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022). Moreover, they have vested interests in the professionalisation of European lobbying. Through their work, they collectively shape the reality of European lobbying and consequently play a decisive role in the development of the field.

The focus of this book thus requires a more comprehensive review of available studies. For this reason, the presentation will not stop with the findings on the organisational field of European interest groups, but will include available analyses on staff. Sociological research on professions and experts will provide useful insights and assessments. This review will help formulate the

theoretical and conceptual frame of reference and determine the various research assumptions that will guide the empirical investigations in the following chapters. Against this background, a final section of this chapter will offer a detailed description of the research design and mixed-methods approach of the study, the twofold data sets used for the analyses and the strengths and limitations of the empirical evidence to be presented.

2.1 European lobbying as an organisational field

Previous research has focused extensively on European lobbying as an organisational field. These findings are of particular relevance for a study of the lobbying profession, because they provide important insights into the institutional and organisational context within which lobbyists work. Three areas of research deliver important evidence: the development and structure of the organisational field; the institutional and political specificities of the European arena of interest groups; and the impact of the institutional and organisational context on patterns of European lobbying.

2.1.1 Development and structure of the organisational field

Studies on European lobbying have been attentive to the genesis of the organisational field in its central developmental trajectories. It was found that the establishment of the European Communities and the subsequent deepening and enlargement of the European Union (EU) brought an increasing number of interest groups to the scene, seeking to shape European policy. Numerous studies have attempted to substantiate this growth with figures, even if the estimates are always to be understood as approximations, since the basis for the data – as will be explained in more detail – is always incomplete and imprecise (Berkhout and Lowery 2008). For the year 1996, the size of the organisational field was already given as 2,221 interest groups (Berkhout and Lowery 2010). This number grew to 5,039 organisations by 2003, counting only those interest groups accredited by the European Parliament (Coen 2007: 335). In 2013, the Transparency Register of the European Parliament reported the number of registered interest groups as 5,949 organisations (Greenwood and Dreger 2013); in 2016 the number was already 9,752 organisations (Greenwood 2017: 13). Since the 1990s, the organisational field had consequently grown more than fourfold.

This development is based on a growth logic that was accompanied by an internal differentiation of the organisational field. Most observers agree that this field has become increasingly heterogeneous, plural and competitive; one can even speak of a fragmentation (Schmitter and Streeck 1991; Eising and Kohler-Koch 1994; Greenwood 1997). European lobbying is characterised by the supremacy of business representatives, since 70 per cent of interest groups belong to the commercial sector, while the European Parliament estimates the number of accredited non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

at just 20 per cent (European Parliament 2003). However, these figures are also subject to fluctuations, as the share of NGOs grew to 25.4 per cent in 2016. The commercial sector needs to be broken down at the same time, as companies and trade associations accounted for 44 per cent of entries that year, consultancies and law firms for 11 per cent, and trade unions or professional associations for 7 per cent (Greenwood 2017: 13). Industry is represented by a multitude of lobby groups that are active in Brussels at the same time and do not necessarily speak with one voice (Dür et al. 2015; Kluger Rasmussen 2015; Chalmers 2019). These groups include the European industry associations and the sector- and product-specific umbrella organisations (automotive, chemicals, energy, transport, construction and mining, trade, telecommunications, etc.), but also the corresponding trade associations of the individual Member States and many large companies (Pedler and van Schendelen 1994; Greenwood 1997; Eising 2007 and 2009). The increasing number of company representations in particular changed European lobbying noticeably throughout the 1990s, as large companies now also engaged in direct lobbying – including independently and outside the respective national and European umbrella organisations (for example, Cawson 1997; Coen 1997, 1998; Green Cowles 2002; Eising 2007).

Non-profit NGOs have also contributed to the differentiation and pluralisation of the organisational field. Since the 1990s, civil society organisations from a wide range of sectors (trade unions and professional associations, environmental, and consumer protection, women's and social associations, cultural associations, and foundations, etc.) have intensified their activities at the EU level and opened their own offices in Brussels (Bouwen 2007; Long and Lörinzci 2009; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013). Even protest-oriented social movement organisations have noticeably increased their presence at the EU institutions (Lahusen 2004; Balme and Chabanet 2008; della Porta 2020).

The heterogeneity of the organisational field is the result of the multitude of interests represented. But the organisational forms themselves also contribute to this diversity. In this respect, particular attention should be paid to the difference between lobbying associations, individual representations, and commercial service providers. Lobbying associations include formally constituted umbrella organisations of all kinds (industry associations, sectoral associations, professional associations, etc.), but also more flexibly designed networks or campaign-specific alliances (Knill 2001; Eising 2007; Mahoney 2007). The group of individual representations consists on the one hand of the offices of large private companies already mentioned, while on the other hand there are also the representations of state bodies (public companies, cities, or regions) and non-profit NGOs and social movement organisations (human rights, environmental protection, women's, or consumer groups) (Imig and Tarrow 2001; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013; Balme and Chabanet 2008; della Porta 2022). Lastly, there are also a large number of commercial public affairs enterprises, law firms or self-employed consultants offering lobbying services (Moloney 1996; Lahusen 2002, 2003).

The different organisational forms can coexist because they provide different goods (Bouwen 2002; Eising 2007; Woll and Jacquot 2010). Lobbying networks are used and recognised by their members and the EU institutions because they aggregate social interests and opinions. The particular value of this kind of lobbying is to bring together the views of a wide range of members and stakeholders, to conduct a dialogue with one voice and to signal joint agreement or support. However, this form of representation also has a weakness: The larger and broader the membership base and sponsorship, the more difficult it is to develop common positions and to maintain them in the event of conflict. Individual representations have it much easier in this respect, as they represent specific interests. Large individual companies or NGOs are also heard because of their political clout; however, their influence consists primarily of the factual, professional or technical expertise that they can provide for concrete legislative procedures. Their ability to organise political followers beyond their own organisational membership is, however, quite low.

Finally, with regard to commercial public affairs agencies, it must be said that they cannot make a specific contribution to lobbying, as their respective function always depends on the agreed service. But this is the reason why this form of organisation has become more important over time (Lahusen 2002, 2003). Their strength lies precisely not in their advocacy, meaning in their ability to represent social interests authentically and appropriately; rather, it lies in the provision of professional services independent of interests, that is, in the provision of lobbying-specific resources and competences.

2.1.2 The specificity of the European arena

Overall, research to date has shown that the development of the organisational field has been subject to a dual momentum of growth with simultaneous differentiation. At the same time, the research has tried to explain this development with reference to the European integration process. A special role is attributed to the establishment of the EC or the EU as a political system. Here, representatives of the schools of theory dominant in political science, known by the terms neofunctionalism or supranationalism (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997; Niemann et al. 2009), intergovernmentalism (Moravcsik 1991; Moravcsik and Schimmelpfennig 2009), and the multilevel approach (Marks et al. 1996; Bache and Flinders 2004), had their say. They all assume different forms and processes of interest aggregation and articulation at the EU level. Neofunctionalism assumes that the establishment of the European Communities created a new, autonomous, supranational arena of political decision-making that reconfigures and Europeanises the political operation in the Member States. The European umbrella organisations are seen as an important element of European integration, as they can reaggregate national interests, align them on a pan-European basis and thus create the necessary pressure to generate further integration successes (Haas 1968: 16; Stone

Sweet and Sandholtz 1997). The representatives of intergovernmentalism have opposed this assumption of a cumulative integration process. They see every integration step as a laboriously negotiated compromise between the participating Member States. The latter still remain – given the legislative role of the European Council in relation to the Commission and Parliament – the main actors of the EC or the EU. And this implies that Member States continue to be an important, if not decisive, arena of interest articulation (Moravcsik 1991).

In the meantime, the multilevel approach has become the dominant explanatory strategy in the study of European lobbying (Marks et al. 1996; Bache and Flinders 2004), because the relevant studies were able to prove that the European and national arenas are mutually interwoven. This is also reflected in the fact that lobby groups focus their activities on both levels and thus engage in multilevel lobbying (Eising 2004 and 2017). In addition, the EU institutions cannot legislate on all issues in the same way, as their competences vary greatly, depending on the policy area. We are consequently dealing with a highly complex institutional structure that produces an equally complex organisational field (Coen 1997; Kohler-Koch 1997; Bouwen 2002; Michalowitz 2007) with equally complex forms of European interest representation (Pijnenburg 1998; Pedler 2002; Mazey and Richardson 2006; Eising 2008; Dür and Mateo 2012).

The complexity of the organisational field is particularly evident in the simultaneity of European and national lobbying activities. If European legislative projects are to be influenced at an early stage, lobby groups must be present in Brussels to contact the relevant departments of the Directorates-General in the European Commission. After all, the European Treaties guarantee the EU Commission the right of initiative. At the same time, the Commission is responsible for developing secondary law (regulations, directives, and other legal acts), which make up the bulk of current EU law (Nugent and Rhinard 2019). In legislative procedures that grant co-decision to the EU Parliament, it is essential to be in discussion with the rapporteur of the committee concerned. It may also be necessary to influence the parliamentary groups or the individual parliamentarians. Lastly, lobby groups must take into account the fact that the decision-making power still lies essentially with the Council of Ministers. They must therefore also make representations to the governments of individual Member States in order to effectively represent their interests. Organisations that can develop geographically differentiated lobbying activities or organise correspondingly complex alliances are accordingly at an advantage (Eising 2004 and 2007).

However, the EU's multilevel system also has advantages for interest groups, as it provides multiple channels of influence and allows lobby groups to compensate for organisational weaknesses. This means that national interest groups whose concerns fall on deaf ears in their own governments can head to Europe to exert pressure on politicians in their own countries via the European institutions – a strategy known in protest research as

externalisation (Chabanet 2010; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; della Porta and Caiani 2009: 82–128). Similarly, national actors can try to use their contacts with their own government to influence the decisions of the EU institutions in their favour, if necessary by intervening late to prevent a worst-case scenario for them.

These observations help explain why European lobbying is not limited to European umbrella organisations, individual representations and public affairs agencies based in Brussels. Many national and local actors are also involved (van Hecke et al. 2016; Hafner-Fink et al. 2016); these can be distributed across the European territory, and even across the globe (Korkea-Aho 2016). The organisational field is therefore not sharply defined and is in principle boundless. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the field is structured along concentric circles. The centre is likely to be in the places where the EU institutions are located: Brussels in particular, but also Strasbourg and Luxembourg, and finally the capitals of all the Member States, which assume the Presidency of the Council every six months. From there the field extends to the interest groups based in the Member States' capitals. Depending on the subject matter, however, lobby groups can also come from countries outside the EU and Europe. In view of this concentric structure, it can be assumed that European lobbying is a highly dynamic field subject to contraction and expansion: In continuous operation, European lobbying is likely to contract to the core arena of European politics, but it is also capable of mobilising a transnational field of organised interests should this be necessary for effective interest representation.

The findings on the multilevel character of the EU are also highly relevant for the analysis of European lobbying, because they highlight the fact that interest groups have to operate in different arenas. Separate arenas of political decision-making continue to exist at the European and national levels, each of which is subject to its own constellations of actors and institutions, agendas and procedures, rules, and discourses. Public policy analyses have shown that both arenas are interrelated, because regulatory ideas and legislative proposals developed at the European level may well be taken up by the Member States and vice versa – as the concept of vertical Europeanisation assumes (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003; Radaelli 2003; Graziano and Vink 2007). These diffusion processes seem to be more likely when the similarity or complementarity of European and national policy domains ("the goodness of fit") is more pronounced (Börzel 1999; Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Héritier et al. 2001).

The field of interest representation seems to deviate from this picture in important aspects. With reference to institutional fit or compatibility, it was examined whether interest groups from countries where lobbying is a firmly established and legitimate expression of political interest representation, are more inclined to Europeanise their lobbying activities. This was not proven by the survey of trade associations, as associations from pluralistic countries with a high affinity for lobbying (such as Great Britain or the USA)

are not clearly overrepresented (Eising 2007; Bernhagen and Mitchell 2009). Lobby groups from all countries obviously strive to introduce their concerns and demands into the European legislative processes (van Hecke et al. 2016; Eising 2017). The organisational capacity and willingness to act weigh more heavily than any potential fit between European and Member State structures and forms of interest representation (Kohler-Koch et al. 2017).

Additionally, it has been shown that interest groups have to adapt when they expand their activity from the national to the European arena, because the EU is an institutional structure in its own right with specific procedures and working methods (Eising 2004; Michalowitz 2007; Bernhagen and Mitchel 2009). Europeanisation requires not only additional resources, in particular personnel and funds (Coen and Dannreuther 2003; Klüver 2010; Kohler-Koch et al. 2017), but also knowledge about the functioning of the EU and familiarity with the relations with the EU institutions, which are characterised by informality (Imig and Tarrow 1999; Woll and Jacquot 2010; Mazey and Richardson 2015). Furthermore, the European arena is populated by specialised professionals and experts (Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Kauppi and Madsen 2013; Büttner et al. 2015), which requires interest groups aiming at the European level to acquire the relevant expertise and affiliations (Vargovčíková 2015; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022).

These findings do not exclude the possibility of mutual influences. Studies have shown, for example, that national lobby groups have been able to establish their forms of lobbying at the European level (Taylor and Mathers 2004; Monforte 2009). Particularly with reference to US companies and associations, it has been argued that these lobby groups use the much more confrontational and belligerent lobbying style they pursue in Washington also in Europe and thereby change the European organisational field (Green Cowles 1996; Coen 1999). But examples were also found in the opposite direction, showing that the EU-specific processes of political decision-making and participation changed the forms of lobbying at the Member State level (Green Cowles et al. 2001; Grossman and Saurugger 2004). However, it must be noted that such reciprocal changes are not easy to measure (Saurugger 2005). Moreover, even if they have been identified in individual policy fields or legislative processes, this does not necessarily mean that the structures and processes of interest representation at national and European level have changed in the long term. The findings rather speak for a constancy or inertia, which is why national interest groups wishing to become active at the level of EU institutions must continue to adapt to the conditions in Brussels (Coen and Dannreuther 2003; Coen 2004: 208–209; Beauvallet et al. 2022).

2.1.3 The organisational field and its implications

The previous explanations paint a picture of an organisational field that has grown steadily and has become internally differentiated with regard to interests, forms of organisation, and levels of action. Although it is open to

new entrants and invites Europeanisation, the field also seems to have entry requirements and barriers. In this respect, one can speak of a closure process that sets limits to growth and differentiation. These developments seem to have a direct impact on European lobbying. In this regard, three implications should be pointed out, which are mostly assessed similarly in the literature.

First, the growth and differentiation of the organisational field has direct consequences for European lobbying, as interest representation becomes more competitive. The European umbrella organisations cannot assume that their members will keep quiet, because many of these organisations are active in several trade associations, networks or campaigns and also do their own lobbying. In addition to the industry associations, trade unions, and social associations, consumer initiatives, environmental or human rights groups also campaign for their issues, to name just a few examples. The multilevel structure of the EU provides a fertile breeding ground for this competitive representation of interests: Lobby groups can start at several points in the political process, for example at the Commission's Green or White Papers and the first draft bills, at the deliberations in the European Parliament or the Permanent Representations, at the negotiations and decision-making of the Council or, finally, at the European courts (Pedler and van Schendelen 1994; Bouwen and McCown 2007). Interest groups take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself, a tactic described as "multilevel venue shopping" (Richardson 2006; Mazey and Richardson 2006; Bouwen 2007; Baumgartner 2007). At the same time, it is significant that lobby groups also work on networking in order to combine forces and alleviate competition. This then causes formal alliances between interest groups to become established (Coen 2004). More common, however, are issue-specific coalitions (Pijnenburg 1998; Mahoney 2007; Klüver 2011; Barron and Trouille 2015; Beyers and de Bruycker 2018).

Second, the development of the organisational field seems to have shifted the established patterns of interest representation and participation from corporatism to pluralism (Schmitter and Streeck 1991; Mazey and Richardson 2015). The privileged involvement of centralised umbrella organisations now seems to have given way to competition between conflicting lobby groups. Even in the field of economic interests, strong growth and internal differentiation seem to have paved the way for an elite pluralism (Coen 2007: 335) that makes the representation of interests more open and unpredictable. However, it is debatable how fundamental this change really is. Corporatist and pluralist structures of interest representation and political participation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since the European arena is divided into different policy fields, within which separate networks and communities of actors have emerged (Michalowitz 2002; Coen 2004; Broscheid and Coen 2007; Eising 2009; Bernhagen et al. 2015; Ruiz et al. 2016). It is true that lobby groups are in competition with many other groups. However, pluralism is limited, because these lobby groups have been able to secure privileged access to the Directorates-General of the EU Commissions, the committees of the EU Parliament or the respective expert groups of the Permanent Representations

that are relevant to them, and because the competing interest groups very often belong to other policy fields and thus use other contact networks and opportunities for participation. In this respect, corporatist patterns of interest representation and participation survive within a pluralistic organisational field.

However, the idea of a pluralistic competition of interests is also inappropriate with regard to opportunities to exert influence, because the mere number of lobby groups tells us nothing about the organisational capacity and ability to act. Especially in multilevel systems, lobbying is a question of resources and thus ultimately a question of staffing and money (Coen and Dannreuther 2003; Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Klüver 2010). The groups that can best meet the requirements of multilevel venue shopping, networking, and the formation of issue-specific coalitions seem to be at an advantage. Furthermore, European lobbying also appears to be a battle of resources that requires greater investment from lobby groups. On this issue, there is a consensus in research that business interests have a structural advantage over all other civil society groups, because they are not only represented in greater numbers at the EU level, but also have more resources and thus greater organisational capacity and ability to act (Coen 2004; Eising 2007; Ruzza and Bozzini 2008; Hermansson 2016). Whether this structural advantage ultimately pays off, and whether business interests can influence political legislative processes more effectively, depends on the concrete disputes, the resonance of the demands in question within the public sphere, and the dynamics of political negotiations within as well as between the EU institutions (Woll 2007; Dür et al. 2015; Kluger Rasmussen 2015; Chalmers 2019; Junk 2019). This means that the outcome of lobbying efforts is always subject to a high degree of uncertainty (Coen 2004; Mazey and Richardson 2015).

Third, despite its size, heterogeneity and competitiveness, the organisational field is subject to processes of closure and exclusion. The EU has established its own arena of political decision-making with its own institutions, procedures, and rules. Interest groups that move in this arena must adapt to these conditions if they want to be heard. However, these closure processes are not primarily based on formal barriers to entry, as the EU is known for its weak regulation and control of the field of European lobbying. It is true that over the last decades the EU has tightened the reins somewhat, as a process was initiated with the EU Commission's White Paper on "Governance in Europe" (Commission of the European Community 2001) that regulates the working relations between the EU institutions and lobby groups to a greater extent (Homan and Luneburg 2012; Greenwood and Dreger 2013).

This openness facilitates lobbying, but does not rule out informal barriers to access. These can be defined by three aspects. In first instance, it is noted that lobby groups need to have specific knowledge. Those who want to be effective must have reliable information about upcoming or ongoing legislative projects and be well acquainted with the EU's established decision-making processes and procedures within and between the EU institutions (van

Schendelen 2013). Additionally, Brussels is referred to as an "insiders' town" (Nugent 1999), because the staff of the EU institutions and lobby groups are in regular contact and develop long-standing working relationships and informal networks. These policy communities fluctuate between exclusivity and inclusivity: The EU institutions are said to cultivate an open consultation practice in order to increase their own knowledge base and legitimacy (Jarman 2011), which is why they are not too exclusive in their choice of dialogue partners (Mazey and Richardson 2015). At the same time, however, privileged discussion circles seem to be emerging, even if the composition of these can be quite heterogeneous (Jarman 2008; Broscheid and Coen 2007; Eising 2009).

This remarkable combination of inclusivity and exclusivity is ultimately the result of the preferred consultation style within the EU. The emphasis is on factual, dialogue-based and consensus-oriented forms of participation, which is why information, expertise, and specialist knowledge remain central resources of effective lobbying (Bouwen 2002; Coen 2004; Jarman 2008; Hermansson 2016; Koehler 2019: 9–39). This consultation style generates adaptive pressures that have been clearly demonstrated by civil society groups and social movement organisations, because their conflict-, protest- and publicity-oriented mobilisation strategies clash noticeably with the collaborative style of interest representation that is cultivated in Brussels (Marks and McAdam 1999; Imig and Tarrow 2001; Rucht 2004; Coen 2004: 208–9). These groups take a more contentious approach to advocacy and aim to politicise European policymaking (Imig and Tarrow 2001; della Porta and Parks 2013; della Porta 2022), but have had to adapt to established legislative procedures and styles of policy deliberation in order to become part of the inner circle of privileged dialogue partners (Jarman 2008).

The development of the European field of interest groups thus has important implications for the patterns and dynamics of lobbying as an organisational goal and professional activity. At the same time, it affects the role the organisational field plays within European integration and democratic governance. Scholars have discussed critically the contribution of interest groups to European policymaking within the widely ramified network of committees, advisory bodies and expert groups established around the Commission, the Parliament, and the Council of Ministers (Haibach 2000; Nørgaard et al. 2014; Dehousse et al. 2014). Similarly, studies have reflected on the consequences of lobbying for the legitimacy of the EU institutions and their legislative processes (Greenwood 2017: 194–218; Jarman 2011). Critical voices emphasise that the EU has numerous deficits, which are magnified by European lobbying. Scholars are concerned about deficits in governance and control (Benz and Papadopoulos 2006), which are intensified by the growth and differentiation of the field of organised interests. At the same time, reference is made to the democratic deficit of the EU (Karr 2007; Bartolini 2009), which is also associated with the work of European lobby groups, as the influence of particular interests undermines democratic and public

welfare-oriented politics. Analysis has focused particularly on the role of civil societies, with critical discussion also centring on the gains in democratisation and participation (e.g. Smismans 2006; Kröger 2008; Ruzza and Bozzini 2008; Long and Lörinczi 2009; Kohler-Koch 2010; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013). Overall, opinions on the compatibility of European lobby groups with integration and democracy diverge, as fundamental (Balanyá et al. 2000; van Apeldoorn 2002; Saurugger 2008; Laurens 2018) as well as moderate (Karr 2007) criticism is voiced.

2.2 European lobbying as an occupational field

Political science research has privileged the analysis of organisations, organisational forms and organisational fields. However, scholars interested in European lobbying have devoted themselves increasingly to the lobbying staff, even though insights are more fragmented. Firstly, staff played a role once it came to estimating the growth and size of the field. Time and again, figures appear in the documents of the EU institutions and scientific studies that speak of 10,000, 15,000 or more EU lobbyists (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Courty 2010). Most of the time only these estimates are available, which is why the composition of the staff and the structure of the field of activity are not discussed. Secondly, the distinction between lobbying consultants and in-house lobbyists is repeatedly referred to (Michalowitz 2002: 88–98) in order to identify different types of employment (e.g. self-employment and salaried employment). However, this comparison ultimately points back to different organisational forms, as the typology aims to distinguish between commercial consultancy agencies, public relations companies or law firms on the one hand and associations or individual representations on the other.

The analysis of lobbying has shifted the focus of attention more clearly onto the staff in recent years. Numerous topics have been addressed, even though lobbying professionals are of relevance only indirectly. The staff is treated as an organisational resource that increases the interest groups' professionalism and thus affects their lobbying performance (van Deth and Maloney 2011; Klüver 2012; Eberwein and Saurugger 2013; Albareda 2020; Heylen et al. 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 162–167). Studies interested in the relations between European institutions and interest groups also moved lobbyists to centre stage when addressing the mutual recruitment of personnel and the revolving doors between the private and public sector (Avril 2018; Coen and Vannon 2016). Finally, studies interested in lobbying strategies and practices pointed also at the staff of interest groups (Woll 2007; Barron and Trouille 2015), even though both levels – the organisation and its personnel – were addressed as complementary sides of the same coin. In fact, the debate is driven by an implicit assumption that lobbyists are primarily a mouthpiece of their organisations, and this assumption was explicitly voiced by US-American scholars who identified a strong partisan attachment of lobbyists to their clients (Heinz et al. 1997; Healy 2016).

Recent research urges to distinguish more clearly between both, because professionals are actors in their own right and follow own needs and interests, aspirations, and convictions. Several case studies acknowledge that lobbyists are policy intermediaries or brokers who adapt and shape the policy agendas of their clients (Stephenson and Jackson 2010; Lowery and Marchetti 2012; Tyllström and Murray 2021). Additionally, they strive to expand their work-related autonomy within their organisations (Vargovčíková 2015; Avril 2018; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022), as this has an impact on their work performance. Lobbyists thus have their own professional agenda. However, it is important to acknowledge that this agenda is not only an individual one but also a collective agenda, because European lobbyists are engaged in establishing and reproducing common practices and skills across the various employees, thus enabling professional exchange across the various sectors as well as social mobility within the wider labour market. Recent sociological studies indicate that such a professional group has been formed. They show that the staff of interest groups share similar social backgrounds (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Michon 2022), are professionally mobile across employers, and are engaged in forming a set of skills and practices (Courty and Michel 2013; Cheynis 2022). They are collectively committed to establishing European lobbying as a specialised professional activity within and between their organisations (Michel 2013; Vargovčíková 2015; Avril 2018; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022).

This book aims to contribute to this emerging body of evidence by providing a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the occupational field as such. For this purpose, it is necessary to review sociological research about occupations and professions, because this strand of inquiry offers considerable theoretical, conceptual, and empirical wisdom to the analysis of European lobbying. The added value does not stem from the simple question as to whether European lobbying is a profession in its own right. More promising is the contribution of sociological writing to the analysis of professionalisation processes in its various dimensions, because it allows to better understand the extent to which European lobbying has developed structural characteristics that integrate the field internally and close it off externally, and because it allows to uncover the main factors and drivers responsible for the – always contentious and precarious – enforcement of professional work.

The sociology of occupations and professions has explored these questions in depth. It is true that earlier studies were much more interested in individual occupations and professions than in fields of activity. The main focus was on fully qualified occupational groups and professions, such as the liberal professions – especially doctors and lawyers (Abbott 1988; Burrage and Torstendahl 1990; Broadbent et al. 1997). However, these cases allowed to determine how a field of activity is shaped and established as a labour market with restricted access; and it allowed the researchers to trace how occupational groups and professions define and control their fields of work (Wilensky 1964; Abbott 1988; Neal and Morgen 2020). The focus on individual occupations and professions is of limited use for the purposes of this

study, because European lobbying is a highly diversified field of activities and recruits people with different professional profiles. However, sociological research has moved away from the idea of clearly delimitable occupational groups and now investigates specific forms of knowledge and fields of activity (Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011; Muzio et al. 2013; Saks 2016; Noordegraaf 2020), thus increasing its appeal for a study of European lobbying. Recent research has addressed three issues that can help formulate key assumptions that guide the present study: research studying the changes in the social environment of professions; studies analysing the strategies of professionalisation; and investigations into the particular requirements of transnational arenas of professionalisation.

2.2.1 *The changing context of professional work*

A first debate was mainly interested in the changes in the social environment of professional work. Here, sociological theory takes the lead. It argues that the emergence of occupational groups and professions is an essential part of the development of modern societies, precisely because the process of functional differentiation of social spheres calls for such specialisation (Durkheim 1997). Occupational groups and professions safeguard the functioning of societies in specific areas because they provide, expand and pass on specialised, rational knowledge and because they link their professional actions to norms oriented towards the common good (Parsons 1968). Societal differentiation can therefore work towards a monopolisation of areas of activity by occupational groups, provided that these groups succeed in establishing specialised knowledge as authoritative expertise and legitimising it through a mission dedicated to the common good. The simultaneous development of capitalist enterprises and state bureaucracies both jeopardises and promotes this push towards professionalisation, as salaried employment in companies and administrations becomes the dominant form of activity (Wilensky 1964; Rueschemeyer 1983; Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011). This curtails professional autonomy, which is why professions have appeared to establish themselves best in areas of self-employment – the liberal professions (especially medicine and lawyers) (Parsons 1968). However, state regulation of the education system is also conducive to professions, because the accumulation of cultural capital in the form of state-accredited educational certificates helps secure and reproduce the social status of occupational groups (Bourdieu 1977 and 1996; Hanlon 1998; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). Modern, functionally differentiated societies consequently produce a system of professions based on the division of labour (Abbott 1988), in which different occupational groups define their respective spheres of activity and influence.

However, there is widespread agreement in research that occupational groups and professions are no longer able to secure their position sufficiently in the course of further societal developments (Evetts 2003; Gorman and Vallas 2020). From a systems theory perspective, functional differentiation

contributes to the establishment of professions (Parsons 1939), but also to the erosion of their ability to exert social control (Stichweh 1997). This is not only due to the fact that differentiation is constantly triggering further specialisation. It is more significant that professionalism becomes a generalised orientation for action that can be adopted by different actors (Evetts 2013; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). Professional knowledge and action orientations can be monopolised less and less by certain collectives, which is why not only can there be a professionalisation of different professionals, but also a professionalisation of laypersons in relation to experts.

Behind these developments are societal changes that can only be listed briefly here. It is about the mechanisation, rationalisation, and digitalisation of the world of work, which replace old occupations and professions with new ones. The transition from an industrial to an information and knowledge society brings about educational expansion, an increase in the service sector and the upgrading of knowledge-based work (Bell 1973), and thus the emergence of a multitude of new occupational groups that base their validity precisely on specific knowledge and a rational-professional approach to this knowledge (Evetts et al. 2012; Saks 2012). Another factor to be mentioned is the changed role of the state, because the deregulated, increasingly flexible labour markets have changed the existing employment relationships and increased the share of atypical employment (Countouris 2007). This implies risks for established occupational groups, but also new opportunities for occupationalisation, especially in the field of knowledge-based services. Moreover, the education revolution has implications for established professions, because the growing access to higher education and the growing internationalisation of this process is eroding their privileged status and questioning their claims to superior knowledge (Baker 2018). Finally, the strengthening of social movements, self-help groups or citizens' initiatives and a more critical public should be mentioned. Established groups of experts and professions increasingly see themselves confronted with a multitude of counter-experts, protest groups or lay associations that question the experts' claim to exclusive access to higher knowledge (Beck et al. 1994; Evetts 2008; Pfadenhauer and Kirschner 2017).

These developments necessarily result in a continuous pluralisation and democratisation of knowledge and thus also in a demystification of professional expertise (Nowotny et al. 2001; Pfadenhauer 2006; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). Established professions risk a decline in status or influence, just as less established occupational groups can no longer follow the traditional path of professionalisation, because clearly defined and exclusive areas of responsibility and professional roles, training and professional careers are no longer so easy to define and defend. In addition, the certification of one's own sphere of influence by the state is becoming increasingly precarious. To contend with this, occupational groups must increasingly hold their own in the market and present themselves to a critical public.

The societal context challenges occupational groups that seek professional status, but it also encourages new forms of professionalisation

that are better adapted to the new exigencies of work. Particularly in the area of knowledge-intensive services (for instance, digitalisation and IT-communication, management consultancy, legal counselling, policy analysis, and creative services), new occupational groups are formed that put particular emphasis on professional expertise in mastering complex problems. Given that these occupations are strongly tied to organisations, either in terms of employment and/or as subject of their work, these occupations develop a new approach that has been called hybrid, corporate or organisational professionalism (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008; Muzio et al. 2011; Noordegraaf 2015 and 2020), because it merges the contradictory orientations of professional and managerial principles, that is, autonomy and control, quality and efficiency.

These observations also apply to European lobbying. The field of work is not protected by any formalised barriers to entry, so it is open to people with different professional backgrounds. Lobbyists do knowledge work, but the breadth of activities calls for different bodies of knowledge. They are employed by organisations whose interests they are charged with representing, but their professionalism depends largely on their ability to organise the development of political interests and demands within their interest group or client organisation. In addition, interest representation is repeatedly confronted with the demand for de-occupationalisation. Criticism of lobbying is to a large extent always also criticism of the occupationality of interest representation. It thus also implies demands for a democratisation of lobbying, in other words for generalised and unhindered access to politics for all.

2.2.2 *Occupational groups and strategies of professionalisation*

The described pluralisation of professional expertise and practice does not call into question the processes of occupationalisation and professionalisation (Wilensky 1964; Broadbend et al. 1997). Rather, it can be assumed that professionalisation has become a generalised point of orientation and a standard of assessment for professional work, also in the area of lobbying. A second strand of research in the sociology of professions is devoted to these processes of professionalisation. It is primarily concerned with the question of which paths occupational groups take and which strategies they employ in order to establish themselves in a highly changeable social environment. This research debate is heavily oriented towards the sociology of knowledge, as it is interested in how occupational groups produce bodies of knowledge, practices, and professionalist values, and how they institutionalise them as valid points of orientation in a specific field of work (Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Evetts 2013; Suddaby and Viale 2011). Much of this work is rooted in a Weberian tradition (Saks 2016), because it aims to uncover the ways in which professionals engage collectively in generating common understandings, routines, and beliefs relevant to their work. Symbolic interactionism was early in discovering this profession-building work by studying

the way in which occupations construct common practices, skills, and identities, and how they strive to increase their social status as a group (Hughes 1958). However, questions of power theory were also addressed in this strand of research, since professionalisation ultimately aims at market control through monopoly formation (Larson 1977; Freidson 1986). According to this approach, occupational groups try to transfer the scarce resources they control (expertise and professional competences) into other scarce resources (high income and high social prestige). The aim of the research is therefore to identify the means and mechanisms that underlie profession-specific professionalisation projects (Saks 2016; Neal and Morgen 2020). In total, five such levers can be identified that have been introduced into the debate over time.

The focus of the initial studies was, firstly, the organisational capacity of the occupational group itself. Occupational groups claim special knowledge, ability, and skill in identifying, analysing, and solving socially relevant issues and problems. They legitimise their professional mission by referring to their own expertise and their orientation towards the common good. Ultimately, however, occupational groups as a collective must be able to tap into and control a particular labour market. Professional organisations and trade associations play an important role here (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1936; Harrison 2003). This corporative form of organisation is important in order to claim an exclusive knowledge, to underpin accountability for socially recognised services and to regulate access to the profession. Professional associations play an important role in this professional closure of fields of activity, because they advocate the introduction of binding training and qualification certificates, push for registration in professional chambers as a prerequisite for practising a profession and/or enforce control bodies with an association that sanction good and bad professional practice (Wilensky 1964; Larson 1977). Political representation of interests is also not insignificant, as the legal framework set by the state is of great importance for a professionalisation project.

These studies thus already pointed to a second lever, which concerns the state: Occupational groups are also interested in state recognition, licensing, and mandates (Collins 1987; Burrage and Torstendahl 1990). Indeed, occupational groups have an interest in the state recognising corresponding educational pathways and degrees, protecting professions and professional titles, delegating responsibility for certain activities to occupational groups, subsidising them via state funding instruments or even bringing them into the public services. Professional privileges are institutionalised by the state, which means that they are established, sanctioned and legitimised through legal frameworks and public funding. However, the state can also play an obstructive role when it comes to restricting privileges, deregulating labour markets, promoting competition or regulating professional practice (Broadbent et al. 1997; Hanlon 1999; Evetts 2003). The extent of state regulation varies between countries and occupational fields, depending on the degree of resistance to state regulation or the state's interest in gaining access to the

occupational field (Neal and Morgen 2020). In the area of public services, for example, the state has a major interest in regulating professional labour markets, whereas in many areas of business-related activities and knowledge-based services (such as the IT and multimedia sector, the new creative industries), there is greater reliance on the market or professional associations.

With professional associations and the state, two central players or mechanisms of professionalisation have been identified. However, the more recent sociology of professions has been able to show that today's occupational groups have greater problems claiming special knowledge and professional privileges and having them certified by the state. Therefore, thirdly, the market seems to have become an important venue for contrarian professionalisation projects. Or to put it another way: Occupational groups have to push strategies of professionalisation that pay off on the market. This means developing marketable services, securing important contracts, filling lucrative positions (jobs, directorships, advisory positions), aggressively marketing professional expertise, establishing their own private training camps and other means that are in line with the market. State regulations and privileges play a lesser role, but are not necessarily abandoned. For instance, occupational groups can use (legally codified) evidence of professional performance (evaluation, transparency, training obligations, etc.) to distinguish themselves from other providers on the labour market (Broadbend et al. 1997; Pfadenhauer 2006; Pfadenhauer and Kirschner 2017).

Fourthly, reference has been made to the importance of science and higher education. Professions are characterised by specific knowledge and a clearly delineated world of expertise. Professions have esoteric knowledge and an esoteric practice (Hughes 1971: 374 f.; Macdonald 1995: 1), which is not accessible to laypersons. For the development and establishment of this special knowledge, universities play a prominent role as a place of teaching and research (Saks 2012; Evetts et al. 2012; Frank and Meyer 2020). Professional knowledge is legitimised as rational and abstract knowledge that is generally applicable to various problems and can be reflexively extended. For many professions, the scientification of the professional knowledge base (for example, through cooperation with universities, research assignments, professional publications or conferences) is becoming a decisive strategy for professionalisation (Mieg and Evetts 2018). In this context, the academisation of vocational education and training plays an important role, since this ensures that educational certificates are acquired that indicate rationality, superiority and exclusivity.

Finally, the scientification and academisation of professional action point to the necessity of staging professionalism. In fact, professionalism is understood as an ability to convincingly present one's own professional competence (Dent and Whitehead 2002; Evetts 2013; Noordegraaf 2020). This staging competence is initially only a means used by professionals to be recognised as professional by employers or clients. Professionalism is a label that directly pays off for professionals on the labour market. It signals willingness, ability,

and authority to take on tasks and activities (Pfadenhauer 2006; Evetts 2008). In a societal context in which the presentation of one's professionalism is made permanent, however, this staging is a constitutive element of professionalism itself. This is not only due to the competitive pressure of competitive markets, but also as result of the greater importance of a critical public, which is discussed as the fifth and last factor of professionalisation. As already described, occupational groups are under public scrutiny; they have to justify their own expertise and practice, assert themselves against other occupational groups and deal with a self-assured lay public (Beck et al. 1994; Rucht 2004; della Porta and Pava 2017). This makes the display of competence a part of professional skills and activities. Professional action is only effective if it is perceived as professional by clients, customers, competitors, the media, and the general public (Mieg and Evetts 2018; Harrits and Larsen 2021).

European lobbying offers an interesting case for the study of such professionalisation processes. On the one hand, the conditions for successful professionalisation are not particularly favourable; on the other hand, it can be assumed that this field of activity is subject to controversial professionalisation projects. First, it can be assumed that a corporative strategy plays only a minor role in the field of European lobbying, since lobbying-specific professional associations are hardly of any importance. The legal regulation of lobbying by the EU institutions is also unlikely to be a driving force, as the measures introduced only address the working relations between lobby groups and EU institutions and do not directly regulate the occupational group and the related labour market. In contrast, it can be assumed that European lobbying is subject to a market-conforming process of professionalisation, since commercial services have become an important sub-segment of the occupational field and thus also place special demands on the proof of a professional gain. In this context, it can also be assumed that European lobbying follows the path of scientification and academisation of professional activity in order to provide such evidence. After all, the need for staging in this field of work is probably extremely high. This is because lobbying is an easily scandalised activity, and because professionals have to overcome reservations on the part of clients, institutional targets and the mass media in order to be able to do their work.

2.2.3 Transnational expert groups

European lobbying is also an attractive object of study because it is linked back to a transnational field of activity that poses particular challenges for professionalisation. The pool of professionals is not only characterised by a diversity of professional backgrounds and careers but also by the diversity of national origins. This particularity has not been addressed in depth by sociological research on occupations and professions, as interest has been primarily focused on the situation in individual countries. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw on scientific findings identified by political science and sociological

research. This research debate has dealt with transnational experts and professions and represents the third point of reference for the present study. For the purposes of this study, reference should be made in particular to studies on transnational professional networks and associations (Seabrooke 2014; Quack 2006), on so-called epistemic communities (Haas 1992; Cross 2013) or communities of practice (Wenger et al. 2002; Bicchi 2011).

The main purpose of this research was to empirically determine the importance of professional expertise in the field of international politics. In this respect, studies have shown that experts have a discernible influence on political negotiations between governments (Cross 2013), as they define problems, determine the causes of problems, narrow down constraints on action and offer possible solutions. They are not infrequently also responsible for encouraging international organisations and national governments to legally and institutionally establish individual policy fields (such as economic, security, climate, environmental or education policy), which actively involve these expert groups or delegate core tasks to them (Dunlop 2010 and 2014; Faleg 2012; Galbreath and McEvoy 2013). For this research approach, experts and professions are therefore driving forces of globalisation. They are themselves transnationally organised and put pressure on international organisations and national governments to identify and address common problems. In this they are not only advocates for international regulations. They seem to homogenise political institutions at the national and international level, as they promote similar problem-solving role models. Transnational expert groups and professions are thus institutional entrepreneurs that contribute to institutional isomorphism (Meyer et al. 1997a; Meyer et al. 1997b; Meyer and Ramirez 2000; Antoniades 2003). Their influence is primarily cognitive, because they affect the way the world is seen and evaluated, that is, which problems and causes of problems are identified and addressed.

Scholars have proposed to distinguish between different types of communities – epistemic communities on the one side, communities of practice and instrument constituencies on the other – because they play different roles within the political process. Transnational communities of experts are strongly involved when it comes to the definition of policy problems and goals. Epistemic communities have highly rationalised and consistent bodies of knowledge, which are a source of their social and political influence, but also of their internal homogeneity as a group. These communities share a similar world view, common causal thinking, a belief in the verifiability of problem diagnoses and solutions, and similar notions of meaningful strategies for action (Haas 1992; Seabrooke 2014). Their bodies of knowledge are specialised in certain fields of action, which is why these communities are usually also differentiated along policy or problem fields (such as economy, security, climate, environment or education).

However, expert communities are not exclusively made up of members of academia and academically related professions (Haas 1992; Ikenberry 1992).

Research also proposes to acknowledge the existence of communities of practice and instrument constituencies. They comprise professional practitioners who are committed to policy and problem solution and employ similar policy instruments and toolkits (Wenger et al. 2002; Antoniades 2003; Zito 2018; Bicchi 2011; Howlett and Saguin 2021). These communities are effective on the practical level, since the implementation and application of political programmes and government measures are very often placed in the hands of occupational groups that claim to have a profession-specific repertoire of knowledge and a corresponding toolbox.

The predominance of transnational communities of experts has been confirmed in many case analyses (Schneiker et al. 2018). However, recent research draws a more differentiated picture that seeks to do justice to the internal heterogeneity of the fields of action in which these expert groups operate. Earlier studies have focused on issue-specific expert groups, including science-based ones (Ikenberry 1992; Schofer 2003), underlining that they operate as cohesive transnational groups. The community character is indeed very pronounced within scientific disciplines and schools. Yet, even more so than the earlier studies, current research points out that many policy fields (such as security, economic, environmental or education policy) are internally heterogeneous and sometimes also listen to different groups of experts and professions (Drake and Nicolaïdis 1992; Cross 2013; Galbreath and McEvoy 2013). The work of expert committees is not necessarily characterised by consensus, because often there are differences of opinion and dissent (Dehousse et al. 2014). Especially when it comes to the professional-practical level of detailed regulation and implementation, the circle of actors and organisations involved becomes even wider (Wenger et al. 2002; Adler 2008; Djelic and Quack 2010: 21; Béland et al. 2018: 8).

Transnational expert groups are consequently also confronted with a growing number of competing bodies of knowledge and working related toolkits. This diversification, however, does not necessarily limit their ability to reproduce themselves as communities of knowledge and/or practice. Two factors seem to be particularly effective (Schneiker et al. 2018). On the one hand, it is emphasised that transnational communities of experts are primarily based on personal interactions and shared socialisation processes (Antoniades 2003; Cross 2013: 147; Checkel 2009; Faleg 2012: 165). Through regular meetings and continuous communication, the members develop common world views, ideas, and identities. Transnational expertise is ultimately constructed through mutual attributions. On the other hand, the recognition of this community of experts by international organisations and national governments plays an important role. Individuals only gain expert status by being invited to and participating in expert hearings and panels. Moreover, the same applies to the extended networks and expert groups that use such hearings and participations as an arena of communitisation and recognition. In this respect, transnational expertise is dependent on state recognition and accreditation.

The case of the EU provides a vivid example of this, because the formation of transnational communities of experts is institutionally provided for. In the literature, the European integration process and the establishment of the EU are described as a process of juridification (Joerges 2003; Münch 2008). The central role of European law as a driver of integration has led to the establishment of professional networks of legal practitioners (judges, lawyers, administrative officials) who exert considerable influence on shaping European law (Vauchez and Mudge 2012; Vauchez and de Witte 2013). Furthermore, the many consultation forums of the EU Commission and the numerous specialised committees of the EU Parliament and the Permanent Representations create a multitude of thematically specialised expert circles (Haibach 2000; Nørgaard et al. 2014). Although this system of comitology allows for diversity of opinion and dissent (Dehousse et al. 2014), it also consolidates policy field-specific expert networks across national borders. These networks bridge communities of expertise and practice, because the importance of secondary law (e.g. implementing and delegated acts) within European policymaking makes the work within the comitology system a highly technical matter. Finally, the many European funding programmes also result in the development of a transnational network of EU professionals who make their living in the field of fund acquisition, project management and consultancy (Büttner et al. 2015 and 2018). In all these cases, the development of professional networks and communities of experts is clearly demand-driven, because these groups of people develop specialised knowledge of the EU regulatory material, undergo common socialisation processes and often develop a professional self-image based on the European idea.

The findings of this debate are important for the study of European lobbyists, because they help comprehend them as a transnational community of knowledge and practice. Their role, however, is a peculiar one, because they are not firm experts themselves. Rather, they process, communicate, and contribute information and analyses that have been developed by experts on the subject matter. It is not uncommon for their work to involve identifying and recruiting experts who specialise in a particular field or topic and integrating them into advisory bodies and procedures. The specificity of European lobbying is thus related to its mediating role: European lobbyists have assembled specialised knowledge about the European policy process and a toolkit of instruments to exert political influence on this process. Lobbyists perceive themselves as professional experts – and so do their clients and employers. They are part of a community insofar as they claim to possess an exclusive knowledge and practical mastery that is not accessible to every layperson: Membership to this community must be obtained, recognised or granted.

2.3 Analytical concepts and research assumptions

The review of previous research allows to sharpen the senses when analysing the field of European lobbying. Studies about European interest groups

help delimit the specificities of the professional field under analysis, while research about professions and expert groups provides the analytic framework to conceptualise the field and identify the relevant research questions and assumptions.

2.3.1 The conceptual framework: professional work as occupational field

The analyses of this book are thus particularly indebted to the sociology of professions. An important point of reference is the social constructivist approach to the study of occupational groups, because is allows to move European lobbyists to centre stage. Following the path created by previous research (Hughes 1958; Freidson 1970; Larson 1977; Dent and Whitehead 2002; Saks 2016), it is argued that the professionals' own experiences, practices, and convictions are crucial to understanding the formation and reproduction of the occupational field. It is thus essential to determine how European lobbyists are involved in shaping common routines, relationships, and understandings relevant to their work, in forming and vindicating group images and missions, in safeguarding the authority and command of their area of operation, and in increasing their professional standing and social status. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on the role of professionalism as a specific type of agency, expertise, and value in the formation and reproduction of occupational groups (Freidson 2001; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Saks 2012; Evetts et al. 2012; Evetts 2013), because it is argued that European lobbyists are interested in professionalism as a resource and asset to secure acceptance, reputation, and influence. Highly relevant is also the societal, institutional, and organisational context of professional work, particularly with regard to European lobbying, because most lobbyists are employed by interest groups, consultancies or law firms. They are thus exposed to corporate, managerial, and/or bureaucratic pressures (Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011) that require new professional tasks and skills, thus encouraging new forms of corporate or organisational professionalism (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008; Muzio et al. 2011; Noordegraaf 2015).

These indications highlight the need to acknowledge the organisational and institutional embeddedness of professional work. For this reason, it is argued that the constructivist approach to the study of occupational groups has to be inserted into a field-theorical research agenda (Bourdieu 1998: 1–34; Kauppi 2003; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Vauchez and de Witte 2013). This approach makes it possible to conceptualise European lobbying as an occupational field that is institutionally embedded into the architecture of the EU and organisationally patterned by the arena of interest groups and commercial consultancies working at EU level. The theoretical adjustment is also required, because the constructivist approach has privileged the joint attempts of occupational groups to ensure a professional status, thus downplaying internal rifts and conflicts (Saks 2016). European lobbying, however, is an open and contested field (Michel 2013; Beauvallet et al. 2022), marked by

different occupational groups, internal tensions, and conflicts that are fuelled by antagonistic groups, scandal-mongering media, watchdog NGOs, and regulatory EU institutions. In this sense, it is necessary to respect the role of rifts and conflicts in the formation and professionalisation of European lobbying.

The proposed conceptualisation of European lobbying as an occupational field makes it possible to adopt a well-established theoretical framework – the theory of social fields. According to this approach, fields are social arenas of collective action. They are constituted by common purposes, interactions between actors having a stake in these purposes, and binding rules and discourses guiding these interactions (Bourdieu 1998: 1–34; Bourdieu and Wachquant 1992: 94–115 and 2020). Fields are structured along the strategic relations between actors, and thus by conflictual relations of domination and subordination, core and periphery (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). These conflictual relations are determined by the scarcity of resources, which is characteristic of social fields. Scarcity prompts struggles over access and allocation, competition between actors, and disputes over the definition of the underlying rules.

Field theory has been widely applied within the social sciences, amongst them to the study of contentious policy fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2012), expert and professional groups (Vauchez 2008; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Vauchez and de Witte 2013), organisational fields (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2008; Suddaby and Viale 2011), and societal sub-areas, such as art, academia, law, or education (Bourdieu 1987, 1993 and 1996). Beyond that, it is also highly appropriate for an analysis of European lobbying, because the latter can be defined as a strategic field of action with common purposes, competing actors, and scarce resources. In fact, European lobbyists are guided by one concern: How can they effectively influence relevant decisions? This question not only implies a common purpose but also a reference to influence as a scarce resource. It is true that competing interest groups might be able to jointly influence a policy, given that political decisions are usually based on compromises between diverging demands. However, the number of demands that can be tabled in legislative proceedings and are ultimately incorporated into laws is limited. Moreover, limited influence is also a function of limited access, because lobbyists can only exert political influence if they have access to the political institutions and their staff. Hence, access is itself a scarce resource (Bouwen 2002; Eising 2007) that determines the degree of political influence. Members of the European Parliament or the European Commission, for example, can only conduct a certain number of meetings. It should also be taken into account that the Commission and the Parliament are internally differentiated according to policy fields, which is why lobby groups vie for access to Directorates-General and committees, which are staffed to varying degrees. After all, lobbyists compete not only for the scarce commodity of "influence" or "access," but also for "attention." Lobbying is aimed at generating attention for specific issues and demands

within as well as between the European institutions (Skorkjær Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015; Kastner 2018; Rasch 2018). The aim is to raise issues and place demands, and this objective is ambitious, given the multitude of interest groups competing for attention for their issues and demands. Also important is the fact that lobby groups themselves have limited resources (funds, staff), which is why they have to decide in which (limited) way they want to generate access, attention and influence.

These explanations make it clear that European lobbying meets an important characteristic of social fields. Lobbyists are professionally oriented towards a common goal – that of influencing political decisions. Furthermore, they interact directly with each other through their activities. Influence, access, and attention are scarce commodities, which is why one's own success is largely determined by the actions of others. These interdependencies do imply competitive relationships between lobby groups. But they can also lead to cooperation, coalitions or alliances (Pijnenburg 1998; Mahoney 2007; Klüver 2011; Beyers and de Bruycker 2018), because the latter can solve the problems of scarce resources, access, and attention spans. European lobbying therefore oscillates between competition and cooperation. In any case, however, the actions of the individual lobby groups are integrated into a network of interdependencies and interactions: Lobbyists observe each other, are in direct and indirect contact with each other and align their own activities with the actions of others.

The interdependencies described above point to two further characteristics of social fields. On the one hand, strategic interactions do not follow a random principle but are guided by rules and norms. The occupational field of lobbying is subject to a set of norms, incentives, and sanctions, which is why lobbyists moving in the field know (or should know) which action is appropriate or inappropriate, sensible or senseless, desired or undesired. On the other hand, occupational fields are characterised by discourses that legitimise these rules and norms, and justify or discredit actions that follow or deviate from them. This has been well documented in relation to professionalism as a value and occupational ethos (Evetts 2013; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). In the occupational field of European lobbying, such a discourse is likely to be widespread, because lobbyists have a mutual interest in justifying their professional work as meaningful and legitimate, even though they work for competing interests. Additionally, the justification pressure is also likely to be pronounced because European lobbying is the subject of controversial debates within the public sphere. This is mainly due to the scandal-ready mass media and NGOs that are critical of lobbying with regard to democratic principles of governance. However, justification pressure is also inherent in the regulatory measures of the EU institutions, as EU affairs professionals are required to comply with (voluntary) commitments and codes of conduct (Greenwood and Dreger 2013; Greenwood 2017: 55–66) in order to safeguard their professional reputation (Năstase and Muurmans 2018).

2.3.2 *Mapping the field – research questions and assumptions (I)*

The analysis of European lobbying as an occupational field involves, in first instance, an empirical objective that calls to answer a number of descriptive research questions related to the field's scope and structure. Is European lobbying a well-established occupation that spans across interest sectors and lobby group provenances? Is it a field subjected to processes of integration and closure? How strong is the internal homogeneity or differentiation? And what are the main dividing lines structuring the field internally? The empirical data of this study promise to deliver answers to all these research questions, because it comprises two data sets (a quantitative and a qualitative one) that provide a comprehensive picture of the breadth and diversity of the occupational field across various interest groups, professional backgrounds, national provenances, and activity profiles (see Section 2.4). The mapping also promises to be systematic, because it aims to conceptually distinguish between three components of professionalism – as an occupation, knowledge and value – and to empirically map and analyse the related dimensions accordingly: the employment patterns and occupational status, the know-how and professional capital, and the professional self-affirmation and legitimation. Each of these dimensions is expected to be responsible for the successive integration and closure of the field around paid employment, professional capitals and a legitimate mission.

The first empirical dimension refers to the occupational structure of the field. In this respect, the analyses will take a look at the employment status of lobbying staff (e.g. contractual relations, remuneration, staff positions, job satisfaction, and aspirations), the sectoral permeability of the field (e.g. work experiences in different sectors and within the EU institutions), and occupational paths (e.g. points of access to the field, career histories, occupational requirements). The aim will be to ascertain the extent to which European lobbying has been established as an occupational group across interest groups and professionals. Occupationalisation is a concept proposed to describe the replacement of (voluntary, part-time or temporary, and rotating) lobbying activities by forms of full-time, remunerated and long-term (career-oriented) employment. It also refers to the establishment of an integrated labour market that erects external boundaries and entrance requirements, while allowing for occupational mobility across interest groups and sectors.

The second dimension relates to the professional expertise of the occupational group. To identify this professional dimension, the analyses will make use of data about the educational background of European lobbyists (e.g. educational attainment, disciplinary background), their professional know-how (e.g. exclusivity claims, required skills), and their professional capitals (e.g. networks, expertise, reputation, belonging). The aim is to ascertain the degree of professional integration and closure of the field across interest groups and their staff. Professionalisation in its strict sense is used as a concept to delineate the extent to which diverging skills and practices between

different interest sectors, vocational backgrounds, and national provenances have been supplanted by a shared repertoire of action and a common stock of professional capitals. It will not only help ascertain the degree of homogenisation, but also the extent to which the field is establishing boundaries between insiders and outsiders, depending on the ability of professionals to acquire the necessary professional capitals, and thus, ultimately, the professional prestige and influence necessary to move into the closed circuit of insiders.

The third dimension is associated with the professional and political legitimacy of the occupational groups. In order to substantiate this dimension, the analysis will make use of data about the professional ethos of European lobbyists (e.g. attitudes towards European public affairs, lobbying and professional work), their perceived images of lobbying (e.g. the perceived public acceptance, their own assessments, and political and ethical demands), and the explicit justifications and criticisms they voice. This legitimation is expected to be twofold, because it requires a justification of the professionalised form (the labour) of political exertion of influence (the task). The aim is to delimit the extent to which European lobbyists have internalised an ethos of professionalism and profess their work's political legitimacy. It will allow to ascertain the degree to which competing visions about the professionalism and political legitimacy of lobbying are replaced by a shared understanding of the profession's mandate and mission.

The analyses of this book will be devoted to empirically mapping these dimensions separately. The overall aim, however, is to paint a nuanced picture of European lobbying that makes it possible to consider additive relations between the three components, and the cumulative effects they might have on the internal integration and external closure of the field. It will be asked whether European lobbying is not only a well-established occupation, but also a professional group that dissociates itself from non-professional outsiders and is eventually committed to an ethos of professionalism and a belief in the political legitimacy of its mission. The empirical findings presented in the following chapters will show that the internal integration and external closure of the field are quite advanced, but exhibit different levels on the three dimensions analysed. The empirical data will reveal that European lobbying is a fully established occupation marginalising other forms of labour. Moreover, European lobbyists are jointly engaged in accumulating professional skills and capitals that allow them to access the inner circles of EU politics. However, lobbyists do not see themselves as a corporate professional actor, and disagreements emerge when considering professional and political attitudes, thus evidencing considerable conflicts about the occupational groups' legitimacy.

2.3.3 Identifying drivers – research questions and assumptions (II)

The empirical mapping of the field stimulates a number of analytic questions that are related to the second, explanatory objective of this study. If the field

of European lobbying is (gradually and/or partially) professionalising along the three components introduced above, what are the drivers of the professional integration and closure of the field? Is it possible to identify those segments of the field that are particularly professionalised with regard to all three components? Which are the factors that have an effect on diverging levels of professionalisation within the field? And is it possible to identify the types of lobbyists that are most closely linked to the professionalisation of European lobbying, and can thus be labelled as drivers of professionalisation? The review of previous research studies and findings provides a number of assumptions about the explanatory factors and driving forces that might be responsible for the (partial and/or gradual) professionalisation of European lobbying. In this regard, it is advisable to start with the identification of research assumptions that are related to the institutional and societal context of European lobbying, before the focus is placed on more specific research assumptions that address the lobbyists themselves.

The first set of research assumptions refers to the societal context of the occupational field. Based on the review of the sociology of professions (Section 2.2), it is expected that the presumed professionalism is the result of a co-production of different societal spheres: market actors, state institutions, educational institutions, professional associations, and actors of the public sphere (especially mass media and organised civil society). Some of these actors will have their say in the following chapters, thus providing empirical illustrations of their influences on the field. Above all, however, the European lobbyists will help explore the constellations of economic, institutional, political, and social forces that are constitutive of the occupational field, because the data allow to identify those professionals that are particularly exposed to these contextual drivers of professionalisation. In preparation for the empirical evaluations, five assumptions can be formulated.

Firstly, it can be assumed that the process of professionalisation follows the logic of the market. European lobbying is a growing and highly internationalised labour and service market. Lobby groups are in competition with each other and this competition should conceptually and structurally favour professionalisation, since highly professionalised forms of lobbying promise a comparative competitive advantage in influencing political decisions. Industry lobby groups are likely to have played a decisive role in establishing a labour market of secure, often well-paid jobs. Professionalisation drivers are likely to include, in particular, commercial consultancies (law firms, management consultancies, PR agencies, etc.) that have made professional services their business model (Avril 2018; Korkea-aho 2021). They have been an important player in the field since the 1990s (Lahusen 2003 and 2013). However, large companies are also likely to play an important role, as company representations have gained a foothold as well in Brussels and have shaped European lobbying (Coen 1997; Laurens 2018; Coen et al. 2021). It can therefore be assumed that the professionalism of European lobbying is particularly pronounced in the industry-related sector of the labour market.

Secondly, the sociology of professions has emphasised that higher education institutions play an important role in the establishment of occupational fields, the academisation of staff and the scientification of professional practice. This is also true for European lobbying, because public affairs are being included into the curricula of professional and academic education. Universities in several Member States offer thematically relevant courses and specialisations (Bitonti et al. 2017; Michon 2022), and at the College of Europe in Bruges, which is considered a hotbed of EU activity (Poehls 2009), these topics are an integral part of the curriculum. In addition, private educational institutions have established specialised education and training programmes. There are also conferences, handbooks (Cassidy 2000; Geiger 2006; van Schendelen 2013), and publications in relevant journals (*Journal of Public Affairs*, *Interest Groups & Advocacy* or others). This suggests that academisation has reached and shaped the occupational field. It is to be expected that this academisation will be particularly strong among the younger cohorts, who should have relevant academic certificates and internalised an academically oriented professional ethos.

Thirdly, sociological research also points to the special role of the state in the formation of occupational fields as legislator, employer, financier, and/or purchaser. In the case of European lobbying, the EU institutions have been less active as a legislator beyond the introduction of transparency and conduct rules (Commission of the European Communities 2001; European Parliament 2003; Holman and Luneberg 2012). However, institutional pressures might still be relevant for the occupational field. In the first instance, transparency requirements and ethical standards might have an impact on the professional integration and closure of European lobbying (Bunea and Gross 2019; Barron and Skountridaki 2022). European institutions play a decisive role by establishing European interest groups conceptually, financially, and institutionally, and this financial support is explicitly directed at under-resourced interest groups from the civil society sector (Persson and Edholm 2018). It can therefore be expected that the NGO sector has also embarked on the path of occupationalisation, thus levelling out differences between different interest sectors. Beyond this occupational dimension, however, it is expected that the consultation procedures and routines of the EU institutions are contributing to the professional closure of the field in terms of inner circles of insiders. In this regard, it is indicative that political elites played and play a decisive role in the building of the EU (Haller 2008; Vogel and Rodríguez-Teruel 2016; Laurens 2018), thus implying that high-ranking senior professionals with a superior social status might be at the forefront of this process of closure.

Fourthly, it can be assumed that the public sphere increasingly determines the success of professionalisation, particularly by introducing critical voices that aim to limit or oppose this process. These voices are not only associated with the mass media; the establishment of several watchdog NGOs is particularly significant. Examples that focus on European lobbying include the Alliance for Lobbying Transparency and Ethics Regulation (Alter-EU)

and the Corporate Europe Observatory. International organisations such as Transparency International also regularly report on the lobbying activities of high-ranking EU politicians. National watchdog NGOs should also be mentioned, which are based in the UK (Public Interest Investigations and their Spin Watch project) or Germany (LobbyContol) and critically monitor European lobbying from there. LobbyControl, for example, created the Worst EU Lobbying Award 2005, which is awarded annually to "black sheep." The actors generate a considerable pressure on European lobbyists to justify and legitimise their work. It is to be expected that this pressure increases contentions within the field, depending on the specific approach and action repertoire they employ: business lobbyists and NGOs activists should opt for contrary justifications that lean either towards a professionalist and/or an advocatory ethos.

Finally, scholarly writing has also pointed to the role of professional associations in the formation of occupational fields, for example with regard to issues of education and training, networking within the profession, ethical standards, and the representation of professional interests (Greenwood 2017: 59; Bitonti et al. 2017; Barron and Skountridaki 2022). However, these collective actors do not seem to influence the field decisively. Professional associations have become established in the field of European lobbying, such as the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA) or the Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP). There are also associations that see themselves as a forum for professional exchange on occupational and ethical standards. They work at the EU level (the European Centre for Public Affairs, ECPA) or organise professionals across national borders (the Public Affairs Community of Europe, PACE). However, these associations do not have a large membership base. In addition, professional associations also organise and represent practitioners at EU level, such as the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) in the field of law. The professional organisation of EU affairs professionals is consequently weak and fragmented, and professional associations are not expected to contribute significantly to the self-regulation and communitisation of the occupational field. It can be thus expected that European lobbyists lack a collective and corporate consciousness. Rather, the acting individuals are likely to be characterised by different professional profiles and professional loyalties.

Overall, the above assumptions suggest a nuanced picture of professionalisation. The process should be particularly advanced among company representations, trade associations, and commercial consultancies, which have established an independent labour market through their demand. Additionally, European funding may have ensured that even weak interests followed the path of occupationalisation. In terms of professionalisation in its strictly conceptual sense, one can assume an incomplete professionalisation. It can certainly be assumed that academisation standardises professional knowledge and that, moreover, the informal consultation practices of the EU institutions establish insider–outsider relations and centre–periphery

structures. This implies that a highly professionalised core area is likely to stand out from a marginal area of semi-professional activity and an external area of non-professional interest representation. This core area presumably includes lobbyists who look back on a long-standing presence in the arena and share knowledge and skills that are explicitly declared as professional. However, it is not to be expected that the staff has produced common professional self-images and identities, as the collective and corporate organisation of the occupational field is low. And in the face of a critical public, it is to be expected that voices critical of lobbying will also speak out within the occupational field and in this way hinder occupational communitisation across interest groups. In Bourdieu's sense (1977: 159–171; 1991: 184–188), it is to be expected that the field is separated by an orthodox and a heterodox discourse, respectively, which emphatically affirms or denies the professionalism and legitimacy of European lobbying. A marginal and heterodox discourse should speak out against the professionalism of the dominant discourse, advocating a pushback of resource-rich lobby groups, a de-occupationalisation of interest representation and greater appreciation of direct forms of participation. In distinction to the professionalism in the core area, the fringe area is expected to be characterised by an orientation towards political activism.

This first set of research assumptions helps provide potential explanations as to why European lobbying has been professionalised, to what extent this process has had an impact on the field, and which segments of the field spearhead this process. However, they need to be specified further in order to be able to explain the position of lobbying professionals within the field. Which lobbyists are the most professionalised when considering occupational and career patterns, professional expertise and capitals, and work-related convictions? Can we identify a group of drivers sharing a set of relevant traits? Which profiles are associated with this group, and do these profiles allow general conclusions about the main forces pattering the occupational field to be drawn? The exploration of potential answers can rely on previous findings and theoretical reflections drawn from studies about European lobbying and professional groups. Different explanations can be identified, which group around three key factors: organisational membership, institutional demands and social profiles.

The first three assumptions centre on organisations and expect that professionalism in its three dimensions is strongly determined by the organisations EU affairs professionals work for. The first assumption follows the proposition formulated explicitly for the US-American case, which stipulates that lobbyists are representatives of their clients and thus strictly tied to their mandate (Heinz et al. 1997; Healy 2016). According to this view, professionalisation is an organisational choice, and this means that varying degrees of professionalism within the occupational group will thus strictly mirror the sectoral differentiations within the organisational field. In particular, it is to be expected that professionalisation in its three dimensions is more developed among business interests, as indicated by previous studies (Laurens 2018;

Coen et al. 2021). Business interests provide more stable and better paid employment, are committed to standard repertoires of action explicitly related to legislative lobbying, and endorse more overtly the idea of professionalism and the legitimacy of lobbying. NGOs should be more reluctant to professionalise their staff because they have more limited resources, take a more confrontational advocacy approach and express more doubts about professional lobbying.

However, other research assumptions cast doubts on the alleged importance of sectoral interests. A second proposition argues that a high degree of professionalisation must rather be attributed to commercial consultancies, because these companies treat lobbying as marketable services. Even more overtly than representatives from interest groups, who are tied to a specific sector and sectoral expertise, it is the commercial consultant that has a vested interest in establishing EU affairs as an area of professional labour (Avril 2018; Lahusen 2003 and 2013). Commercial consultants can expect a good employment situation due to the high demand for their services; they have a particular interest in developing lobbying practices and skills that can be applied across issue fields; and the need to market their services predisposes them to propagate an ethos of professionalism.

Third, it can be argued that professionalism does not depend on sectoral interests or commercial services, but more generally on the resource endowment of organisations. Previous studies have shown that the financial and human resources of organisations are one of the main factors explaining lobbying performance (Klüver 2012; Kohler-Koch et al. 2017), implying that sectoral differences between commercial interests and NGOs play a minor role in the level of professionalism (Klüver and Saurugger 2013). Instead, well-resourced organisations are expected to be the most advanced in professionalism across all domains compared to low-resourced organisations.

A second research assumption centres on the institutional context and expects that the exposure to the EU institutions is a driving force of professionalisation. This proposition builds on the extensive literature about the accommodative pressures of the European institutions (Coen and Richardson 2009; Mazey and Richardson 2015; Koehler 2019) and its influence on the assimilation of lobbying activities across all interest sectors (Woll 2012; Michalowitz 2019). Two propositions can be derived from this assumption. On the one hand, it is very likely that lobbyists maintaining more regular contacts with the European institutions might be more professionalised on all three dimensions. Close relations with these institutions might be a driver of professionalisation because they require more stable employment, targeted action repertoires and an aura of professionalism and legitimacy. The divisional line in regard to professionalism would thus separate lobbyists along their government relations, and also within the various interest sectors. On the other hand, it is possible that the pressure to professionalise might not be tied to specific institutional demands, but rather to Brussels as a political place and its agglomeration of European institutions, interest groups,

experts and specialised media (Büttner et al. 2018; Kortelainen and Koeppen 2018). Lobbyists spending more working time in Brussels might be more professionalised with regard to the three dimensions analysed, because the "Brussels bubble" grants them preferential access to good jobs, facilitates the development of professional skills and promotes a common professional awareness and identity.

The third assumption leaves the organisational and institutional levels aside and focuses exclusively on the personal characteristics of EU affairs professionals. This proposition builds on the increasing body of knowledge about the social background of European lobbyists. While most studies recognise that the personal biographies are varied, there are considerable similarities in terms of education, work experience, and career paths (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 149–158; Michon 2022). Two assumptions can be derived from this proposition. On the one hand, it is very likely that professionalisation is driven by social class. This conforms to the proposition that professionalism is an elitist phenomenon (Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Evetts et al. 2012) determined by the disposition of professionals with a privileged social status to protect their standing against lower occupational positions. Professionalisation might thus be a social class project. In the context of the EU, this project might even be cultivated by the fact that political and economic elites have played a decisive role in building the EU (Haller 2008; Vogel and Rodríguez-Teruel 2016; Laurens 2018). An academic elite of high-ranking professionals might be at the forefront of professionalisation, because they have been able to secure outstanding positions, invest considerable efforts in accumulating work-related capitals and are devoted to internalising a professional habitus that grants preferential access to the inner circle of EU politics.

On the other hand, it is necessary to validate the assumption that professionalism depends more generally on socio-demographic factors that go beyond social class. In particular, professionalisation might be linked to personal characteristics such as age, gender or national provenance. In fact, it has been shown that men are overrepresented among European lobbyists (Junk et al. 2021; also Bath et al. 2005; LaPira et al. 2020), which implies that professionalism might be gender-driven. Age is a relevant factor as well, because of possible cohort effects. If the observation is correct that European lobbying is exposed to a gradual process of professionalisation, it should be more established among the younger generations that have a more outspoken interest in developing professional skills and habitus within a more populated and competitive arena of interest groups. Finally, national provenance might also be a driver of professionalisation, because interest groups and lobbyists coming from countries with longer traditions of interest representation (e.g. UK and the USA) might be overrepresented among professionalised segments in terms of jobs, professional skills, and convictions, even though findings are inconclusive (Eising 2007; Bernhagen and Mitchell 2009; Coen et al. 2021: 149–158).

2.4 The empirical research design: methods and data

The present analysis of EU lobbying as an occupational field required extensive fieldwork, systematic data-gathering and analysis. This work was accomplished in the context of two research projects. The primary study involved fieldwork conducted between May 2014 and March 2019 in order to inquire into the professionalisation of European lobbying, as conceptualised in this book. It employed a mixed-methods approach and allowed to gather two types of data: a standardised survey of a total sample of 700 respondents; and a series of more than 40 qualitative interviews with European lobbyists and EU stakeholders. Additionally, the analyses of this book draw on the data from a second and earlier research project devoted to the study of interest groups in the multilevel system of the EU (Lahusen and Jauß 2001). It generated a number of qualitative interviews conducted between July 1997 and June 1999, which makes it possible to compare the more recent material with the situation of European lobbying almost 20 years earlier.

The findings presented in this book rely primarily on the data of the more recent research project, because this inquiry was explicitly designed to address the lobbying staff. In particular, the aim was to generate data sets that provide a comprehensive overview and systematic insight into the occupational field. The project followed the recommendation of various scholars to overcome the prevailing orientation towards case studies and instead look at the field of investigation as a whole (Beyers et al. 2008; Franchino 2005; Coen 2007; Beyers 2008; Eising 2008). Many of the more recent studies are in fact driven by a desire to generate large data sets in order to be able to produce more comprehensive and generalisable findings (see, for example, Beyers, Bonafort et al. 2014; Lowery 2014; Eising 2016; Eising et al. 2017; Beyer and Fink-Hafner et al. 2020). Following these examples, the present study implemented a mixed-methods approach that combined various instruments of systematic data-gathering and analysis. First, qualitative, exploratory, and theory-generating research was carried out in order to focus on the largely under-researched staff. The field-immanent conditions had to be determined and inductively synthesised. These inquiries followed precepts of qualitative and interpretative research, which urge the researcher to immerse into the data with an open mind to ensure that findings emerge from the material (Strauss 2004; Charmaz 2006), without excluding analytical and theoretical reasoning (Kelle 2014). The research assumptions presented in the previous sections were thus used as analytic devices during the iterative process of inducive analysis and generalisation, but they were also revised and refined during the inductive and exploratory analyses. Then, a quantitative and hypothesis-testing research approach was applied, which aimed at a standardised survey of European lobbyists and a statistical analysis of the data collected. The calculations were intended to generate generalisable results on the structure of the occupational field. In particular, the assumption of a professionalisation of the field of activity was to be verified and discussed critically. For this

purpose, the research questions and assumptions indicated above were used to identify a number of explanatory factors and test their potential effects on the three components of professionalisation.

The data on which this book is based are highly fruitful in their richness and breadth. However, they also have their limits, because the empirical survey of the occupational field required conceptual and methodological decisions to be made that narrowed down the object of investigation and thus also the total population of the persons investigated. The project took an exclusive approach in determining what constitutes "European lobbying." Only those persons explicitly involved in European lobbying were considered. More specifically, the study focused on those persons responsible for representing societal interests towards the institutions of the EU. No minimum requirements were set for the scope of the activities in question, which is why persons who may be only partially involved in European lobbying in the above sense, even on the periphery, were also included. As the later chapters will illustrate, this exclusive approach turned out to be quite inclusive, as the breadth and variability of the surveyed job profiles, occupational profiles and self-perceptions are considerable.

The explicit focus on European lobbying had implications for the sample of interviewees, as it deliberately relied on a self-selection of the respondents. Interview requests and the invitation to take part in the standardised survey contained references to the topics and objectives of the survey ("European lobbying"), which also resulted in a number of rejections or dropouts. Only respondents who were at least partly personally involved in this area of activity actually participated in the two surveys. The respondents do not necessarily consider themselves "lobbyists," but state that they are involved in lobbying as an activity. This means that, although the present study can make statements about the occupational field of European lobbying, it provides little insight into the broader field of political interest representation. Actors who do not directly and explicitly target the EU institutions are not taken into account. This concerns interest representatives who live in the European Member States and who have an exclusively national mandate. This does not mean, however, that the data are restricted to Brussels. On the contrary, many of the European lobbyists interviewed do not live in Brussels. They lobby from the countries in which they live and work. The object of investigation is therefore limited institutionally but not spatially: The data concentrate on EU-specific lobbying, but cover the field in its pan-European and partly global composition.

The research approach outlined above was implemented in a multistage work programme. In a first step, the professional field of European lobbying, including the relevant contextual structures, was reconstructed using research literature and available documents (in particular reports from EU institutions, think tanks or associations critical of lobbying, selected background reports from the media, etc.). In some cases, expert interviews were conducted with central actors (members of the EU Commission and the

EU Parliament, relevant NGOs, and journalists, professional associations, and media representatives). The 16 interviews used a common but flexibly adapted guideline. They were conducted by Frank Borchers between June 2014 and April 2015. If respondents consented, the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The second step followed an explorative research approach and used qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The qualitative data collection was carried out by Frank Borchers. Firstly, longer and shorter field trips to Brussels were used to visit events, hold all kinds of meetings and gain insights into the practical work of a lobby group. The results of these participatory observations were documented in the form of field notes. Secondly, 29 interviews were conducted with employees of various European lobby groups – some face to face, some via telephone or video conference. This second series of interviews was conducted between June 2015 and February 2016. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with consent. The examinations in Chapter 3 make additional use of the 20 interviews that were conducted in the course of the earlier research project in 1998 and 1999. These interviews were included in the analysis, as they contained statements and descriptions concerning the situation of European lobbying in the late 1990s. They make it possible to carry out a contrasting evaluation that provides insights into changes in the occupational field. Consent and transcripts were also available for these interviews.

The selection of interview partners followed the guidelines of theoretical sampling (Morse 2007; Rapley 2014) and aimed to capture the breadth and diversity of the occupational field (e.g. in terms of employers, fields of work, age, and gender). From the total number of interviews conducted, 41 were used for the present analyses. Thirty-seven interviews were done with EU affairs professionals, four with stakeholders. Of the 37 professionals, 10 were women and 27 were men; 10 worked for NGOs, 20 for companies and trade associations, and 7 for consultancies and professional associations. The gender gap is mainly due to the first interview series, which means that women were more easily recruited during the later fieldwork. The interview guidelines had been formulated in a topic-centred manner and consisted mainly of narrative prompts that were flexibly adapted to the profile of the interviewee and to the course of the interview. The interviews addressed various topics, among them the professional background and activities of the interviewed lobbyists, their perception and assessment of the organisational, institutional, and societal contexts of their work, their evaluation of the field of European lobbying in its multilevel structure, and their description and assessment of the EU's regulatory approach. The interviewees readily provided information, which is why the interviews have a high narrative content. The interviews were transcribed word for word, although emphases and filler words were not included, as these were not the subject of the analyses. The material from the interviews was analysed in accordance with the methodological principles of qualitative social research, in particular grounded theory (Charmaz 2000;

Mills et al. 2006; Roulston 2014), and was carried out in a number of steps. The in-depth micro and detailed analysis of a small number of interviews provided the basis for a systematic coding of the interviews. The identified codes were condensed into central categories. Lastly, these categories were used to selectively code all interviews, and thus to amend, expand and refine the emergent codes and categories. This made it possible to inductively identify various thematic areas that could be confirmed as relevant structuring characteristics of the occupational field. Core categories were also evaluated in terms of their inherent meaning and cross-relations in order to identify structurally interrelated aspects of EU affairs as an occupation.

This synthesising analysis was supplemented by an interpretative analysis of central interview passages, as the meaning of the codes and categories identified is not self-explanatory. The coding and categorisation should be understood as an interpretative task, which is why the presentation of results must explicitly focus on the interpretative part. The aim was to reconstruct the social significance of the identified core characteristics of the occupational field (e.g. forms of knowledge, practices, orientations of action, ideals) from the perspective of those involved. In the selection and interpretation of the passages, consideration was given to differences in order to enable an inquiry with a comparative approach so as to identify different positions in the occupational field, the relations of these positions to one another, and the structural dimensions of the occupational field. The interpretative analysis of the passages was based on the principles of a comparative, paraphrasing and analysing, formulating, and reflecting interpretation (Bohnsack 2014; Nohl 2010).

Strict anonymisation was ensured in the presentation of the results. As the staff are well networked, any identification had to be completely ruled out, which is why far-reaching measures were necessary. The presentations in the following chapters therefore include no information on the name and gender, nationality, and age of the respondents. As regards the employer, the information is limited to the main sectors to which the organisations can be attributed. The distinction here is made primarily between the following sectors: industry associations, corporate representations, NGOs, consultancies, and professional associations. The names of the interviewees mentioned in the chapters are completely fictitious; the linguistic origin and gender have also been randomly assigned, but mirror the proportion of interviews between these categories. This anonymisation method does not reduce the output in terms of content. During the data analysis, it became apparent that the interview responses did not vary noticeably by gender and nationality, which is why randomisation does not cause a significant loss of information. Only the employer's sector has emerged as an important structuring feature of the occupational field, which is why complete anonymisation was not used in this case.

The interviews were conducted in English, French, or German and were also analysed in the chosen language version. However, in the interests of

complete anonymity, the printed passages were translated into English in order to prevent identification of the source language. Multilingual data collection and evaluation are certainly more demanding (Inhetveen 2012), and the subsequent translation of the passages used also carries the risk of losing the language-specific meaning of the original statements. However, the examination of the interviews did not focus on implicit meanings and connotations which would require an in-depth hermeneutical analysis. Rather than an in-depth examination of individual passages, the emphasis was on comparing the statements of several interviews with regard to the topics discussed, descriptions of the situation and orientation for action. Lastly, it should be borne in mind that English was not the native language of most of the participants but rather a lingua franca and working language. This also meant that a less ambitious interpretative strategy of data analysis was most appropriate.

The qualitative and explorative research work culminated in a third research step, which aimed to conduct a standardised survey among European lobbyists. The objective was to examine the thesis of a professionalisation of the occupational field on the basis of a larger sample. In the conceptualisation of this survey, it was essential to recognise that the survey could only measure the level of professionalisation at the time of data collection; the focus is thus on process outcomes, not on long-term processes themselves. With reference to the sociological concept of generations (Kertzer 1983; Alwin and McCammon 2003), however, it should at least be investigated whether differences between respondents of different age groups might also be attributable to cohort effects. Such cohort or generational effects can help draw conclusions about changed contexts of action, occupational profiles and self-images.

Data collection was challenging from the start. On the one hand, this was due to the problem of not having reliable figures on the total number of European lobbyists. As previously reported, there are various estimates on the number of staff, ranging from 15,000 (Woll 2005; Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Courty 2010) to 30,000 to 50,000 full-time employees (Corporate Europe Observatory 2011: 6; European Parliament 2018). On the other hand, the databases used in previous investigations (such as the online "Coneccs" database or the "European Public Affairs Directory") only contain information on the organisations and not on the individuals employed. The present study opted for using the European transparency register, as this also records the names of individuals. The transparency register was introduced by the European Commission and the European Parliament in 2011 to encourage all persons wishing to have access to the European Parliament to register. However, the register is by no means exhaustive, as registration in the transparency register is only required for those who wish to have an access card, and not for all employees of an interest group. Furthermore, some groups are not obliged to register, among them lawyers and law firms, political parties, churches, religious associations, and public or local authorities. Although

the transparency register does not cover all lobbyists, it can be assumed that it reflects a significant part of the profession. Persons who are professionally involved in EU lobbying and who make regular appearances in the EU Parliament have a vested interest in registration. It should also be noted that surveys have shown that participation in the voluntary transparency register not only follows instrumental interests but also normative motives, in particular the desire to preserve one's own professional standing (Năstase and Muurmans 2018). This means that individuals who work for groups that do not require registration are also registered.

