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List of abbreviations

30K.....	"30 km/h - making the streets liveable!"
A4G.....	Act 4 Growth
ARD.....	Allgemeiner Deutscher Rundfunk
CETA.....	Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement
COW.....	EU Directive on Dairy Cow Welfare
CSO.....	Civil society organisation
csQCA.....	crisp-set QCA
DEC.....	Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs
EAPN.....	European Anti-Poverty Network
ECAS.....	European Affairs Committees
ECAS.....	European Citizens' Action Service
ECI.....	European Citizens' Initiative
ECO.....	End Ecocide in Europe: A Citizens' Initiative to give the Earth Rights
EEB.....	European Environmental Bureau
EESC.....	European Economic and Social Council
EP.....	European Parliament
EPHA.....	European Public Health Alliance
ETUC.....	European Trade Union Confederation
EPSU.....	European Federation of Public Service Unions
EU.....	European Union
EUGENT.....	European Alliance for Deceleration
EWS.....	Early Warning System
FR.....	Framing
FRA.....	Fraternité 2020 - Mobility. Progress. Europe.
FRO.....	And end to front companies in order to secure a fairer Europe
fsQCA.....	fuzzy-set QCA
FU.....	Funding
FWE.....	Food and Water Europe
FYEG.....	Federation of Young European Greens
H.....	Hypothesis
HR.....	Human Resources/ Staff
LMV.....	Let me vote
MEP.....	Member of EP

MP.....	European Initiative for Media Pluralism
NI.....	Normative Institutionalism
NGO.....	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOW.....	National Organization for Women
ONE.....	One of Us
PDF.....	Portable Document Format
PO.....	Partner Organisations
PRI.....	Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency
PU.....	Publicity Activities
QCA.....	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
R2W.....	Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!
RC.....	Rational Choice
RCI.....	Rational Choice Institutionalism
RMA.....	Resource Mobilisation Approach
SIG.....	Signatures
SMO.....	Social Movement Organization
T4Y.....	Teach for Youth -- Upgrade to Erasmus 2.0
TAR.....	Single Communication Tariff Act
TDS.....	Transnational Discursive Space
TFEU.....	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TiSA.....	Trade in Services Agreement
UBI.....	Unconditional Basic Income - Exploring a pathway towards emancipatory welfare conditions in the EU
VAP.....	European Free Vaping Initiative
WECF.....	Women in Europe for a Common Future
WEE.....	Weed like to talk

1 Introductory chapter: The ECI – a tool for the powerful only?

“But it is true that the people of Europe probably feel that they have little or no say in the way in which the EU is run, and that was one of the reasons why we decided to create the European Citizens' Initiative, to give the 'real' people of Europe a chance to put an issue of importance to them on the EU policy-making agenda.”

(Maroš Ševčovič, then Vice-President of the European Commission, speech at the Tripartite EP Citizen Forum, Hainburg, Austria, 1 June 2012.)

In 2012, the European Commission introduced a unique democratic innovation: The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), which is the first tool for transnational citizen participation world-wide. European citizens can use the ECI to set the agenda of the Commission by requesting the institution to put forward a legislative proposal¹. The introduction of the ECI was an unexpected by-product of the Convention on the Future of Europe, which took place in the early 2000s. In December 2001, the heads of state and government of EU member states had agreed in their Laeken Council Meeting, that a European Convention should debate on the future trajectory of the European Union. Under the chairmanship of French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the Convention concluded with a draft treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. At the last minute as a result of their lobbying efforts, a handful of NGOs were able to reach the inclusion of the paragraph on the ECI into the text of the Constitutional Treaty (De Clerck-Sachsse, 2012). After the ECI was included in the text of the Constitutional Treaty, the corresponding paragraph remained untouched in the subsequent Lisbon Treaty. At the time, the text on the ECI did not receive a lot of public attention. Little did policy makers know that a decade later, the ECI would mobilise over seven million people and trigger discussions among academics and engaged civil society groups, ultimately leading to a reform of the instrument in 2018.

¹ Treaty of Lisbon (TEU), Title II, “Provisions on Democratic Principles”, Article 11(4) stipulates that “Not less than one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States may take the initiative of inviting the European Commission, within the framework of its powers, to submit any appropriate proposal on matters where citizens consider that a legal act of the Union is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties.”

The European Citizens' Initiative is part of a global trend of strengthening direct democracy and one among a set of participatory tools on the European level. In the EU, additional participatory mechanisms exist, such as the petition to the EP, the complaints mechanism to the European Ombudsman, as well as the Commission's public consultations and citizens' dialogues. During the past 20 years, both the number of direct democratic instruments introduced into national constitutions and their usage has increased worldwide (Grotz, 2009). By giving citizens a temporary say in politics beyond elections, leaders hope to strengthen the legitimacy of decision making and even the political system as a whole. The most recent examples are the Brexit referendum or the Austrian "Don't smoke" petition – the latter gathered almost 900.000 signatures. The UK's European Union membership referendum was a legally non-binding "in or out vote" installed by the ruling government, resulting in a 52% majority in favour of leaving the EU. The Austrian "Volksbegehren" is equally non-binding but has to be formulated by citizens who petition the government to debate their cause. These two examples already demonstrate that direct democratic instruments vary substantially in relation to many different aspects: how they work formally and procedurally (signature threshold/ type of question), on which administrative level they take place (regional/ national/ European) and who initiates the ballot (legislators/ citizens).

From a theoretical perspective, direct democracy refers to all political processes "[...]which allow ordinary citizens to vote directly on laws rather than candidates for office" (Matsusaka, 2005). Historically, the roots of direct democracy lie in the citizen assemblies of ancient Athens. All Athenians were entitled to participate in these assemblies which served various tasks of organising public life. In fact, the term "democracy" originates in the Greek language and combines two words: *demos* ("the people") and *kratein* ("to rule"). In other words, democracy, in its most fundamental version, means rule by the people. "Demos" was sometimes also used as a term describing only common people or the poor (Dahl, 1998). Nowadays, the roots of direct democracy have grown into a variety of practices on the municipal, regional, national and – for the first time, through the ECI – European and thus transnational level. The measures under the umbrella of direct democracy span from ballot votes and referendums to citizens' initiatives. While ballot measures and referenda allow citizens to vote on already existing legislation proposed by policy makers (e.g. Brexit), citizens' initiatives usually involve legislation formulated by "ordinary" people (such as the Austrian "Volksbegehren") (See Matsusaka, 2005 for a more detailed overview of the different forms

of direct democracy). In comparison to existing tools, the ECI extends the reach of participation to a transnational dimension for the first time in history.

On a superficial level, letting citizens decide on political matters through a direct ballot appears to produce more legitimate outcomes which are closer to the preferences of voters. However, direct democracy can be misused and lead to a tyranny of the majority. Populist parties in particular frequently demand referenda in order to enact what they tend to term the “will of the real people”. Often times the actual goal of these demands is to undermine the representative system as a whole. While day-to-day politics tend to be too complex to be broken down according to a simple yes-or-no-ballot, scholars found that direct democracy could actually be used as a corrective in representative democracies. The effect of direct democracy is frequently measured with the yardstick of policy congruence. In other words, does direct democracy produce policies that are closer to the will of the people than legislation enacted under representative processes? On the one hand, scholars find no evidence for an improved link between the preferences of citizens and policies in the presence of initiative processes (Camobreco, 1998). On the other hand, a number of studies point to the connection between direct democratic measures and improved responsiveness of legislators. For example, Randolph (2010) finds that in the US, the mere possibility of introducing an initiative propels state legislatures to become more active in terms of legislative production. In line with this, McGrath (2011) demonstrates that increased initiative use can act as a corrective to unresponsive representative institutions as states with less competitive elections witness increased use of direct democratic tools. Especially when the preferences of elites and voters deviate strongly, direct democracy improves policy congruence between the will of voters and legislative output (Leemann and Wasserfallen, 2016). This way, direct democracy corrects the outputs of representative systems as it enables the unbundling of complex policy issues that are not dealt with in elections (Besley and Coate, 2000). What is more, proponents of direct democracy highlight its positive effects on the electorate. Studies from the US and Europe show that where participatory mechanisms exist, citizens tend to be better informed about politics and are more likely to participate through various other channels (Benz and Stutzer, 2004; Tolbert, et al., 2003).