A standardised questionnaire was developed for the survey, which was designed to collect the relevant variables using a series of question items. The topics covered included: educational paths and careers, employment types and relationships, knowledge and practices typical of the profession, membership of professional associations, professional identities and professional ethics, working relations with EU institutions, and socio-demographic data on individuals. The aim was to have a sample of 700 to 800 lobbyists in order to be able to conduct a statistically adequate analysis of a sample differentiated by occupation types and cohorts. Experience from previous surveys of European interest groups had shown that the response rate to a postal enquiry was very low (Lahusen 2002 and 2003), which is why the data collection was based on a multistage process that also used a variety of survey methods (online, postal, and telephone). A specialised survey institute (the Social Science Survey Centre, SUZ) was commissioned to conduct the survey.

It was possible to extract data on 7,069 registered lobbyists from the transparency register. However, during the collection of data, it became apparent that some contact details were outdated or incorrect. The response rate was also low despite repeated reminders. For these reasons, almost all of the persons listed in the register were contacted successively and invited to participate. The survey, which began in October 2016, was therefore only completed in October 2017. With 699 fully completed questionnaires, a response rate of 10.5 per cent was achieved. This rate is not unusual for self-administered surveys (Shih and Fan 2002). Other surveys addressing interest groups on the basis of the Transparency Register reported higher response rates (e.g. Lowery 2014; Beyers et al. 2014; Beyers et al. 2020). However, it needs to be remembered that these research projects surveyed interest groups, which can always assign respondents to participate in the survey among their ranks. Addressing individual lobbyists is a more challenging approach, also because they had to be persuaded to answer questions on their personal backgrounds, activities, and convictions.

The low response rate does not necessarily reduce the value of the data. Nor did the analysis indicate any distortion of the sample in terms of relevant characteristics, as the group of respondents essentially corresponds to the age and gender structure reflected in the transparency register and the distribution of the different organisation types represented. Nevertheless, the survey

cannot be considered representative. This is not only due to the low response rate and the possible bias in favour of persons willing to be interviewed. The main reason is the difficulty described above in making satisfactory statements about the population as a whole. It is therefore not possible to determine whether the results of the data collected can be generalised to the entire population of individuals involved in European lobbying. The data primarily tell us something about the group of persons listed in the transparency register who are willing to be interviewed. For the reasons stated above, the statistical analyses were mainly based on descriptive and explorative methods. Regression-analytical methods were used to determine correlations between the collected variables, although this does not imply that the results should necessarily be generalised to the (unknown) entire population. Other forms of results validation were used for this purpose. Additionally, some of the key questions were skewed to the right or left, as topics were raised that generated high or low approval ratings. Since the assumption of a normal distribution was breached (heteroscedasticity, "fat tails"), linear regression methods were not used. Likewise, no data were imputed, even though the number of missing values was sometimes considerable. However, calculations with an imputed data set and alternative model specifications have shown that the calculated results were robust.

The limitations of the data sets collected are symptomatic of an object of investigation that is difficult to research and can only be empirically measured and analysed in defined sub-areas. These challenges were known, which is why the research used various measures to validate the data and results. For instance, when evaluating the collected data (interviews and survey data), attention was paid to the plausibility of the assertions. With regard to the survey data, it was decided to have an expert validation of the results. This was done by organising a workshop in Brussels in March 2019, to which the lobbyists who took part in the survey were invited. The event provided important suggestions for the evaluation and interpretation of the survey data, which have been incorporated into this book. Above all, however, the participants largely validated the empirical substance of the findings.

Finally, the triangulation of the data sets was used as an important element of the results validation, because the evaluations of the survey data and the interviews were systematically related to each other in all relevant dimensions of the investigation. This approach has its limits, as the possibility that the qualitative interviews and the standardised survey data are subject to the same bias could not be ruled out, which is why a triangulation might only give an overall skewed picture of the occupational field. However, the investigations revealed that the two data sets offer similar as well as differing insights, which enabled a contrasting analysis. In particular, it became apparent that the respective data sets helped identify partial aspects of the object of investigation with varying degrees of reliability and precision. The structure of this book documents this triangulation

intention in a systematic way, with Chapters 3 to 7 using the findings of the quantitative and qualitative analyses to elaborate and develop the partial aspects treated in their respective differentiations and nuances. The method-combining analyses proved to be worthwhile, as they not only allowed the field of European lobbying to be surveyed in terms of its professionalisation, but also to be comprehended with regard to the underlying contexts and action orientations.

3 The genesis of the field of work

Internal views

European lobbying is a field of work that is closely intertwined with the process of European integration. This relates to the growing number of interest groups that made their way to Brussels in order to establish direct contact with the European institutions and influence political decision-making processes (Schmitter and Streeck 1991; Mazey and Richardson 2006a). As the organisational field grew, so did the need for people who could maintain contacts and represent interests. It was progressively populated by lobbyists working for lobby groups as diverse as business associations and private companies (Eising 2009; Coen and Dannreuther 2003; Coen et al. 2021), trade unions, and social associations. Environmental groups and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also received attention (Ruzza and Bozzini 2008; Kohler-Koch and Quittkat 2013), as did commercial consultancies, law firms, think tanks, and many other groups (Lahusen 2002; Avril 2018; Korkea-aho 2021; also Georgakakis and Rowell 2013). This growth had implications for European lobbying, because it not only increased the number of interest groups but also the diversity, competitiveness, and professionalisation within the organisational field (Michel 2005a; Courty 2010; Woll and Jacquet 2010; Klüver and Saurugger 2013). The repercussions for European lobbyists, however, are less clear. Elements of continuity and change seem to concur when referring to the persistence of the EU-specific approach of European lobbying on the one hand, and the constraints, pressures, and complexities the staff is faced with on the other. Hence, it is necessary to ascertain the type and magnitude of changes that the gradual growth and differentiation of the organisational field has had for European interest representation.

European lobbyists can contribute to the reconstruction of these developments when recounting their experiences, perceptions, and assessments. Their accounts provide a particularly rich and nuanced picture of an occupational field in the making, and make it possible to reveal processes of professionalisation. The reconstruction of these developments will rely on a pool of 50 interviews conducted during the late 1990s and mid-2010s with lobbyists from various interest groups, but also with members of the European institutions and media representatives. Especially the comparison of the more

recent interviews with the conversations conducted almost 20 years earlier helps trace common lines of development and elements of change on the basis of different horizons of experience. Taken as a whole, the various accounts paint a vivid picture of the development of European lobbying in a critical stage of its growth and differentiation, and thus allow to better understand the specificities of today's occupational field.

3.1 The great upheaval: a field in the making

The interviews conducted with European lobbyists during the late 1990s convey a sense of the fundamental transformations their work was undergoing at the time. Such a narrative of change is advocated by Olof Olsson, as the veteran among the interviewees with more than 40 years of work experience will be called. According to him, his personal career epitomises what has happened to the field of European lobbying at large. When he started to work as lobbyist, he was not based in Brussels because the industry association he worked for had its headquarters in the capital of one of the Member States and lobbied from there. "The weight of the work was not so big," he describes his job at the time. "I have travelled a lot [...] it was a good life." He remembers a realignment taking place in 1986 or 1987. This date is significant, because the Single European Act (SEA) came into force in 1987 and launched the project of a common internal market. During that year, the leadership of Olof Olsson's association decided to move the contact office to Brussels. He was told: "You have to go to Brussels, because somewhere now we have the Single Market and this is the place to be." The change of location not only changed his personal working focus but also brought a fundamental shift in the association's approach. "Lobbying before was a very diplomatic exercise," Olof Olsson describes the situation. Politics changed with the Single Market: "we were probably the first in Brussels to consider [lobbying] as a strategic activity. And we built, together, a completely new style. It was a U-turn, you know, in lobbying."

Olof Olsson is not the only interviewee to provide such a chronological reference. Other participants who were interviewed in the 1990s also described the changes in a similar way. Patrick Peters, who worked for a European industry umbrella organisation, underlined that the implementation of the Single Market project called for more proactive lobbying in the relevant submarkets. This lobbying had to focus on the creation of pan-European markets, which is why it was no longer sufficient to represent national interests in Brussels. In the case of his umbrella organisation, this brought about significant organisational, personnel, and content-related changes. In the early years, "the national federations, put a man, a dog and a secretary in Brussels, in case anything might happen one day in the capital of Europe." According to him, the early European representations and interest groups had a simple function: sounding the alarm. The internal federation reforms implemented in the course of the 1990s pursued the goal of integrating the

industry representations of individual countries into the development of pan-European positions in order to be able to speak with one voice.

Bettina Böhm was also of the opinion that it is possible to put a date to the main impulses for change in the field. She was working in a consultancy and public relations (PR) agency when she was interviewed in 1997. According to her observation, the Single Market project had significantly changed the activities of the (national) associations and federations entrusted with European lobbying. Her attention was directed to the changes in staff, where she identified a decisive qualitative leap:

> You must remember that lobbying per se, as a profession in Brussels is ten years old, it really started with the completion of the internal market programme, which was the White Paper in 1985 it was about '87 '88 when companies suddenly realised there was these 300 pieces of legislation which could on the one hand be an opportunity and a threat, and I think that's when it really developed. So lobbying in Brussels in my view as a profession is only ten years old, well maybe 12 years old now. I'm not saying it wasn't done before, but it was done much more through the networks, the chambers of commerce, the trade associations.

In all three accounts, the Single Market project was described as the initial spark for change in the field. This timing makes sense as a rough milestone, but the creation of a common market was a long-term goal that had to be realised in stages and involved numerous directives that affected different sectors at different times. This clarification helps to understand why different interviewees diverge in the exact dating of the great transition. Olof Olsson, Patrick Peters, and Bettina Böhm experienced the impact of the Single Market project already during the late 1980s, while Valerie Vincent dated the great transition a little later when she was interviewed in 2015. She works for a company representation and has been active in the field since the early 2000s. The timing she gives shifts the critical moment to the late 1990s, because she only has her industry sector in mind. If we follow her account, the European Single Market project does not play a role as a reference point. Rather, her attention is focused on the integration of sector-specific markets, which derived from the Single Market project and affected certain industry associations and companies. In her company's industry, several directives adopted between the mid-1990s and the late 2000s to liberalise and integrate national markets in their various subsectors are worth mentioning. Across the board, these policies promoted strategic lobbying, which focused on actively shaping the respectively addressed markets. This development therefore took place over a longer time span.

> In the past, it was really about containing or making things work. But then, I think from end of 1990s to 2000, it was really about defining what

kind of market it should have been. And of course that brings all industry representatives in town.

The various interviews thus trace longer lines of development that begin around 1986 and develop a clear thrust during the 1990s. This narrative is told in many voices, but all of them converge in the conviction that the field has been exposed to fundamental transformations. Moreover, this narrative of change is used by European lobbyists to draw a contrast between before and after, that is, between the old days before the big shift and the current conditions. Particularly the more recent interviews from 2014 to 2016 portray the scene of the old times as rather compact. They indicate that decision-making within the European Communities was straightforward: Legislative procedures began in the Commission, which had the right of initiative as guardian of the Treaties, and ended in the Council of Ministers, which adopted resolutions. In such an architecture, European lobbying focused largely on the Commission, while national governments, which had the final say in the Council of Ministers, were addressed through national members. Karin Keller, who has been working as a freelance journalist in Brussels since the mid-2000s, describes the situation along these lines: "In the past, you only had to lobby the Commission, so to speak. And then it just took its course. Maybe a bit more with the governments. And that was it." The institutional architecture of the EU implied that lobbying was as straightforward as the legislative powers of the EU institutions suggested. Olof Olsson agrees, when looking back at his early days. According to him, the logic was quite simple: "It's a uniform system. So then we identify easily who are your interlocutors, you meet them, and you lobby."

Interviews conducted in the late 1990s indicate that the old days still seemed to shape the experience of most lobbyists. For those working for the European associations, lobbying at the time of the interviews had not changed fundamentally compared to the old days, although adjustments could be observed. They described that the federations had increased the organisational and personnel presence in Brussels; the work also became oriented towards pan-European lobbying that sought to transcend national individual interests. In this respect, European lobbying had already been firmly established as a separate sphere of interest aggregation and representation by the end of the 1990s. No changes are apparent with regard to the intended audience of European lobby groups. According to the association representatives, the aim was still to establish privileged relationships with the European institutions and this concerned in particular the Directorates-General of the European Commission.

In the interview material, this position emerges clearly among the staff of the European umbrella organisations. The European Commission was the linchpin of the legislative process and thus the primary focus of their work. At least, that is how it was put in 1998 by an association staff member at the time, who will be called Elena Eder here:

> One has to realise that Parliament, at this point in time, doesn't have much to say about [name of the issue]. Of course, its opinion is obligatory, but after the opinion (.) It's about the consultation process. The consequence of that, by the way, is that you have immense power at the Commission within the Community decision-making structure.

Elena Eder did not see any noticeable change in the strategies and techniques of European lobbying. According to her accounts, it was first a matter of reaching agreement among themselves in the association in order to then defend themselves before the Commission, and then before the Council of Ministers and the Parliament. She did underline that the association and its staff use all means of advocacy. But essentially, it was about personal interventions and top-level meetings. Media and PR work was explicitly not carried out.

This form of political interest representation corresponds to the ideas of a neo-corporatist model of interest mediation, which was still formative for the early years of the European Communities, although political science research agrees that it became increasingly less important with the start of the Single Market project in the late 1980s (Schmitter and Streeck 1991; Coen 2007). Amicable and exclusive working relationships between the state and umbrella organisations were replaced by broader consultations with a wider range of stakeholders. However, the circle of participants remains relatively small and the working relationships remain symbiotic (Mazey and Richardson 2006b), which is why people speak of a limited pluralism (Brodscheid and Coen 2007; Richardson and Coen 2009) that retains exclusive features (Eising 2007). For the 1990s, the pluralistic parts still seem to be limited, because the accounts refer to a small circle of actors involved, between whom there were close working relationships. The EU Commission, in particular, maintained informal dialogue forums, bodies, and consultative procedures for each policy area, involving a small number of privileged umbrella organisations and experts.

This description corresponds to Elena Eder's account, because for her Brussels was a "small world" at that time. However, this does not imply that she was oblivious to the developments around her and did not take note of the strong growth of the field since the late 1980s. For her, the larger number of lobby groups was not relevant information. And so she reacted quite unperturbedly to a question as to whether the number of lobbyists, which was already estimated at over 10,000 at that time, did not change this view at all: "Yes, because there are 10,000 lobbyists from 15 nationalities. And also there are, I don't know, 24 Directorates-General. Ultimately, I guess these are relatively few people." The Brussels world remained so small for her because European politics was divided into different parcels. This allowed lobby groups to limit their main activities to their respective turf. Cooperative relationships seemed to prevail within the respective domains. If there were competitive relationships, it was only between different regulatory communities.

These competitive relationships were the gateway for the ongoing transformations of European lobbying. According to Elena Eder, the mid-1990s were no longer quite as peaceful and manageable as in the old days. For a long time, a single Directorate-General had been "our privileged counterpart." But the association felt compelled to diversify its contacts. In her view, the changes already started with the accession of Great Britain, the emergence of the Greens and the introduction of the euro as important landmarks. "There is no longer just the DG[...]." Alongside it, there was now another Directorate-General (DG) "that does many things, so we are forced to have contacts with it." There was marked competition between various Directorates-General, which is why she felt compelled to diversify the lobbying activities. However, as long as her umbrella association could rely on privileged working relationships within its own policy domain, the broader field of competing interest groups was less of a serious concern.

This opinion was shared by other lobbyists, who thus also qualified the importance of the growing field of interest groups. Frederic Fournier, who worked for a large European trade association, also assumed that the field of interest representation was overpopulated; he even spoke of "50,000 lobbyists here in Brussels." However, he too did not see any reason for concern, because for him most of the interest groups were insignificant actors who brought little credibility with them and therefore did not play a serious role. This babble of voices was more like background noise. In his accounts, he caricatured this wide range of actors to emphasise the ridiculousness of the situation.

> You can pick up any subject you will find here in Brussels, the European Federation of, I don`t know what. Any product, any service, any trade, any sport activity, any club something, there is a European something here in Brussels. But, it`s only a few of them who are credible and who will play a certain role. Most of, I would say, the others and, I don`t want to be mean, but it's just a club of retired persons, and they try to find a hobby activity to do, to defend the interest of fishermen from that river or somewhere. You have that type. A lot of things which are not really serious.

According to Frederic Fournier, the wheat was quickly separated from the chaff, because in the end only the large and important associations were heard by the European institutions. Paradoxically, it was precisely this overpopulated field of lobby groups that resulted in the circle of relevant actors shrinking to a more manageable number. One concentrates on the really important matters – and in his opinion, the civil servants in the Commission are likely to feel the same way: "You get information from all sources and you just look at who is writing to you. And, you just work with the major partners. I have no time to read all that." Whether an association can be counted among the relevant actors and thus also have its voice heard depends on factors that are quite easy to pinpoint. It is about "their members, their power, and the

importance of the sector, of course." All other actors are onlookers who have no real power to shape things. "Only those who have a real power or raison d'être survive. All of the others, I think, they just happen to be there, OK, but you can ignore them, it doesn't change anything."

The assessment that privileged discussion circles persist in an overpopulated arena was also reiterated in the other interviews from the 1990s. Veronika Vogel, for instance, who worked for a sector-specific European umbrella organisation, underlined that the competitiveness of European lobbying was not very high at the time of the interview, as not all legislative initiatives affected all stakeholders equally, although she acknowledged that these cases did of course exist. Patrick Peters, who worked for another industry umbrella organisation, struck a similar note. Institutional reforms had started to move other institutions into the focus of lobbyists: "Commission, very strong, Parliament very strong because it suddenly became significant; the Economic and Social Committee to some extent, and informally with the Council." He also spoke about the need for aggressive, advocacy lobbying. However, Patrick Peters was not particularly convinced by the opinion that the lobbying sector might have changed. Umbrella organisations continued to play a privileged mediating role. Nor did he perceive that lobbying had become more competitive in view of the large number of interest groups.

European lobbyists in the late 1990s thus tended to represent a certain type of lobbying that seems to have been formative for the field of European interest groups as a whole. It was still based on the neo-corporatist model and relied on privileged talks with the relevant Directorates-General of the EU Commission (Broscheid and Coen 2007; Mazey and Richardson 2015). This made sense insofar as the right of initiative remained with the Commission despite all institutional reforms; the European Parliament mainly performed advisory tasks. This left lobbying focused on the Directorates-General as the first choice. The national governments came into focus as soon as decisions had to be taken in the Council and lobbying activities of the national association members had to be coordinated. Other activities – especially those related to the European Parliament – had a secondary, sometimes reparative character. In organisational terms, the lobby groups were concerned with increased presence and greater clout. They set up EU representations in Brussels, expanded them in terms of personnel and finances, and staffed the governing bodies with influential people. In such a context, lobbying consisted of identifying relevant contacts within the EU institutions, building long-term working relationships and using peer pressure at different levels of decision-making, as Patrick Peters described it. The staffs of the umbrella organisations were responsible for regular contacts with the heads of department within the Directorates-General, while the chairpersons of the boards were responsible for contacting the individual commissioners and the president of the Commission. In essence, lobbyists were concerned with bundling political influence within associations and dosing it appropriately in interactions with the Commission.

This form of lobbying can be considered dominant and style-setting for the entire organisational field. What is remarkable is that the civil society interest groups that were interviewed at the time also considered this lobbying to be essentially without alternative. This did not mean that NGOs were not critical of the status quo. The core complaint was that the rapid growth of the lobby sector should be attributed primarily to the numerous economic actors. Interviewees argued that it was the many sector- and product-specific associations, individual representations, and commercial consultants who intervened in European politics and in this way reinforced the already existing imbalance between business interests on the one hand and civil society factions on the other. Overcrowding, one-sidedness and lack of transparency were the issues that fuelled this criticism.

Whilst this criticism was raised at the time of the interviews, it was not one of the only concerns of the interviewees. The primary concern of the NGOs interviewed was, first, how to engage in effective advocacy in such an environment. This applies, for example, to Matteo Mancini, who worked for an NGO. While he argued that European NGOs were already much more professional, this assertion also reflected that the professionalisation was incomplete.

> And I would say that the NGOs have gained a lot of professionalism in the course of the last 20 years. We are certainly no longer a mere protest movement, but have expertise and also now know substantially how to get it to the man.

His statement referred to the NGO sector as a whole, to which he attributed increased professionalism. What is significant about the wording is the reference that NGOs had by now acquired knowledge that other organisations already possessed. Matteo Mancini gave numerous examples of what he meant by professionalisation and the new knowledge that was necessary to engage in effective advocacy: "courses for such things," "contact with the press," "one-to-one meetings" (with decision makers), "printing appropriate brochures," "an entire evening event with discussions and buffet and presentations." He attributed these activities and events to professional lobbying and underlined that in this respect "again, the industry has huge advantages." These reflections demonstrate that Matteo Mancini used a clearly defined benchmark to which the desired professionalisation of NGOs is aligned: the industry lobby. The organisational weakness of the NGO sector thus translated into a practical weakness: The low number of NGOs in the organisational field ("about 95, if not more, per cent industry and political lobby") was repeated at the practical level, as NGOs could hardly keep up with the industry lobby. This ultimately meant that they were less able to lobby effectively and influence ongoing legislative processes.

What is significant about these accounts is that Matteo Mancini saw the NGOs – along with the industry lobby – as parts of a common field of work. Differences existed only in terms of origins and degree of professionalisation.

These assessments were also shared by the two other NGO representatives who were interviewed in the mid-1990s. They described the situation similarly, although they assessed the situation of the NGOs differently. In terms of professionalism, Benedikt Baumann, who worked for a large civil society umbrella organisation, came to a much more pessimistic assessment than Matteo Mancini:

> Well, it's not like in America. For example, I come from the American area because I lived there for 20 years, and I came back here and was shocked at how little professionalism there is among the lobbyists, that is, in the NGOs. So whereas in America the NGOs have built up quite the, in the way that the business people have also done it, professional lobby.

The fact that he found the level of professionalisation shockingly low may have to do with the fact that he had chosen a different reference point. While Matteo Mancini compared NGOs to their origins ("a mere protest movement") and identified significant progress in professionalisation over the last 20 years, Benedikt Baumann compared European NGOs to American NGOs and identified a low level of professionalism. What is also remarkable about this passage is that Benedikt Baumann used "business people" as a benchmark of professional lobbying. According to him, the benchmark for assessing the degree of professionalism was "the way" business people lobby. As he explained later in the interview, he defined professionalism according to the tools that professional lobby groups use, which is why professionalisation consists of the appropriation of these tools. Professionalisation seemed possible to him because this craft can be learned: "You learn what are called tools."

Catherine Chevalier, who worked for an international NGO, also thought that NGOs and industry lobbies resembled each other at the action level and became similar through professionalisation. She ultimately found that the practical differences were minimal: "Well, at the level of lobbying techniques, I think it's no secret, I think it's true: An effective lobbyist will undoubtedly be very much like me." Where Catherine Chevalier and Benedikt Baumann identified clear differences was in terms of the interests NGOs represent. The specific interests were responsible for the fact that their own practice then deviated from what characterised the work of the industry side. Catherine Chevalier underlined one difference above all: "I don't represent specific interests; I represent the values that are common to all my counterparts." Benedikt Baumann took up this point to illustrate that these values guide the practical work: "The businesses have something else to offer, yes, so they have productivity to offer, jobs or whatever, yes. And we can offer legitimacy, yes, democracy, justice, these are other things."

It is collective goods and universal values that make the NGOs' work mandate unique and shape their work routines. According to Benedikt Baumann, NGOs "don't talk to the same people" and also "talk differently"

to them. But his remarks ultimately make it clear that the NGOs, just like the industry associations, rely on their own privileged policy communities and dialogues. The representatives of NGOs also reported intensive contacts with the Directorates-General and parliamentary committees that were central to them, while they only had to deal with the other departments to prevent matters from getting worse. Benedikt Baumann described these working relationships in the same way as all the other interviewees had or would have:

> So the Commission has proposed something, we hear that. We hear in the [specific unit] in DG[...], something is being prepared here, and we are in contact with the people almost daily. These are then also in inverted commas [name of the world view], so they work hard and of course they have to let the first drafts then go through the whole Commission, through all the DGs. And you can imagine that in every DG this is somehow toned down even more. That means we follow a legislative proposal through all the DGs, then sit down with each individual unit, write letters to each Commissioner, have to know when the document is in which DG at what time. And then we make a press statement when this is then officially stamped by the Commission. You know how the process works. The European Parliament then comments on these positions of the European Commission. And that also means that we have to comment on what the European Parliament comments on the European Commission's comment. And of course there are several committees, and then I sit in the committees, listen, talk to the individual rapporteurs, so they write a report or an opinion of the European Parliament or the committee on the subject of [...].

This account reflects all the elements that had already surfaced among those working in the industry associations: the amicable discussions and intensive working relationships with the relevant departments and committees; the attempts to influence bills early on and defend them against amendments in the course of the many consultations; and the competitive and adversarial relationships with other departments, committees, and interest groups. Within the policy fields, the actors (especially the specialist departments within the Commission and the central lobby groups) seemed to share common political convictions and demands. Benedikt Baumann sees them as like-minded people who share the same world view. Political allegiances also developed, because in the drafted bills both sides seemed to pursue the common interest of getting the draft through the multistage consultation process unscathed.

These accounts demonstrate the considerable capacity of the EU institutions and their consultative structures to absorb and accommodate new interest groups (Mazey and Richardson 2006b). NGO representatives testified to this accommodative capacity by joining sectoral policy dialogues and adapting their work to the rules of the game. However, the interviews conducted during this critical decade also help identify crucial stimuli for the

development of the field of European lobbying. In this regard, two actors tend to play a decisive role, against the more traditional approach of the established umbrella associations: the NGOs themselves and the emerging sector of commercial consultancies.

On the one hand, NGOs emerged with force in the EU arena during the 1990s, a decade that was marked by institutional reforms which provided new opportunities for lobbying and thus opened the range of potential strategies and activities. Earlier and more explicitly than the industry associations, they started to address systematically the media public and the European Parliament in order to influence policy agendas and legislative decision-making. Even though the European Parliament had limited competences in the legislative process, it opened new possibilities to influence the inter-institutional deliberations. Benedikt Baumann, for example, explained that he liked to address the European Parliament to put pressure on the Commission: "For example, I like to play the European Parliament against the Commission and vice versa." And Catherine Chevalier described how her organisation used the media public as an important tool for political advocacy and legislative lobbying. Her NGO pursued a dual strategy: Lobbying was aimed at maintaining continuously good relations with the EU institutions and conveying information and advice, but if this approach did not have an effect, she resorted to the "media approach." She described this approach as a "hard approach" because it abandons personal talks with the EU institutions to build public pressure.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the concept of professionalisation had already become an explicit point of reference in European lobbying by the late 1990s. It was used by NGO representatives as a cue to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their own lobbying work. As illustrated above, these respondents shared the belief that lobbying is a learnable craft that must be consistently internalised and applied to make one's work more effective. The most ardent advocate of such professionalisation, however, was Bettina Böhm, who worked for a consultancy and PR agency and advocated a resolute professionalism. For her, lobbying was much more than the establishing of privileged conversational relationships and the well-measured use of political influence. In her opinion, lobbying embodied a whole arsenal of instruments and methods that could be used by the most diverse interests to make their political influence effective. She spoke on behalf of a group of "public affairs professionals" – a "we." This professional community is characterised by its own craft, by a scientific methodology:

> I wouldn't say a scientific approach yet, but it's getting that way in terms of how to reanalyse a problem, how you put a strategy together and in terms of how we set objectives, how we identify stakeholders, all these different things – we in our view have a craft, we have a methodology of how we run a particular lobbying campaign and that's the theme developed as we talked today.

Only in this interview was the professionalism of lobbying as a quasi-scientific profession asserted with such conviction. This is no coincidence, because Bettina Böhm was an employee of a consulting and PR firm, which means that she makes a living from offering their clients methods, tools or models to support them in their lobbying work or to take over this work. Commercial consultants thus seem to have played an important role in the formation of European lobbying during the critical decade of the 1990s, even though they are a service provider and not a relevant interest group. In fact, consultancies do not represent specific interests, issues or constituencies, and thus have no influence or power on their own. They provide services to interest groups by assembling information, preparing dossiers, establishing contacts or organising activities and events. Within the organisational field of interest groups, these commercial providers did therefore not initiate significant changes. However, they are still important for the formation of the occupational field and the instruction of European lobbyists. As will be shown in Chapter 5, many of today's lobbyists worked for consultancies in the course of their professional careers, many gained their first professional experience there and, by their own admission, learned the tools of the trade there. Consequently, these service providers shape the professional socialisation of many young professionals. Furthermore, the consultancies represent a professional ethos that appears to have an impact on the entire occupational field, as it influences the professional self-image of many lobbyists.

3.2 The big shift: current dynamics and alterations of the field

More than 15 years later, the described conditions in the field of European lobbying look different, although there are aspects of continuity. The lobbyists interviewed in the years between 2014 and 2016 also firmly believe that the Single Market project brought about substantial changes, which were reflected above all in the rapid increase in the number of active lobby groups. While the early interviews demonstrate that the architecture of the EU was able to absorb this growing number well and integrate it into the policy field-specific regulatory communities without changing the structure and logic of European lobbying, the later interviews underline that important changes have now occurred after all. These lobbyists list several changes in the political, institutional, and social environment that are perceived as altering the work of currently active advocates. Three main strands of development can be identified: the changing relationships between the EU institutions; the growing diversity of the lobbying sector itself; and the greater importance of the mass media and the organised public.

With regard to the first source of changes, a general trend is identified that has led to a noticeable shift of legislative competences from the national to the European level. For Frank Fischer, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), the growth of the lobbying sector is a direct consequence of this: "Wherever fundamental decisions are made, lobbyists are of course

very active." This moves Brussels onto centre stage: "the real lobbying and the battle between lobby and politics rages in Brussels." However, the growing size, fragmentation, and competitiveness of European lobbying has also to do with various institutional and political changes that lobbyists associate with the Lisbon Treaty of 2007 and affect the working of the European institutions and their inter-institutional dialogue. With regard to the functioning of the Council of Ministers, many interviewees complain that the work has become much more complicated for the lobby groups since majority voting has been introduced. Valerie Vincent, who works for a company representation, mainly highlights the fact that the enlarged EU now has many more voices that can have a say:

> with 15 Member States, it was much easier. […] You knew you had to influence three or four of the big ones. And your issues could have more or less passed through the Council of Ministers. And now, with 28, it's very different.

The European Parliament has also moved to the front stage of lobbying. Kate Kavanagh, who works for an NGO in Brussels, notes that the role of the Parliament has changed drastically since the early 2000s. It still allows for the reopening of legislative initiatives by the Commission, over which they seem to have little influence, through Parliament, as was highlighted already in the previous section. However, the European Parliament also enforces a much more political approach to legislative procedures. According to Kate Kavanagh, the Commission is industry-friendly and follows a primarily bureaucratic logic: "The Commission are unelected civil servants." Through the Parliament, a political logic enters the legislative process that opens up new opportunities for NGOs to feed their demands into the inter-institutional negotiations. The opportunities provided by the European Parliament for legislative lobbying, however, also entail new pressures and requirements. According to Ralf Richter, who works for a Brussels-based professional association, the Lisbon Treaty has driven the classic heavyweights of the European umbrella organisations into the Parliament, as their areas of regulation have been brought under the control of Parliament. More lobby groups therefore aim to influence the voting behaviour of MEPs and significantly increase the number of their activities, thus contributing to the politicisation of European politics.

But the European Commission has also experienced important changes that affect the work of European lobbyists. For Giuseppe Giordano, who works for an NGO, the Commission is still "the most important institution, because it has the greatest influence on how the regulations will ultimately look in Europe." Its power has even increased, as many lobbyists report. With reference to primary law, which is anchored in the European treaty texts, the Commission, as the proclaimed guardian of these Treaties, is increasingly relying on secondary law (also Nugent and

Rhinard 2019), especially implementing acts and delegated acts, which can be developed in a number of key policy areas (agriculture, internal market, health, consumer protection etc.). The Commission can essentially adopt these legal acts – in consultation with the Member States that have to implement them – within the framework of what is known as comitology. The European Parliament and the Council are not involved in these procedures but can veto these acts. In addition, the so-called trilogue (Bianco 2016) between the three EU institutions (Commission, Council, and Parliament) has been given greater significance. While these informal negotiations involve Parliament, they shorten the legislative process precisely with a view to the forthcoming readings of the proposed legislation in Parliament. Instead, negotiations shift to the mediation committees.

All these changes have negative consequences for interest groups, as lobbyists are eager to explain. What is particularly remarkable about these criticisms is that they are consistently raised across all interest sectors. According to these voices, the informal negotiations between the EU institutions (trilogues) and agreements in the various comitology committees (delegated and implementing acts) are taking the place of formalised decision-making procedures. For Olof Olsson, this situation creates a new form of opacity: "We have a generalisation of trilogues. Very opaque, lack of transparency, work behind closed doors." Maxime Moreau, who works at a company representation, also complains that these inter-institutional discussions do not serve a "democratic transparent process." For lobbyists, this situation is highly problematic, because it becomes more difficult to assess which consultative processes are the most important ones, and which interest groups wielded influence at which point. Jeremy Jones, who works for an industry association, complains that it is currently no longer possible to tell on what basis the Commission made its decisions and formulated the wording of its legislative proposal. The Commission has far-reaching powers to steer consultations in a way that suits its needs – and thus also its own agenda – as business lobbyist Norbert Neumann insinuates with regard to secondary law: "These are delegated acts. The Commission gets the power to do something, the power. The Commission should consult, but doesn't have to. It can invite experts. Now the question is, who is the expert? Where are the experts based?" Lorenzo Lombardi, who works for the industry, also agrees with this assessment. Consultations have something ritualistic about them. They also do not seem to necessarily encourage the ideas, proposals, and solutions offered by individual interest groups to actually be taken up: "We are indeed consulted. However, these are usually pro forma token events where we are heard, but none of the ideas, proposals, and solutions that we have offered are necessarily reflected in the proposal."

The institutional reforms since the Lisbon Treaties are not the only source of change, as lobbyists report. A second important factor transforming the field of interest representation is related to the increasing role of the mass and social media as platforms and instruments of lobbying. The latter changes

classical lobbying in two ways. On the one hand, PR and media work play a greater role for most lobby groups. This is because NGOs use print, electronic, and social media much more than industry interests to exert public pressure on the EU institutions, first and foremost on the European Parliament. "Public pressure through social media and traditional media" is a central topic for Colin Cooper, "because this is one of our key assets as an NGO." However, this option is not restricted to the NGO sector alone. Industry associations and companies are also much more proactive in playing this card. This is noted as well by the NGOs themselves, as indicated by Dominique Dubois, who works for an NGO: "I mean, if we write a letter to the *Financial Times*, two weeks later there is a letter from BusinessEurope to the *Financial Times*." This indicates that the classic forms of legislative lobbying, which were primarily aimed at directly influencing decision makers, are now being supplemented by instruments of dedicated PR work, which for a long time were among the preferred options of NGOs.

The alignment of the repertoire of actions is undoubtedly related to the institutional enhancement of the European Parliament. However, the alignment is also related to the opportunities offered by the new media and the communication habits of MEPs in this regard. The advent of social media in the world of politics seems to have had a particularly stimulating effect here. Electronic and social media facilitate the sending of statements, documents, and reports to a large number of addressees. In fact, Frank Fischer as an MEP and Karin Keller as a journalist agree that they are faced with a high number of electronic messages. But not only are electronic mass mailings becoming more common, communication work is also shifting more towards social media, as Georg Gerlach describes: "So there's a lot more tweeting and a lot more use of all kinds of things. Also in the lobby area; [this use of Twitter] is really amazing. But this is also what politics wants. They are also riding the wave like crazy."

A final source of change is a consequence of the institutional reforms of the EU and the increasing importance of mass and social media – namely, the growth of the arena of interest groups and the dynamism it is unleashing. In fact, European lobbyists comment concertedly that the growing number of interests, the greater fragmentation and specialisation of the respective camps, and the greater funds that lobby groups invest in their work are among the reasons why their work has changed significantly during the last decades. The first and most remarkable change refers to the growth and differentiation of the lobbying sector, as the complaint about over-competitiveness resonates throughout the interview material. Particularly interesting is the comparison with the accounts from 1998 and 1999 presented above. Two decades earlier, respondents also felt that the lobby sector had grown rapidly and now included a large number and variety of special interest groups. Up to 50,000 lobbyists were supposed to be out and about, and literally any random – and nonsensical – topic found a mouthpiece in Brussels, according to Frederic Fournier's caricatured account at the time. Andrea Albrecht provides a

similar description more than 15 years later: "Everyone has their own special pet topic, special interest. You have NGOs. You have corporations. You have associations." Nevertheless, there is a striking and decisive difference between the statements made at these two points in time. In the late 1990s, lobbyists still assumed that the growing organisational field could be absorbed and broken down by the EU with its many policy field-specific arenas, and that the really relevant interests within these arenas would assert themselves against the many insignificant small and micro associations. In the mid-2010s, there was talk of generalised competition. The chorus of voices describing this competition as counterproductive also included the representatives of industry interests. Andrea Albrecht, for example, looked at the politicians and laments, "They are being inundated by so many different people on the same topic. And you can see this affecting at least the legislative process." For interest groups, the work becomes more difficult "because your voice is being drowned out by other voices."

This competition is detrimental to the industry sector, says Athanasios Angelopoulos, because it prevents successful advocacy: "The reason I say: There are too many lobbyists and too many trade associations; I see them competing." They compete particularly for attention. "That's the stupidest thing, because then the Commission or others can really play you off against each other." In such circumstances, interest groups are pushed to form alliances. As Karin Keller, a Brussels correspondent, describes it, these alliances do not always succeed. She explains this using the example of the Commission's proposal on the circular economy, which sought to set high recycling targets and reduce landfill. The problem of forming an alliance was that the industry's umbrella organisation (Business Europe and the national umbrella organisations organised under it) tried to prevent the adoption of this proposal, while individual companies (Philips, Unilever or Michelin, the recycling industry and the World European Council for Development) were against the withdrawal of the proposal. "So we are also divided because the world of business is also so complex. And you can no longer bundle all interests under one hat."

The growth and fragmentation of the organisational field thus generates considerable problems for the lobbying staff, particularly because the increased competition goes hand in hand with the increasing importance of issue-specific consultation processes. For Olof Olsson, it is the mushrooming of informal negotiations in technical and conciliation committees and the enhanced status of implementing acts that force lobby groups to take a case-by-case approach: "Now you have a lot of exceptions, deviations, complications." This increases the demand for external consultants because the latter can help out with advocacy on a specific issue: "You must really be an expert. And that means you have to subcontract or you have to externalise that procedural dimension." Colin Cooper, who works for an NGO, also suspects that this demand is growing among industry representations. More and more companies freeze the funds for employing "in-house" lobbyists in

order to use consultancy services. In this way, the number of staff can easily be doubled if necessary.

The increasing fragmentation of the lobbying sector and the growing competitiveness of lobbying is, finally, responsible for the trend towards bigger budgets and staffs. In fact, many interviewees make remarks about the budget of the respective counterpart, the observed staffing levels of some of the interests and the perceived frequency of activities. While the assumption of increasing budgets is always made in relation to the respective other side, it is indicative for the general trend that this perception is shared by almost all interviewees. Georg Gerlach, who is employed by an NGO, describes the financial and personnel effort of the other side as follows: "Other people have ten people running here, have even more people running there, plus they hire law firms or even pure lobbying events, and that goes into the hundreds of thousands and millions, of course." He sees his own NGO as being in an unfair competition with other lobby groups. He is not alone in this respect, as other NGO representatives also point to the implicit motif of having to fight like "David against Goliath" (that is: the supremacy of industry). The business interests would like to counter this impression, because they too talk about the increasing financial power of other factions. Their focus is on large industry associations and individual companies, but also on the NGO sector, which Andrea Albrecht feels is significantly increasing its spending:

> I think NGOs have become more and more powerful in Brussels. They have a lot more financial power. I mean, we, as an organisation, do not have that much money that we invest in lobbying capabilities other than, you know, the personnel themselves. So we don't have large coffers of money that I think maybe other organisations and companies invest in.

Valerie Vincent, who also works for a company representation, agrees with this statement, as she too underlines that other companies invest disproportionately more money in lobbying activities than her own representation. She mentions in particular money spent on paying commercial consultancies: "They will invest at least millions in this stuff." The disparaging undertone ("this stuff") suggests that she doubts the return on these "investments." Nevertheless, she at least concedes that other interest groups put in much more effort, which could pay off under certain circumstances.

Despite this scepticism about the added value of bigger budgets, the belief seems to persist that money might increase the effectiveness of European lobbying. For Geert van Gelder and Valerie Vincent, money is not a sufficient condition to guarantee lobbying success, but financial resources are certainly a necessity. Following this sentiment, Colin Cooper links the trend towards the professionalisation of lobbying to financial investment: "Some from the industry," he points out, "hire better professionals and they invest more money and time in doing better things." This perception of the beneficial role of money is also reflected in the concern of many that the lobbying

of the financially stronger counterpart may be more successful than that of their own organisation. At the same time, this recurring concern also seems to express a discomfort with the implicit escalation logic of current conditions. Financial investments seem to fuel each other, as the perception of unequal financial reserves on the other side is likely to spur the desire to increase corresponding investments for one's own work. The perception that "business is getting tougher," as Frank Fischer describes the current development, is consequently an expression of discomfort with the race for ever increasing labour and material input.

3.3 The qualitative transformation of lobbying: towards professionalism

European lobbying has been impacted decisively by the fundamental changes of the institutional and societal reality – this is the shared conviction of those lobbyists interviewed in the years between 2014 and 2016. According to them, today's conditions differ from past conditions in both quantitative and qualitative terms. In quantitative terms, it has already been pointed out that in earlier days there were far fewer interest groups and lobbyists than at present. Those who have been professionally active in the field for longer report that the number of people today has increased significantly, if not dramatically, compared to when they entered the field. Stefan Schneider, for example, who works for a company representation, remembers: "So around '98 [...] there were really much fewer – in inverted commas – lobbyists or consultants here in Brussels." Athanasios Angelopoulos, who started out working for an MEP and now works as a lobbyist for a private company, seeks to back up this growth with figures: "I mean, 20 years ago, I knew a couple of them. But not as much as now. And it must have, perhaps, ten times more or something, or 20 times more."

Whether this subjective perception also corresponds to an objective increase in interest groups and persons cannot be unequivocally clarified. It may also be influenced by factors related to the intensity of lobbying rather than the number of actors. This is because the greater diversity of interests represented increases the competitiveness of the field and the struggle for opinion leadership, which automatically increases the frequency of contacts and inputs. There also seems to be more money being invested in advocacy, which improves the actors' capacity to act and increases the density of activity. Lastly, the media shift is changing communication practices by replacing expensive and cumbersome printed matter with cheap electronic mass mailings.

Overall, it cannot be ruled out that the perception of a disproportionate growth of the field is not only related to the growing number of interest groups, but is also a consequence of the greater intensity and faster pace of lobbying-specific activities. The quantitative change in the field is consequently accompanied by a qualitative change that directly affects the work

of European lobbyists. In fact, the interviewees highlight that the qualitative change concerns the staff themselves and can be reduced to a fairly simple formula: In the past, deserving but inexperienced people were entrusted with the tasks of European lobbying; today, they are specialised professionals.

Frank Fischer, who is an MEP, describes the change this way: "So, it is no longer the case that the board member is shunted off to the European association." Martin Müller also thinks that it used to be common practice to entrust obsolete employees of national associations or companies with tasks of European interest representation. Other interviewees do not express themselves in such derogatory terms. Nevertheless, they agree that the lobbyists of the early days do not match today's job description. They name three characteristics of the previous staff that are quite consistent with the above theme. Firstly, Andrea Albrecht emphasises that European interest representation in the early days was primarily a kind of travelling diplomacy: "In the past, I'll be fair, people would come to Brussels. They would have a meeting, and they would leave. And they called that lobbying." Lobbying at a distance was not only because stakeholders were often not based in Brussels in the past. It was also an expression of a time when lobbying was still more strongly tied to the national Member States and the associations and factions based there. Consequently, interest representatives only travelled to Brussels when they had meetings to attend. As has already been illustrated, this constellation applied to Olof Olsson because the European association he worked for did not open an office in Brussels until the late 1980s.

Secondly, the lobbyists of the early days were bound to national associations or companies not only spatially but also in terms of content. They were very familiar with the industry, the company or the product. As Olof Olsson notes, thematic specialisation is particularly characteristic of early interest representation:

> In the good old days, you know what is a lobbyist? A lobbyist is a guy being a specialist in an issue. You know? You're a specialist in sugar, or in milk, or in beef, or in energy, or in petrol, or in renewable energy, whatever. So you're a specialist.

Lobbying of this kind builds on thematic expertise, which at the same time also conveys credibility, because these lobbyists are a mouthpiece for specific interests. Although Olof Olsson does not provide details about the recruitment channels, it seems reasonable to assume that these people were often regular employees of companies or industry associations who were entrusted with lobbying tasks in the course of their careers. This assessment had already been put forward by Frank Fischer and Martin Müller, as both describe the lobbyists of the early days as former and obsolete staff of the companies or associations concerned.

Thirdly, the interviewees leave no doubt that the staff of the old days did have thematic expertise. In terms of lobbying, however, these people were

mainly laypersons; and in their new professional activity, they were then inev-
itably regarded as self-taught. This is the opinion of Martin Müller, who uses
a disparaging choice of words to denounce the lack of professionalism in
early European lobbying:

> The big shift that is happening, according to me, is the specialisation. [...]
> Back in the old days, I think lobbying was much less a profession. I think
> lots of companies sent representatives that they didn't know exactly where
> to put. Nice guys. They came here and they probably did good things, but
> it was more on a social, networking level.

The early lobbyists seem to lack the know-how of a lobbyist, which is why
Martin Müller describes their work by referring to personal attributes: They
cannot offer more than good intentions ("doing good things") and personal
relationship work (the "social network level"). They obviously did no harm,
but their activities were at amateur level and thus below what a professionally
consolidated advocacy group could achieve.

This lack of professionalism is also attributed to another group of people
from which the European lobby sector has been recruited in the past as well
as today: the former members of the EU institutions. However, this group of
people does not appear in the interview material when describing the changes
over time. In the past, as today, career changers were part of the normal
recruitment channels, which is why no change in the lobbying sector can be
attributed to this group of people; nor does it represent a professionalisation
of the field. As Bettina Böhm already noted in 1999, "an ex-Commission offi-
cial, or an ex-parliamentarian or an ex-journalist" does certainly contribute
an important lobbying resource: contacts with members of the European
institutions. However, she felt that this resource is subject to rapid devalu-
ation: "the shelf life of an ex-politician is only a year or two." Consequently,
the ex-politicians have to hold their own in a professional field that is now
characterised by a high level of professionalism.

Martin Müller also shares the view that today's staff have become sig-
nificantly more professional when he speaks of an increasing specialisation
of the profession in the passage quoted above. This means that his concept
of specialisation differs entirely from the kind of specialisation that Olof
Olsson had in mind when he spoke of sector- or product-specific expertise.
What Martin Müller means is the lobbying-related specialised knowledge
that the lobbyists of the early days lacked. And specialisation also appears to
be changing recruitment channels and career paths, as the many companies
today are clearly no longer sending people for whom they have no other use.
Conversely, this would mean that many companies today dispatch profes-
sionally specialised people with relevant work experience to Brussels. Such
an observation was also made by Laurent Leroy, who works for a European
association. Interest groups now also look for professionally relevant expertise
when recruiting their staff, making lobbying-specific careers possible: "Most

associations now are recruiting at all levels and quite directly. So there's people who are looking towards a career in public affairs."

The interviews highlight both the occupational nature and the professionalism of today's lobbying in order to describe the qualitative change in the profession. They bring into focus a fundamental shift that can be called the big shift of European lobbying. According to this, the dominant lobbying style is moving away from what Colin Cooper, as staff member of an NGO, describes as "old school." This lobbying style was cultivated by a group of people who grew up in a political context characterised by agricultural policy and the central position of farmers' organisations. According to his account, the "old school" generation is increasingly being replaced by younger people who act in a much more professional manner:

> Some directors of those organisations were really old school. Because you need to understand Brussels has existed since the '60s. [...] Those guys are still old school. But then you have new guys coming in and more professionalised and American teaching people here. And you see a professionalisation, I would say, and especially in the industries getting better. And the NGOs are getting better and better.

Distinguishing between two generations is to distinguish between lobbying approaches. Although Colin Cooper does not describe the "old school" in detail, the comparison insinuates that the early days were characterised by a lower level of professionalisation. In this respect, the diagnosis coincides with the descriptions of the old days already outlined: the central importance of a travelling diplomacy, the predominance of untrained and obsolete staff, the orientation of work towards factual expertise, and the cultivation of personal contacts with the institutions of the EC or EU. This description is largely consistent with what is described as "old-school lobbying" in professional articles and reports from practice: "In the year before the Lisbon Treaty, EU lobbying rules were quite simple. They were divided into three stages: stage 1, mastering the technical issues; stage 2, identifying decision makers, and stage 3, meeting those decision makers" (Guéguen 2019: 94). And it is also consistent with what the evaluation of the interviews from the 1990s identified in terms of reference points and practices of lobbying at the time.

The description of the old days and the assumed professionalism of today's lobbyists should be treated with caution, because these contrasting assessments are not impartial. For one thing, it has already been observed that the more recent accounts of the early times are not always based on personal experience. As most respondents only started working in the new millennium, they most likely glean their image of the old days from the older people still working today. In addition, their perceptions are based on narratives and assessments that apparently circulate in Brussels circles. This is especially true of the buzzword "old school." After all, the dialogue partners also have an interest in elevating and legitimising today's lobbying by referring

to the higher standards of professional work. The old days obviously serve as a negative contrast for this justification.

However, the comparison does not necessarily imply a criticism of the old days. In individual interviews, the assessment is more reserved. For Laurent Leroy, for example, the field of work has changed significantly, but this change only concerns the higher density of activities and the diversity of the recruited staff, but not the professionalism of lobbying in terms of good work. It can also be deduced from Olof Olsson's accounts that different times necessitate different approaches to lobbying. The recurrent reference to the professionalism of today's lobbying is thus an acknowledgement that the current field of activity has to conform to new standards. Lobbyists referring to professionalism certify that interest representation requires a specific know-how that needs to be learned and applied. It is this know-how that distinguishes professional lobbying from old-school advocacy and gives it a competitive edge. Bettina Böhm already held this view in 1999, as outlined above. She was convinced that lobbying is a fully developed craft that can draw on precise tools and tried and tested instruments to guarantee maximum effectiveness. But this conviction is also expressed in the more recent interviews, although no other interviewee takes this position as firmly as Bettina Böhm. Rosalie Rousseau, who works for an NGO, notes, for example, that more and more organisations are getting involved in communication work, because "communication is the be-all and end-all." Maxime Moreau (corporate lobbyist), Geert van Gelder (employee of a consultancy firm), and Olof Olsson are also of the opinion that there are lobbying-specific instruments, "formulas," or methods that can be learned to make one's own work more efficient.

3.4 A retrospective: the genesis of a field of professional activity

European lobbying has changed significantly over time. This is the view of the lobbyists who were interviewed in the late 1990s and mid-2010s. They not only mention a significantly higher number of interest groups seeking to influence European legislative processes, but also perceive a qualitative change in the European lobby sector that ultimately stimulates a further professionalisation of European interest representation. These accounts are largely in line with the findings of previous research on the organisational field of European interest groups (Schmitter and Streeck 1991; Eising and Kohler-Koch 1994; Greenwood 2017). However, they place particular emphasis on a number of changes that have tangible consequences for the day-to-day work of EU affairs professionals. The organisational field is subject to processes of diversification, fragmentation and specialisation, which is why competition between interest groups is also increasing within the economy and reducing the probability of success for each individual group (Dür et al. 2015; Kluger Rasmussen 2015; Chalmers 2019). The competition is also shifting to the public sphere, which has become an important arena in the battle for opinion leadership (Eising et al. 2015; Junk 2015; Keller 2018; Rasch 2018; de Bruycker

and Beyers 2019). Privileged discussions between the lobby groups and the Directorates-General of the EU Commission do continue within the various policy fields. However, lobbyists have to significantly intensify and diversify their activities because European legislative initiatives pass through a complex decision-making process (Coen et al. 2021: 118–124). Institutional reforms have changed the workings and balance of power between the Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, just as the coordination between these institutions produces its own negotiations. Due to these developments, the competition of interest groups within as well as between policy fields has intensified significantly (Kastner 2018; Keller 2018). All these developments encourage a steady professionalisation of European lobbying across interest sectors (Bursens 1997; Coen and Richardson 2009; Klüver and Saurugger 20113; Coen and Vannoni 2016).

The European lobbyists interviewed during the late 1990s and mid-2010s provide rich insights into these larger transformations and confirm that the changes have triggered a surge in professionalism. Firstly, they argue that lobbying has increasingly established itself as a distinct occupational field. This implies that European advocacy is less and less pursued by the amateurs of the early years (the "old school"). The amateurs are replaced by professionals who have specialised in this activity and developed their own expertise. Secondly, they believe that today's staff make use of a toolkit or tools of the trade that at least improves the chance of conducting effective and successful lobbying. Professionalisation would thus appear to be an answer to the greater demands of the field, as it promises to improve the lobbyists' ability to act and reflect.

The accounts suggest that the two developments are interlinked, as the steady professionalisation of the work also meant that European lobbying became more and more established as a specialised occupation. The more competitive the environment, the more the professionalism of European lobbying seemed to manifest itself. Even the staff of conflicting interest groups – here especially those of NGOs and industry interests – described and assessed these developments in similar terms. The level of consensus is remarkably high and suggests that professionalisation is experienced as a common reality. However, the previous evaluations could only provide preliminary indications of such a shift, and this means that the empirical validation and explanation of this development is still pending.

4 The lobbying staff

Structures, profiles, self-images

European lobbying is a specialised activity that is usually placed in the hands of accomplished specialists. It is therefore reasonable to explore European lobbying through the professionals entrusted with it. A look at the staff helps describe the contours and structures of the field of work, and it can be clarified whether the staff perceive European lobbying as a common field of work in relation to professional activity profiles and self-images. Paying attention to the staff makes it possible to draw a differentiated picture of the field of work, because the group of people entrusted with EU affairs is very heterogeneous. Above all, the job profiles and job titles diverge, as some focus on relations with the EU institutions (Director of EU Affairs, Head of European Government Affairs, EU Liaison Officer), and others emphasise political regulatory work (Policy Officer, EU Policy Advisor, Manager Regulatory Affairs), focus on interest representation (Advocacy Manager, Consultant EU Policy and Advocacy, Brussels Representative), emphasise communications work (Communications Officer, Manager Communications and Events, Head of Communications and Public Affairs), or name general management tasks (Executive Director, Vice-President, Secretary General, Head of Department), which obviously include lobbying-related activities.

The heterogeneity of the job descriptions highlights the fact that political advocacy encompasses different areas of responsibility. The field of work does have a clearly defined core task, as lobbying is defined by activities that seek to exert a direct influence on political decision-making within the EU institutions. However, the more the core area of lobbying is left behind, the more the spectrum of tasks opens up and activity profiles come into play that fulfil lobbying-related, complementary or additional tasks (Michel 2005b; Büttner et al. 2015; Bitonti et al. 2017). The broader field of work of EU affairs involves preparing and conducting meetings and organising events. In addition, information gathering and preparation plays a major role, for example in relation to preparing topic-specific dossiers, reporting on developments in the field of European policy or drafting position papers. Communication, public relations (PR), and media work are also of central importance. The work with clients, federation members, or the membership base should not be neglected either, for example in relation to the organisation's internal

information procurement, coordination, and decision-making. These tasks are sometimes taken over by individual persons. However, these activities are also entrusted to different staff members who are particularly qualified for the respective task profiles due to their professional background. The group of people involved is therefore not only subdivided along different activity profiles, but also along different professional biographies and job profiles.

This means that the field of European lobbying can consequently only be captured adequately by taking an inclusive approach, which first defines the relevant group of people across the broad range of tasks of EU public affairs. This term has become widely accepted in the field as a label for activities and professions, because it allows the broad spectrum of tasks already mentioned to be described, and it will also be the starting point for the following considerations. The inclusive approach will facilitate an estimate of the size of the circle of EU affairs professionals in general and that of European lobbying in particular. Furthermore, it allows to determine the weight of lobbying-specific activities and self-images in the field of work. This will help show that European lobbying is the focal point of a diverse and open field of work.

4.1 The EU affairs professionals: contours and structures of the staff

Previous research has gathered evidence that the European Union (EU) has developed its own staffs, circles of experts and professional networks specialising in European law and European politics (Olgiati 2008; Kauppi and Madsen 2013; Vauchez and Mudge 2012; Vauchez and de Witte 2013; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Büttner et al. 2015). Similar results also apply to the narrower field of European lobbying, as the growing field of organised interests has also favoured the formation of its own staff (Michel 2005a; Courty 2010; McGrath 2005; Klüver and Saurugger 2013; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Avril 2018; Beauvallet et al. 2022). This was also the opinion of the lobbyists interviewed in the previous chapter. According to their accounts, European lobbying has established itself as a profession that is characterised by specialised skills and activity profile.

These indications will be investigated in the following. The first step is to empirically define the staff in its general structure. The survey data collected allow for such a representation, as the respondents all indicated that they are active in the field of European lobbying, even if the degree of affiliation diverges. The survey data therefore provide insights into the size of the staff, the socio-demographic structure and the geographical distribution.

4.1.1 Estimates of the size of the staff

The number of active lobbyists is unknown, which is why the size of the staff can only be estimated. The number of active interest groups (Courty 2010; Beyers et al. 2020) for which EU affairs professionals work, does not help in

this respect either, as the corresponding figures are also based on estimates. The aforementioned 1992 report of the European Commission named more than 3,000 interest groups and up to 10,000 lobbyists (Commission of the European Communities, 1992: 2). The estimated number of individuals has increased significantly since then. Alter-EU spoke of 15,000 individuals in 2010 (Alter-EU 2010: 23), while LobbyControl and the research and campaign organisation Europe Observatory a few years later stated that the number of individuals was as high as 30,000 (Corporate Europe Observatory 2011: 6). The figure of 50,000 full-time professionals is also mentioned (European Parliament 2018). However, the parameters on which these estimates are based are not discussed, which is why an evaluation is difficult. The own survey data allow to overcome this deficiency, because they help develop estimates based on nameable parameters. As discussed in Chapter 2, the data were collected by means of a standardised survey of European lobbyists in 2016/2017 and do have certain limitations. However, they provide an accurate overview of the occupational field that paints a differentiated picture of the staff. Most importantly, the data can be used to estimate the size of the staff because respondents also provided information on colleagues active in the field.

An estimate of staff must first and foremost make a differentiation that does not seem to have been taken into account in the available reports. The narrower field of lobbying must be distinguished from the broader field of EU affairs. This field of activity is much broader than what is referred to as lobbying in the narrower sense; and, as will be shown, the respondents actually understand lobbying as only one specific sub-area of the broader field. In general, the area of EU affairs is assigned tasks that are aimed at lobbying, advocacy or EU relations, but also concern topics such as monitoring, analyses and expert opinions, information management, communication, PR or media work, legal advice or compliance. The term "EU affairs" therefore also includes people who work for different organisations – not only associations, company representations, NGOs, or state bodies, but also consultancies, law firms, or think tanks.

It is therefore advisable to make two separate estimates – one with regard to the total population of EU affairs professionals, a second with regard to the number of European lobbyists in the narrower sense. For the first estimate, data from the survey and the transparency register can be used. In June 2016, the EU register listed 6,301 individuals and 9,290 organisations. However, only 2,184 of these organisations have registered their staff, which means that the missing persons need to be estimated. One-third of the organisations (2,767) are based in the greater Brussels area; the rest (6,523) operate from outside. The majority of registered persons belongs to the Brussels offices (4,962); fewer work elsewhere (1,339). The number of registered EU affairs professionals thus seems to depend on the seat of the organisation. This finding is confirmed by the survey data, which show that Brussels-based and non-Brussels-based organisations employ 6.8 and 2.6 EU affairs officers

respectively. If these figures are extrapolated to the organisational field, this would result in a total population of 35,775 professionals.

Although this figure corresponds to some estimates, it appears to be too high, as the number of employees of the 2,184 organisations cannot be fully transferred to the 7,106 groups without registered staff. A more appropriate estimate is one that differentiates by residency. For the 2,184 organisations with registered staff in and outside Brussels (1,485 and 699 respectively), the calculated staff size (6.8 and 2.6 respectively) can be aligned with the average number of registered persons (according to the register, 3.3 and 1.9 respectively) to determine the non-registered persons (3.5 and 0.7 per group respectively). This adds 5,198 and 489 to the 6,301 registered EU affairs professionals. However, the 7,106 organisations that have not registered staff are also likely to employ EU affairs professionals. It is possible to estimate this group of people, as the EU register indicates that 27.7 per cent of the workforce of Brussels-based organisations – and 1.4 per cent of those with a registered office outside – are listed in the register. If these percentages are extrapolated to the total workforce, 4,946 are added for Brussels-based organisations and 1,413 for those based outside.

This brings the total number of EU affairs professionals to 18,347, of whom 15,106 are employed in Brussels and 3,241 outside. The figure can only be understood as an estimate of the people working in this field. The circle of employees in and outside Brussels could be larger, as many interest groups may only be active sporadically if legislative processes relevant to them are pending. In addition, there would be activities related to the implementation of European law, the implementation of EU funding programmes and the application for EU funding. Studies show that a separate labour market has established itself in the European Member States to take on these tasks. The EU professionals employed here are characterised by EU-specific expertise, which extends primarily to the areas of European law, European funding programmes, and funding resources (Büttner et al. 2015). If these professionals were counted, the total number of people involved in EU affairs across all Member States could easily reach the number of 30,000 to 50,000 people estimated by Corporate Europe Observatory (2011: 6) or the European Parliament (European Parliament 2018). However, the estimate of active EU affairs professionals presented here does not take these national labour markets into account. It narrows down the staff to those people who maintain a direct line to the EU institutions. Compared to the national labour markets of EU professionals, the figure presented should therefore relate to the supranational labour market of EU relations in the narrower sense.

The group of EU affairs professionals is very large, with over 18,000 people, but it still remains unclear as to how many are involved in European lobbying in the strict sense. Estimating this core staff is fraught with uncertainty: Since the respondents are more or less involved in lobbying-specific activities, it is not clear at what percentage one should speak of a lobbying-specific job profile. In fact, it can be assumed that all respondents saw themselves as part of

the field of work, as the invitation to participate in the survey explicitly stated the project topic and goal ("Professionalisation of EU lobbying and interest representation"), which is why recruitment was subject to self-selection. At the same time, the responses indicate that not all respondents consider themselves to belong to this field of work in the same way. As will be shown, some of the interviewees state that they are only involved in lobbying to a limited extent. It is thus advisable to determine the group of people who can be assigned to the core staff. To this end, two questions can be used to help assess the degree of belonging to the narrower field of work of European lobbying. Firstly, respondents were asked to indicate how much of their total working time they spent on lobbying activities – the nine-point scale ranged from "not at all" to "frequently." Secondly, the participants were asked about their professional self-image.

With a view to professional self-images, 67.8 per cent of respondents chose job titles that use lobbying, interest representation or other synonyms (see Section 4.2), while just over a third named other job titles (such as expert, consultant, analyst, manager, diplomat). With regard to the frequency of lobbying-specific activities, almost one in three (28.9 per cent) says they are rarely or never involved in such activities (see also Section 4.2). It can thus be concluded that one-third of the respondents should not be assigned to the narrower field of European lobbying. If this share is deducted from the estimated number of active EU affairs professionals, the number of European lobbyists can be estimated at around 12,400 or 13,000 persons. It must also be emphasised that this estimate mainly takes into account the supranational labour market of European lobbyists, as the national labour markets are only partially covered by the transparency register.

The distinction between EU affairs and European lobbying has consequences for the analyses and discussions in the following chapters. First, it will be necessary to establish differences, because EU affairs refers to a heterogeneous field of activity with different job profiles and self-images, whereas lobbying is a much more confined field of work with specific task profiles and job descriptions. At the same time, however, it can be assumed that there will be fluid transitions between the broader field of work of EU affairs and the core area of lobbying, which must be taken into account in the analysis of activities and persons.

4.1.2 The socio-demographic profile of EU affairs professionals

A first insight into the structure of the staff is provided by the demographic characteristics of the respondents – their age and gender. This information can be used to clarify whether the change in staff discussed in the interviews has occurred. According to the descriptions, the old days were characterised by a one-sided staff structure. The reports reveal that it was above all the (older, male) employees of national federations, companies or associations who were sent to Brussels to represent the interests of their employers

towards the European institutions. The interviews indicate that the changes in the field have also led to a change in the group of practitioners, as younger men and women are now taking up lobbying as a career and pursuing it professionally.

The socio-demographic data gathered by the survey can help assess the magnitude of these changes. A high proportion of younger and middle-aged people would suggest the establishment of a labour market that makes early career entry and own career paths possible. Moreover, higher proportions of women would indicate a steady feminisation of the staff, thus underlining the plausibility of the presumed change. Particular attention needs to be paid to gender-specific inequalities and segmentations along positions and occupational status so characteristic of many labour markets (Bolton and Muzio 2008), because it allows to assess the extent to which the feminisation of the workforce has changed the entire field of EU public affairs, including high-ranking positions. Moreover, it makes it possible to ascertain the extent to which a gender gap within the lobbying profession, which has been identified by previous research (Junk et al. 2021; also Bath et al. 2005; LaPira et al. 2020), is also a reality within the political arena of the EU.

To shed light on the age and gender structure of the staff, an age pyramid was created based on the survey data. Figure 4.1 shows that people of all age groups are active in the field of EU affairs, including some respondents of retirement age. However, the age pyramid has quite a pronounced base, with many people between the ages of 30 and 35 among the respondents. The proportion of people under 30 is significantly lower. A second striking feature is the uneven distribution of age groups by gender. Among the younger age groups, men and women are almost equally well represented in the field. The
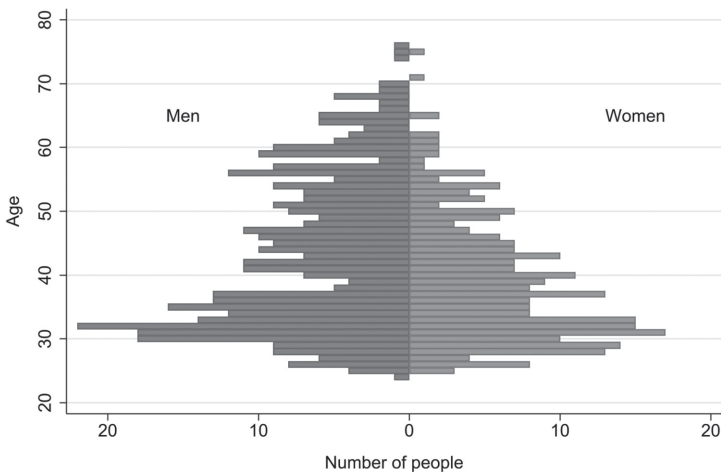

Figure 4.1 Age and gender structure (N = 655).

Table 4.1 Age and gender structure of all respondents

	Age					
	20–29	*30–39*	*40–49*	*50–59*	*60+*	*total*
all respondents	79	246	158	113	59	655
	12.1%	*37.6%*	*24.1%*	*17.2%*	*9.0%*	*100.0%*
according to gender						
Female	42	111	69	35	10	267
	53.2%	*45.1%*	*43.7%*	*31.0%*	*17.0%*	*40.8%*
Male	37	135	89	78	49	388
	46.8%	*54.9%*	*56.3%*	*69.0%*	*83.0%*	*59.2%*
Total	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100.0%*

over-45s, in contrast, are dominated by men; the imbalance is particularly pronounced among the over-55s.

These findings are corroborated as soon as the respondents are divided into different cohorts. Table 4.1 shows that the group of 30-year-olds (irrespective of gender) is the largest, and that the cohorts between 30 and 49 years of age account for almost two-thirds of all respondents. The group of the over-50s is still well represented with a quarter of respondents, while the youngest make up just over one in ten. If the figures are broken down by gender, a clear feminisation of the staff can be seen along the age structure. The older the cohort, the more dominant the proportion of men; the younger the cohort, the more balanced the proportion of women and men. In the youngest cohort, women are even in the majority. What is unclear about these findings, however, is whether we are dealing with an age or a cohort effect. On the one hand, it is conceivable that these figures indicate a steady change in the labour market. A higher proportion of men in the cohorts of the over 50s and 60s could indicate that 20 or 30 years ago, hardly any women, but many men, opted for a career in this labour market. At the same time, it would indicate that this situation has changed radically by now, as the proportion of women who have sought and found relevant employment has increased noticeably. In that case, older, male-dominated generations would be supplemented or replaced by younger, more female-dominated generations. On the other hand, these findings can also be attributed to an age effect. In this case, the higher proportion of men would indicate that women leave the profession more often with increasing age, while men remain in the occupational field until old age or join as career changers. The fact that the proportion of women decreases evenly from the youngest to the oldest generation supports the plausibility of the cohort effect, since age-specific career endings would have to occur more frequently during biographically distinctive stages – in terms of traditional gender roles: at the age of starting a family – which is not the case. However, a definite clarification is not possible on the basis of a one-time cross-sectional analysis.

The feminisation of the labour market, however, also needs to be validated with regard to the proportion of women in senior positions in order to assess the scope of the change. A question on the role profile of the job that respondents hold within their organisation can be used for these purposes. The respondents were asked to indicate which decision-making competences they have in their day-to-day work. The closest to leadership positions was the statement that respondents assumed management responsibility with decision-making powers. Of the 268 people who considered themselves to be in this position (representing 41 per cent of all), 67 per cent were male and only 33 per cent were female (see Table 4.2). The proportion of women among senior staff is thus quite moderate. However, a process of feminisation can also be discerned in this respect, as the proportion of women in leadership positions increases, the younger the cohorts are. This finding is conveyed in the following figure and table. Figure 4.2 first shows that, as expected, the age pyramid becomes significantly narrower as soon as the group of respondents is restricted to the 267 people in leadership positions. As Table 4.2 shows, these positions are more frequent in the older cohorts: Among the over-60s, 62.7 per cent are in a senior position and the same is true for the 50s (61.1 per cent) and 40s (53.2 per cent) cohorts. The proportion drops significantly in the younger cohorts: Here, only 27.6 per cent of thirty-somethings and just 11.4 per cent of twenty-somethings hold a leadership position. As in many other fields, the prospects of holding leadership positions in EU affairs also increase with age.

In terms of gender ratios, it is evident from the age pyramid that the number of men in senior positions is significantly higher compared to women. This ratio evens out considerably among the younger cohorts, and among the youngest, women in leadership positions even predominate. Table 4.2 confirms this feminisation of the management floors. Women are slightly overrepresented among the few young leaders and the ratio remains fairly even among the 30-year-old cohort. The proportion of women then gradually

Table 4.2 Gender relations in leadership positions

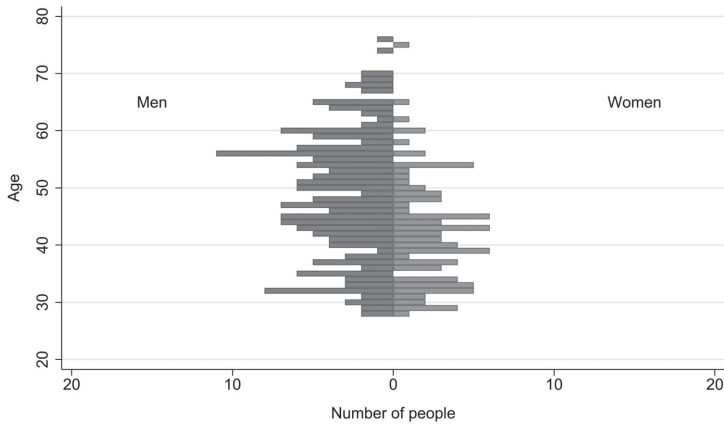| Gender	Age					
	20–29	*30–39*	*40–49*	*50–59*	*60+*	*total*
Female	5	32	33	13	5	88
	55.6%	*47.1%*	*39.3%*	*18.8%*	*13.5%*	*33.0%*
Male	4	36	51	56	32	179
	44.4%	*52.9%*	*60.7%*	*81.2%*	*86.5%*	*67.0%*
All leaders	9	68	84	69	37	267
	100%	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*
All respondents	79	246	158	113	59	655
Proportion of leaders	*11.4%*	*27.6%*	*53.2%*	*61.1%*	*62.7%*	*40.8%*

Figure 4.2 Age pyramid of respondents in leadership positions (N = 267).

decreases up to the oldest cohorts, where men occupy almost nine out of ten positions. Here, too, it cannot be conclusively clarified whether these are cohort or age effects. The fact that the proportion of women drops significantly among the generation in their fifties speaks more in favour of age-specific, biographical decisions, although cohort effects are also conceivable.

The magnitude of the rejuvenation and feminisation of the labour market can be best evaluated when comparing the findings with the data on the staff structure of the EU institutions and associations. In terms of age structure, it can be noted that the average age of the EU affairs professionals surveyed is somewhat lower than that of the staff of the EU institutions. Respondents are on average 41.8 years old, while the corresponding age for European Commission employees is around 46 years (European Commission 2018b). The members of the European Parliament are even older: In 2016, MEPs were on average 54 years old, even though the values vary significantly between national origins. Bulgaria had the youngest delegates (45 years), Poland the oldest (59 years) (European Parliamentary Research Service 2017). Overall, this comparison shows that EU affairs professionals are significantly younger than the target group. This is an indication that the entry barriers to this field of work are less high than for the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The gender ratio shows a mixed picture. Available reports indicate that the proportion of women among EU affairs professionals is around the average of what is known about employees within the EU. For example, surveys on the gender ratio in leadership positions within all EU institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council of Ministers, Committees, and Agencies) show that the share of women at the leadership level was 31.6 per cent in 2017 (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017).[1] In some EU institutions, the share of

women is even lower, for example in leadership positions within the European courts or financial institutions. Here the figure drops to 20.8 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017).

The information about gender relations in associations and interest groups is particularly noteworthy, because it corroborates that the proportion of women in management positions varies significantly between sectors. The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the proportion of women in leadership positions among the European social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions) is only 27.2 per cent. The highest percentage is achieved by European non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In this area, the proportion of women in senior positions (presidents and members of governing bodies) is 47.6 per cent (European Institute for Gender Equality 2017). Gender parity has thus been largely achieved among European NGOs. These indications correspond roughly to the proportion of women in the area of EU public affairs: According to the survey data, the share of women at senior level is significantly higher among NGOs (40 per cent) than among trade associations and company representations (both 17 per cent).

Overall, the results prove that the change in the field of work described by the lobbyists has occurred. The staff is now recruited from women and men of all ages, although the younger generations dominate. This demographic structure suggests that EU affairs has become a labour market that readily accepts new entrants and offers personal development opportunities. At the same time, it could be shown that the EU affairs professionals do not stand out clearly from the staff of the EU institutions insofar as the age and gender structure is considered. The group of individuals is significantly younger, but only slightly more female in terms of the proportion of women. Especially among the younger cohorts, there is a clear feminisation, which also affects the management levels, thus evidencing that the gender gap is rather low at the EU level (see Junk et al. 2021; also Bath et al. 2005; LaPira et al. 2020). The comparison with the EU institutions therefore suggests that EU affairs constitute a labour market with lower entry barriers. This may point to fluid transitions between European labour markets inside and outside the EU institutions, which will be discussed in later chapters.

4.1.3 High diversity of personal and professional backgrounds

The circle of EU affairs professionals is characterised by a high diversity of personal backgrounds. Internal diversity is, first, reflected in the national origin of the respondents. When asked about their nationality, they indicated 40 different nationalities; 12 per cent hold dual citizenship. As Figure 4.3 shows, people with German passports form the largest group, followed by France, Italy, Belgium, Great Britain, and Spain. There are also significant numbers of EU affairs professionals from the Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, and Poland. While the vast majority
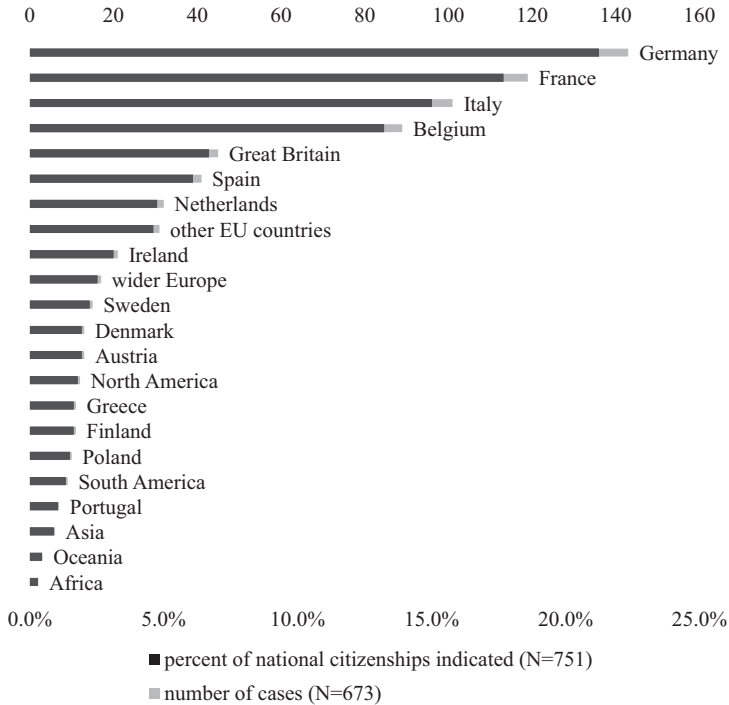
Figure 4.3 National citizenship indicated – multiple answers.

of respondents have European citizenship, only 5 per cent are from non-European countries, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia or the USA, Russia, Australia, South Korea, or South Africa.

The great heterogeneity of national origins is fully in line with the multinational structure of the EU. The fact that people with non-European roots are also among the respondents has to do with personal life histories. But it also signals that organisations outside Europe have an interest in engaging with the EU institutions, which is why they send their own staff. The percentage distribution of nationalities among the respondents largely corresponds to the size of the respective Member States, especially since German interest groups are said to have a high level of engagement in European politics (Eising 2009: 103–126; Dür and Mateo 2016: 47–69); however, the small proportion of staff with British passports seems somewhat too low (Coen et al. 2021: 150f.).

Second, the EU affairs staff is also heterogenous in terms of expertise. This can be determined on the basis of the educational profiles. Since almost all respondents have a university degree, as will be shown in the sixth chapter, the degrees can be used as a point of orientation to draw a picture of the

professional backgrounds. The first thing that stands out is the marked diversity of subjects studied, with EU affairs professionals naming a good 200 different subjects or combinations of subjects. There is hardly a subject area that is not represented. The mentions range from administrative and legal sciences, business administration, and economics to engineering, chemistry, biology, astrophysics, mathematics, medicine, history, anthropology, linguistics, and sociology. In quantitative terms, however, the social sciences, law, and economics dominate, as will be shown in more detail (see Section 6.1). Taken together, the technical and scientific subjects are well represented, with respondents citing such a subject classification in one out of six cases. While this means that the field of activity of EU affairs is dominated by graduates from economics, law, and social science courses, the breadth of professional backgrounds is nevertheless remarkable.

Third, it is advisable to take a look at the organisations for which the EU affairs professionals work. The heterogeneity of the organisational field is likely to be reflected in the heterogeneity of the staff, because different organisations (such as sector-specific companies or associations, law firms, think tanks or NGOs) also recruit different people, just as the different interest groups and task profiles socialise staff in different professional directions. The survey data make it possible to identify this organisation-related heterogeneity, as the respondents provided information about their employer. Relevant information is whether the "EU affairs offices" for which the respondents work are based exclusively in Brussels or are part of an organisation that is also active in other countries. In addition, information is available on the type of organisation, but only for those groups that are not exclusively based in Brussels.

Table 4.3 shows that almost half of all organisations operate exclusively in Brussels, with the other half in other countries. For the latter, information on the sector was requested. Almost half of the respondents work for business interest groups, every fourth person is employed by NGOs, trade unions, and professional associations, and a similarly large proportion work for commercial consultancy firms and think tanks. These figures initially confirm the predominance of economic interests, which has been determined for the field of organised interests (European Parliament 2003; Greenwood 2017: 13; Coen et al. 2021: 59–63). Since it can be assumed that the commercial consultancies primarily count companies or trade associations among their clients, the employees of these firms, as well as those of companies and trade associations, are likely to make up almost two-thirds of all EU affairs professionals. However, this does not mean that the field of work is dominated by a certain type of professional work, because the work at consultancies, associations, and company representations certainly diverges. In addition, one-third of all employees comes from a wide range of organisations, including NGOs, government bodies, think tanks, research, and educational institutions.

The information in the EU Transparency Register has been included in the table in order to check whether the proportions of respondents match those of the organisations reported in the register. Although the figures (employees

Table 4.3 Sector and type of organisation: own survey (N = 633) and organisations in the Transparency Register (N = 11791)

	respondents		EU Register [a]
	N	per cent	per cent
Organisation based exclusively in Brussels	281	44.4	
Organisation at several locations	352	55.6	
of which:			
Companies or corporations	90	25.8	19.8
Industry or employers' association	79	22.6	20.6
Trade unions or professional associations	25	7.2	7.7
NGOs, civil society	44	12.6	27.2
Public bodies and governmental organisations	24	6.9	4.9
Commercial consultancies	47	13.5	9.4
Think tanks, research or higher education	21	6.0	7.7
other	19	5.4	2.7
Total	349	100.0	100.0

a) *EU Transparency Register: http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/home, retrieved 12/04/2019.*

on the one hand and organisations on the other) cannot be equated, the comparison does provide a rough guide to assess whether the survey data paint a distorted picture. This does not seem to be the case. There are deviations among the respondents who work for NGOs. These are underrepresented in relation to the number of registered organisations, while employees of business interests and consulting firms are overrepresented. These deviations have to do with the staffing levels of the organisations concerned, as the survey data confirm. Respondents were asked to indicate how many staff members in their organisation are responsible for EU affairs. Table 4.4 shows that consultancy firms and trade associations have a larger staff working in EU relations (a median value of 15 and four employees) than NGOs (three), which is why respondents from industry-related interest groups are overrepresented in relation to the proportion of organisations, while those from NGOs are underrepresented.