The potential positive effects of direct democracy are closely connected to the (alleged) democratic deficit of the EU and the introduction of the European Citizens’ Initiative. European institutions are frequently accused of being undemocratic and distant from voters (Follesdal and Hix, 2006; Hix, 2003; Hurrelmann, 2014; Schmidt, 2013). In light of the positive effects

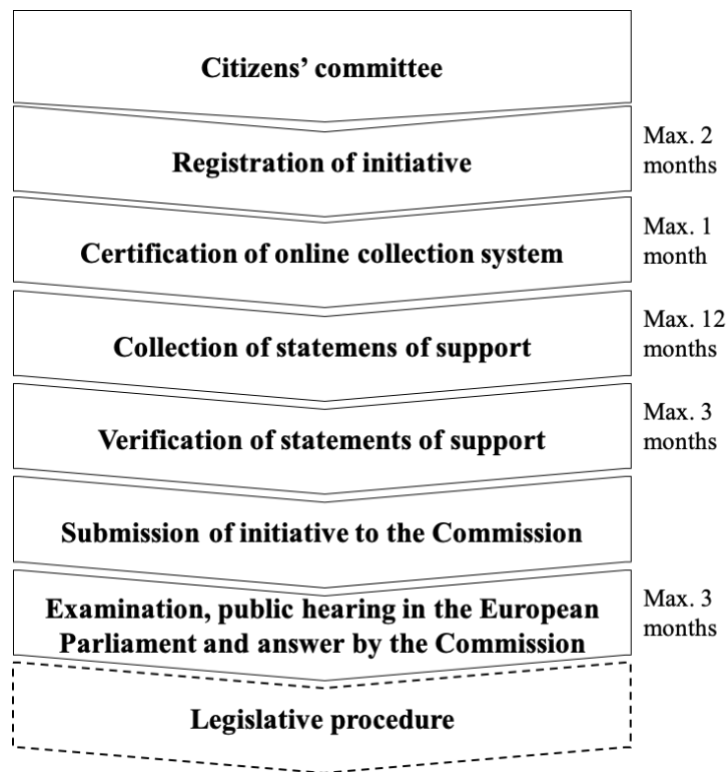
of national direct democracy and taking into account the structural and functional differences between national and supranational democracy, what can be expected from the ECI? The quotation by Maroš Ševčovič at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates the high hopes towards the tool. It is supposed to give the “real” citizens of Europe an opportunity to set the agenda of EU institutions. Thereby, the ECI is expected to foster a popular, transnational sense of belonging. From an institutional perspective, the introduction of the ECI is a continuation of an already existing practice with the aim of increasing the inclusion of civil society and even individuals in EU policy making. Over the years, numerous participatory experiments such as stakeholder fora and consultation mechanisms have been introduced in the EU – a trend which I will discuss in more detail in the literature review. Scholars have termed the behavioural shift of European institutions the “participatory turn” (Kohler-Koch, 2011; 2012; Monaghan, 2012; Quittkat and Finke, 2008; Saurugger, 2010). Previous democratic experiments on the level of EU institutions have been criticised for perpetuating the elite bias of European policy making as organised business and industry actors dominated the stage (Hüller, 2010; Marxsen, 2015; Saurugger, 2008). The big questions in relation to the ECI then are: How can the ECI lessen the elite bias of EU policy making? And: Does the ECI fulfil the promises made during its introduction?

1.1 How does the ECI work?

Before gauging the possible “democratising” effects of the ECI on European policy making, it is important to clarify the steps necessary to conduct an initiative. The ECI takes place on a transnational level and involves legislation proposed to the European Commission by citizens. The instrument – being a legal collection of national best practices (Cuesta-Lopez, 2012) and a hybrid genre of participatory democracy which connects national and European levels (Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir, 2016) – involves a number of organisational hurdles. I have summarised the steps necessary during, before and after the signature collection campaign of an initiative in graph 1. Before citizens can start collecting signatures, they have to form a so-called “citizens’ committee” consisting of at least seven citizens from seven different EU member states. During the preparatory phase, members of the citizens’ committee draft a legislative proposal that they submit to the European Commission. After receiving the proposal, staff in the Commission has two months to perform a first assessment of the initiative’s content to decide whether to accept it. According to the legal framework, an ECI is admissible if it falls within the powers of the Commission, aims at improving the

implementation of the European Treaties and does not contradict the basic values of the EU. Once an ECI is declared admissible, organisers have to certify their online signature collection software: If the citizens' committee wishes to collect signatures through their website and not only on paper, they need member state authorities to certify that the online collection system complies with national technical and safety standards – which may take up to one month.