The table also shows that the employers have different levels of staffing and funding. Consultancies are among the most staffed organisations, while trade unions and NGOs are among the least staffed. A similar picture emerges for the budgets for EU-related activities, with business associations having even more financial resources in this respect. However, there is a wide dispersion in regard to expenses, especially at the top. Every fourth company representation and every seventh business association has spent more than one million euros on EU affairs, while only one in ten NGOs has done so. Staffing levels and spending levels correlate significantly (Pearson's coefficient of .503***), although small offices also handle high budgets. The data thus confirm the well-known imbalance between economic interests and organised civil society.

Table 4.4 Resource endowment of the EU affairs offices

	EU affairs staff (median)	costs of EU affairs activities (median)	N
All	3 persons	200,000 euros	579 /320
Brussels-based	3	150,000	249 / 136
Consultancies	15	350,000	41 / 16
Companies	3	380,000	75 / 46
Trade associations	4	300,000	67 / 37
Trade unions	2.5	80,000	20 / 12
NGOs	3	50,000	68 / 39
others	3.5	300,000	36 /19

4.1.4 The world of EU affairs: Brussels and beyond?

The group of people working in the field of EU affairs might be hetero-geneous when considering demographic profiles, personal backgrounds, and employers. However, the impression of a consistent diversity must be put into perspective, because the world of EU affairs seems to revolve around a centre of gravity: Brussels. This city is the seat of many EU institutions, which is why the political representation of interests has a clear local connection (Kortelainen and Koeppen 2018). Admittedly, this does not necessarily mean that the interest groups must also be physically pre-sent in Brussels. In addition to the European lobby groups that have their headquarters in the 'capital of the EU', there are also local and national organisations that carry out their work entirely from their own countries, entrust consultancies in Brussels with representation work and are only active in Brussels itself on a selective basis (Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Poloni-Staudinger 2008). Nevertheless, the interest groups that main-tain their own offices in Brussels seem to have an advantage (Coen 2004). Many of the formal consultations and informal talks take place in Brussels (Broscheid and Cohen 2007). Effective lobbying also depends on being informed about planned legislation at an early stage. And it is mainly those who build lasting working relationships with the EU institutions who are heard (Coen and Richardson 2009).

For the assumed professionalisation of European lobbying, Brussels might play a decisive role, for the reasons given. It is thus important to ascertain empir-ically how much presence there is. Although many meetings are held in Brussels, the day-to-day work is also characterised by high mobility requirements. European policy is not only made in Brussels by the EU institutions based there (the EU Commission, the second seat of the European Parliament, the Permanent Representations). The Member States also play an important role – ultimately through the Council of Ministers – in shaping political will and decision-making. EU affairs professionals not infrequently have to contact

national member associations, corporate headquarters or alliance partners to target national governments. Furthermore, European lobbyists can only carry out their representation work in Brussels if they receive the mandate of the member associations, the management or the clients, and if they have agreed the content of the demands and positions with them. For these reasons, it cannot be assumed that Brussels completely binds the staff geographically. EU affairs professionals are likely to be expected to have a high presence in Brussels, but they are also likely to have to travel a lot. They may also commute between their national headquarters and Brussels. Consequently, the fact that Brussels is the hub of European interest representation does not exclude a broad – international and pan-European – field of action.

These considerations are reason enough to seek an empirical answer to the question of the degree of geographical centricity. Firstly, it is important to check the extent to which Brussels binds staff geographically. Secondly, it must be answered how far-reaching the sphere of influence of EU affairs professionals is beyond Brussels. Thirdly, it needs to be ascertained how strongly these professionals are engaged in regular contacts with EU institutions, among other addressees. These questions can be answered once the respondents' data on place of residence, attendance times, and work contacts are evaluated. The study design must be taken into account when considering this information, as the sample of respondents consisted of the group of those registered in the transparency register. This means that people who come to Brussels only rarely for occasional appointments (such as an event organised by a lobby group, a meeting of an expert group, a meeting with a Commissioner) are likely to be underrepresented in the sample, as they may not see any reason to register. The transparency register is likely to adequately represent the core workforce of EU affairs professionals, as lobbyists who want to make appointments at the European Parliament have to register; at the same time, this group of people also seems to use registration to underpin their professionalism and reputation (Năstase and Muurmans 2018).

Thus, the data collected provide us with insights into the extent of the geographical centricity of the core staff involved in EU affairs – and this geographical centricity is quite pronounced, as the data show. Figure 4.4 focuses on place of residence and shows that two-thirds of the respondents live in Brussels. The number of outsiders is significantly lower: One in ten commutes daily, almost one in five travels to Brussels weekly and only a few see no reason to be there regularly. The figures make it clear that the job have consequences for private life. Most of the respondents probably moved to Brussels for the work. But Brussels also plays an important role for most of the others who chose to live elsewhere, as they commute regularly.

The importance of Brussels as a location for work is substantiated once the respondents' data on attendance times are analysed. They were asked to indicate how much time they had spent at different working locations in the last 12 months. The working locations to choose from were: the office in Brussels, external meetings or events in Brussels, travel outside Brussels,
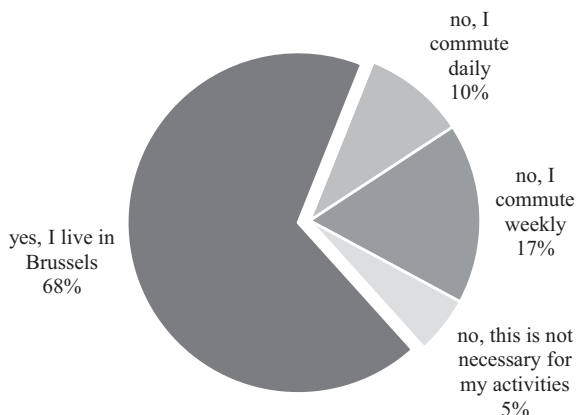
Figure 4.4 Residence of respondents and presence in Brussels (N = 660).

Table 4.5 Work locations and attendance times in per cent (all questions N = 699)

mean values			*percentage distribution*					
	mean value	*std- dev.*	*0*	*up to 25*	*up to 50*	*up to 75*	*up to 100*	*total*
office in Brussels	46.2	29.7	16.0	12.6	23.8	30.6	17.0	100.0
meetings in Brussels	16.9	12.6	13.2	65.5	20.3	0.7	0.3	100.0
travel outside Brussels	12.0	11.9	18.6	70.1	10.6	0.4	0.3	100.0
in other offices of the organisation	6.3	15.8	67.1	26.0	3.0	2.6	1.3	100.0
working from home	10.3	21.4	61.8	25.2	5.6	4.0	3.4	100.0

other offices of the organisation and, lastly, working from home. Respondents could give percentages between zero and 100 to indicate their average time spent in the different locations. These values were grouped for the presentation in Table 4.5. Both the average length of stay and the frequencies of the respective proportions are given.

The figures show that the Brussels office is the most important place of work. On average, respondents spend almost half of their annual working time there. In addition, 17 per cent of their working time is spent in meetings or events in Brussels. This brings the total proportion of time spent in Brussels to two-thirds of the annual working time (63 per cent). Trips outside Brussels account for just under a tenth of working time, and work in other offices and at home is similarly low. However, the information provided by the respondents varies considerably, especially with regard to the length of time spent in the Brussels offices and working from home. Broken down by

percentage, the columns on the right-hand side of the table show that the respondents provide different information about their presence in the Brussels office: One in six is not on site at all and, if respondents with a length of stay of less than 25 per cent are added, as many as 29 per cent are rarely or never in a Brussels office. For the vast majority, however, high attendance times apply: 71 per cent are very often in the Brussels office (i.e. between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of their annual working time), and 66 per cent say they spend up to a quarter of their working time in meetings or events in Brussels. This means that Brussels is indeed the main place of activity for most EU affairs professionals.

The importance of Brussels as a place to live and work is closely related to the requirement to be close to the European institutions and engage in regular contacts. This is reported by Figure 4.5, which summarises the answers to a question about the intensity of formal contacts with representatives of various organisations during the past 12 months. The list of these addresses is comprehensive, but the responses shows that EU public affairs privilege a number
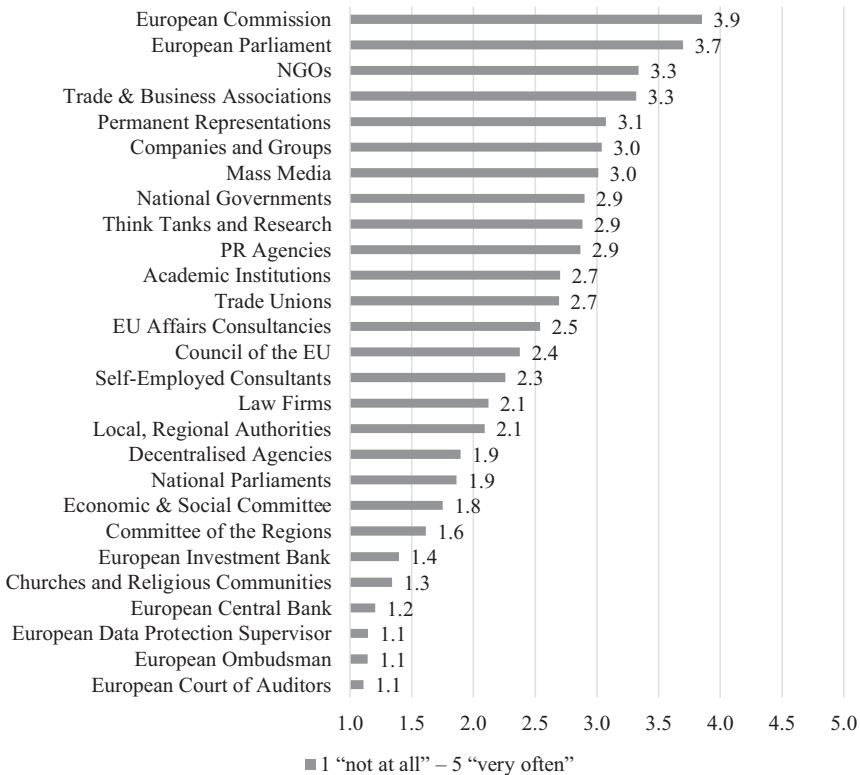

Figure 4.5 Formal contacts during the last 12 months with... (means).

of key players who are located in Brussels. On average, they meet rather often with representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament and the Permanent Representations, but they are also fairly often in contact with representatives from other interest groups (e.g. NGOs, business associations, companies), many of whom will be based in Brussels, too.

The moderate relevance of contacts with national governments and local and regional authorities indicates that the scope of activities transcends Brussels, as was already evidenced by Table 4.5. The data presented there make it possible to estimate that respondents spend on average one-tenth of their annual working time travelling – at 250 working days per year, this would correspond to about 30 working days. These indications make sense, because EU affairs professionals have to attend regular appointments outside Brussels, mainly to meet with association members, company management or client decision makers, as will be explained in Section 4.3. The importance of travelling outside Brussels thus suggests that the radius of action of EU affairs professionals has an international component.

A look at the respondents' work contacts is useful in order to gain more clarity in regard to this matter. During the survey, they were asked to indicate how multinational their sphere of action is, both inside and outside Brussels. When recording this socio-spatial radius of action, the survey distinguished between two dimensions: One aspect was the working contacts with people or organisations in their home country (the national dimension); the other was the contacts with people of other nationalities in Brussels (the international dimension). Table 4.6 provides empirical evidence by compiling the respondents' answers to these two questions. The question on work contacts in the home country shows that as many as 43 per cent of the respondents

Table 4.6 Working contacts – national and international (in per cent)

How often do you have professional contact with individuals and organisations in your home country?

Never	5.6
	28.2
	23.6
	17.2
very often	25.4
Total	100.0 (N = 639)

In Brussels, what is the main national background of your professional contacts?

my home country	5.2
	6.0
the same	28.4
	15.2
other countries	45.2
Total	100.0 (N = 637)

maintain such contacts often or very often; another 24 per cent maintain these contacts from time to time. While these responses underline the importance of the national level, including for EU affairs professionals based in Brussels, the results also make clear that EU affairs professionals are integrated into an international working environment. Only a small minority of respondents report that they move primarily within professional networks from their home country in Brussels (11 per cent), whereas a clear majority (60 per cent) report that they maintain contacts with people from other countries. Slightly more than one in four report a blend of national and multinational contacts.

Many EU affairs professionals thus maintain regular contact with people and organisations in their home country and interact with people from different countries in Brussels at the same time. However, in general there is a negative correlation between the two questions (Pearson's coefficient of $-.273***$). People who are involved in international networks in Brussels are less likely to maintain contact with their home country, which also implies that those who have more frequent contact with organisations in their home country are significantly less likely to have contact with people from other countries in Brussels. Although international networks in Brussels and frequent contacts in one's own home country are not mutually exclusive, there is a tendency to separate the two spheres: EU affairs professionals either tend to move within national networks inside and outside Brussels, or they settle in Brussels primarily within international networks that are closed off to the national level. Considering the dimensions, the group of the nationally oriented, with one-third of the respondents, is weaker than the group of the internationally oriented, who make up about half of the respondents.

All in all, the findings show that the world of EU affairs is tied back to Brussels. Many interest groups, consultancies or think tanks have made Brussels the headquarters of their organisations, which is why the majority of employees live in this city or commute there daily. In addition, they spend a large part of their working time in the Brussels offices, meetings and events, and engage in regular contacts with the European institutions, Permanent Representations, and other interest groups. The national level does remain an important reference point for their work, as almost one in two respondents regularly comes into professional contact with people from their home country. The pull of Brussels is considerable, however, because most EU affairs professionals live and work in this city, and contact networks are in the majority of cases international. The world of EU affairs may be heterogeneous in terms of the personal and professional backgrounds of the employees, but its local orientation indicates a high degree of professional integration.

4.2 EU affairs and lobbying: focus of activities and self-images

Lobbying is part of the EU affairs professionals' remit. However, it has remained unclear until now how important this specific type of activity is. At

the same time, the transitions to other activities are fluid, which is why it is not possible to clearly determine where the work of lobbyists ends and where the factual work of expert groups, the legal advice of law firms or the communication policy of PR agencies, NGOs, or associations begins. For this reason, the question of the extent of EU affairs professionals' involvement in European lobbying will be described and examined next.

4.2.1 Main areas of activity

The survey data collected confirm the assumption that European lobbying is a variable field. Almost all respondents indicated that they are at least partially involved in lobbying activities, although the extent varies significantly. Being part of the field of work in general has to do with the design of the survey, as the survey was explicitly tailored to lobbying or political interest representation. It can therefore be assumed that only those persons participated in the survey who identify at least to some extent with these terms. In fact, very few dropouts were recorded for questions that explicitly targeted lobbying-specific activities. These cases were discarded. Differences between the respondents only emerged in the data on the extent of lobbying activities, because EU affairs professionals have different degrees of activity in the field of European lobbying. This is because the scope of work of EU affairs encompasses a whole range of tasks, as Section 4.3 will show. Two of these tasks were picked up in the survey in order to draw a more complete picture of the activity profiles: firstly, the activities of "monitoring and commenting," which means observing, analysing and reporting on political and legal developments within the EU; secondly, "lobbying and public affairs," which means representing interests towards EU institutions and the public. The professionals surveyed were asked to indicate how much of their working time they devote to these two areas. They were able to choose values from one to nine, depending on whether they did this work not at all or frequently.[2] The aim was to find out how important these two tasks are in the day-to-day work of EU affairs professionals. Another aim was to clarify the relationship between passive engagement with political initiatives within the EU (monitoring) and active influencing of the European institutions (lobbying). Figure 4.6 presents the frequency distribution for both areas. It shows that the workload of monitoring and commenting on EU policies is estimated to be higher than lobbying. In particular, the proportion of those who monitor frequently is higher than the number of those who lobby frequently. Very few respondents reported not working in lobbying or monitoring at all, so their activities are more likely to be related to other EU affairs tasks (such as expertise, consultancy, communication, compliance, management).

A direct comparison of the two areas of activity illustrates the wide variation among the respondents. Figure 4.7 places respondents in a two-dimensional space according to how much they are involved in monitoring and lobbying in their working time. The point clouds were graphically adjusted using random

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Monitoring and commenting EU policies	1.1%	5.8%	10.1%	11.5%	13.8%	14.9%	16.4%	13.2%	13.3%
Lobbying and public affairs	2.6%	10.1%	15.2%	14.0%	16.3%	10.6%	12.3%	7.4%	11.5%

never   often
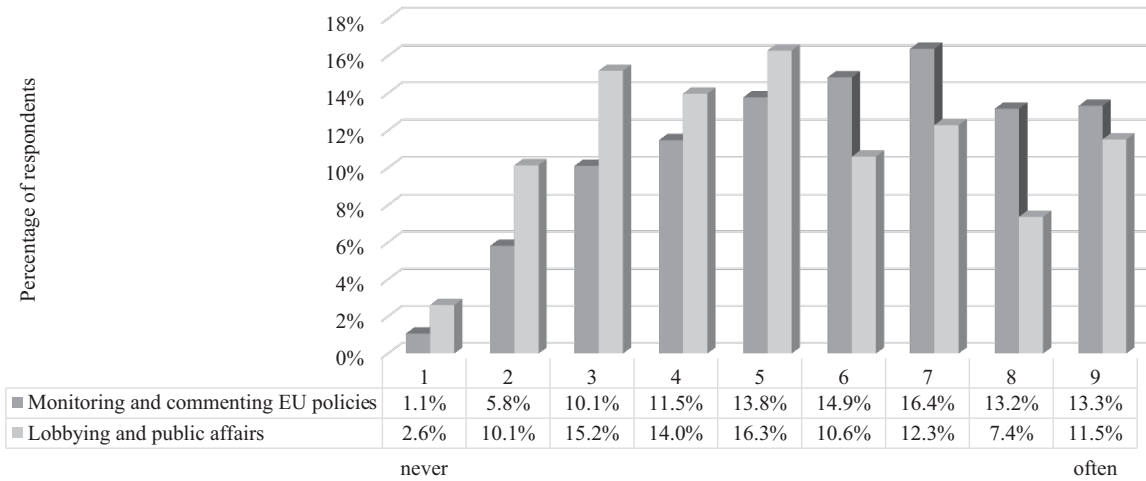
Figure 4.6 Core activities – monitoring (N = 653) and lobbying (N = 651).
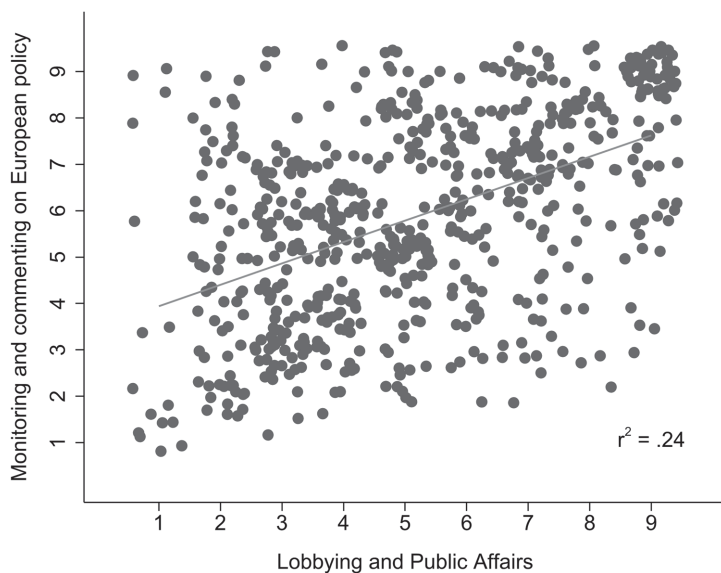
Figure 4.7 Main activities (plot, N = 651).

noise in order to improve the visualisation of the frequency distribution. The scatter diagram shows that the focus of the respondents' work varies considerably, as there are respondents who are only marginally active in the two areas and others who spend a larger proportion of their working time in them. Both areas of activity are interrelated, as those who report a higher proportion of lobbying activities are also more often involved in monitoring. The trend line illustrates this connection. However, the diagram confirms that the focus of the respondents' work is more on monitoring: Respondents with a low share of work in lobbying activities already state that they regularly carry out monitoring, which is why the trend line in the graph starts at a value of around four. In contrast, the area in the lower right part of the graph is only weakly occupied, which means that people with a high proportion of work in lobbying are also very involved in monitoring. Only a few of these respondents can afford to invest little time in monitoring European politics. Monitoring therefore not only seems to account for a significant share of the workload. It also seems to be the basis of lobbying.

The results suggest that lobbying is only one component of a broader range of tasks. As the analysis of the qualitative interviews will show (see Section 4.3), this is because EU affairs professionals define lobbying as a specific activity, which they then only deal with to a manageable extent. At the same time, the effectiveness of lobbying depends on a number of other tasks that determine the workload more clearly. However, the results so far also show

that the professionals surveyed are entrusted with lobbying tasks to varying degrees. Interest representation is therefore to be understood as a gradual field of activity. People are more or less involved in this work, which is why the job title of "lobbyist" can only be understood as a gradual typification.

However, the professionals interviewed not only differ in how strongly their work is oriented towards lobbying. They have also been working in the field for different lengths of time. In fact, not all respondents have a similar wealth of experience; it is nevertheless surprising that the older ones have not necessarily been in business any longer. The data thus provide insights into the question of when the respondents entered the occupational field – whether as beginners or as career changers. In order to answer these questions, it is possible to draw on the information provided by respondents on their years of experience in monitoring and commenting on European politics. While this means that data are only available on one of the two areas of activity, monitoring is one of the basic and more widespread tasks of EU affairs.

As Table 4.7 shows, four out of five respondents answered this question. Overall, the length of experience is quite moderate, averaging nine years. Slightly more than 40 per cent of the respondents state that they have been active in the field for one to five years; nevertheless, one in four can look back on six to ten years of professional experience. This relatively modest period of activity is because the majority of the interviewees, at 24 to 40 years of age, are still quite young and can therefore hardly have a wealth of experience. The

Table 4.7 Experience with monitoring and commenting on European policy, by age cohort

| | | All | by age cohorts | | | | |
		total	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+
1–5 years	N	230	56	125	23	18	8
	%	43.2	100.0	60.4	17.0	19.6	19.0
6–10 years	N	132		63	38	20	11
	%	24.8		30.4	28.2	21.7	26.2
11–15 years	N	73		18	39	15	1
	%	13.7		8.7	28.9	16.3	2.4
16–20 years	N	60		1	30	17	12
	%	11.3		0.5	22.2	18.5	28.6
21–25 years	N	23			5	12	6
	%	4.3			3.7	13.0	14.3
26–35 years	N	14				10	4
	%	2.7				10.9	9.5
Total	N	532	56	207	135	92	42
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

breakdown by cohorts confirms this assumption, because the younger ones indicate shorter, the older ones longer periods.

What is more remarkable is the fact that the reverse is not true: Although some older respondents say they have been involved in EU affairs for a longer period of time, every fifth respondent in the cohorts of people in their 50s and over 60 years of age has only one to five years of professional experience. If all those over 50 who indicate up to five or ten years are added together, this somewhat limited work experience applies to 40 per cent of the oldest cohorts. In contrast, only a small proportion of these respondents say they have been active in the field for more than 21 or 26 years.

The results show that many of the older respondents had little professional experience in monitoring European policies, probably because they only came into contact with the world of EU affairs later in their lives. Career changes do indeed seem to be quite common. The survey data show that half of the respondents must have entered the occupational field between the ages of 20 and 29, which also puts EU affairs at the start of their professional careers. Another third only started at the age of 30 to 39. It is remarkable, however, that 11.5 per cent of those working today only started working in the field of EU affairs when they were 40 to 49 years old, and a further 6.2 per cent when they were over 50. These entries could be estimated by matching the length of work experience with age. This information is important for the question of a possible professionalisation of European lobbying, because in the case of late entrants it can be assumed that professional socialisation took place elsewhere. These people are therefore likely to have developed professional qualifications, routines, and identities that they have brought with them into the field.

Overall, the findings so far indicate that the positioning in the field of European lobbying is of a gradual nature, as the staff is involved in the corresponding activities to a different extent. This raises the question of the factors responsible for the indicated frequency of lobbying activities. Taking the assumptions presented in Chapter 2 and the descriptive findings from Chapters 3 and 4 as a point of reference, it can be expected that lobbying activities are associated with four factors. In the first instance, it is likely that lobbying activities are tied to specific employers, amongst them lobby groups with an explicit mandate, such as business associations and companies, but also NGOs. Additionally, it is necessary to examine whether organisational staffing levels are related to the frequency of lobbying activity across sectors. Secondly, it needs to be checked whether being embedded in the EU world of Brussels makes a difference in the intensity of lobbying. Thirdly, it is plausible to expect that lobbying is assigned to higher positions within the organisations (see Section 5.2). Finally, socio-demographic traits of the respondents are included to ascertain the effect of the age, gender, educational, and national background. After all, lobbying is a term that has different meanings in different countries or setttings.

Table 4.8 summarises the results of a linear regression: the first two models comprise the factors related to the employer, and to Brussels and the job position, while the final one adds the socio-demographic traits as controls. The coefficients (odd ratios) indicate the probability of a high proportion of lobbying activities among the individuals with the characteristics in question when compared with the respective reference group. The coefficients show that business associations are particularly active, followed by NGOs. Consultancies

Table 4.8 Frequency of lobbying (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*
Employer (*ref.: Brussels only*)			
Consultancies	0.553		0.441*
Companies	1.235		0.936
Trade associations	2.173**		2.122**
Trade unions	1.212		1.210
NGOs	1.750*		2.201**
other	0.714		0.821
Size of the EU affairs staff (*std.*)	1.273**		1.275**
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)		1.394***	1.391***
Professional position (*qualified activity*)			
Senior position		1.620*	1.834**
Executive position		1.405	1.713*
Income (*< € 25,000*)			
€ 25-49,999		1.690*	1.691
€ 50-99,999		2.078**	2.325**
€ 100,000 and more		2.146*	2.622**
Personal characteristics			
Gender (*male*)			0.702
Age (*std.*)			0.868
Education (*BA and lower*)			
Postgraduate			1.361
PhD			1.543
Field of study			
European studies			1.870**
Economics			1.341
Law			1.381
MINT			0.898
Citizenship			
German			0.630*
British			1.263
Italian			1.044
Eastern European			1.386
Constant	164.8***	82.44***	53.76***
Observations	448	448	448
R^2	0.029	0.026	0.109

*Significance levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.*

do not stand out, thus indicating that their mandate is more strongly related to complementary services. The size of the staff is also correlated with lobbying intensity, which means that organisations with a large amount of (human) resources are particularly active, regardless of the interest sector. The time spent in Brussels has an effect, thus indicating that meetings very likely imply lobbying.

Most striking is the effect of the job position, as lobbying is assigned to respondents with a high status in terms of decision-making authority and income. The effect is noticeably greater for senior positions than for executive staff. As will be shown in more detail in Chapter 5, lobbyists predominantly hold senior positions and not leadership positions, which means that they assume responsibility for a specific area of activity within the organisation. These correlations remain dominant even after the introduction of the socio-demographic variables. These factors do not yield substantial findings. Women are less often involved in lobbying activities, and the same is true for older respondents, but the effects are not statistically significant. As will be shown in the Section 6.1, biological age does not predetermine more professional experience, because many younger and middle-aged respondents can look back on quite a long period of activity in the field and were able to gain relevant knowledge and practical experience before they ramped up the proportion of lobbying activities. The educational background underscores that higher social status is associated with lobbying activities, while science graduates are less likely to report such activities than the other degree holder. EU affairs professionals with German nationality rate the extent of their own lobbying activity lower, while those from the UK and Eastern Europe rate it higher.

Overall, it appears that employers and job-related factors have a critical influence on lobbying activities. The frequency of the reported lobbying activities increases, the larger the repondent's employer is in terms of human resources, and the higher his or her salary. The estimation of predictive margins shows that the lowest incidence of lobbying is found among respondents earning below 25,000 euros (4.6 on a nine-point scale) and working for organisations with fewer than three employees (5.1). The rate increases by one point among those with the highest salary (5.6) and by 0.8 for employers with the biggest staff (5.9). The threshold for staff size is higher than that for income, probably because smaller offices expect more lobbying from each member of the staff. At the same time, the frequency of these activities is lower for smaller teams than for larger ones. It is very likely that employees of smaller organisations are less involved in lobbying because they have to take on other responsibilities, while employees of larger organisations may focus more on advocacy. In relation to annual income, the findings show that lobbying is a core aim, which means that organisations are ready to provide better-paid positions to individuals who are more clearly involved in lobbying and thus responsible for representing their interests to the European institutions.

4.2.2 Professional self-images

European lobbying seems to be a field of work characterised by gradual affiliations. On the basis of the activities, it could be determined that the persons interviewed are involved in interest representation activities to a greater or lesser extent. At the same time, they entered the field of EU affairs at different points in their careers. It might thus not be so easy to determine exactly who should be called a lobbyist. This conclusion is not only in line with the experience of previous attempts at regulation and control by the EU institutions, which have had difficulties in clearly defining the activity and profile of lobbying and therefore capturing it as an object of regulation. It is also likely to apply to the perceptions and assessments of lobbyists themselves, who do not necessarily feel that they belong to the occupational field.

EU affairs professionals are indeed divided when it comes to naming a job title, as the survey data show. Asked about the label that would best fit their professional identity, only 52 per cent chose the given category of "lobbyists." The remaining 48 per cent used the second category ("others") to make personal suggestions for job or occupational titles. All in all, more than 230 occupational or professional titles were listed, ranging from "active citizen," "campaigner" or "influencer" through "business developer," "economist," and "managing director" to "science communication" and "information agent." However, certain keywords are repeated that allow this long list to be condensed to a few core terms. Table 4.9 shows that two-thirds of the respondents describe their professional identity as representing interests. More than half agree with the label "lobbyist," while a few others add additional terms (for example, "lobbyist" plus "adviser," "consultant," "advocacy" or "research"), in order to make clear that lobbying is only part of their own task profile or self-image. In addition, there are those who see themselves more as activists, as advocates or representatives of particular interests. A further 7 per cent consider their professional identity to be tied back to broader
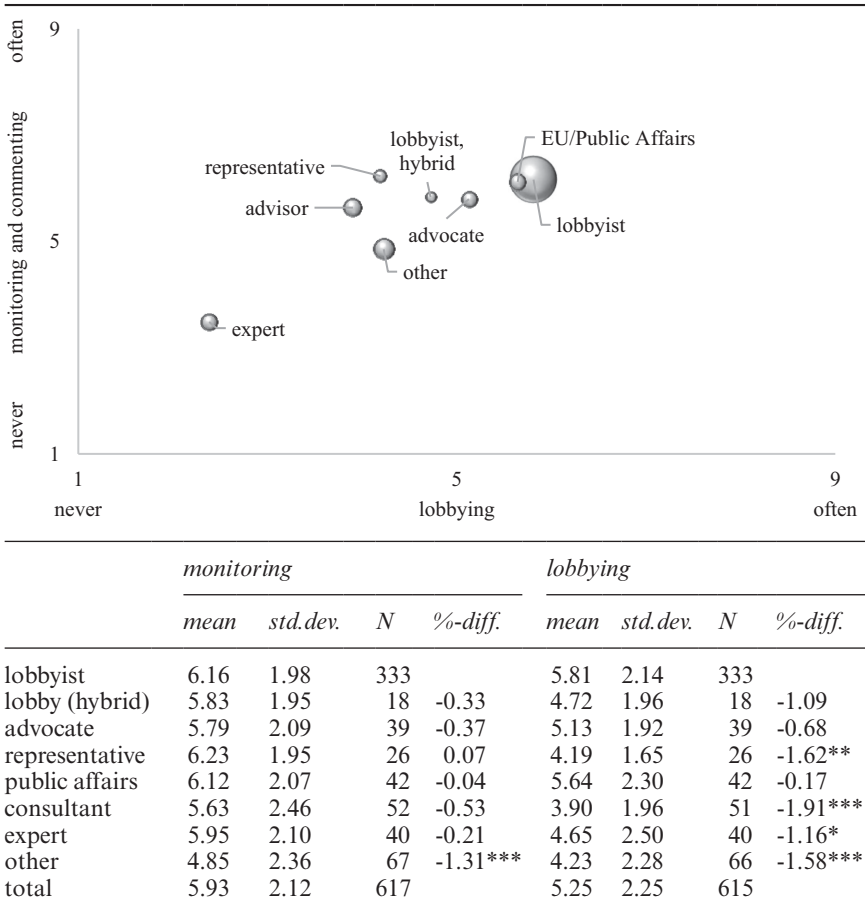
Table 4.9 Which label best describes your professional identity?

	frequencies	*per cent*	*cumulative percentages*
lobbyist	350	53.9	53.9
lobbyist plus ... (hybrid)	21	3.2	57.1
advocate, activist	42	6.5	63.6
(interest) representative(s)	27	4.2	67.8
EU/public affairs	44	6.8	74.6
advisor, consultant	53	8.1	82.7
expert, analyst	42	6.5	89.2
miscellaneous	70	10.8	100.0
total	649	100.0	

responsibilities, as they are more likely to claim "EU affairs" or "public affairs" for themselves. The group of consultants, experts and analysts is represented with about 15 per cent, although this expertise is divided into many sub-areas. Many of these respondents see themselves as experts in the field of European or international law and EU policy, but sometimes also in the field of fundraising, project management, market analysis, science or research. The remaining 11 per cent conceals a wide range of professional titles related to PR, management, and executive leadership, technical support or administration.

Professional identity is related to tasks and job profiles, as evidenced by findings summarised in Table 4.10. Respondents who describe themselves as lobbyists are also significantly more likely to be involved in monitoring and

Table 4.10 Focus of activity according to professional identity

	monitoring				lobbying			
	mean	*std.dev.*	*N*	*%-diff.*	*mean*	*std.dev.*	*N*	*%-diff.*
lobbyist	6.16	1.98	333		5.81	2.14	333	
lobby (hybrid)	5.83	1.95	18	-0.33	4.72	1.96	18	-1.09
advocate	5.79	2.09	39	-0.37	5.13	1.92	39	-0.68
representative	6.23	1.95	26	0.07	4.19	1.65	26	-1.62**
public affairs	6.12	2.07	42	-0.04	5.64	2.30	42	-0.17
consultant	5.63	2.46	52	-0.53	3.90	1.96	51	-1.91***
expert	5.95	2.10	40	-0.21	4.65	2.50	40	-1.16*
other	4.85	2.36	67	-1.31***	4.23	2.28	66	-1.58***
total	5.93	2.12	617		5.25	2.25	615	

significance level: ***<.001, **<.01, *<0.05 (Bonferroni test).

commenting on European policies, and the majority of them also state that they are frequently involved in lobbying activities. These activity profiles are much less pronounced among the consultants and experts. This result is unsurprising, although the Table 4.10 and Figure 4.7 suggest some clarifications. In addition to lobbyists, respondents who named EU affairs and public affairs as their job title are also most often involved in monitoring and lobbying. Since the number of those who consider themselves to be lobbying is much larger than those who cite EU affairs, the circle in the diagram is also correspondingly larger. The hybrid lobbyists and advocates have shifted away from this focus of activity, although they still do it regularly. Those who perceive themselves as representatives of interest groups achieve higher scores in monitoring, but are less likely to be active in lobbying. The consultants, but above all the experts, are even more clearly removed from lobbying, because they concern themselves with it the least.

The variations with regard to activities profiles and professional self-identities are indicative of the internal diversity of the occupational field. While it cannot be ruled out that some of this variance is caused by the reluctance of some respondents to associate themselves to the label of lobbying, the consensus within the field should not be downplayed. In fact, job titles do not diverge too much. Although many respondents have a problem with lobbying, they either add supplementary job descriptions or suggest terms that can be described as synonyms. These additions and corrections seem to point in two directions. On the one hand, lobbying is supplemented or replaced by job descriptions that more strongly emphasise the advocacy character of interest representation. These respondents see their tasks as active advocacy, engagement or struggle for a particular cause. On the other hand, additions and corrections are made that place more emphasis on the role of expertise, of the expert knowledge and thus of consultancy. European lobbying does indeed operate within a spectrum of tasks that has to cover advocacy and expertise in equal measure, as will be explained below, which is why it is not surprising that the respondents' professional self-perception oscillates between the two positions.

4.3 The field of activity of EU affairs: task diversity and multitasking

European lobbying can only be understood as an occupation if it is seen as the core task of a broader, more heterogeneous field of activity. This insight has already emerged from the results so far. However, it becomes even clearer once the qualitative interviews with European lobbyists are taken into account. They describe lobbying as a core activity, but one that is dependent on other tasks to be effective. This heterogeneity of responsibilities can be seen in the function of interest groups. According to the interviewees, lobby groups are above all mediating bodies between social interest groups and the European institutions. This mediating function points in two directions. On

the one side, the respondents regard their organisation as an "early warning system," as Walter Wiese, an employee of a company representation office, put it. Giuseppe Giordano, who works for an NGO, has a similar view:

> Well, the Brussels office has the task on the one hand to be the eyes and ears for [name of organisation] in Brussels (.) so that we know at an early stage where either new legislative projects are planned that could improve the [subject area] or dilute it. And also keeping an eye on what the industry lobby is up to, which unfortunately for the most part is always rather on the other side, but not always, fortunately.

Lobby groups need to keep their "eyes and ears" open to identify relevant policy initiatives at an early stage. This requires activities that were described as monitoring and commenting in the previous sections. In this regard, lobbyists have considerable discretion in their work – "we're very free here," as Walter Wiese describes it –, because only the Brussels office can assess which topics need to be reported on and in what form. The reporting is intended to be permanent, but does not necessarily generate a need for action. The decision to become politically proactive is also not made in Brussels but in the company. As an early warning system, it is important to report back, make recommendations and wait to see what decisions are made by the company management: "From our point of view, these and those issues are important here, we should pursue them. Then there may still be word from home: 'Nah, we don't need that or we only pursue it through associations.' Or whatever."

As a mediating body, the Brussels offices are also the mouthpiece of the interest group. They become active as soon as political developments emerge within the EU that need to be reacted to or acted upon. Although they are involved in identifying sensitive policy initiatives and issues and developing a lobbying strategy, they remain bound by instructions from their members, managers or clients. The extent of professional autonomy must therefore be explored in practice. It should also be borne in mind that the Brussels offices usually employ only a few people, which is why their own ability to act very often depends on involving other association members, company departments, other interest groups or external service providers.

There are indeed differences between in-house lobbyists, who work for associations or corporate representative offices, and commercial consultants. However, they do take on comparable functions, as Helen Huber, who works for a consultancy firm, explains. Frequently, her clients are not based in Brussels because they cannot afford their own representation or are not sufficiently affected by European legislation to need to be permanently on the ground. Furthermore, some interest groups are involved in so many issues that they need an extra pair of hands or want to buy in additional expertise. In all these cases, consultants fulfil similar tasks. They track "what the institutions are doing" on behalf of their clients, establish contacts, and

maintain networks. In reporting, they are the eyes and ears of their clients, although they can only be active as a mouthpiece to a limited extent:

> I have informal meetings or telephone conversations with EU decision makers. But if I want to represent a position, one of my clients, it's better if I go there with them. I don't represent them. I'm not an employee of the company. I don't have (.) I'm not legitimised to speak on their behalf.

The mediating position of EU affairs professionals therefore requires a task profile that is characterised by monitoring activities (in internal relations) and lobbying (in external relations). In-house lobbyists and commercial consultants differ in this respect only gradually but not structurally. And while both tasks are tightly interrelated, there is strong agreement among European professionals that the workload is determined much more by monitoring than by lobbying activities. Some of the respondents were even asked to assess the weighting in numeric terms during the interview. Lorenzo Lombardi, who works for a European trade association, describes the workload as follows:

> So we are maybe, I know, 15 per cent, 10 to 15 per cent of our time we are really out and about, explaining our position, talking to media, talking to legislators and so on. That's way too little, but that's a bit the nature of the job. We first have to understand how our figures come about, how the figures of others come about, what are the proposals of others? What does that mean for us? So the whole thing, all this background work cannot be called lobbying or advocacy, as we like to call it, but it is a kind of intelligence building.

Effective lobbying requires thorough background work and this implies that the internal work is more complex than the external appointments and talks. It is noteworthy that Lorenzo Lombardi declares the external activities as "way too little," but justifies the small share immediately afterwards with reference to the "nature of the job." According to him, although more frequent talks are desirable, they are ultimately not feasible because they have to be prepared properly. When asked, he explains that the higher share is not just generally desirable, but is demanded by association members: "Yes, too little is perhaps the expectation of our members. They would think we go out every day and are just out representing the position of our paid-up members, if I may say so."

Pinelópi Papadakis, a lobbyist for a global corporation, comes to a similar conclusion. For her, the internal background work is tied to internal coordination and leaves little time for actual lobbying: "Fifty per cent internal coordination, internal meetings. I would say internally: internally at [name of company] and internally with other industry colleagues. And externally, maybe 10 per cent." She also confirms that this is very little, although she adds that this percentage could well increase: "Of course, it always depends on the

stage my topics are at. And mine were simple, were not exactly urgent." She explains that this was currently the case with her colleague, which was why for him, the share of lobbying-specific activities was almost 60 per cent.

These accounts match largely with the numeric assessment made by respondents to the researchers' survey, as the findings presented in Section 4.2.1 showed. The majority had indicated that they were much more often involved in monitoring and commenting on European policy than in lobbying practices, and only a minority testified that they devoted a lot of time to advocacy work. Quantitative and qualitative assessments correspond, thus testifying that EU public affairs professionals are entrusted with a wide range of activities, which are, however, ultimately geared towards being able to lobby effectively in the event of a need for action. Consequently, they share a common understanding of what lobbying is and what it requires. In essence, this understanding rests on the activity-based definition proposed as a determinant in the documents of the EU institutions. Practitioners use activities to define the core area of the field of work, just as they name activities to explore marginal areas and boundaries. It therefore makes sense to place the activities described at the centre of the discussion in order to reconstruct the structure of the occupational field. Since the descriptions show a high degree of similarity, it can be assumed that the reconstructed structures reflect the common world of EU affairs.

4.3.1 Precarious demarcations

When describing their tasks and activities, several lobbyists raise the question of the boundaries of the field of work. In doing so, they not only react to a public discourse that seeks to clarify what actually qualifies as interest representation, who should be considered a lobbyist and how these activities and persons can be legally regulated and institutionally controlled. For those affected, this topic also seems to have a personal sensitivity. In most cases, they are keen to highlight how broad the potential circle of stakeholders actually is. Supposedly clear boundaries are questioned in order to refer to a number of other actors who must also be included. Lobbying is defined as a normal and widespread activity. In this way, those affected try to manoeuvre themselves out of the firing line and other actors into it.

The search for boundaries, however, is also part of their attempt to determine the core of their work. Demarcations are reassurances about what lobbying is essentially about. Consequently, questions of definition play an important role for the interviewees themselves. The starting point of most discussions is the question of who belongs to the field of lobbying – and who does not. It is particularly noteworthy that the discussion about the boundaries of the field is mostly conducted in question form. Answers do not seem to be obvious, although the questions ultimately insinuate certain answers. This problematisation applies, for example, to Frank Fischer, who is a Member of the European Parliament. His question relates to the boundaries between

lobbying and political protest: "Is a lobbyist already someone who sits on his tractor in [name of the city] and says: 'Let's go to Brussels and tell them how to make proper agricultural policy.' Is that lobbying already?"

Besides the farmers, there are also other actors to whom this question refers. Thomas Theisen, who works as a journalist in Brussels, widens the circle of possible aspirants twice over by asking: "What is the classic lobbyist now, what is the diplomat, what is the NGO representative?" For him, NGOs are part of the game as much as diplomatic service of states. Moreover, Luuk van Leeuwen, who works for a European industry association, is also convinced that government agencies act as lobby groups. The interest groups include Member States, countries, and regions; individual authorities; or state-owned enterprises. However, he widens the circle of possible interests even further. The EU Commission also seeks to represent its interests towards the other EU institutions, just as the individual Directorates-General within the EU Commission are in regulatory competition with each other. From his time as an employee of a Directorate-General, he knows that internal differences are pronounced, as was already made clear in Section 3.2: "You'll see that there are different perspectives. Even though the Commission speaks with one voice, there are different, if you like, different, let me put it this way, divergent focal areas." He describes how, at the time, he was in contact with colleagues from other Directorates-General who, in his opinion, were working too one-sidedly – from within their department's area of competence – on a legislative project and were advocating a one-sided "neoliberal approach." Ultimately, he had felt like a lobbyist because "I also had to lobby, if you like, internally with regard to my colleagues who were working on [name of issue]." For him, lobbying therefore means presenting well-founded and airtight arguments in order to influence political decisions appropriately. In this sense, the circle of interests involved is much broader than the narrow group of associations, companies or NGOs.

These accounts concur that lobbying is always to be assumed as soon as people speak up in order to have their concerns and interests considered in upcoming political decisions. However, the actions of third parties can also be included, provided that these actors behave in a fiduciary capacity on behalf of others and represent their interests. The circle of potential lobby groups is thus once again significantly expanded. For Tadeusz Tomaszewski, the most important organisations in this regard are those that provide legal advice and representation:

> Some law firms do lobbying, but what is lobbying? If you're a small business owner and you contact a consultancy here in Brussels and say that you want a report on the state of European legislation on the production of pens because you produce pens, right? Is this lobbying or not? If the consultancy conducts interviews with people from the Commission, does this count as lobbying? If they put an ad in newspapers, is that lobbying or not?

The accounts confirm that the debate on the boundaries of lobbying is not only being conducted by the European institutions, the media, and watchdog NGOs but also by EU affairs professionals themselves. They also come to a similar conclusion, because according to their definition, lobbying lurks everywhere. However, this observation is not presented with concern; it is thus not part of an alarmist discourse of scandalisation. On the contrary, most employees are involved in a discourse of normality. The political protest of citizens, the work of non-profit NGOs, the submissions of states, and the services of law firms are all expressions of broad political participation in European legislation. This is where attempts at justification are made, which place lobbying in the vicinity of democratic forms of participation (the political protest of citizens), non-profit engagement for general welfare-oriented goals (NGOs), and decision-making oriented towards compromise (negotiations between states). The message is quite simple: Lobbying is a normal activity and an expression of vibrant political participation.

The normality discourse concerns issues of political legitimacy that remain virulent in the everyday work of EU affairs professionals, as will be discussed in Section 7.3. First, however, EU affairs professionals participate in the normality discourse in order to expand the circle of those affected to the maximum, since every form of political participation now seems relevant. Yet this increases the problem of demarcation, because now it is hardly possible to decide which actors belong and which do not. The quoted passages offer a conceptual solution that links lobbying to intentions and activities. Lobbying cannot be determined and demarcated on the basis of actors, but only through intentional activities. Following the example of the farmers, any form of public protest would be a form of lobbying, as the protesters are concerned with influencing political decision-making and legislation. The intention is clearly present and the actions – to go to Brussels to tell "them" what to think – are also to be regarded as direct interventions, even though direct contact with the legislator is not mentioned. A similar intention is pursued by diplomats, who also choose direct forms of personal influence. The law firms and consultancies also mention personal meetings, which give the client the opportunity to report on their views and demands with regard to upcoming legislative procedures.

4.3.2 Task and activity profiles of a complex field of work

Intentions and interventions are used in the conversations to explore the boundaries of the field, but this focus on activities is not only determined by the desire to expand the circle of implicated parties and underline the normality of lobbying. The relevance of the activity-based definition has also to do with the professional interests of the interviewees: European lobbyists are interested in delimiting what defines the core of lobbying, but they are also keen to demarcate what constitutes the essence of good, effective lobbying. In this respect, reference is made to (professionally established) working routines

and practices, complementary competences, and expertise. It follows that the discussion on boundaries is also a reassurance of what lobbying is at its core. To this end, the interviewees propose a series of simple formulas to sum up the essence of (good) lobbying.

Core activity of "pure" lobbying

EU affairs professionals find it easy to name the common link of their profession, because they start from a rather narrow understanding of lobbying. As already indicated in the previous section, the interviewees reduce the core business to a few elements, which they explicitly describe in ideal-typical simplifications. The two points already mentioned – intentions and goals on the one hand, direct interventions on the other – are decisive here. Initially, it is argued that lobbying sets a clear goal that translates into a professional maxim of action for the staff. Ultimately, it is about influencing legislative processes, as Athanasios Angelopoulos, who works at a company representation in Brussels, explains: "Classic lobbying: That's influencing policy, influencing legislation and regulation." The target audience of lobbying is initially defined in general terms as "politics," although he adds two political "products" for clarification and illustration. With this he reduces the focus to legislative lobbying. This restricted definition is surprising, because it is quite conceivable that interest representation also aims to influence the implementation of laws once they have been passed. But this possibility is not included in Athanasios Angelopoulos' definition; nor is it mentioned in other interviews. This will be related to the institutional architecture of the EU, as the European institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council of Ministers) are concerned with legislation, while implementation is in the hands of the Member States and consequently outside the sphere of influence of European lobbying itself. And although the European courts play a crucial role in the final review of European law, they are removed from the mandate of European interest representation. At least, corresponding tasks or activities are not mentioned in the interviews.

The aim of lobbying – to influence legislative processes – puts activities at the centre of discussions. In this respect, too, the descriptions tend towards ideal–typical exaggeration. Influencing political legislation ultimately means influencing the staff entrusted with it – top Commission officials, MEPs, members of the Permanent Representations or national governments. Across several interviews, it is emphasised that this is ultimately about influencing through personal contacts. Andrea Albrecht, who lobbies for a transnational company, describes it as follows: "At the end of the day, every issue has a limited number of people you have to influence. And you do that personally." Lobbying is therefore an activity that consists of personal conversations with key decision makers. Ralf Richter, who works in an association, clearly narrows down this group of people: "Classic lobbying, meaning a private entity, let's say a company, a corporate actor, who goes to the government

and tries to change a law. This is the essential core definition or very puristic definition of lobbying."

This definition, with its reference to "government," does not refer solely to the institutional architecture of the EU, since the EU lacks a classical government. But Ralf Richter obviously wanted to provide a generally valid clarification of the term, which names the primary target audience of lobbying. Other descriptions also aim to narrow down the possible target audiences, even if these take more account of the specifics of the EU. This is true for Kate Kavanagh, who works for an NGO and reduces lobbying to direct interventions with the EU's main actor: "Going to these conferences, intervening, talking to Commission officials, I mean, just this kind of pure lobbying, going to meetings." "Pure" lobbying is defined by places and opportunities, but above all by direct contacts with representatives of the European institutions (here again: the Commission) and by active interventions (that is, intervening in "these conferences," talking to the "officials").

In this respect, European lobbyists emphasise that effective interest representation relies on conversations at all levels of policy- and decision-making: It involves meetings with the specialist departments within the EU Commission, with the committees and rapporteurs of the European Parliament, with the political leaders of the EU Commission and with the representations of national governments. However, "pure" lobbying also implies prioritising and systemising contacts and meetings. Andrea Albrecht, for instance, strongly emphasises the importance of the working-level units within the EU Commission at the centre of her attention: "These are the people who write practically everything. So if you want to influence anything, if you're a good lobbyist and you want to have an impact, you have to do it at the beginning."

For Andrea Albrecht, contacts and interventions are not only the core of lobbying but also the hallmarks of "good" lobbying: Lobbyists must start where the impact is highest, and that is with the people who draft legislative proposals. Good lobbying therefore requires meetings to be organised, information to be prepared, and talks to be held with the staff of the specialist departments. Above all, however, it is essential to maintain contacts at the working level on an ongoing basis. Beyond that, lobbying must be able to work at all levels in order to defend, correct or even prevent legislative proposals that make their way through the EU institutions. In this respect, a short line to the political leadership of the EU is an equally important prerequisite for effective lobbying, as Andrea Albrecht confirms for her association. Talks with the EU Commission are particularly close to her heart:

> We interact with the European Commission at all levels, from the Commissioner to his private offices, the cabinets, usually the Chief of Cabinet or the Deputy Chief of Cabinet, and then the person responsible for [issue] at Commissioner [name]'s office, also at Commissioner [name]. And then we also approach DG [name], so from the highest level, [name of commissioner].

The narrow understanding of "pure" lobbying is not only used by lobbyists that consider personal contacts with decision makers to be a core responsibility of their job. The definition is also taken up by EU professionals who are not exclusively engaged in lobbying. In fact, the reference to the narrow definition of "pure" lobbying allows them to determine how important this activity is within their personal field of work and how great the proximity or distance to the core business of lobbying therefore is. This is the case for Bastien Bertrand, for instance, who had worked for two different NGOs in the past years. He sees himself less clearly as a lobbyist with regard to his current employer when he compares this with his previous work:

> We are a legal NGO, we do very little lobbying compared to other NGOs. For example, when I was at [name of organisation], I met someone from the Commission or the Parliament basically every day. Whereas now, if I meet someone from the Commission or Parliament, it's once a month.

For these respondents, other activities are more relevant, even though these tasks do not leave the ambit of public affairs in general, and European lobbying in particular. What is particularly remarkable about these accounts, is that the list of these additional activities is limited. Essentially, it is about three areas of work: coordination processes, policy work, and communication. Other tasks are also mentioned, but the accounts make it clear that these actions are associated with other organisational forms, work contexts, and job requirements (such as fundraising, compliance, corporate social responsibility, expert reports). The three areas of activity mentioned not only stand out from the rest of the tasks because of the recurring theme in the interview material, but are also related to lobbying in terms of content. They will be briefly described below in order to illuminate the potential spectrum of work of European lobbyists. A detailed description will not be provided, as these activities have been sufficiently described and analysed in previous research and reference books (Greenwood 1997; Lahusen and Jauß 2001; van Schendelen 2013).

Coordination: the backstage of lobbying

One area of activity – coordination within as well as between organisations – is so consistently and thoroughly addressed in the interview material that it can be understood as the twin of lobbying in the narrow sense described so far. The interactions between the two remits are clearly identified: While lobbying can be understood as the outward-facing work on the front stage of political interest representation, coordination work is a background activity that underpins lobbying. This background work is crucial, because a lobby group has to work out what exactly the interests to be represented are and what political demands should be made with a view to potential or upcoming legislative procedures. It is also conceivable that the European institutions

instruct the lobbyists to carry out such coordination in order to obtain the joint opinions and demands of an association or a group on upcoming legislative procedures.

Coordination shapes the daily work of all staff, regardless of the type of organisation they work for. Employees of European umbrella organisations have to coordinate with their member organisations, NGO representations with the management or membership base, company representations with the management at headquarters, and consultancies with their clients. The need for coordination arises from the intermediary role of European lobbying: The staff's task is to inform members, superiors or clients about political developments and their implications; at the same time, it is important to identify positions and demands that should be incorporated into the legislative process. Furthermore, interest groups also need to coordinate with each other, as they are either members of several European umbrella organisations, platforms or action networks themselves, or they are interested in building issue-specific alliances in order to increase their political clout.

Especially for the employees of the umbrella organisations, internal coordination is part of their daily work. It is about "a lot of coordination between different companies and a certain industry, such as photovoltaics. They will coordinate their interests in a business association," says Ralf Richter. He characterises this coordination as "association work." Those who work for associations have to coordinate. This was also the tenor of other conversations with association representatives. They all describe this activity as important, long-lasting, demanding, and sometimes arduous work. This is how Dominique Dubois, who works for a European NGO umbrella organisation, sees it and illustrates the challenge of this coordination work in all its breadth:

> We always agree our position with the members first, we don't have a position without our members saying: 'we agree,' or having said nothing. So [laughing] if there is abstention, it means support. And that also means that in some situations [...] the discussions can also take a relatively long time until we take a position, because it's not always so obvious that the interests [...] in Denmark are identical with the interests [...] in Spain, simply because the national systems are sometimes very divergent. And there it is already the case that you then really need the coordination until you can speak with one voice at the European level. And that's what our goals are. That's what we always want.

This passage addresses several requirements and difficulties that increase the need for coordination and thus the workload. First, it cannot always be assumed that members will have the interest or time to engage with the issues and questions that are brought to them from Brussels. The rule of counting abstentions as approval is common practice in many bodies, but seems to cause a certain unease in the aforementioned association – at least that is

how Dominique Dubois' embarrassed laughter is to be understood. The discomfort signals that abstentions can also undermine the validity of identified positions. In addition, the wording postulates a causal connection ("and that also means") between the reference to abstentions and the remark that the discussions can take quite a long time. This is surprising at first, because the practice of counting abstentions as consent was supposed to speed up the decision-making process – but it obviously does not. It seems that the Brussels office tries to have an active and broad participation in the decision-making process. But those who abstain (at first) seem to question decisions and want to reopen discussions. This prolongs the process. However, it can also be protracted, according to the next causal reference in the following sentences, because the positions of the members diverge. Additional time also seems to elapse because coordination by means of a vote and a majority decision does not seem to be an option. The coordination that is being addressed here is that of consensus. The association must speak with one voice at the European level, which implies that the association must have found a common, Europe-wide voice.

This description is also consistent with the explanations of the other staff members of European umbrella organisations who were interviewed. It suggests a certain coordination pressure that characterises the everyday reality of working life. They all mention that their own association provides for polling in case unanimity cannot be achieved, just as there are specific bodies and governance structures to improve and facilitate decision-making. But according to several interviews, the instrument of majority voting is rarely used. Luuk van Leeuwen, who works for a sectoral trade association, explains this in the following words:

> We also have a voting system. As soon as things (.) if we don't get unanimity, and that's not (.) that's rather rarely the case that we don't have unanimity, then we can put things to a vote and then it's about a majority decision. And people respect that too. But the idea is to try to have a good paper, a good position.

The quality of a "good position" thus depends on unanimity and this requires coordination. However, Luuk van Leeuwen adds that unanimous positions must also secure a second quality feature. "As you will no doubt understand, in an association you have to find a common denominator." He describes this task as a "filter" that decides on the quality of the position papers identified: "Let's put it this way, you can have a low denominator, or you can have an even lower denominator." Coordination within the association cannot solve the problem of the low common denominator, because according to his statement, there can only be a lower or an even lower common denominator, but never a higher one. However, coordination least seems to be useful for finding a level of agreement that helps produce satisfactory position papers. European lobbyists do not necessarily play a key role in these internal

coordination processes, as the member associations on the one hand and the leadership structures in the umbrella organisation on the other are decisive. According to the accounts, they are nevertheless active in terms of content, moderation or coordination.

The coordination work is particularly pronounced in associations, but just as important with other organisations. Company representations have to coordinate their work with the management, and a similar observation applies to consultancies. Especially the employees of company representations in Brussels underline the necessity of maintaining close ties emphatically. For Valerie Vincent, for instance, this close feedback is central to her work: "the key is really to understand what the company's priorities are." She also emphasises several times how much her work requires close interaction with the corporate headquarters – even though she does not like this part of the work very much: "But it's crucial, because without it you are then disconnected and other people say: 'Hey, but these Brussels people live in a different world.'" The particular challenge of this coordination relationship, she says, is "putting the two pieces of the puzzle together."

Company representations also report about the problem of not being heard at headquarters or by the management. Athanasios Angelopoulos describes, for example, that the management and the central departments do not always react as they should: "I told the legal department that we need to be much more in touch. The legal department only came to Brussels after receiving another fine from EU Competition." This disconnection obstructs coordination processes that are important prerequisites of multilevel lobbying strategies that bridge the European and national levels. Successful lobbying requires that an integrated approach must be agreed and the actual activities coordinated. These tasks are not necessarily assigned to the Brussels offices, as the relevant decisions may remain with the corporate headquarters or the member associations. However, European lobbyists play an important role in designing an EU-focused strategy, and very often their task is to stimulate, coordinate, and evaluate the various activities.

Lastly, European lobbyists also have to coordinate with other interest groups in Brussels. These include, first, the various European associations in which the individual companies are represented. Valerie Vincent names five European business associations in which her company is represented: "So you really have to coordinate your company's positions in all these bodies." Then there is the forging of alliances. In her opinion, these alliances increase the effectiveness of advocacy because the political decision makers save themselves the work of asking the different actors individually.

> You know, five big companies. Now we go to the institutions and talk. Yeah? It's fantastic. And that's why we do a lot of this work that the decision makers would do earlier. Putting things together, so to speak. We come with an already finished product.

These "finished products" require significant coordination, because they not only imply the identification of potential allies and the building of alliances, but also the drafting of issue-specific papers that allow them to speak with one voice.

Information and communication work

Effective lobbying requires good coordination. Both areas can therefore be understood as the external and internal components of an integrated activity profile. However, they rely on another background activity: collecting and processing information. Lobbying is information work, because information is one of the most important resources and levers of political influence on planned or ongoing legislative processes. Good coordination work requires knowledge of what positive or negative consequences the planned or desired policies would have for the targeted area of regulation, and it requires information to develop positions and demands. Effective lobbying also relies on this work, because information is used in a targeted way to indicate the possible consequences of planned or desired regulations and to put pressure on decision makers. Lobbyists therefore unanimously report that the procurement, preparation, and transmission of information are part of their core tasks.

The special significance of information work is related to the fact that European lobbying is described as a highly technical activity. For Maxime Moreau, who works in a company representation, this is specific to Brussels: "Especially when you're right here, you realise that lobbying is a very technical activity." In the opinion of Martin Müller, who works for an association, this has to do with the fact that European legislation is primarily regulatory in nature: "Most lobbyists here are involved in regulatory lobbying." The concrete everyday work in many interest groups is dictated by the need to obtain, prepare, and offer topic-specific information. The effort is also so high because the European institutions have a correspondingly high demand for information. According to Tadeusz Tomaszewski, who is also active in an association, the European institutions often resort to interest groups:

> If you make a law about the steel industry, you will ask the steel industry what they think. And you will mainly ask them about the figures, targets, revenues, employment and so on. So, that's the core of it: Being able to offer that information is a big part of lobbying.

European lobbyists are therefore expected to be able to obtain and process the necessary information. For this reason, a large part of the day-to-day work consists of preparing numerous papers – studies, reports, dossiers, position papers, statements – which process information, comment on pending legislative processes, identify political implications and raise demands. Stefan Schneider, who works for a company representation, even describes the paper form as an important tool for successful lobbying:

> So, when we go to the Commission, we already have our own [name of company] position paper. That's sort of the basis, I would say, if you want to be successful in a lobbying activity: go to a meeting with clear points you want to make.

Information work ultimately aims at putting things in writing. Oral interventions (i.e. personal contacts and conversations) are an essential characteristic of lobbying in the narrow sense, but they often refer back to written submissions. Additionally, the success of oral interventions depends, according to the interviews, very often on the quality of the written documents. They lend the collected information, positions, and demands a degree of commitment in paper form – a "finished product" in the sense of Valerie Vincent, which can be further refined in the legislative process.

Information work has a strategic value for effective lobbying, but the accounts also show that it is an expression of the practitioners' professional self-image. The interviewees are unanimously interested in developing a topic-specific expertise, because this is valuable professional capital and an important reference point of the professional habitus (see also Chapter 6). They are keen to emphasise that interest representation has a lot to do with technical expertise. In this way, information work also offers them a point of reference for justifying and legitimising their own activities. They concede that lobbying gathers and deploys information strategically, but they argue that the provision of information by the various interest groups is entirely in the spirit of evidence-based policy, which is ultimately concerned with good legal regulations (see Section 7.2).

This characterisation of lobbying as information work is part of the employees' common narrative, but needs to be differentiated in order to iden-tify the specific areas of activity with which staff are entrusted. The interviews suggest that a distinction can be made along the lines of the one already made between a backstage and a front stage in lobbying. This means that infor-mation work within the organisation must be distinguished from externally oriented communication work. Although both areas of responsibility refer to each other, they are often handled by different people within an organisa-tion. This is because interest groups have developed sufficiently differentiated organisational structures and staffing plans to recruit appropriately qualified staff. The world of EU affairs even seems to be divided into two circles of people who take on the factual or communication work and also develop different attitudes in it, as Geert van Gelder reports:

> There are two types of lobbyists in Brussels. There are those who do a lot of public affairs, a lot of communications. Who like to hang out at the reception with a glass of bubbly. And there are people who I think are like us here in the office, who really work more technically. Who say, Okay, the policy is this and the implications are that, and they do a study on it. There are just two different worlds almost.

The other interviewees do not describe the field quite so strikingly and judge-mentally. But the distinction made in this passage between a world of receptions, where one "hangs out" and does public affairs and communications, and a world of inquiry, where one works on technical tasks and produces policy-relevant studies, appears in modified form in many conversations. It is evident from the descriptions that job profiles are either more focused on working with information (backstage) or on working with people (front stage). This distinction applies to Bastien Bertrand's professional stations, as already made clear in an account quoted above. His previous work for an NGO involved a lot of communication work with decision makers. His current position, on the other hand, is much more focused on information work (research, writing dossiers and statements). He still has meetings today, but much less frequently: "But I do a lot more research and writing and that kind of thing. So, there's a lot less weight on the lobbying side."

Bastien Bertrand's distinction between activity profiles is not only in his case related to the fact that he has held different jobs at different organisations. The interviews indicate that the interest groups deal with the information requirements in different ways. Many lobbyists report that they do not need to know and provide the relevant information in detail themselves, but often rely on the expertise within the association, their memberships or the companies they represent. Depending on the scope and objectives, corresponding expert reports are also commissioned, which is where consultancies or think tanks come into play. The decision to externalise information work also has tactical reasons, because information from respected institutes, experts or researchers often has a greater influence on political decision-making, as Andrea Albrecht (company representation) notes: "It's usually better to offer information from third parties that are internationally recognised."

This externalisation does not seem to be the rule, however, as many interest groups tend to value internal expertise, as Stefan Schneider notes: "Well, mostly we do it internally. Yes. We really do have the expertise in-house." The particular importance of in-house expertise has to do with the coordination processes already described. Position papers have to go through internal organisational coordination channels, which is why technical expertise, in line with the goals and demands of the interest group, must also be included. This seems to work better in-house. According to Tadeusz Tomaszewski, position papers in his association usually come about in two ways: "Either positions are drafted by the secretariat, if this is possible. Or they're prepared by experts who can be found within the ranks of the organisation." In-house expertise may also be important, because the analyses, assessments, and demands presented reflect the positions of the interests concerned themselves and are thus of direct political relevance for the European institutions.

Interest groups externalise or internalise information work to varying degrees, which is why the activity and job profiles of European lobbyists diverge significantly in this respect. There are interviewees like Bastien Bertrand and Geert van Gelder who spend a high proportion of their working time

researching information, compiling dossiers, and drafting policy statements and position papers. Andrea Albrecht and Stefan Schneider, on the other hand, draw on both external and internal expertise. But even in these cases, it is evident that their own work is not reduced to merely recruiting and coordinating these experts. They actively participate in the preparation and communication of the papers drafted.

EU affairs professionals, who are much more on the front stage of lobbying, have less to do with this information work, because they see their mandate more in communication work. These individuals also emphasise the importance of technical and topical expertise because, after all, interests must be represented in a factually correct and credible manner. However, their core expertise and the main part of their activity is more in the field of communication. In principle, this communication work also includes what was described above as classical lobbying: making contacts with the European institutions, organising information events and discussion rounds, holding meetings and talks with political decision makers. The focus is on formulating and communicating political demands, which above all should be convincing. These people are certainly interested in acquiring expertise, according to Valerie Vincent, who works for a company representation: "But it's also about translating difficult things into simple messages for your decision makers." Communication work is an activity in its own right that is ultimately about the art of persuasion. This is based on communication expertise, appropriate tasks, and working techniques.

The stronger role of communication as a focus of the work of EU affairs professionals suggests that it goes beyond traditional lobbying and also targets the general public. The activities of European lobbyists in these cases come very close to what is typically associated with PR. Dominique Dubois, who works for an NGO, describes the work of his team in a rather conventional way: "We do press work." The aim of this PR work is above all "agenda setting," as Athanasios Angelopoulos (company representation) describes it. The conflict between the interest groups also extends to influencing the public discourse. The aim is even to dominate it, as Kate Kavanagh, who works for a European NGO, says. Her day-to-day work is dominated by work with electronic media, as her organisation seeks to mobilise the interested public with regard to upcoming legislative procedures: "Disseminating information is definitely 50 per cent of the job." Colin Cooper, who also works for an NGO, is also professionally active in this area. For him, the decisive factor is "the public pressure we can exert via social media and traditional media. The more, the better. Because this is one of our key assets as an NGO."

Since the proportion of work with the media can be high, these people tend to classify their own job and activity profile as classic PR work and not as lobbying in the narrower sense. Dominique Dubois, for example, emphasises that it is ultimately a separate field of work, distinct from lobbying: "The main area of activity for the communications team, and then also for me, is public relations, which helps to support the lobbying

work." Public relations is thus not the same as lobbying; it is only there to support the latter. Colin Cooper puts it similarly: "I support through media and social media, traditional and social media and any other communication work, the work that the lobbyists do in this organisation." This differentiation of the two areas of responsibility, however, seems to be understood more as an internal division of labour within the organisation, which benefits the effectiveness and efficiency of lobbying. In this context, PR work not only supports the representation of interests, but it is possibly also an effective instrument of lobbying. Colin Cooper therefore only distances himself from a narrow understanding of lobbying. "I'm not a traditional lobbyist," he says, suggesting that he is part of an extended group of people who represent political interests.

4.4 Conclusion: a field of work with fraying edges

European lobbying is a field differentiated along diverse key activities. Lobbying itself is a core aim, but as an activity it is related to a specific mandate – namely the use of (personal) contacts and interventions to influence political decision-making. Other areas of work (coordination work, information, and communication and PR work) are performed in equal measure. In some cases, all these tasks are part of the job profile of European lobbyists, but very often staff focus on certain areas of activity. Survey data and qualitative interviews thus corroborate that the frequency of lobbying-specific activities scatters widely within the field. Quite a number of respondents were only rarely involved in lobbying, just as many did not describe themselves exclusively as lobbyists. It is noteworthy, however, that "pure" lobbying activities make up only a small proportion of the weekly workload, as European lobbyists emphasise, because the advocatory work depends a lot on preparatory and complementary tasks. Lobbying and auxiliary tasks thus go hand in hand, which also explains why those professionals responsible for the corresponding activities testify that they participate in advocacy work, are integrated into lobbying processes or cooperate with colleagues who can be described as lobbyists in the true sense.

The heterogeneity of activities increases further as soon as other fields of work and organisations are taken into account that do not directly play a part in lobbying but are nevertheless relevant to lobbying. Such an expansion is unavoidable, because the considerations so far have shown that lobbying is characterised by blurred boundaries and fluid transitions. The lobbyists interviewed gave many examples of these fluid transitions, especially when they referred to the wide range of tasks that constitute EU affairs. Some of them point out that think tanks, research institutes, and researchers must be counted as part of the field of work if they produce studies that are linked to specific interests or are financed by them. The same applies to law firms. Even if the European institutions do not consider these organisations as lobby groups, as they focus on legal advice or legal representation in court

proceedings, mandates are often fluid. The boundaries were reported to be particularly fluid in the area of European competition law, as the European Commission can impose fines, the legality of which is then decided by the European courts. Beyond these activities, PR and marketing work, corporate social responsibility, and regulatory compliance were also listed as related areas of work.

It can thus be concluded that EU affairs is a field of work that revolves around lobbying at its core, but is visibly fraying at the edges. The staff is therefore divided along concentric circles. Lobbyists in a strict sense are located at the field's core. Their day-to-day work may not necessarily involve a high proportion of lobbying-specific activities; however, their activities are ultimately geared towards this goal. They also express subjectively that they are located at the centre of the field and choose lobbying-specific job titles or alternative terms (such as advocate, activist or representative). Grouped around this core are the supporting staff, who are primarily involved in information or policy work as well as PR and communication work. Finally, interest groups call on the services of other people (think tanks, academics or experts, law firms, legal advice, etc.), and in some cases there are also additional areas of responsibility (fundraising, campaigning, corporate social responsibility, compliance, etc.).

Despite this openness and heterogeneity, the field of work is held together by several common bonds. Interest groups organise work processes and staffs in such a way that European lobbying is equipped with the resources and tools necessary for its own success. There seems to be as much agreement on the professional mission as on the core activities of the field. The work is furthermore geared towards Brussels, which is why high attendance times are prevalent. Brussels also seems to ensure that EU affairs professionals are involved in multinational contact networks. The staff structure contributes as well to the integration of the field, as the core staff with high proportions of lobbying have more extensive professional experience and also hold managerial positions more often. Thus, the findings so far suggest that the world of EU affairs essentially consists of a manageable, well-connected and well-placed workforce. There is much to suggest that a separate labour market has emerged, opening up its own career paths and fuelling processes of occupationalisation and professionalisation. In this respect, it is to be expected that European lobbying has evolved into a specialised occupational field.

Notes

1 This includes all senior positions (directors, presidents, CEOs, members of decision-making bodies) within the Commission, the European Parliament, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the European committees and agencies. This proportion also roughly corresponds to the proportion of women among the members of the European Parliament (37.5%; European Parliament 2017).

2 The categories were "not at all" for one and "often all the time" for nine. This ambiguous wording was left in the questionnaire due to a programming error, which is why the results are only interpreted in the weaker form (often). Since the qualitative interviews indicated that even full-time lobbyists invest only a small proportion of their working time in lobbying activities, the difference between "often" and "all the time" may also be less relevant for the response behaviour.

5 The occupationalisation of lobbying

The constitution of a specialised labour market

European lobbying has developed into a specialised area of work, whose internal diversity is remarkable when considering employers and activities. Organisations as heterogeneous as trade associations and companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and protest groups, commercial consultancies and law firms rely on a staff to engage in monitoring, communication, coordination and advocacy. This field of activity seems to be exposed to integrative forces. The various tasks are executed by employed staff, whose jobs descriptions share a set of similar or complementary responsibilities. Furthermore, the Brussels arena has a strong pull effect on the world of European Union (EU) affairs, as most professionals live and work in town. Although their action radius is internationally oriented, its centre of gravity lies in Brussels. The evidence gathered in the previous chapters thus suggests that over the last decades, a specialised labour market has emerged that has made European lobbying a fully fledged occupation. The heterogeneity and competitiveness of interest groups have not hindered this development, but rather spurred it on by generating employment for an increasing number of professionals. This labour market seems to have developed clearly identifiable entry requirements, employment patterns, career paths and closure processes.

This assumption will be examined in the following section. First, it needs to be critically validated whether European lobbying has undergone such occupationalisation processes across the various interest sectors, thus establishing an integrated labour market. This process would entail a structural change of interest representation, as unpaid, voluntary part-time work would be replaced by paid, long-term and career-oriented full-time employment. Such a process seems to be under way in the field of EU affairs, as studies of business interests (Laurens 2018; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 149–158) and NGOs have shown (van Deth and Maloney 2011; Heylen et al. 2020; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020). However, the magnitude of the occupationalisation of European lobbying has to be determined, because little is known about the extent to which the entire field across its interest sectors and working areas has been affected by this process (Klüver and Saurugger 2013). For this purpose, this chapter will look at the employment

status of lobbying staff, the sectoral permeability of the field, and career paths. Additionally, the internal structures of this labour market need to be reconstructed in order to ascertain the social inequalities it has established. Labour markets are generally marked by status and income hierarchies, and EU public affairs might have generated such patterns as a consequence of its formation, thus privileging certain groups within the occupational field against others.

The aim of this chapter is also to identify those driving forces that are promoting the formation of this occupational field with its internal structures. In particular, the analyses strive to detect those professional groups within the field that are at the lead of the occupationalisation process. For this purpose, a set of factors introduced in the theoretical section (Section 2.3) will be examined, which are related to organisational membership, institutional targets, and socio-economic traits. Finally, the purpose will be to explore the entrance requirements and career patterns, because these insights help to better understand the dynamics that structure the labour market internally and lock it to the outside.

5.1 EU affairs as a labour market: employment forms and sectoral permeability

An analysis of the occupationalisation of European lobbying must start with the question of whether and to what extent this activity is carried out as a full-time job. Moreover, it must be explored whether this labour market is internally integrated. Is EU public affairs tied to salaried full-time employment across all sectors? How strongly is the labour market integrated in terms of cross-sectoral permeability? And how strongly is this labour market coupled to the broader employment field of the European institutions? That is, how common are changes from the public sector into the field of EU public affairs?

5.1.1 European affairs as full-time job

Previous studies have unveiled a steady process of professionalisation, which has primarily been understood as a growing occupationalisation of the field. Interest groups have opted to place European lobbying into the hand of full-time salaried staff (Klüver and Saurugger 2013). Moreover, even if this practice is more common among business interests (Laurens 2018; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Beauvallet et al. 2022), it also seems to apply to NGOs (Brusens 1977; van Deth and Malony 2011; Heylen et al. 2020). This occupationalisation makes sense when considering the institutional context of European lobbying. The EU, for instance, sets high standards for successful interest representation (Coen and Richardson 2009). While it may be that European legislation is ultimately still adopted by Member States within the Council of Ministers, effective lobbying must be able to monitor decision-making processes across

the institutions involved (Commission, Parliament, Council of Ministers, European courts, etc.) and thus ensure a presence in the key places. Groups wishing to be heard at EU level must adapt their activities to the agendas and rules of the game in Brussels (Taylor and Mathers 2004; Monforte 2009; Coen and Dannreuther 2003; Beyers and Kerremans 2007; Klüver 2010; Woll and Jacquot 2010). At the same time, the highly competitive nature of the organisational field also creates incentives for the occupationalisation of lobbying. In order to have a competitive advantage over the many other interest groups, it is necessary to pay full-time staff who take on these tasks in full, establish appropriate networks, and develop improved action strategies (Rudy et al. 2019; Albareda 2020; Coen et al. 2021: 162–167). At the same time, it is known from the sociology of professions that a high level of competition between groups of professionals and experts promotes the staging of professionalism (Fournier 1999; Noordegraaf 2007; Evetts 2013). After all, it is important to build trust and acceptance of one's own work among clients, members, and addressees (Svensson 2006; Harrits and Larsen 2021).

The survey data show that the assumption of a high level of occupationalisation is correct, as EU affairs are largely in the hands of full-time professionals. Table 5.1 provides insight into the employment relationships. Firstly, it breaks down the proportion of full-time versus part-time employment, and secondly, the extent of paid full- or part-time employment. As can be seen, four out of five people are in full-time paid employment and only one in ten works part-time. In addition to their main job, respondents were also asked about secondary jobs. This applied in only 5 per cent of the cases, with these additional jobs being mainly unpaid part-time positions.

In addition to these two characteristics, Figure 5.1 illustrates the share of salaried employment compared to various forms of self-employment. Four out of five respondents are employees. Few report that they are self-employed, hold a voluntary position, and/or receive an expense allowance. Political interest representation is clearly tied to formal organisations as employers.

Table 5.1 Employment relationships by hours and pay (N = 660)

| | primary position | | secondary part-time position | | | |
| | | | paid | | unpaid | |
	N	*per cent*	*N*	*per cent*	*N*	*per cent*
full-time						
paid	548	83.0	3	0.5	14	2.1
unpaid	6	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
part-time						
paid	65	9.9	4	0.6	10	1.5
unpaid	7	1.1	1	0.2	2	0.3
total	626	94.9	8	1.2	26	3.9

■ employed by an organisation   ■ self-employed/freelancer   ■ expense allowances   ■ work is voluntary   ■ other
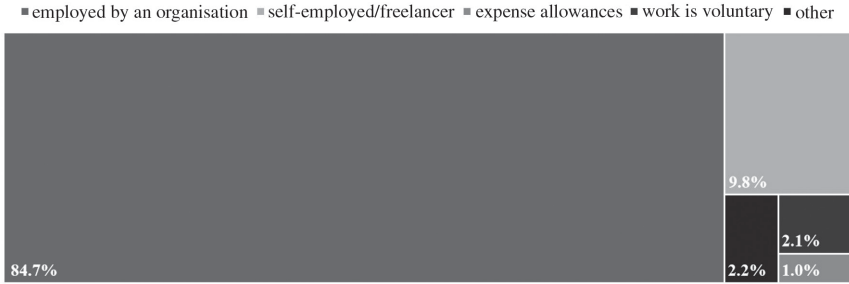
Figure 5.1 Type of employment and payment (N = 671).

This is not only the case for interest groups (associations, private companies, NGOs, etc.). In the field of lobbying-related services (such as commercial consulting firms, PR agencies, and others), salaried employment is also the dominant form of employment.

All in all, the figures show that the field of activity has become highly occupationalised. EU affairs is a full-time job in paid employment, which means that only a very small minority of respondents is in a less favourable job situation. The magnitude of the process entails that full-time salaried work is the norm across all segments of the field. However, there are small variations that can be highlighted in descriptive terms to identify the occupational sectors within the field that seem to be particularly associated with this process. According to the data, professionals working for companies are more often in full-time paid jobs (92%), when compared to most other employees (81%–86%) and the union (with only 77%). This shows that business interests are at the lead of the development and offer better jobs to their staffs. Additionally, the regularity of contacts with the European Commission seems to vary with the employment status, because the few part-time non-salaried persons report to be less often in contact (an average of 3.2 on a five-point scale) than the many full-time paid employees (3.9). These figures suggest that there is a nexus between the aim to maintain close institutional relationships in Brussels and a good employment situation. Finally, the level of occupationalisation is also higher among the lobbyists in the stricter sense. As outlined in the previous chapter, not all of the EU affairs professionals interviewed stated that they regularly engage in monitoring and lobbying activities. A comparison of the task profiles shows that full-time paid employees are on average more active in monitoring and lobbying (an average of 5.9 and 5.2 on a nine-point scale) than the few in part-time unremunerated positions (4.3 and 3.1). Similar differences can be observed with regard to the type of employment and payment, as employees are more active (5.2) than the self-employed (5.0) and volunteers (3.9). In regard to personal characteristics of the staff, the job situation does not differ between

national provenances or does so very moderately when considering age or educational attainment.

Overall, these descriptive indications show that the field of EU public affairs is almost entirely patterned as paid full-time employment. Although other forms of involvement (part-time, but especially volunteer work) also exist in the wider field of EU affairs, they represent a very small minority. Additionally, the comparison of groups shows that the occupational situation is most advanced in the core area of the field, because lobbying activities and the cultivation of institutional relationships are entrusted to full-time salaried employees in nine out of ten cases. Hence, the assumption that the occupationalisation might be fuelled by the specificities of the task profile of lobbying and the related institutional demands seems to be initially confirmed. At the same time, the prominent position of company employees suggests that business interests are particularly active in this process.

5.1.2. The sectoral permeability of the occupational field: an integrated labour market?

The labour market of EU affairs has proven to be highly integrated when forms of employment across the various interest sectors are considered. But does this also involve occupational integration in terms of cross-sectoral per-meability? How common are career changes between the various sectors? Or is the field still segmented into different job markets? The assumption of a fully integrated labour market raises doubts because, after all, these groups of people may not have very much to do with each other. Companies and trade associations on the one hand, social NGOs and social movement organisations on the other, represent issues, interests, goals, and values that often conflict in legislative processes. Moreover, the two camps represent political interests in different ways. For instance, it has been shown that companies and trade associations focus more strongly on legislative lobbying and hence even more clearly on the EU Commission and the Permanent Representations, while the NGO sector more often addresses the public via campaigns and protests (Dür and Mateo 2016; Junk 2015). In addition, companies and trade associations have made their lobbying work much more professional and, where neces-sary, also rely on commercial providers (public affairs agencies, law firms, or think tanks) (Coen 2009; Avril 2018). Such a trend has generally also been identified among NGOs, as the desire for effective interest representation within the complex world of the EU has also prompted these groups to make efforts to professionalise their organisational structures and working methods (Bursens 1997; van Deth and Maloney 2011; Eberwein and Saurugger 2013; Albareda 2020). However, when compared, the NGOs seem to have even greater objections to dedicated lobbying, which is why it is argued that they have not yet developed consistently professionalised organisational forms and personnel structures (Coen 2004). They also proclaim different, in part even

antagonistic ideas about the professionalism and legitimacy of lobbying, as will be shown in Section 7.3.

Available studies do not make it possible to determine whether these doubts about the relevance of cross-sectoral mobility are justified, because available evidence is limited and inconclusive. There are clear indications that there is mobility between the public and the private sector, between the European institutions and lobby groups (Coen and Vannoni 2016; Avril 2018; also Balosin 2016), as will be analysed in the next section (see Section 5.1.3). However, little can be said about the permeability of the occupational field itself. The few studies analysing the professional careers of the lobbying staff show that there is mobility between different interest groups working within individual sectors, such as consultancy services (Avril 2018), business interests (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Coen et al. 2021: 156f.), NGOs (Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020), and policy domains (Cheynis 2022). The organisational field thus seems to be divided into different sectors representing different interests on the basis of different repertoires of action. Such a correlation of organisational and staffing realities would imply two things: In this case, interest groups would not only recruit different people, the employees would also have to remain loyal to the respective camp throughout their careers and not move to other sectors. In theory, however, intersectoral mobility should still be possible. The wealth of professional experience gained by employees in one sector could qualify them for other areas of work and make them interesting for other employers. If EU affairs were to become established as an occupational field in its own right, job changes between sectors would even have to be quite common, as workers would accumulate professional qualifications, skills, and work routines that could be used flexibly.

The assumption of a highly permeable labour market will be empirically validated in the following section. The information on previous professional experience will be used for this purpose. The respondents were asked to indicate how many years they had worked and gained professional experience since finishing their studies. They were able to consider a list of 11 sectors or branches for the relevant information. Most of them reported their professional experience in full years; some also reported shorter periods (for example, three-quarters of a year or less). The answers provide a fairly accurate picture of the sectors in which the respondents were professionally active and for how long. It can also be determined in how many fields of work they have gained experience. However, it is important to note that the life-biographical sequence of these activities was not queried. Nor can it be determined whether these activities were explicitly related to EU affairs. Professional experience in the field of EU affairs was identified separately and the results have already been discussed (see Section 4.3). However, the question addressed here can be answered on the basis of the information collected. First, it can be clarified whether the staff have had NGO and industry-specific careers or can draw on a broader, cross-sectoral wealth of experience. In addition, it can

Table 5.2 Work experience in years and by sector (multiple answers)

Number of respondents = 611	number	% of cases	Mean Value	std. dev.	max.
consulting firms	232	38.7	6.0	5.4	30
public authorities, agencies, and other bodies	224	37.3	5.2	5.6	42
political and social associations and networks, non-profit organisations	218	36.3	7.6	7.4	36
commercial and trade associations	211	35.2	8.8	7.3	32
private companies and corporate groups	205	34.2	8.5	8.7	37
research, educational institutions, and academic associations	136	22.7	5.1	6.3	35
trade unions and professional associations	99	16.5	10.4	9.4	38
think tanks	59	9.8	3.5	4.9	25
information, media, public relations and culture	53	8.8	6.1	8.2	45
law firms	41	6.8	5.1	7.6	32
other	28	4.7	7.4	7.1	25
total	*1506*	*251.0*	*17.5*	*14.2*	

be determined whether employment in EU affairs is more common among people who have acquired professional experience in certain sectors or a configuration of such sectors.

To answer these questions, the first step is to find out in which sectors EU affairs professionals have worked to date and how many years of professional experience they can look back on. Table 5.2 presents the results by sector: The first two columns indicate the proportion of respondents who have worked in the respective areas, at least in the short term, while the last three columns indicate the number of years. As the respondents may have worked in several sectors, the table is based on multiple answers.

The figures show that over a third of all respondents have work experience in the area of consulting firms, public authorities or bodies, political or social associations, trade associations, and private companies. Research and educational institutions account for about a quarter and trade unions for a sixth of all respondents. The other sectors are mentioned less frequently: For example, only 10 per cent of all people have worked for think tanks, media and PR agencies, and law firms. These organisations are generally service providers in the lobbying field and their importance is therefore somewhat diminished.

A similar picture emerges when looking at the average number of years of employment by sector. Among trade unions, respondents report the longest average stay at ten years, but a similar picture is also found for trade associations and private companies at almost nine years, and for associations and NGOs at almost eight years. At 5.2 years, time spent at public authorities, agencies, and other bodies is rather brief. Those working for think tanks only stay for an average of four years, in other lobbying-related service sectors five to six years. However, this information should be treated with caution, given the significant dispersion of responses around the mean value (see standard deviation). In the case of trade unions, for instance, the figures vary by an average of 9.4 years around the mean value, which is why the respondents spent on average between one and 20 years working for the trade unions. For other sectors, the dispersion is similarly large or even disproportionately high in relation to the mean value. In this respect, the mean value for this question is only an imprecise approximate value.

The totals of the first two columns show that respondents have worked in more than one sector. The total number of sectors mentioned (N = 1506) is more than twice as high as the number of respondents (N = 611), which is why the percentage values are 250 per cent. The questionnaire allowed multiple answers and, as can be seen, the respondents made extensive use of this option. Their data show that they have gained work experience in 2.5 sectors on average.

More detailed information on this is provided by Table 5.3, which breaks down the number of sectors reported by respondents. It indicates that only one-fifth of respondents have been active in only one sector in the course of their own careers. Almost two-thirds have gained professional experience in two or three areas; for 10 per cent of those surveyed there are four; and 7 per cent have worked in more than five different areas. As the age of the respondents is clearly related to the number of sectors mentioned, the age information was included in the table. It shows that those who have only worked in one sector are on average 40 years old and thus eight years younger than those who have worked in more than five sectors (48 years). Again, it should be noted that

Table 5.3 Number of sectors in which respondents have worked, with age information

number of sectors	number of respondents	share in per cent	age			
			mean value	std. dev.	min	max
1	115	19.6 %	40.1	11.3	25	69
2	222	37.8 %	40.8	10.5	26	65
3	152	25.9 %	42.5	11.2	24	76
4	56	9.5 %	45.0	11.3	27	69
5 and more	42	7.2 %	48.2	12.0	29	70
total	587	100.0 %	42.0	11.2	24	76

the data scatter by more than ten years, which means that those who have worked in only one field are on average between 29 and 51 years old, while those with the most experience are between 36 and 60 years old. The extreme values underline this variance, as each group includes employees in their 20s as well as those over 60 years of age. Again, the mean values are an imprecise estimator. The high variance ultimately shows that changing sectors is not unusual, even among younger EU affairs professionals.

These figures show that EU affairs professionals have gathered a variety of work experiences. However, they reveal nothing about which fields the respondents have switched between. In order to empirically ascertain the degree of cross-sectoral permeability of the labour market, the multiple answers should be looked at more closely. It is necessary to identify the combination pairs that emerge from the totality of the information. Based on the 11 sectors, a total of 55 combinations were recorded. Table 5.4 provides an overview of how respondents are distributed among these combination pairs. For the sake of completeness, the table also includes information on the number of respondents who indicated work experience in only one sector; these figures are shown in italics.

The most striking result is, first, that all cells are occupied – except for the cell that indicates sole activity in think tanks. The data therefore show that it is possible and customary to change jobs between all 11 sectors. Even the sectors which maintain more distant, even conflictual relations (companies and trade associations versus social associations, NGOs, and trade unions) are named by a considerable number of respondents as the areas in which they have worked to date. Little seems to prevent respondents from switching sectors and/or camps.

With regard to the frequency distribution, however, there are distinct differences between the possible combinations. The observation relates to quantitative relations: Sectors in which many respondents have gained professional experience are also much more often interlinked than sectors in which respondents have worked less frequently. For instance, people who have worked in consulting firms have often gained professional experience with public authorities or agencies, political and social organisations, trade associations, and private companies; and the same is true in reverse. This enables the above statement to be further specified: Many respondents have gained professional experience in the two divergent sectors (i.e. companies and trade associations versus social associations and trade unions) because these are important areas of activity in which many EU affairs professionals work. Combinations of lobbying-related service sectors (think tanks, PR agencies, law firms) are much less common because these are rather peripheral areas in which respondents also have less professional experience overall. Only in one combination instance do the antagonisms mentioned appear as a structuring principle: People who have worked for private companies and trade associations alike make up one of the largest groups. However, it is not possible to identify an equally strong pair of opposites, as respondents who were

Table 5.4 Work experience – absolute number of respondents by combination pairs (N = 600)

	consulting firm	*authorities, agencies*	*political/social organisations*	*trade associations*	*private companies*	*research/ education*	*trade unions*	*think tanks*	*media/ PR*	*law firms*	*other*
consulting firm	*16*										
authorities, agencies	84	*14*									
political/social organisations	84	85	*32*								
trade associations	77	76	45	*19*							
private companies	76	76	52	85	*16*						
research/education	61	43	54	49	49	*6*					
trade unions	37	30	33	20	24	18	*10*				
think tanks	33	28	27	18	16	20	13	*0*			
media/PR	29	21	22	21	18	11	7	11	*3*		
law firms	15	15	12	16	16	13	5	7	3	*1*	
other	6	6	11	8	6	7	3	3	3	3	*1*

employed by social and political associations are more likely to have professional experience in state institutions and consulting firms than in trade unions.

The figures underline that the EU affairs labour market is integrated across sectors, as job changes are common. However, this finding is based exclusively on mentions of the sectors in which EU affairs professionals have worked. Based on the results so far, it can therefore only be determined that the respondents have had at least a taste of different sectors. These may have been short periods of activity. One-year internships, trainee, or entry-level phases as well as temporary positions are conceivable. These transitions are quite common for the career of European lobbyists, as will be shown in Section 5.3. For a definitive verdict, it is therefore necessary to also take into account the length of professional activity in the respective sectors in order to be able to identify focal points of work. Table 5.4 has indeed shown that respondents stayed longer in certain sectors, which suggests that there are different groups of people circling around certain sectors and combinations.

A cluster analysis was conducted to identify sectoral priorities. This statistical method is suitable for grouping respondents on the basis of similar characteristics. In the present case, the information provided by respondents on the time spent working in different sectors was to be used to determine whether it is possible to identify combinations characterised by a similar length of stay in the different sectors. The cluster method used is based on a comparison of the answers with the mean values of the number of groups (k-means); in the present case, a partition into four groups was the best solution, with the angular partition used as a similarity measure.

The cluster analysis assigned the respondents to four groups that can be meaningfully interpreted in terms of content. The members of these groups differ significantly in the nature of their professional experience, particularly in the priorities they have set in relation to individual sectors. Table 5.5 summarises the results of the calculations: The first column shows how many respondents were assigned to each group; the following columns display how many years on average the members of these groups stayed in the respective sectors. The maximum value in years was added to give an impression of the range. Finally, the average number of years for the whole sample was included in the bottom row of the table in order to identify the sectors in which the four groups differ significantly from the overall average.

The cluster analysis identifies four groups of people who are distinguished by area-specific experience profiles. The first two groups consist of people who have remained mainly in one sector: While the members of the first cluster worked for trade associations for more than 11 years on average, the second cluster brings together people who worked for private companies for an average of 13 years. In both groups, respondents also stated that they had been employed by consulting firms or government bodies, and by trade associations or companies for an average of one year. However, these figures are below the mean values of the entire sample, which is why these professional

Table 5.5 Groups of persons according to professional experience in years (cluster analysis)

cluster		consulting firm	authorities, agencies	political/ social organisations	trade associations	private companies	research/ education	trade unions	think tanks	medial PR	law firms	other
trade associations (N = 135)	mean	1.25	1.19	0.59	11.27	1.17	0.81	0.90	0.26	0.19	0.55	0.24
	max.	25	20	16	32	20	14	25	22	20	31	20
companies (N = 113)	mean	1.50	1.69	0.64	1.85	12.68	0.88	0.50	0.19	0.13	0.27	0.40
	max.	16	22	20	15	37	35	20	8	4	14	20
NGOs (N = 195)	mean	0.85	1.20	7.18	0.21	0.29	0.56	3.72	0.34	0.19	0.08	0.34
	max.	11	15	36	10	5	15	38	25	9	5	15
services (N = 168)	mean	5.29	3.44	0.61	0.57	0.61	2.25	0.73	0.51	1.44	0.53	0.39
	max.	30	42	20	10	15	35	28	20	45	32	25
total (N=611)	mean	2.28	1.91	2.71	3.06	2.87	1.14	1.68	0.34	0.53	0.34	0.34
	max.	30	42	36	32	37	35	38	25	45	32	25

experiences are not characteristic of the two groups. Trade associations and private companies therefore appear to be successful in retaining employees over a longer period of time. The length of stay is highest in this group.

The other two clusters are characterised by a cross-sectoral experience profile. The third group, which with 195 respondents is also the largest in terms of numbers, consists of people who have worked on average for more than three years in trade unions and more than seven years in political and social associations. The fourth group has the most heterogeneous range of experience, as it brings together people who have gained one or two years of professional experience in media/PR agencies and research/educational institutions. They also spent three to five years with government agencies and consulting firms. The fourth group therefore brings together people who are primarily active in the field of lobbying-related services. In contrast to the first two clusters, the last two groups do not appear to be able to retain the respondents in the long term; fluctuation, including among themselves, is a much more characteristic feature of these groups.

The results of the cluster analysis confirm, on the one hand, sectoral focal points (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Avril 2018; Coen et al. 2021: 156f.; Cheynis 2022). Cross-sectoral professional experience is widespread among lobbying-related service providers and in the NGO sector (including trade unions), while the staff of trade associations or private companies is much more strongly tied to the respective sector and also stays there longer. On the other hand, and despite these sectoral fragmentations of the labour market, the various staffs should not be understood as hermetically sealed groups of people. In their midst are also professionals who had been active in other areas, including sectors on the opposing side, even though this represents only a few months of work experience per group member (see Table 5.5). This indicates that gaining experience in different sectors is an implicit norm within the professional development of the European staff, and thus a professional capital that seems to pay off in their career advancement.

The data therefore show that EU affairs are an integrated occupational field overall, but with different centres of gravity. These centres of gravity include industry interest groups, political and social associations (including trade unions), and lobbying-related service providers. The groups of people differ in terms of their professional stations. It is striking, however, that they do not differ in terms of their activity profile, as they are all similarly often involved in monitoring and lobbying activities. Or to put it another way: The length of stay in certain sectors may vary, but job profiles are similar across sectors. Table 5.6 provides evidence of this particularity by listing the average frequency of these activities per cluster – the underlying scale ranges from 'never' (1) to 'frequently' (9). Although the members of the fourth cluster (service providers) are slightly more frequently concerned with monitoring, the mean value for the other groups of persons differs only minimally from this, which is why the difference is not statistically significant. The differences are somewhat more pronounced with regard to lobbying, because those who

Table 5.6 Activity profiles according to cluster (comparison of mean values)

cluster	monitoring				lobbying			
	mean value	std. dev.	N	difference	mean value	std. dev.	N	difference
trade associations	5.93	2.12	135	−.060	5.69	2.26	135	.629
companies	5.73	2.26	113	−.268	5.22	2.29	113	.161
NGOs	5.98	2.15	188	−.153	5.06	2.29	187	−.106
services	5.99	2.13	168	(ref.)	5.06	2.28	167	(ref.)
total	5.93	2.15	604		5.23	2.29	602	

stay with the trade associations for a long time are more active than the consultants/experts. But even these differences are too small to be statistically significant.

The picture is different when it comes to professional self-image. The groups differ most markedly with regard to the professional title of lobbying: While more than two-thirds of people with extensive professional experience in trade associations use this label, only one in two members of the third cluster (trade unions, social NGOs) does so. With regard to the alternative designations given by the respondents themselves, the concept of advocate or representative prevailed among those who had worked longest in trade unions and NGOs, and that of adviser and expert among those who had mainly gained professional experience in consulting firms, the media, or public bodies (Table 5.7).

Overall, the results show that the EU affairs staff consists of diverse groups of people who differ mainly in terms of their sectoral work experiences and their professional identities. EU affairs professionals do indeed remain in certain sectors (industry, NGOs, or service providers) for longer and develop professional images that are more common there. Nonetheless, job changes between different sectors are common, despite the fact that all sectors have their own focus, which is probably due to the similarity of the job profiles. Monitoring and lobbying involves tasks and activities that are required by a wide range of interest groups. Consequently, those involved in lobbying, regardless of the employer, are qualified for professional employment in the entire labour market. In this respect, the results provide strong evidence that European lobbying can be described as a common occupational field.

5.1.3. The revolving door effect: the importance of insider experience

In most cases, EU affairs professionals can draw on a broad and cross-sectoral wealth of experience. The professional stations frequently also include government institutions. These are particularly relevant for lobbying, as public entities, authorities, and agencies not only act as interest groups but are also among the addressees of interest representation. Professional experience

Table 5.7 Occupational identity by cluster (absolute numbers and per cent)

cluster		trade associations	companies	NGOs	service providers	total
lobbyist	N	94	57	85	74	310
	%	70.7	55.3	47.2	47.1	54.1
lobbyist and others	N	2	2	6	5	15
	%	1.5	1.9	3.3	3.2	2.6
advocate, activist	N	1	5	26	6	38
	%	0.8	4.9	14.4	3.8	6.6
representative	N	6	3	13	2	24
	%	4.5	2.9	7.2	1.3	4.2
EU/public affairs	N	7	10	9	14	40
	%	5.3	9.7	5.0	8.9	7.0
adviser, consultant	N	8	6	12	24	50
	%	6.0	5.8	6.7	15.3	8.7
expert, analyst	N	3	8	9	17	37
	%	2.3	7.8	5.0	10.8	6.5
other	N	12	12	20	15	59
	%	9.0	11.7	11.1	9.6	10.3
total	N	133	103	180	157	573
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

with government institutions is therefore particularly valuable for EU affairs professionals. It makes it possible to tap into insider knowledge and establish contacts that can be very useful for lobbying activities. In this respect, it must be clarified whether the respondents also worked within the EU institutions and were therefore able to build on insider experience.

Such a professional change of sides – from the EU institutions to lobby groups – is a recurrent theme and topic of public discourse under the catchword 'revolving door effect' (Alter-EU 2011; Balosin 2016; Coen and Vannoni 2016). The discourse centres on EU political leaders, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), but primarily EU Commissioners who, after leaving office, take up important positions with companies or associations or set up their own consulting firms. This change of sides is considered highly problematic, as these individuals are privy to sensitive insider information and have personal contacts with decision makers within the EU institutions and Member States. Such cases have prompted the EU institutions to introduce rules and codes of conduct to prevent conflicts of interest and safeguard the independence and integrity of Commissioners (see Article 245 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU; and European Commission 2018a).

Changes at the lower levels of the hierarchy are much less in focus (Coen and Vannoni 2016; Avril 2018), even though they should be more common when compared to the few but highly visible top-ranking politicians taking up

a job in a lobby group or consultancy firm. The lack of studies makes it difficult to determine how many EU affairs professionals can look back on work within the EU institutions and use corresponding insider knowledge for their current work. To answer this question, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had worked within the EU institutions and for how long. The survey data provide only a summary picture, as no questions were asked about the individual institutions (Commission, Parliament, European agencies, etc.). Furthermore, the employment relationships were not determined, which is why it cannot be clarified whether the work was done in the form of full-time positions, temporary employment, part-time work, or internships. However, the data provide sufficient information on how prevalent stations within the EU institutions are among EU affairs professionals. More detailed insights will only be provided in the next subchapter, where the career paths of European lobbyists will be identified and presented on the basis of life-biographical reports.

The survey data show that a significant proportion of respondents spent some time working within the EU institutions. The majority of those surveyed do not have such professional experience, but as Figure 5.2 shows, 45 per cent confirm that they have worked in the EU institutions, at least for a short time. One in ten spent less than a year in the EU institutions and another one in ten indicates a period of one year. This suggests that some of the interviewees completed internships or other short assignments to provide orientation during their studies, for work experience, or to gain insight into the workings of the EU institutions. With 26 per cent of the interviewees, that is, one in four, the length of stay can be described as longer, ranging from two to 28 years.

The quantitative data do not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the order of career stations, which is why it cannot be said with certainty that work in the EU institutions always preceded a change to an interest group.

one year
10.1%

5–10 years
9.5%

less than one year
9.4%

2–4 years
8.5%

11–28 years
7.4%
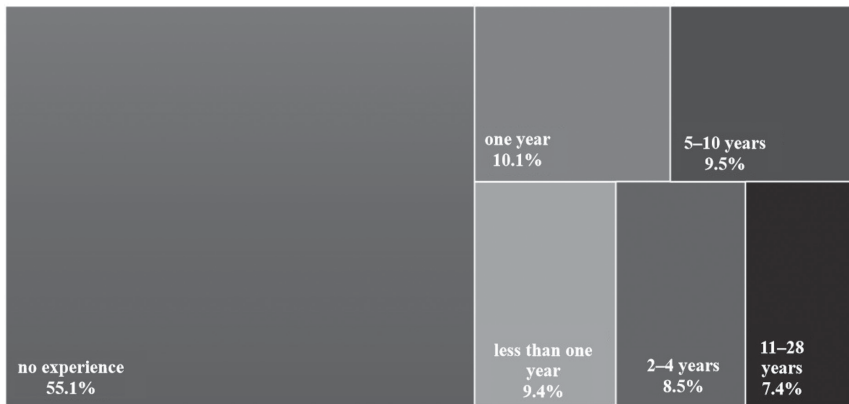
no experience
55.1%

Figure 5.2 Work experience within the EU institutions (N = 597).

Table 5.8 Work experience within the EU institutions, by sector (N = 597)

	total	Cases ›Yes‹	%	years, mv.	std. dev.	min.	max.
all respondents	597	268	44.9 %	4.58	5.82	0.1	28
separated by sector:							
consultancy	232	114	49.1 %	4.33	5.23	0.1	25
political/social organisations	218	103	47.2 %	4.08	5.13	0.45	25
trade associations	211	98	46.4 %	5.18	6.40	0.2	28
private companies	205	82	40.0 %	4.92	5.92	0.5	25
authorities, agencies [a]	155	77	49.7 %	3.91	4.81	0.5	25
research/education	136	56	41.2 %	6.47	7.38	0.5	25
trade unions	99	38	38.4 %	6.22	7.36	0.5	25
media/PR	53	28	52.8 %	4.46	4.75	0.5	16
think tanks	59	27	45.8 %	6.59	7.41	0.5	25
law firms	41	23	56.1 %	5.11	6.52	0.5	28
other	28	12	42.9 %	3.68	4.27	0.45	16
total	1437	658					

a 69 cases were excluded, as the information given was identical.

For the shorter stations within the EU institutions, however, such an interpretation is quite plausible, especially considering that this statement is more frequent among the younger age cohorts. As many as one in five respondents in the cohort of twenty-somethings stated that they had worked there for less than a year, and the same applies to one in six 30- to 39-year-olds. The assumption that internships were completed before or during their studies seems likely for these individuals. The proportion drops to zero in the older cohorts, which may be because such internships were not yet common in their time; they may no longer find such short stations worth mentioning.

Reports of insider experience come from employees in all sectors of the organisational field. Table 5.8 provides this insight by breaking down the proportion of respondents with work experience within the EU institutions for each sector. As a reference point, the proportion for the total sample was included in order to be able to compare the sectors. Of the 600 or so applicable cases, just under half stated that they had worked in the EU institutions; on average, a respondent had worked there for just under 4.6 years. However, the data are scattered, which means that the periods mentioned vary between zero and ten years; at the peak, even 28 years are mentioned.

The differences between the sectors in which the respondents have gained professional experience are clear. EU affairs professionals who have also worked for law firms mention such a station most frequently (i.e. in 23 of 41 cases, or 56 per cent). The proportion is also high among those who have worked in consulting firms (49 per cent), while it is lowest among those with experience in trade union work (38 per cent). As multiple answers were possible, the sum of the absolute numbers is more than double the total number

of applicable cases. Caution should be exercised with regard to information on public authorities, entities, or agencies. It is likely that some respondents provided identical information, as they found the questions about professional experience with public authorities and EU institutions to be congruent. Indeed, the wording ("public authorities, agencies and entities") left it open whether they were national or European institutions. However, the cases in which the data are congruent can be identified quite clearly: this was the case in 69 cases (11.6 per cent), but not in the remaining 199. When compiling the table, these 69 cases were deducted in order to include only those persons who provided differing information for public authorities and EU institutions.

In terms of length of stay, it appears that those working in think tanks, research and educational institutions, and trade unions had worked longest within the EU institutions, with respondents having worked there for an average of six years. Staff who have worked for trade associations and law firms can also look back on quite long periods; in these cases of more than five years. Even with these data, however, it must be remembered that there is a very clear scatter (i.e. by four to seven years), which is why the mean values provide only a rough estimate.

All in all, the findings show that career moves from the European institutions in the field of lobbying are widespread but not pervasive. The boundaries between both are blurred to some extent (Avril 2018), even though it is better to speak about sliding doors than revolving doors (Coen and Vannoni 2016). Work experience within the European institutions is not a requirement. That is, professionals develop their career also outside of the institutional ambit. This means that EU affairs is a proper and partly autonomous field of professional expertise, because it is detached from the institutional labour market for a considerable share of its employees. At the same time, however, work experience within the EU institutions – even for shorter periods of time – can be found everywhere in the field of European interest representation. This implies that insider knowledge is a professional capital available in all sectors. It shows that many up-and-coming lobbyists are evidently keen to enrich their careers by working within the EU institutions. Moreover, it signifies that many interest groups hire outgoing staff from the EU institutions to utilise their inside knowledge and contacts.

5.2 Labour market inequalities: positional hierarchies and income distribution

The occupationalisation process implies opportunities for the professionals involved, but it also entails downsides. The findings presented demonstrate that European lobbying has become a full-time and salaried occupation for the overwhelming part of the staff. An integrated labour market has been formed that provides jobs for a growing number of professionals, and allows for sectoral and cross-sectoral job mobility. The formation of a labour market, however, tends to also impose inequalities. Normally, jobs diverge in

regard to decision-making authorities, income levels, and social status. Good occupational positions are unequally distributed, privileging some segments of the workforce to the detriment of others. The occupationalisation of EU affairs might thus entail full-time and salaried jobs for the vast majority of professionals, but it could also entrench social inequalities in the labour market that affect work conditions and staff satisfaction.

Available knowledge about social inequalities within the field of European lobbying is limited. Previous studies have testified that interest groups work with a rather small staff of full-time lobbyists (Dür and Mateo 2012; Greenwood 2017: 104). It is thus very likely that a considerable share of EU affairs professionals hold high-ranking and well-remunerated positions, as has been shown for business interests (Laurens 2018: 86–97; Rudy et al. 2019; Coen et al. 2021: 149–152; Michon 2022). But is this observation limited to this interest sector, or do other segments of the occupational group also belong to this circle of better-off positions? Are lobbying activities and regular contacts to the EU institutions generally delegated to well-paid senior or executive positions? Or are the power imbalances between business interests and NGOs replicated at the level of staffing? The survey data provide answers that paint a mixed picture, which matches both expectations formulated by research on lobby groups and occupational groups.

5.2.1 Salaried employment and professional autonomy

The sociology of professions views the dominance of salaried employment as both a curse and a blessing for occupational groups. On the one side, scholars see the predominance of salaried employment as a possible indication of a lower degree of occupational consolidation and professionalism of work (Wilensky 1964; Rueschemeyer 1983; Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011; Evetts 2011). Organisations restrict their employees' scope for decision-making and limit professional autonomy because they subordinate the activities of their employees to organisational goals and work processes. Under certain circumstances, organisations can standardise and rationalise work to such an extent that professional knowledge and skills become worthless, thereby causing a de-qualification, de-professionalisation, or even proletarianisation of the working population (Oppenheimer 1973; Derber and Schwartz 1991). For these reasons, the early sociology of professions argued that the liberal professions (such as lawyers or doctors) were able to establish themselves so successfully as a professional group because work was more often carried out on a self-employed basis and was more removed from the reach of formal organisations (Carr-Saunders et al. 1936; Friedson 1970; Abbott 1988; Hanlon 1999). However, the more recent sociological studies emphasise that new professions are also emerging whose expertise relates to organisation as a form and process (such as management consultancy, project management, personnel development, or headhunting). Additionally, organisations operating in the knowledge-intensive service sector also rely considerably

on professional initiative and expertise (for instance, legal counselling, project management, research, analyses, information technology (IT), and creative services). These professionals are confronted with contradictory tasks and orientations, as they need to bridge professional and managerial principles – autonomy and quality on the one side, and control and efficiency on the other –, thus encouraging new forms of hybrid, corporate, or organisational professionalism (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008; Muzio et al. 2011; Noordegraaf 2015 and 2020).

The relationship between organisations and professions therefore depends on the specific nature of the tasks and knowledge: In some areas of work, dependent professionals have to reckon with restrictions in their autonomy; in others, organisations ensure corresponding scope for action. At the same time, it can be assumed that the relationship within organisations will not be the same for all those in employment, as the positions and hierarchies within the organisation limit or stimulate the employees' scope for shaping their work to a different extent. Work in the lower-ranking, operative areas is much more formalised and standardised than in management positions. This level is where responsibilities and decision-making powers are anchored, which relate much more to a professionally defined mandate. Employees in these positions do not rely solely on internal organisational decision-making guidelines and formalised procedures in their work, but use professional knowledge and skills to defend professional autonomy against possible interference. Furthermore, the professionalism of work in the sense of subjectively perceived professional competence plays an important role at the level of middle and upper management. It seems to help staff underpin and legitimise their claim to leadership (Svensson 2006; Evetts 2013).

This debate is directly relevant to the investigated field of activity, as formal organisations have been constitutive for the profession of European lobbying from the beginning. They play a beneficial role in occupationalisation, as interest groups offer and finance jobs with a specialised job profile. The dominance of salaried employment, however, may have positive and negative implications for professional autonomy. It may be an indication that employed lobbyists are bound by instructions and procedures. They may be the worker bees, underlings, or vicarious agents of their organisations, and the contents and objectives may be defined by the organisation's management. The high need for coordination identified in Section 4.3.2 can be seen as an indication of such a limitation of professional autonomy; coordination requirements were not without reason perceived as a nuisance by some interviewees. In order to be able to answer the question of the professional scope of employees within their organisations, it is therefore important to determine how widespread standardised and low-skilled jobs are among staff.

The survey data do not show any evidence of such a limitation of professional discretion. On the contrary, the responses from EU affairs professionals indicate a high degree of professional autonomy. This concerns both decision-making powers and scope for action. Respondents were asked
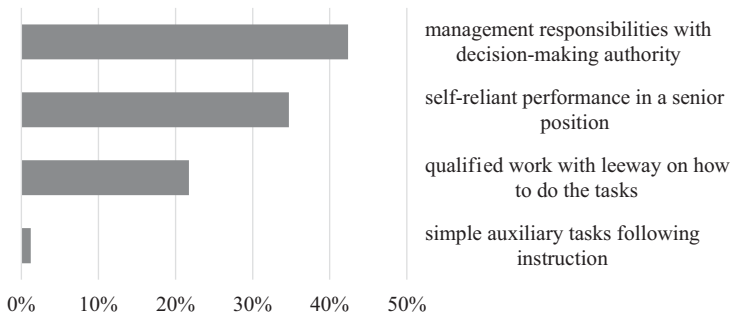
Figure 5.3 Decision-making authority in absolute figures (N = 663).

to label their job profile in terms of the competences attributed to their own job. The possible answers ranged from "simple auxiliary tasks following instructions" to "management responsibilities with decision-making authority." The answers therefore provide information not only about the extent of personal decision-making authority, but also about the hierarchical position of the respondent's own position within the organisation. Figure 5.3 summarises the response categories and the corresponding figures. It can be seen that only a very small group of respondents (just 1.2 per cent) carry out auxiliary and support activities. As many as 22 per cent perform qualified work with leeway on how to do the tasks, another 35 per cent carry out self-reliant work in a senior position and 42 per cent even hold management and leadership positions.

It can therefore be concluded that the staff consists mainly of senior executives and managers. This means that EU affairs professionals are primarily part of the middle and senior management, which is supported by a look at the job titles also indicated by the respondents. This shows that the employees belong to the top staff of the organisations (Director, President, Secretary General, Executive Director, etc.), the management of the Brussels office of these organisations (Public Affairs Director Europe, Head of EU Liaison Office, Head of Brussels Office), or the top of the departments in charge of EU affairs (Vice-President Government Affairs, Senior Manager Communications, Principal Consultant, Head of European Regulation, Policy Director, etc.). It is true that the job descriptions are not directly comparable, as the CEO of a global corporation has a scope of influence and control that goes far beyond that of a comparable position at a small representation office in Brussels. However, the question of professional autonomy is purely a matter of the scope of decision-making powers of EU affairs professionals in their field of work, regardless of the size of the headquarters or parent companies. The results are clear in this respect, as they demonstrate that interest representation is primarily confined to positions of high accountability and decision-making authority.

Table 5.9 Professional autonomy (descriptive statistics, mean value comparison)

	mean value	std.dev.	bonferroni	cases
Freedom of choice for topics/projects	3.43	1.17		666
by employment type				
self-employed	3.79	1.17		66
salaried	3.36	1.16	−0.425*	559
by decision-making competence				
simple auxiliary activity	2.38	0.74		8
skilled work	2.92	1.10	0.541	143
senior position	3.55	1.10	1.176*	227
executive responsibility	3.62	1.20	1.245*	274
Formalisation of work processes	2.67	1.16		655
by employment type				
self-employed	2.46	1.20		63
salaried	2.71	1.15	0.248	552
by decision-making competence				
simple auxiliary activity	2.88	1.25		8
skilled work	2.73	1.18	−0.145	141
senior position	2.52	1.09	−0.351	225
executive responsibility	2.77	1.19	−0.106	268

*significance level: *$*<0.05$.

This assumption can be confirmed with regard to the employees' scope for action. Two questions were put to the respondents. Firstly, they were asked to indicate whether they usually decide themselves which subjects and projects they work on – the response scale ranged from "not at all" (1) to "very much" (5). Secondly, they were asked to comment on the statement that the processes in their workplace are usually highly formalised. The response scale started with an absence of formalisation (1, "not at all") and gave the option of indicating a low to high degree of formalisation (5, "very much").

Table 5.9 summarises the answers in the form of mean values. The figures show that EU affairs professionals tend to be rather free in their choice of topics and projects and are involved in fairly unformalised work processes. A comparison of the mean values also shows that the scope for action varies between the various workplaces. With regard to the type of employment, it can be seen that the freedom of choice is, as expected, greater for the self-employed than for those in salaried employment. An even greater spread can be observed along the various hierarchical levels with their specific decision-making powers. Freedom in the choice of topics is particularly low among employees engaged in simple auxiliary activities; however, as expected, it is highest among management staff.

With regard to the degree of formalisation of work processes, the same picture emerges. Overall, the processes are rather less formalised, although employees report a higher degree of formalisation than the self-employed,

which is in line with expectations. However, the differences are remarkably small, which is why the mean value comparisons are not statistically significant. A similar picture emerges with regard to areas of competence, as EU affairs professionals at all hierarchical levels tend to follow rather unformalised work processes. Conversely, this also means that the senior positions must also observe existing processes. In fact, management staff are much more likely to perform such formalised processes than senior executives, because the difference to more basic areas of activity is remarkably small. This is because the executive level of the organisations regards its own reporting and accountability obligations to the board, members, or customers as binding.

Overall, the results show that the occupationalisation process has established an extensive labour market of full-time and salaried jobs, which are most often placed at high-ranking positions within the respective organisations and entail considerable autonomy. These findings have to do with the mandate of EU affairs professionals. In the field of monitoring, they must observe the political decision-making processes within the EU and must be able to decide which developments are relevant for their association, their company, their NGO, or their client. They thereby perform early warning and translation roles. In the field of lobbying, they must develop contact networks, and above all they must decide whom to talk to and in what way with regard to upcoming legislative procedures. Although they work on behalf of their organisations or clients and must liaise closely with them, they can only do their job if they have sufficient autonomy to identify relevant issues and develop appropriate measures. The fact that senior and executive positions are more often entrusted with lobbying activities (see also Table 4.8 in Section 4.2) signals that top-ranking professionals are an important asset that interest groups and consultancies wish to equip adequately. Recruiting high-ranking professionals and granting them work-related autonomy seems to be the preferred strategy to increase the impact of political exertion of influence.

5.2.2 Income inequalities and non-monetary incentives

It is noteworthy that the income structure of the EU affairs professionals surveyed does not reflect this prevalence of senior and executive positions. As Figure 5.4 below shows, the annual income of half the respondents is less than 50,000 euros; 20 per cent earn between 50,000 and 80,000 euros a year; and the remaining 25 per cent earn more. This means that the majority of EU affairs professionals earn just about as much as the average German in full-time employment: With an average monthly salary of 3,800 euros, the gross annual salary in 2017 was just over 45,000 euros (Federal Statistical Office 2019). However, it is not only striking that the respondents, although they mostly hold senior positions, are hardly better off than the average German employee. When assessing income situations, it should also be kept in mind that the cost of living in Brussels is quite high. Compared to major German
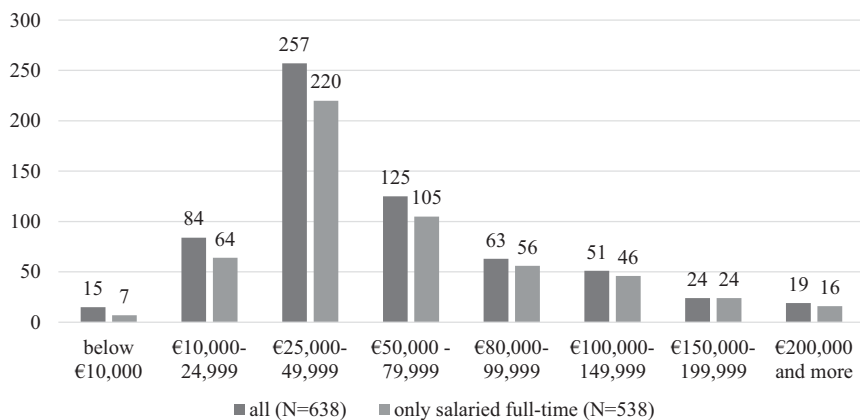
Figure 5.4 Distribution of income.

cities, it is slightly lower than in Munich and Frankfurt, but higher than in Hamburg and Düsseldorf.[1] Although not all respondents live in Brussels, the high cost of living affects as many as two-thirds of respondents, as demonstrated in Section 4.2.

There are two factors that may be responsible for this cluster of middle-income earners. On the one hand, part-time employment is associated with lower incomes; on the other hand, there are also people who perform their work, even in senior positions, in a voluntary capacity and/or receive an expense allowance. However, excluding these cases changes the overall picture of income distribution only marginally, as can be seen from the grey columns. The observation thus remains valid: EU affairs professionals take on managerial positions, but only some can expect to earn a very good income.

A further explanation for this remarkable result might be that EU affairs is merely a transitory labour market where respondents are actively looking for new jobs. After all, the previous chapter revealed that the proportion of younger employees is high. Additionally, it may be that there are fewer older workers because they move on to new tasks or more attractive jobs outside the profession. The survey data, however, cannot confirm this assumption of high volatility in the profession. For instance, employees were asked whether they expect to still be working in European public affairs in five years' time. As the information in Table 5.10 shows, almost two-thirds of all respondents anticipate this. It is true that only one in six is firmly committed to remaining in the field, and another 20 per cent have no firm opinion ("don't know"). But only a negligible proportion are determined to get out.

Most respondents seem to be satisfied with their work in EU affairs, at least for the coming years. This shows that the question of income is an important component for most respondents, but not the only one they associate with a

Table 5.10 Remaining in the field of European public affairs in the next five years

	N	*per cent*
definitely	105	15.8
rather yes	326	49.2
rather no	95	14.3
under no circumstances	7	1.1
don't know	130	19.6
total	663	100.0

good job. This is reflected in the information provided by respondents about what is important to them at work (see Figure 5.5). Income is important or very important for almost one in two respondents, but the content of the work is more important. It is about having a varied job, which almost two-thirds consider to be very important, and about doing activities that correspond to their personal interests.

Other than a high income, there are various reasons for EU affairs professionals to work in this field. The profession seems to offer them sufficiently diversified tasks, international travel, and contacts as well as the opportunity to pursue personal interests. The wide range of activities in which professionals are involved (see Section 4.3) is obviously partly responsible for their job satisfaction. At the same time, the occupational field seems to be developing a certain binding force. As will be shown later, many European lobbyists did not deliberately plan or aim for their current job, but their career entry is described as consequent personal development (see Section 5.3), and they also see their continued presence in the field as an expression of a personal learning and development process that is essential for professionalism (see Section 6.3).

Consequently, a high income does not seem to be the first and foremost consideration for European lobbyists when assessing a job. Nevertheless, the question of income is an important issue, as it has a considerable effect on the labour market in general and on the work-related standing of EU affairs professionals in particular. In fact, income differentials are the decisive factor introducing social inequalities into a field, where full-time salaried employment is the norm in all interest sectors, and where even high-ranking positions are within the reach of two-thirds of all respondents. EU affairs professionals might be on an equal footing in regard to their employment status and job position, but they are remunerated very differently. This raises questions about the occupational segments most affected by these income inequalities. Answers are provided by a regression analysis that tests a number of potential determinants (see Table 5.11). Following the assumptions introduced in Section 2.3, it was expected that employees of business interests might be economically privileged due to the assumed budgetary scope of these employers. But higher income should also pertain to consultants, as they provide marketable services and follow a commercial for-profit orientation. The staffing
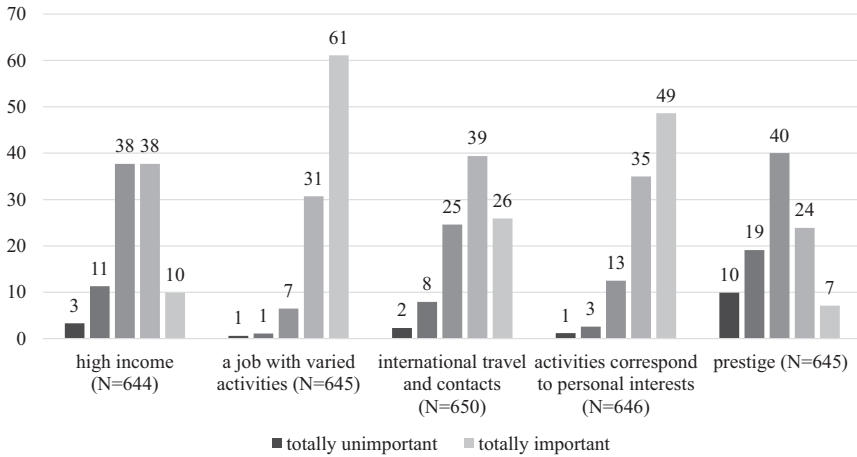
Figure 5.5 Important aspects of the work (in %).

levels were included into the calculations, because they are a proxy for the financial scope of an employer and might show that resource endowment is the factor determining income across sectors. Additionally, the presence in Brussels might be beneficial in finding well-paid positions. Moreover, particularly those professionals regularly meeting with representatives of the European Commission should be better off, because interest groups might be inclined to assign their lobbyists the necessary social status to effectively influence representatives of this institution. A number of socio-demographic variables were introduced as controls, because income should be correlated with gender, age, educational attainment, and national wage structures. The calculations also consider job-related attitudes, because it was advisable to also control for the relevance of income as an element of job satisfaction.

The assumed correlations were determined by means of a linear regression analysis, in which the various models were introduced step by step. Table 5.11 shows that the correlations are in line with expectations. The sector in which the employees work is a significant factor. The likelihood of earning a very good income is two or three times higher for companies, trade associations, and consulting firms. NGO workers are the worst off. Being regularly in contact with representatives of the European Commission is associated with higher incomes, while the intensity of lobbying activities is only weakly related. Strong working commitment in Brussels does not correlate with higher income, and the same is true in regard to the size of the organisations.

Socio-demographic characteristics were included in the calculations because they have an important influence on the income situation of EU affairs professionals and can help determine the extent to which employer and job responsibilities remain a relevant explanatory factor. This is clearly the case, as

Table 5.11 Income situations (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Employer (*ref.: Brussels only*)				
Consultancies	1.721			1.382
Companies	2.720***			2.152***
Trade associations	2.232***			1.490*
Trade unions	0.993			1.083
NGOs	0.623**			0.728*
other	1.468			1.343
Size of the EU affairs staff (*std.*)	1.042			1.055
Lobbying activities (amount, *std.*)		1.189**		1.063
Contacts to Commission (*std.*)		1.232***		1.200***
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)		0.991		1.024
High income important (*std.*)			1.329***	1.275***
Remain in the field (*definitely*)				
probably yes			0.476***	0.694**
probably not/absolutely not			0.638	0.673*
don't know			0.471***	0.728
Personal characteristics				
Gender (*ref.: male*)				0.813*
Age (*std.*)				1.976***
Education (*ref.: BA and lower*)				
Postgraduate				1.644*
PhD				1.603
Field of study				
European studies				0.833
Economics				1.415**
Law				1.236
MINT				0.993
Citizenship				
German				1.364**
British				1.884**
Italian				0.632***
Eastern European				0.786
Constant	34.65***	44.53***	79.83***	41.52***
Observations	433	433	433	433
R^2	0.101	0.037	0.063	0.460

Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$ (robust standard errors).

shown by the fourth model in the table. The strength of the effects is reduced, but only partially. Additionally, we see that women are unlikely to belong to the group of high earners, while older people have higher incomes. The same applies to those with higher academic degrees (master's or doctorate). The national background has an effect, as German and British respondents belong

to the high earners, while the Italians and Eastern Europeans are worse off. This seems to reflect diverging wage structures across countries. The hierarchical positions were not included in the model, as it is obvious that senior and executive jobs are well remunerated.

The table indicates also that attitudes towards one's own job are clearly related to personal income. The subjective relevance matches the objective income situation, which means that those respondents who underline the importance of income in regard to their job satisfaction are also among the better paid. This also corresponds with plans for the future, because people with a lower inclination to remain in the occupational field are less likely to be among the very high earners. This means, conversely, that the lower earners keep all options open: When asked about future plans, they show a slight to pronounced preference for leaving. At the same time, high earnings go hand in hand with a firm intention to remain in the occupational field. A high income would therefore appear to increase the binding force of the profession.

Overall, the results show that income inequalities are a reality inherent in the labour market of EU affairs. For those working in lobbying, income is not necessarily the most important aspect of their work, and this means that few are dissatisfied with their occupation and plan to move out of the field. Income inequalities might even be favourable for long-term career paths, because unequal earning opportunities within individual organisations as well as between sectors offer incentives to boost occupational mobility within the field and thereby retain workers in the EU affairs world in the long term. However, social inequalities perpetuate and deepen disparities within the field of interest representation. The power imbalances between business interests and NGOs are duplicated on the level of the staff, as the former provide higher-ranking and better paid jobs than the latter. Additionally, labour market-related inequalities seem to deepen core–periphery relations within the occupational field – between a group of professional insiders with well-paid senior positions, more active in the field of lobbying and with closer relations to the European institutions, on the one side, and those professionals engaged in complementary tasks, with less privileged jobs and greater distance to the worlds of the EU institutions, on the other.

5.3 Standardised careers: getting started in an established field

EU affairs is a surprisingly homogeneous labour market when considering employment relations, decision-making authority, and discretionary autonomy, but also an occupational field with internal income and status inequalities. These findings suggest that the internal integration and structuration of the field is paralleled by processes of double closure. Those who wish to gain a foothold in the field need to reach for one of the full-time qualified jobs and eventually put themselves forward for one of the higher-ranking and well-paid senior positions. What the survey data were unable to show, is whether this profession is characterised by its own career entries

and pathways. This search for occupation-specific career paths requires a change in methods, as it is now a matter of reconstructing individual educational and occupational trajectories from the life-biographical perspective of those involved. This will be based on the in-depth interviews conducted with European lobbyists, which have already been used in previous chapters.

The reports as a whole are informative, because despite different educational and occupational biographies, similar stations, descriptions, and assessments are mentioned again and again. This makes it possible to reconstruct typical career paths. Moreover, the individuals in question bring up such typical career paths themselves, and they often reflect on their own careers in the light of these models. Beyond the identification of the usual pathways, the following is primarily intended to clarify whether the observed regularity of stations and combinations is also related to the fact that career starts and career paths must comply with certain standards and principles that are firmly anchored in the occupational field.

5.3.1 *The diversity of career paths*

The first thing that becomes apparent when looking through the biographical sections is that the career paths of the various individuals differ considerably, especially with regard to their personal backgrounds. This diversity is also discussed in the interviews as a characteristic of European lobbying. For example, many reports converge in the view that European lobbying is in principle open to all educational and professional backgrounds. Veronika Vogel already described in an interview in 1998 that she did not know what the specific professional background of a lobbyist should be. At that time she worked for a Brussels-based umbrella organisation of a European industry and had found that personal backgrounds could vary considerably "depending on the interests you represent." This view is still valid almost 20 years later, as seen in the perspective of Ralf Richter, who works for a European professional association, and who also stresses that the people he deals with "have very diverse backgrounds. So often they would be lawyers, but often economists, often natural sciences." He describes the case of a biologist who works for the public affairs (PA) department of a big company and who is able to use her scientific skills effectively in order to understand the chemical and technical aspects of her work. In both cases, the diversity of professional backgrounds is explained by the variety of interests represented and the necessary openness with regard to professional knowledge.

However, there seems to be another reason for the great diversity of professional backgrounds, which has to do with career goals. Although there are many professionals in lobbying who come from law, political science, or economics, few of them are likely to have had lobbying on their list of professional goals or aspirations at the outset of their careers. The same applies to those who come from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, or

engineering. Among the interviewees, Geert van Gelder was one of the few who had geared his master's degree in European studies towards this career goal and pursued his career entry accordingly. Such a career aspiration is not discernible in the other cases; sometimes it is even described as absurd. Rosalie Rousseau, for example, who now works for a European NGO, describes her goals during her university studies and afterwards: "I wanted to be anything but a lobbyist." Similarly, Valerie Vincent, who works in a company's EU office, explains: "It's all a coincidence. [...] I never wanted to be a lobbyist because I didn't know it existed." Moreover, it was the same with Helen Huber (a consultant), although she had made sure that her degree programme related to the EU: "When I decided that I wanted to study things related to the European Union, I didn't know what a lobbyist was. I had no idea that this was even existing as a job."

Life-biographical coincidences play a crucial role for a large proportion of staff in explaining why they now work in the field of European lobbying (see also Section 6.1). The recurring reference to coincidences documents that lobbying is an unusual or unlikely career choice. The respondents thereby make it clear that this field of activity does not really correspond to vocational and academic training and the occupational profiles anchored therein. Even in the case of the vocational training and degree programmes that are still considered most relevant in the occupational field, the graduates concerned agree that they do not provide adequate training for their current jobs. Ralf Richter, for example, is a trained lawyer and therefore brings skills that are usually considered highly relevant to the field of European lobbying. However, he himself questions the relevance of his professional background by distancing himself from his professional identity as a lawyer in terms of time and content: "I'm a lawyer myself, from my distant past. I'm not a practising lawyer." With this he makes it clear that lobbying may have something to do with law, but it is not one of the profession's primary professional fields. Lobbying is a secondary labour market for lawyers.

Other descriptions also emphasise the lack of fit between vocational and academic training and fields of activity. Communication, for example, is seen as an essential component of European lobbying activities. However, this does not necessarily qualify communication science graduates for this occupational field. This is how Colin Cooper, who works for a European NGO, sees it. Against the background of his many years of professional experience in a PR agency and his current job, he affirms that "you need a lot of skills and a lot of knowledge that communication as such, if you study that, doesn't give you." The knowledge acquired during this degree course proves to be of little use once it comes to applying it in the field of European lobbying.

With these statements, the professionals express the belief that their work requires its own practical knowledge, as will be further developed in Section 6.4. They feel that European lobbying is not a profession that can be learned through book knowledge, but a practical profession that has to be learned,

practised, and perfected. This position in professional practice makes a seamless career path into the profession with adequate training very unlikely in the eyes of all those working in this field. Conversely, this means that there are also no predestined future professionals, as everyone must submit to the demands of real-life work.

The interview material therefore confirms that European lobbying is both an inclusive and exclusive field of activity. It is exclusive, as career starters have to learn the tools of the trade and gain a foothold in the occupational field. But it is also inclusive, as it is fundamentally open to people with different educational and professional backgrounds. Although lobbying has therefore established itself as a field of activity in its own right, it draws on many educational and professional fields. Against this background, it is understandable that many lobbyists have taken unconventional career paths that are marked by coincidences or detours.

5.3.2 Common and typical career paths

The description mainly concerns educational pathways, while the career entries and the early career paths of most employees are very similar in many respects and show typical patterns. As will be shown later, this relates to the practical requirements of European lobbying, which must essentially be understood as selection and closure mechanisms. The typical patterns become visible as soon as the careers are grouped along their stations and their sequences are examined. However, they are also sometimes addressed by the interviewees themselves, as they compare their own career paths with the careers of others working in the field and suggest generalisations. The similarities are remarkable and suggest that employees watch each other and exchange information on this issue, and in this way develop common characterisations of typical career entries.

These characterisations are suitable as a starting point for a description of the career paths of European lobbyists. They correspond in important aspects with the results of the inductive analysis of the interview material, although clarifications and differentiations are required. However, the descriptions of common career paths help identify two distinct trajectories and outline them roughly. As these types also coincide with the personal career of the persons concerned, one can speak of individually anchored generalisations.

The interviews describe two typical career paths, which can be referred to as the "national path" and the "direct route to Brussels." The first career path appears in the interview with Tadeusz Tomaszewski, who at the time of the interview, with almost six years of professional experience, is one of the younger representatives and works for a professional association. He describes that professional entry into the field of EU affairs very often occurs via a Member State:

> You don't have a lot of people jumping from being a lawyer in a small town in Europe and dealing with court cases (.) civil law and everything,

and all of a sudden jumping to Brussels. Legal background as a training exists, but the experience is mostly that of being inside of an organisation as a lobbyist. You also see a lot of people who have some experience at national level, working in an NGO, charities, [social] organisations, trade unions, and so on. And they will then [stay] either in the same field or move to a different field, and move to Brussels. Because they have built an experience at national level.

According to this description, the career path of a lobbyist starts at home. Nevertheless, Tadeusz Tomaszewski stresses that there is a considerable difference in altitude between a little village somewhere in Europe and the capital of the EU, which is not easy to overcome. The lawyers he cites as the anchor point of his account might well be predestined for such a leap, as the EU has a lot to do with law. But even the lawyers do not seem to be able to make this leap without a run-up and support. Such a springboard is offered by organisations that play a decisive role in the metamorphosis of lawyer to lobbyist. In his experience, lobbyists are primarily representatives of an organisation, which means that they have nothing to do with the legal profession (the local lawyers). It is the experience of representing national organisations that prepares them to take the plunge by imparting the necessary competences and skills. The transfer to Brussels is therefore facilitated and channelled through national organisations.

   The other typical career entry differs from the previous one, as the geographical move to Brussels takes place at the start of the professional career. Those who have arrived there professionally then change jobs and enter the field of European lobbying. This changes not only the sequence of the stations but also the underlying logic. This second typification is made by Dominique Dubois, who works for an NGO in Brussels:

   I think that if you're interested in politics, in European politics, then you quickly end up in Brussels or quickly deal with Brussels, even if you work in Berlin or in Madrid or anywhere else in Europe. Political or European politics is the fixed point for people who are interested in politics in general, I think. And (.)

I: Especially with your focus.

   Yes. But the focus, that develops only afterwards. That means that you can then get into this lobbying field for the first time. But Brussels certainly has an attraction, it had an attraction for me too. But I also believe (.) I've dealt with many people that I either hired myself, that were trainees, that come to Brussels from the most diverse regions of Europe, because it has a certain fascination, I think. EU policy, lobbying, how to influence rules that then impact 520 or 510 million Europeans. And I think that is something that has played a role for me personally, but also in general for many people who work in Brussels, it's one reason is why they work here.

This passage of his interview has autobiographical qualities and should help in understanding what drives him and other professionals to work as a lobbyist in Brussels. Unlike Tadeusz Tomaszewski, who describes the forces that bring lobbyists to Brussels, Dominique Dubois is interested in the forces that attract people to Brussels. It is, first, the interest in politics that propels him and others to Brussels; but above all it is the special quality of European politics (the large number of people affected by political decisions) that exerts a special fascination on those interested in politics. These people follow the call of the EU and then only decide to work in lobbying once there.

Those who follow this call have two career options that Helen Huber highlights: "Basically you have two choices if you want to work in European affairs. Either you join the institutions and you work on the (.) on the EU law making (.) or you work for the private sector and you represent their interest and therefore work with the institutions." Newcomers find employment either within the EU institutions or with an interest group. Both cases involve working on European legislation, sometimes directly (within the institutions) and sometimes indirectly (by working with the institutions).

The emblematic career entries described by Tadeusz Tomaszewski and Dominique Dubois correspond roughly to what the inductive analysis of the entire interview material was able to reveal. However, important variations and amendments have to be highlighted. The first inductively determined career path follows the case described by Tadeusz Tomaszewski, but shows that the path from the national to the European level is mediated by work experience in an international and/or global environment. This career path applies to Lorenzo Lombardi, who was working for a European umbrella organisation at the time of the interview. After completing his degree, which was followed by a doctorate and scientific work at a university, he was hired by a company where he was responsible for product development, consulting, and advertising. He later moved to a large global corporation, which eventually sent him to Brussels to work for the European industry association that the company belonged to. This secondment came at a later stage in his career and implied a move to a new area of responsibility: lobbying. However, given that his company had an eye on the global and European market, he did not perceive his late career change to the world of EU affairs as inconsistent: "My CV is actually very logical until then." His previous professional experience seems to have qualified him to work for a European lobbying association.

The same path applies to other people. During her time at university, Pinelópi Papadakis completed various internships in the political field. The internship at the headquarters of a global corporation paved the way for her direct route to Brussels, as she was offered a three-year trainee position at the corporate representation in Brussels at the end of her studies, which now opened up the prospect of a permanent position in Brussels. For Pinelópi Papadakis, the national path is therefore mediated by international stopovers, which paved her way to Brussels and opened up career prospects in the world

of EU affairs. And while Lorenzo Lombardi was able to successfully make the leap into a European umbrella organisation because he had many years of professional experience, Pinelópi Papadakis first had to learn the tools of the trade before she was offered a permanent position within the corporate representation in Brussels. Both cases therefore show that the national path to the world of EU affairs is still being trodden, because European interest groups have to recruit lobbyists from among the ranks of their member associations or companies; moreover, national associations, companies, or NGOs will also continue to send their staff to Brussels. However, the two cases show that the leap into the world of EU affairs cannot be achieved without substantial preparations and entry assistance. With Lorenzo Lombardi, many years of professional experience in an international company paved the way; with Pinelópi Papadakis it was a long induction phase provided by the human resources (HR) development department of a similarly international company.

This observation also applies to all other respondents who followed the national path. Henric Huisman, for example, seems to be among those who have followed the example given by Tadeusz Tomaszewski. He had also completed his studies and initially worked for three years on the board of a national NGO before moving to Brussels to find employment with a European NGO. However, the change came not entirely unprepared, as he had already completed an internship with the same NGO in Brussels before starting his career. In the other cases that followed a national path, respondents worked in other areas before entering the Brussels world of European lobbying. However, they did not come there from their home country, but chose an international path. This applies for instance to Georg Gerlach, who completed internships in Brussels and several other European and non-European cities during his studies. After completing a trainee programme with an NGO and working for almost eight years at headquarters and in several representations outside Europe, he applied for a position in the EU office of another NGO. This international path to the EU can also be found among employees of multinational companies. Maxime Moreau, for example, had worked in the legal department at the company's headquarters and at a subsidiary in a Member State before joining the public affairs department in Brussels. He describes this as a normal transfer, which is why it is likely that he will leave Brussels again.

Prior professional experience in diplomacy is also not uncommon. Although the diplomatic service is bound to a specific country, it also involves an international career that is defined by foreign assignments. Tadeusz Tomaszewski chose this career path. He began his professional career in the service of a national cultural institute. As part of his diplomatic training, he found employment in overseas embassies. As his work had a clear European and EU connection, his career took him to Brussels, where he initially worked for a small European lobbying association for four years before moving to a European professional and umbrella organisation, where he was still employed at the time of the interview.

A much closer connection with the Brussels world of EU affairs applies to the second emblematic path described by Dominique Dubois and Helen Huber as a direct career entry in Brussels. The inductive analysis of the interviews makes it possible to identify two specifications: the direct entry into Brussels' world of public affairs is often facilitated by commercial consultancies or paved indirectly through employment with the institutions of the EU. The first variant can be described as a linear career path, as the respondents found employment with an interest group or, more frequently, a consulting firm in Brussels. Geert van Gelder, for example, had completed a master's in European studies and felt that starting his career with a small consulting firm in Brussels was only logical. After three years, he found employment with a larger trade association, because he wanted to develop his career and take on more responsibility for professionally sound work. Colin Cooper's career also follows this pattern. Born in a non-European country, he came to Europe to study in England and Belgium. After graduating, he took a job with a PR agency in Brussels (first as a trainee, then as a permanent employee) before joining an NGO. The situation was similar for Dominique Dubois, who initially worked for a public affairs agency in Brussels in the field of lobbying and PR after finishing university. Prior to joining the non-profit organisation where he was employed at the time of the interview, he had gained work experience with two private companies. Dávid Dabecz followed the same path. During his studies, he already completed various internships in Brussels. After leaving university, he first found employment with a consulting firm, but then moved to a corporate representation, where he was still working at the time of the interview.

In all these cases, consulting firms paved the way for entry into the world of EU affairs. The professional experience gained there enabled the interviewees to change employers, usually with the aim of being employed by a corporate representation, a trade association, or an NGO. However, long-term careers in commercial lobbying are also common. This applies to Helen Huber, who changed employers several times in order to advance her career. During her studies, she completed two internships in Brussels with an NGO and a trade association. After completing her training, she joined a consulting firm, where she stayed for five years. She then changed companies twice to climb the career ladder. She has accepted a management position at her current employer.

A second variant of the direct route to Europe involves stopovers in the European institutions. This time may have been short, as in the case of the six-month internships indicated by many interviewees, but it could also have involved several years of full-time employment. These stations seem to have acted as door openers for these employees. This becomes clear in the case of those who set foot in the Brussels world through traineeships. Rosalie Rousseau's greatest aspiration, for instance, was to find employment in the European Parliament. She had already worked there as a student and trainee. As she was looking for work in Brussels, she accepted a chance acquaintance's offer of a position in a small European umbrella organisation. After two years,

she then moved to a larger NGO. Other respondents have additional stations in between. Andrea Albrecht has insider knowledge, because after her studies she worked as a journalist for an information portal before she started an internship at a Directorate-General of the European Commission. Her entry into the field of public affairs followed. She first worked for a sectoral trade association in Brussels for ten years and then moved to a global company in the same industry sector. Valerie Vincent also took a similar career path. During her studies, she had already got to know the European Parliament on several occasions, first through an Erasmus stay, then through an internship with an MEP. At the end of her studies at the College of Europe in Bruges, she was recruited by a private company for its public affairs department. Her career has been tied to Brussels ever since, as she worked for the EU offices of several private companies over the years.

Some interviewees were able to demonstrate extensive professional experience within the European institutions before moving into the lobbying field. This is, for instance, the case with Luuk van Leeuwen, who initially worked for a think tank for four years before spending three years working for an advisory body of the Commission. After working for over seven years within two Directorates-General of the Commission, he then moved to a sectoral trade association for which he was still working at the time of the interview. A similar path was taken by Stefan Schneider, who is a diplomat from a Member State but has spent his entire career within the EU. Initially, he worked for ten years on behalf of his country in various positions within the European institutions before moving to a private company. At the time of the interview, he had headed the Brussels office for five years.

This second career path is much more location based than the national path to Europe, because from the time of entry into the profession to the current job, the people concerned remain loyal to Brussels. Consulting firms play an important role in direct entry into the Brussels world of EU affairs, but others spend several years working in the European institutions before moving into the field of European lobbying. Career changes are the rule after entering European lobbying, because the people interviewed have mostly worked for several lobby groups or EU affairs departments of private companies., as many of the professionals interviewed first found employment with these companies. However, job changes take place primarily within the two sectors of industry and NGOs (see Section 5.1.2). Professional stations in various sectors seem to contribute mainly to qualification.

5.3.3 Normal and standardised careers

A comparison of the two career paths shows that the professional careers of lobbying staff are standardised. Although the professional biographies are varied and diverse, the common features dominate. A first characteristic of "normal" careers is the special importance attached to insider status. Anyone wishing to work as a lobbyist must have acquired not only basic (theoretical)

knowledge of the EU, but also (practical) experience of the work of the European institutions and the practice of interest representation. Lobbyists' practical professional competence and capability therefore depend on them having passed through the relevant practical phases. In this sense they seem to be an indispensable part of the career. This indicates that these practical phases are not only useful because they provide insider knowledge – they also seem to be about being acknowledged as an insider.

The interviews provide striking evidence of the importance of practical experience and the related stations. As will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.4, the practical phases are important because they provide those insights into the workings of the EU which no training or degree programme can offer. Furthermore, it has already been pointed out that EU affairs professionals come from different educational and vocational backgrounds, so they have had to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills on the job. Even the graduates of lobbying-compatible degree programmes will not have learned what is important in lobbying. Colin Cooper had already represented this position in a passage cited above. Graduates with specific educational credentials have only a limited range of instruments and do not have the fundamental willingness to develop beyond the narrow professional mindset: "I believe that you need to have a lot of tools, sometimes a lawyer or a historian or a philosopher, somebody who studied philosophy, is more well equipped if eager to learn how to do communication than somebody that has studied communications."

Stefan Schneider comes to a similar conclusion with regard to the College of Europe in Bruges. At first glance, the degree programmes there appear to be an exception on the training market. He expressly praises the practical teaching of EU-specific basic knowledge. For him, "the programme in Bruges is very practice-oriented, yes. […] legal cases that need to be solved, or with the public affairs people, really concrete, how do you say, classes where you do a simulation game or simulation negotiations." Despite all the tangibility and application orientation, however, the knowledge remains theoretical, which is why he underlines the importance of practical experience gained during internship and trainee programmes.

> Of course nothing can compare with learning on the spot. Yeah, so this practice, the chance to really learn this at work, is something you often have afterwards and many people do it then. A postgraduate traineeship in the Commission, yes. There's the *stage*. You'll be in the Blue Book.

The necessity of practical learning implies that the qualification must happen in the course of practical phases completed in the European institutions or lobby groups. This learning phase is not only about knowledge, skills, and tools (cultural professional capital), but also about social professional capital. As will be shown later (see Section 6.4), these contacts are important for establishing dialogue with members of the EU institutions. Most importantly,

credibility, reputation, and trust must be established in order to be listened to and have an impact in these discussions. However, the respondents consider it important to note that the accumulation of this social capital cannot be learned in theory, as Stefan Schneider's trainee says in regard to her internship after her studies at the College of Europe:

> the degree programme already prepares you a lot for it, in the sense of simulations or legal cases. But [...] the thing you can never learn at university is how to create your own network. And that's what you do, as you actually said, in the place itself.

A second characteristic of the careers of European lobbyists is the internationality of their personal and professional backgrounds, and this implicit norm has various components. As has already been shown, internationality is a characteristic of the first typical career path that could be identified from the interview material. The respective individuals had passed through professional stations outside their home country, sometimes even outside Europe, before coming to Brussels to work for a trade association, a private company, or a non-profit organisation. But internationality is not limited to this group of people. On the contrary, it applies to the vast majority of EU affairs professionals, once family backgrounds, time spent at university, and internships are taken into account in addition to their career stations. What is remarkable here is that the interview guide did not contain any explicit question about time spent abroad. It was the interviewees themselves who raised this topic without being prompted, after they were asked to describe their personal background. According to the self-reports, Geert van Gelder studied in France, Andrea Albrecht in Belgium and Spain, Luuk van Leeuwen in the UK and Germany, Stefan Schneider in Belgium, Tadeusz Tomaszewski in Canada, Athanasios Angelopoulos and Daniel Dieckmann in France, Giuseppe Giordano in England and France, and Dávid Dabecz in England. Some individuals report that these studies abroad were due to Erasmus stays. This is the case with Colin Cooper, for instance, who was an Erasmus student in Spain in addition to his studies in Belgium. Kate Kavanagh also came to Germany through the Erasmus programme, just as Georg Gerlach went to Spain. Also mentioned were internships abroad, especially in Strasbourg (Bettina Böhm, Giuseppe Giordano, and Jeremy Jones) and Brussels (Georg Gerlach, Bastien Bertrand, Henric Huisman, Helen Huber, and Dávid Dabecz). If those persons who mention previous professional secondments abroad when describing their careers are also included (Maxime Moreau, Stefan Schneider, or Laurent Leroy), only a few persons remain who did not mention a previous stay abroad in their review of their professional biographies. Ultimately, only Olof Olsson, Dominique Dubois, and Pinelópi Papadakis do not mention any experiences abroad before starting their careers. However, Dominique Dubois did also study international economic relations. Corresponding references to degree programmes with a focus on

international relations, international or European law, international studies, or international project management can also be found in interviews with many other individuals (such as Luuk van Leeuwen, Tadeusz Tomaszewski, Andrea Albrecht, Helen Huber, Dávid Dabecz, Daniel Dieckmann, Jeremy Jones, or Colin Cooper).

Internationality also refers to the international composition of the staffs. "The people in Brussels tend to have an international background," as Martin Müller notes, also in reference to his association. "In this office, we have 40 (.) around 40 people employed, 22 nationalities." However, the people in Brussels not only come from different countries. Internationality also refers to the lifestyles and attitudes, as Laurent Leroy notes: Brussels "does attract people with an international perspective." This perspective is required because EU affairs professionals must possess multilingualism, familiarity with the political reality in different countries, and transnational networks, as Martin Müller highlights: "As a group you need the different language skills and then the different cultural and political understandings. You need different networks." Additionally, EU affairs professionals must demonstrate in their everyday work that they can think and act in European dimensions and categories when representing interests, even if the interests to be represented are national. Olof Olsson succinctly sums up this requirement: "You know, a lobbyist has to think European. If a lobbyist thinks national, he's lost." A pro-European attitude resonates here, and is likewise shared by other interviewees (see also Section 6.4). More fundamental, however, is the implicit professional standard of representing interests in such a way that they generate the much-vaunted European added value so as to be able to connect with the political agendas and regulations of the EU.

A third characteristic of the career paths of European lobbyists has already been mentioned several times in the previous remarks: the need to have spent at least part of their career in Brussels. This tie to a specific location has definite standardising effects, because it causes an alignment of personal careers, attitudes, and habitus among the staff. It is a fact that hardly any lobbyist can escape. There are several reasons for this, some of which have already been explained. First, EU affairs professionals must be regularly on location, because European politics essentially takes place in Brussels. Furthermore, the interview material shows that prospective lobbyists have to go through practical phases within the European institutions and local lobby groups in order to develop insider knowledge, contact networks, and insider status. It is important that lobbyists become part of the Brussels arena; and most importantly that they are perceived, seen, and recognised as part of the Brussels arena. Dominique Dubois refers to this insider status when he points out that his employer "also has a name in the Brussels lobby scene." This statement is testament to the conviction that being accepted as part of the scene and having a name is valuable symbolic capital. Lobby groups, and thus also individual lobbyists, fulfil their tasks effectively if they are recognised and known by name, and therefore also have a better chance of being listened

to on specific points during the legislative process. This recognition is not easy to obtain, because, in the words of Colin Cooper, Brussels is a "small world" only accessible to those who actively strive to become part of it. Local presence is a key requirement here. The social boundary between inside and outside, between insiders and outsiders is therefore also a spatial boundary between Brussels and the rest of Europe.

5.4 The world of EU affairs: professional ambitions and careers

The standardising role that Brussels plays in the careers of European lobbyists is not only a result of the local nature of European politics. Integrating stations in Brussels in one's biography is also important for finding paid employment in Brussels. This does not so much refer to the many internships available within the European institutions and the many lobby groups, which are often used by younger people to position themselves for work in Brussels. Above all, this is down to the labour market for full-time employees that has developed in Brussels. Those who are currently working or want to work as EU lobbyists are often transferred to Brussels (as in the case of Stefan Schneider, Olof Olsson, Maxime Moreau, Lorenzo Lombardi, or Daniel Dieckmann) or find employment in Brussels (as in the case of Pinelópi Papadakis, Helen Huber, Athanasios Angelopoulos, Jeremy Jones, Henric Huisman, and Tadeusz Tomaszewski). More importantly, Brussels offers opportunities for professional improvement, advancement, and the pursuit of further career plans in the field of EU affairs.

These opportunities are inherent in the structure of the Brussels labour market itself. It should first be noted that the jobs available in the lobbying sector cannot be separated from the Brussels labour market that has formed around the EU institutions. Helen Huber has already been quoted as saying that those who are interested in European affairs essentially have two options for gaining a foothold in Brussels: with the European institutions or with interest groups. Although some of the interviewees pursued a direct career entry into the world of European lobbying, for many others the option of employment with the EU institutions seems more apparent, even more desirable. Some of the interviewees had worked for years in the European Parliament as parliamentary assistants, but had to look for another job when it became clear that the MEP would not be re-elected. This was the case for Walter Wiese and Jeremy Jones, who found a job with a trade association quite quickly. Although Walter Wiese had attempted to obtain a permanent position with the EU institutions, he had failed in the competitive selection process. Rosalie Rousseau, who after numerous internships in Brussels wanted to join the EU Parliament as a research assistant, also had to give up her plans and accepted a job offer from an NGO to stay in Brussels. She had already moved to Brussels and "somehow already knew a lot of people," she said, "and then I was simply approached by one person" about whether she wanted to take over her job as she was moving abroad.

Working in a European interest group is therefore an option for many people interested in the EU. The labour market in this field is large, as the estimates of the organisations and individuals active in Brussels show. Although the figures should only be seen as cautious estimates, at least 3,000 interest groups have their head office in Brussels, probably even more (Greenwood and Deger 2013; Greenwood 2017: 13), whilst an even higher number of organisations operate from outside. The number of jobs is very high, as almost all employees stated in the survey that they hold paid full-time positions. With an average staff size of 5.2 positions per organisation, the total number of jobs is therefore likely to be several thousand. The author's own estimates resulted in a staff of up to 13,000 lobbyists (see Section 4.1), although not all of them can be considered part of the Brussels labour market, as one in five does not live and work in Brussels.

However, the lobbying-specific labour market is marked by great differences and inequalities. As can be shown in this chapter, the occupational field of European lobbying is divided into different tasks, status groups, and income levels. The survey data showed that the vast majority of employees work full-time. However, one in five only performs operative tasks and more than 50 per cent have an annual salary of less than 50,000 euros. At the same time, more than 40 per cent of those surveyed report that they hold management positions with decision-making authority. But only some of these jobs are considered to be very well paid, as only just under 25 per cent of the employees state that they earn more than 80,000 euros a year. Many of these jobs are likely to be fixed-term, because the interest groups finance themselves through funds that do not flow continuously: Associations are dependent on the contributions of their member organisations; NGOs additionally rely on public funding that has to be raised for specific projects; and consulting firms depend on the number of orders and clients acquired. As the Brussels representation offices have a limited number of staff, only the management positions are likely to enjoy a certain degree of protection.

In addition, the labour market has its own economic cycles, with periods when no staff are hired. This was the case for Helen Huber in 2008, when she and the other graduates of her degree programme were looking for employment in Brussels. The beginning of the financial and economic crisis coincided with the election to the European Parliament and caused a noticeable dent in the labour market:

> Here in Brussels it was even worse because the crisis it's (.) in the second half of 2008. So the companies were cutting budgets. And then 2009 was a year of European elections. And usually a year of election yes you have a little bit of analyses to do but you don't have lot of lobbying.

Elections generally lead to a cyclical dent in the labour market, "because companies don't want to spend money (.) talking to people who might not be

re-elected and they prefer to wait." For Helen Huber, 2009 and 2014 were therefore difficult years. The problem primarily affects consulting firms, as they are directly dependent on the number of assignments; however, she feels that elections also seem to affect the associations. This is likely to apply to smaller associations, which will have to budget more carefully with their membership fees. Finally, it can be assumed that the recruitment practices of interest groups are also driven by the political agenda of the European institutions. Pending legislative procedures are likely to prompt associations, liaison offices, and consultancies to hire more staff in order to influence decision-making more effectively. The willingness to invest more money does seem to be there, according to the lobbyists interviewed (see Section 3.2).

The problem of securing a good job in a dynamic labour market does not apply to those who are only seconded temporarily to Brussels. Maxime Moreau, for example, is permanently employed by his company and was transferred to Brussels for a period of time to manage the representation office there. He expects to be transferred again in a few years. The same applies to Daniel Dieckmann and Lorenzo Lombardi, but also to Athanasios Angelopoulos, who does not rule out a return to his former employer. However, all those who opt for a career within EU affairs are part of a competitive labour market where competition for good, interesting, and lucrative management positions is fierce. Although potential applicants may have to contend with economic downturns when entering the job market, many of them find employment, provided they can present a biography that demonstrates internationality and insider knowledge.

Consulting firms in particular seem to have a high demand for newcomers to the profession. Indeed, many of the interviewees started their careers with these firms (such as Geert van Gelder, Helen Huber, Colin Cooper, Dominique Dubois, or Dávid Dabecz). However, the air becomes thinner the more the EU affairs professionals look for well-paid, executive positions, which means that the circle of individuals in top positions also becomes smaller. It becomes increasingly important to develop insider status and thereby become part of the circles in which information about executive positions and personal recommendations circulate.

Helen Huber experienced this during her own career, as recruitment paths differ between the different hierarchical levels. She obtained her internships, for example, through a formal application procedure: "The two internships I had, they were advertised on Euro Brussels and so I send in my CV without knowing anybody who could recommend me. And then I did the interviews and I got the job." When she was looking for a permanent position, recruitment already followed a different track, as she had established new contacts in the meantime. She was offered a job just after the end of her internship. "I was contacted by a friend of a friend who worked at a consultancy [name of the company] and they were looking for somebody." But she makes a point of saying that the hiring process was competitive nonetheless. It would seem that

the consulting firm had no difficulty in finding suitable candidates, amongst whom she came out on top:

> I mean even when this friend of a friend said: oh we're looking for some-body, it was still a competitive process. So I wasn't the only one being interviewed. It's just that back then they really needed somebody very quickly. They didn't have the time to post the ad on Euro Brussels, to screen through the hundreds of CVs you receive when you post an ad on Euro Brussels.

A wholly different logic applies at the level of executive positions, as the usual tendering and recruitment processes are suspended in these cases. Here, the personal reputation that the lobbyists were able to develop within the Brussels world of EU affairs is decisive. "At the level where I am now, so more senior, yeah, jobs they are not advertised anymore. It's either because you know somebody and they think of you or headhunters."

EU affairs professionals who opt for this track and pursue career plans are therefore faced with a changed competitive situation. Relevant expertise and professional experience are still important but not sufficient. Rather, it is now a question of personal reputation and personal networking that determines professional advancement. As will be shown later, concern for one's own pro-fessionalism shifts to the forefront of professional development, which is why EU affairs professionals strive to accumulate professional capital that allows them to preserve their reputation and membership of the inner circle of the Brussels world (see Section 6.4).

The preceding deliberations therefore show that the occupational field of EU affairs is marked by striking inequality structures. Although most of the jobs are full-time positions with their own areas of responsibility and decision-making powers, many of these positions are less well paid. Executive and well-paid positions are limited. While more basic jobs are filled through formal tendering and recruitment procedures, the more lucrative positions are reserved for the initiated. This way the occupational field establishes a hierarchy of positions that encourages, and possibly even forces, EU affairs professionals to move up the career ladder. If you want to get ahead in your career, you need to advance in the status hierarchy and strive for better paid positions in management.

The EU affairs professionals expressed this motivation in several interviews. The desire to advance to the core area of insiders in leading positions can have various reasons: the drive to take on more interesting tasks and work; the intention to take on a leading position and thus more responsibility for a cause; and the will to hold a position where lobbying can be done effectively. In this respect, EU affairs professionals do not differ from other employees in other occupational fields. For their careers, they want opportunities for personal development, an interesting field of activity and career advancement

opportunities that will allow them greater professional autonomy, scope for influence, better income, and higher professional status.

The life-biographical reports emphatically reflect these professional ambitions. Geert van Gelder, for example, recounts that he first worked for a consulting firm before moving to an industry association. His first station was very important, he said, as his work at the Brussels consulting firm gave him a lot of professional experience. He adds, however, that the work was repetitive in the long term:

> And it was just always the same, the lobbying strategy was now, I mean, how much can you do, it's always the same. So we have meetings and, depending on where we are in the legislative process, we have meetings with the Commission, with Parliament, and then we have an information evening. Then you host a public event, a public hearing in parliament [...] then you create a media strategy. I found it very limited.