Graph 1 Formal steps of the ECI procedure



Graph adapted from: <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/how-it-works/certification>

After the initial steps of the preparation, registration and certification phases, organisers are allowed to start the signature collection campaign. Their goal is to collect at least one million statements of support from European citizens within a period of twelve months. The composition of the one million signatures is subject to a formal requirement: The total number has to be composed of minimum thresholds from at least seven member states. For instance, if an ECI collects one million signatures just in Germany, it will not be considered to have met the formal requirements. The signature threshold for each country is calculated based on the

number of Members of EP multiplied by 750². As a result, the minimum number of signatures for each country is proportional to population size. Consider table 1 for an overview of the national thresholds. The requirement ensures the transnational dimension of the ECI, akin to the composition of the citizens' committee. Signatures for successful initiatives – ECIs which have collected one million or more signatures – are verified by member state authorities. The responsible agencies perform random checks of the statements of support to ensure that no information is missing from the forms. This is particularly important, as each member state has set different requirements in relation to personal information and age for signing an initiative. Once signatures have been verified and deemed valid by national authorities, the initiative is handed over to the Commission who then – within a period of three months – has to deliver an official response explaining its reasons for (non-)action, with action referring to proposing legislation to the EP and the Council. In the meantime, organisers will be invited to a hearing at the EP to justify their proposal.

² Please consider regulation No 211/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 February 2011 specifying the formal rules on the citizens' initiative: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0119:FIN:EN:PDF>.

Table 1 Minimum number of signatories per European member state

Member state	Minimum number of signatories
Austria	13500
Belgium	15750
Bulgaria	12750
Croatia	8250
Cyprus	4500
Czech Republic	15750
Denmark	9750
Estonia	4500
Finland	9750
France	55500
Germany	72000
Greece	15750
Hungary	15750
Ireland	8250
Italy	54750
Latvia	6000
Lithuania	8250
Luxembourg	4500
Malta	4500
Netherlands	19500
Poland	38250
Portugal	15750
Romania	24000
Slovakia	9750
Slovenia	6000
Spain	40500
Sweden	15000
United Kingdom	54750

Data for table retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/signatories>

1.2 The empirical puzzle: How can the success and failure of ECIs be explained?

Even though the ECI is one among many participatory channels in the EU, its design is completely different from the other tools as it goes further than the Commission consultations, the right of petition to the EP and the European ombudsman in terms of possible impact (Conrad, 2011). If organisers of an ECI manage to meet the formal requirements and mobilise at least one million signatures, they could ultimately trigger EU legislation. Formally, this puts citizens on equal footing with the EP, the Commission and the Council by giving them a more