His account indicates that this limitation related to the company's commercial orientation. The company was not specialised in any particular topic, but offered clients a range of services tailored to their needs. Therefore, he was ultimately given ongoing and routine tasks. This had the advantage that he was able to become familiar with the instruments of lobbying and develop a certain routine. In the long run, however, this work was too monotonous for him. It was ultimately simply a matter of applying the usual tools to all kinds of topics. Over time, he increasingly wanted to explore and specialise in a particular topic: "I never really got into a topic. I'd have liked to become an expert, but when you work on a lot of things superficially, you don't get into situations where you eventually become an expert."

Moreover, the work in this company did not provide any special opportunities to advance within the company. It soon became clear to him that the work at the consulting firm could only be the first stop on his career path: "Of course, there was no opportunity for advancement in such a small company. So I figured: OK, three years is fine for a first job." By moving to a sectoral trade association, he was able to realise his desire to develop his career. He was particularly intent on getting into a field of work where he could work consistently on one topic: "It's my three-year, four-year, five-year plan now to become a bit of a specialist in [topic name]."

The professional advancement orientation also applies to Helen Huber, who found her first permanent position with a larger consulting firm. In retrospect, she evaluates her time there very positively, since during the five years she made great professional strides. She had started as an intern with a fairly wide range of topics: "It was turned into a permanent contract. And when I left I was an associate director." She stresses that she was directly subordinate to the CEO: "So within five years quite a fast progression." However, she left this company to pursue new opportunities. Her current company

had approached her because the director of a division had left. She took this position for two reasons. Firstly, she had had to deal with a subject area in the previous company that she was not very familiar with and in which she did not feel she had the necessary expertise. The new directorship position now dealt exclusively with her core topic. She was also tempted by the clients: "also I have to admit a very interesting portfolio because my main client today is [name of a global corporation]. So that's interesting for a [topic name] lobbyist to work for [company name]."

Helen Huber's professional ambition is therefore to work on topics that interest her and match her professional expertise. Likewise, it is her professional goal to work for a company with market leadership. She believes that the value of a professional position increases with the value of the client to be represented. The weight of the interests represented therefore has a positive effect on the professional reputation of the staff, possibly because such a position indicates both special qualifications and special power to influence decisions.

Athanasios Angelopoulos also expresses similar professional ambitions. He moved from the diplomatic service to a company representation, because he was offered a prominent position there. His reasoning illustrates that the senior position he was given not only enhances his personal status but also improves his career options:

> The way this office is linked to the rest of the company (.) we are very close. My predecessor here is the one between me and the executive committee. So really high up in the hierarchy, which is interesting because you have the support to do things.

The attractiveness is based on the high standing in the corporate structure. However, what Athanasios Angelopoulos finds "interesting" about this position is that this senior position increases his personal scope for influence. He is interested in "doing things," and for this a position high up in the hierarchy and therefore close to the centre of the organisation's internal power seems suitable. For a lobbyist like Athanasios Angelopoulos, however, this is also particularly important because his personal influence on European legislative procedures depends on the organisational power of the company he represents. This means that high-ranking positions in a politically influential interest group are particularly attractive to EU affairs professionals. This motivation applies as well to Dominique Dubois, who works for an NGO. This is at least his justification for switching to his current employer: "It's also just exciting to work for [name of the organisation], because you have opportunities that some PA agencies or even smaller trade associations do not have, that is to have influence or contacts to the highest level."

He finds it particularly appealing to work for an influential association, because influence is the decisive currency of the profession. Large and powerful associations not only offer particularly attractive positions, but also

a particularly conducive working environment that makes successful work likely. This also corresponds to the motivation of Olof Olsson, who advanced to the top of one of the large European umbrella organisations during his career. He stresses that he was attracted by this role because he wanted to influence and improve European policy in the relevant field. However, personal ambitions equally played a role: "I have been someone ambitious." Even in retrospect, he believes that it is a good goal for a lobbyist to head a large association, or as he calls it: the "biggest lobbying structure" in a policy field.

The top positions in leading interest groups therefore exert a professional attraction that promises to guarantee political influence. This does not detract from other motives for changing employers. Geert van Gelder, Rosalie Rousseau, Valerie Vincent, and Bastien Bertrand all state that they would have liked to find a new job that better suits their expertise, personal interests, thematic passions, or ethical beliefs. Yet despite all this, EU affairs professionals evaluate a good job also according to criteria of professional success. Their professional record is measured by the effectiveness of their lobbying, which is why they develop a professional interest in positions that guarantee them such success.

5.5 Conclusion: the standardising force of the occupational field

The large number of lobbying associations, company representations, NGOs, and consultancies active in Brussels seems to be what makes this city so attractive. The many organisations have established their own independent labour market, which provides employment for career starters, career changers, and established lobbyists. But Brussels also seems to exert a special pull on people's careers because the Brussels world is very compact. Again and again it was reported that informal contacts had played a beneficial role in individuals changing jobs, especially when it came to obtaining well-paid jobs in leading positions. They were told about vacancies, they were approached by their future employer, or they had applied and were successful because the future employer already knew them.

At the same time, the labour market is sufficiently differentiated in terms of tasks and status positions to enable people to pursue longer, and in some cases lifelong, careers within EU affairs. Lobbyists follow multi-tiered careers, which sometimes lead them to the core of well-paid and influential management positions with important interest groups. Not all lobbyists follow this path, because career trajectories and plans are not only aimed at improving their own professional status. Thematic preferences and expertise attract EU affairs professionals to specific interest groups or sectors. At the same time, fundamental political convictions also play a role, as career paths in the long term still remain within the confines of the interests of industry and the NGO sector. However, the labour market is permeable and allows for cross-sectoral mobility. Related work experiences even seem to be a prerequisite for the development of professional excellence.

The findings of this chapter therefore verify a wide-ranging occupationalisation of EU affairs, thus corroborating previous research (Klüver and Saurugger 2013) that revealed such a process among business interests (Laurens 2018; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Beauvallet et al. 2022) and NGOs (Brusens 1977; van Deth and Maloney 2011; Heylen et al. 2020). A specialised labour market has been formed, which is marked by a high degree of internal integration and external closure. Internally, the labour market is strikingly homogeneous, because it consists overwhelmingly of full-time salaried jobs with high degrees of discretion and decision-making authority, with a large majority of jobs at senior or executive positions within the organisation. At the same time, however, EU affairs is a labour market with strong income and status inequalities, which are apparent when considering the distribution of leadership positions and high earnings across different occupational segments.

These employment-specific inequalities strengthen divisional lines within the field. On the one hand, they deepen core–periphery relations. The occupationalisation of EU affairs has replaced informal or voluntary advocacy work by full-time, salaried, and career-oriented employment, thus marginalising civic engagement and public participation even within the work of the various interest groups. Additionally, the field contracts into a core area of professional insiders with well-paid senior positions, most of them active lobbyists with closer relations to the European institutions. Around them, professionals have to live with less attractive jobs, complementary tasks, and greater distance to the worlds of the EU institutions. On the other hand, inequalities within the labour market reinforce the disparities between interest groups. The numeric imbalances between business interests and the NGOs are replicated at the level of the staff, because the former have many more employed professionals and provide higher-ranking and better paid jobs than the latter. The labour market thus seems to gravitate around these interests.

Externally, the labour market is exposed to processes of closure. In fact, the leap into the world of the EU requires specific stations, knowledge, and contacts that exert a standardising force on career paths. At the same time, access to the jobs in the core area of the field requires track records, support networks and insider status. In this respect, Brussels plays an important role as a turntable of European lobby groups and their employees. Careers outside this gravitational centre are conceivable, but have to contend with obstacles or difficulties. Nationally active colleagues are likely to have more difficulty in claiming professionalism linked to European knowledge, contacts, and habitus for themselves. In many cases, their professional standing requires a basic nexus to the world of EU affairs, thus implying previous stays in Brussels, regular travels, and/or informal networking with those on site. In this respect, it is reasonable to conclude that the labour market is subject to

closure processes that have a homogenising effect on the field of European lobbying.

Note

1 These figures correspond to the estimates of two rankings: the "Cost of living city ranking" by the management consultancy Mercer (https://mobilityexchange.mer cer.com/Insights/cost-of-living-rankings) and the information provided by the web service Numbeo (www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/).

6 The professionalisation of lobbying

The constitution of specialised knowledge

The growing number of interest groups and consultancies has prompted the establishment of a specialised occupation, as they offer full-time jobs and career prospects for the many European lobbyists populating the European Union (EU). This development, however, does not necessarily imply that an occupational group has also been formed. Similarities between occupations abound when considering employment forms and lobbying activities, but vocational backgrounds, job descriptions, and professional identities vary. The transition from an occupation to an occupational group is thus a supplementary process that is strongly related to the formation and reproduction of shared professional knowledge, as research in this area has shown (Larson 1977: 40–47; Evetts et al. 2012; Saks 2012; Michel 2005a; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013; Büttner et al. 2015; Beauvallet et al. 2022). In this sense, professionalisation refers to the formation of an occupational group through the development and delimitation of professional skills and repertoires of action that are regarded as being exclusive to the group and superior to those of outsiders, particularly laypersons. Professionalisation thus contributes to the further integration and closure of an occupational field by linking salaried work to a specialised knowledge and practice.

Previous research has provided a number of indications that such a professionalisation process has impacted on the area of European lobbying (Cloteau 2018; Barron and Skountridaki 2022; Coen and Vannoni 2020; Beauvallet et al. 2022), although insights are inconclusive. Two aspects of the debate merit particular attention. On the one hand, studies about corporate lobbyists have indicated that educational background seems to converge around academic credentials (Laurens 2018: 89–94; Coen et al. 2021: 154f.; Michon 2022), but less is known about the other interest sectors (see Michel 2005a; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020). It thus needs to be ascertained whether and how strongly the field of European lobbying is contracting around an academic elite. On the other hand, research has identified work-related skills, and here informational resources and skills are identified as the core currency of European lobbying (Bouwen 2002; Koehler 2019: 9–39; Coen et al. 2021: 129–138), while policy process knowledge and informal contacts are

named as relevant, too (Holyoke et al. 2015; Cloteau 2018). Seemingly, what you know seems to be more important than whom you know, and technical expertise in specific issues is more relevant than general knowledge about policy processes. However, consistent evidence about the set of relevant skills and practices is lacking, and this means that it is difficult to assess the extent to which professional activity is converging around a clearly delimited body of knowledge. It is thus necessary to examine the scope and structure of professional know-how, and to explore whether European lobbyists concur in their strategies of accumulating professional capitals and establishing a professional habitus.

The analysis of this professionalisation process will make use of data about the educational background of European lobbyists and the reported professional know-how in order to empirically assess the extent of professional convergence. Additionally, the aim will be to compare different occupational segments and their characteristics in order to identify the proponents of professionalisation, and to ascertain the driving forces behind this process. The analysis will, finally, focus on those skills and resources that seem to be key in the formation of a professional habitus. Professionalisation will thus be conceived as an accumulation of professional capitals that is responsible for the deepening of the core–periphery relations apparent in the field of European lobbying.

6.1 The academisation of the professional field: displacement processes

The professionalisation of European lobbying is likely to face barriers, as many of the prerequisites for the delimitation and closure of professional knowledge are not in place. One of the unfavourable starting points is that this field of activity has few entry barriers. Job titles are not legally protected, there are no specialised education pathways, no upstream approval procedures, or accreditation or admission procedures. Moreover, participation in this field of activity is more gradual in nature, as respondents reported different levels of participation in monitoring or lobbying activities, thus also implying different levels of lobbying-related know-how. Lastly, it was determined that entry from outside the profession is also possible. Almost one in ten had entered the field of EU affairs only between 40 and 49 years of age and one in 16 only at over 50 (see Section 4.2). All these aspects suggest a fundamental openness of the field towards career starters or career changers with their respective experiences and abilities. Although the comments in the previous chapters have shown that European lobbying has informal barriers to entry (see Section 5.3 on careers), the fundamental openness of the occupational field must be remembered in order to understand the particular starting point for professionalisation: The field is marked by a diversity of educational backgrounds, job-related skills, and repertoires of action, thus limiting the role of shared professional knowledge.
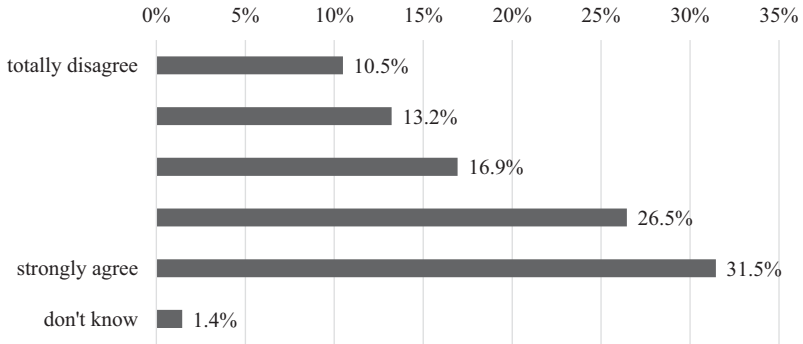
Figure 6.1 Started working in lobbying by chance? (N = 620).

This openness is demonstrated clearly in the survey data, as the respondents were asked to provide information about their career entry and the occupational relevance of their degree. With regard to career entry, EU affairs professionals were asked to indicate how they remember their entry into the profession: "I did not actively aim to work in lobbying, it just so happened rather by chance." As Figure 6.1 shows, the majority of respondents indicate that they came to this field of work rather by chance. As many as 58 per cent of all respondents agree with this statement, while only 24 per cent indicated a more targeted approach. This confirms the portrayal provided by the interviews of a rather coincidental career start (see Section 5.3). Separate calculations according to gender and age indicate that women report slightly more frequently than men that they happened to be employed in EU affairs by chance (62.2 per cent compared to 55.7 per cent). No differences in terms of the age of the respondents were found between the younger and older cohorts. The result suggests that there has been no change over time, as entry to the workforce is as often a matter of chance for both younger and older people.

The small proportion of those who specifically pursued a career in lobbying suggests that this activity is largely unknown as a profession. Above all, however, it illustrates that lobbying is hardly ever considered as a potential career goal in the education system. This is confirmed by the respondents, as most of them cannot remember lobbying or public affairs having played a role during their own vocational training or their time at university. When asked whether lobbying and public affairs was a special focus of their studies, two-thirds of respondents said that this was not the case (see Figure 6.2). Although this topic was on the curriculum for a number of respondents, only a tiny minority stated that they had completed specialised studies and were therefore prepared specifically for the labour market.

■ Not at all.

■ I had 1-3 classes on this subject.

■ I had more than 3 classes on this subject.

■ Most of my classes (or at least one of my degrees) were on this subject.

■ I don't know.

65.5%	21.6%	6.6%	
		3.8%	
		2.5%	

Figure 6.2 Was lobbying/public affairs a special focus of your studies? (in per cent; N = 681).

All in all, these findings confirm that EU affairs is not a profession with a straightforward training and recruitment path. It would seem to be open to a heterogeneous group of people and therefore does not appear to have any entry barriers that cannot be overcome by coincidences or detours. Such a conclusion is plausible because the educational system produces hardly any specifically trained and qualified staff, which is why companies, associations, or NGOs have to rely on people who are sufficiently motivated and qualified. They may also be employees who understand the issues, are committed to the organisation's objectives, and are interested in the work. The recruitment and development of suitable staff must therefore be flexible enough to compensate for the inadequate vocational qualification provided by the educational institutions.

This openness can be a handicap for the professionalisation of this field of work. It can be assumed that, at least at the beginning of their employment, those working in this field do not possess common knowledge and tools, a common professional identity, and an "esprit de corps." Studies in the sociology of professions have shown that the openness of the labour market and the diversity of career entry points is problematic, because the transition from vocational training to employment is a decisive factor in setting the course for professionalisation. For instance, it was established early on that new occupational groups, compared to the established ones, are barely in a position to directly or indirectly control vocational training courses, occupational titles, and access to a specific labour market (such as in the form of professional associations or state guarantees) (Wilensky 1964; Brown 2001; Noordegraaf 2015).

6.1.1 Academisation and specialisation

The survey data reveal that formal educational qualifications and disciplines have contributed to the marked structuring and closure of the occupational field. In fact, the analysis of the educational background of professionals clearly indicates that the field of EU affairs is firmly in the hands of academics. As Table 6.1 shows, only a very small minority (2 per cent) holds a non-university title. Four out of five respondents have completed a master's degree, one in ten even a doctorate. The qualification profile of EU affairs professionals therefore bears no resemblance to the educational level of the overall population. Within the EU, the proportion of university graduates among 25–64 year olds was 32 per cent in 2018 (see Eurostat 2018a and 2018b). It is true that the rate was significantly higher among the 30–34 year olds (41 per cent) and demonstrates a general academisation of the younger population. This process moves at a rapid pace in some countries: In Sweden, the rate is significantly higher for younger people (52 per cent) than for those over 55 (31 per cent), while in many other countries the differences are equally great (Great Britain: 49 per cent vs. 33 per cent, Poland: 46 per cent vs. 15 per cent, and Greece: 44 per cent vs. 19 per cent). But in no other Member State is the proportion of academics as high as among EU affairs professionals. It can therefore be concluded that educational background plays an important role when taking on tasks of political interest representation: Those who have not completed a university education will find it more difficult to gain a foothold in the field of EU affairs.

Interestingly, the proportion of academics among EU affairs professionals is comparable to that of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). According to the results of studies that looked at the elected members of the EU Parliament (Beauvallet-Haddad et al. 2016; Allertseder 2016), in the seventh legislative period (2009–2014) the proportion was over 80 per cent. In previous legislative periods, the proportion in the EU Parliament was even higher: Among the MEPs from Germany and France, the rate was highest in the sixth legislative period (2004–2009) at 83.0 per cent and 87.7 per cent respectively; for Great Britain and France, the figures for the legislative period

Table 6.1 Highest educational attainment

	Cases	Per cent
primary education	0	0.0
secondary education ("high school," "lyceum")	11	1.6
vocational education	2	0.3
tertiary level, "undergraduate" (such as bachelor's degree)	46	6.7
tertiary level, "postgraduate" (such as master's degree)	560	82.0
doctorate (such as PhD, Dr.)	64	9.4
total	683	100.00

between 1994 and 1999 were as high as 88.9 per cent and 91.5 per cent respectively (Allertseder 2016: 204, 247, 292, 335).

The exceptionally high degree of academisation among EU affairs professionals thus seems to reflect the fact that the Brussels arena is generally populated to a considerable extent by academics. European interest groups are possibly reacting to the dominance of the educational elites among the staff of the EU institutions when recruiting their lobbyists. It may well be an advantage in meetings if the lobbyists have similar educational backgrounds and can talk on the same academic wavelength with the decision makers.

In any case, the high proportion of academic degrees illustrates that the field of European lobbying has created a clear but implicit entry barrier: If you want to work in EU affairs, you have to have a university degree. This remarkable dominance of the educational elites is the product of a successive academisation of the occupational field. Indications of this are given in Figure 6.3. The data show that the proportions of the various academic titles differ between age groups, probably due to age and cohort effects. For one thing, it can be seen that the proportion of the highest academic degrees, namely doctorates, is greater among the older generation than the younger one. There is no one among the 20–29 year olds who has completed a doctorate, while the proportion among the older age groups is growing steadily. An age effect can be assumed here, because the probability that the older ones hold a doctorate is higher than among the younger ones. A similar effect can also be seen regarding master's degrees: Although the proportion of individuals in their 20s with such a degree is already very high (87.5 per cent), it is slightly higher among the over-30s (91.5 per cent). Professional activity in
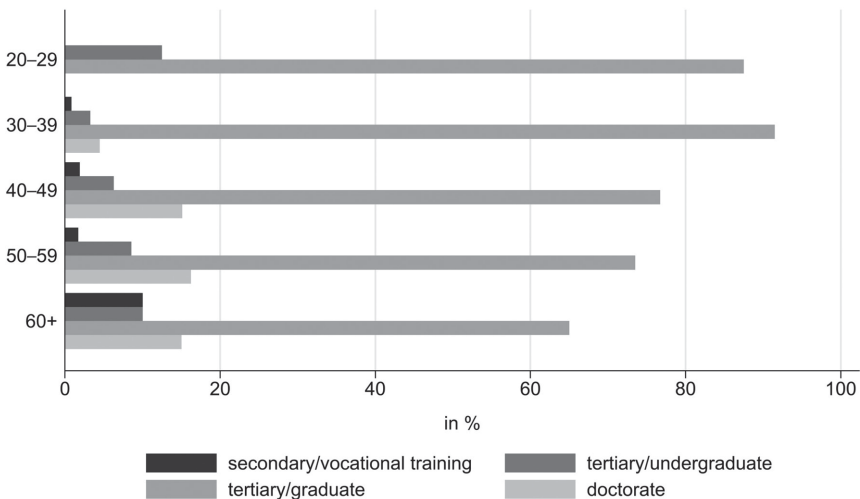
Figure 6.3 Highest educational attainment by age group in per cent (N = 664).

the field does not seem to discourage respondents from pursuing further academic qualifications. On the contrary, the respondents follow the prevailing trend in the field towards academic educational capital. Anyone working in EU affairs should acquire further academic qualifications if he or she has not already done so.

At the same time, the uneven distribution of lower educational attainment across age groups suggests a cohort effect and thus a steady academisation of EU affairs professionals over time. As Figure 6.3 shows, the proportion of respondents with a non-academic educational certificate (a secondary school leaving certificate or a vocational training qualification) decreases steadily from the oldest to the youngest cohort. Among the older ones, it can still be observed occasionally that they gained a foothold in the field of European lobbying with lower educational attainment. Among the younger generations, this seems to be largely precluded. In fact, one in ten respondents over the age of 60 has only completed secondary education or holds a vocational qualification. Among the cohorts of 30- to 60-year-olds, however, this share drops to less than 2 per cent, among 20-year-olds even to 0 per cent.

All in all, the results demonstrate a considerable academisation of the occupational field, corroborating the proposition that professions aim at securing academic credentials in order to limit access to the labour market and legitimise their own privileges (Wilensky 1964; Larson 1977; Freidson 1986; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Evetts et al. 2012; Frank and Meyer 2020). In the field of EU affairs, this academisation is reflected in an increase in the educational capital of the staff already employed, as these continue to acquire higher education titles (master's and doctorate). At the same time, this academisation occurs by sealing off the occupational field against persons without an academic education, particularly among the younger cohorts. These developments illustrate that closure processes are at work. Although there are no explicit employment bans, the field of activity nevertheless conforms to an implicit rule that makes working in it largely impossible for those without a university degree. In reality, the barriers to entry for less privileged population groups, and therefore also for the perspectives, interests, and action preferences of these social groups, are virtually insurmountable.

This development testifies to a constant professional closure of the occupational field. However, academisation is a necessary, but by no means sufficient condition for such professionalisation, because this process also requires uniform or complementary knowledge. Indeed, the academisation of many occupational groups is often linked to individual disciplines, as the sociology of profession has demonstrated. Occupational groups claim a specific know-how and repertoire of action (e.g. legal, medical, or economic), which is why vocational training courses and educational certificates are mostly defined by subject (Freidson 1970; Abbott 1988; Evetts et al. 2012). In the field of European interest representation, however, the situation is completely different. As has already been shown, the professional background of EU affairs professionals is heterogeneous. It appears at first glance to

be an interdisciplinary academisation in which many different, partly competing disciplines and occupational groups with different, partly competing stocks of knowledge and repertoires of action are involved. What is unclear, however, is how this heterogeneity of vocational training backgrounds has changed over time. It is conceivable that the diversity of academic degrees has decreased, especially among the younger cohorts, thereby contributing to a subject-oriented professionalisation of the field. The survey data will be reviewed for this purpose, as respondents were asked to indicate their degree courses and degrees, with multiple answers possible.

The information provided by the respondents first demonstrates that European lobbying does not exclude any specific discipline. Their responses impressively reflect the breadth of academic degree programmes in all their diversity. The respondents pursued degree programmes in the fields of administration or law, business administration and economics, auditing, or banking. Others had studied human or veterinary medicine, natural sciences, engineering, mathematics, chemistry, or physics. Again others have a degree in history, political science, or sociology, in linguistics, theology, and anthropology. Almost one in two respondents stated that they had two educational certificates, mostly from different, neighbouring fields. If the information is summarised along the lines of the European Classification System (ISCED), clear focal points emerge from within this broad range. As Table 6.2 shows, the focus is on political science and European studies, economics, administration, and law. Mathematics, engineering, natural sciences, and technology

Table 6.2 Subject area of the degree programmes, multiple answers (N = 624)

	Cases	% of cases	% of answers
Education and training	3	0.5	0.4
Humanities	73	11.7	8.5
Social sciences and journalism	362	58.0	42.2
Political science	*163*	*26.1*	*19.0*
European studies	*145*	*23.2*	*16.9*
other	*54*	*8.6*	*6.3*
Business, administration, and law	288	46.1	33.5
Economics	*73*	*11.7*	*8.5*
Management and administration	*42*	*6.7*	*4.9*
Law	*135*	*21.6*	*15.7*
other	*38*	*6.1*	*4.4*
Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics	56	9.0	6.5
Information and communication technology	5	1.1	0.5
Engineering, manufacturing, and construction	45	7.2	5.2
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary science	17	2.7	2.0
Health and social affairs	8	1.3	0.9
Infrastructure and services	3	0.5	0.4
total	859	137.7	100.0
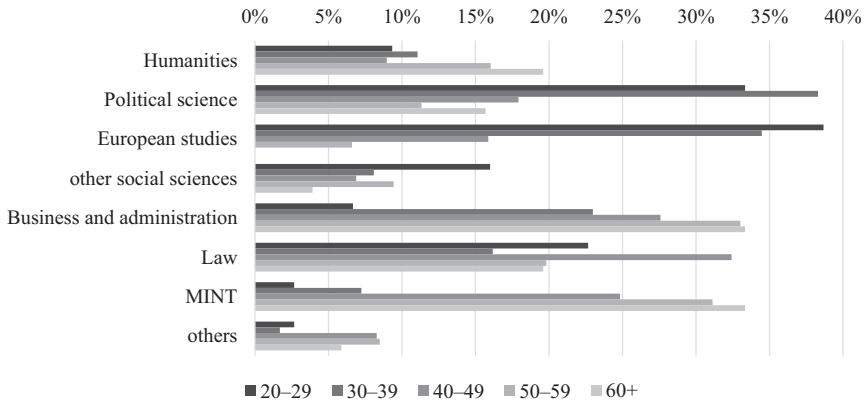
Figure 6.4 Subject area of the degrees by age group, multiple answers (N = 612).

MINT subjects account for 12.2 per cent, humanities for 8.5 per cent, and all other subjects for just over 14 per cent.

Certain subjects therefore appear to have an advantage. These are subjects that have a thematic reference to the target group of the lobbying activity. Knowledge of politics, law, and economics, of the EU or Europe increases the chances of gaining a professional foothold in the field of European interest representation. The survey data also show that there is a clear increase in setting thematic priorities across the cohorts. To illustrate this, Figure 6.4 breaks down the degrees according to age cohorts, with subjects with low numbers of students grouped together. It shows how the professional qualification profile has changed over the generations and, accordingly, over time. The results illustrate that clear and linear changes can be observed in almost all disciplines. Only law remains at a similar level, except for a significant increase among respondents in their forties.

The losers among the degree courses include above all the MINT subjects, which drop from 33 per cent of all respondents over 60 to less than 3 per cent among the youngest. The proportion of economics graduates also decreases continuously from 23.5 per cent to just 5.3 per cent of people in their twenties. A similar fate befalls the humanities, where the proportion of graduates drops by almost 10 per cent. The winners are clearly to be found among the social and European sciences. The proportion of political scientists doubles across the age cohorts from 15.7 per cent to 33.3 per cent and that of European studies graduates even quadruples from zero to 38.7 per cent. This subject is one of the most recent degree programmes at university level and has already established itself successfully in the occupational field of EU affairs. As an academic degree it only appears among respondents under 57 years of age; however, it has become a degree that seems to pay off, especially for the younger ones.

Yet the fact that graduates with a degree in political and European sciences increasingly end up in the field of European lobbying does not necessarily mean that this career path was deliberately chosen. With these respondents, too, a majority view their career entry into this field of work as more of a coincidence. Among those with degrees in European studies, the proportion of those who fully or somewhat agree with this statement is still 47.1 per cent; among those with degrees in political science, it is as high as 60.4 per cent. This still leaves these subjects far below the level of MINT graduates, however, because 70.1 per cent of them believe that their career entry is more of a coincidence.

What has changed, is the perceived occupational adequacy of the educational pathways, as the younger respondents rate the subject-specific relevance of their studies much more highly than the older ones. Figure 6.2 (see above) had already established that one-third of all respondents saw a connection between the content of their education and lobbying. This proportion increases when focusing on the younger cohorts, as separate calculations not documented here showed: Almost all respondents in the oldest cohort see no connection at all, while one in two respondents in the youngest cohort (51.3 per cent) recalls having taken individual courses on this subject, and almost 8 per cent took a relevant degree course. This development is related to the marked increase in the number of law, economics, European, and social science degrees among the younger cohorts, since these degree courses provide more compatible training than the others.

Overall, the findings show that the field of work of European lobbying is not only dominated by academics. Within this fully academised field of work, an additional professional specialisation can also be identified. This result does not mean that graduates from other disciplines no longer have any entry points into the field of European lobbying. The next section will seek to clarify whether these groups of individuals will continue to enter the field from other career paths. At this stage, however, only standard entry is of interest, and in this respect the data show that the majority of young graduates have almost exclusively acquired social science qualifications (primarily political science and European studies). The proportion of these degrees is already surprisingly high across all generations, as these subjects are represented almost five times as frequently as the MINT subjects. Only the lawyers hold their own over the generations with a similarly high proportion.

The displacement is considerable among the younger cohorts in view of an exponentially higher participation of social science graduates. The likelihood of working in the field is 31 times higher among under-40s with a social science degree than among graduates of MINT subjects (90.7 per cent vs. 2.9 per cent); compared to lawyers, the likelihood is four times higher (90.7 per cent vs. 22.7 per cent). What is remarkable about these figures is the fact that the respondents frequently listed two degrees (for example, bachelor's, master's, and/or doctorate). While law appears to be maintaining its position

as a part of the training profile, the streamlining in the occupational field has led to a primarily social science qualification profile becoming established, in which other subjects hardly play a significant (even if secondary) role. This means that an ideal route to entry into the profession has become established: Anyone wishing to enter the professional field of EU affairs should have a degree in social sciences. Even if not all graduates of political science and European studies initially intended to work in this labour market, it would seem that these subjects are increasingly able to claim this occupational field for themselves.

6.1.2 *Academic career entries: displacing career changers*

The previous analyses repeatedly addressed the question of the time of entry into the occupational field. So far, however, it has only been presumed that the majority of staff start working in EU affairs at a young age. Whilst there are some who move into lobbying at a later stage from other fields of work, it would appear that entry straight after completing education is the rule. This presumption must now be verified, especially in order to be able to draw conclusions about access modalities and barriers.

The information provided by respondents on the duration of their professional activity in monitoring European policies will help in this task, as this activity is at the heart of EU affairs (see Section 4.2). When designing the questionnaire, it was decided to ask respondents the simpler question about the number of years they had been involved in monitoring, in order to reduce the number of missing values. This information makes it possible to estimate the time of entry into the profession, although the number of years does not give any indication of possible career breaks. However, subtracting the number of years from the time of the survey makes it possible to at least roughly estimate the year of entry into the profession; and if this number is subtracted from the age of the respondents, it can be estimated how old they might have been when they first embarked on monitoring European policy.

The following graph (Figure 6.5) shows the estimated calendar year in which respondents started working in the EU affairs field (x-axis) and their likely age at that time (y-axis). As the number of cases below the x-axis shows, the group size of the respondents decreases the further back in time they entered the profession. Indeed, there are only three cases that entered the field between 1982 and 1986. The majority of respondents only recently became involved in such tasks. What is striking, however, is the comparability of entries, as over the entire timeline most of the respondents were aged between their late 20s and early 30s when they started working in the field. The lines within the bars show the median value that divides the respective group into two equally sized subgroups. This shows that at all times 50 per cent of the respondents were under 28 or 31 years of age, depending on which five-year period is considered. The box sections and whiskers below the median furthermore show that a quarter of the respondents were in their mid- to late 20s and
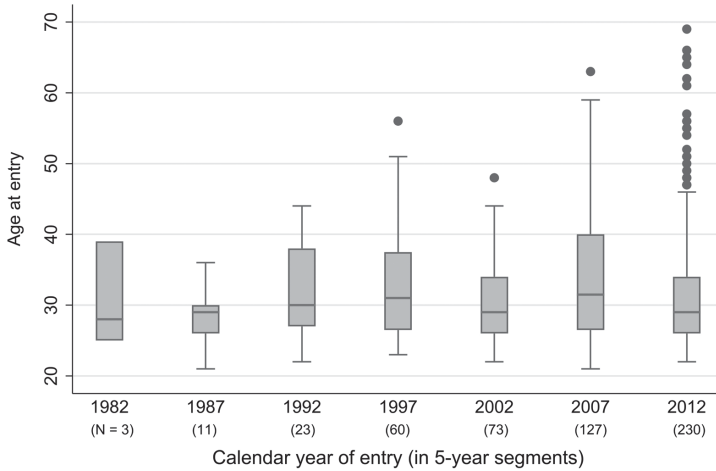
Figure 6.5 Entry into the field, by year and age of entry (N = 527).

another quarter were in their early to mid-20s when they started monitoring. This means that many people embarked on this profession at a young age and probably at the beginning of their careers.

However, the data also show that half of the respondents were over 29–31 years old when they entered the profession. This information is much more scattered the closer it gets to the year of the survey. The box sections and threads above the median show that a quarter of the respondents who started working in the 1990s were aged between their early and late 30s, and another quarter even over 40 and 50 years of age. The scatter increases significantly for entries since 2002, and in the most recent period there have been a rising number of outliers among the respondents. There are now some people here who only entered the field of EU affairs at over 50 years of age – and up to the age of 69.

The different entry dates offer interesting insights once they are broken down by university degree. Figure 6.6 summarises the results and confirms the dominance of social science degrees among early career entrants. In fact, students in European studies are among those with the earliest career entries: A quarter of these individuals are under 25 years of age at the time they enter the profession; half are under 27 years of age; and nine out of ten respondents with this degree are no older than 33. The age of graduates in political science and other social sciences is only slightly higher, at one year each. Students of the other subjects are on average several years older. The MINT degree programmes stand out in particular, as the median age in this group is 38.5 years: 50 per cent of this group are over 39 years old, and a quarter even between 46 and 53 years of age.
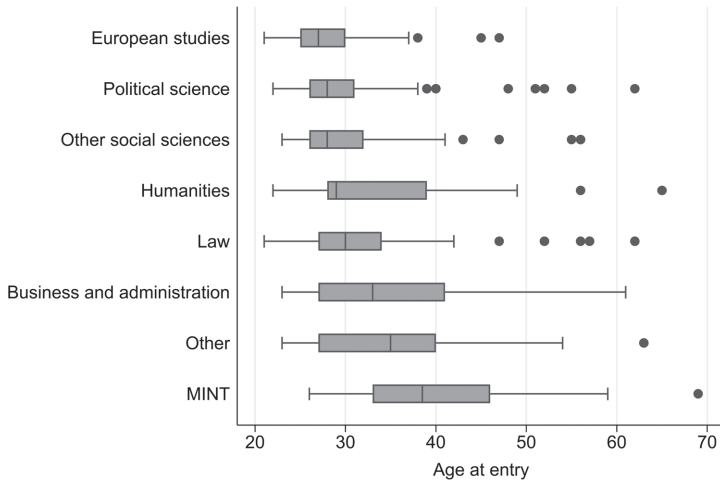
Figure 6.6 Entries by field of studies (N = 501).

Overall, the survey data confirm that the EU affairs labour market is ultimately filled via two recruitment pathways. Firstly, there is the career entry of younger graduates with thematically congruent degrees; secondly, there is the later entry of people with different professional backgrounds who only join part way through their careers. The first, most common recruitment pathway appears to be increasingly confining the field of work to expertise in the social sciences. The second, secondary recruitment pathway opens up the field by bringing in expertise from different disciplines; these can range from the humanities to the natural and technical sciences. In view of the predominance of the social sciences, however, this recruitment pathway only seems to be of secondary importance. This subject-specific homogenisation suggests a professional closure of the occupational field, as it establishes certain bodies of knowledge as the starting point for careers and the basis for professional interaction with others.

6.2 The canonisation of knowledge: specialised expertise

The tenor of previous research is dominated by the assumption that a professional field is distinguished by a certain body of knowledge and repertoire of actions (Freidson 1986; Evetts et al. 2012). The sociology of professions considers this to be the result of a rise of knowledge-based occupational groups that define their market value as a new category of services primarily through their expertise (Wilensky 1964; Murphy 1988; Macdonald 1995). This knowledge is tailored to specific societal fields of activity and promotes itself as a useful means of diagnosing, processing, and overcoming the corresponding

problems. The professional knowledge is systematised, canonised, and formalised and, for this reason, claims a special status as the "true" knowledge. Professional knowledge claims not only to be empirically tested and to have proven itself in practice, but it also asserts to be coherent, generalisable, rationally justifiable, and subject to reflection. Professionals do not just do their job the way it has always been done and because past success has made further reflection on the reasons unnecessary. They insist that they are professional because they can provide good reasons for their actions, because they are able to reflect on their actions in relation to empirical evidence and theoretical models, and because they are able to further develop their knowledge based on the evidence and models. When professionals claim professionalism, they also claim access to a specialised body of knowledge that is not accessible to everyone. They substantiate and stage their professional competence by referring to this exclusive expertise (Svensson 2006; Evetts 2008; Pfadenhauer and Kirschner 2017).

The professional field of EU affairs would have to have produced such exclusive bodies of knowledge in order to meet the assumption of professional closure. The available data allow such an assumption to be verified, at least through the assessments and opinions of the respondents. With this in mind, the following section aims to clarify how respondents perceive and relate to the qualification requirements of the field. These deliberations will involve answering two questions. The first step is to determine whether EU affairs, according to the respondents, require special expertise. Furthermore, the aim is to show which distinct knowledge and skills the respondents identify in detail. In all of this, it is important to determine the consensus or dissent among the respondents. A professional closure of the occupational field would require that the respondents agree, across all professional backgrounds, that distinct specialist expertise is essential for practising the profession.

The survey data largely confirm the assumptions of professional closure. According to the respondents, working in the field of EU affairs involves distinct qualification requirements for professionals. Only a tiny minority agrees with the statement that anyone can do a good job as an EU affairs professional. Figure 6.7 shows that almost no one fully agrees with this statement, and those who somewhat agree are also in a considerable minority. This proportion contrasts with the 70 per cent of respondents who disagree with this statement and thus subscribe to the opinion that public affairs requires specialised skills not available to everyone. It is particularly remarkable that there are no significant differences between different groups of professionals. Minor differences emerge when considering the educational background and the sector in which EU affairs professionals work. Respondents with a background in law are the least convinced that everyone can do the job (a mean of 2.0 on the five-point scale), while graduates of other degree programmes (including education, medicine, agriculture, or forestry) agree a bit more (a mean of 2.4). In regard to organisational affiliation, respondents working for companies are the least convinced (1.9) that there are no special skills required,
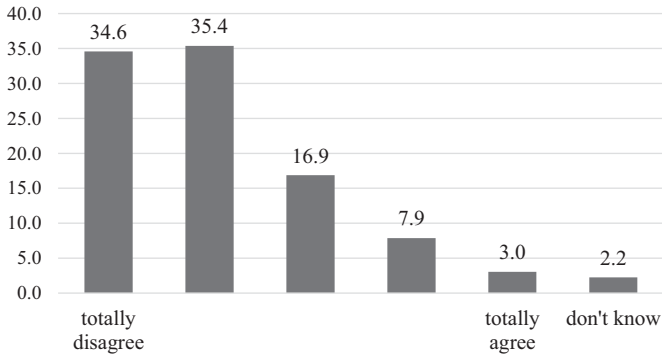
Figure 6.7 "Mainly, anybody can do a good job as a public affairs professional" (in %, N = 622).

when compared to those employed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade unions (2.3).

EU affairs staff are therefore largely of the opinion that their own work cannot be carried out without certain prerequisites. As this consensus spans across the entire field, even bridging different professional backgrounds and interest sectors, it must be assumed that the respondents would also agree on the main qualification requirements in the occupational field. But what exactly are the experiences and skills in question? And do EU affairs professionals agree in their assessment of which of these skills are particularly important? The answers are provided by a battery of questions that focus on the relevant knowledge and experience. Respondents were asked to imagine that someone else would have to do their job ("Which skills are important for the relevant tasks?") and invited to indicate whether the suggested experiences and skills are not required at all or are absolutely necessary.

The following figure shows that clear priorities emerge. Two aspects draw the most support: knowledge of European legislative processes and networking skills. Some respondents voluntarily indicated additional skills. Communication skills clearly dominate here. A second set of skills refers to prior practical work experience. Although the respondents also tend to agree here, this is no longer as clear. Many respondents consider it important to have gained professional experience in the field of public affairs. Connections and familiarity within the field also seem to be conducive, as many respondents stress that employees should know their own sector and have established sector-specific contact networks in order to be successful in their work. However, professional experience (and thus job-related socialisation in the field or sector) is not as important as general knowledge and skills. The respondents disagree above all with regard to administrative skills and technical expertise. Although these are mentioned as relevant, only 45 per cent of
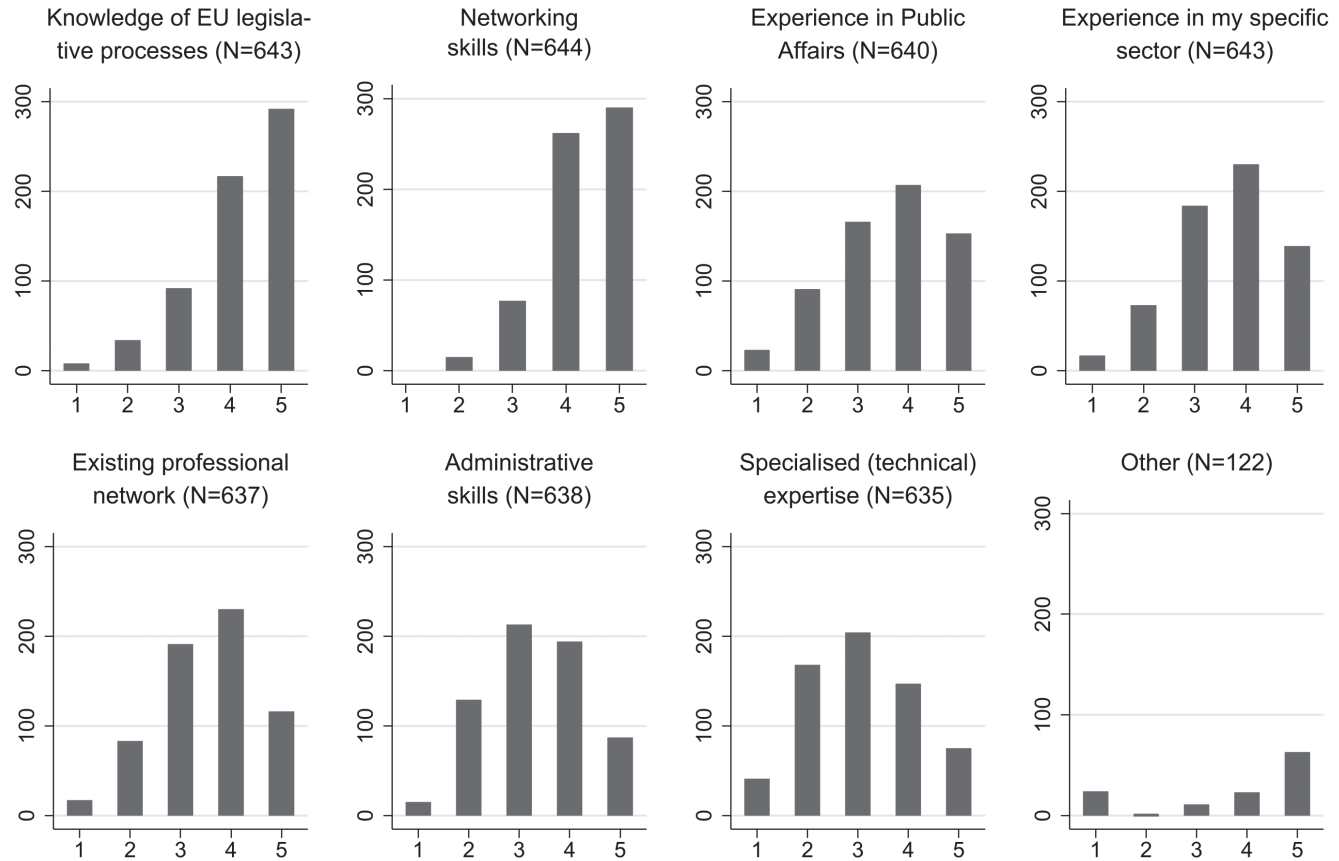
Figure 6.8 Skills required: "not at all required" (1) to "absolutely required" (5).

respondents consider administrative skills to be fairly necessary and only 25 per cent say this about special (technical) knowledge.

EU affairs professionals thus agree consistently that it is important to be familiar with the EU and have contacts or the ability to establish contacts. Opinions about the relevance of professional experiences are more divided, and this is particularly revealing in regard to the reported professional experiences in public affairs. Affirmative responses to this question are closest to the idea that EU affairs is an occupational field building on a shared set of professional skills that is applicable across the various sectors and issues. An analysis of these responses thus allows to identify those occupational groups that promote the professionalisation of EU affairs most overtly. For this purpose, the effects of a list of relevant factors that have already guided calculations in regard to previous aspects of the analyses were estimated on the basis of a linear regression. The regression models thus build on the expectation that the belief in shared professional knowledge is most diffused among employees of commercial consultancies, as these companies promote EU affairs as marketable services applicable across sectors. It should be endorsed more proactively by professionals more involved in Brussels and more engaged in the area of European lobbying, thus belonging to the Brussels bubble of EU affairs. Regular contacts to representatives of the EU Commission should also reinforce the conviction that the institutional demands can be met similarly across the various sectors. And with reference to occupational patterns, the assumption of sociological studies needs to be validated that EU affairs professionalism is strongest among high-ranking positions requiring professional legitimacy. Socio-demographic traits also need to be considered in order to control for the effect of gender, age, the field of studies, and the national background.

The results are reported in Table 6.3, which indicates that a number of these assumptions prove to be adequate. Respondents working for consultancies are among the more fervent supporters of public affairs professionalism, but the same also applies to business interests, while employees of NGOs and trade unions are less likely to subscribe to these convictions. Although these effects lose their statistical significance when other factors are included in the calculation (see model 4), it must be taken into account that the regression model uses robust standard errors and thus a rather conservative approach. Moreover, those more present in Brussels do not stand out with their approval. It is rather the activity profile of the respondents, because more active lobbyists maintaining regular contacts to the EU Commission are those affirming the relevance of public affairs as an area of professional knowledge. The occupational status in terms of authority and income is, again, the most noteworthy factor, because respondents at the top of the occupational ladder are the most fervent supporters of EU affairs as specialised and generally applicable knowledge. The introduction of control variables qualifies the effect of income, particularly for the highest income group. Additionally, degree holders of European studies stand out as staunch supporters.

Table 6.3 Professional expertise in public affairs (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Employer (*ref.:Brussels only*)				
Consultancy	1.396			1.253
Company	1.255			1.199
Trade association	1.281*			1.017
Trade union	0.652			0.631
NGO	0.705*			0.749*
other	0.996			0.991
Lobbying activities (amount, *std.*)		1.368***		1.313***
Contacts to Commission (*std.*)		1.160***		1.133**
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)		1.043		1.038
Professional position (*qualified activity*)				
Senior position			1.180	1.147
Executive position			1.390**	1.444**
Income (ref.: < € 25,000)				
€ 25,000–49,999			1.369**	1.266
€ 50,000–99,999			1.537**	1.361*
€ 100,000 and more			1.582**	1.350
Personal characteristics				
Gender (*male*)				0.801**
Age (*std.*)				1.031
Field of study				
European studies				1.469***
Economics				0.880
Law				1.089
MINT				0.806
Citizenship				
German				0.995
British				0.775
Italian				1.242
Eastern European				1.153
Constant	36.74***	37.38***	22.64***	31.00***
Observations	452	452	452	452
R^2	0.036	0.115	0.045	0.212

Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$ (robust standard errors).

These findings can be used to identify the main contributors to professionalisation. However, most respondents indicated that their work required many more qualifications than professional experience in the area of public affairs might facilitate. The responses summarised in Figure 6.8 suggest that EU affairs professionals have to rely on a broader set of complementary skills and experiences. But what is this composite professional knowledge about? And do respondents have different perceptions about this know-how? The survey offered respondents different items, among them four questions that address

either general qualifications (knowledge of EU legislative processes and professional experiences in public affairs) or special skills (specialised technical expertise and professional experiences in the respondent's specific sector). The distinction between generalist and specialised knowledge orientations proves to be a relevant point of orientation: Employees who consider professional experience in a specific field to be important also tend to emphasise the importance of special (technical) expertise; and a similar relationship could be observed in the assessment of general knowledge and general professional experience. However, these correlations are not very strong. A factor analysis confirmed the pairing between the two dimensions, although the reliability tests for the general and specific bodies of knowledge yielded only moderate values (0.54 and 0.59 respectively). A significant proportion of respondents therefore tend to consider general and specific knowledge equally important or unimportant. It is therefore advisable to look at the knowledge orientations in the occupational field as a whole in order to be able to estimate the quantitative distribution in the field. For this purpose, two variables were created to represent the aforementioned knowledge orientation. As the respondents were able to clearly emphasise or relativise the importance of general and specialist knowledge orientation, the answers were assigned to four groups: holists, generalists, specialists, and autodidacts. This knowledge orientation is represented to varying degrees in the professional field of EU affairs, as Figure 6.9 illustrates.

The group of holists is the largest. It was called that because these individuals find general and specific knowledge and experience equally important. According to them, lobbying requires not only familiarity with the institutional
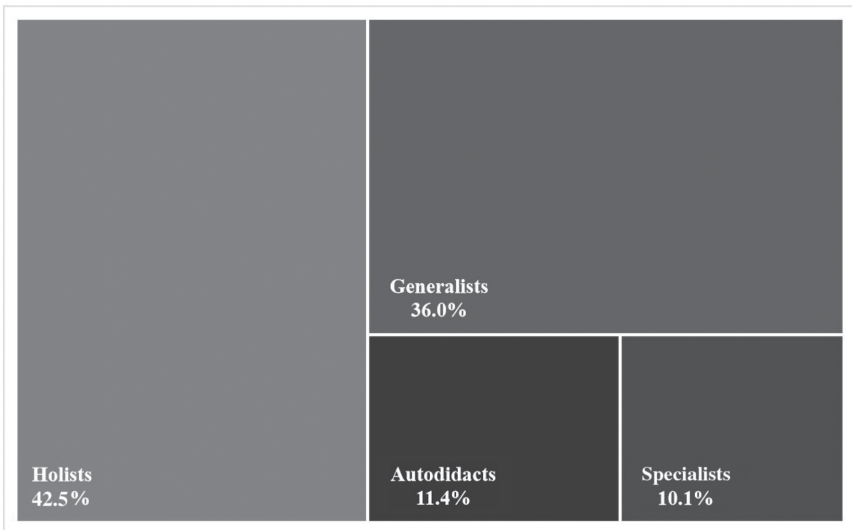
Figure 6.9 Knowledge types within the field of EU affairs (in percentages, N = 625).

structure of the EU and professional experience in the general field of public affairs. They also call for specific knowledge of the sector concerned and of the specific regulatory issues. More than any other group, these individuals are convinced that their field of activity requires high qualifications, as only 7 per cent think that lobbying is actually accessible to everyone. These respondents are slightly overrepresented among the employees of business associations and NGOs, and also among the executive positions.

The next two groups are separated by a generalist or specialised orientation. Generalists are those who consider general experience in public affairs and institutional knowledge to be necessary, but attach only minor importance to professional experience in specific sectors and special (technical) expertise. At 36 per cent, they make up one-third of the respondents. This group also believes that the job requires special qualifications. Generalists are overrepresented among consultants, and underrepresented among the employees of NGOs.

The specialists are, at 10 per cent, the smallest group of respondents. They attach particular importance to professional experience in the respective sector and to specific technical expertise. In contrast, they downplay the importance of general knowledge and experience. They are also of the opinion that their work cannot be carried out by just anyone. In this respect, they confirm that there are entry requirements for this field. However, these do not present insurmountable hurdles, as technical expertise and sector-specific professional experience can provide the necessary skills and knowledge. Specialists are evenly distributed among employers and occupational positions, albeit as a minority group.

The autodidacts, finally, are of the opinion that no special knowledge or professional experience is required to work in the field of EU affairs. In any case, they agree only somewhat with the listed bodies of knowledge or do not consider them important. Furthermore, almost every third member of this group believes that their own work can be done by anyone. As the majority does not share this opinion, it must be assumed that this group takes a minimalist view: Although it is true that working in this field requires certain knowledge and skills, these can be learned, which is why many (and maybe anyone) could do this work. Autodidacts are overrepresented among NGOs and trade unions, and underrepresented among the senior and executive positions and the well-paid jobs.

The group sizes clearly show that the occupational field of EU affairs can be divided into a core and a peripheral area. The predominance of EU affairs professionals who share a professional credo pushes divergent positions to the margins. There is indeed a broad consensus that the work of EU affairs is characterised by a distinct repertoire of special knowledge and action. Although the specialists argue that particular knowledge of the subject matter and professional experience in the sector concerned are also important, they do not really downplay the relevance of professional expertise. Only the autodidacts downplay this, because many are of the opinion that the activity does not

have to exclude anyone. However, even among them, two out of three people think that this work is not without prerequisites. Although public affairs seem to be something that can be picked up, this also implies that knowledge and skills must be learned and acquired in order to guarantee professional success. Despite the internal diversity and fragmentation of professional backgrounds and knowledge orientation, the field of work is therefore supported by a broad basic consensus that is fuelled by a belief in one's own professionalism.

6.3 The closure of the professional field: professional practice as accumulation of capital

The occupational field of EU affairs is subject to closure processes, because the establishment of paid employment in full-time positions, the standard-isation of careers, and the academisation of qualification and job profiles increasingly demarcate the field of work from those who do not fit into this pattern. Additionally, this closure relates to knowledge and skills, since all the respondents indicate that their professional activity requires specialised knowledge, which distinguishes them as insiders and sets them apart from laypersons as experts. In this respect, EU affairs professionals see themselves as knowledge workers. The career paths of the interviewed lobbyists confirm these knowledge requirements, as newcomers to the profession have to settle in and establish themselves first (see Section 5.3). Particularly in the absence of specialised training courses, formal job titles, and legal licences, the field of work seems to depend on a professional socialisation in which implicit special knowledge is internalised and practical skills are learned. In order to understand the professional closure of the field, it is therefore essential to take a closer and in-depth look at the qualitative interviews conducted with European lobbyists working for different interest groups and consultancy firms, as this allows to better understand the role of professional knowledge in the constitution and closure of the occupational field. It is necessary to clarify which subtle differences in the professional field come into play when it comes to differentiating between professional and unprofessional actions and establishing a dividing line between insiders and outsiders.

It can be assumed that those involved in the field have a vested interest in this dividing line, because political lobbying is a competitive activity. Different interest groups vie with each other for influence on political decision-making, legislation, and implementation. There is no doubt that the likelihood of these conflicting interest groups being heard by decision makers depends on organ-isational power. As will be shown later, the name of the organisation is an important door opener. However, lobbyists emphasise that representation of interests also depends on personal demeanour. The contest between interest groups for political influence therefore translates into a competition between staff for professional success, and their personal work is ultimately measured by their political influence. Against this background, lobbyists develop a par-ticular interest in professionalism. First, they need professional knowledge

in order to be able to decide which persons in which institutions should be contacted at which time with which information and statements in which way. Furthermore, a professional habitus is important, because the effectiveness of political advocacy depends on the reputation, renown, and credibility of the people involved. Ultimately, this reputation also pays off professionally, because lobbyists pursue career plans, and lucrative and interesting jobs are only offered to those who have made a name for themselves in the field. Professionalism is therefore a highly valued asset which is essential for the professional success of lobbyists.

6.3.1 The professional consecrations: the three stages of enlightenment

In the course of the interviews, the European lobbyists repeatedly referred to the knowledge and skills which, in their opinion, are essential in order to carry out their work adequately. These descriptions were driven by two intentions. On the one hand, the interviewees try to explain what sets them apart from those who are not professionally initiated; on the other hand, they seek to identify what constitutes professional quality, professionalism, or virtuosity. Across all interviews, these descriptions can be used to classify professionally relevant knowledge and skills into four groups of people. Table 6.4 provides an overview of the structure of the occupational field with its differentiation modes, reconstructed inductively on the basis of the interviews.

At the lowest level are the laypersons, who probably include the majority of the European population. They have no knowledge of the EU and consequently no knowledge of EU lobbying. They are largely irrelevant as actors, as they have no independent means of impact. A first stage of enlightenment has been reached by those who are sufficiently informed about the EU and might therefore know something about European lobbying. Such persons may well also include political amateurs who are involved in civic activities, take part in political participation processes, or represent interest groups.

Table 6.4 The three stages of enlightenment

	outside the field		*inside the field*	
Prerequisite for action	no knowledge	theoretical (book) knowledge	formulas/methods as professional capital	habitus, masterful use of the skills
Access to knowledge	unenlightened	enlightened	learned, semitheoretical	internalised, practical
Demeanour	unprofessional	unprofessional	semi-professional	professional
Actors	layperson	layperson, at best: amateur	trainee	proficiency, mastery

However, they are also outside the field, as their knowledge of the EU and of European lobbying is purely theoretical and they have no access to professional capitals or skills.

Both the uninitiated laypersons and the enlightened amateurs are unlikely to have any chance of success in the professional field of European lobbying. Only the initiated can be sure of belonging to the profession and only they can hope to exert an effective influence on European politics. However, the group of the initiated is again divided into two subgroups, as not all of them have the same level of professional competences and skills. The semi-professional activity is located in the outer area. It can be considered semi-professional, as these individuals have a good knowledge of the EU and specialised knowledge of European lobbying instruments. This enables them to take part in the competitive process of European lobbying. However, this area of professional practice is still semi-professional, as (book) knowledge is predominant here. As long as it is merely learned, it remains theoretical, mechanical, or formulaic and thus misses the actual point of carrying out practical work correctly, even intuitively. These persons lack the necessary confidence or proficiency to gain professional recognition or reputation through professional success in individual cases. A well-developed professionalism is not just a product of the skills, knowledge, and practices learned, and therefore not just a result of good workmanship. It must also be part of a professional habitus that characterises professionals as masterful insiders.

Between these four circles of individuals there are transitions that relate these four groups to each other as different levels of enlightenment. These transitions are linked to knowledge and the transfer of knowledge, and therefore also to professional socialisation and ultimately also to entry into the Brussels world of European politics, as already described in Section 5.3 with regard to careers. Some interviewees describe their own career path in the sense of such a learning, socialisation, and initiation process; some of them also report that they pass on these stocks of knowledge and experiences to others in order to instruct and familiarise them accordingly.

The first stage of enlightenment is essentially about acquiring basic knowledge about the EU and European policies. Some interviewees describe their own career in these words. They too first had to understand what the EU stands for, what its significance is, how it works, and what it achieves. For Valerie Vincent, this step came during an Erasmus stay in Strasbourg. She had worked as an assistant to an MEP during the session and experienced how much Strasbourg had become a hub for interest groups from a variety of countries and how lobbyists approached MEPs with a wide range of issues in order to influence EU policy. "And I think that is what brought me here, in a way, unexpectedly."

With this level of knowledge, the respondents can only express their astonishment at the wide gap between them and the laypersons. Particularly Rosalie Rousseau complains about "a huge education deficit," which she has noticed for a very long time. She reports that she learned little about the European

Communities during her school and university education. Geert van Gelder's assessment of university teaching is not quite as negative as Rosalie Rousseau's; he is even involved as a lecturer in such courses. According to him, these students are among the initiated, because they acquire knowledge of European politics. However, this level of knowledge is unproductive for the professional field of European lobbying as long as it remains primarily theoretical, abstract, and without practical relevance. Geert van Gelder refers here to a university degree course with a strong reference to lobbying. According to him, they "look at the matter from a very philosophical–political perspective. I don't know how much that helps in day-to-day lobbying. I mean [...] people don't care if you can quote Montesquieu or not when you want to lobby." In comparison, the graduates of the European College in Bruges award better marks to their education, because they praise the practical relevance of their studies. The teaching of EU-specific basic knowledge is enriched by case analyses of European legislation and case law. Yet the general thrust of the assessment is similar: The practical relevance itself remains theoretical and this theory does not help as long as the application and practice are lacking. In this sense, those who are enlightened about European politics also find themselves outside the professional field of European lobbying. They know something about the EU and may be interested in European politics, but they have no real capacity for action or impact.

The second stage of enlightenment is based on imparting relevant and practical knowledge and skills. This stage is no longer located in the area of (university) education, but is part of professional socialisation within the occupational field. Enlightenment is at the same time tied to introduction to the field and is frequently achieved through internships in the EU institutions, European interest groups, or consultancies. Many interviews indicate that this introduction depends on imparting the tools of the trade, because while these can be taught, they must also be learned and practised. Geert van Gelder experienced this during his own career. He describes how he spent the early years of his career with a consulting firm. His work was characterised by arranging meetings with the Commission or Parliament, information evenings, and public events or hearings. "I found it very limited. Even though it's effective, because it's certainly a formula that's effective, that works well." This made the day-to-day work somewhat formulaic and repetitive. Nevertheless, these instruments are fundamentally important, because they have proven their practical suitability and effectiveness. As standardised formats or formulas, they can be learned and practised. Also Geert van Gelder affirms that he was able to develop a routine when using them, which helped him advance professionally.

The descriptions already suggest that the acquisition of this craft or equipment is an essential, but not the only condition for professional activity. Anyone wishing to gain a foothold and establish themselves professionally in the field of European lobbying must enter this second stage and adopt and internalise the knowledge and skills imparted here. But this does not mean

that these people are really part of the circle of truly initiated professionals. The third stage of enlightenment requires practical understanding of how to apply these instruments, tools, or methodologies correctly in order to generate effective products and activities. Being able to organise meetings or hearings is not yet an indicator of professionalism, as such events do not automatically have political impact. Professional success in lobbying does not depend so much on the instruments used, but on using and applying these methods correctly. This is about ingrained, internalised skills. In order to do a really good job, the lobbyists have to develop a professional proficiency that ultimately puts them as a person in the centre. Good lobbying requires good lobbyists with a habitus that exudes professionalism. This professional habitus is characterised by two attributes in particular.

Firstly, personal excellence depends on the degree to which professional knowledge and skills are internalised. Good lobbying does not emerge from the mechanical application of working tools, which is why several of the interviewees stress that lobbying can never be learned from reading books (Jeremy Jones, Lorenzo Lombardi, and Athanasios Angelopoulos). It requires lobbyists to master the entire range of instruments and to use them effectively in the actual legislative process. In addition to craftsmanship, this requires above all a mental ability to correctly understand and classify the political world of Brussels. This is how Athanasios Angelopoulos explains the fundamental competence of good lobbyists. It is not the learning of working techniques – here he uses the example of contact networks – that is decisive, but the mental and creative ability to read and interpret the political reality of Brussels correctly:

> The network is nice, but everyone can build up a network. But it's a specific skill set and trying to think out of the box. And to get to know Brussels. You can learn it from a book, but to really understand it, you have to have spent time here because the dynamics between institutions is constantly changing and shifting.

Book knowledge is contrasted with real political life. Books do not help, because political life in Brussels is characterised by "dynamics," which is why what you learn always lags behind reality. Personal experience is essential because it provides an unbiased and deeper insight into the situation in Brussels and allows to "really understand" what is going on between the institutions. At the same time, it opens up creative potentials which he believes are necessary to effectively influence a dynamic political entity. In this respect, good lobbying seems to depend on people instinctively doing the right thing. The field of European politics is highly competitive, the processes of political decision-making are complex, and the political constellations are changing. Lobbyists not only have to be able to keep up with political developments both inside and outside the European institutions, but also to anticipate them. This means that one's own professionalism is based on the ability to

understand, read, and interpret political realities correctly and possibly even to anticipate them.

Secondly, professional success depends on being heard and taken seriously by the members of the EU institutions. Some of this is accomplished by the organisation, as the political weight of the interest group can lend the words of the lobbyists the desired impact. However, they must also make themselves heard, be persuasive as individuals, and make a name for themselves. Numerous attributes related to this reputation are mentioned in this context: personal renown and importance, expertise, credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness. These attributes demonstrate that the ultimate goal of the personal development as European lobbyists is the formation of a personal habitus radiating professionalism and professional charisma. After all, the success of lobbying depends on the personal ability to be heard, to be taken seriously, and to exert influence onto the interlocutors. This formation of a professional habitus might rest on professional training and networking, but it is a process that ultimately requires the transformation of professional skills and assets into personal reputation.

6.3.2 The professional capital of European lobbying

The process of personal initiation and professional development portrayed in the previous section is a process of accumulation of professional capitals. In fact, European lobbyists describe their professional training and socialisation as a constant acquisition of job-related skills, routines, and contacts that are invested to generate further skills, routines, and contacts. This accumulation also implies a transformative element, because professional capitals also generate higher valued capabilities, that is, a better understanding of European politics, a more reliable intuition about the best opportunities, and a secure instinct for the proper ways of influencing legislative processes. Additionally, professional skills, routines, and contacts are professional capitals required to build one's own professional habitus, reputation, and authority. To reconstruct these processes of capital accumulation and transformation (Bourdieu 1977; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011), it is necessary to go back to the raw materials of lobbying. The interviews with European lobbyists helped identify a whole range of these assets that can be grouped into four categories. Each of these categories refers to a central commodity or resource: contact networks, information, process knowledge, and organisational resources.

Contact networks and relationship capital

Lobbying is an activity whose effectiveness depends on establishing personal contacts with decision makers. This general opinion also corresponds to the perception of the lobbyists interviewed. They all emphasise the significance of contacts and therefore ultimately the central importance of working on personal relationships. Stefan Schneider, for example, stresses that a solid

knowledge of the EU is certainly important: "But who you know and who you can basically call is, I think, almost the most important thing." All other respondents also reiterate the importance of personal contacts. According to them, contacts are a professional asset that determines the lobbyists' market value. Interest groups make sure that they have access to this particular professional capital when recruiting their staff. Dominique Dubois illustrates this with the example of US law firms, which in his opinion play an increasingly important role in Brussels, precisely because they acquire political influence through their recruitment practices:

> All the big law firms have one or two advisers who were previously director-general, MEP, or Commissioner. And that's not because they will then represent the company or a firm before the ECJ. They're often not even lawyers. They're there because they have influence, because they have contacts.

Political influence and personal contacts are the two reasons why former members of the EU institutions are recruited. Both components are intrinsically linked: Law firms are interested in political influence, so they invest in personal contacts. Professional backgrounds and expertise take a back seat to the value of personal contacts. For those in the occupational field who have not spent any time within the EU institutions and who therefore do not have any insider contacts, it is therefore essential to develop relationships in order to establish appropriate contacts.

However, it should be added that it is not about personal contacts in detail. "You have to develop your networks," as Olof Olsson puts it. The plural was also deliberately chosen by Martin Müller: "You need different networks." Evidently it is important to reflect the complexity of the field of activity in the structure of the contacts. Georg Gerlach describes in more detail what this diversity consists of. "We are members of very many networks. On various topics, on different geographical regions, all kinds of things. And a lot of work is going on there." His account makes it clear that this diversity is directly related to how the EU works. The EU not only deals with different policy areas; it is also an intergovernmental entity, as the Member States play an important role in decision-making. The plurality of the networks accordingly reflects the diversity of policy fields and Member States. Georg Gerlach adds, however, that the number of working contexts is large, possibly unlimited ("all kinds of things"). Lobbyists must develop contacts with members of the Commission, the Parliament, the European Council, and the Permanent Representations. Additionally, it is also important to cooperate with other interest groups in order to forge alliances. Finally, contacts must be established in one's own association or organisation or among clients in order to coordinate positions and mobilise expertise even under time pressure. European lobbyists evidently build up an extensive address book with numerous contacts, which they then compile flexibly into topic- and task-specific networks.

This clearly shows that networks are a professional productive force. First, it is essential to have informal channels to know what is going on politically – "this gives you a better view of what's really happening," as Valerie Vincent describes it. For Stefan Schneider, fast access to information is essential: "For a Brussels lobbyist, the important thing is to get the relevant information quickly." The prerequisite for this is, however, "that he already has a good network." Networks, however, are not only important to secure access to information. They are also essential for alliances with other lobby groups. These alliances might be forged with a view to upcoming legislative procedures in order to give more emphasis to one's own position. But those who first have to find and establish such contacts also seem to be at a disadvantage. The effectiveness of one's own lobbying depends on existing contact networks. As Valerie Vincent already explained (see Section 4.3), alliances are maintained and activated at an early stage in order to be able to deliver a joint "finished product" to the legislator. Contact networks with members of one's own association or organisation must also be established at the same time, so that those who are suitable as speakers or experts in the relevant subject matter can be recruited. Valerie Vincent is therefore constantly on the lookout for new people within her company whom she can call upon for presentations in Brussels.

The Brussels arena seems to have created favourable conditions for this contact work. Many interviews mention that it is quite easy to get an overview of who within the European institutions is responsible for which topics. Making contact is also easy, as the staff are rather open to this. For William Walker, networking in Brussels is also simple because the circle of relevant actors is manageable:

> Brussels may be a different ball game compared to Berlin, but the core or this European bubble, as they usually call it here, is so small that you often run into each other on the same day, I would say, even at most events. That means you see the same faces quite often, so you know each other and you talk to each other, right?

The probability of running into each other is also high as European policy is ultimately divided into different policy and regulatory fields, which have produced established and relatively compact discussion groups and regulatory networks (see also Chapter 3). Pinelópi Papadakis refers to these circles as parallel communities:

> There are many, many parallel communities, so to speak. There are the people who, for instance, deal with financial market policy, deal with financial market regulation. Then there are the people who deal with crop protection, the people who deal with Reach, with chemicals legislation. Then there are the people who deal with health policy. Except for a few connections, cross-connections, they're often just really communities in themselves.

This division into different discussion groups and regulatory communi-ties makes it easier to identify potential dialogue partners. At the same time, it makes it easier to familiarise oneself with the relevant stakeholders and become part of established circles. For Geert van Gelder, it is vital to be included in these contact networks in order to be treated as part of the "scene" in question. As he describes it, meetings with Commission officials then proceed differently:

> The discussion with an official from the Commission is quite different if you really know a topic and, I would say, are a bit of an insider in the scene. Especially XXX [name of the topic] is a very small, I'd say almost a family. They've all been there for years. When you go to events you always see the same faces. You do invest a lot of yourself.

For him, expertise in the matter is a first important door opener. More important, however, is acceptance into the "family." These intimate networks can be developed because the circle of people involved is limited and remains so over time. This not only enables personal investments; the "scene" also seems to expect such efforts. And as long as the lobbyists become part of the "family," the personal investments will also pay off. After all, the discussions then take a completely different course.

These investments pay off, because European politics essentially happens in Brussels, which is why it is possible to establish reliable and long-standing contacts. For Valerie Vincent, the concentration in a single location is the cen-tral reason why contact networks are an accumulating capital. Professional changes – she speaks of a change of company as "refreshing" – do not jeop-ardise this capital, provided they take place within the world of Brussels. "And so the Brussels nebula, you sort of expand your contacts. But you don't lose them because you keep on staying here." Contact networks are location bound, which is why they can also be expanded locally. Being tied to a specific location is coupled with a time factor, as the longer staff stay in Brussels, the larger the networks will become. In this respect, the accumula-tion of capital must be understood in a linear fashion. Size matters, according to Kate Kavanagh: "I think what matters in Brussels is how big your network is." But the size comes with time, because after 15 years, "your address book will be much bigger than if you just arrived fresh off the boat."

Contact networks should be understood as social capital that can be accumulated and invested variably over time in a locally fixed political con-text. However, it is clear from the explanations given that the acquisition and accumulation of this professional capital is also tied to conditions that imply a tendency to close the occupational field. Successful lobbying initially depends on a certain amount of social capital, as Kate Kavanagh pointed out. This implies that lobbyists can only work effectively after a certain time. For example, Maxime Moreau knows from conversations with colleagues who have been in Brussels for some time that "you start to be efficient after

a few years' time, not immediately." It is also important to have spent time in Brussels, because contacts can only be forged, maintained, and developed into consistent networks on the ground. Finally, the structure and size of the network depends on its areas of application, as contacts that were established and consolidated in a particular policy field are retained and accrued. Lobbyists should be able to accumulate considerable social capital in the course of their careers, provided they invest consistently in Brussels relations. The more they immerse themselves in the scene, the more they will be able to stand out from others as insiders.

Information and relevant arguments

A second resource that is regarded by respondents as an important "currency" of lobbying is information. Firstly, information lends itself as a legitimisation resource, as many participants regard themselves as information brokers who contribute to pluralistic and evidence-based decision-making. These notions of legitimacy will be discussed in the following chapter. Secondly, on the practical level, information is perceived as a commodity that is traded in the meetings. Information is obtained, collected, and processed in preparation for a meeting; it is exchanged with other interest groups and passed on in the meeting in order to be heard and to be able to influence decisions. But European lobbyists are not just mere vessels that collect, store, and transmit information. They have to build up relevant knowledge in order to identify, process, and use information at all. Many interviewees therefore also consider the expertise or know-how of their work to be an important productive force. Lorenzo Lombardi characterises corporate lobbying as follows: "A corporate lobbyist is a specialist in terms of knowledge."

Tadeusz Tomaszewski explains the importance of factual information by the way the EU works. Lobbyists must be able to offer "technical expertise" to be heard, because such knowledge is in demand. The special importance of factual information is above all attributable to the regulatory orientation of European policy, a view also shared by other lobbyists. Maxime Moreau even goes so far as to describe European lobbying as "a hugely technical activity" that is not political at all. For him, the representation of political positions in the individual Member States is important, because national policy is about questions of distribution or redistribution, whereas European policy is essentially a regulatory undertaking that requires expertise. Members of the Commission and MEPs are described as generalists who, according to Tadeusz Tomaszewski, rely heavily on factual information for their legislative procedures. Expertise is particularly important in European comitology – the many specialised bodies dealing with implementing rules. According to Valerie Vincent, "all the details are done in comitology," which is why a proper understanding of the issues involved is needed in order to put forward your own position. Here, it is mainly a question of figures and statistics, because, according to Tadeusz Tomaszewski, the European institutions do not have

sufficient resources to "research everything." Interest groups strategically exploit this gap, which is why statistical data are used as "an important part of lobbying." For Rosalie Rousseau, this dependence on numbers is also crucial for NGOs: "If we don't live in the number worlds and all the table worlds of the DGs, we're left out of the conversation." The demands for information by the European institutions is particularly high, because they are highly interested in specific pieces of information: "You need to learn because people ask you more and more details about how things work. And if you want a long-term relationship, you need to have that content. Yeah? So your learning curve at the beginning is very steep." Those who cannot provide these details run the risk of being ignored not just in pending legislative procedures but also for future consultation processes.

The challenge of gathering relevant and detailed information and expertise is further complicated by the competitiveness of interest representation. Lobbyists are well aware that they have to have the better facts and factual information on their side. When interests compete, the other side is often accused of providing false information or arguments; frequently, it is accused of not possessing the relevant expertise (see Chapter 7). The information work of interest groups therefore faces a paradox. The more they rely on information as their currency, the more intense the competition between the information, which can result in their own information losing value. At the same time, they are walking a fine line, as most lobbyists do not have the necessary expertise and detailed knowledge of all the regulatory issues involved, although decision makers expect them to have the appropriate expertise.

These contradictions are reflected in the lobbyists' divergent perceptions of which competences are central to their work. As explained in the previous sections, some respondents are convinced that technical expertise is an important, even indispensable prerequisite for good work. Most others at least concede that this specialist expertise should be part of the tools of the trade. What the respondents unanimously agree on, however, is that factual expertise per se does not make for good lobbying. The information work of professional lobbying is characterised by a strategic approach: It is about extracting and communicating politically relevant information.

Information can therefore only be understood and used as a productive force if it generates a political value. This transformation and translation service is what the interviews repeatedly refer to as the necessary added value that lobbying must provide. Information is not an end in itself, but must generate added value that manifests itself in political benefits: European lobbyists have to deliver information, arguments, and positions that can be used by decision makers as political decision-making aids. First and foremost, this concerns the general question of whether or not statutory regulation is desirable at all. Lobby groups collect and process information to demonstrate that there is (or is not) a regulatory problem, that legislation will (or will not) solve the problem, and that regulatory interventions do not (or actually do) generate undesirable side effects. Decision-making aids become

more and more important in the course of the legislative process, because more detailed questions regarding the nature and design of the measures as well as the individual phrasing have to be clarified. Interest groups accompany this long process and must repeatedly deliver politically useful information if they want to make sure that the draft legislation bears their hallmark in the final resolution.

According to Geert van Gelder, interest groups that do not focus on generating informational added value are not doing a good job. Here he has his former employer in mind, although his criticism also seems to be levelled against the entire industry of consulting firms as a whole. He recalls that during his previous employment, he had to organise many events with the sole purpose of keeping the various interest groups represented in touch with the Commission. These events therefore offered little added value:

> I always find that a little embarrassing, also what kind of events I had to organise, partly for my clients. Where I end up thinking: Okay, you've got the dosh and you're doing an event somewhere. But there's no policy input, there's no (.). Why should anyone from the Commission come along? There's nothing that offers them added value that they can use as input for their own policy.

Not only do interest groups burn a lot of "dosh" in this way, but they also seem to lose face, as Commission staff see through the uselessness of such events and dismiss them as a transparent attempt at manipulation with no concrete content. Events must be a means to an end, and this end consists of delivering a substantive contribution that advances the ongoing discussion and decision-making process within the EU institutions.

Information is therefore only to be understood as professional capital if it is useful and has been compiled in the form of politically compatible arguments and positions. EU affairs professionals invest a lot of time in this work, as has already been described (see Section 4.3). This information, mediation, and translation work is ultimately reflected in written dossiers (e.g. position papers, statements, reports, analyses), which can be considered tradable products of good lobbying work. Successful lobbying therefore depends on the quality of these dossiers. And this is where the European lobbyists' own professional contribution is justified, because professionalism depends on how skilfully the professionals collect and process existing information, how convincingly they are able to substantiate their employers' demands with arguments, and how credibly they can market the information and arguments as helpful contributions to ongoing decision-making processes. The political weight of these arguments and positions doubtlessly depends on the organisational power of the interest group. But, first, successful information and translation work is required. On top of that, a good lobbyist will know how to dose and direct the organisational power in order to lend the necessary emphasis to his own interventions.

Insider knowledge and the right intuition

Information, facts, or expertise are an unproductive resource that has no political value without the translation work described. However, this work requires another professional capital to ensure the political effectiveness of the information and arguments presented: the knowledge of the institutional structures of the EU and the political processes that shape decision-making. The definition of lobbying proposed by Tadeusz Tomaszewski requires such knowledge: "Lobbying is about getting the right person, the right information at the right time." The value of a piece of information therefore depends on the person to whom it might be relevant and the mandate and role that person has in the EU's institutional architecture. The right time is in turn predefined by the legislative process, as different people with different tasks are involved in the course of the decision-making process, just as the value of information depends on at which point of the decision-making process it is needed. Ultimately, it is a question of *kairos* – the right moment or the right opportunity – which can only be answered by those who have the knowledge of the structure of the EU, insights into ongoing legislative processes, and a keen sense of the internal logic of European politics.

Lobbyists describe their core competencies and professional capital in precisely these words. Athanasios Angelopoulos, for example, explains that he is not important for his company because of his specialist qualifications; he is a lawyer, but not a lawyer specialised in specific areas. Apparently the company has enough of those. His expertise lies elsewhere: "I know the EU infrastructure and the institutional architecture." And that means essentially: "I know Brussels, Commission, Parliament, I have been a member of several working groups." He therefore knows all the institutions, including comitology, partly from the inside. Ralf Richter agrees but adds that this understanding must ultimately extend to the "EU and Europe," because the Member States also play a decisive role. The required understanding of the EU also includes "at least a basic idea" about "the political dynamics and the way politics is done in most EU Member States."

This knowledge is a decisive basis for successful lobbying work. However, it initially only enables lobbyists to carry out a primarily passive activity: understanding the political situation. A number of interviewees consistently use this wording, as they unanimously speak of "understanding." By doing so, they underline that this understanding is in itself a considerable achievement. The EU is a complex and multilayered system, which is why this "institutional architecture" (Athanasios Angelopoulos) and the "political dynamics" (Ralf Richter) first have to be understood.

But this knowledge is not a productive force, as it does not extend beyond passive understanding. Only an exclusive stock of knowledge that can be described as informal insider knowledge becomes an asset. This knowledge enables lobbyists to correctly interpret and effectively influence the political dynamics within the institutional architecture of the EU. Especially Valerie

Vincent emphasises the importance of this special knowledge. "You can't do this job from outside," she says. "You don't have that informal channel that gives you a better view of what's really happening, you know? Understanding what's the political force behind certain decisions." It is the informal channel that conveys informal knowledge about the political background and internal forces of the legislative process. This is also about "understanding," but this understanding goes deeper and uncovers the "forces" that operate behind the institutions and their processes.

This informal insider knowledge is indispensable for effective lobbying because interest groups must become aware of planned legislative initiatives so that they can intervene as early as possible. Jeremy Jones stresses that it may already be too late by the time the Commission publishes a legislative initiative. "The main problem and the main difficulty is: get to this knowledge before." Good lobbyists need to know the people within the European institutions who are working on the issues relevant to them, and they also need to stay in permanent contact with them in order to remain abreast of developments. Furthermore, insider knowledge is absolutely vital because political decision-making is guided by informal rules that only those who have been confronted with them professionally can know. Jeremy Jones stresses that his time as an assistant in the European Parliament has provided him with invaluable insights without which he could not work effectively. About the members of Parliament he talks to as a lobbyist, he says: "I know them personally and I know the specifics. I know how you should behave in which situation or you shouldn't behave in that situation. And this knowledge you won't get it otherwise than being inside." According to Lorenzo Lombardi, lobbyists should be well informed about the individuals addressed, their background, and their opinions, so that they can decide which person and which issue "should be treated with caution, where one might make a fool of oneself. All these things you have to learn, you have to learn on the job."

This informal insider knowledge unfolds its full productive power as soon as it becomes an internalised intuition, a feeling for the right thing to do at the right time. The interviews provide numerous insights into this almost magical translation of insider knowledge into an internal compass. The first step is to sharpen one's own perception in order to be able to identify the real forces and developments that are to be influenced. For Valerie Vincent, the right understanding is the key to action: "you have to start interpreting and maybe influencing the politics." Although this statement underlines that the success of one's own actions is not guaranteed ("maybe influencing"), without insight into the true state of affairs, any attempt is bound to fail. This kind of understanding helps identify effective strategies for action. However, Valerie Vincent stresses that this understanding requires a presence in Brussels, as it involves practical comprehension of what is really going on. "It's very important to be here to understand the mechanisms," says Valerie Vincent, describing the local nature of this informal knowledge. She not only has a knowledge advantage over non-resident lobbyists. Her special knowledge also

provides her with the judgement that is the basis of her professionalism and enables her to steer the lobbying activities of her company. Lobbying is about operating or planning future actions in a highly dynamic and complex environment. It is necessary to clarify when the right time has come for the right intervention. In this respect, feelings become more important than thoughts, as Valerie Vincent illustrates with the example of a joint lobbying initiative of several company representatives from Brussels:

> We said: Listen, this is the moment in Brussels we can do this. We can really fight. So we moved the internal machine to get a position on that. We're not just here waiting for positions. But we also (.) we feel what's happening out there and we bring it in. We say: Maybe now it's the moment to open a debate on these issues. You know, let's have a strong position. Let's work with the other companies. And so we were, I would say, one of the drivers of this group to really work on this issue.

Insider knowledge can only be considered as professional capital if it has been internalised in the form of a feeling for correct and appropriate action. Only then does it become a productive force that guides action and implies and distinguishes professionalism. This knowledge-specific professional capital is incorporated and internalised and therefore person-specific. The capital can only be acquired on the ground in the course of a process of professional socialisation. Once acquired, however, it can be taken along, expanded, and multiplied over the course of career stages, as can the contact networks that lobbyists have built up and maintained during their careers. This view is shared by many of the respondents, including Rosalie Rousseau: "If you have a lobbyist for a big company who's new here and has never done it before, it'll take him a year and a half to get up to speed. Once you're in, you can lobby for anything." The insider knowledge and the internalised feeling are thus a generalised professional capital that is separate from individual areas of application and can be successfully invested into the effective representation of whatever issues and interests are at stake.

Organisational resources and presence

In addition to the contact networks and the two bodies of knowledge that have so far been identified as professional capital, other resources also play an important role. Although lobbyists have these resources at their disposal, they have less control over them: the material and human resources that European interest groups provide. The lobbyists with whom interviews were conducted are themselves the embodiment of these resources, as they are in paid employment, have their own office, can use material and travel resources, and may be part of a team of several people. Other organisations that do not make such investments are clearly at a disadvantage because they have to operate from outside Brussels. They do not have the same access to what is happening in

Brussels and are denied important professional capital, as described above. Valerie Vincent is therefore convinced that lobbying can only be effective on the ground. "You can't do this job from outside." Stefan Schneider also stresses the need for a permanent representation: "If you're taking this really seriously, you should have someone here."

None of the respondents questioned the importance of Brussels as a hub for effective lobbying, and they all agreed that their own interest groups need to provide resources in order to operate effectively. However, interest groups have yet to come to this realisation, which is why setting up and outfitting a Brussels office is described as a process by Rosalie Rousseau: "It was obvious that we would want an office here, so I basically set up the office. Now there are four of us here, soon we'll be five and six." Her description is somewhat ambivalent, as she describes setting up the office as a self-evident ("was obvious"), but only as a possible option ("would want"). Against the background of the conditional will of the group ("we" would want to have an office), setting up the office is ultimately described as a personal act ("so I basically set up the office"). She described how her own commitment was decisive not only in setting up the office but also in expanding it. This presentation indicates that setting up and expanding a Brussels representation must be justified towards the own association, the members, or the parent company. European lobbyists must advocate for the resources needed for serious work. The respondents seem to be successful to a certain extent. At the same time, however, their efforts make it clear that their own representation in Brussels is not always able to make do with the allocated resources.

In fact, a number of interviewees complained about the material and personnel resources of their own representation. These complaints often involve comparisons with other interest groups. The inequalities in the Brussels organisational field are described as profound and unfair. Especially the members of the NGOs unanimously stress that industry interests use considerably more resources than they are able to raise themselves. Georg Gerlach describes the imbalance with the following words:

> And our scope is very limited. That's my job here and the part-time secretary and a small budget. That's it. Other people have ten people running here, have even more people running there, plus they hire law firms or even pure lobbying events, and that goes into the hundreds of thousands and millions, of course.

The imbalances distort the competition of interest representation, as own staff can hardly keep up with the pace of others. Other interests have more people working on their behalf ("running"), or they may have additional staff they can engage as needed. Interest representation is described as a race for influence, which is not fought individually but collectively: If you can get more people in the race, you have an advantage because you can use it to define topics, mould opinions, or place demands. Kate Kavanagh describes

this race as frustrating, because the industry's competitive advantage means that it is always ahead.

> This thing that is interesting or maybe frustrates me most is that, when you go to the Parliament and you want to speak about [name of the topic], it's just that they (.) the industry's been there. They have so many resources, and they've done so many events on [name of related topic], just repeated the message: [Topic] can be done safely. [Topic] can be done safely.

Lobbying is therefore a battle of resources. "The sheer quantity then makes all the difference," as Dominique Dubois describes it. He illustrates the numeric challenge by comparing his office staff ("We have two and a half employees") with the size of the European Parliament and the length of legislative processes:

> These are always processes that are very lengthy, where many things happen at the same time. And that means that if there is a particular vote, as an NGO you can often only meet ten MEPs, because you have to contact the assistant, you have to hope that there's an appointment available, then that gets postponed, you have to prepare, you have to make sure that the experts provide accurate information so that you can actually hold the meeting. And then you've met 10, 15 people maybe, but there are 750 MEPs.

In both aspects – speed and quantity – presence is the key asset that is at stake in the competition between interest groups. Anyone who wants to represent the interests of their own association, company, or client and effectively influence legislative procedures must be present within the decision-making process in order to generate attention, set agendas, form opinions, and secure interpretative sovereignty. Guaranteeing this presence requires a large number of meetings, events, information, campaign, and mailing materials. Ultimately this means that successful lobbying ultimately it is about two things: money and staff.

As far as monetary resources are concerned, some interviews indicate that there is a lot of money in circulation. This observation is first and foremost made by the representatives of the NGOs, who at the same time seek to document the supremacy of the interests of industry. Colin Cooper, for example, explains the weakness of NGOs in financial categories. Organising a communications campaign that generates resonance in the decision-making process requires an appropriate budget: "You need a lot of money." According to Georg Gerlach, trade associations invest amounts in this area that run into the hundreds of thousands and millions. However, budgetary differences between the organisations also exist in the industrial sector. According to Maxime Moreau, it is the large trade associations that invest a great deal of

money in their lobby work. And big corporations also invest large sums of money that far exceed the budgets of smaller offices. Valerie Vincent indicates two American corporate representations in her field, which spend large sums on consultancies: "I mean, they will at least spend millions on this stuff." But the representatives of the industry lobbies also point out that the NGOs have significant financial resources. Maxime Moreau, Andrea Albrecht, and Tadeusz Tomaszewski, for example, complain that NGOs can rely on financial support from the EU institutions, which they use to fund their lobbying activities. And Frank Fischer, who was an MEP, pointed out that NGOs can mobilise significant funds through crowdfunding to advance their campaign work.

The financial scope of the European lobby groups then also determines the number of staff. This does not always have to be the case, as interest groups can rely on volunteers or staff within the association, company, or client. According to Tadeusz Tomaszewski, this is likely to be the case when it comes to obtaining relevant expertise for ongoing legislative procedures from within the organisation. A lack of funds is not a problem then:

> If you have people, enough people, who can work for free, basically just giving their time as volunteers, it's good. When you don't, it's a problem. Many organisations don't actually have their big pools of experts. And when they do, the experts are not always available.

Additionally, NGOs might be able to mobilise members of national associations and followers at the grassroots level to support EU-related lobbying activities and campaigns. However, both options (technical experts and grassroots support) do not help fulfil all day-to-day tasks of European lobbying. Lobby groups with greater financial leeway may seek the services of commercial consultants to increase the number of persons supporting a specific lobbying campaign, but interest groups with tight budgets must make do with sparse staffing levels. Several interviewees expressed this complaint. The NGOs see themselves at a disadvantage in terms of staff compared with the interests of industry, just as smaller offices within industry feel disadvantaged compared with the large corporations or associations.

However, it must be added that many of the respondents also downplay the importance of organisational resources. It is argued that money is not a necessary prerequisite for good work. Other professional capital is much more important than organisational resources, as Andrea Albrecht explains: "Money doesn't necessarily help, I think, in Brussels. It's all about people and people managing those relationships and having access to the right policymakers." Additionally, she says, it is all about content, which is why organisational resources only provide the means to attract attention to issues and demands. According to Geert van Gelder, they cannot be a substitute for substantive work: "After all, what's the point of being able to pay for admission to all events or throwing a fantastic event yourself every year. There's

no point if there's nothing behind it." Excessive use of funds can ultimately have the opposite effect. The number of staff and the size of the budget provide ample opportunity for criticism, as already reflected in the complaints about financial inequalities and the unfair competition between interests. Other respondents report that the EU institutions deliberately seek the views of weaker interest groups. These groups are heard because they present themselves more credibly and authentically (according to Kate Kavanagh), or because they can be confident that the decision makers are interested in a balanced decision-making process (according to Georg Gerlach).

The material and financial resources of the interest group are therefore important as working tools, but this does not ultimately define good lobbying, that is, the professionalism of lobbying. Good representation of interests becomes easier with more staff and money, but it does not depend on it, and the widely shared view is that it may even be damaged by it. In this sense, it is a sign of professionalism if lobbyists do not primarily focus on what is possible in terms of resources, but on what makes sense for the overall objective of interest representation. The professionalism of one's own actions is not determined by the organisational resources; rather, professionalism manifests itself in the correct use of (scarce) organisational resources.

6.4 Professional distinction: accesses to power

Lobbyists are unanimous about the skills and knowledge they need for their everyday work. They strive to gather insider knowledge, contact networks, expertise, and organisational resources, because they are aware that only those who succeed in increasing their professional capital will grow professionally. The careers of the European lobbyists make it clear that the accumulation of this professional capital is indeed an important point of reference for their professional development (see also Chapter 5). The vast majority of EU affairs professionals have worked in the European institutions, at least for a short time; have spent time with different employers; have gained professional experience in different subject areas; and have developed connections and familiarity with the Brussels scene. These trajectories are beneficial for their own professionalisation. The best way to expand contact networks and EU-specific insider knowledge is for professionals to get to know the EU institutions from the inside, to acquire the tools of the trade from different lobby groups, and to work on different topics. In addition, the personal market value is likely to increase as a result of a broader and stronger portfolio of previous fields of work, contact networks, and insider knowledge. It can be assumed that employees develop an interest in a career within the occupational field and consequently seek employment with a large or influential lobby group. Such an employer is likely to have high expectations of the EU affairs professionals recruited, but will also make their work considerably easier, as the organisational resources will significantly increase the employees' scope for action. It is furthermore not insignificant that such employers also

promise increased income, influence, and reputation, which is also a driving force for professional development, as will be shown later.

6.4.1 The symbolic added value of a professional approach

The professional field of European lobbying is constituted and structured externally and internally by the skills and professional capital described above. By acquiring these, professional lobbyists distinguish themselves from the unprofessional or amateurish representation of interests by laypersons. At the same time, EU affairs professionals are interested in an accumulation of these professional capitals, because they also vie with each other for political influence, want to stand out from the crowd of employees, and are interested in their own professional standing. It can therefore be assumed that the actors seek a professional distinction that is twofold: The core area of established insiders will aim to distinguish itself from the outer area of non-professional interest representation as well as from the inner area of the many semi-professional lobbyists.

This professional distinction illustrates that the occupational field is marked by a symbolic struggle in which the actors vie for the generation and accumulation of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991: 163–203; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011). Lobbyists are not only interested in acquiring the aforementioned skills and professional capital, but above all in a symbolic added value, which is expressed in the form of professional acclaim and reputation and creates personal influence. This symbolic added value does not depend on mere possession of the aforementioned capitals, but on an internalisation of the patterns of thought and action inherent in the professional capital. "True" professionalism depends on developing a professional habitus that holds the promise of recognition in one's own field and thus augurs professional success as it makes preferential treatment by the contacts within the European institutions more likely.

The descriptions of some interviewees who are critical or disparaging about the inadequate professional skills and knowledge of others provide some indication of this struggle for symbolic capital. According to the comments, good lobbyists are characterised by the fact that they have moved beyond simply acquiring these skills and recognise what really matters. Those who merely acquire the aforementioned knowledge like a fetish and apply it mechanically are ultimately unsuited to the profession. EU-specific knowledge can be learned, but it remains only theoretical. Contacts can be made very easily in Brussels, as access to the EU institutions is straightforward and the circle of people involved is manageable, but to be taken seriously requires more than that. Organisational resources are important, but using them indiscriminately can reduce credibility and influence. Expert knowledge is indispensable, but specialist expertise per se does not help anyone formulate opinions that are relevant to ongoing legislative processes and can be integrated into these.

Athanasios Angelopoulos has made this partly caricatured distinction between good work and well-intentioned but unprofessional work very clear. He was quoted earlier as saying that you can learn a lot about Brussels from books without generating relevant understanding. Only prolonged professional presence can help to really understand this place. At the same time, he argues that the notorious process of making new contacts is an unpleasant practice for many lobbyists. He illustrates this with an event with local high-profile people, which he himself had attended and at which it was apparently customary to go on the prowl for prominent contacts. This was out of the question for him: "I would be constantly looking for someone more interesting, which happens all the time. Looking at the badge." He found this kind of networking and the constant gathering of business cards personally unpleasant: "You have people who want to collect as many business cards as possible." His descriptions show that he personally found this practice embarrassing.

Those who merely work towards acquiring job-specific capital will never reach the core of true professionalism. A professional approach requires EU knowledge, expertise, contacts, and organisational resources, as well as the ability to leverage these professional assets. But above all it is important to establish a professional reputation. The interviews provide numerous indications that the inner core of this occupational field is reserved for those who have been able to acquire this symbolic capital and develop an appropriate professional habitus. They also illustrate, however, that professional reputation is not acquired, but is above all awarded or attributed – it must be conferred. Lobbyists can certainly contribute to obtaining a reputation for true professionalism. But true professionalism is not a commodity that can be produced individually – rather, it is collectively developed within the working relations with the EU institutions and is awarded or attributed within them. It is the consequence of a twofold relationship of recognition: being recognised as a credible individual who has something to say; and being recognised as belonging to the Brussels scene and its political communities as an individual.

6.4.2 Making a name for yourself: reputation and standing

The concern for professional recognition is omnipresent in the field of EU affairs, because European lobbying faces reservations and criticism. Whilst lobbyists can expect a certain degree of acceptance in Brussels, many respondents say that public opinion is critical of lobbying. Athanasios Angelopoulos, Maxime Moreau, Martin Müller, Olof Olsson, Pinelópi Papadakis, or Helen Huber refer in particular to the prevailing opinion within the Member States, for example in France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, or the Netherlands. Lorenzo Lombardi describes this negative image as follows: "We're also lobbyists. I don't get offended if I'm called a lobbyist. / *I: Yeah, in Brussels, it's normal to be called a lobbyist. When in Germany /* B: Well, in XX [Member State] as well. It's a kind of offence." Henric Huisman

takes a similar view, putting a number of negatively connoted adjectives to the poor image of lobbying in his country: "It's a bit of a dodgy, obscure, back room, untransparent, yeah." Maxime Moreau and Martin Müller also agree with this. As a whole, these succinct descriptions converge in the perception that public opinion questions the democratic legitimacy of lobbying.

Internally, however, relations with the EU institutions are described as uncomplicated, as decision makers are generally open to discussions with lobbying staff. Although the interviewees describe the EU institutions as willing to talk, a closer look reveals that they are nevertheless under permanent pressure to prove themselves professionally. Reservations against dubious lobbying are ever-present, especially since Brussels is under scrutiny by a media public eager for scandal and is being monitored closed by watchdog NGOs critical of lobbying. It is also relevant that the competing interest groups criticise or condemn the activities of the respective opposite side, as will be explained later (see Section 7.3). This latent risk of scandalisation also affects the staff individually, because professional misconduct can quickly affect professional and personal reputation and therefore also one's own political influence. Valerie Vincent expresses this concern most clearly, emphasising that it is difficult for outsiders to understand how important transparency is in the small Brussels world:

> I mean, if you want to live here, you have to be as crystal clear as water, full stop. I mean, no matter what (.) no matter what your company says, no matter what, you have to be as transparent. And maybe if you're not here, you don't realise what kind of life Brussels is. And you risk jeopardising your credibility immediately and then you'll never recover it since it's such a small place. Once people say, Oh, but that guy is bullshit, you know?

The risk of loss of face and thus of ruining one's own professional reputation for good is particularly great in Brussels, as it is a small world in which the people involved know each other personally and also talk to each other. Valerie Vincent's reference to the fact that a company can come into conflict with its own lobbying staff as soon as it acts in a way that is detrimental to the staff is significant. From a company perspective, it seems to be a tactical option not to provide the EU institutions with "crystal clear water" in terms of information and intentions. As a lobbyist, however, she has to disregard the wishes of the company ("no matter what your company says") because the employer is unable to properly gauge the consequences. Companies not only risk losing political influence in the short term, they also jeopardise long-term working relations. She considers such tactics to be professionally damaging, as they undermine her credibility.

Reputation is thus a highly valued but fragile and ephemeral good. It takes a lot of time to build up a good reputation, but very little to destroy it, as Lorenzo Lombardi explains: "We've actually made quite a name for ourselves over the years. And the worst thing is always when you risk your reputation,

as it were, or ruin it with some kind of stunt." This fragility is not only due to the small world of Brussels, where you meet your contacts again and again. The competing interests make it more likely that lobbyists are under scrutiny and any wrongdoing is detected. Bastien Bertrand has this risk in mind. He expresses a concern that is not only voiced within the NGO sector but also shared by other interviewees: "But for an NGO, if you're not absolutely strictly sticking to the facts, someone will pick you up on it, and you will just lose all of your credibility. That will be the end of that basically."

It is remarkable that interviews use a categorical wording: Any deviation from the rule is sanctioned without any discernible exception; every misstep will be picked up, inevitably causing a loss of credibility, and will mean the end of one's own professional work. The core problem is not so much that misconduct might become known to the wider public; the problem is that the contacts within the EU institutions will find out about it and terminate the working relationship. The motivation for good conduct therefore results from the effort not to jeopardise long-term working relationships.

The omnipresence of concern for personal reputation is remarkable, because one might have suspected that successful lobbying depends on different things: Interest groups are tasked with influencing European legislative processes, and a decisive instrument for influencing political decisions effectively is organisational power. Politicians or civil servants who do not attach the necessary importance to the demands of these groups are put under political pressure. This pressure is exerted through the leaders of European associations or companies, national associations are called in, support from national governments is mobilised, public campaigns are launched, and street protests or mass electronic submissions are organised. Illegitimate forms of influence (bonus payments, appointments or contracts, etc.) or illegal forms (favours, bribes, or threats) are not excluded, but are dealt with in the interviews more as exceptions and consequently as deviations, aberrations, or outliers.

Organisational power is indeed an important resource for lobbyists in order to be heard politically. Depending on the course of political discussions during the legislative process, they sometimes have to use this organisational power openly and bluntly. However, interest groups only have this scope for decision-making because their staff work hard in their day-to-day work to keep all options for action open. Confrontational strategies of political influence are risky and limited. They are mostly aimed at preventing political regulation, but can also attempt to force such regulation. In any case, they risk burning bridges with the departments, committees, factions, or governments involved. In the day-to-day work of European lobbyists, it is much more important to be accepted and recognised as partners by the members of the EU institutions; and this recognition must be stable enough to survive periods of open conflict. Organisational power in this respect is not necessarily something that is explicitly addressed and dealt with in day-to-day work.

The political influence that European lobbyists can exert therefore depends not only on the organisational power of the interest group. Personal reputation is more crucial for day-to-day work, as only those who are taken seriously by their counterpart can exert political influence. However, the organisation should not be neglected in this respect either, as the interviews make it clear that the personal reputation is linked to the name that an interest group in Brussels has made for itself. Organisational power comes back into play in this respect, as already described in Section 3.1. Interest groups openly communicate which membership (national associations, individual organisations, or groups of companies, population groups, or support groups) is represented by the organisation. The organisation names stand for specific markets, industries, or products, population groups, customers, or constituencies. The name denotes a representative mandate that simultaneously signifies political weight. Lobbying employs an arithmetic logic that links one's own political influence to the proportional weight of the social interests represented and uses the name of an organisation as a symbol (Section 7.3). However, the reputation of an organisation is not solely based on its clout. Interest groups are subject to the cooperation necessities, regulatory objectivity requirements, and professional ethics rules that apply within the Brussels world of EU affairs. If the interviewees say that their employers have a good reputation, they also mean that their organisation is accepted as a reliable, reputable, and constructive discussion partner.

The organisation's reputation is also personally important for European lobbyists, as it rubs off on their own standing. They know that their chances of being heard by the staff of EU institutions depend on who they work for. The name can open doors to a varying degree. They therefore also have a professional interest in working for an important or influential interest group. Organisations with a large staff and budget, a substantial membership base, and good relations with the EU institutions present EU affairs professionals with much greater opportunities for professional success and personal development. For Luuk van Leeuwen, for example, the good reputation of the industry association was an important reason why he chose his employer: "So [name of the association] has a reputation, I believe. That's why I decided to work for them." Moreover, Colin Cooper suggests that his organisation's name provides the necessary tailwind for his own work: "This is one of our key assets as an NGO, the trust and the authority we have to talk about certain issues." The persuasive power he can develop as a lobbyist in the meetings depends on the authority the organisation has been able to develop. For this reason, the personal reputation of the lobbyists is a reputation that is tied to the membership of the organisation, a borrowed reputation.

Borrowed standing and authority is a necessary, but not inevitably a sufficient condition for building a good personal reputation. First, the lobbyists must be able to live up to the name of the organisation. Those who cannot personally live up to this reputation risk being professionally sidelined, as lobby groups have an interest in ensuring that their staff maintain and

increase their own reputation. Lobbyists cannot rest on their employer's reputation, but must put a lot of energy into establishing their own name. Above all, it is important to be taken seriously by the relevant contacts within the EU institutions. For European lobbyists, the question of reputation is a thoroughly personal one. Valerie Vincent, who works for a corporate representation, describes this work on her own reputation as follows: "It's really about the quality of what you do, which then brings the added value (.) your reputation. And I want my reputation to be good with about 15 people here that I know that are the key guys, you know?"

Successful lobbying depends on the personal reputation that lobbyists enjoy with the really important people. EU affairs professionals must prove their worth in meetings if they are to be taken seriously and listened to in the future. With this, Valerie Vincent illustrates that professional reputation is a scarce symbolic asset that is not bestowed upon everyone. This scarcity is clearly expressed in an interview with Rosalie Rousseau when she discusses the relevance of the age and gender of lobbyists. In her opinion, younger women especially find it difficult to be taken seriously in a male-dominated domain:

> Well, especially in my field, that's a very grey male domain. Sure, that has an advantage if you come in as a younger woman, but you have to make a name for yourself first. It's not so easy. The language of men is a language of its own.

In a field of work dominated by older men, young women may well be welcome. However, they face the problem of having to "make a name for themselves" in order to be taken seriously. Although this requirement applies to all employees, younger women seem to face greater hurdles. They are accepted as newcomers in the occupational field, but are not necessarily perceived and treated as relevant actors:

> When is a woman taken seriously? When are you not the sweet little girl with a pretty smile, but when are you taken seriously, to say she really has a message to get across, when are you invited to a panel?

Physical presence in Brussels, attending events, appointments with MEPs or Commissioners are signs that women lobbyists have become part of the Brussels arena. But all this is irrelevant as long as the counterpart does not listen and does not take the arguments seriously. Younger women are denied professional recognition because they often play a purely decorative part. According to Rosalie Rousseau, an invitation to a panel is the ultimate accolade. This means that a female lobbyist only enjoys true recognition if she is invited with intention of the panellists actually listening to her opinion or message. Rosalie Rousseau relates the problem particularly to young women, implying that the EU institutions continue to give more weight to male (and

even younger) lobbyists. She certainly feels that it is difficult for all female lobbyists to talk to "them" in the Commission:

> Well, especially in the Commission, it simply depends on the level you're at, and if you have to fight man to man, so to speak, as a woman, it's sometimes not so easy to talk to them, even as a woman.

This is also the reason why interest groups still follow traditional gender roles in the recruitment of senior staff, as Rosalie Rousseau notes, using the example of the selection procedure for filling a director's post in her association: "It was very clear, we want a man, we want a grey-haired man." Men in high-ranking positions seem to find it easier to talk to equally high-ranking persons within the Commission and to fight "man to man."

Younger women may experience this problem of being taken seriously particularly acutely. But all other lobbyists also face the challenge of obtaining professional recognition. It is not without reason that the concern for personal reputation is present throughout the interview material. A closer look reveals that building a good reputation requires considerable relationship work. The accounts refer to two levels: The relationship work draws on common manners as well as on professional skills.

On the one hand, the work on personal reputation and the associated professional recognition is based on social relations work. Geert van Gelder had already referred to this aspect when he spoke of the fact that he was now part of the "scene" or "family" in his area of regulation and had to put in a lot of effort to get to this point. What is decisive, however, is that relations with the staff of the EU institutions must be maintained continually in order to generate a high degree of trust and dependability, says Daniel Dieckmann: "You need to meet people regularly to build that relation that they know you, that they trust you." It is necessary to build up relationship capital that will endure even in rough times: "So that you know people in peace time, let's put it this way." Those who, when in doubt, take a confrontational stance with the leading players in the EU Commission and Parliament should be able to rely on resilient working relations, because trust and dependability cannot be generated when there is conflict.

The importance of interpersonal relations work is remarkable, because the working contacts between interest groups and EU institutions do not correspond to the logic of everyday relations, but ultimately serve strategic considerations of benefit. Both sides know that lobbying boils down to influencing political decisions, which is why the talks do not have an intrinsic but a calculated value: They are a means to an end. Every politician and civil servant must therefore assume that he or she is being contacted and worked on only in order to make changes to the present legislative proposals. According to the accounts, however, these working contacts only appear to generate instrumental value if they are based on a resilient relationship characterised by appreciation, dependability, and trust. Or to put it another way: Contacts only have instrumental value if they have an intrinsic social value.

The conviction that lobbying is above all work with people and requires social skills is shared by many lobbyists. Rosalie Rousseau describes these soft qualifications as follows: "That's the most important thing, you must enjoy working with people." Other interest groups seem to privilege expertise ("some companies just send the nerds here, they're brilliant"), but these qualifications are not the ones that matter when personal contacts are concerned: "I don't know so much about the ins and outs of my subject, I have to prepare for it every time. But I'm just curious about people." Rosalie Rousseau approaches a meeting with a sense of curiosity, because she asks herself various questions: What legislative initiatives is the counterpart working on, what concrete work is being done and what factual, legal, or political problems are they trying to solve? Her success depends on putting herself in the other side's position, because her legislative footprint increases, the more she can anticipate the specific topics and tasks, problems and frustrations the politician or civil servant is dealing with. Her lobbying work is most effective when she can market her input as contributions to solving the legislative tasks and problems her counterparts are currently dealing with: "That means you are also a psychologist, and I think that's something you can't make anybody understand. You just have to be human."

Professionalism is therefore defined by "human" conduct and a personal tone and appearance. This is also the opinion of journalist Jaan Jonker, who considers the lobby staff to be a thoroughly friendly and pleasant bunch. Knowledge and expertise are not so decisive:

> I have never met an unfriendly lobbyist. Meaning, they are usually already approachable, interested, open-minded. So they are people who are also enthusiastic and interested in [...] many things. And this means they can easily strike up a conversation with someone about this and that. And that's a big difference to these PR agencies, for example, where there are often people sitting there who, well, who try to stir things up or influence the mood in a very crude way.

Lobbyists are an amiable bunch. Although they have a specific interest to represent, they are friendly, attentive, even enthusiastic. They are people with whom one can have a good and pleasant conversation, because they are interested in what concerns their counterpart. This enables them to develop resilient working contacts: Casual conversations become a steady thread of conversation and this thread of conversation evolves into a reliable working relationship.

The work on professional reputation, however, does not stop at relationship building. The challenge that European lobbyists are faced with emanates from the fact that the working contacts are ultimately of a professional nature. When establishing a good reputation, they have to adopt a professional demeanour in line with the task at hand. In this respect, personal reputation depends also on the credibility attributed to EU affairs professionals. Almost

every interview refers to this symbolic asset. This applies to Olof Olsson, for whom credibility is the second resource that really counts in lobbying, alongside contact networks. Maxime Moreau agrees when he says: "You need (.) I would say, to be listened to, to be credible."

Credibility is certainly also a norm that guides action in day-to-day contexts. However, the descriptions show that credibility is a symbolic asset that has its own professional value in the context of lobbying. This is also because the talks with the EU institutions are of a strategic nature. Both sides know that lobby groups represent particular interests and aim to exert effective influence, which is why the discussion partners cannot be sure that the lobbyists are truthful or honest. However, the prospects of being able to influence upcoming legislative procedures depend on EU affairs professionals representing credible positions. Ultimately, politicians must be able to rely on the fact that the information, assessments, and proposals they receive from the interest groups serve as a sound basis for the upcoming political decisions – pushing through, amending, or preventing a law. After all, civil servants and politicians expose themselves to criticism if they allow themselves to be politically influenced and introduce proposals into the legislative process that turn out to be factually incorrect, difficult to justify publicly, or politically unacceptable. In both respects, input from lobby groups must be able to stand up to factual or political scrutiny.

In lobbying, credibility is a central but fragile asset because it is a target of the aforementioned competition between opposing interest groups. Competing lobby groups try to provide the EU institutions with information and analyses that brand the opposing side's position as false, unfounded, implausible, even dishonest. In fact, many lobbyists see credibility as their most important Achilles heel and take this point of attack very seriously, as doubts about their own credibility are professionally damaging. EU affairs professionals therefore have an intense interest in solving the problem of credibility. In this respect, too, everyday social rules of interpersonal interaction initially play an important role. Ultimately, lobbyists must communicate through their behaviour that they are interested in a relationship with the members of the EU institutions that is based on honesty. Honesty in turn requires authenticity and genuineness in personal demeanour. For Rosalie Rousseau, effective lobbying is ultimately a question of authenticity: "Well, I think what makes a good lobbyist nowadays is that they have to be absolutely authentic." Athanasios Angelopoulos adds genuineness or sincerity: "You have to be authentic (.) genuine." Only those who behave as they really are, can expect to be believed. In terms of communication, it is important to avoid the impression of pretence or manipulation.

Beyond that, lobbyists attempt to solve the problem of credibility by adopting a professional habitus that draws on the professional capitals listed above. In factual terms, thematic expertise plays an important role, because only those who provide useful and reliable information, analyses, or proposals can build and maintain credibility. Bastien Bertrand has already

been quoted as saying that NGOs must strictly abide by the facts in order to remain credible. Also Valerie Vincent reasserts this with regard to economic interests: "You just can't bullshit your way through. So you need to bring in the right people." – which is why, in case of doubt, it is better to let experts from within the organisation hold meetings if the matter requires it, rather than jeopardising your own credibility.

After all, credibility also depends on personal persuasiveness. Lobbyists must provide credible assurances that they personally endorse the information, analyses, or demands that have been put forward. Their interventions are only useful if they effectively communicate the concerns, issues, and values of the stakeholders they represent. However, this will only succeed if the lobbyists are able to personally advocate these convictions. For Frank Fischer, who was an MEP, this feeling comes quite quickly: "You can sense in conversation, also as a member of parliament, whether someone's really behind what they're saying. Or if they're just a gob for hire." Particularly consultancy staff seem to have a credibility problem, as the business model consists precisely in representing a variety of clients, which means that there is a real risk of being perceived as a "gob for hire." It is not without reason that Olof Olsson, who works for such a company, argues that his own work should not be exposed to the complete arbitrariness of the interests represented. "The credibility is: to be consistent in what you say. You can't work for the tobacco industry and for the anti-tobacco the next day. And I think, personally, I have my ideas, I have my convictions."

Personal convictions are important for the credibility of EU affairs professionals because they signal sincerity and authenticity. Although specialist expertise is a necessary requirement for a good lobbyist, it is by no means the only one. Lobbyists must be able to derive demands from their expertise and represent these politically. Convictions are crucial in this respect, because they free one's own work from the impression of indifference and commit it to specific issues and demands. Following this line of reasoning, there is a direct connection between credibility, authenticity, and advocacy. Credibility and authenticity emanate from advocatory charisma or leadership, because the latter signal personal commitment to a cause. The importance of this habitus is understandable when considering the occupational dynamic dominating the field: Lobbyists are hired to represent interests. The professional habitus helps override the profane employment relation between the lobbyists and their clients by a personal appearance that indicates personal commitment to a higher mission. In this sense, advocatory leadership is a crucial ingredient of professionalism, as Olof Olsson puts it:

> So you need to be very well informed, you have to develop your networks, all that. On top, you have to have a personality. [...] The personality, the capacity to have a leadership, the capacity to try to convince people. The capacity to take a risk. And to be moved or to be pushed by your convictions. This is very, very important.

All in all, the accounts of EU affairs professionals prove that concern for one's own reputation is a driving force behind professionalism in the field. Although the day-to-day work of lobbyists is aimed at achieving political influence, the underlying aim is to maintain their own reputation. Personal reputation is extremely important for professional distinction, because this symbolic asset separates the wheat from the chaff. There are many well-informed and networked EU affairs professionals, but only those with a good reputation will be invited to important consultations. And only they are among those who are being heard and taken seriously.

6.4.3 Being one of us: belonging

The second symbolic asset that is highly valued in the profession is the achievement of being recognised as part of the European project, as "one of us." This asset is not something that European lobbyists can control themselves, as it is conferred. However, they certainly actively try to promote such a conferral. In this regard, there are two groups of people who can bestow such a recognition. First, peer recognition plays a role. Acceptance as part of the same Brussels world is granted or denied by the EU affairs professionals among themselves. Conflicting factual stances do not necessarily preclude mutual recognition. On the contrary, the employees of the NGOs and the industry agree that the respective opposite side presents itself in a professional manner and therefore also has considerable influence on European politics. In this respect, they take each other seriously as political opponents, which means that they enter into a relationship of mutual professional recognition based on conflict. Second, the recognition of belonging expressed by the staff of the EU institutions is even more important. This recognition must also be earned and deserved. In this regard, the relationship work described above is crucial. Personal demeanour is not only important to build professional reputation; it is also a precondition for individual EU affairs professionals to be recognised by members of the EU institution as part of the politically relevant circles.

However, the question of belonging can only be properly understood if one considers that it is not only about individual relationships but also about collective forms of recognition. As has already been described, the relationship work revolves around building and expanding entire networks. Only these networks allow social relationship capital to grow and accumulate. Furthermore, these networks also have a symbolic added value: the mutual recognition of belonging to the wider circle of those entrusted with the task of shaping Europe. In this respect, Brussels plays an important role, as it is where the EU-specific networks are based. Those who wish to join these networks should have professional roots in Brussels. This is the case for many lobbyists, as a look at their career stations and trajectories has shown (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3). Professional experience in the EU institutions in Brussels is not only common but also conducive to career development. Many lobbyists can

therefore credibly claim that they were and still are part of the circle of those who shape Europe. Athanasios Angelopoulos explicitly mentions this recognition through affiliation:

> Having been an intern in the Commission, having worked in Parliament, having worked in the Council, in a way, I'm regarded as one of them. I know the language. I know what they appreciate. I can put myself in their position.

Athanasios Angelopoulos sees this sense of belonging as a primarily strategic benefit because it makes his work more effective: His professional insider experience gives him a special ability to assume roles that make it easier for him to influence the Commission's positions. Other lobbyists who have not spent time in the EU institutions will have to build up networks in order to prove that they belong. It is no coincidence that trust becomes more important in these cases. Anyone who was not professionally socialised within the EU will have to build up trust in order to merit inclusion in the wider circle of participants. Maxime Moreau, for example, explains that his presence on the ground has mainly practical reasons. This allows him to attend many events where the "people in the public eye" are present and can be approached. But the practical benefit is also followed by a human one: "So I would say the proximity, the human contact helps building trust, building a good flow of information." As he explains in an already quoted passage, newcomers have a harder time in this respect, as years of preparation and networking are necessary before work can be done efficiently.

Belonging is a scarce symbolic asset conferred on those who have earned a place in the Brussels world. However, the descriptions show that belonging is also related to social and ideational factors. On the one hand, the socio-structural background of the EU affairs professionals decides whether they are accepted into the wider circle of those who shape Europe. The EU recruits its top staff (e.g. Commission officials or MEPs) mainly from privileged groups with academic educational capital, and a similar social background can also be observed among those working for interest groups. As shown in Section 6.1, the overwhelming majority of EU affairs professionals hold a university degree. Despite the wide range of fields of study, respondents largely agree that their current occupation corresponds to this level of education (see Section 7.1). EU affairs are therefore regarded as knowledge work that requires academic qualifications. This is due to the knowledge requirements described: Respondents stress that their work requires thematic expertise or know-how as well as an in-depth knowledge of the structure and functioning of the EU. However, it must be assumed that the dominance of academics has a strategic reason. EU affairs professionals should have an academic habitus that allows them to talk to members of the EU institutions at socio-structural eye level.

This socio-structural kinship is socially desired in the professional field. It is indeed telling that the lobbyists unanimously emphasise two aspects

as particularly important when describing their personal biography: their academic and their international background. As shown in Section 5.3, some professionals report that they have studied and obtained degrees abroad. Other interviewees refer to short-term study visits, internships, or work placements abroad or to mobility due to family and upbringing. All interviewees mentioned internationality as an important aspect of their personal background, with many keen to stress the international nature of their academic education. EU affairs professionals therefore see themselves as part of an international academic community that feels sufficiently qualified and motivated to help shape the destiny of Europe.

This habitus manifests itself above all in professional ambitions. Valerie Vincent already emphasised that it is very important for her professionally to be accepted as a discussion partner by the really important people in key positions. Geert van Gelder described how he had invested a lot of energy in becoming part of the small scene that will be included in discussions in his policy area in upcoming legislative procedures. However, these professional ambitions also coincide with internalised personal aspirations. Dominique Dubois, for example, had stated in an already quoted passage (Section 5.3) that the special attraction of the work lies in the "certain fascination" of being able to help shape political rules that "impact 520 or 510 million Europeans." The special attraction of the work is therefore the proximity to power. Olof Olsson was also gripped by this fascination, because his desire is to be part of the really important insider circles.

> Yesterday in Strasbourg, I was part of a very, very small group of top people. And I was paid for doing that and was saying myself: my goodness, normally I will be pleased to pay. (laughs). And also I am curious to meet people, to be in (.) to be in, if you wish, was my motivation.

To be part of these small but powerful circles is not only professionally necessary but also personally desirable. In order to achieve this goal, lobbyists must do a good job and present themselves as authentic and credible. On top of that, they have to invest a lot of themselves, as Geert van Gelder described. Those who want to belong, however, must above all have the professional and personal ambition to talk to the top people at eye level. Athanasios Angelopoulos, for example, describes the work of the corporate representation he heads as follows: "I lead my small team as a mini-mini-mini perm rep of [company name] in Brussels. It's comparable to a German or a Dutch permanent representation."

The company's lobby office is equated with a state representation because the standards must be comparable. As the representative of a global corporation with tens of thousands of employees, he maintains links with the EU institutions and national governments, which are similar to diplomatic relations between countries. He therefore sees his company as a partner of state institutions: "I'd like to present [company name] as a reliable, constructive

partner, a company that wants to team up with MEPs, Commission, Member States."

In this sense, lobbying is not dissimilar to economic diplomacy, as its work involves coordinating and negotiating with the representatives of the EU institutions and Member States. One of Geert van Gelder's main tasks is to arrange meetings with the diplomatic representations of his company's home country in other European and non-European countries.

> I connect all the time. I'm connecting our ambassadors to [company name] colleagues and advisers. On Friday, I had a meeting with our new ambassador in Iraq and I briefed him on [company name]. […] Next week, I will receive the new [country name] ambassador to Washington.

As a lobbyist, he can talk to members of parliament, Commissioners, or ambassadors on an equal footing because, as the company's representative, he acts on the direct instructions of the board of directors and therefore has a quasi-diplomatic status. But talking to the really important people at the top is not only the privilege of a lobbyist who, as the representative of an important company, has the necessary mandate for such a representation. He himself must meet this professional expectation: His demeanour must be restrained, reliable, and constructive – essentially diplomatic. Pushy, brash behaviour is unwelcome and ineffective; rather, what is needed is well-prepared and carefully cultivated conversation, followed by a friendly reminder, such as an email with the words: "Dear [name], great to talk to you, and hereby the link to this and that." Such an approach would leave the right impression on the other person: "Well, he's a nice guy and professional. I mean, he is."

This unobtrusive strategy is effective because it is based on the equality of social status and habitus. According to Athanasios Angelopoulos, a brash approach will not be effective, as it will be perceived by top political figures as presumptuous (neither "nice" nor "professional"). But even a restrained approach could be dismissed as irrelevant, unless the relationship between the two sides turns out to be solid. It is the engaging nature of the social relationship among socially equal "partners" that lends the necessary emphasis to restrained interventions. This is the reason why leadership emerges as an important element of the aspired recognition of belonging. Recognition as a truly "nice and professional" person is attributed to leadership because it signals the ambition to shape policy. Ordinary lobbyists represent interests, positions, and demands. But they are only taken seriously if they have the personal calibre to persuade the other side of their own ideas. True personalities have the ambition to actively shape the destiny of Europe. They negotiate at eye level with the EU institutions because they represent their own convictions, which are on a par with those of the political decision makers. Such a professional recognition is only granted to those who credibly present themselves as part of Europe's political elite through their social background, their career, and their personal demeanour.

This ultimately elitist claim contains not only a socio-structural component but also a second, ideational component, which is just as important for recognising belonging. This is because the circle of relevant actors defines itself through a common mission: shaping Europe. The interviews show that this mission has also been internalised by European lobbyists. Moreover, they also seem to share such identification with the European project. Those who claim belonging for themselves must adopt this accepted norm and represent it in a credible manner.

Such identification by no means excludes criticism of the EU. On the contrary, many interviewees are dissatisfied with the European Treaties, the institutional structure of the EU, European legislation, or individual political decisions (such as Olof Olsson, Bastien Bertrand, or Kate Kavanagh). Particularly representatives of industry are sceptical about Europe because of the many regulations pursued by the EU, especially the Commission. Lorenzo Lombardi even perceives this regulatory frenzy as a cancer that is spreading to more and more areas of life, which is why it is necessary to formulate a new vision for the EU. Jeremy Jones, too, stresses that non-regulation must be a real option when the EU institutions engage in consultations. But this criticism does not seem to affect fundamental convictions. "Enthusiasm is then perhaps a little overtaken by reality," as Stefan Schneider puts it. "But at heart, one remains a committed European." With this generalising phrase ("one remains"), he already indicates that this is a collectively shared conviction. He elaborates on this observation in the course of his interview. In his opinion, European lobbyists are behind the European idea, despite all the criticism: "In principle I can say that all lobbyists are essentially committed Europeans. I think that if you don't believe in the European [...] project as a whole, then it's difficult to be a lobbyist."

The statement is far-reaching, as Stefan Schneider sees "all lobbyists" as committed Europeans. And while he adds two qualifications ("in principle" and "essentially"), thus implying that lobbyists might have some reservations, he believes that ultimately they would defend the European project passionately if it came down to it. Other interviewees identify even more strongly with the European idea. Jeremy Jones speaks of a passionate relationship that has been ignited since he joined the European Parliament: "But I need to admit that when I was in here I in some way fell in love with the Union, if we can call it like that." Still others have developed a European sense of mission. This is the case of Rosalie Rousseau, who has been enthusiastic about the European project since her youth. As she has already explained, she is therefore frustrated by the poor level of public knowledge and the lack of education among today's students. For her this is "a huge education deficit," which she finds alarming, even dangerous from a Euro-political point of view. She refers to the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016 to illustrate the political consequences of such an educational deficit. She has made it her personal mission to educate and inspire people about the EU and its importance. What is remarkable, however, is that she calls this project a joint one: "There

you're really fighting windmills and then suddenly we're in the same boat as the EU institutions." European lobbyists may often be at odds with the EU institutions, but when it comes to the future of the EU, they are all in the same boat.

This desire for "more Europe" enjoys widespread approval among the lobbyists interviewed. Many interviews indicate that EU affairs professionals, including those in industry (such as Jeremy Jones and Norbert Naumann), have a great deal of enthusiasm for European integration and the EU. For this reason, many of the interviewees see the need for a pro-European agenda and some criticise that European politics is overly dominated by national particularisms. They bemoan the national mindset and consequently the politics of the Member States. Bastien Bertrand, for example, complains that the French are far removed from the "European spirit." And Kate Kavanagh demands a more convincing, pro-European narrative: "Then Member States would be less anti-EU, and much more (.) what's the word (.) I guess willing to negotiate in good faith."

Anyone who wants to belong to the extended circle of those who shape Europe must represent the common European ideals. According to the interviews, however, this pro-European attitude also has direct consequences for one's own lobbying work, because pro-European convictions and words must be followed by deeds. Lobbying must be based on constructive cooperation in order to be effective. With this, the interviewees indicate that there are red lines in the Brussels world of European politics which must not be crossed. These red lines are related to the political and normative foundations of the EU: Those who question the sense and purpose of the EU discredit themselves. It is therefore risky for European lobby groups to question the fundamental necessity of European regulations, even if interest groups in the respective policy field pursue such ambitions.

The norm of constructive cooperation in no way prevents fundamental criticism and obstructive lobbying. The interview material provides many examples of this. Olof Olsson, for example, reports on his earlier achievements when he succeeded in largely preventing strict regulation of his industry. Kate Kavanagh also explains that her NGO is currently pursuing such a goal. The position on an ongoing legislative procedure would ultimately amount to completely banning certain industrial practices (and thus an entire subsector). The efforts of her association are ultimately aimed at such a ban, although the Commission would like to see a regulation to that effect.

Kate Kavanagh emphasises that her association is taking the risk of manoeuvring itself onto the sidelines with these obstruction tactics. "So there's a fine line that we're walking with the Commission to kind of support their efforts a little bit." Even though her association is opposed to regulation, as a lobbyist she faces the problem of "kind of" and "a little bit" "supporting" the Commission. However, the conditions for constructive participation are not the best, as the NGO is demanding the strictest requirements, which would ultimately make the operation of the corporate facilities concerned

unprofitable. Yet she cannot make such a demand, so as not to be branded a covert obstructionist. Although Kate Kavanagh can understand the (destructive) position of her NGO, it does not make her work any easier.

Other lobbyists also see the cooperation requirement as a given. Dominique Dubois voices this when he emphasises that his NGO should not be considered one of the notorious naysayers: "And we certainly see our role as that of a constructive partner. That we specifically try to improve things in the legislative process and get results. And you can't do that by saying no to everyone. That's bad." The work of the Commission must therefore be both criticised and praised, without crossing a red line: "But we don't just reject the whole process outright." This implies that lobbyists support the general approach, while adding specific recommendations, as Stefan Schneider explains: "On the whole, we basically follow the Commission's way of thinking, so to speak, but there are special areas where we are able to make a difference through our position in Europe." The work of the corporate representation therefore revolves around the European thinking to which the Commission, as guardian of the European Treaties, is committed, and to which the interest group can make valuable contributions, due to its own position in Europe.

The principle of cooperation is closely linked to the recognition of belonging. Those who take a proactive role in shaping Europe also have a better chance of being seen as active players. Anyone who defies the cooperation requirement risks losing their status. Valerie Vincent addresses this issue when she describes the problem that her employer puts on her: Her company stipulates positions and demands that she does not consider feasible. They also imply a realistic risk of being excluded from the circle of actors who are listened to. Her description illustrates that the relevant circle of stakeholders does not consist solely of the Commission's members, but of a broader circle of actors relevant to the policy area:

> Just by being here, you understand what's possible and what's not, you know? If (.) sometimes my headquarters say, yeah, we should support this. I'm like, Are you crazy? I mean, this is totally against, you know, the political field here. If we say this, they're going to send us to hell. And it's only by being here. It's not only about the informal contact. It's really about understanding the difference between what's doable and what's not.

Radical positions are counterproductive, because in this case they are contrary to what is politically feasible. Above all, however, they carry the risk of being excluded from the "political field." In this respect, Valerie Vincent paints the picture of a hermetic field that only knows insiders or outsiders and sends deviants "to hell." Unrealistic demands jeopardise working relations not only with the Commission. In such cases, belonging to the extended network specific to a particular policy field is also at stake.

At organisational level, political differences between interest groups and the EU institutions are part of everyday life. However, at personal level, these antagonisms and conflicts cause serious turmoil, as the professional level is characterised by a cooperation requirement that determines whether EU affairs professionals belong to the relevant circles. Professionalism in this case implies the ability to mitigate conflicts of interest at organisational level between one's own lobby group and the EU institutions at the professional level and to transform them into constructive cooperation. Pinelópi Papadakis reports that political differences are omnipresent in Brussels – but "in principle everyone in Brussels knows, of course: I'll see all these people again." Ultimately, no one wants to alienate others in such a way that they "no longer work with me" and "no longer accept my invitations." It is thus essential to avoid "not being invited anymore," and that is the reason why everyone tries to treat each other "a bit harmoniously."

On the whole, the descriptions show that the Brussels world can be regarded as a spiritual community. It is recruited from the ranks of staunch Europeans who are working to shape a common Europe. At the heart of this circle are the staff of the European Commission, because it is this institution that safeguards the European Treaties. The extended circle includes not only the staffs of all other European institutions but also that of the interest groups. Being part of this circle means identifying with the overall project and providing constructive support for the regulatory intentions and legislative procedures. It is primarily the EU Commission that decides who belongs to the circle of those who shape Europe. At least this is how many individual accounts can be interpreted. However, the findings also suggest that there are specific regulatory networks in Brussels, made up of the staff of the EU institutions and the relevant interest groups, which jointly decide on whether someone belongs and may participate – or not. Belonging seems to be reserved above all for EU affairs professionals who, because of their socio-structural habitus, can negotiate at eye level with the EU institutions and, because of their pro-European attitudes, are included in the circle of persons entrusted with the European project.

6.5 Conclusion: the professional closure of a heterogeneous occupational field

In the occupational field of European lobbying, the question of the attributes of good work is not so much answered by references to formal qualifications, abstract theories, or recognised models, methods, or techniques. The focus is on professional practice itself. This practical orientation is remarkable in its clarity. Given the almost universal academisation of the occupational field, one would have expected that references to theoretical foundations, proven methods, and evidence-based practices of influencing policy would play a greater role. This expectation is formulated at least by the sociology

of professions. The academisation of occupational groups is in many cases accompanied by a scientification of occupational activities, discourses, and self-perceptions, as universities become an important station and a central reference point for professionalisation (Larson 1977; Evetts et al. 2012; Mieg and Evetts 2018).

Despite this observation, the analyses in this chapter confirm that this occupational field has been fully seized by academisation, thus corroborating a process that was documented among the ranks of business interests (Laurens 2018: 89–94; Coen et al. 2021: 154f.; Michon 2022), but was not yet validated for the other interest sectors (see Michel 2005a; Lindellee and Scaramuzzino 2020). The data presented here testify that academic credentials have become a norm among the staffs of interest groups and consultancies across the field, and this means that EU affairs is contracting around an academic elite. Most professionals hold postgraduate university credentials, and this trend has been accomplished among the younger cohorts, almost all of whom have completed academic studies. Fields of study are increasingly streamlined, because the social sciences and European studies are on the rise, thus increasingly marginalising other fields of study.

This academisation seems to promote the idea that EU affairs builds on specialised skills and higher knowledge that are not accessible to everyone. Those working in this field share the view that there are professional skills, tools, or methods that prove their value and effectiveness, and can be learned and applied. However, the unanimous conviction is that the professional work cannot be reduced to these tools or methods alone. European lobbyists agree that good work has to prove itself in practice and that good lobbyists ultimately have to prove themselves in the professional field, in competition with others. Those striving for professional excellence thus have to gather practical experiences and develop practice-related skills and competences. The mastery lies in the practical application of methods and tools, and only in this sense can one speak of an artisan "art of lobbying" (van Schendelen 2013).

The professionalisation of EU affairs is thus a process that builds on the formation and reproduction of shared knowledge, that is, a converging set of professional skills and routines that acquire a binding quality for those accessing the field and claiming professional excellence (Larson 1977: 40–47; Evetts et al. 2012; Saks 2012; Büttner et al. 2015). The professionalisation of the occupational field can therefore be regarded as a process of closure. Such closure cannot start at the outer fringes of the occupational field, because European lobbying is not a field of work where access is limited by educational certificates and/or state regulations. The professional title is not officially protected, and except for a partial registration obligation, the activity is not regulated by qualification requirements and legal standards. Self-regulation by professional associations is poorly developed; it is confined to questions of professional practice and excludes the aspect of access to the professional

field. Although academic education certificates are gaining ground in practice, and although social science courses are becoming a popular route to Brussels, this does not preclude other educational paths, careers, and career changers.

For these reasons, professional closure can only be placed within the professional field. First, professionalism depends on (many years of) practical work in the field and (many years of) physical presence in the Brussels arena. Or to put it another way: Professionalism develops through professional socialisation in practice. Moreover, the basic skills of European lobbying can be learned, but this toolbox does not define professionalism itself. Rather, it is based on the acquisition and accumulation of professional capital (contacts, expertise, insider knowledge, and organisational resources). The scope and value of these professional assets is defined by the length of professional practice, as contact networks and insider knowledge can be continuously expanded over time. Or to put it another way: Seniority is a decisive factor of greater professionalism. However, true professionalism goes beyond these assets, as it is based on professional recognition and reputation. Greater professionalism is linked to a professional habitus that signals expertise, credibility, and leadership skills. In socio-structural terms, it is an academic habitus that goes hand in hand with a pro-European attitude. Insiders have thereby internalised a professional habitus that represents an elitist claim and grants them a place in the inner circle of those who shape Europe (Poehls 2009).

European lobbyists largely agree on what constitutes good professional work, and therefore success in the field. The search for driving forces behind the professionalisation of EU affairs has shown that factors related to the organisational field of interest groups are relevant. Differences between sectors had an impact, because employees of commercial consultancies and business interests are more supportive of the idea of a specific set of skills and experiences, when compared to NGOs and trade unions, and they are more often convinced that this professional knowledge is distant from those not initiated. These dividing lines, however, are less consequential than the core–periphery relations within the occupational field itself. The driving group behind the professionalisation of EU affairs consists of high-ranking and well-paid professionals who are located at the core of the field, that is, professionals with lobbying-intensive jobs and regular contacts to the EU institutions. The professional closure of the field thus follows the logic of class distinction, promoted by an academic elite with leadership ambitions.

The professional recognition that EU affairs professionals strive to achieve is precarious. The concern of losing credibility and reputation is rampant in the professional field and shows how fiercely contested symbolic recognition is. Here, political differences in the organisational field have an impact on professional practice. At the working level, the competition between interest groups translates into a competition for professional recognition. It is not uncommon for European lobbyists to criticise or scandalise the work of the other side, which is why political dissent also has negative consequences for the professional recognition of those working in the field. However, the fight

for professional recognition also has a collective dimension, as the profession is confronted with public mistrust that affects the field of activity as a whole. European lobbying is exposed to a discourse of legitimacy that puts the profession under permanent pressure to justify itself. This is why professional recognition is inseparable from the efforts of employees to defend their work – and, where applicable, the profession as a whole – as an activity worthy of recognition. The professionalisation of European lobbying is hence also characterised by discourses of legitimacy and the justifications put forward in the field.

7 The legitimacy of European lobbying

Divisions and conflicts of a political field

European lobbying is under public scrutiny. Criticism is levelled at the high number of lobby groups, the multitude of lobbying activities, the improper influences, and the lack of transparency of contacts and discussions. EU affairs professionals are fully aware of these public criticisms, but try to respond by imbuing their professional activity with the integrity and legitimacy that might lend it public acceptance. Normative and ethical issues thus play a considerable role within the profession and its acclaimed professionalisation. These issues are not only related to professional codes of conduct and transparency regulations applicable in the European Union (EU) (Bunea 2017; Năstase and Muurmans 2018; Bunea and Gross 2019), but also to more fundamental questions about the acceptability and legitimacy of professional lobbying (Offerlé 2005; Michel 2013). European lobbyists are thus engaged in establishing their profession as an ethically acceptable and responsible métier (Bauer 2017; Barron and Skountridaki 2022).

These attempts face opposition, not only from outside the field but also within. In fact, while EU affairs is a fully fledged occupation sharing specialised knowledge, lobbyists seem to have different opinions about the acceptability and legitimacy of lobbying, and the normative and ethical standards that should apply (Michel 2013; Bunea and Gross 2019). The field seems to be structured along a dividing line between business interests and civic groups, because the former clearly endorse professionalised lobbying, while many NGOs and social movement organisations defend a contentious and advocatory approach that ultimately has an anti-professional impetus (Offerlé 2005; Michel 2013; della Porta and Parks 2013).

These indications suggest that European lobbying is an occupational group that is poorly integrated in terms of shared attitudes and values when compared to occupational characteristics and professional expertise, given the inherent disagreements about the acceptability of professionalism and the legitimacy of lobbying. However, empirical insights are inconclusive, particularly in regard to the magnitude of the controversy and the role of opposition within the field. The question as to whether professionalisation has also led to consistent agreement on the value of professionalism and the legitimacy of professional lobbying needs still to be answered.

This chapter aims to shed light on this question by engaging with a systematic examination of professional attitudes and beliefs. It will expose the extent to which EU affairs professionals congregate around the value of professionalism and agree about the public acceptance and political legitimacy of European lobbying. It will identify the lines of dissent and identify those occupational groups that are particularly outspoken in promoting the professionalisation of EU affairs. The focus will then turn to the discourse about the political legitimacy of lobbying among the professionals themselves in order to ascertain the divisional lines, the discursive strategies employed by the contending parties, and the effect this has on the professionalism inherent in the field.

7.1 The professionalist ethos: a common mission?

European lobbying is professionally organised work. But does this mean that those working in the field share a sense of professionalism and also pursue a common professionalisation project? Such an assumption can be deduced from the sociology of professions, which has already established repeatedly that occupational groups develop a professionalist ethos the more they set out to claim a social area of responsibility for themselves (Freidson 1986; Evetts et al. 2012). In cognitive terms, this ethos assumes that an occupational group possesses special knowledge and a repertoire of actions that are indispensable for solving social tasks (Collins 1987; Murphy 1988; Harrits and Larsen 2021). In normative terms, professionalism is committed to an orientation towards the common good (Parsons 1968; Abbott 1988), which tethers the mandate of professional work to the well-being of all and thus links professional interest to a social mandate. This ethos of professionalism is particularly prevalent in the knowledge-based service professions and is especially commonplace in senior management positions because this elitist ideology helps justify leadership claims (Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Evetts 2008 and 2013).

All in all, the literature is quite unanimous that professionalism as a value and ethos is indispensable for the legitimisation of professional mandates, the more the professions aim to control the field of work. In this way, they seek to establish themselves as an autonomous sphere in relation to the market and the state, as research has been able to show clearly in the example of the liberal professions (Freidson 1970; Larkin 1983; Abbott 1988; Burrage and Torstendahl 1990; Hanlon 1999). However, it has been rightly pointed out that the days of powerful professions are over. Firstly, the state regulates service sectors that are relevant to the common good – first by expanding public services, then by creating numerous quasi-markets. Secondly, labour markets are subject to concentration processes that have established the employment relationship within formal (large) organisations as the dominant type of employment (Reed 1996). The autonomy of professional groups is consequently limited from several sides (Oppenheimer 1973; Derber and Schwartz

1991; Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011). Under these circumstances, professional groups have had to change their approach. Particularly among occupations in the area of knowledge-intensive services and managerial responsibilities, contradictory requirements have become more imperative, as employees have to reconcile organisational and managerial principles of control and efficiency with professional aspirations towards autonomy and quality. This is forcing occupational groups to develop more hybrid forms of professionalism (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008; Noordegraaf 2015), and to proactively enact their professional action as knowledgeable and authoritative in their immediate working environment and the larger public sphere (Noordegraaf 2020).

This requirement applies to the field of EU affairs, particularly in regard to lobbying, as its acceptance is contested both within the occupational field itself as well as in the mass media public. This contentiousness is not only related to the political legitimacy of lobbying, as will be discussed in later sections of this chapter (see Sections 7.2 and 7.3). It already affects the acceptance of a professionalisation of political interest representation in terms of salaried full-time employment and the imperatives of specialised knowledge. The previous chapters have provided several indications that such an acceptance is widely diffused, particularly in the core area of European lobbying, but more contested towards the edges. It can therefore be assumed that the attitudes towards professionalism as a value or ethos are divided and that these fault lines stand in the way of the development of a common professionalist ethos.

This assumption needs to be verified empirically. With this in mind, there are some questions to be answered. Do respondents perceive European interest representation as a common field of activity in which employees of different employers are involved as professional equals – as peers? Do the professionals share the idea of a common professional expertise and qualification? And do they pursue a common, professional mission? In order to be able to answer these questions, EU affairs professionals were presented with a series of statements designed to survey different dimensions of the professionalist ethos. While data on some of these statements were already used in earlier chapters, the statements will now be examined in their entirety.

- I attach great importance to discussing and exchanging views with other public affairs professionals.
- I often exchange views with other public affairs professionals who work in another sector than I.
- The requirements of my current position correspond to my level of education and skills.
- It makes sense to regularly attend trainings in the field of European public affairs.
- European public affairs professionals need a professional association to represent their interests.
- I could easily switch to any other sector and could do lobbying/public affairs just as effectively as I do now.

- Mainly, anybody can do a good job as public affairs professional.
- I did not actively aim to work in lobbying; it just so happened rather by chance.

These statements help determine the extent to which respondents define the field of EU affairs as a common professional field. High agreement scores on the first six questions indicate that respondents view public affairs as a cross-issue and cross-sector activity: It allows for collegial exchange and professional movement, it necessitates continuous professional development, and it calls for professional representation. Contrasting statements were included in order to also be able to survey aspects that argue against a decidedly professional ethos. This includes two statements: Public affairs was not one of the respondents' career aspirations and can be pursued by anyone.

As can be seen from Figure 7.1, the agreement ratings vary greatly. The statements were ordered according to the degree of agreement. For better comparability, the statement on the absence of prerequisites for one's own activity (anyone can do a good job) was recoded, which is why the high values now indicate that the activity is reserved for insiders. That is, it cannot be done by everyone.

The highest agreement ratings are given to the first three statements that associate public affairs with the respondent's own expertise. The respondents thus underline that they do knowledge work. They emphasise that this work corresponds to their own qualifications (in the majority of cases an academic education) and also that not everyone can do it. Public affairs requires a special knowledge that is not accessible to all, but which is shared by other professionals in the field. The high agreement rate for the exchange between colleagues also signals that there is a common knowledge in the professional field that makes such an exchange possible. It shows that sharing experiences with other professionals is important to the respondents, possibly because it helps them improve their own work. There is also strong agreement with the statement that the career path steered EU affairs professionals into this field of activity by chance. However, this entry into the profession obviously does not diminish the conviction that the professional field has a specific special knowledge and repertoire of actions. Even those who did not aim for the profession had to acquire this knowledge in the course of their work, as was shown in the explanations on career paths and professional socialisation (Sections 5.3 and 6.3).

The next two statements receive less agreement. When asked whether public affairs is a cross-sectoral professional field, most respondents tend to be undecided. The extreme positions of strong agreement or disagreement are only weakly occupied. The majority of respondents therefore temper the assessment that a professional change across sectoral boundaries is possible and that collegial exchange is common. Nevertheless, approval is slightly higher (41 per cent and 42 per cent respectively) than disapproval (32 per cent and 37 per cent respectively).
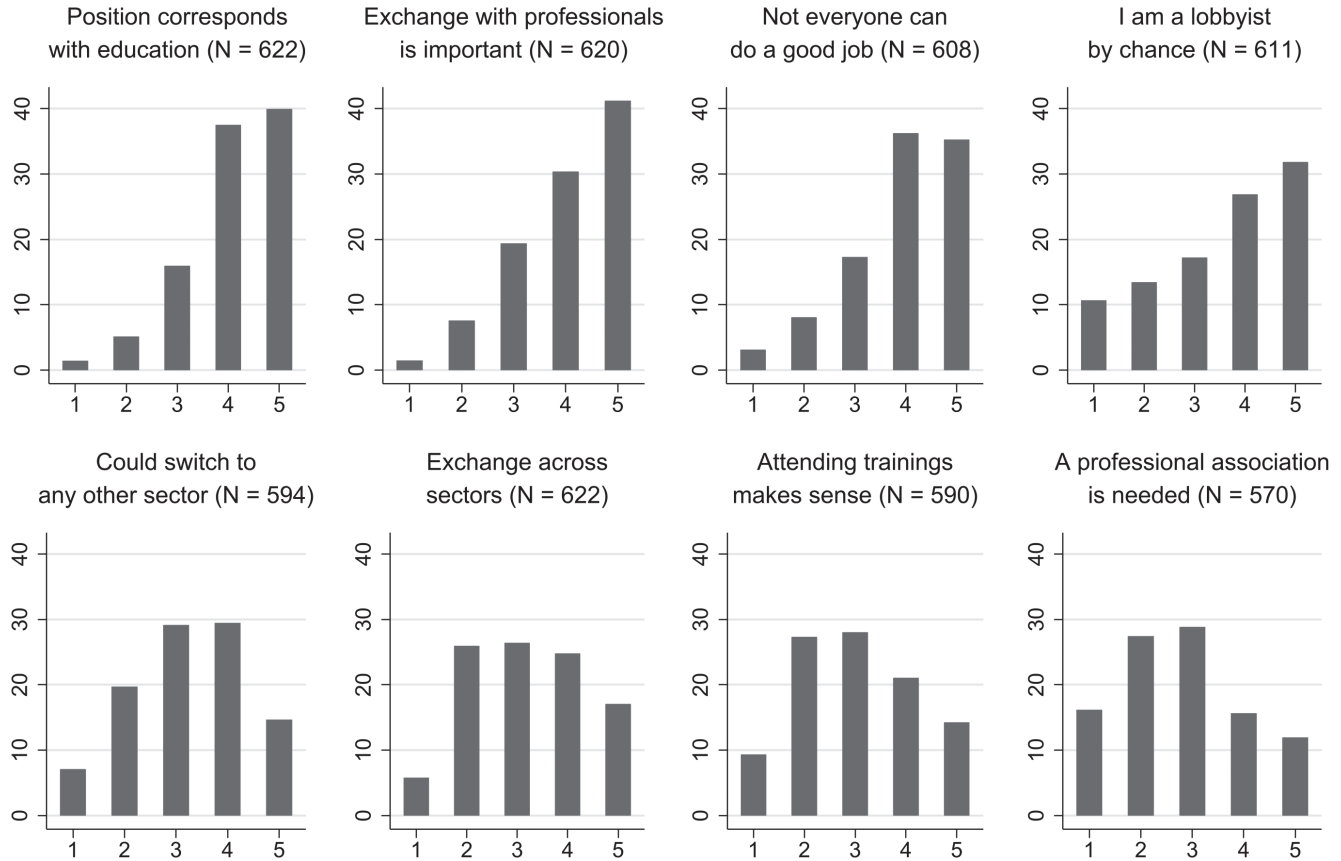
Figure 7.1 Professionalism, agreement in per cent – (1) "totally disagree" / (5) "totally agree".

The number of affirmative responses drops noticeably once respondents start talking about a professional organisation. Firstly, many are not sure whether it makes sense for them professionally to attend further training in the field of public affairs. In fact, only a few respondents have taken advantage of such training, as evidenced by Table 7.1. But the general willingness is also low, because the group of those who find such offers useful is only 8 per cent larger than the group of those who have already attended such events. This may be due to the firm conviction of EU affairs professionals that the craft of European lobbying can only be learned and perfected in professional practice itself, as shown in Section 6.3. Overall, there seem to be reservations regarding professional development measures.

Lastly, the willingness to support a professional interest group is significantly lower. Only one in four respondents agrees with this demand; almost 40 per cent even reject it. These reservations correspond to the small number of members in professional associations. Seventy-three per cent of the respondents state that they are not members of a professional association. Those who are organised in a professional association mention only one association in more than half of the cases, and two or more associations in the rest of the cases. A look at the listed associations shows that in the vast majority of cases, the respondents are part of national professional associations that are related to their vocational background or field of professional activity, but have little relation to EU affairs. Mentioned are national or international professional associations in the field of law, auditing, chambers of commerce, agriculture and forestry, medicine and the medical professions, chemicals, technology, construction and engineering, journalism, and communication among many others. Only a handful of respondents report being members of one of the relevant European professional associations: the European Public Affairs Consultancies' Association (EPACA), the Association of Public Affairs Agencies (APAA), the Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union (AALEP), or the Society of European Affairs Professionals (SEAP). The readiness to support and even join professional associations at the European level is thus quite limited. However, it must be stressed that membership in (national) professional societies does

Table 7.1 "Have you attended any European Public Affairs training courses in the last 12 months?"

	N	*per cent*
none	486	74.65
exactly one training course	87	13.36
two or three	54	8.29
more than three	10	1.54
don't know	14	2.15
total	651	100.00

not seem to stand in the way of approval of the professional organisation of public affairs professionals. On the contrary, those organised in professional associations belong to the proponents of a European lobbying association: One in four respondents sees the need for corporate representation of EU affairs professionals and the same percentage mentions membership in a professional or trade association. In this respect, the dividing line seems to run more between those who are active in the professional community and those who are inactive.

All in all, the survey data show that central aspects of a professional ethos are widely shared. Many respondents believe that their work is based on special knowledge to which they have privileged access. Generally, they feel confident about moving to another sector, just as they are in contact with EU affairs professionals from other sectors. These convictions indicate a shared belief in one's own professionalism, but not a proactively pursued professional mission, as collective forms of organisation and representation of the profession's interests do not receive high affirmative scores.

Furthermore, it should be noted that not all respondents have internalised the professionalist beliefs in their entirety. As Figure 7.2 shows, the proportion of people who agree with the professionalist credo decreases as soon as three, five, or seven of the questions listed above are combined into index variables. The proportion of respondents who attribute special knowledge to public affairs (questions 1, 3, and 6) is still high, as 66 per cent tend to agree with this bundle of statements somewhat or totally. The proportion drops to 43 per cent as soon as respondents are asked if this special knowledge also enables a professional transfer and exchange across sectoral boundaries (including questions 2 and 7). Only 31 per cent voice, in addition to these convictions, their approval of a more concerted approach towards professionalisation, which is expressed in demands for a professional association and professional training measures (including questions 4 and 5). However, the group of those who have not internalised a professionalist ethos at all is
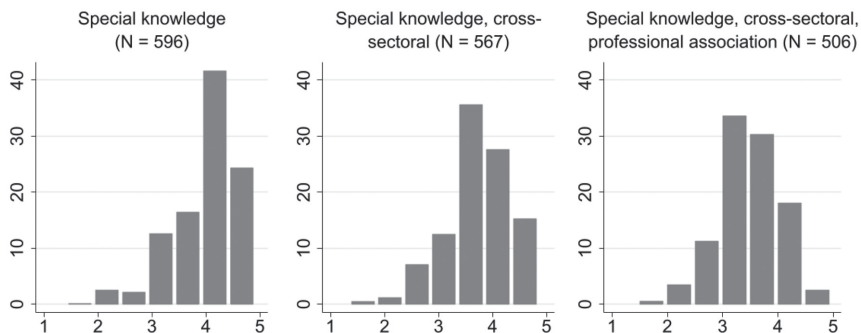
Figure 7.2 Agreement with the professionalist ethos in per cent.

rather small. The proportion of those who do not attribute any special knowledge to public affairs and limit the field of application to the various sectors is just 9 to 10 per cent. The response behaviour consequently converges more and more clearly to a normal distribution with weakly occupied extreme positions once all statements are taken into account.

This raises the question of which persons belong to the proponents of a professional ethos and which clearly distance themselves from it. To this end, the characteristics of the EU affairs professionals surveyed that increase the likelihood of agreement will be identified. For one, several assumptions can be made that can be derived from the insights into the differentiation and divisional lines within the field that have been developed so far. It can be assumed that professional convictions are particularly common among respondents working in industry-related sectors, while NGO workers are more critical of the professional claim of EU affairs. Professionalism would also have to be more strongly represented among those who belong to the core of the occupational field. For instance, respondents who are more frequently involved in lobbying activities in their work might have a stronger attachment to this professional ethos, as would those who maintain more regular contacts with representatives of the European Commission.

Furthermore, factors that have been identified by research by the sociology of professions could also exert an influence on professionalist convictions. In particular, it can be assumed that the socio-structural position – measured by personal income – increases the likelihood of having internalised a professionalist occupational ethos, since this elitist credo allows one to legitimise one's own occupational position and the social status attached to it. It must furthermore be checked whether high levels of agreement are possibly also related to age, gender, educational background, and national origin. In order to keep the number of variables included in the regression analysis manageable, only a few degree programmes and German citizenship alone were included, as these variables had proven relevant in previous analyses.

Professionalism is considered in its more demanding variant (see Figure 7.2, centre graph). It includes five statements: collegial exchange (in general and across sectors), professional qualification (qualification adequacy of the job and possibility of changing sectors), and a contrast statement (job cannot be done by everyone). Although the scale reliability test only yielded a moderate value (0.458), it makes sense to check which groups of people across all these statements stand out due to their particularly high level of agreement. For this purpose, a summary index was created, with values ranging from 1 to 5.

Table 7.2 summarises the results of the regression analyses, introducing the employers, the job-related, and person-related characteristics in stages, following assumptions introduced in previous chapters. The intensity of lobbying activities correlates with the professionalist ethos, thus showing that core lobbyists are among the adherents of this ethos. However, the presence in Brussels makes no difference, thus indicating that the exposure to the Brussels

Table 7.2 Professional ethos (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Employer (*ref.: Brussels only*)				
Consultancy	1.208*			1.161
Company	1.139			1.122
Trade association	1.075			1.007
Trade union	1.079			1.084
NGO	0.956			0.987
other	1.123			1.068
Lobbying activities (amount, *std.*)		1.115***		1.100***
Contacts to Commission (*std.*)		1.053*		1.038
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)		1.030		1.016
Professional position (*qualified activity*)				
Senior position			1.023	1.065
Executive position			0.962	1.056
Income (*< € 25,000*)				
€ 25,000–49,999			1.069	1.031
€ 50,000–99,999			1.130	1.133
€ 100,000 and more			1.316**	1.364**
Personal characteristics				
Gender (*male*)				0.980
Age (*std.*)				0.907**
Education (*BA and lower*)				
Postgraduate				0.937
PhD				1.187
Field of study				
European studies				1.061
Economics				1.057
Law				1.037
MINT				0.856*
Citizenship				
German				0.928
British				0.832
Italian				1.074
Eastern European				1.134
Constant	41.41***	42.92***	39.36***	38.09***
Observations	412	412	412	412
R^2	0.015	0.051	0.018	0.120

Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

bubble is not a stimulating factor. Employees of consultancies are more likely to hold professionalist beliefs when compared to the reference group, but the effect of the organisational membership is generally weak and not statistically significant when controlling for other factors. Regular contacts with representatives from the European Commission encourage respondents

to underline such an orientation, but also this correlation is negligible. In contrast, the probability increases with personal income, which means that the highest-earning respondents are most likely to have internalised the professionalist ethos. Finally, older EU affairs professionals do subscribe to the value of professionalism less overtly when compared to the younger generations, and the same is true for science graduates. The explanatory power of the models is low overall, which suggests that the ethos of professionalism is spread across the occupational field without being tied to a clearly delimitable occupational group.

Overall, the findings on professional attitudes demonstrate that the field of EU affairs work is underpinned by a belief in a professional ethos that refers primarily to a shared special knowledge. The great majority of respondents agree that their job cannot be done by everyone. At the same time, they emphasise that the professional work corresponds to their own (high) level of education. However, a common ethos of professionalism that goes beyond these general views has only taken root in the core area. The more staff are involved in lobbying, and the higher their socio-structural status in terms of income, the more clearly they support the professionalist credo. This professional ethos frays more and more at the edges of the field, obviously also because those working in these areas are also significantly less involved in lobbying, spend less time in Brussels, and are situated in lower-ranking professional positions. This finding is in line with the conclusions of earlier chapters, because the professionalist convictions largely follow the closure tendencies of the professional field. It is the established lobbyists who justify their professional position and their claim to professional validity with reference to the exclusivity of the profession-specific capital and habitus, and distinguish it from semi-professional or unprofessional work. However, this professionalism does not go unchallenged. Less professionalised sectors further removed from the Brussels establishment are characterised by greater scepticism. It can even be assumed that criticism of professionalised, indeed commercial interest representation is being voiced in this area.

7.2. Professional recognition: external and internal legitimacy

Occupational groups are dependent on public acceptance insofar as they claim income, prestige, and recognition and seek to develop and control a specific labour market for this purpose. Such a statement also applies to European lobbying. Nevertheless, European lobbyists face a particular problem of legitimacy. The aim and purpose of lobbying is to exert influence on political decision-making. It is true that interest groups can invoke constitutional provisions, such as freedom of expression or the right to form associations. No one can deny them the fundamental right to participate in political decision-making. This participation, however, raises questions of legitimacy, as the objective of interest groups to influence legislative procedures can collide with representative democratic principles as soon as the decisions of politicians

no longer follow their democratic mandate but bear the hallmarks of particular interests. Lobbyists do indeed represent certain social groups, act on their behalf, and are also accountable to them, which is why they have a particular legitimacy; but because of their particular issues and objectives, they only act in the public interest to a limited extent. Furthermore, lobbying is an easy target for scandalisation because it is associated with the dark side of power: Lobby groups are involved when political decisions are made behind closed doors in a tangle of personal contacts and cronyism, far from democratic checks and balances. The legitimacy of the profession is thus rather fragile and vulnerable to criticism.

EU affairs professionals are aware of this criticism, which is why it needs to be clarified how explicitly the question of acceptance and legitimacy is addressed within the professional field. On the one hand, the question of legitimacy is brought to the professional field from the outside. The European institutions should be mentioned here in particular, but also other actors (such as the mass media) who can indirectly or directly bestow or withdraw social recognition. On the other hand, the question of legitimacy is also addressed within the occupational field. It is at times a controversial issue because stakeholders have different views on what forms of advocacy should be considered appropriate or acceptable. Again and again, fundamental doubts are also raised about the mission, objectives, and functioning of European lobbying.

The survey data make it possible to examine this complex of issues. In terms of external recognition, respondents were asked to assess how much acceptance they receive from different institutional and societal actors. At the same time, they were asked to provide their own opinions on various issues that affect the legitimacy and regulation of their work, thus also providing data on internal legitimacy.

With regard to external acceptance, a questionnaire should be mentioned that has the following wording: "How would you generally describe your experiences related to contacts with representatives of the following groups? Do you feel fully accepted or do you encounter strong reservations?" Respondents were asked to rank their experiences on a five-point scale ranging from "fully accepted" (1) to "not at all accepted." Figure 7.3 summarises the results, listing the institutions and organisations concerned according to the degree of perceived acceptance. As can be seen from the data, the highest acceptance comes from consultants and industry stakeholders, the lowest from journalists and NGOs. Overall, however, the respondents perceive a generally high level of acceptance: Four out of five respondents assume acceptance by industry groups, companies, consultancies, the European Commission, and the European Parliament and as many as two-thirds report positive experiences with European agencies, law firms, or trade unions. However, it must be added that the total number of cases fluctuates, as many respondents are reluctant to assess the acceptance of some actors (especially law firms, trade unions, or consultancies), or their experience is not sufficient for such an assessment.
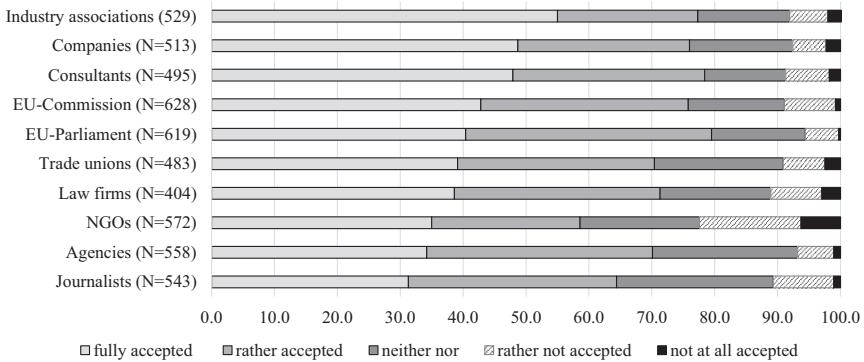
Figure 7.3 The perceived acceptance (in per cent).

Only a minority perceives a lack of acceptance. Especially among NGOs, many people do not feel at all accepted or somewhat accepted. The share is at 22 per cent. Furthermore, one in ten has experienced that journalists and law firms treat the respondent's work with reservation; and as many as one in six respondents has had mixed experiences. When the negative and mixed assessments are added up, between 20 and 30 per cent of EU affairs professionals seem to have experienced a lack of acceptance by their counterparts. In contrast, the majority of all respondents feel fully accepted or at least mostly taken seriously by important actors.