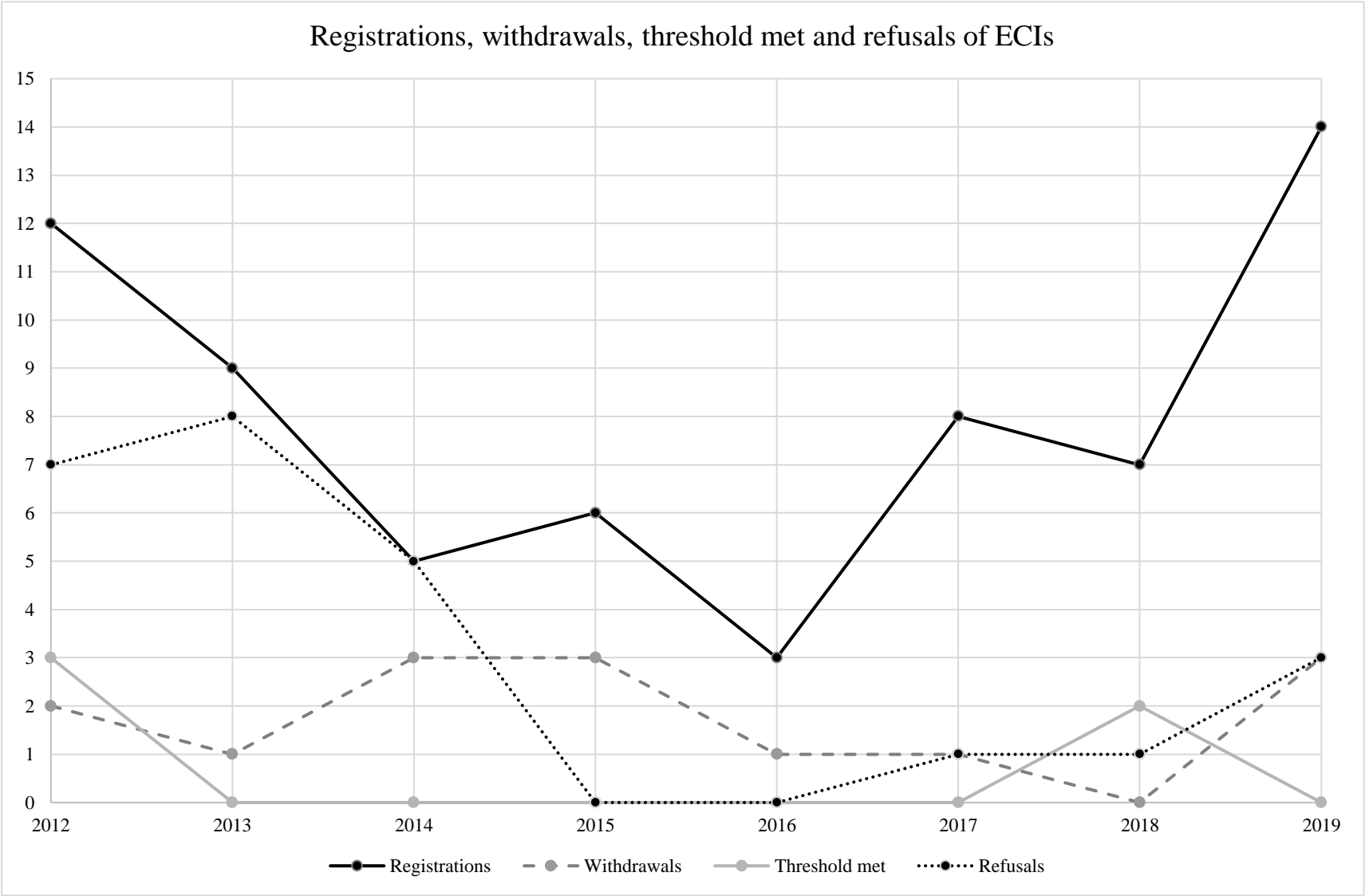
prominent role in the formulation of European legislation. This institutional novelty opens up a range of possibilities for strengthening EU democracy and unlike any other channel into EU decision making, requires substantial grass root mobilisation (Bouza García and Del Rio Villar, 2012, p. 315). Collecting as many signatures as possible increases the political significance of claims made by an initiative and could ultimately lead to a legislative proposal by the Commission. Even if a legislative proposal is rejected by institutions, initiatives have a greater chance of shaping the agenda and gaining attention from policy makers if a substantial number of signatures has been collected.

Beyond the potential impact of an initiative, the administrative and organisational costs connected to conducting a large-scale signature collection campaign appear considerable. When taking a closer look at the burdensome formal requirements and the lengthy process (which takes a minimum of 21 months), it becomes questionable whether the ECI can truly lead to more involvement of “ordinary citizens”. It has been estimated that acquiring one signature costs around 1€ (The ECI Campaign, 2014). In the face of such challenges, it appears unlikely that a group of engaged citizens who are not professional lobbyists or members of an organised interest group will be able to meet these high demands. Despite these pitfalls, it has been argued that the ECI could open the door for new players into Brussels and serve as an impetus for national groups to Europeanise their structures (Bouza García and Del Rio Villar, 2012; Greenwood, 2012). Organisers of European Citizens’ Initiatives are key players in bringing the EU closer to citizens. By acting as transmission belts for the preferences of Europeans, campaigners behind different ECIs have the chance to bring new issues to the attention of EU institutions. In addition to the potential of activating citizens and raising awareness for European topics, I consider the diversification of interest groups on the EU stage the most immediate contribution of the ECI to European democracy. The key distinguishing feature of the ECI in comparison to other EU-level participatory channels is the requirement of mass mobilisation. Therefore, the ability of different types of organisers to collect as many signatures as possible shapes the quality of this diversification. Currently, no extensive policy output can be attributed to the ECI yet. Thus, number of signatures collected is a proxy for any ECI’s potential impact on public debates and European policy.

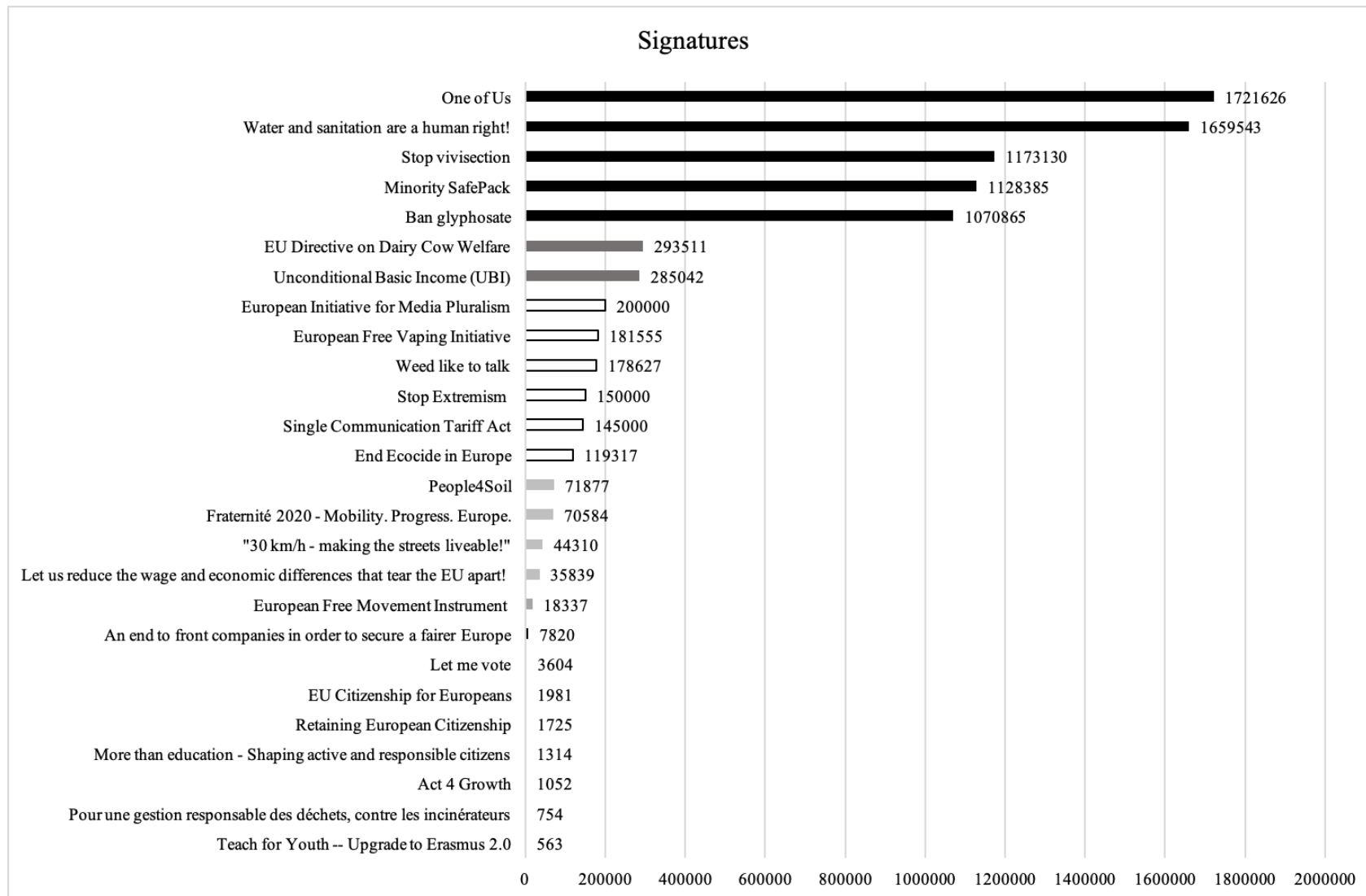
64 ECIs have been accepted by the Commission between 2012 and 2019 (Graph 2) while a total of 25 initiatives were refused. After an initial rush of registrations in 2012, interest in the instrument seems to have waned as fewer ECIs were proposed during the following years, with a sharp rise of registered initiatives in 2019. Registrations dropped to their lowest