The different assessments raise the question of which factors perceived acceptance depends on. It can be assumed that the identified differentiation and fault lines of the occupational field become effective in the question of acceptance. It is possible that respondents report about external recognition differently depending on the sector in which they work, their professional background, their level of involvement in the Brussels world of European politics, and their personal characteristics. The regularity of contacts with representatives of the European Commission was not included because, as expected, it dominated the picture. To test the assumptions, a regression analysis was carried out to determine which groups of people feel most accepted by the different actors. The regression analysis took into account the explanatory factors that were already part of the modelling in the analysis of the professionalist ethos.

Table 7.3 summarises the results of respondents' experiences with the European Commission and Parliament, trade associations, and NGOs. In regard to the European Commission, the explanatory power of the model is very low, which shows that professionals with their different characteristics do not feel treated differently by their interlocutors. Sectoral differences play a minor role, as only consultants perceive less acceptance. The staffing level of the organisation, the intensity of lobbying activities, and most personal

Table 7.3 Perceived acceptance: EU institutions, trade associations, and NGOs (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	European Commission	*European Parliament*	*Trade associations*	*NGOs*
Employer (*ref.: Brussels only*)				
Consultancies	0.711	0.861	1.198	0.398***
Companies	1.028	0.926	1.366**	0.627**
Trade associations	0.949	0.862	1.456**	0.501***
Trade unions	0.670	1.207	0.989	1.134
NGOs	0.983	1.297*	0.454***	2.139***
other	1.171	1.336*	0.727	1.272
Size of the EU affairs staff (*std.*)	1.073	1.107**	1.022	1.072
Lobbying activities (amount, *std.*)	1.055	1.151***	1.093	1.078
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)	1.027	1.010	1.094	0.907
Professional position (*qualified activity*)				
Senior position	0.908	1.097	0.922	1.141
Executive position	0.916	1.218	1.035	1.291
Income (*< € 25,000*)				
€ 25,000–49,999	1.259	1.179	1.211	0.799
€ 50,000–99,999	1.325	1.185	1.371	0.654**
€ 100,000 and more	1.607**	1.378	1.585*	0.543**
Personal characteristics				
Gender (*male*)	0.937	0.901	0.808*	0.998
Age (*std.*)	1.081	1.043	0.904	1.186**
Field of study				
European studies	1.104	1.139	0.966	1.121
Economics	1.028	1.024	1.168	0.906
Law	1.053	0.997	1.094	1.047
MINT	1.062	0.942	0.812	0.879
Citizenship				
German	1.235**	1.173	1.160	1.164
British	1.150	0.954	0.833	1.158
Italian	1.006	1.026	0.777	0.895
Eastern European	0.703*	0.637**	1.090	0.715
Constant	52.23***	52.25***	67.63***	50.55***
Observations	435	429	371	397
R^2	0.078	0.113	0.193	0.175

Significance levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$ *(robust standard errors).*

characteristics are also negligible. The positive correlation with German citizenship indicates that national provenance might make a difference. It is in turn remarkable that the income situation correlates most clearly with acceptance. Converted into predictive margins, the results show that the top earners are among those who feel accepted (4.3 on the five-point scale), while the lowest earners are less confident (3.7). Broken down by organisation, it is the lowest-paid trade unionists and consultants who feel only partially accepted (3.3 and 3.6), while it is the highest-earning representatives of NGOs (4.2), companies (4.3), and trade associations (4.4) who are more likely to report acceptance.

When it comes to parliament, the picture is essentially repeated. Now, however, the answers differ more perceptibly between the sectors, and in the expected way, because the actors close to the industry experience acceptance by the parliamentarians less frequently, while NGOs and other actors tend to report greater acceptance. A stronger commitment to lobbying seems to go hand in hand with greater acceptance, as well as the size of the organisation's human resources. Local presence does not increase the likelihood of reporting more acceptance. In terms of personal characteristics, it is again the higher income groups that report greater acceptance, even though the effect is not statistically significant.

Overall, the results so far support the findings of the previous analyses. Acceptance and recognition are valuable commodities that not all European lobbyists benefit from equally. There are minor inequalities related to age and gender, but the weightier ones are linked to the social class of respondents. The general resource endowment of the organisations plays a role (Klüver 2012; Kohler-Koch et al. 2017), but it is primarily the income granted to lobbyists that makes a difference in increasing acceptance by the European institutions. A greater intensity of lobbying-specific activities seems to improve the situation and might also compensate for possible differences between the sectors.

It is quite different with the acceptance experiences that the respondents have with the two antagonistic interest camps. This is evidenced by the third and fourth columns of Table 7.3, which focus on the respondents' experiences with industry associations and NGOs. Both those working for industry interests and NGOs report that the other side does not accept their own work. Employees of companies, business associations, and consultants experience significantly more often that NGOs have reservations towards them, while more employees of NGOs do not feel accepted by industry interests. At the same time, the actors report that they can count on acceptance within their own interest camp. However, the recognition relationships are exclusive: The staffs of NGOs can essentially count solely on the acceptance of other NGOs, while the interviewees who work for the industry assume recognition by companies, industry associations, and consultancies.

The intensity of lobbying activities seems to solve the acceptance problem only partially. The stronger presence in Brussels meetings tends to help only with business associations, but not with NGOs, suggesting that these events

and opportunities are not primarily the places to win the favour of others. However, these correlations are weak and statistically not significant. With regard to personal characteristics, new aspects come to the fore, because women seem to have a slightly harder time with trade associations. Income levels have opposing outcomes, as higher income clearly improves acceptance experiences among business associations, while it tends to worsen acceptance by NGOs. These results suggest that acceptance of NGO representatives depends primarily on ideational values, as these lobbyists recurrently confirm (see Section 7.3), which is why personal wealth might be perceived as a disruptive element

Overall, three preliminary conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, full acceptance is a key asset that requires investments. Increasing lobbying activities is an essential prerequisite for gaining professional recognition. Secondly, the results show that acceptance is unequally distributed in terms of social structure. Particularly the income-related status seems to have an impact on how much EU affairs professionals feel taken seriously by their counterparts. Lastly, respondents tend to assume that there is a fairly high level of general acceptance within the EU. But full acceptance still seems to be a contested commodity. Especially the opposing positions of industry interests and NGOs seem to have an impact on the level of acceptance experienced in the profession. EU affairs professionals anticipate significant reservations, since their work is the object of a simmering conflict for recognition and legitimacy, in which they themselves seem to actively participate.

The low level of acceptance among the interest groups now raises the question of how strongly the staff themselves believe in the legitimacy of their own actions. In order to be able to answer this question, the respondents were presented with statements that addressed common justifications and professional ethical positions. Specifically, the following opinions were covered, with respondents either disagreeing (1) or fully agreeing (5):

- The work of public affairs professionals should be subject to a code of ethics.
- The work of public affairs professionals should be more transparent.
- Client confidentiality is essential for effective lobbying.
- Lobbying/public affairs certifies that political decisions are based on objective facts.
- Lobbying contributes to well-balanced political decisions.
- Lobbying distorts the democratic decision-making process on behalf of particular interests.

The first three statements concern professional ethical demands; the last three statements address questions of legitimacy. One statement each identifies a contrasting position to provide options for respondents to take a position that differs from the expected majority opinion. It was important to offer respondents the opportunity to express fundamental criticism of lobbying,

as it could be assumed that the profession takes an affirmative position. Furthermore, the political discussion on how to deal with European lobbying is dominated by demands for more transparency and self-commitment. Lobbyists may find it inopportune to distance themselves from this majority opinion. The question of confidentiality was included because this measure could be used as a legitimate argument to question the universality of transparency obligations. In this respect, too, respondents were able to use the contrast statements to distinguish themselves from the majority opinion.

As the following figure shows, most affirmative statements can count on widespread agreement. In terms of political justifications, the first three bars show that the vast majority of respondents consider lobbying to be politically legitimate. For one, they agree with a democratic-pluralist legitimacy. Two-thirds of all respondents believe that advocacy is necessary to make politics more balanced. The statement is based on the idea that politics has to listen to and adequately take into account the views and interests of many stakeholders in a society. This gives political legitimacy to interest groups, as they become important actors in balanced political will-formation and decision-making that is oriented towards compromise. Secondly, the majority of respondents share the view that lobbying is also factually necessary. Technocratic or deliberative ideas play a role here, because the participation of interest groups increases the chance of making factually sound decisions. Slightly fewer respondents can identify with this idea, although the proportion is still high at 50 per cent. This shows that the belief in the legitimacy of lobbying is widespread in the professional field, although the justifications are primarily
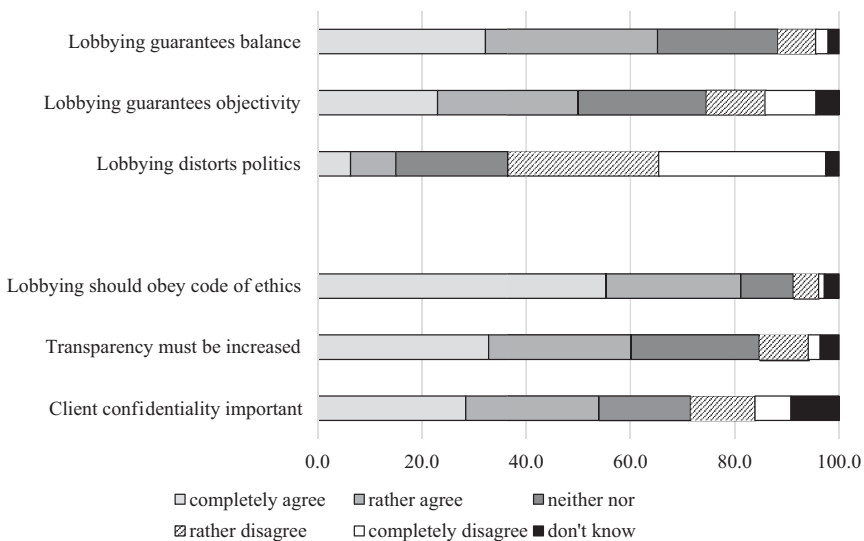
Figure 7.4 Belief in legitimacy and professional ethical demands (in per cent, N = 630–639).

politically pluralistic rather than technocratically motivated. The fact that there is broad consensus on this belief is also expressed in the low approval ratings for the contrast statement. The opinion that lobbying distorts political decisions in favour of certain interest groups is only supported by a small minority (one in six).

The justifications are supplemented by ethical demands on one's own actions. A surprisingly high number of respondents see the need for their own work to follow a code of ethics. More transparency is still demanded by 60 per cent. However, a majority of respondents also agree with the statement that client confidentiality is important for the work. Transparency and confidentiality are thus understood as complementary professional ethical standards that EU affairs professionals must consider equally. Separate calculations showed that as many as 36 per cent of respondents declared both goals as very important points of orientation. Twenty-three per cent prioritise confidentiality over transparency, 25 per cent prioritise transparency over confidentiality, and for 16 per cent both demands are equally of secondary importance.

Although the justifications and demands of professional ethics are supported by a clear majority of respondents, dissent also emerges. As many as one in three respondents believes that lobbying cannot be justified, or can only be partially justified, with a view to balancing political decisions. In order to be able to identify political lines of conflict in the professional field, it is therefore advisable to identify the groups of people who are in favour of or critical of lobbying. For this purpose, the survey data will be evaluated regression-analytically in relation to the political justifications and professional ethics research. The questions on both topics were merged into one variable for this purpose, as the response behaviour was very similar for both pairs. Respondents who called for more transparency – or rejected it – also stressed the importance of a code of ethics. At the same time, the two justifications correlate clearly. Either lobbying was at the same time justified with a view to the balance and objectivity of political decision-making or the veracity of these statements was doubted in equal measure. This pairing is confirmed by a factor analysis. The scale reliability test yielded values of 0.652 (alpha) for the professional ethical demands and 0.692 for the two legitimacy beliefs. The basic criticism of lobbying did correlate positively with the first dimension, as did the reference to client confidentiality with the second dimension. But the correlations were only weak, which is why the reliability of the dimensions dropped significantly. Moreover, separate calculations failed to identify any conspicuous dissent. With respect to confidentiality, respondents who worked at consultancies and had studied law tended to have significantly higher agreement scores. This conspicuousness can be explained by the client relationship of these groups of persons and apparently barely affects the other professional field of EU affairs. A presentation of the analysis will therefore be omitted.

The results of the two regression analyses show that the questions about the political legitimacy of lobbying divide the respondents significantly more

than the professional ethical demands. The differences are much weaker when it comes to professional ethics (see Table 7.4). These are evidently agreeable positions that do not invite such strong opposition. There is a tendency for employees of NGOs, other actors (including government bodies), and consultancies to agree, while industry associations tend to maintain a greater distance. Brussels does not seem to spur aspirations, and the same is true when it comes to active lobbyists in regular contact with the EU Commission. They probably see less need to introduce further regulatory measures. It is significant, however, that income has a marked influence on professional ethics, as the top earners are significantly more likely to see the need for professional ethics rules. Converted into estimated probabilities, this is reflected in the fact that the highest income group is 10 per cent less likely to be represented among those who find such demands absurd, while it is 19 per cent more likely to be among those who declare such measures to be absolutely necessary, when compared to the lowest earners. Here, too, it could be assumed that EU affairs professionals who work in an exposed position in terms of professional and social status see a greater need to regulate their own professional activities and thus to legitimise them professionally.

The lines of division that have emerged in the demands for professional ethics can be elaborated much better in relation to the political justifications. First, the sectoral antagonism that already played a role in the perceived acceptance of lobbying reappears. Those working for industry associations and company representations are far more likely to share the view that interest representation is politically expedient. In terms of predictive margins, employees of trade associations are more likely to share this conviction (4.2 on a five-point scale) than respondents working for trade unions and NGOs (3.5 and 3.2). The social-structural class situation of the respondents has an ambivalent effect, because the willingness to ascribe political legitimacy to lobbying decreases among executive positions, while it increases with income. The respondents' income-related social class affiliation is the factor determining their belief in the political legitimacy of their métier, and not the leadership mandate within their organisations.

Overall, the findings show that the majority of the profession believes in the legitimacy of its own actions, although criticism of lobbying is also voiced. At the same time, a majority of respondents are also in favour of professional ethical regulation of the field, although there are opposing opinions here as well. There is a certain complementarity between the two topics – justifications and obligations – because believers in legitimacy demand professional ethical obligations less often (−0.104*), but emphasise the value of confidentiality more often (0.208***). Conversely, criticism of European lobbying often coincides with the opinion that lobbying should be subject to professional ethical rules.

Despite this general tendency, attitudes towards political legitimacy and professional ethics regulation do not coincide among all respondents. The relationship between the two issues is more complex, as the reasoning behind

Table 7.4 Legitimacy and obligations (OLS regression, odd ratios)

	political legitimacy	regulatory obligations
Employer (*ref.: Brussels only*)		
Consultancies	1.274	1.095
Companies	1.350**	0.815
Trade associations	1.764***	0.776*
Trade unions	0.885	0.647
NGOs	0.677**	1.215
other	0.701*	1.272
Size of the EU affairs staff (*std.*)	0.983	1.018
Lobbying activities (amount, *std.*)	1.014	0.974
Contacts to Commission (*std.*)	1.050	0.964
Time spent in Brussels meetings (*std.*)	1.037	1.043
Professional position (*qualified activity*)		
Senior position	0.773*	0.929
Executive position	0.775*	0.897
Income (*< € 25,000*)		
€ 25,000–49,999	1.078	1.097
€ 50,000–99,999	1.427*	1.006
€ 100,000 and more	1.833***	1.284
Personal characteristics		
Gender (*male*)	1.084	1.056
Age (*std.*)	0.996	1.108*
Field of study		
European studies	0.803*	1.062
Economics	1.137	1.158
Law	1.235*	1.030
MINT	0.823	0.936
Citizenship		
German	0.780**	0.776**
British	1.046	0.975
Italian	0.923	1.119
Eastern European	1.141	1.005
Constant	33.02***	54.99***
Observations	403	405
R^2	0.179	0.085

Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$ (robust standard errors).

the connection can be different. Many EU affairs professionals seem to be in favour of professional ethics regulation because they assume that lobbying has little legitimacy. However, an inverse connection is just as conceivable, because respondents could also be of the opinion that professional ethical obligations are part of the self-image of a profession that is legitimate in itself. It is also conceivable that those who believe in legitimacy find professional ethics regulation unnecessary. Lastly, the critics of legitimacy could also be
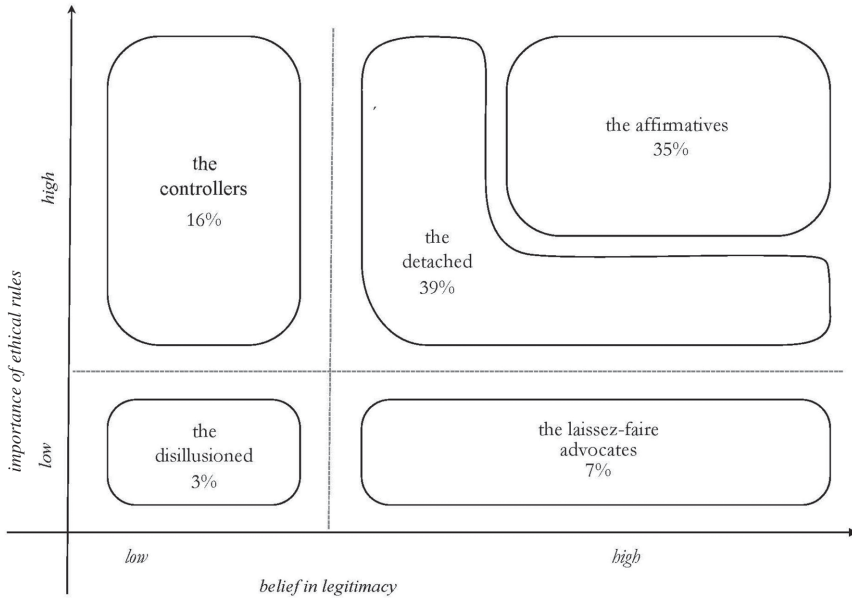
Figure 7.5 Professional ethics beliefs.

opposed to professional ethics rules because such obligations are ineffective and therefore pointless in a politically highly problematic profession.

EU affairs professionals do indeed respond to questions about the relationship between legitimacy beliefs and professional ethics in different ways. For illustration purposes, respondents can be assigned to different groups of people, each with different response profiles. In order to determine these factions, the attitudes towards the two pairs of statements (ideas of legitimacy and professional ethical positions) were cross-tabulated. The response combinations identified were grouped into five main factions, each with a specific profile: These are the affirmatives, the detached, the controllers, the laissez-faire advocates, and the disillusioned. Figure 7.5 graphically represents the factions by marking the positions in terms of belief in legitimacy and advocacy of professional ethics demands. In addition, the percentage values are given to show the shares of the groups in the total number of respondents.

A first group is recruited from the circle of affirmatives. There is a broad consensus in this group that lobbying is legitimised by political benefits (balance and objectivity of decisions) and must be guided by professional ethical principles (code of ethics and transparency). This group is quite large, as the proportion of respondents who wholeheartedly support this position is one-third. This first group is followed by a second group that tends to hold this affirmative position, but not as resolutely, which is why it is called the detached here. Their share is at 39 per cent. It is remarkable that these two

factions make up the lion's share of the professional field: More than two-thirds of the respondents (74 per cent) stand by the legitimacy of the profession and their rules of professional ethics.

Only a quarter of the respondents deviate from this normative consensus. Three different groups can be identified in this minority area. The third group can be called the controllers; it represents every sixth respondent. Rules of conduct and transparency are important for them, precisely because lobbying has no political legitimacy in their opinion. A small group is of the opposite opinion, as they consider lobbying to be a thoroughly justified activity, which is why they do not subscribe to the call for rules of conduct and more transparency. This fourth group represents a position of laissez-faire and is small, with 7 per cent of the respondents. A fifth group is populated by the few respondents who are very pessimistic in both respects. They do not ascribe political legitimacy to the profession, nor do they advocate demands for professional ethics. This is presumably due to disillusionment with one's own work. This circle is very modest, with 3 per cent of the respondents.

These five groups are characterised by different socio-structural and professional profiles. Besides age and gender, professional backgrounds and socialisation experiences are particularly relevant. If the respective proportion of socio-structural and occupational characteristics is compared with those of the total sample, it can be determined in which group these characteristics are over- or underrepresented.

The group of the disillusioned can be most clearly distinguished from the others, possibly because it is a rather small group in which the profiles do not blur so easily. This is the youngest group, as the average age is just 37 years. Women are overrepresented with plus 9 per cent. The disillusioned are overrepresented among employees at a lower hierarchical level (up 16 per cent) and underrepresented among those in a management position (down 15 per cent). Staff from trade unions and public authorities are more strongly represented compared to their overall share (up 10 per cent and 24 per cent respectively), and political science graduates are significantly overrepresented (up 29 per cent).

The controllers resemble the disillusioned in many aspects. They are overrepresented among those who have worked for NGOs during their careers (up 23 per cent), while they are underrepresented among the staff of industry associations and companies (down 9 per cent in each case). They are also more common among women (plus 6 per cent).

The advocates of laissez-faire present the counterpart and are also characterised by an opposing profile. This position appears more frequently among the staff of companies and industry associations (up 9 and 18 per cent respectively). They are also overrepresented among lawyers, at 10 per cent. Lastly, these people are, on average, among the highest earners.

The profile of the detached is characterised by weak contours, for which the moderate positions on questions of legitimacy and ethics are probably responsible. This group is more common among the staff of industry associations

(plus 8 per cent), and less common among those working for NGOs (minus 4 per cent). Among the affirmatives, on the other hand, professional profiles emerge somewhat more clearly. This position is more frequently represented among the staff of consultancies and company representations (up 5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively). Above all, however, it is remarkable that this group has the highest average age (43 years). Lastly, the member of this group are, on average, among the highest earners.

A comparison of the groups reveals marked similarities. The group of the disillusioned and the controllers are similar in terms of professional profile. Both groups are recruited mainly from the NGO sector and express fundamental criticism of lobbying. While some apparently see no point in introducing professional ethical standards and regulations, others emphasise all the more frequently that the legitimacy deficit makes such measures necessary. There are also similarities between the affirmatives and the proponents of laissez-faire, as there are more representatives of industry interests among them. Both share a fundamental belief in the legitimacy of lobbying; they differ primarily in their choice of professional ethics demands, as one side emphasises the need for professional ethics rules, while the other wants to keep the status quo as it is.

Both pairs of groups can be assigned to the core and fringe areas of the occupational field. In terms of activity profiles and self-conceptions, the affirmative and laissez-faire groups belong to the core area, the controllers and disillusioned to the fringe area. The former are significantly more often involved in lobbying activities than the latter – on average, the proportion is one or half a point higher on the nine-point scale. With regard to professional self-conception, the groups hardly stand out from the overall average; only the proponents of laissez-faire describe themselves more frequently than average as lobbyists (plus 17 per cent). In contrast, the disillusioned and the controllers are more inclined to call themselves representatives or activists. With regard to the professionalist occupational ethos, complementary allocations to the core and fringe areas emerge. The professionalist credo is weakest among the disillusioned; in contrast, approval grows successively across the other groups – the controllers, the laissez-faire advocates, and the detached – to stand out most clearly among the affirmatives.

Overall, the findings illustrate that the professional field is dominated by affirmative positions. The majority of respondents assume that their work is accepted by the actors in their institutional and political environment; and they themselves also firmly believe that their actions are politically legitimate. Criticism is also voiced within the profession, but the dissent tends to be expressed at the margins of the profession. For one, the dissent is ignited along the conflicting interest camps, as the legitimacy believers are more often found among the industry associations and business representations, while the sceptical voices are found more often among the ranks of the NGOs. Secondly, the dissent also runs along professional differentiations. As expected, the group of people who consider lobbying to be their core business

has a conciliatory or affirmative attitude. They also believe more firmly in the professionalist credo of their job mission. In contrast, those who are less intensively involved in the core business are more likely to express scepticism about the legitimacy of lobbying. Tellingly, they also believe less strongly in the professionalist credo.

7.3. EU lobbying as a contested field: legitimisation and delegitimisation

The evaluations so far have only been able to identify tendencies, which is why the dissent in relation to the actors could be mapped but not itself deciphered in its conflicting positions, justifications, and rationales. The qualitative interview material opens up such insights because it allows us to work out the different notions of legitimacy. At the same time, it is possible to determine the antagonisms inherent in the professional field that underlie the conflicting justifications. In particular, it will become apparent that the dissent is based on an interplay of legitimisation and delegitimisation of the conflicting positions, which makes the professionalisation of the professional field problematic and thus keeps it precarious.

The interview material initially provides evidence that the professional field of European lobbying has an internal structure that is characteristic of social fields as a whole (Bourdieu 1998, 2020; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 94–115; Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Georgakakis and Rowell 2013), as explained before in more detail (see Section 2.3). This is no coincidence, as EU affairs is a semi-autonomous professional field that is tied to the field of European politics. On the one hand, political advocacy can be understood as an autonomous field of action because it has constituted itself as an organisational and professional field in its own right. Here, statutory provisions that grant social groups the right to organise and represent their interests towards the state and policymakers are crucial. The legitimacy of interest groups and their staff depends on this autonomy, as they can only perform their tasks credibly if they are a mouthpiece for sections of society and can thus demonstrate the necessary independence from the state and politics. State control, political influence, or organisational conformity directly undermine their credibility and legitimacy. Autonomy is thus a constitutive feature of the organisational and professional field.

On the other hand, however, there are limits to this autonomy. The EU institutions have actively promoted the establishment of European interest groups, some of which are financially supported. EU affairs professionals have often gained professional experience within the EU institutions and see themselves as part of a common Brussels policy arena committed to the European project. The structure of the organisational field reflects the diversity of policy areas with which the EU is concerned, which is why political antagonisms between interest groups mirror the political divergences between Directorates-General, parliamentary committees, or bodies. Interest groups

are also closely linked to the EU's consultation processes, and in some cases very close working relationships develop that establish policy field-specific regulatory communities. The autonomy is hence relative throughout.

This partial autonomy helps explain why the structure of the political field feeds through to the professional field. A relative structural equivalence is established because interest groups seek to influence political will-formation and decision-making and thus become part of the political and symbolic struggles for power and legitimacy. These struggles are characterised by a tense relationship between an autonomous and a heteronomous pole (Bourdieu 1991: 184–188; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), between the politically established and the challengers, making the relationship to the core of power the structuring element of the field (Kauppi 2003; Joignant 2019). On this issue, however, it is necessary to trace the polarity more to the institutional allocation of political power. Accordingly, the state powers would be located at the autonomous pole, the political public at the heteronomous pole. This is supported by the fact that the political field is ultimately institutionalised through state organs and procedures of political decision-making and thus becomes autonomous towards society and the public. At the autonomous pole are state bodies that represent the political will of the public, delegate it to full-time elected officials, and in this way implement and administer it. As representative democratic institutions, however, they remain exposed to the heteronomous forces of the political public sphere, for example by means of elections, public debates, or polls. The political field is thus exposed to the conflict between the autonomous pole of state organs and the heteronomous pole of the political public.

The analysis of the interview material yields evidence that the professional field of EU affairs replicates this dual structure of the political field. The core area of professionalised lobbying is oriented towards the autonomous pole, moving in close proximity to the core and arcane realm of the EU institutions (here in particular: EU Commission, European Council, and Permanent Representations) and seeks to legitimise its own work as a functional contribution to governance. In contrast, advocacy lobbying is located at the heteronomous pole, which means that it is closer to the political (media) public sphere and seeks to politicise and scandalise the political entanglements of interests in the core area and the arcane realm in the name of public goods and interests. Although the European Parliament is part of the institutions involved in the legislative process (and thus closer to the pole of institutional power), it is perceived by EU affairs professionals more as an institution oriented towards the political public.

The duality of the field is brought up in the interviews themselves, because the interviewees divide the EU institutions into two groups that stand for different logics and opportunities for influence. The polarity between the European Commission and the European Parliament established here was already mentioned in earlier chapters (see Section 3.2). But it is also addressed in a passage by Giuseppe Giordano. According to him, the EU institutions

offer interest groups several opportunities to exert influence. NGOs and industry interests can, for example, seek to correct the legislative procedures drawn up by the Commission via the Parliament or the Council of Ministers. However, these bodies have different degrees of openness towards the two factions:

> Often the Council and Parliament are also quite opposed to each other with their respective interests. Parliament is generally much more open to environmental and citizens' interests, while in the Council access is more difficult for groups like us. There's also less transparency. [...] In my experience, we don't have (.) the really big companies and the really big lobbying associations really have more influence than, yes, than environmental or human rights associations or other groups that just stand up for general interests.

Giuseppe Giordano perceives the Parliament to be much more open to the general interests of the citizenry, while the Council seems to listen much more to the representation of specific interests. This also applies, according to Kate Kavanagh, to the Commission that is made up of "unelected officials" who are thus less susceptible to political pressure from the public. The interviewees agree that both bodies carry out regulatory work that is often small-scale and requires a lot of technical expertise. In this sense, the European institutions represent different logics: a bureaucratic-regulatory logic on the part of the Commission and the Council, and a (ideological or party) political logic on the part of the Parliament.

   The different sensitivities and logics of the European institutions underline that the various lobby groups not only vie for political influence but also for recognition and legitimacy. Their political influence even depends on the recognition of their own claim to validity and representation by the European institutions. Differences seem to arise in this respect, as the Commission, the Parliament, and the Council have different ideas about what legitimises these groups to represent an issue, a cause, or a population group and to call for changes to legislative proposals. Lobby groups seem to have to decide which ideas of legitimacy they follow. They are above all involved in discourses of legitimacy: EU affairs professionals have to defend their activities as legitimate contributions to policymaking, knowing full well that the other side will seek to challenge this legitimacy. In particular, it can be seen that lobbyists are involved in orthodox and heterodox discourses that are fuelled by efforts to autonomise and heteronomise the professional field and use antagonistic notions of legitimacy for this purpose.

7.3.1. *Lobbying and democracy: generalised recognition*

Legitimacy issues are professionally relevant for European lobbyists. The fact that they raised these issues during the interviews without being prompted

indicates that they are confronted with reservations and seek to overcome them. The justifications they put forward in the interviews show a surprisingly high degree of consistency. It was already shown in the previous sections that most EU affairs professionals are confident that lobbying makes political decisions more balanced. In the qualitative interviews, the interviewees elaborate the topic in more detail, but above all it becomes apparent that the justifications address a much broader frame of reference for expressing political legitimacy – namely that of democracy. According to the interview partners, lobbying is politically legitimate because the representation of interests corresponds to the requirements of democratic decision-making – and not only that: Lobbying fulfils democratic functions.

Lobby groups and their employees are a mouthpiece of societal interests and therein ultimately an articulation instrument of the democratic sovereign. Liberal, pluralistic, technocratic, and deliberative ideas of democratic decision-making are manifested in the descriptions and accounts of the interviewees. According to the common core idea, good political decisions depend on the (broad) participation of societal groups. Interest groups are legitimate as long as they provide the necessary input for democratically grounded decision-making. They help ensure that politicians consider and coordinate the interests, concerns, and views of different sectors of society (the pluralist element) and thus do the least possible harm to individuals (the liberal element). They help them consider objective facts and constraints in order to make factually correct decisions (the technocratic element) that are also compatible with the common good through the weighing of reasons and arguments (the deliberative element).

Remarkably, corresponding assessments are found among the staff of industry interests as well as among the employees of NGOs. For example, Tadeusz Tomaszewski, who works for an industry association, believes that lobbying is equivalent to elections. In both cases, people express their political will: "If you consider lobbying as an expression of democratic will outside of the elections, then it makes sense to try and have as many people from as many backgrounds as possible get together and make their proposals."

Professional representation is legitimate, because he sees lobby groups as representing the "people" and their "proposals." However, Tadeusz Tomaszewski's wording makes it clear that he is already anticipating points of criticism. His statement is initially only a potential interpretation: If lobbying is understood ("considered") as democratic expression of will, then it makes sense to involve "many people" in the decision-making process. However, there is no question in his mind that lobbying is one way, among others, to keep democracy alive beyond periodic participation in elections. "In my opinion, democracy is not putting a paper in a ballot box every five years. Democracy happens in between, between the elections. Lobbying is one form of it." Lobbying is part of democratic decision-making because it guarantees a continuous expression of the will of the "people" – via the lobby group as a mouthpiece.

Luuk van Leeuwen also emphasises that European interest groups exercise a democratic mandate and thus make an important contribution to political decision-making. This time, however, the focus is not on the proposals made by interest groups on behalf of the people. According to him, the articulation function of associations is in the foreground, which he interprets primarily as a signalling function. In his opinion, associations need to address possible risks or damages that misguided policy decisions would entail. With regard to legislative initiatives in his policy field, he stresses that it is very important to make sure "that these decisions make economic sense." The legitimacy of lobby groups arises from the interest-specific information and assessments that enable meaningful decisions and minimise harm to the economy and society.

Rosalie Rousseau, who works for an NGO, agrees with regard to the articulation function, but in her opinion, the contribution is to give societal interests the necessary voice to address societal problems or grievances. "One of the tasks of associations is to articulate different interests, first to collect them and then to articulate them. And for me, that is a genuine, democratic task, namely to simply draw attention to grievances." Additionally, it is important for lobbyists to ensure that different voices are heard, argues Norbert Neumann, a representative of an industry association. "What does one do as a lobbyist? You present an opinion." Lobby groups are important for shaping political opinion, as they allow a "different spectrum of opinion" to be brought into the decision-making process.

In addition to this articulation function, an awareness and control function are also mentioned. Colin Cooper emphasises, from the perspective of an NGO worker, that interest groups provide critical oversight of the work of governments. As we live in democracies, he argues, it is important that people understand what governments do. This also includes permanent monitoring of whether the government's work lives up to what one's own association stands for. This awareness function is particularly important in relation to European politics, as Maxime Moreau (an employee of a company representation) believes, since political decision-making at the EU level is not transparent enough. Although he excludes European primary law from this assessment, it is precisely in the area of secondary law that a development towards "skeleton" directives and regulations can be observed, in which the actual measures are negotiated in specialised committees that do not meet in public. This issue is raised by several respondents. They dislike this practice because it makes their own work more difficult, as already shown in Section 3.2. For Maxime Moreau, however, it also raises questions of legitimacy, as this delegation of important aspects of European secondary law is not helpful for "a democratically transparent process."

Overall, there is a consensus that lobbying fulfils a general democratic mandate. Interest groups are democratically legitimised. However, this also implies that all factions can claim legitimacy for themselves, provided they fulfil the mandate of political representation. Pinelópi Papadakis, for example, is

willing to grant such legitimacy to the many interest groups because this corresponds to the political reality of a pluralistic society: "There are different objectives, there are different values. But that's quite normal in a, shall I say, pluralistic society." The pragmatic statement – "there are some and there are others" – culminates in a shared commitment to compromise-oriented decision-making – "we just try to compromise between different views." In this way, the fundamental legitimacy of all represented interests is recognised.

Such a position is demanding for EU affairs professionals, as they have to be prepared to grant political legitimacy to the other side as well. As will be shown, some of the respondents tend to question this legitimacy, at least to some extent. However, it can be seen that the interviewees are concerned about normative consistency: While they often criticise the other side for using illegitimate means, the criticism rarely goes so far as to question the legitimacy of the interest group itself.

The generalising attribution of political legitimacy corresponds to liberal and pluralist ideas, since politics must offer each individual a reasonable chance to articulate his or her own political will. This implies that in principle all interest groups are to be involved, regardless of their type, size, or reputation. Tadeusz Tomaszewski, for example, emphasises that the small ones also have a right to make their voices heard. He refers to the Motorcycle and Bicycle Retailers Association as an example. They are certainly not part of the "dominant companies that control governments," but these people have their own businesses and need to be represented at the EU level. The mere existence of a group gives it a legitimate claim to representation, and this claim must be met through a fair process of consultation and participation. For this reason, Tadeusz Tomaszewski sees the practice of financial support for small businesses by the EU institutions as justified to a certain extent. The general claim to legitimacy extends even to those interests that have to reckon with public disdain. Valerie Vincent has the tobacco industry in mind here. Although she works for a company in a different industry, she firmly believes that this industry, which is dominated by negative headlines, also deserves political recognition: "It's a legitimate product and there should be people that are able to defend it. So I firmly believe in that."

At the level of general principles, respondents are comfortable agreeing on a common democratic mandate. Lobbying is democratically legitimate because interest groups have a political right to have their say and contribute to the democratic connection of political will-formation and decision-making to society, including between election periods. As already indicated by Tadeusz Tomaszewski, the respondents only partially sympathise with the public criticism of lobbying's compatibility with democracy. Martin Müller even explicitly rejects the unjustified criticism of lobbying. According to him, lobbyists have a bad reputation and are not seen as "a good force for democracy, although we are." The qualitative interviews thus also confirmed the affirmative consensus prevailing in the occupational field according to the survey data. This result is not surprising, as the respondents have made

lobbying their profession and claim professional as well as personal recognition for themselves. However, the evaluations in Section 7.2 have shown that there are different ideas in the occupational field about the political legitimacy of lobbying. Below the fundamentally approving consensus, there seems to be a disagreement about what exactly defines this political legitimacy, which lobby groups can exercise it, and which organisations delegitimise themselves through their actions.

7.3.2 The struggle for recognition: mutual delegitimisation

Differences erupt as soon as it comes to specifying and evaluating the general democratic mandate more precisely. The interview material reveals mutual points of criticism that ultimately seek to undermine the legitimacy of the other side. Especially the general willingness to recognise the legitimacy of interests in and of itself ends at the latest once the form of interest representation itself, and thus also the way in which interests are aggregated and articulated, becomes the subject of discussion. Here a line of conflict emerges within the workforce, which ultimately corresponds to the divisive structure of the organisational field: Industry interests and NGOs not only represent different interests, goals and demands; but the professionals also propagate contrary ideas of political legitimacy, which thereby also seek to undermine their opponents' claims to legitimacy.

   The analyses of the interviews were able to identify two types of legitimacy that can be assigned to the two interest camps. Industry lobbyists lean more towards a particularist strategy of legitimisation, relying on concrete articulations of interests, numerical relevance criteria, and objective expertise as resources of legitimacy. The representatives of the NGOs, in turn, prefer a universalist strategy of legitimisation, which relies on interest articulations relevant to the common good, normative relevance criteria, and an advocatory activism. These strategies of legitimisation are connected to the interests represented, but also result from the polarity of the occupational field. In fact, these strategies of legitimisation are relationally linked. The actors tend to distinguish their own legitimacy from that of the respective opposing side and to criticise the other side from their own perspective. Furthermore, this polarity relates to the structure of the political field. The first type of legitimisation has a greater focus on the core area and the arcane realm of the autonomous pole (that is, policy formulation within the EU Commission and comitology), while the second type is much more related to the heteronomous pole (that is, the parliamentary co-decision process, mass media debates, and public mobilisations). The two legitimisation strategies thus reflect different legitimatory affinities and preferences in the political field. For this reason, the line of conflict for legitimacy in the professional field does not necessarily have to run between economic interests and NGOs, which means that the two types of legitimacy detected in the interview materials are ideal types that resonate more or less clearly with the reasoning of specific lobbying groups. As

will be shown, some interest groups have legitimacy ideas that contradict the usual beliefs in their sector, thus bringing dissent on issues of legitimacy into the respective sectors.

In order to identify the two concepts and strategies of legitimacy, it is useful to start with the criticism levelled at the respective other side. This is expedient because the discourse of legitimacy in the interviews is conducted in this way: It is above all a discourse of delegitimisation. In fact, the interviewees do not discuss their own ideas of legitimacy as explicitly, especially since generalising statements dominate here, which were already explained with regard to the democratic compatibility of lobbying. The interview participants substantiate their ideas of legitimacy primarily by being disparaging of the lack of legitimacy of the others. This is why the two types of legitimisation will first be identified through the criticisms that were raised, substantiated with regard to the underlying legitimisation resources, and illuminated in terms of their location in the political field.

Particularist legitimacy

The particularist legitimation strategy that dominates among those working for industry interests criticises NGOs for their supposed universalist claim. On the one hand, the representatives of NGOs are accused of distancing themselves from lobbying, although they are merely one of many lobby groups with particular interests. For Tadeusz Tomaszewski, NGOs do nothing different from any other interest group: "Whether you're a business owner or a concerned citizen or a motorcyclist, or a pharmacist. You're addressing your government that way." The accusation of hypocrisy stands: "They criticise lobbyists, but they're lobbyists," says Colin Cooper, who works for a company representation. Geert van Gelder is also annoyed by the double standard with which a lobby-critical organisation like "Corporate Europe Observatory always rage against all lobbyists," while it never portrays other NGOs as a lobby group. This criticism seeks to question the NGOs' claim to legitimacy by evaluating their ambition to represent common goods as a deceptive attempt to represent particular interests.

This relativisation leads into a second point of criticism, which refers to the lack of representativeness of a supposedly civic interest group. The accusation of "astroturfing" is invoked for this purpose. This buzzword has become established in the English-speaking world to describe public campaigns or lobby groups that falsely masquerade as grassroots organisations or civic initiatives. While this obfuscation tactic is primarily attributed to companies and industry associations, NGOs in the broadest sense also face accusations of a lack of representativeness. Tadeusz Tomaszewski expanded on this accusation in its various aspects in a longer passage:

> Astroturfing is the art of creating a movement that appears to be grassroots, but is actually entirely manufactured by different interests.

And you have some of that in lobbying. For example, you have some associations that find themselves at very important round tables and working groups and so on. As experts on road safety. And these guys have 500 members, 100 members in some cases. And they are kept afloat by subventions by national governments or by regional governments or by different sources. And so, there comes a moment where you ask the question: How legitimate is that person to be sitting in this expert group? They are member of an NGO, that's true, but how representative are they? In many (.) in some cases, I have seen some, they were typically just one or a handful of founding members, which is pretty sad for them. But these will be people who have zero technical expertise and who are no more qualified than any of us to speak on behalf of an entire segment of population. And so there comes the question, who is legitimate, who is representative?

The passage ends with a blanket suspicion. In principle, any interest group can be accused of being an artificial product with nobody behind it. The example (road safety) suggests that Tadeusz Tomaszewski initially only has public organisations in mind. However, the remarks generalise the accusation levelled at the NGO sector, although he refrains from making sweeping statements ("in many" cases) and narrows down the circle of artificial creations to "some" cases. The general suspicion of inadequate representativeness thus remains. The absent legitimacy of some NGOs is attributed to the fact that these organisations do not represent a real and substantial segment of the population beyond the small circle of founding members. Moreover, these groups also lack the expertise to be able to have a "qualified" say on behalf of a section of the population. The NGO sector thus makes much ado about nothing in "some cases."

The accusation of sham representation is ultimately based on the allusion to the funding of many NGOs, which is perceived as non-transparent. Daniel Dieckmann criticises the fact that transparency is demanded of industry interests, even though the NGOs themselves do not adhere to it: "It's always very difficult to find out how NGOs are funded." But for him, as for others working for the business lobbies, it is well known that they do not finance themselves from their own resources: "Often, as you probably know, by public funding by taxpayers' money, which is interesting." This question is directly linked to the problem of a lack of representation. It remains unclear on behalf of which donors they are actually operating, as Jeremy Jones puts it: "We don't know from where they have money, whose ideas and problems they are working on really." According to him, it cannot be ruled out that they represent the particular interests of specific donors. While Daniel Dieckmann and Jeremy Jones do not name the donor, Lorenzo Lombardi has no doubts about the donor funding many European NGOs. For example, with regard to some of the "so-called green NGOs," he says that "I know two-thirds of their finances come from Commission funds." Consequently, behind these NGOs are not the interests they claim to represent: "Two-thirds of his payment

does not come from the many, many members who all want something good, but from the institution itself. So these are also a bit the cheerleaders of this institution." The lack of financial independence undermines the credibility, because the "non-governmental organisations" do not represent the citizenry but ultimately governmental organisations. It is mainly the European Commission that subsidises NGOs in order to secure the political support it needs for its legislative projects.

This criticism says something above all about the idea of legitimacy from which this criticism is fed. Three core aspects stand out in this respect, all of which point to particularity as the basis of legitimate interest representation. First, an interest group is legitimate if it speaks on behalf of real persons and organisations. The problem of a lack of representativeness is initially not the number of people represented. The "sad thing," in the words of Tadeusz Tomaszewski, is rather that the few founding members remain among themselves and thus have no one to represent and on whose behalf they can speak in a qualified manner. The Association of Motorcycle and Bicycle Retailers, which he cites as an example of a small lobby group in a previous passage, at least has the advantage of representing real interests. And even if this market segment is quite modest, within the European internal market this retail sector represents a sufficiently large reservoir of people who can and should be represented. It is not about big companies.

> No, these are people who own their own small business. They sell bicycles and they need to be represented at the EU level. The European Union is over 500 million people, and the world's largest economy. So, inevitably, even the smallest organisations, they pool their resources together and will be able to find representation.

Industry associations represent particular interests, and this particularity is the guarantor that these interests are real, because they are linked back to specific markets with a tangible group of companies, products, jobs, or customers. This notion of representativeness implies that interest representation follows the arithmetical logic of basic mathematics: The larger the represented group of real stakeholders, the greater the political weight. Small associations can stake their own claim to political participation at the EU level because they represent few but real interests; the political weight then necessarily increases with the size of the association or company. The reminder not to overlook minority interests does not invalidate this arithmetic, as groups that are small in number need to be heard as much as large ones in order to ensure that policy decisions are also responsive to these needs and demands. But the claim of the big lobby groups to have more say is perfectly legitimate in view of this arithmetical logic, as they are politically, economically, or socially more relevant.

This arithmetic is also the reason why Andrea Albrecht is disappointed that the EU failed to sufficiently address own concerns and proposals in a

key document on the political guidelines of a policy field that is central to the association. For her, the document did not sufficiently reflect the industry's contribution. After all, she says, her industry contributes 30 per cent of the targeted key figures to the politically set targets, and even 50 per cent in combination with a neighbouring industry. Such arithmetic also explains why those working for the industry lobby complain about the disproportionate influence of NGOs. In their opinion, the fact that NGOs sometimes have only 500 members or fewer necessarily reduces the political relevance of the interests represented.

Lastly, the particularist legitimation strategy uses issue-specific expertise as a justification for its own claim to representation. The belief in the political legitimacy of one's own expertise is based on the idea of "rule by virtue of knowledge." According to this, political decisions are likely to gain support if they are seen as objectively reasonable and/or justifiable. Interest groups that lobby to contribute to informed decision-making can, based on this interpretation, claim legitimacy for their actions. This conviction is shared by many lobbyists across the different interest camps, as was elaborated in Sections 6.2, 6.3 and 7.2. However, these resources of legitimacy are used preferentially by those working for industry interests. This is due to ideas of representativeness, because the claim to be able to contribute specific expertise is based on the mandate to represent particular interests that are characterised by a specific and thus at the same time exclusive body of knowledge.

This expertise is relevant in terms of legitimacy, because it justifies a claim to shape policy: Lobbyists who want to influence political legislation can use their expertise to give good reasons why they want to introduce, change, or prevent a measure. The question is not only what advantages and disadvantages the political measures would have for the represented actors. European policy is considered to be extremely technical, which is why it is important to obtain specific knowledge when drafting regulatory proposals in order to launch measures that work factually, meaning they are legally, administratively, technically, or economically feasible and effective. This makes lobbying itself a highly technical matter, as Geert van Gelder, Maxime Moreau, and Tadeusz Tomaszewski emphasise. Valerie Vincent cites the example of production-related safety regulations that the EU had been working on and that affected her industry. Precise knowledge of the relevant safety issues and processes in her companies was indispensable for her as a lobbyist in order to be able to answer appropriate follow-up questions during discussions with the decision makers.

Interviewees do indeed agree that expertise is indispensable, especially at the autonomous pole of the political field. Lack of expertise seriously jeopardises the participation of lobby groups in informal discussions or formal committees. The actors involved are aware that each lobby group can only contribute specific expertise and thus only claim particular truths for itself. But it is precisely the particularity of this expertise that seems to underpin the special veracity of the objections and demands raised. Industry lobbyists

in fact place particular emphasis on the assertion that only they have the expertise (for example, on markets, products, production processes) necessary for the particular factual issue to be able to make authoritative judgements on the merits of legislative proposals.

Expertise as a legitimising resource is particularly important because the European institutions need this issue-specific expertise. This applies to the European Commission. As guardian of the Treaties, it is responsible for developing and drafting legislative proposals, and for this reason it has established innumerable working groups that provide opportunities for participation. For Tadeusz Tomaszewski, however, the problem is that this high demand for expertise also legitimises those actors who do not have significative expertise to deliver:

> We hit one of the limits of the system of the Commission, where they do a great job trying to bring together people who know about a topic. To try and help them draft legislation. But do they have the right people? No!

According to his account quoted above, the proposal to provide financial aid to small lobby groups like the motorcycle and bicycle retailers to facilitate their participation in this arduous process is sound. His incomprehension, however, is aimed at those groups that "have zero technical expertise and are no more qualified than any of us." They also forfeit their legitimacy as representatives.

Universalist legitimacy

The second legitimation strategy can be described as universalist, as it finds particularist representation of interests short-sighted and misguided in the face of problems, goods, and values relevant to the common good. In the interview material, this criticism is mainly directed at the lobby groups from the corporate sector; the NGOs are the main proponents. The central point of criticism does not concern the industry interests themselves but rather the way in which they are represented. However, some interviews reveal the belief that certain particular interests cannot really claim legitimacy in the face of universal values or goods. This is the case with Kate Kavanagh, who, on behalf of an NGO, would like to see the products of a certain industry banned altogether. However, it was already discussed (see Section 6.3) that such a position is not opportune, especially if it contradicts the political agenda of the EU Commission. The relevant departments of the Commission seem to listen only to those who agree to recognise the fundamental legitimacy of the existence of economic interests. Consequently, NGOs have to find a "delicate balance" between the general acceptance of the other side and their own demands.

The criticism of the industry interests comes at a central point of their concept of legitimacy, because the particularity of the interests becomes

the target of their delegitimisation. The industry is accused of representing "special interests," as Rosalie Rousseau puts it. Georg Gerlach adds for his field of work that this one-sided pursuit of particular interests brings great disadvantages for other groups and issues: "Huge interests are being violated, huge human rights are being violated. [...] That doesn't bother anyone. No, no, that's really huge, what's happening there. And you can go through all the sectors now." The conflict is not only between competing particular interests, but between particular interests and universal human rights, between commercial interests and non-profit concerns. In the organisational field, "there is this antagonism of not-for-profit, for-profit," says Dominique Dubois, which promotes the feeling of fighting an "us versus them" battle.

In this respect, there are increasing complaints about the domination of industry interests and the drastic power imbalance between particular interests and groups oriented towards the common good. "David – Goliath" is how Kate Kavanagh describes this relationship and finds it "frustrating" that the industry representatives were already there as soon as she had discussions with MEPs in Parliament. Bastien Bertrand refers to a report which found that there are 60 industry lobbyists for every environmental activist: "So this is a real struggle." And this struggle seems hopeless, according to Rosalie Rousseau, because the superiority of the other side is overwhelming:

> We lobby basically against, you can imagine, against the nuclear industry. We lobby against all the coal industries. We lobby against everything that is heavy industry. We lobby against the car industry. And I think those are the hardcore people, so to speak.

The battle is thus being waged against an overwhelming army of lobbyists. "If you keep it to Brussels and this small world, the industry outnumbers us. And they throw millions and millions every year," says Colin Cooper. This army works restlessly on its own cause and continuously provides supplies: "They have the best lobbyists in town on their payroll. They work every day, day and night. And when they need extra support because the shit hits the fan, they go and hire."

NGO staff are evidently upset about the imbalance of power. It is true that these conditions also have something to do with their own inability to provide the appropriate resources. But most of all, they provide an opportunity to criticise the industry for being solely focused on its own success and for ruthlessly exploiting the inequality of power relations. It is accused of fighting mercilessly ("hardcore") and using all means. However, NGO employees do not go so far as to accuse the industry of illegal and corrupt forms of lobbying; in fact, such references appear very rarely in the interviews. Kate Kavanagh says that she may be naive, but she assumes that little money "changes hands." Media reports from earlier years that parliamentarians were "paid for amendments" seem to be exceptions, according to her. The scope for possible attempts to exert influence is nevertheless very large and the possibilities

for control or regulation rather small. "If they want to influence someone, they will do it, and they will do it by any means," judges Rosalie Rousseau, elaborating that such means can range from simple favours to gifts to bribes. The number of complaints is thus high, but they essentially revolve around one point: The industry uses its power in an illegitimate way to push through (questionable) special interests. This playing to one's strength is perceived as illegitimate because it runs counter to the alignment of interests in the sense of open, fair, and balanced decision-making.

The criticism of particularist lobbying already reveals which ideas of legitimacy the representatives of the universalist legitimacy strategy have internalised. This strategy is characterised by interest articulations that are relevant to the common good, normative relevance criteria, and a model of advocatory activism. Rosalie Rousseau has this dividing line between different goods in mind when she assigns industry the representation of "particular interests," while NGOs "advocate for a general public good." Dominique Dubois emphasises this common good orientation when he describes that for many of his colleagues, as well as for him personally, it is important "that you can also really influence policymaking, and achieve what you are convinced is good for society." He insinuates that common goods, such as a clean environment, human rights, or a fairer society, require a different kind of lobbying. While NGOs also strive for issue-specific expertise and invest considerable energy in generating informational resources (information, analyses, and reports), as was elaborated in Chapter 6, they put a particular emphasis on the common goods they advocate. This entails that the role of direct representation or representativeness as legitimation resources are downplayed. In fact, although many NGOs have memberships and circles of supporters, NGOs do not necessarily represent the particular interests of their members or supporters. They advocate for collective goods in which members and supporters have an interest but need not be directly affected. This changes the view of representation. Lobbying is not primarily understood as the representation of interests, but as advocacy for the interests of third parties or all. Humanitarian NGOs advocate for the rights of impoverished people in the Global South, environmental organisations for animate and inanimate nature as well as for future generations, consumer protection organisations for the concerns of all consumers, and the like. This means that the focus of the work is not on one's own particular interests but on the commitment to the rights of others or of all. In this respect, the respondents emphasise that idealistic values are at the centre of political work, but also determine personal motivation to work. At least that is how Colin Cooper sees it:

> I think you need to be passionate about what you do. You need to believe, I mean, we, I could earn three, four more times than what I'm earning now if I worked for the industry. If I do it, it's because there's some other rewards that are not monetary, strictly speaking, right?

He clearly downplays the role of monetary incentives, arguing that salary is not the reason why he continues to work at the NGO. Here, passion comes first: Ultimately, "you have to believe in something" to work at an NGO. Bastien Bertrand sees it similarly, adding that this passion is inherent in his biography. When asked why he works for an NGO, he always has to go back to his school days when he was involved with a human rights group and his family with the trade union movement. "And I think I kind of grew up with that. I mean, it wasn't like explicit that you would work for I guess the betterment of society or whatever. But that's kind of the atmosphere I grew up in." Working for an NGO does not seem to be a profession that can be left as soon as better pay beckons. It is more of a vocation that is fuelled by one's belief, learned values, and inner passion. It feeds on an advocacy mandate that champions the interests of third parties. And it is based on idealistic motives that are primarily concerned with altruistic purposes and not with particular utilities.

The universalist legitimacy approach of NGOs corresponds to an advocacy strategy that refers to collective goods and values that concern or could interest everyone. Recourse to the political public sphere is therefore not only a strategic instrument to build up political pressure and to add emphasis to one's own lobbying. It also has reasons of legitimacy, as public opinion can give symbolic recognition to the NGOs' claim to stand up for collective goods and values. The importance of the political public sphere as a political and legitimising resource also explains why NGOs are increasingly turning to the European Parliament. According to them, it is the more political body that is more sensitive to public opinions. The European Commission, on the other hand, is much more resistant to this access. For Kate Kavanagh, at least, the Commission is made up of officials who are far removed from the local citizenry. "And they only talk to industry, predominantly." With Parliament, the situation is different:

> At least the MEP, once a month, he has to go home and speak to his constituents. And he has to get re-elected. And there are votes where you can say, look, you did this or that. So I mean, they're just much more accountable, MEPs.

The chances of success are much better with the Parliament, as many other NGO representatives agree. The NGOs are thus located at the heteronomous pole of the field. They seek to politicise the discussions and negotiations anchored in the arcane realm of the autonomous pole between the Commission, expert bodies, and lobby groups. They claim that the highly specialised and technical-regulatory issues dealt with there are based on one-sided predeterminations and power asymmetries. This would prevent political controversies between diverging interests and objectives, and would lead to political measures that would have negative consequences for the common good. The legitimate means of politicisation include scandalising political

grievances and mobilising the public. Only public opinion can ultimately have a beneficial effect on political will-formation and decision-making in the political field as a whole via the European Parliament.

Legitimatory relativisations

The universalist legitimisation strategy can be found in this ideal-typical form in the interview material, as has been shown in the accounts presented. However, it is significant that the NGO representatives do not wholeheartedly support this idea of legitimisation but rather add numerous relativisations. For one, it is remarkable that the NGOs adhere to a moderation and cooperation requirement anchored in the field, which has already been addressed (Section 6.4). Rosalie Rousseau, for example, describes the NGOs tongue-in-cheek as the do-gooders: "The motivations are certainly always the same, we want to save the world." This motivation makes the work more complicated, because "it is much easier to lobby for particular interests than for our, let's say, general welfare-oriented I-want-to-save-the-world arguments." She says that effective lobbying is largely based on factual work that has to provide facts and figures. In such a context, the passion of do-gooders is apparently counterproductive. She says that if you wanted to be taken seriously, it did not help to stand up for "ladybirds" and "paint some flowers, I don't know, to put it quite meanly," but you had to fight with "hardcore bandages." According to this view, the world of lobbying is not for romantics and idealists.

The interview material contains several such caricaturing and disparaging remarks about a passionate commitment to saving the world. The recurring references from the NGO camp itself make it clear that there seem to be red lines within the Brussels arena for what constitutes befitting behaviour on the part of a lobbyist. This is Colin Cooper's perception: "You have to have an environmental consciousness. But you don't have to be (.) well, some people call it the greenies." He does not consider himself a "tree hugger," which means he does not cross the line of what is judged to be appropriate. Kate Kavanagh is also aware that there are such reservations. She recounts an event attended by many industry representatives. Although she had not even made any radical demands during her speech, "somehow you felt the room go something like this: Oh, the next thing she's going to do is, you know, chain herself to the microphone or something."

Precisely because NGOs belong to the passionate do-gooders, these lobbyists seem to perceive a need for moderation. Political or moral passions should not determine attitude and behaviour. In a regulatory environment where working on the issue is so politically pivotal, such behaviour is quickly judged as inappropriate and illegitimate. For this reason, Colin Cooper is also quick to reject radical positions. He has nothing against industry, trade, or economic development. He would rather build on changes in the economy. The work of NGOs with a more radical approach can be helpful in individual cases. "You need them. And they are very clever, and they pick, let's say, cars

and CO_2." He claims that this strategy is successful to a certain extent. He, however, rejects such an approach: "that's not our game. Our game is to talk to people here." It makes little sense to cut the thread of conversation with other players in the field through a confrontational lobbying style that seeks the public stage. This moderation is not only politically opportune; it is also a manifestation of legitimate forms of political lobbying. Those who want to belong to the inner circles shaping the future of Europe need to show their commitment to a rational, factual, dialogical, and compromise-oriented approach of political advocacy.

7.4. Conclusion: lobbying between professionalism and activism

The antagonistic notions of legitimacy illustrate how much the contest for political influence is also a struggle for legitimacy. Interest groups do mobilise organisational power to make their voices heard and, if necessary, will also use it to force such attention. But from the perspective of the lobbyists who are in daily contact with the EU institutions, it is equally important to be accepted and recognised by the staff as a legitimate representation of societal interests. There are good reasons why credibility is regarded in the profession as one of the central resources that lobbyists have to cultivate in order to be taken seriously and to be able to exert influence effectively (see Section 6.3). In this respect, symbolic recognition determines access to formal procedures and informal forms of political will-formation and decision-making.

However, the struggle for legitimacy is also so pronounced because interest groups work in a highly politicised field where lobbying can become problematic and be scandalised at any time. As has been shown, those employed by industry interests and NGOs tend to adopt different legitimation strategies that seek to occupy different poles of the political field. The industry is oriented towards the arcane realm of legislative consultation processes, while NGOs seek proximity to the political public and parliamentary debate. The legitimation discourse conducted in the professional field replicates the bipolar structure of the political field, as the respective legitimation strategies correspond to the claims to validity of the autonomous or heteronomous pole.

The discourses of legitimacy in the professional field are above all discourses of delegitimisation. Lobbyists seek to discredit the legitimacy and reputation of the other side in order to minimise its chances of exerting influence. Industry is oriented towards the arcane realm of legislative consultation processes and seeks to discredit the representativeness and expertise of NGOs in order to minimise their influence on the autonomous pole. The NGOs, in turn, seek proximity to the political public and parliamentary debate in order to expose the particular interests of industry that are detrimental to the common good and to immunise parliamentary deliberations from its influence. It is true that interest groups have significantly expanded their activities to influence policymaking in both poles of the political field (Junk 2015; Dür and Mateo 2016; Keller 2018; Kastner 2018; de Bruycker

and Beyers 2019). But their struggle for legitimacy at the same time limits these opportunities again, because their attempts at justification reproduce reciprocal perceptions of a fundamental legitimacy deficit. Industry lobbying is accordingly considered potentially ruthless, and the representation of NGOs' interests incompetent.

These struggles for legitimacy illustrate where the limits of an occupationalisation and professionalisation of European lobbying lie. Previous research had already shown that EU affairs professionals might congregate around a general commitment to ethical regulations (Barron and Skountridaki 2022), but have different opinions about the specific regulations (Bunea 2017; Bunea and Gross 2019) and disagree also in regard to the legitimacy of professional lobbying (Michel 2013). Opposition has been attributed particularly to social movement organisations and civic groups defending an advocatory and anti-professionalist approach (Offerlé 2005; della Porta and Parks 2013). The findings presented in this chapter corroborate these indications, because they suggest that the profession vacillates between professionalism and activism. A majority of EU affairs professionals endorses the value and legitimacy of professionalised lobbying, but a minority voices considerable criticism, highlighting risks and calling for stronger regulation. Lobbyists working for NGOs and civic groups are more likely to express this criticism compared to business interests, but an appreciation of professionalised lobbying is also widely shared among their ranks. This ambivalence is connected with the professional status these representatives develop within the field of European lobbying. NGO lobbyists share similar occupational profiles and professional skills with the employees of other, even competing interest groups. They have thus developed a professional habitus and status that have a strategic significance in the field of lobbying, as they improve accessibility to the EU institutions and facilitate working relations with their staffs.

The acceptability and legitimacy of professionalised lobbying, however, remains precarious within the entire field. Lobbyists have internalised fundamentally different notions of legitimacy, which is why they argue with full conviction that particularist or universalist forms of representation and claims to validity are the only legitimate ones. The fact that these divergent ideas are not interchangeable is because they correspond to the structural position that the interest groups occupy in the political field. For those representing industry interests, a particularistic idea of representation and an idea of legitimacy based on expertise are pivotal, because they are much more involved in technical-regulatory consultations with the EU Commission than NGOs, which with their universalist idea of legitimacy are much more frequently part of public debates and political mobilisations.

Professionalism and activism are two fundamentally different orientations of action that feed on these opposing types of legitimacy. A lobbyism that focuses on professionalism sees the professional status as an essential prerequisite for its own work. Lobbying has a vocational nature and should

be understood as rational-methodical work that is subject to postulates of effectiveness and efficiency. The work draws on practitioners' own professional knowledge bases and, in order to produce political effects, must also be expertise based. Lobbyism that focuses on activism deliberately distances itself from such a professionalist orientation. It is precisely the business-like approach of mainstream lobbying that makes professionalism objectionable. Activism has a non- or anti-professional impetus, instead relying on authenticity and preferring the engagement of active citizens who have made this their life's work. The work must be advocacy oriented, which is why identification with the issue, passion for the cause, and commitment to the common good are central. The choice of means does not depend on considerations of effectiveness and efficiency but on political and ethical assessments.

The professional field is characterised by these antagonistic orientations. Within activism, a position has taken root in the occupational field that is sceptical to critical of professionalism. However, the preponderance of professionalism is overwhelming. It is true that the occupational field is not entirely professionalist, as this chapter has shown. Professionalism is firmly anchored in the core area in particular and thins out visibly the more advocacy moves to the margins. Activist lobbying, however, only occurs as a minority discourse and as a marginal professional phenomenon. Consequently, the line of conflict runs between a professionalist majority discourse and an activist minority position.

This divisional structure illustrates that the organisational field only partially shapes the legitimacy discourses of the occupational field. It is true that the dividing line between professionalism and activism is also the line of conflict between industry interests and NGOs. However, this would not sufficiently explain the balance of power, as many NGO employees also seem to subscribe to the professionalist consensus. The occupationalisation and professionalisation of the field of work has reached the broad sector of NGOs, which is why many of their representatives have also joined the ranks of EU affairs professionals. In their efforts to gain professional recognition, they settle into an occupational field that is essentially defined by professionalism.

8 European lobbying
Findings and implications

European lobbying is a specialised profession backed up by its own labour market. This occupationalisation is a consequence of the great demand for qualified staff. Since the early years of the European Communities, there has been an increase in the number of European interest groups that have opened representations, provided funding, and recruited lobbying staff to carry out political interest representation on a permanent basis. In this way, they have produced an occupational group that has purposefully and systematically taken on the task of influencing political decisions in a growing number of policy fields. The previous chapters explored this field of activity and the staff working in it in detail in order to gain new insights into the structures, functioning, and implications of European interest representation. European lobbying is not only to be understood as an organisational field of European interest groups, but also as an occupational field that is characterised by a specific staff structure and by its own career paths, knowledge bases, practices, and discourses. That is why it was necessary to clarify the extent to which this field of activity has been exposed to professionalisation.

Such processes were identified on three different dimensions – the specialised occupation, the shared knowledge, and the legitimating values –, even though the levels of professionalisation diverged considerably between them. The data and results presented show that European lobbying has its own specialised occupation and is also largely limited to this type of work. With regard to the extent of occupationalisation, it was found that the activity is almost universally carried out as full-time paid employment, overwhelmingly in senior and executive positions, while unpaid part-time activity and voluntary work have been marginalised. The level of professionalism in terms of shared knowledge is also high, as lobbying is predominantly conducted by those who have completed university education, and have internalised a coherent body of knowledge and a shared professional habitus. However, the level of convergence is less comprehensive, because there is more variation in regard to the opinions about the mandatory skills and practices necessary to effectively influence European politics. When looking at professionalism as a value, the process is far advanced but less conclusive. The large majority of European Union public affairs professionals believes

in an ethos of professionalism and the legitimacy of lobbying, but this discourse is confronted by a minority of lobbyists that dissociates itself from the business-like approach of mainstream lobbying and rallies for an advocatory, in part even anti-professional form of interest representation. The results therefore paint a nuanced picture of an occupational field characterised by a high degree of occupational integration and professional closure, particularly among the younger generations, but with divisional lines that keep professionalisation as an unfinished and precarious process exposed to considerable internal contentiousness.

8.1   Lobbying as an occupational field

The assumptions of occupationalisation and professionalisation could be confirmed in principle, but with reservations and additions. First, it was found that the group of practitioners is heterogeneous in many respects. Interest groups recruit their staff from a variety of occupational groups, as the respective job profiles require different competences and experience. Legal and institutional barriers to entry are low, as lobbying is not a protected professional title and the European Union (EU) only regulates the working relationships between lobby groups and EU institutions, but not the occupational field and its activities. Furthermore, the employment situation cannot be considered equally secure for all staff. While a substantial proportion of lobbyists have well-paid jobs, the remuneration of many other employees is not nearly as good. Finally, those involved use different job and activity titles to circumscribe their professional identity, even though most of them revolve around the concept of interest representation. There is little support for the demand to establish a separate professional organisation for EU affairs professionals in order to represent their interests. After all, those working in the field are at cross-purposes on the question of the legitimacy of lobbying, as people working for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and business interests share different views on which interest groups and forms of lobbying should be considered legitimate. In all these aspects, it is hardly possible to speak of a clearly contoured profession with a uniform professional identity and mission, thus corroborating current research findings about many modern professions (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2008; Muzio and Kirkpatrick 2011; Noordegraaf 2015 and 2020).

However, the heterogeneity of personal backgrounds and professional self-images is only one aspect, and not one that would have prevented the occupational field from developing clear contours and structures. In this respect, the homogeneity of the forms of employment should be mentioned in particular. Overall, paid full-time positions dominate the field of activity of EU affairs. Practitioners also very often take on management and leadership positions within their associations, company representations, NGOs, consultancies, or think tanks. The area of responsibility is consequently assigned to senior or top management. This also explains the dominance of academic educational

certificates and the inclination to highlight the exclusivity of professional know-how and the distinctiveness of the professional habitus.

The income situation is striking, as the annual income in many cases does not correspond to the senior duties and responsibilities profile of the positions. In many cases, management positions are remunerated with an annual income of less than 50,000 euros. In NGOs, this also concerns the executive levels. Moderate, in part also low incomes are prevalent among female staff, but especially among the younger cohorts. Given the cost of living in Brussels, those concerned also do not consider such low salaries to be particularly good. The academic EU affairs labour market is therefore characterised by internal inequalities, which impact on the opportunities to exert political influence, given that the standing of lobbyists within the Brussels world tends to correlate with social status.

These inequalities, however, do not seem to reduce job satisfaction. Only a small number of practitioners see their professional future outside this field of work and only one in a hundred is determined to look for a job outside EU affairs. This is partly because the labour market offers sufficient opportunities for development and promotion. Career changes are indeed frequent among the staff. The career paths show a high degree of professional mobility, as EU affairs professionals not only report about former positions within the EU institutions, but have usually also moved between associations, companies, NGOs, consultancies, or public authorities (Chapter 5). At the same time, employees acquire competences and resources (expertise, insider knowledge, or contact networks) that increase their market value and make advancement within the occupational field more likely. Acquiring and accumulating this professional capital is described as time- and labour-intensive (Sections 6.3 and 6.4), and thus also increases the willingness to remain in the occupational field. Finally, professional socialisation largely takes place in the course of professional practice, which is why employees develop a professional identity and credo that are closely linked to European affairs.

Overall, the field of work is characterised by homogeneity and heterogeneity in equal measure. This duality has to do with the fact that European lobbying is an organisational as well as an occupational field. It was found that the lines of differentiation within the organisational field are partly responsible for the heterogeneity of the occupational field. It makes a difference in many respects whether EU affairs professionals work for trade associations, company representations, NGOs, public bodies, consultancies, law firms, or think tanks. Especially the division of the organisational field into two camps – the business-oriented interest groups on the one hand, and the civil society or movement-affiliated NGOs on the other – provides a fault line that impacts the occupational field in several ways. The professional nature of interest representation is the dominant element in all interest groups, but well-paid jobs predominate among business interests, while precarious income and insecure forms of employment are more common among NGOs. The degree of professionalisation is also high in all groups as soon as one looks at

educational backgrounds and careers, shared knowledge, and practices, but the staff of business-related interest groups feel more strongly affiliated to the field of public affairs and lobbying than the staff of NGOs. And although most staff have a professionalist ethos that confers recognition and legitimacy on their own actions, representatives of NGOs are often more critical of lobbying than those of trade associations and company representations.

However, this juxtaposition must not be overstated. Lines of differentiation were identified that are related to the occupational field itself. Lobbyists differ primarily on the basis of their occupation-specific characteristics. The core of the profession is made up of people who focus on lobbying in the narrower sense, have a full-time job, have internalised profession-specific knowledge, believe in a professionalist ethos, and consider lobbying to be consistently politically legitimate. These people work for a wide variety of interest groups. The occupational field frays visibly towards the edges, as the share of lobbying-specific activities decreases, job profiles and knowledge bases diverge, and the belief in one's own professionalism and the legitimacy of lobbying dwindles. Lobbying is consequently a significantly integrated occupational field on the inside, and visibly opens up towards the outside. The core staff seeks to react to these blurred boundaries with a professional closure of the occupational field, which draws on accumulating profession-specific capitals and developing a professional habitus. In this respect, one can speak of a collective professionalist mission within the core of the field, whose aim is to maintain and improve the occupational situation, standing, and legitimacy, and thus ultimately also the preferential access to consultative processes of the European institutions, within an arena that is unvaryingly described as overcrowded, fragmented, and highly competitive.

Figure 8.1 attempts to visualise these findings by characterising European lobbying as a field of work that breaks down along two axes. One axis shows how strongly people rate the work of European public affairs as a professionalised activity. The other axis indicates the extent to which people are affirmatively disposed towards political lobbying as an activity. The graph is based on the survey data collected, namely on the average approval ratings for professional ethos and the political legitimacy of lobbying – two variables that were explained in detail in Sections 7.1 and 7.2. However, only a selection of quantitatively significant groups of people is shown. The low approval ratings (that is, a consistently critical attitude towards lobbying and a low professional ethos) are missing from this chart, because they are minority positions held either by individuals or small factions of professionals.

The core of the occupational field is made up of practitioners who are characterised by a strongly developed professional ethos and a very approving attitude towards lobbying. In the graph, this core area is located in the upper left quadrant and is represented by the employees of the consultancy firms and trade associations. The staff of NGOs, on the other hand, are located on the other side of the spectrum, because here the professionals identify only moderately with a professionalist work ethos and also express some reservations
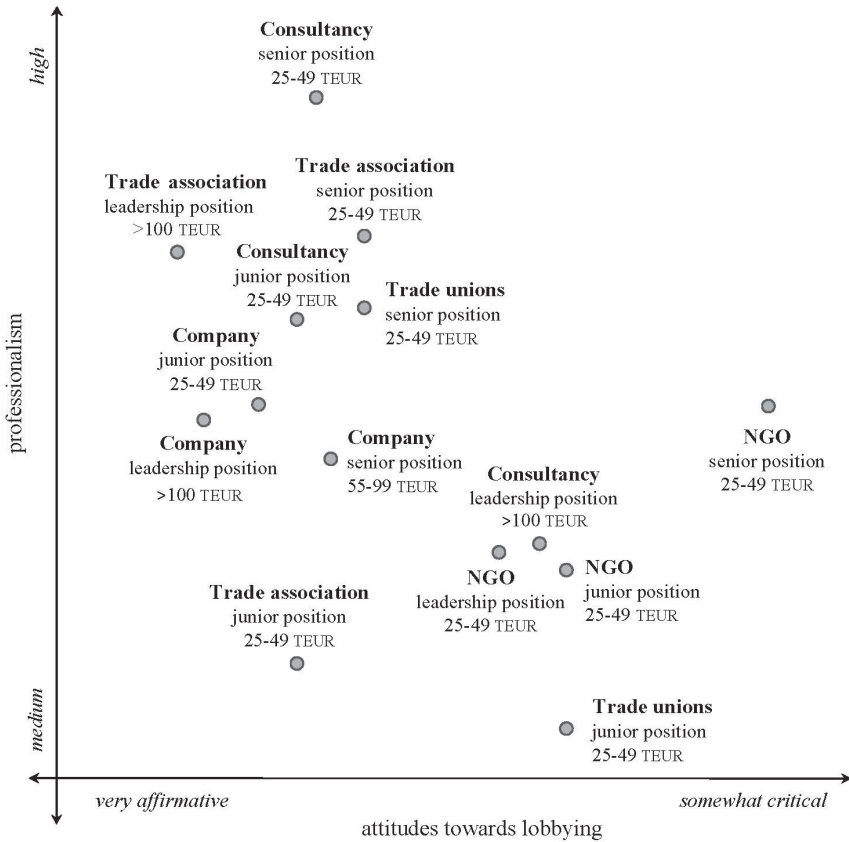
Figure 8.1 Position of professionals in the field of work (selection).

about European lobbying more frequently. In more precise terms, it is possible to detect the main contributor or driving force behind the professionalisation project of European public affairs: Essentially, these are the employees in senior management positions who work at consultancies, trade associations, and company representations. For most consultancy employees, such a project is unreservedly supported because their own professionalism is not based on interest-related factual and technical expertise, but on specialised knowledge of effective and efficient forms, practices, and methods of interest representation. The staff of trade associations and company representations differ from the employees of consultancies, because they express a professionalist credo less clearly. This has to do with factual and technical expertise. Effective interest representation among trade associations requires not only skills in dealing with the instruments and techniques of lobbying, but also sufficient familiarity with the issues, facts, and controversies relevant to the interests.

The concrete contents thus complement and qualify the relevance of professionalism as the main orientation for action and self-image. Nevertheless, this staff also follows a professionalist approach. The data at least show that it is very positive about political interest representation and its further professionalisation.

Among the employees of the NGOs, the professionalisation project is supported much less, although their relationship to the issue is ambivalent. On the one hand, the NGO representatives share professionalist convictions. For them, too, European public affairs is an independent field of knowledge and activity that requires specific knowledge and skills. They, too, are interested in preserving their own autonomy and personal freedom of action. The criticism of European lobbying that is repeatedly voiced from the ranks of NGOs even feeds on the fundamental conviction that occupationalisation and professionalisation increases the political effectiveness of lobbying. According to this perspective, professional – possibly even vocational or commercial – lobbying is politically more effective than unprofessional lobbying. The practice can only be criticised because more money and more experienced staff necessarily give the financially strong interest groups an advantage in the process of political decision-making. Regularly, respondents see the need for more professionalism in the work of their NGOs in order to be able to keep up with the competition between interest groups.

The attitude of the employees of European NGOs is therefore ambivalent, because they recognise the greater effectiveness of professionalised lobbying, but do not see occupationalisation and professionalisation as viable and/or do not support it unconditionally. An occupational and professional representation of interests seems to be much more in conflict with the forms of work, organisational structures, and self-images. NGOs do not necessarily represent clearly defined members and identifiable groups of people, unlike trade associations and company representations, which see themselves as representing specific sectors or companies. The employees of NGOs regard themselves as mouthpieces for general social issues and problems (environmental and nature protection, climate, human rights, poverty, or peace), which are supported by broader, sometimes more diffuse networks of organised members and non-organised sponsors or supporters. They certainly see themselves as lobbyists, but their claim is more advocacy- or activist-oriented. First, the interests and demands of a membership base, broader social movements, or non-participating but affected third parties should be represented. In addition, their work is also about educating the public, mobilising civil society, changing ways of thinking and behaving, and supporting social change. Occupationalisation and professionalisation counteract the advocacy and activist remit, as such a change would limit the work to legislative lobbying. Those working in NGOs are not only likely to have greater problems convincing their members and supporters of such professionalisation. Their orientation towards advocacy and activism also seems to impose a corresponding self-restriction on them.

Figure 8.1 reveals, however, that the divisional lines between business interests and NGOs are not the only relevant ones, and that the occupational field has produced its own lines of differentiation that determine how practitioners relate to professionalisation. The job profiles are particularly important in this respect, because they show that it makes a difference on which hierarchical level (measured by decision-making competences) and which salary group (measured by annual income) the employees are placed. The differences between part-time and full-time work and between salaried and self-employed practitioners were not included in the figure, as they were less relevant with regard to professionalisation.

EU affairs professionals initially have a similar job profile, as they are almost entirely in paid and salaried full-time employment. In the majority of cases, they belong to the higher levels of the hierarchy with managerial responsibility, have far-reaching decision-making powers in their job area, and hold senior positions. As Figure 8.1 shows, however, these hierarchy levels are unevenly distributed across the occupational field. It is noteworthy that employees in lower positions – in the case of EU affairs: middle hierarchical levels with limited scope for decision-making – are among the less professionally oriented within the respective sectors and show greater scepticism towards European lobbying. The only exceptions are the employees of the company representations. The same applies to management staff, as the top executives in most sectors support the professionalist ethos only to a limited extent, even though they regard lobbying as a legitimate activity. It is above all senior management in executive positions that is characterised by higher approval ratings on both axes.

In fact, employees in senior management positions form the backbone of European lobbying, and not those working in leadership positions and lower hierarchical levels. This striking feature is related to the task profiles. Lobbyists are hired to manage an independent unit with a limited number of staff. They run the operations of a Brussels representation office, a European association, a consultancy firm, a think tank, or are responsible for a specialist department in a larger company or association. These management positions indicate own areas of responsibility with rather a large scope for action. Lobbyists do have to coordinate closely with the company management, member associations, or clients, and sometimes they also have to take instructions. However, they are considered to be the competent experts in charge of EU affairs.

This also makes it possible to identify the main drivers or proponents of professionalisation in terms of job profiles. It is the lobbyists in senior management who represent professionalism most wholeheartedly and thus act as central proponents of a consistent occupationalisation and professionalisation of the field. This corresponds to the findings of the sociology of professions. It argues that professionalism feeds on two basic trends in the modern world of work – the growing importance of knowledge work on the one hand and the greater importance of dependent employment in rationalised, bureaucratised,

and managerially controlled organisations on the other (Evetts 2003). The professionalisation of knowledge work does mean that professionals are subject to (remote) control by training institutions, certification authorities, professional representative bodies, and state regulatory agencies (Miller and Rose 1990; Fournier 1999). However, the propagation of a professionalist ethos and the orientation towards professional knowledge, standards of action, and values lend themselves to claiming professional autonomy within formalised organisational structures and work processes and to expanding the scope for action (Svensson 2006; Evetts 2013). Senior management in particular can use this to position itself as a shaping element that has special competences in leading and representing organisations (Muzio et al. 2011; Noordegraaf 2015 and 2020).

These observations are particularly true for the field of EU affairs – for three reasons. First, the interest of European lobbyists in professionalisation is connected to the labour market, because the latter has established selection criteria and occupational inequalities that confer advantages on those who have the necessary professional capital and habitus. Furthermore, the labour market is highly competitive, as good jobs are sought after and fought over – this was reported by respondents when describing their careers. Those who have professional ambitions will most likely follow the path of professionalisation in order to apply for more attractive and better remunerated positions with more prestigious interest groups. Moreover, those who occupy senior management positions are likely to appreciate the value of professionalism as a means of justifying their position.