point in 2016. A similar downward trend until 2018 with a rise in 2019 appears for initiatives which were refused registration, while the number of initiatives which were withdrawn by organisers appears stable. Overall, five ECIs have managed to meet the threshold of one million statements of support. This number, in comparison to the total rate of registrations, appears puzzlingly low based on the premise that mobilising signatures is the main task of organisers to achieve any kind of political impact. Information about the number of signatures is available for 26 initiatives, which are represented in graph 3. Taken together, all ECIs have collected a combined total of over 7,4 million signatures. From the graph it becomes obvious that the numbers of signatures vary significantly across ECIs - from over 1,7 million for the initiative “One of Us” to just above 500 in the case of “Teach for Youth”. The numbers can be grouped into five clusters: 1) initiatives with over one million signatures, 2) initiatives with between 300000 to 200000 signatures 3) ECIs with signatures between 200000 and 100000, 4) a group with 100000 to 10.000 supporters and finally, 5) initiatives with less than 10000 to 500 supporters. If we accept the proposition that ECIs can reach their goals more easily by mobilising as many signatures as possible and that thus, organisers equally seek to collect as many signatures as they can – why do some initiatives manage to reach the official threshold while others fail completely? Can the reason for these differences be found in the elitist nature of the ECI process or is there another mechanism at work? In other words, does the design of the ECI reproduce existing EU power structures in favour of established interest groups with a lot of resources and organisational capacity? Or does the ECI enable new groups with fewer resources to have a say in EU politics? Are there factors explaining the differences in signatures that go beyond interest group power? Which factors can be attributed to the variation in ECI outcomes?

Graph 2 Development of numbers of ECIs since 2012



Graph 3 Number of signatures per ECI



The nascent literature on the ECI has not been able to fully disentangle the causal factors connected to the varying success rates of initiatives with success rates being measured in terms of numbers of signatures collected by initiative organisers. Based on the regulatory framework of the ECI, a successful initiative is defined by “having reached the official threshold of one million signatures”. Due to the novelty of the ECI instrument, researchers have not been able to draw on extensive empirical evidence. In addition, successful initiatives have received most public and scholarly attention while cases of failure have not been analysed. Most studies have focussed on the ECI’s theoretical potential for strengthening EU democracy by expanding the range of possible new actors that may emerge on the EU stage (Bouza García, 2012a; b; Bouza García and Del Rio Villar, 2012; Bouza García and Greenwood, 2013; Greenwood, 2012; Szeligowska and Mincheva, 2012; Vogiatzis, 2013). These authors have provided important typologies to gauge the playing field and explore which types of actors are attracted by the new tool (Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir, 2016). While the ECI has been attested the potential to expand the range of actors represented on the EU level (Bouza García and Greenwood, 2014), it is not entirely clear which efforts beyond funds are connected successful campaigns – which in turn might indirectly perpetuate the elite bias of EU policy making. In other words, even if the ECI expands the range of interests active in the EU, it is unknown whether or not successful organisers are just “more of the same”: business interests and lobby groups with significant resources. While a vast number of initiatives has been launched by groups of private citizens, their success was rather low (Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir, 2016). In the absence of clear policy output, except in the case of one single initiative thus far³, number of signatures are the best proxy for assessing the potential impact of initiatives. The causal link between ECI characteristics beyond organiser type can help to get a better understanding of whether or not the tool creates equal opportunities of participation for all ECIs. The literature has somewhat neglected the causal link between ECI outcomes and the behaviour of organisers across classes of cases.