Secondly, professionalism is closely linked to the question of professional autonomy and scope for action. When employees emphasise that EU affairs require a high degree of professionalism, they also do so in particular towards their superiors, members, or clients. European lobbyists have to justify their field of activity to their donors as a demanding permanent activity that requires the use of resources (see Section 6.3). At the same time, it is important to protect one's own position from unauthorised interference. EU affairs professionals reported that they constantly have to coordinate with superiors, members, or clients. However, they also experience this coordination as a nuisance as soon as superiors, members, or clients raise nonsensical concerns, treat their own actions with ignorance, or try to limit their scope for action. Individuals in senior management who claim decision-making authority in their own field of activity are therefore particularly sympathetic to professionalism.

Thirdly, the professionalisation of the field of work provides employees with benefits of distinction. It is important to bear in mind that the field of activity of EU affairs is unanimously described as overpopulated. This implies that the many conflicting interest groups are in competition with each other for attention and influence. This has individual consequences for the employees, because their personal success depends on being listened to and taken seriously as discussion partners. Lobbyists attach great importance to

professionalism, as it helps them distinguish themselves from unprofessional behaviour. Moreover, they struggle for "true professionalism" in order to be recognised as part of the smaller circle of insiders. EU affairs professionals in senior management positions have a particularly positive attitude towards this professionalisation, because they represent the field of lobbying towards their clients and addressees. A professional appearance offers them the chance to improve their professional standing and thus their personal influence within the Brussels world compared to the many other practitioners.

This professional distinction is ultimately based on the logic of social – especially socio-structural – distinction, since social background and social class open up professional benefits of distinction. Almost all EU affairs professionals are university graduates, speak several languages, have spent time abroad, and are integrated into extensive networks of contacts. They belong to a socio-structurally favoured occupational group that vies for reputation and influence. This suggests socio-structural complementarities to the actors within the EU, as the staffs of the EU institutions also have a very high degree of academisation (Haller 2008; Poehls 2009; Beauvallet-Haddad et al. 2016; Allertseder 2016).

A professional habitus that signals academic equivalence brings several advantages to EU affairs professionals. First, respondents agree that lasting working relationships and stable contact networks are crucial for effective lobbying. Those who can communicate with the members of the EU institutions on an equal socio-structural footing have a better chance of being included in the policy-specific forums and networks of political decision-making. Moreover, credibility is a very important asset for European lobbyists. Credibility seems to be unequally distributed, as it is more likely to be attributed to an academic habitus. It is those working in senior management with academic credentials who can more credibly represent the interests of a sector, a company, or a population group to the EU institutions in a way that is appropriate, politically adequate, and legally relevant. After all, the ability to signal professionalism is eminently important in a professional context. Academically educated EU affairs professionals in well-paid senior management positions have a very good chance of displaying such professionalism convincingly. At the least, they attach great importance to embodying expertise, credibility, persuasiveness, and leadership. In this way, they improve their chances of being listened to and taken seriously as a discussion partner. European lobbying is therefore only politically effective if it is socially effective.

8.2. Lobbyists, interest groups, and institutions

The present study helps to better understand the occupational dimension of European lobbying, thus supporting current research debates that are placing more emphasis on the staff. It was able to corroborate the considerable professionalisation of the field in its various dimensions. Sector-specific studies had already shown that European interest groups are interested in employing

suitable staff to effectively represent their conflicting interests, which is why the occupationalisation of European lobbying is a general trend affecting all interest sectors (Klüver and Saurugger 2013; van Deth and Maloney 2011; Heylen et al. 2020; Coen and Vannoni 2020). A comprehensive survey of EU affairs professionals and a series of in-depth interviews confirmed these findings for the entire field. European lobbying has thus become an occupation that generalises full-time paid employment and marginalises any other forms of (unpaid, voluntary, or part-time) interest representation. Additionally, lobby groups converge in their decision to place European lobbying in the hands of senior or executive positions, even though considerable inequalities between business groups and other interests emerge in terms of income levels. These inequalities are indicative of the financial scope of business interests, but also of their attempts to confer their representatives with the necessary status and standing to effectively represent their interests in their dealings with the European institutions (Laurens 2018; Beauvallet et al. 2022).

The data presented in the previous chapters were also able to provide more systematic insights into dimensions of the professionalisation of European lobbying that transcend the occupational aspects and relate to the professional expertise. With regard to education, the findings showed that the trend towards academic credentials is not only limited to the area of business interests, as identified by individual studies (Michel 2005a; Laurens 2018: 89–94; Coen et al. 2021: 154f.; Michon 2022), but has also reached the other interest sectors, including NGOs and civic groups. This complements the observation that European lobbying is populated by senior and executive positions, many of them well paid. It ultimately shows that EU public affairs is increasingly in the hands of an academic elite.

Additionally, professionalisation is streamlining relevant knowledge, particularly professional skills and practices. The findings corroborate that information and informational skills are an important currency of interest representation, and a specificity of the European situation, as argued by previous research (Bouwen 2002; Koehler 2019: 9–39; Coen et al. 2021: 129–138), also with reference to the diverging experiences of US-American lobbying (Bertrand et al. 2014; Healey 2016). However, this assessment privileges institutional demands for information and neglects the role of other skills and practices cherished by European lobbyists, among them policy process knowledge, networking, and the management of organisational resources. The preceding chapters confirmed that European lobbyists agree that what you know is particularly relevant when relating with the European institutions, especially because European policymaking is described as a regulatory and technical matter. But for European lobbyists, knowing the institutional fabric of European politics is the most decisive element, clearly delimiting their professional expertise as unique. Additionally, whom you know is weighted more clearly than what you know, as the ability to network and establish stable contacts is portrayed as an essential prerequisite of effective lobbying. Information and informational skills are ineffective without this.

These findings underline that the professionalisation of EU affairs is not limited to the occupational dimension. The constitution of professional knowledge is particularly relevant, because lobbyists are interested in delimiting and establishing European lobbying as a specialised area and distinct unit, also within their own (national and/or European) organisations, thus insisting on the specific expertise, contacts, and routines this work requires (Michel 2005a; Vargovčíková 2015; Avril 2018; Cloteau 2018; Kerduel 2022). This confirms that European lobbyists are policy intermediaries or brokers, whose professional performance depends on their ability to defend and expand work-related discretion and autonomy within their respective organisations. They are thus actively engaged in adapting and shaping their organisation's policy agenda (Stephenson and Jackson 2010; Lowery and Marchetti 2012; Tyllström and Murray 2021). And conforming to the data presented in previous chapters, they are also important proponents of a further professionalisation of European lobbying within their own lobby groups and consultancies.

The relevance of EU affairs professionals as drivers of professionalisation was also corroborated with regard to the interplay of different explanatory factors, analysed within the preceding chapters. The analyses of the survey data showed that organisational membership has an impact on professionalism in all three dimensions. In fact, employees working for business interests and consultancies are most professionalised in terms of employment status, know-how, and attitudes. This supports the assumption that European lobbyists are representatives of their organisation, therefore guided by the interests and agendas of their clients, as the US-American experience indicates particularly clearly (Heinz et al. 1997; Healy 2016). Also in the European context, the professional conditions and ambitions of the staff are co-determined by the interest groups or consultancies for which they work, as previous studies suggest (Michel 2005a; Offerlé 2005; van Deth and Maloney 2011; Laurens 2018; Coen et al. 2021; Beauvallet et al. 2022). However, the importance of sectors should not be overemphasised because differences between interest groups were less pronounced for lobbying practices, professional knowledge, and attitudes when compared to cross-sectoral characteristics. This was true for the organisations' financial and human resources, which have been found to be an important determinant of lobbying performance (Klüver 2012; Kohler-Koch et al. 2017). Human resources turned out to be relevant for the frequency of lobbying activities and the experienced acceptance by EU institutions, but this aspect is put into perspective by lobbyists' income. It is not the general resource endowment that seems to make the difference, but mainly the allocation of lobbying tasks to well-paid positions at senior or executive levels.

At the same time, professionalisation is also influenced by the institutional context of the EU. The analyses showed that the physical presence in the political capital of the EU and the insertion into the Brussels bubble are not a factor that boosts professionalism among lobbying staff. Institutional demands, however, play an important role, because the intensity of relations with the EU Commission clearly correlates with the occupational and

expertise-related dimension of professionalism. Lobbyists maintaining regular contacts with representatives from the European Commission are the most professionalised in terms of full-time, well-remunerated, and high-ranking positions, and hold a strong belief in the specificity of their professional knowledge. These findings are in line with previous studies that have already highlighted the importance of the European institutions and the specific policy style they have established (Coen 2004; Woll 2009; Klüver et al. 2015a; Mazey and Richardson 2006a and 2015), particularly compared with the US-American experiences. In this respect, three aspects seem to be particularly important. In the US, lobbying is strongly focused on the two chambers of Congress and a two-party winner-takes-all system in constant election mode. This boosts the role of money and fundraising, contacts and networking, partisan affiliations and strict client orientation, fierce competition, and aggressive approaches of interest representation (Woll 2006 and 2012; Mahoney 2008; Healy 2016; Michalowitz 2019). In the EU, lobbyists are confronted with institutional complexities and multilevel structures, a regulatory policy orientation with distinct policy domains, and lower levels of ideological divisions and partisanships. This incites them to build technical expertise and long-standing and collaborative working relationships, as corroborated also by the analyses in the previous chapters. Additionally, European lobbyists tend as well to place more emphasis on professional discretion and autonomy, also in regard to their clients, because they insist that their professionalism is a prerequisite to effectively influencing the European institutions.

These observations underline that professional needs, interests, and ambitions are highly relevant to explaining the professionalisation process of European lobbying. In line with the evidence provided by the sociology of professions (Larson 1977; Freidson 1986; Georgakakis 2002; Schinkel and Noordegraaf 2011; Evetts et al. 2012), the empirical analyses of the previous chapters were able to show that professionalisation is a mission tied strongly to a high-ranking class of professionals. They have vested interests in convincing their headquarters, members, or clients of the need to expand lobbying budgets and human resources, and to guarantee professional discretion and autonomy for their work. They firmly believe that their work requires an exclusive body of knowledge, and are clearly engaged in accumulating professional capitals and generating a professional habitus that grants them a preferential status within the profession. Moreover, they are fervent believers in the value of professionalism and the acceptability and legitimacy of lobbying. The main driver behind this factor seems to be the social class status, because professionalisation is a process that allows them to improve their occupational situation, grant their professional standing more weight, and justify their professional mission even in the face of public scrutiny and criticism.

The findings of this study thus underline the important role EU affairs professionals play in the formation and development of European lobbying. While these insights do not disregard the relevance of the organisational and

institutional contexts within which these professionals operate, they show that European lobbyists should be taken more seriously as a significant factor. Their role is particularly strong when it comes to the integration and closure of the field, given that they reinforce the ongoing homogenisation of professional work and the apparent marginalisation of non-professionalised forms of interest representation. Despite the diversity of personal backgrounds and the general openness of the field towards newcomers and career changers, European lobbyists are important gatekeepers that impose an established professional practice and professional socialisation and thus ensure a remarkable integration and closure of the occupational field. Although EU affairs professionals have not developed a common professional identity, disagree with regard to the legitimacy of professional lobbying, and are far from internalising a professional esprit de corps, they share professional interests, practices, and beliefs that actively promote professional homogenisation and closure of the field.

8.3. Implications

The world of EU affairs has mixed feelings about the occupationalisation and professionalisation of European lobbying. Advantages are mentioned on the one hand, as these processes increase the clout and capacity for action of the interest groups and open up recognition and distinction advantages for the workforce. On the other hand, negative implications are also mentioned. Essentially, two problem areas can be identified. On the one hand, reference is made to the growing imbalances within the field of organised interests, and on the other hand, to an unfettered competition of interests that magnifies deficits in control and democracy.

The first area of concern relates to the professional closure of the field of European interest representation. This noticeably limits the political participation of certain societal circles, for example with regard to the involvement of non-professionals or weakly organised interests. EU affairs professionals have this risk in mind themselves, as the primacy of professionalism favours financially stronger interests and thus exacerbates the imbalances in the organisational field. It was pointed out several times that the big trade associations and business representations have a large budget, employ more staff, and buy consultancy services, which enables them to show more presence, generate more attention, and build up more pressure. Beyond quantitative imbalances, it is assumed that this also creates qualitative inequalities. For instance, respondents assume that professionalism increases the effectiveness of European lobbying and improves the chances of exerting political influence. This means that less professionalised interest representation falls behind.

However, the frequently voiced criticism of the structural imbalances and disadvantages does not go unchallenged. Professionalisation comes into play at this point, because it seems to improve the effectiveness of lobbying across interest camps. Many NGOs have also followed the process of

occupationalisation and professionalisation in order to lobby more effectively. This approach seems to be successful, because not only the representatives of the NGOs but also those of the trade associations and companies share this assessment. They complain that the often-used self-portrayal of NGOs as David fighting Goliath does not reflect the political clout of NGOs and their actual influence on European legislation. Furthermore, the pro-business lobby groups complain that companies and business associations often represent different interests or conflicting demands as soon as it comes to concrete decision-making issues. They experience these antagonisms as an unnecessary weakening of their own side and an unwelcome strengthening of the other side. Finally, they criticise that the number of lobby groups effectively representing their interests in consultation processes is so large that it is no longer possible to identify which groups the committees and bodies within the European institutions have listened to. The consultation processes are seen as non-transparent, sometimes branded as token events that turn out to be ineffective for their own interest representation.

In sum, EU affairs professionals experience that political success is contingent. And even if they identify imbalances in the organisational field that should be considered, corrected, or compensated for in order to guarantee open, transparent, and fair decision-making (Persson and Edholm 2018; Sanchez Salgado 2019), they do not believe that these imbalances necessarily determine the probability of success in individual cases. It is therefore not possible to conclusively clarify whether the occupationalisation and professionalisation of EU affairs causally promote or attenuate the structural imbalances within the organisational field. In quantitative terms, this seems to be true, because financially strong lobby groups can use the instruments of occupationalised interest representation consistently (Skorkjær Binderkrantz and Rasmussen 2015; Hermansson 2016). In qualitative terms, however, it is by no means certain that these investments will translate into political influence and thus pay off (Dür et al. 2015; Diogini 2017: 152; Chalmers 2019). The European lobbyists also referred to this in the interviews.

More problematic, however, is the fact that the process of occupationalisation and professionalisation are changing the forms of interest representation and limiting political participation. Occupationalisation contributes to the fact that the representation of interests is increasingly placed in the hands of EU affairs professionals who can consolidate their role as professional gatekeepers. This does not per se exclude individual citizens, informal initiatives, non-profit voluntary organisations, or social protest movements. In practice, however, these actors will have to adapt their language and activities to the rules and customs of the Brussels world of EU affairs in order to exert influence effectively (Tarrow 1998: 190–192; Lahusen 2004; della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Petrova and Tarrow 2007). They may be forced to resort to professional specialists themselves. This development is consequential, as it excludes spontaneous, unconventional, and/or more confrontational forms of

political expression and participation. Especially interests that are difficult to organise and financially weak are marginalised or overheard.

The peer pressure between professionals is also problematic for those groups that have successfully established themselves within the EU and are engaged in professional lobbying. The more EU affairs professionals adapt to and engage with the Brussels world, the more they seem to distance themselves from the concerns of their members, supporters, or followers. This alienation from their own base does not only apply to NGO workers, who maintain such grounding by default. It was also addressed by the employees of the business representations and trade associations. Professional closure consequently risks undermining the acceptance and legitimacy of European lobbying within its own ranks. For this reason, EU affairs professionals are keen to coordinate with their members, supervisors, or clients. Only in this way can they convey to them – as well as to the European institutions – that they represent the concerns and interests adequately and authentically.

The divide between the European interest groups and their base can be bridged in this way, but not closed. European interest representation remains a translation or transmission process that has a European slant, as EU affairs professionals are an integral part of the Brussels world. This implies that they dock the interests, concerns, or demands of their base to European policies and consequently adapt them to the political agenda, language, and legislative system of the EU institutions. European lobbying is partly responsible for a substantial metamorphosis of the content and forms of interest representation, because local or national concerns must become European ones in order to influence legislative processes within the EU. The professionalisation of European lobbying could therefore contribute to increasing the detachment of European politics from the political debates and controversies within the Member States.

The occupational field of European lobbying not only increases the problems of translation, mediation, and representation in external relations – between the Brussels world of EU affairs and the societal interests within the Member States. It also exacerbates a second area of concern, as professionalisation sets in motion a spiralling escalation in the EU's internal relations that leads to disruption and tension. This problem is also critically regarded by EU affairs professionals. Indeed, the growth and pluralisation of the field of organised interests exacerbates the competition between lobby groups and unleashes the struggle for political influence. It is remarkable that in such a situation, the interest groups rely on the occupationalisation and professionalisation of their work in order to effectively represent their own demands in the clamour of competing voices. In fact, the number of active lobbyists has increased significantly since the 1980s (Berkhout and Lowery 2008; Woll 2005; Greenwood and Dreger 2013). In addition, the accounts of the EU affairs professionals indicate that the current rivalry has led to a battle of materials that requires the allocation of additional funds and people (see Section 6.3).

There are no institutional limits to this escalation. Given the complexity of the EU, it would even be rational for the individual interest groups to further expand their activities, as there are many more members of the Commission, more parliamentarians, and more Permanent Representations than they – and their political opponents – have been able to address so far. The upward momentum is only defined by the limits of what the interest groups themselves can provide in terms of material and human resources. However, lobbyists are certainly interested in shifting these limits, as the frequent complaints about insufficient budgets have shown. After all, their work is geared towards being professionally successful. Voluntary self-restraint would be conceivable for the occupational field under certain circumstances, but hardly feasible on an individual basis, since those working in EU affairs are professionally measured by whether they succeed in exerting effective political influence on European legislative procedures.

This continuous increase is definitely seen as a political problem by the actors involved. Decision-making within the EU becomes a complex and unpredictable undertaking, as different interest groups seek to speed up, slow down, or prevent legislative projects; present conflicting findings, assessments, and proposals; and seek to criticise or scandalise each other's actions. This unleashes a conflict dynamic that contributes to the growing politicisation of the EU. Such a process seems to accompany European integration in general (Hooghe and Marks 2009; de Wilde and Zürn 2012), because while the population of the Member States was initially still indifferent or approving of the European unification project (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970; Hix 1999: 135), the honeymoon period seems to have come to an end since the 1990s. The EU finds itself at the centre of political controversies and conflicts over the fundamental direction of national and European policies. Not only has the pro-European consensus within the party landscape of the Member States started to crumble (Hutter and Grande 2014; Baldassari et al. 2020), but the populations are also divided in their opinions and attitudes towards the EU (Hobolt and de Vries 2016). This development is due to a variety of factors, among which European lobbying is not necessarily one of the driving forces. However, the more intense competition between European interest groups contributes to politicisation, specifically because it provides political actors with occasions to scandalise European politics. The spiralling escalation even shifts this readiness for scandalisation into the organisational field, because, as has been reported, EU affairs professionals are in principle prepared to question the credibility and legitimacy of the respective other side and, in some cases, even willing to cast doubt on these publicly in the event of conflict. European politics consequently becomes the cause of a latent permanent conflict. The more intense the dispute between competing interests for political influence, the more likely it is that political actors (politicians, interest groups, media representatives) will be tempted to paint adopted decisions as the result of one-sided or improper lobbying efforts.

The European institutions have tried to minimise these dysfunctionalities and legitimacy risks without making access to the EU institutions noticeably more difficult. In this context, they were particularly concerned with making relations between the EU institutions and interest groups more transparent. The EU Commission has introduced rules of conduct for its top staff, with a two-year waiting period to delay a move to a company or interest group. In turn, most interest groups are required to sign up to a transparency register and disclose organisational information if they want a badge that gives them access to the European Parliament. The EU Parliament has furthermore decided to ban secondary employment with lobby groups. In addition, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who are responsible for shaping parliamentary opinion in upcoming legislative procedures (the so-called rapporteurs) must report all meetings with interest groups in order to disclose publicly which discussions preceded parliamentary deliberations and votes. In this way, the EU puts the regular working relations between interest groups and EU institutions under the spotlight. This is a reaction to the criticism voiced by watchdog NGOs and media representatives critical of lobbying. It is striking that problematic cases of illegitimate, even illegal forms of lobbying are rarely the focus of interest. The Worst EU Lobbying Award, which was introduced in 2005, also no longer plays a high-profile role. Progress has obviously been made in sanctioning misconduct among top European staff and in curbing scandalous working practices among interest groups, although malpractices and scandals are not unheard of. In fact, problems remain that are repeatedly addressed in the public discourse. This is about structural imbalances, inequalities between lobby groups, lack of transparency in the work of interest groups, and possible conflicts of interest of top staff and staff of the EU institutions (Alter-EU 2011; Corporate Europe Observatory 2011).

It is still unclear what contribution European lobbyists can and will make to solving these imbalances. At least it can be said what effects the occupationalisation and professionalisation of the field of work are likely to have. On the one hand, positive effects can be assumed. European lobbyists who wish to establish a successful career are likely to have an interest in avoiding professional misconduct. After all, they work in a fairly small environment in which the actors involved tend to know each other. They are also under the scrutiny of competing interest groups, NGOs critical of lobbying, and media keen for scandal. Trust and credibility are described as assets that are central to professional success and must not be frittered away lightly. Professionalised working practices do not eliminate illegitimate and illegal practices, but at least seem to reduce the number of cases worthy of scandalisation.

On the other hand, it can be assumed that the professionalised occupational field will cement the aforementioned imbalances in the long term. EU affairs professionals are likely to avoid obvious misconduct, but their professional track record depends on success, and in this specific case that means unconditional effectiveness in influencing policymaking processes. Even the

professionals surveyed are sceptical about whether the regulatory and control measures introduced by the EU will show the desired results (also Bunea 2017). The transparency rules are insufficient to achieve comprehensive disclosure. A whole number of actors are exempt from registration, such as political parties, churches, religious associations, and public or local authorities, but also lawyers, who can refer to the legally protected right of lawyer–client confidentiality, client protection, and secrecy. However, lobbyists also report that it is quite possible for interest groups to talk to politicians or officials without registering and hence remain under the radar. This option is not necessarily driven by the desire to deliberately undermine the transparency rules. It corresponds to the historically grown and firmly established practices of participation of societal interests, which are essentially based on openness, informality, and cooperation and are perceived as beneficial by both sides.

The European institutions have declared themselves in favour of transparency as a guiding principle, but are reluctant to implement this consistently. Offensive and systematic regulation would be conceivable and could draw on a bundle of measures that are the subject of public discourse: mandatory registration of all interest groups, consistent disclosure of all working relationships on the part of EU officials and MEPs, mandatory declaration or a ban on all (paid or voluntary) sideline activities, and/or compensatory participation of weak interest groups. The European institutions have repeatedly discussed such measures, but have so far refrained from implementing them, citing fundamental reservations as well as pragmatic considerations. As such, the circle of lobby groups cannot be clearly defined, as the boundaries between interested influence and disinterested consultation are fluid. Moreover, stricter regulations could jeopardise the fundamental openness and accessibility of the EU institutions, from which weak or weakly organised interests in particular also benefit. Questions concerning an adequate review of the implemented measures and a consistent sanctioning of misconduct would also have to be clarified. After all, the policy of consistent disclosure could intensify the competition between interest groups even further and overburden the legislative processes of decision-making even more.

Some of the arguments raised seem to be largely motivated by a desire to maintain established practice. Those who rely on institutional regulation and control are pushing for structural changes to the status quo in order to address the deficits in governance and legitimacy of political decision-making. Less is said about how to deal with the fundamental problem of adequate participation of societal actors in the politics of the EU. Stronger control could help address, monitor, and limit more firmly structural inequalities in the field of organised interests. On the practical level, however, the regulatory measures would only shift the imbalances and exclusions and not solve them. It is possible that they would contribute to the further occupationalisation and professionalisation of EU affairs by increasing the demands on professional work and raising the barriers for non-professional forms of political participation and interest representation. Simple solutions should therefore not

be assumed. European lobbying has indeed established itself as a decidedly European occupational field and has been able to further develop over time. It has evolved a professional practice that closes itself off externally and as a result increases the distance to political participation in the national and local environment. Against this background, it can be assumed that the fundamental criticism of European lobbying – and consequently: of the political reality of the EU – will remain. This criticism is an important corrective mechanism, but it should not obscure the fact that the occupational field has proven that it can always adapt to changing circumstances and requirements. This is why it is important to have continuous critical oversight.

References

Abbott, Andrew (1988). *The System of Professions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Adler, Emanuel (2008). "The Spread of Security Communities: Communities of Practice, Self-Restraint, and NATO's Post-Cold War Transformation." *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(2): 195–230.

Albareda, Adrià (2020). "Prioritizing Professionals? How the Democratic and Professionalized Nature of Interest Groups Shapes Their Degree of Access to EU Officials." *European Political Science Review*, 12(4): 485–501.

Allertseder, Sebastian (2016). *Elite zwischen Europäisierung und nationalen Mustern. Die Karrierewege der Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Alter-EU (2010). *Bursting the Brussels Bubble: The Battle to Expose Corporate Lobbying at the Heart of the EU*. Brussels: Alter-EU.

Alter-EU (2011). *Block the Revolving Door: Why We Need to Stop EU Officials Becoming Lobbyists*. Brussels: Alter-EU.

Alter-EU (2018). *Corporate Capture in Europe. When Big Business Dominates Policy-Making and Threatens Our Rights*. Brussels: Alter-EU.

Alwin, Duane F. and Ryan J. McCammon (2003). "Generations, Cohorts, and Social Change." In: Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan (eds.), *Handbook of the Life Course. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research* (pp. 23–49). Boston: Springer.

Antoniades, Andreas (2003). "Epistemic Communities, Epistemic and the Construction of (World) Politics." *Global Society*, 17(1): 21–38.

Asher, Brad (1994). "The Professional Vision: Conflicts over Journalism Education, 1900-1955." *American Journalism*, 11(4): 304–320.

Avril, Lola (2018). "Lobbying and Advocacy: Brussels' Competition Lawyers as Brokers in European Public Policies." *Sociologický Časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 54(6): 859–880.

Bache, Ian and Matthew Flinders (eds.) (2004). *Multi-Level Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baker, David P. (2018). "Where Have All the Elites Gone? Cultural Transformation of Elitism in the Schooled Society." In: Claire Maxwell, Ulrike Deppe, Heinz-Hermann Krüger and Werner Helsper (eds.), *Elite Education and Internationalisation* (pp. 25–39). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Balanyá, Belen, Anne Doherty, Olivier Hoedeman, Adam Ma'anit, Erik Wesselius and Anne Marie Doherty (2000). *Europe Inc: Regional & Global Restructuring and the Rise of Corporate Power*. London: Pluto Press.

Baldassari, Marco, Emanuele Castelli, Matteo Truffelli and Giovanni Vezzani (eds.) (2020). *Anti-Europeanism. Critical Perspectives Towards the European Union*. Cham: Springer.

Balme, Richard and Didier Chabanet (2008). *European Governance and Democracy. Power and Protest in the EU*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Balosin, Miruna Andreea (2016). "Lobbying in the European Parliament. 'Revolving Door' and 'Cooling off' Phenomena." *Online Journal Modelling the New Europe*, 19: 78–89.

Barron, Andrew and Jean-Marc Trouille (2015). "Perceptions of Institutional Complexity and Lobbyists' Decisions to Join Lobbying Coalitions – Evidence from the European Union Context." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 34: 73–90.

Barron, Andrew and Lila Skountridaki (2022). "Toward a Professions-Based Understanding of Ethical and Responsible Lobbying." *Business & Society*, 61(2): 340–371.

Bartolini, Stefano (2009). "The Nature of the EU Legitimacy Crisis and Institutional Constraints: Defining the Conditions for Politicisation and Partisanship." In: Olaf Cramme (ed.), *Rescuing the European Project: EU Legitimacy, Governance and Security* (pp. 57–70). London: Policy Network.

Bath, Michael G., Jennifer Gayvert-Owen and Anthony J. Nownes (2005). "Women Lobbyists: The Gender Gap and Interest Representation." *Politics & Policy*, 33(1): 136–152.

Bauer, Theresa (2017). *Responsible Lobbying. Conceptual Foundations and Empirical Findings in the EU*. Wiesbaden: Springer/Gabler.

Baumgartner, Frank R. (2007). "EU Lobbying. A View from the US." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 482–488.

Beauvallet, Willy, Cécile Robert and Elise Roullaud (eds.) (2022). *EU Affairs. Sociologie des lobbyistes européens*. Brussels: Peter Lang.

Beauvallet-Haddad, Willy, Sébastian Michon, Victor Lepaux and Céline Monicolle (2016). "The Changing Composition of the European Parliament: MEPs from 1979 to 2014." *French Politics*, 14: 101–125.

Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (1994). *Reflexive Modernity, Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Cambridge: Polity.

Béland, Daniel, Michael Howlett and Ishani Mukherjee (2018). "Instrument Constituencies and Public Policy-Making: An Introduction." *Policy and Society*, 37(1): 1–13.

Bell, Daniel D. (1973). *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*. New York: Basic Books.

Benz, Arthur and Yannis Papadopoulos (eds.) (2006). *Governance and Democracy: Comparing National, European and International Experiences*. London: Routledge.

Berkhout, Joost, Brendan J. Carroll, Caelesta Braun, Adam W. Chalmers, Tine Destrooper, David Lowery, Simon Otjes and Anne Rasmussen (2015). "Interest Organizations across Economic Sectors: Explaining Interest Group Density in the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 462–480.

Berkhout, Joost and David Lowery (2008). "Counting Organized Interests in the European Union: A Comparison of Data Sources." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(4): 489–513.

Berkhout, Joost and David Lowery (2010). "The Changing Demography of the EU Interest System since 1990." *European Union Politics*, 11(3): 447–461.

Bernhagen, Patrick, Andreas Dür and David Marshall (2015). "Information or Context: What Accounts for Positional Proximity between the European Commission and Lobbyists?" *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 570–587.

Bernhagen, Patrick and Neil J. Mitchell (2009). "The Determinants of Direct Corporate Lobbying in the European Union." *European Union Politics*, 10(2): 155–176.

Bertrand, Marianne, Matilde Bombardini and Francesco Trebbi (2014). "Is It Whom You Know or What You Know? An Empirical Assessment of the Lobbying Process." *American Economic Review*, 104(12): 3885–3920.

Beyers, Jan (2008). "Policy Issues, Organisational Format and the Political Strategies of Interest Organisations." *West European Politics*, 31(6): 1188–1211.

Beyers, Jan, Laura Chaqués Bonafont, Andreas Dür, Rainer Eising, Danica Fink-Hafner, David Lowery, Christine Mahoney, William Maloney and Daniel Naurin (2014). "The INTEREURO Project: Logic and structure." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 3(2): 126–140.

Beyers, Jan and Iskander de Bruycker (2018). "Lobbying Makes (Strange) Bedfellows: Explaining the Formation and Composition of Lobbying Coalitions in EU Legislative Politics." *Political Studies*, 66(4): 959–984.

Beyers, Jan, Rainer Eising and William Maloney (2008). "Researching Interest Group Politics in Europe and Elsewhere: Much We Study, Little We Know?" *West European Politics*, 31(6): 1103–1128.

Beyers, Jan, Danica Fink-Hafner, William Maloney, Meta Novak and Frederik Heylen (2020). "The Comparative Interest Group-Survey Project: Design, Practical Lessons, and datasets". *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 9(3): 272–289.

Beyers, Jan and Bart Kerremans (2007). "Critical Resource Dependencies and the Europeanization of Domestic Interest Groups." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 460–481.

Beyers Jan and Bart Kerremans (2012). "Domestic Embeddedness and the Dynamics of Multi-Level Venue-Shopping in Four EU Member-States." *Governance*, 25(2): 263–290.

Bianco, Santino L. (2016). "Informal Decision-Making in the EU: Assessing Trialogues in the Light of Deliberative Democracy." In: Jaap de Zwaan, Martijn Lak, Abiola Makinwa and Piet Willems (eds.), *Governance and Security Issues of the European Union* (pp.75–92). The Hague: Asser Press.

Bicchi, Federica (2011). "The EU as a Community of Practice: Foreign Policy Communications in the COREU Network." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18(8): 1115–1132.

Bitonti, Alberto and Phil Harris (2017), *Lobbying in Europe: Public Affairs and the Lobbying Industry in 28 EU Countries*. London: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Bitonti, Alberto, Phil Harris and Claudia Mariotti (2017). "Lobbying and Public Affairs in Europe: Some Comparative Remarks." In: Alberto Bitonti and Phil Harris (eds.), *Lobbying in Europe. Public Affairs and the Lobbying Industry in 28 EU Countries* (pp. 351–362). London: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Bohnsack, Ralf (2014). "Documentary Method." In: Uwe Flick (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 217–233). London: Sage.

Bolton, Sharon C. and Daniel Muzio (2008). "The Paradoxical Processes of Feminization in the Professions: The Case of Established, Aspiring and Semi-Professions." *Work, Employment & Society*, 22(2): 281–299.

Börzel, Tanja A. (1999). "Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanization in Germany and Spain." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37: 573–596.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1987). "The Force of Law: Toward a Sociology of the Juridical Field." *Hastings Law Journal*, 38(5): 805–863.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1993). *Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1996). *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1998). *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (2020). "The Field of Power and the Division of the Labour of Domination." In: Francois Denord, Mikael Palme and Bertrand Réau (eds.), *Researching Elites and Power. Theory, Methods, Analyses* (pp. 33–44). Cham: Springer.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic J. D. Wacquant (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bouwen, Pieter (2002). "Corporate Lobbying in the European Union. The Logic of Access." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(3): 365–390.

Bouwen, Pieter (2007). "Competing for Consultation: Civil Society and Conflict between the European Commission and the European Parliament." *West European Politics*, 30(2): 265–284.

Bouwen, Pieter and Margaret McCown (2007). "Lobbying versus Litigation: Political and Legal Strategies of Interest Representation in the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 422–443.

Broadbent, Jane, Michael Dietrich and Jennifer Roberts (eds.) (1997). *The End of the Professions? The Restructuring of Professional Work*. New York: Routledge.

Broscheid, Andreas and David Coen (2007). "Lobbying Activity and Fora Creation in the EU: Empirically Exploring the Nature of the Policy Good." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 346–365.

Brown, David K. (2001). "The Social Sources of Educational Credentialism: Status Cultures, Labor Markets, and Organizations." *Sociology of Education*, 74: 19–34.

Bunea, Adriana (2017). "Legitimacy through Targeted Transparency? Regulatory Effectiveness and Sustainability of Lobbying Regulation in the European Union." *European Journal of Political Research*, 57(2): 378–403.

Bunea, Adriana and Vlad Gross (2019). "Regulating Lobbying through Voluntary Transparency Clubs: The Connoisseurs' Assessment. Evidence from the European Union." *Public Administration*, 97: 797– 813.

Burrage, Michael C. and Rolf Torstendahl (eds.) (1990). *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions.* London: SAGE.

Bursens, Peter (1997). "Environmental Interest Representation in Belgium and the EU: Professionalization and Division of Labour within a Multi-Level Governance Setting." *Environmental Politics*, 6(4): 51–75.

Büttner, Sebastian M., Lucia Leopold, Steffen Mau and Matthias Posvic (2015). "Professionalization in EU Policy-Making? The Topology of the Transnational Field of EU Affairs." *European Societies*, 17(4): 569–592.

Büttner, Sebastian M., Steffen Mau, Katharina Zimmermann and Ole Oeltjen (2018). "Benennungsmacht und Vokabular der EU-Governance." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 43: 37–63.

Carr-Saunders, Alexander Morris and Paul Alexander Wilson (1936). *The Professions*. Cambridge: Clarendon Press.

Cassidy, Bryan (2000). *European Lobbying Guide*. London: Thorogood.

Cawson, Alan (1997). "Big Firms as Political Actors: Corporate Power and the Governance of the European Consumer Electronics Industry." In: Helen S. Wallace and Alasdair R. Young (eds.), *Participation and Policy-Making in the European Union* (pp. 185–205). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Chabanet, Didier (2010). "When the Unemployed Challenge the European Union: The European Marches as a Mode of Externalization of Protest." In: Marco Giugni (ed.), *The Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe. Welfare States and Political Opportunities* (pp. 227–243). Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chalmers, Adam W. (2019). "Unity and Conflict: Explaining Financial Industry Lobbying Success in European Union Public Consultations." *Regulation & Governance*, online first, https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12231.

Charmaz, Kathy (2000). "Grounded Theory Methodology. Objectivist and Constructivist Qualitative Methods." In: Norman K. Deniz and Yvonna Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 509–535). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2nd edition.

Charmaz, Kathy (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Checkel, Jeffrey (ed.) (2009). *International Institutions and Socialization in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cheynis, Éric (2022). "Les carrières des représentants des intérêts de l'industrie pharmaceutique à Bruxelles: porosité des frontières et constitution d'un «groupe»." In: Willy Beauvallet, Cécile Robert and Elise Roullaud (eds.), *EU Affairs. Sociologie des lobbyistes européens* (pp. 121–144). Brussels: Peter Lang.

Cloteau, Armèle (2018). "The 'Angels of Europe': Corporate Public Affairs Employees as the In-House Entrepreneurs of Europe". *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 54(6): 837–857.

Coen, David (1997). "The Evolution of the Large Firm as a Political Actor in the European Union." *Journal of Public Policy*, 4(1): 91–108.

Coen, David (1998). "The European Business Interest and the Nation State: Large-firm in the European Union and Member States." *Journal of Public Policy*, 18(1): 75–100.

Coen, David (1999). "The Impact of U.S. Lobbying Practice on the European Business-Government Relationship." *California Management Review*, 41(4): 27–44.

Coen, David (2004). "Environmental and Business Lobbying Alliances in Europe: Learning from Washington?" In: David Levy and Peter Newell (eds.), *Business in International Environmental Governance: A Political Economy Approach* (pp. 197–220). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Coen, David (2007). "Empirical and Theoretical Studies in EU Lobbying." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 333–345.

Coen, David (2009). "Business Lobbying in the European Union." In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues* (pp. 145–168). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coen, David and Charles Dannreuther (2003). "Differentiated Europeanization: Large and Small Firms in EU Policy Process." In: Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization* (pp. 255–275). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coen, David and Jeremy Richardson (2009). "Learning to Lobby the European Union: 20 Years of Change." In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues* (pp. 3–15). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coen, David and Matia Vannoni (2016). "Sliding Doors in Brussels: A Career Path Analysis of EU Affairs Managers." *European Journal of Political Research*, 55(4): 811–826.

Coen, David and Matia Vannoni (2020). "The Strategic Management of Government Affairs in Brussels." *Business & Society*, 59(4), 612–641.

Coen, David, Alexander Katsaitis and Matia Vannoni (2021). *Business Lobbying in the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collins, Randall (1987). "Schließungsprozesse und die Konflikttheorie der Professionen." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 12(2): 46–60.

Commission of the European Communities (1992). *An Open and Structured Dialogue between the Commission and Special Interest Groups*. Brussels: SEC(92)2272 fin.

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

Corporate Europe Observatory (2011). *Lobby Planet. Brussels. The EU Quarter*. Brussels: CEO, revised and updated version, September 2011.

Countouris, Nicola (2007). *The Changing Law of the Employment Relationship: Comparative Analysis in the European Context*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Courty, Guillaume (2010). *Are There 30.000 Lobbyists in Brussels? A Sociological Approach of the European Directories of Interest Groups since 1960*. Brügge: UACES [last accessed 12.08.2022: www.uaces.org/archive/papers/abstract.php?paper_id=51].

Courty, Giullaume and Hélène Michel (2013). "Interest Groups and Lobbyists in the European Political Space: The Permanent Eurocrats." In: Didier Georgakakis and Jay Rowell (eds.), *The Field of Eurocracy* (pp. 166–187). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cross, Mai'a K. Davis (2013). "Rethinking Epistemic Communities Twenty Years Later." *Review of International Studies*, 39(1): 137–160.

de Bruycker, Iskander and Jan Beyers (2019). "Lobbying Strategies and Success: Inside and Outside Lobbying in European Union Legislative Politics." *European Political Science Review*, 11(1): 57–74.

de Wilde, Pieter and Michael Zürn (2012). "Can the Politicization of European Integration Be Reversed?" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50(1): 137–153.

Dehousse, Renaud, Ana Fernández Pasarín and Joan Plaza (2014). "How Consensual Is Comitology?" *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(6): 842–859.

della Porta, Donatella (2022). "Progressive Social Movements and the Creation of European Public Spheres." *Theory, Culture & Society*, July 2022, online first.

della Porta, Donatella and Manuela Caiani (2009). *Social Movements and Europeanization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

della Porta, Donatella and Louisa Parks (2013). "Contentious EU Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Protest Campaigns." In: Niilo Kauppi (ed.), *A Political Sociology of Transnational Europe* (pp. 19–49). Colchester: ECPR-Press.

della Porta, Donatella and Elena Pavan (2017). "Repertoires of Knowledge Practices: Social Movements in Times of Crisis." *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 12(4): 297–314.

della Porta, Donatella and Sidney Tarrow (2005). "Transnational Processes and Social Activism: An Introduction." In: Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow (eds.), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (pp. 1–18). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Dent, Mike and Stephen Whitehead (eds.) (2002). *Managing Professional Identities: Knowledge, Performativity and the "New" Professional*. London: Routledge.

Derber, Charles and William A. Schwartz (1991). "New Mandarins or New Proletariat? Professional Power at Work." In: Pamela S. Tolbert and Stephen R. Barley (eds.), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations: Organizations and Professions* (pp. 71–96). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell (1983). "The Iron Cage Revisited: Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review*, 48: 147–160.

Dionigi, Maja Kluger (2017). *Lobbying in the European Parliament: The Battle for Influence*. Cham: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Djelic, Marie-Laure and Sigrid Quack (2010). "Transnational Communities and Governance." In: Marie-Laure Djelic and Sigrid Quack (eds.), *Transnational Communities. Shaping Global Economic Governance* (pp. 3–36). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Drake, William J. and Kalypso Nicolaïdis (1992). "Ideas, Interests, and Institutionalization: 'Trade in Services' and the Uruguay Round." *International Organization*, 46(1): 37–100.

Dunlop, Claire (2010). "Epistemic Communities and Two Goals of Delegation: Hormone Growth Promoters in the European Union." *Science and Public Policy*, 37(3): 205–217.

Dunlop, Claire (2014). "The Possible Experts: How Epistemic Communities Negotiate Barriers to Knowledge Use in Ecosystems Services Policy." *Government and Policy*, 32(2): 208–228.

Dür, Andreas (2008). "Measuring Interest Group Influence in the EU: A Note on Methodology." *European Union Politics*, 9(4): 559–576.

Dür, Andreas, Patrick Bernhagen and David Marshall (2015). "Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose?" *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(8): 951–983.

Dür, Andreas and Gemma Mateo (2012). "Who Lobbies the European Union? National Interest Groups in a Multilevel Polity." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(7): 969–987.

Dür, Andreas and Gemma Mateo (2016). *Insiders versus Outsiders. Interest Group Politics in Multilevel Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Durkheim, Émile (1997). *The Division of Labour in Society.* New York: Free Press.

Eberwein, Wolf-Dieter and Sabine Saurugger (2013). "The Professionalization of International Non-governmental Organizations." In: Rob Reinalda (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of International Organizations* (pp. 257–269). London: Routledge.

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

Eising, Rainer (2007). "The Access of Business Interests to EU Institutions: Towards Elite Pluralism?" *Journal of European Public Policy,* 4(3): 384–403.

Eising, Rainer (2008). "Clientelism, Commitees, Pluralism and Protest in the European Union: Matching Patterns?" *West European Politics*, 31(6): 1166–1187.

Eising, Rainer (2009). *The Political Economy of State-Business Relations in Europe. Interest Mediation, Capitalism and EU Policy Making*. London: Routledge.

Eising, Rainer (2016). "Studying Interest Groups: Methodological Challenges and Tools." *European Political Science*, 16(3): 291–305.

Eising, Rainer (2017). "Imperfect Public Goods and the Logic of Selective Exit in EU Interest Organisations." *West European Politics*, 40(5): 1025–1045.

Eising, Rainer and Beate Kohler-Koch (1994). "Inflation und Zerfaserung: Trends der Interessenvermittlung in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft." In: Wolfgang Streeck (ed.), *Staat und Verbände* (pp. 175–206). Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Eising, Rainer, Daniel Rasch and Patrycja Rozbicka (2015). "Institutions, Policies, and Arguments: Context and Strategy in EU Policy Framing." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 516–533.

Eising, Rainer, Daniel Rasch and Patrycja Rozbicka (2017). "National Interest Organisations in EU Policy-Making." *West European Politics*, 40(5): 939–956.

European Commission (2016). *Proposal for a Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register*. Brussels: COM(2016) 627 final.

European Commission (2018a). *Commission Decision of 31 January 2018 on a Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission*. Brussels: Official Journal of the European Union 2018/C 65/06.

European Commission (2018b). *Statistical Bulletin for COMMISSION on 01/10/ 2018*. Brussels: European Commission [last accessed 12.08.2022: https://ec.eur opa.eu/info/about-european-commission/organisational-structure/commission-staff_en].

European Institute for Gender Equality (2017). *Gender Statistics Database: Women and Men in Decision making*. Vilnius [last accessed 12.08.2022: http://eige.europa. eu/gender-statistics/dgs].

European Parliament (2003). *Lobbying in the European Union: Current Rules and Practices*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Research, Working Paper "Constitutional Affairs Series," AFCO 104 en.

European Parliament (2017). *Women in den European Parliament*. Luxembourg: DG Personnel, Equality and Diversity Unit.

European Parliament (2018). *Transparency Register: Who is Lobbying the EU?* [last accessed: www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20180108STO91 215/transparency-register-who-is-lobbying-the-eu-infographic].

European Parliamentary Research Service (2017). *European Parliament: Facts and Figures: Age of MEPT* [last accessed: https://epthinktank.eu/2014/11/26/european-parliament-facts-and-figures/4-age-of-meps-by-ms/].

Eurostat (2018a). *Population Aged 30–34 with Tertiary Educational Attainment (ISCED 5-8), 2018*. Eurostat: online data code: t2020_41.

Eurostat (2018b). *Share of the Population by Educational Attainment Level and Selected Age Groups, 2018*. Eurostat: online data code: edat_lfs_9903.

Evetts, Julia (2003). "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World." *International Sociology*, 18(2): 395–415.

Evetts, Julia (2008). "Introduction: Trust and Professionalism: Challenges and Occupational Changes." *Current Sociology*, 54(4): 515–531.

Evetts, Julia (2011). "A New Professionalism? Challenges and Opportunities." *Current Sociology*, 59(4): 406–422.

Evetts, Julia (2013). "Professionalism: Value and ideology." *Current Sociology*, 61(5/6): 778–796.

Evetts, Julia, Harald A. Mieg and Ulrike Felt (2012). "Professionalization, Scientific Expertise, and Elitism: A Sociological Perspective." In: K. Anders Ericsson, Neil Charness, Paul J. Feltovich and Robert R. Hoffman (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance* (pp. 105–124). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Faleg, Giovanni (2012). "Between Knowledge and Power: Epistemic Communities and the Emergence of Security Sector Reform in the EU Security Architecture." *European Security*, 21(2): 161–84.

Faulconbridge, James and Daniel Muzio (2008). "Organizational Professionalism in Globalizing Law Firms". *Work, Employment and Society*, 22(1): 7–25.

Featherstone, Kevin and Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.) (2003). *The Politics of Europeanization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Federal Statistical Office (2019). *Verdienste und Verdienstunterschiede: Durchschnittliche Bruttomonatsverdienste, Zeitreihe*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt [last accessed 12.08.2022: www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Arbeit/Verdienste/Verdienste-Verdienstunterschiede/Tabellen/liste-bruttomonatsverdienste.html].

Fligstein, Neil and Doug McAdam (2012). *A Theory of Fields*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fournier, Valérie (1999). "The Appeal to 'Professionalism' as a Disciplinary Mechanism." *Sociological Review*, 47(2): 280–307.

Franchino, Fabio (2005). "The Study of the EU Public Policy. Results of a Survey." *European Union Politics*, 6(2): 243–252.

Frank, David John and John W. Meyer (2020). *The University of the Global Knowledge Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Freidson, Eliot (1970). *Profession of Medicine: A Study in the Sociology of Applied Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freidson, Eliot (1986). *Professional Powers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedson, Eliot (2001). *Professionalism: The Third Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Galbreath, David J. and Joanne McEvoy (2013). "How Epistemic Communities Drive International Regimes: The Case of Minority Rights in Europe." *European Integration*, 35(2): 169–186.

Geiger, Andreas (2006). *EU Lobbying Handbook. A Guide to Modern Participation in Brussels*. Berlin: Helios Media.

Georgakakis, Didier (ed.) (2002). *Les métiers de l'Europe politique. Acteurs et professionnalisation de l'Union européenne*. Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg.

Georgakakis, Didier and Jay Rowell (eds.) (2013). *The Field of Eurocracy. Mapping EU Actors and Professionals*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gorman, Elizabeth H. and Steven P. Vallas (2020). "Introduction: Expertise and the Changing Structure of Professional Work." In: Elizabeth H. Gorman and Steven P. Vallas (eds.), *Professional Work: Knowledge, Power and Social Inequalities* (pp. 1–8). Bingley: Emerald.

Graziano, Paolo and Maarten P. Vink (eds.) (2007). *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Green Cowles, Maria (1996). "The EU Committee of AmCham: The Powerful Voice of American Firms in Brussels." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 3(3): 339–358.

Green Cowles, Maria (2002). "Large Firms and the Transformation of EU Business Associations: A Historical Perspective." In: Justin Greenwood (ed.), *The Effectiveness of EU Business Associations* (pp. 64–78). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Green Cowles, Maria, Thomas Risse and James A. Caporaso (eds.) (2001). *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Greenwood, Justin (1997). *Representing Interests in the European Union*. Houndmills: Macmillan.

Greenwood, Justin (2002). *Inside the EU Business Associations*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Greenwood, J. (2007). "Organized Civil Society and Democratic Legitimacy in the European Union." *British Journal of Political Science*, 37(2), 333–357.

Greenwood, Justin (2017). *Interest Representation in the European Union*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Greenwood, Justin and Joanna Dreger (2013). "The Transparency Register: A European Vanguard of Strong Lobby Regulation?" *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2(2): 1–24.

Grossman, Emiliano and Sabine Saurugger (2004). "Challenging French Interest Groups: The State, Europe and the International Political System." *French Politics*, 2(2): 203–220.

Guéguen, Daniel (2019). "Reshaping European Lobbying: How to Be One Step Ahead." In: Doris Dialer and Margarethe Richter (eds.), *Lobbying in the European Union. Strategies, Dynamics and Trends* (pp. 94–104). Cham: Springer VS.

Haas, Ernst B. (1968). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950–1957*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Haas, Peter M. (1992). "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination." *International Organization*, 46(1): 1–35.

Hafner-Fink, Mitja, Meta Novak, Danica Fink-Hafner, Rainer Eising, Daniel Rasch and Patrycja Rozbicka (2016). "Giants and Dwarfs: The Multilevel Lobbying Strategies of National Interest Organisations." *Teorija in Praska*, 53(3): 605–624.

Haibach, Georg (2000). "Governance by Committee: The Role of Committees in European Policy Making and Policy Implementation." *Eipascope*, 2000(2): 1–4.

Haller, Max (2008). *European Integration as an Elite Process: The Failure of a Dream?* New York: Routledge.

Hanegraaff, Marcel and Arlo Poletti (2021). "The Rise of Corporate Lobbying in the European Union: An Agenda for Future Research." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(4): 839–855.

Hanlon, Gerard (1998). "Professionalism as Enterprise: Service Class Politics and the Redefinition of Professionalism." *Sociology*, 32: 43–63.

Hanlon, Gerard (1999). *Lawyers, the State and the Market: Professionalism Revisited*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Business.

Harrison, Shirley (2003). "Debate Paper: Professionalism." *Journal of Communication Management*, 8: 213–215.

Harrits, Gitte Sommer and Lars Thorup Larsen (2021). "Advice Not Safely Ignored: Professional Authority and the Strength of Legitimate Complexity." *Sociology*, 55(5): 1015–1034.

Hayes-Renshaw, Fiona (2009). "Least Accessible But Not Inaccessible: Lobbying the Council and the European Council." In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson

(eds.), *Lobbying the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues* (pp. 70–88). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Healy, Robert (2016). "Working the Angles: The Job of a Corporate Lobbyist." In: Allan J. Cigler, Burdett A. Loomis and Anthony J. Nownes (eds.), *Interest Group Politics* (pp. 305–326). Los Angeles: SAGE, 9th edition.

Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert L. Nelson and Robert H. Salisbury (1997). *The Hollow Core. Private Interests in National Policy Making*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Héritier, Adrienne, Dieter Kerwer, Christoph Knill, Dirk Lehmkuhl, Michael Teutsch and Anne-Cécile Douillet (eds.) (2001). *Differential Europe: The European Union Impact on National Policymaking*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hermansson, Henrik (2016). "The European Commission's Environmental Stakeholder Consultations: Is Lobbying Success Based on What You Know, What You Own or Who You Know?" *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 5(3): 177–199.

Heylen, Frederik, Evelien Willems and Jan Beyers (2020). "Do Professionals Take Over? Professionalisation and Membership Influence in Civil Society Organisations." *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31: 1226–1238.

Hix, Simon (1999). *The Political System of the European Union*. Houndmills: Macmillan.

Hobolt, Sara B. and Catherine E. de Vries (2016). "Public Support for European Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19: 413–432.

Holman, Craig and William Luneburg (2012). "Lobbying and Transparency: A Comparative Analysis of Regulatory Reform." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 1(1): 75–104.

Holyoke, Thomas, Heath Brown and Timothy LaPira (2015). "Learnable Skills, or Unteachable Instinct? What Can and What Cannot Be Taught in the Lobbying Profession." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 4(1): 7–24.

Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks (2009). "A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus." *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1): 1–23.

Howlett, Michael and Kidjie Saguin (2021). "Instrument Constituency and Policy Transfer: How a Collective Actor Mediates the Transnational Movement of Policy Instruments." In: Osmany Porto de Oliveira (ed.), *Handbook of Policy Transfer, Diffusion and Circulation* (pp. 196–213). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hughes, Everett Cherrington (1958). *Men and Their Work*. Glencoe: Free Press.

Hughes, Everett Cherrington (1971). *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.

Hutter, Swen and Edgar Grande (2014). "Politicizing Europe in the National Electoral Arena: A Comparative Analysis of Five West European Countries, 1970–2010." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5): 1002–1018.

Ikenberry, John G. (1992). "A World Economy Restored: Expert Consensus and the Anglo American Postwar Settlement." *International Organization*, 46(1): 289–321.

Imig, Doug and Sidney Tarrow (1999). "The Europeanization of Movements? A New Approach to Transitional Contention." In: Donatella della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (pp. 112–133). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Imig, Doug and Sidney Tarrow (eds.) (2001). *Contentious Europeans: Protest and Politics in an Emerging Polity*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Inhetveen, Katharina (2012). "Translation Challenges: Qualitative Interviewing in a Multi-Lingual Field." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 8 (2): 28–45.

Jarman, Holly (2008). "The Other Side of the Coin: Knowledge, NGOs and EU Trade Policy." *Politics*, 28(1): 26–32.

Jarman, Holly (2011). "Collaboration and Consultation: Functional Representation in EU Stakeholder Dialogues." *Journal of European Integration*, 33(4): 385–399.

Joerges, Christian (2003). "Law, Economics and Politics in the Constitutionalisation of Europe." *Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies*, 5: 123–149.

Joignant, Alfredo (2019). *Acting Politics. A Critical Sociology of the Political Field*. London: Routledge.

Junk, Wiebke Marie (2015). "Two Logics of NGO Advocacy: Understanding Inside and Outside Lobbying on EU Environmental Policies." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(2): 236–254.

Junk, Wiebke Marie (2019). "Co-Operation as Currency: How Active Coalitions Affect Lobbying Success." *Journal of European Public Policy*, online first, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1631377.

Junk, Wiebke Marie, Jeroen Romeijn and Anne Rasmussen (2021). "Is This a Men's World? On the Need to Study Descriptive Representation of Women in Lobbying and Policy Advocacy." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(6): 943–957.

Karr, Karolina (2007). *Democracy and Lobbying in the European Union*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.

Kastner, Lisa (2018). "Business Lobbying under Salience – Financial Industry Mobilization against the European Financial Transaction Tax." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(1): 1648–1666.

Kauppi, Niilo (2003). "Bourdieu's Political Sociology and the Politics of European Integration." *Theory and Society*, 32(5/6): 775–789.

Kauppi, Niilo and Mikael Rask Madsen (eds.) (2013). *Transnational Power Elites: The New Professionals of Governance, Law and Security*. London: Routledge.

Kelle, Udo (2014). "Theorization from Data." In: Uwe Flick (ed.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 554–568). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Keller, Eileen (2018). "Noisy Business Politics: Lobbying Strategies and Business Influence after the Financial Crisis." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(3): 287–306.

Kerduel, Carole (2022). "Les représentants d'intérêts du secteur portuaire, un groupe en voie d'européanisation." In: Willy Beauvallet, Cécile Robert and Elise Roullaud (eds.), *EU Affairs. Sociologie des lobbyistes européens* (pp. 169–193). Brussels: Peter Lang.

Kertzer, David I. (1983). "Generation as a Sociological Problem." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 9: 125–149.

Kluger Rasmussen, Maja (2015). "The Battle for Influence: The Politics of Business Lobbying in the European Parliament." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(2): 365–382.

Klüver, Heike (2010). "Europeanization of Lobbying Activities: When National Interest Groups Spill Over to the European Level." *Journal of European Integration*, 32(2): 175–191.

Klüver, Heike (2011). "The Contextual Nature of Lobbying: Explaining Lobbying Success in the European Union." *European Union Politics*, 12(4): 483–506.

Klüver, Heike (2012). "Informational Lobbying in the European Union: The Effect of Organizational Characteristics." *West European Politics*, 35(3): 491–510.

Klüver, Heike, Caelesta Braun and Jan Beyers (2015a). "Legislative Lobbying in Context: Towards a Conceptual Framework of Interest Group Lobbying in the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 447–461.

Klüver, Heike, Christine Mahoney and Marc Opper (2015b). "Framing in Context: How Interest Groups Employ Framing to Lobby the European Commission." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 481–498.

Klüver, Heike and Sabine Saurugger (2013). "Opening the Black Box: The Professionalization of Interest Groups in the European Union." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 2(2): 185–205.

Knill, Christoph (2001). "Private Governance across Multiple Arenas: European Interest Associations as Interface Actors." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 8(2): 227–246.

Knill, Christoph and Dirk Lehmkuhl (1999). "How Europe Matters. Different Mechanism of Europeanization." *European Integration online Papers*, 3(7) [last accessed 12.08.2022: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=302746].

Koehler, Sebastian (2019), *Lobbying, Political Uncertainty and Policy Outcomes*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kohler-Koch, Beate (1997). "Organized Interests in the EC and the European Parliament." *European Integration online Paper* (EIoP): 1(9).

Kohler-Koch, Beate (2010). "Civil Society and EU Democracy: 'Astroturf' Representation?" *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17(1): 100–116.

Kohler-Koch, Beate and Vanessa Buth (2013). "The Balancing Act of European Civil Society: Between Professionalism and Grass Roots." In: Beate Kohler-Koch and Christine Quittkat (eds.), *De-Mystification of Participatory Democracy. EU Governance and Civil Society* (pp. 114–148). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kohler-Koch, Beate, Peter Kotzian and Christine Quittkat (2017). "The Multilevel Interest Representation of National Business Associations." *West European Politics*, 40(5): 1046–1065.

Kohler-Koch, Beate and Christine Quittkat (2013). *De-Mystification of Participatory Democracy: EU Governance and Civil Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Korkea-Aho, Emilia (2016). "'Mr Smith Goes to Brussels': Third Country Lobbying and the Making of EU Law and Policy." *Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies*, 18: 45–68.

Korkea-aho, Emilia (2021). "Legal Lobbying: The Evolving (But Hidden) Role of Lawyers and Law Firms in the EU Public Affairs Market." *German Law Journal*, 22(1): 65–84.

Kortelainen, Jarmo and Bernhard Koeppen (2018). "The EU-Quarter as a Political Place: Investigating Fluid Assemblages in EU Policy Making." *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 25(1): 40–53.

Kröger, Sandra (2008). "Nothing But Consultation: The Place of Organised Civil Society in EU Policy-Making across Policies." *European Governance Papers* (EUROGOV), Nr. C-08-03.

Lahusen, Christian (2002). "Commercial Consultancies in the European Union: The Shape and Structure of Professional Interest Intermediation." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 9(5): 695–714.

Lahusen, Christian (2003). "Moving into the European Orbit: Commercial Consultants in the European Union." *European Union Politics*, 4(2): 191–218.

Lahusen, Christian (2004). "Joining the Cocktail-Circuit: Social Movement Organizations at the European Union." *Mobilization,* 9(1): 55–71.

Lahusen, Christian (2013). "Law and Lawyers in Brussels' World of Commercial Consultants." In: Antoine Vauchez and Bruno de Witte (eds.), *Lawyering Europe: European Law as a Transnational Field* (pp. 177–194). Oxford: Hart.

Lahusen, Christian and Claudia Jauß (2001). *Lobbying als Beruf. Interessegruppen in der Europäischen Union*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

LaPira, Timothy, Kathleen Marchetti and Thomas Herschel (2020). "Gender Politics in the Lobbying Profession." *Politics & Gender*, 16(3): 816–844.

Larkin, Gerald (1983). *Occupational Monopoly and Modern Medicine*. London: Tavistock.

Larson, Magali Sarfatti (1977). *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Laurens, Sylvain (2018). *Lobbyists and Bureaucrats in Brussels: Capitalism's Brokers*. London: Routledge.

Lindberg, Leon N. and Stuart A. Scheingold (1970). *Europe's Would-Be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lindellee, Jayeon and Roberto Scaramuzzino (2020). "Can EU Civil Society Elites Burst the Brussels Bubble? Civil Society Leaders' Career Trajectories." *Politics and Governance*, 8(3): 86–96.

LobbyControl (2019). *Lobbyismus in der EU: Eine Bilanz. Was Europa gegen die Macht der Konzerne tun müsste* (EU-Lobbyreport 2019). Cologne: LobbyControl e. V.

Long, Tony and Larisa Lörinczi (2009). "*NGOs as Gatekeepers: A Green Vision*." In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying the European Union* (pp. 169–185). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lowery, David (2014). "Introduction to the Special Issue of IG&A on Methodological Issues of Large-N Research on Interest Representation." *Interest Groups & Advocacy* 3(2): 123–125.

Lowery, David and Kathleen Marchetti (2012). "You Don't Know Jack: Principals, Agents and Lobbying." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 1: 139–170.

Macdonald, Keith (1995). *The Sociology of the Professions*. London: SAGE.

Mahoney, Christine (2007). "Networking vs. Allying: The Decision of Interest Groups to Join Coalitions in the US and the EU." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(3): 366–383.

Mahoney, Christine (2008). *Brussels versus the Beltway: Advocacy in the United States and the European Union*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe and Kermit Blank (1996). "European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-level Governance." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34(3): 341–378.

Marks, Gary and Doug McAdam (1999). "On the Relationship of Political Opportunities to the Form of Collective Action: The Case of the European Union." In: Donatella della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (pp. 97–111). Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Mazey, Sonja and Jeremy Richardson (1999). "Interests." In: Laura Cram, Desmond Dinan and Neill Nugcnt (eds.), *Developments in the European Union* (pp. 105–129). London: St Martin's Press.

Mazey, Sonja and Jeremy Richardson, (2006a). "Interest Groups and EU Policy-Making. Organisational Logic and Venue Shopping." In: Jeremy Richardson (ed.),

European Union. Power and Policy-Making (pp. 247–268). London: Routledge, 3rd edition.

Mazey, Sonja and Jeremy Richardson (2006b). "The Commission and the Lobby." In: David Spence (ed.), *The European Commission* (pp. 279–292). London: Harper.

Mazey, Sonja and Jeremy Richardson (2015). "Shooting Where the Ducks Are: EU Lobbying and Institutionalized Promiscuity." In: Jeremy Richardson and Sonja Mazey (eds.), *European Union. Power and Policy-Making* (pp. 419–443). London: Routledge, 4th edition.

McGrath, Conor (2005). "Towards a Lobbying Profession." *Journal of Public Affairs*, 5(2): 124–135.

McLaughlin, Andrew M. and Justin Greenwood (1995). "The Management of lnterest Representation in the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 33: 143–156.

Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez (1997a). "World Society and the Nation-State." *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(1): 144–181.

Meyer, John W., David John Frank, Ann Hironaka, Evan Schofer and Nancy Brandon Tuma (1997b). "The Structuring of a World Environmental Regime, 1870–1990." *International Organizations*, 51(4): 623–651.

Meyer, John W. and Francisco O. Ramirez (2000). "The World Institutionalization of Education." In: Jürgen Schriewer (ed.), *Discourse Formation in Comparative Education* (pp. 111–132). Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang.

Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan (1977). "Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology*, 83: 340–363.

Michalowitz, Irina (2002). "Beyond Corporatism and Pluralism: Towards a New Theoretical Framework." In: Alex Warleigh and Jenny Fairbrass (eds.), *Influence and Interests in the European Union: The New Politics of Persuasion and Advocacy* (pp. 35–53). London: Europa Publications.

Michalowitz, Irina (2007). "What Determines Influence? Assessing Conditions for Decision-Making Influence of Interest Groups in the EU." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14(1): 132–151.

Michalowitz, Irina (2019). "Lobbying and Public Affairs. Voice, Access, Litigation." In: Svenja Falk, Manuela Glaab, Andrea Römmele, Henrik Schober and Martin Thunert (eds.), *Handbuch Politikberatung* (pp. 504–516). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Michel, Hélène (ed.) (2005a). *Lobbyistes et lobbying de l'union européenne. Trajectoires, formations et pratiques des représentants d'intérêts*. Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg.

Michel, Hélène (2005b). "Un group en pratiques, les pratiques d'un groupe." In: Hélène Michel (ed.), *Lobbyistes et lobbying de l'union européenne. Trajectoires, formations et pratiques des représentants d'intérêts* (pp. 9–21). Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg.

Michel, Hélène (2013). "EU Lobbying and the European Transparency Initiative: A Sociological Approach to Interest Groups." In: Niilo Kauppi (ed.), *A Political Sociology of Transnational Europe* (pp. 53–78). Colchester: ECPR-Press.

Michon, Sébastien (2022). "Le lobbying dans l'espace des métiers de l'Europe. Une analyse relationnelle des auxiliaires de l'Europe politique" In: Willy Beauvallet, Cécile Robert and Elise Roullaud (eds.), *EU Affairs. Sociologie des lobbyistes européens* (pp. 41–64). Brussels: Peter Lang.

Mieg, Harald A. and Julia Evetts (2018). "Professionalism, Science, and Expert Roles: A Social Perspective." In: K. Anders Ericsson, Robert R. Hoffman and Aaron Kozbelt (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance* (pp. 127–148). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, Peter and Nikolas Rose (1990). "Governing Economic Life." *Economy and Society*, 19(1): 1–31.

Mills, Jane, Ann Bonner and Karen Francis (2006). "The Development of Constructivist Grounded Theory." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1): 1–10.

Moloney, Kevin (1996). *Lobbyists for Hire*. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Monforte, Pierre (2009). "Social Movements and Europeanization Processes: The Case of the French Associations Mobilizing around the Asylum Issue." *Social Movement Studies*, 8(4): 409–424.

Moravcsik, Andrew (1991). "Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community." *International Organization*, 45(1): 19–56.

Moravcsik, Andrew and Frank Schimmelpfennig (2009). "Liberal Intergovernmentalism." In: Antje Wiener, Tanja Börzel and Thomas Diez (eds.), *European Integration Theory* (pp. 64–86). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition.

Morse, Janice M. (2007). "Sampling in Grounded Theory." In: Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* (pp. 229–244). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Murphy, Raymond (1988). *Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Muzio, Daniel, David Brock and Roy Suddaby (2013). "Professions and Institutional Change." *Journal of Management Studies*, 50: 699–721.

Muzio, Daniel and Ian Kirkpatrick (2011). "Introduction: Professions and Organizations – a Conceptual Framework." *Current Sociology*, 59(4): 389–405.

Muzio, Daniel, Ian Kirkpatrick, Damian Hodgson, James Faulconbridge, Jonathan Beaverstock and Sarah Hall (2011). "Towards Corporate Professionalization: The Case of Project Management, Management Consultancy and Executive Search." *Current Sociology*, 59(4): 443–464.

Münch, Richard (2008). "Constructing a European Society by Jurisdiction." *Union European Law Journal*, 14(5): 519–541.

Năstase, Andreea and Claire Muurmans (2018). "Regulating Lobbying Activities in the European Union: A Voluntary Club Perspective." *Regulation & Governance*, online first.

Neal, Mark and John Morgan (2020). "The Professionalization of Everyone? A Comparative Study of the Development of the Professions in the United Kingdom and Germany." *European Sociological Review*, 16(1): 9–26.

Nichols, Tom (2017). *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Niemann, Arne, Zoe Lefkofridi and Philippe C. Schmitter (2009). "Neofunctionalism." In: Antje Wiener, Tanja Börzel and Thomas Diez (eds.), *European Integration Theory* (pp. 43–63). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nohl, Arnd Michael (2010). "Narrative Interview and Documentary Interpretation." In: Ralf Bohnsack, Nicolle Pfaff and Wivian Weller (eds.), *Qualitative Analysis*

and Documentary Method in International Educational Research (pp. 195–217). Opladen: B. Budrich.

Noordegraaf, Mirko (2007). "From 'Pure' to 'Hybrid' Professionalism." *Administration & Society*, 39(6): 761–785.

Noordegraaf, Mirko (2015). "Hybrid Professionalism and Beyond: (New) Forms of Public Professionalism in Changing Organizational and Societal Contexts." *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 2(2): 187–206.

Noordegraaf, Mirko (2020). "Protective or Connective Professionalism? How Connected Professionals Can (Still) Act as Autonomous and Authoritative Experts." *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 7(2): 205–223.

Nørgaard, Rikke Wetendorff, Peter Nedergaard and Jens Blom-Hansen (2014). "Lobbying in the EU Comitology System." *Journal of European Integration*, 36(5): 491–507.

Nowotny, Helga, Peter Scott and Michael Gibbons (2001). *Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Nugent, Neill (1999). "Decision-making." In: Geoffrey Edwards and David Spence (eds.), *The European Commission* (pp. 130–150). Harlow: Longman Current Affairs.

Nugent, Neill and Mark Rhinard (2019). "The 'Political' Roles of the European Commission." *Journal of European Integration*, 41(2): 203–220.

Offerlé, Michel (2005). "Lobbyings/lobbyistes Militants/militantismes." In: Hélène Michel (ed.), *Lobbyistes et lobbying de l'union européenne. Trajectoires, formations et pratiques des représentants d'intérêts* (pp. 327–337). Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg.

Olgiati, Vittorio (2008). "The European Learned Professions and the EU Higher Education Project." *European Societies*, 10(4): 545–565.

Oppenheimer, Martin (1973). "Proletarianization of the Professional." In: Paul Halmos (ed.), *Professionalization and Social Change* (pp. 213–227). Keele: Keele University Press.

Parsons, Talcott (1939). "The Professions and Social Structure." *Social Forces*, 17(4): 457–467.

Parsons, Talcott (1968). "Professions." In: David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (pp. 536–547). New York: Macmillan.

Pedler, Robin H. (ed.) (2002). *European Union Lobbying: Changes in the Arena*. Houndmills: Palgrave.

Pedler, Robin H. and Rinus van Schendelen (eds.) (1994). *Lobbying the European Union: Companies, Trade Associations and Issue Groups*. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Persson, Thomas and Kajsa Edholm (2018). "Assessing the Effects of European Union Funding of Civil Society Organizations: Money for Nothing?" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(3): 559–575.

Petrova, Tsveta and Sidney Tarrow (2007). "Transactional and Participatory Activism in the Emerging European Polity: The Puzzle of East Central Europe." *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(1): 74–94.

Pfadenhauer, Michaela (2006). "Crisis or Decline? Problems of Legitimation and Loss of Trust in Modern Professionalism." *Current Sociology*, 54(4): 565–578.

Pfadenhauer, Michaela and Heiko Kirschner (2017). "From Dyad to Triad – Mediatization and Emerging Risks for Professional Autonomy." *Professions and Professionalism*, 7(1): e1646.

Pijnenburg, Bert (1998). "EU-Lobbying by Ad-Hoc Coalitions: An Exploratory Case Study." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 5(2): 303–321.

Poehls, Kerstin (2009). *Europa Backstage. Expertenwissen, Habitus und kulturelle Codes im Machtfeld der EU*. Bielefeld: transcript.

Poloni-Staudinger, Lori M. (2008). "The Domestic Opportunity Structure and Supranational Activity. An Explanation of Environmental Group Activity at the European Union Level." *European Union Politics*, 9(4): 531–558.

Quack, Sigrid (2006). "Who Fills the Legal 'Black Holes' in Transnational Governance? Lawyers, Law Firms and Professional Associations as Border-crossing Regulatory Actors." In: Gunnar Folke Schuppert (ed.), *Global Governance and the Role of Non-state Actors* (pp. 81–100). Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Radaelli, Claudio M. (2003). "The Europeanization of Public Policy." In: Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli (eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization* (pp. 27–56). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rapley, Tiom (2014). "Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Research." In: Uwe Flick (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 49–63). London: SAGE.

Rasch, Daniel (2018). *Lobbying Success in the European Union. The Role of Information and Frames*. New York: Routledge.

Reed, Michael I. (1996). "Expert Power and Control in Late Modernity: An Empirical Review and Theoretical Synthesis." *Organization Studies*, 17(4): 573–597.

Richardson, Jeremy (2006). "Policy-Making in the EU: Interests, Ideas and Garbage Cans of Primeval Soup." In: Jeremy Richardson (ed.), *European Union: Power and Policy-Making* (pp. 3–30). New York: Routledge.

Richardson, Jeremy and David Coen (2009). "Institutionalizing and Managing Intermediation in the EU." In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying in the European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues* (pp. 337–350). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Roulston, Kathryn (2014). "Analysing Interviews." In: Uwe Flick (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 297–312). London: SAGE.

Rucht, Dieter (2004). "The Quadruple 'A'. Media Strategies of Protest Movements since the 1960s." In: Wim van de Donk, Brian D. Loader, Paul G. Nixon and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens and Social Movements* (pp. 25–48). London: Routledge.

Rudy, Bruce C. and Andrew F. Johnson (2019). "The Chief Political Officer: CEO Characteristics and Firm Investment in Corporate Political Activity." *Business & Society*, 58(3): 612–643.

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich (1983). "Professional Autonomy and the Social Control of Expertise." In: Robert Dingwall and Philip Lewis (eds.), *The Sociology of the Professions. Lawyers, Doctors and Others* (pp. 38–58). New Orleans: Quid Pro Books.

Ruiz, Fernando M. M., Florent Hainaut and Nathalie Schiffino (2016). " 'The Lobbies' Network at the EU Policy Level: The Case of Security and Defense." *Defence and Peace Economics*, 27(6): 774–793.

Ruzza, Carlo and Emanuela Bozzini (2008). "Organised Civil Society and European Governance: Routes of Contestation." *European Political Science*, 7(3): 296–303.

Saks, Mike (2012). "Defining a Profession: The Role of Knowledge and Expertise." *Professions & Professionalism*, 2 (1), pp. 1–10.

Saks, Mike (2016). "A Review of Theories of Professions, Organizations and Society: The Case for Neo-Weberianism, Neo-Institutionalism and Eclecticism." *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 3(2): 170–187.

Sallai, Dorottya (2013). "EU Lobbying and Post-Socialist Network Capitalism in Hungary." *Journal of Common Mark Studies*, 51(5): 948–964.

Sanchez Salgado, Rosa (2019). "Theoretical Implications of EU Funding of Advocacy Activities." In: Doris Dialer and Margarethe Richter (eds.), *Lobbying in the European Union: Strategies, Dynamics and Trends* (pp. 81–92). Wiesbaden: Springer.

Saurugger, Sabine (2005). "Europeanization as a Methodological Challenge: The Case of Interest Groups." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 7(4): 291–312.

Saurugger, Sabine (2008). "Interest Groups and Democracy in the European Union." *West European Politics*, 31(6): 1274–1291.

Schinkel, Willem and Mirko Noordegraaf (2011). "Professionalism as Symbolic Capital: Materials for a Bourdieusian Theory of Professionalism." *Comparative Sociology*, 10: 67–96.

Schmitter, Philippe C. and Wolfgang Streeck (1991). "From National Corporatism to Transnational Pluralism: Organized Interests in the Single European Market." *Politics and Society*, 19(2): 133–164.

Schneiker, Andrea, Christian Henrich-Franke, Robert Kaiser and Christian Lahusen (eds.) (2018). *Transnational Expertise. Internal Cohesion and External Recognition of Expert Groups*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Schofer, Evan (2003). "The Global Institutionalization of Geological Science, 1800 to 1990." *American Sociological Review*, 68(5): 730–759.

Scott, William R. (2008). "Lords of the Dance. Professionals as Institutional Agents." *Organization Studies*, 29: 219–238.

Seabrooke, Leonard (2014). "Epistemic Arbitrage: Transnational Professional Knowledge in Action." *Journal of Professions and Organization*, 1(1): 49–64.

Shih, Tse-Hua and Xitao Fan (2002). "Response Rates and Mode Preferences in Web-Mail Mixed-Mode Surveys: A Meta-Analysis." *International Journal of Internet Science*, 2: 59–82.

Skorkjær Binderkrantz, Anne and Anne Rasmussen (2015). "Comparing the Domestic and the EU Lobbying Context: Perceived Agenda-Setting Influence in the Multilevel System of the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4): 552–569.

Smismans, Stijn (ed.) (2006). *Civil Society and Legitimate European Governance*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Stephenson, Matthew C. and Howell E. Jackson (2010). "Lobbyists as Imperfect Agents: Implications for Public Policy in a Pluralist System." *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 47: 1–20.

Stichweh, Rudolf (1997). "Professions in Modern Society." *International Review of Sociology*, 7(1): 95–102.

Stone Sweet, Alec and Wayne Sandholtz (1997). "European Integration and Supranational Governance." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 4(3): 297–317.

Strauss, Anselm L. (2004). "Analysis through Microscopic Examination." *Sozialer Sinn*, 5(2): 169–176.

Suddaby, Roy and Thierry Viale (2011). "Professionals and Field-Level Change: Institutional Work and the Professional Project." *Current Sociology*, 59(4): 423–442.

Švarc, Jadranka (2016). "The Knowledge Worker Is Dead: What about Professions?" *Current Sociology*, 64(3): 392–410.

Svensson, Lennart G. (2006). "New Professionalism, Trust and Competence: Some Conceptual Remarks and Empirical Data." *Current Sociology*, 54(4): 579–593.

Tarrow, Sidney (1998). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Graham and Andrew Mathers (2004). "The European Trade Union Confederation at the Crossroads of Change? Traversing the Variable Geometry of European Trade Unionism." *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 10(3): 267–285.

Tyllström, Anna and John Murray (2021). "Lobbying the Client: The Role of Policy Intermediaries in Corporate Political Activity." *Organization Studies*, 42(6): 971–991.

van Apeldoorn, Bastiaan (2002). *Transnational Capitalism and the Struggle over European Integration*. London: Routledge.

van Deth, Jan W. and William A. Maloney (eds.) (2011). *New Participatory Dimensions in Civil Society. Professionalization and Individualized Collective Action*. London: Routledge.

van Hecke, Matti, Peter Bursens and Jan Beyers (2016). "You'll Never Lobby Alone: Explaining the Participation of Subnational Authorities in the European Commission's Open Consultations." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54(6): 1433–1448.

van Schendelen, Rinus (2013). *The Art of Lobbying the EU. More Machiavelli in Brussels*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Vargovčíková, Jana (2015). "Le lobbying, un vrai métier politique? Éléments pour une sociologie des lobbyistes professionnels en Pologne et en République tchèque." *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, 46(3): 79–119.

Vauchez, Antoine (2008). "The Force of a Weak Field: Law and Lawyers in the Government of the European Union." *International Political Sociology* 2(2): 128–44.

Vauchez, Antoine and Stephanie Lee Mudge, (2012). "Building Europe on a Weak Field: Law, Economics, and Scholarly Avatars in Transnational Politics." *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(2): 449–492.

Vauchez, Antoine and Bruno de Witte, (eds.) (2013). *Lawyering Europe: European Law as a Transnational Social Field*. Oxford: Hart.

Vogel, Lars and Juan Rodríguez-Teruel (2016). "Staying on Course in Turbulent Times: National Political Elites and the Crisis of European Integration." *Historical Social Research*, 41(4), pp. 7–37.

Wenger, Étienne, William Snyder and Richard Arnold McDermott (2002). *A Guide to Managing Knowledge. Cultivating Communities of Practice*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.

Wilensky, Harold L. (1964). "The Professionalization of Everyone?" *American Journal of Sociology,* 70: 137–158.

Woll, Cornelia (2005). "Lobbying in Brüssel: Amerikanische Verhältnisse?" *Yearbook of the Max-Planck-Institut for the Study of Societies*. Cologne: MPIfG: 57–62.

Woll, Cornelia (2006). "Lobbying in the European Union: From Sui Generis to a Comparative Perspective." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 13: 456–469.

Woll, Cornelia (2007). "Leading the Dance? Power and Political Resources of Business Lobbyists." *Journal of Public Policy*, 27(1): 57–78.

Woll, Cornelia (2009). "Trade Policy Lobbying in the European Union: Who Captures Whom?" In: David Coen and Jeremy Richardson (eds.), *Lobbying the*

European Union: Institutions, Actors, and Issues (pp. 277–297). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Woll, Cornelia (2012). "The Brash and the Soft-Spoken: Lobbying Styles in a Transatlantic Comparison." *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 1: 193–214.

Woll, Cornelia and Sophie Jacquot (2010). "Using Europe: Strategic Action in Multi-Level Politics." *Comparative European Politics*, 8(1): 110–126.

Wonka, Arndt, Frank R. Baumgartner, Christine Mahoney and Joost Berkhout (2010). "Measuring the Size and Scope of the EU Interest Group Population." *European Union Politics*, 11(3): 463–476.

Zito, Anthony R. (2018). "Instrument Constituencies and Epistemic Community Theory." *Policy and Society*, 37(1): 36–58.

Index