Another branch of the current literature on the ECI focusses attention to the creation of transnational public spheres through the ECI. Authors have assessed the communication within

³ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/trans-europe-express-water-water-everywhere/>. The initiative Right2Water is the first ECIs to ever trigger legislation, six years after its launch.

organiser networks and provided case studies of how campaigners distribute their message to potential signees through various channels (Conrad, 2013a; Greenwood and Tuokko, 2017; Polchow, 2016). Others take the perspective of citizens and assess which factors make Europeans more likely to use the ECI (Kandyla and Gherghina, 2018; Kentmen-Cin, 2014). Missing from these contributions – similar to the works mentioned previously – is the establishment of a causal link between the behaviour of organisers and the outcomes of campaigns in terms of signatures. Which type of issues resonate more with signatories than others? Is communication connected to the success of ECIs? Authors agree that organisers use strategic communication to connect with citizens but most of the time, analyses of communication are limited to exemplary case studies without an overarching explanatory framework. On a more general level, public and scholarly attention was mainly paid to the most successful initiatives in form of case studies (Conrad, 2013a; Plottka, 2013) and little is known about the remaining campaigns.

1.3 Approach of this dissertation

I seek to expand the current understanding of the ECI in relation to the two main gaps mentioned above. Firstly, a theoretical gap is addressed: How can we define the contribution of the ECI to the democratic credentials of the EU? Secondly, an empirical gap is filled: How can the different outcomes of ECI campaigns be explained? What are the implications of the findings for the (alleged) democratic deficit of the EU?

The overall goal is to provide an analytical framework that deepens the knowledge about the outcomes of signature collection campaigns across the full spectrum of ECIs, ranging from successful initiatives to ECIs with low numbers of signatures. The activity of collecting signatures lies at the core of the European Citizens' Initiative. Examining the factors connected to the outcomes of signature collection campaigns is therefore at the centre of this dissertation. The explanatory factors related to signature collection outcomes will be introduced in depth in the chapters on the research design and hypotheses. To gain a better understanding of ECI outcomes, I examine resource levels of ECIs as well as their strategic communication. Thereby, I am able to qualify the instrument's contribution to the diversification of actors involved in EU agenda setting and policy making. The findings have implications for the debate surrounding the EU's democratic deficit and the role of citizen participation in European policy

making. Addressing the theoretical and empirical puzzle sheds light on whether or not the instrument is a perpetuation of elitist practices in EU stakeholder involvement.

To pursue this research agenda, I proceed in the following manner: Following this first introductory chapter, chapter two presents current scholarship on the ECI and the connected normative debate surrounding the EU's (alleged) democratic deficit. I argue that the EU's gradual extension of powers requires it to enhance its democratic legitimacy through additional channels extending beyond elections. The "participatory turn" of European institutions has been considered a reaction to this claim. I discuss the contribution of participatory tools to democracy from a theoretical perspective and derive expectations towards the ECI. At the end of the literature review, I assess the extent to which current scholarship on the ECI has been able to answer these theoretical questions. I conclude that scholars did not fully address the causal link between the outcomes of ECI campaigns and the strategic behaviour of organisers despite the fact that this link carries relevance for the contribution of the ECI to European democracy. Chapter three proposes a theoretical framework to address the open questions identified in the literature review. Based on two complementary theoretical approaches – resource mobilisation and framing –, I identify two sets of causal factors connected to ECI outcomes: Level of resources (financial resources, staff, socio-organisational resources, publicity activities) and framing strategies. I formulate a set of hypotheses establishing a causal link between ECI resources, strategic communication through framing and signature collection outcomes.

Chapter four contains the research design to test the hypotheses and details the research method, data collection and operationalisation. I have built a dataset of sixteen ECIs spanning from highly successful initiatives to cases with very low numbers of signatures. In order to find explanatory patterns for the different outcomes of the set of ECIs, I make use of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a method and theoretical approach ideally suited to identify different necessary and sufficient conditions leading to the outcome of interest. The outcome refers to the different degrees of success of ECIs which are defined as the varying numbers of signatures. In chapter five I conduct the Qualitative Comparative Analysis and provide two exemplary case studies of the causal patterns behind the success and failure of signature collection campaigns (Right2Water and "30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!"). Surprisingly, resources appeared to be less relevant for a successful signature collection campaign than expected. The results reveal that strategic communication is a necessary condition for ECI success. While the availability of resources is connected to successful

signature collection campaigns, no specific resource proved to be crucial. Interestingly, funding is only of limited importance as it was only present in one single solution path. In line with previous findings, the results suggest that different resources can act as substitutes while a good communication strategy is of vital importance. During the analysis of the non-outcome, the combined lack of staff and funding was connected to lower numbers of signatures while the absence of a fully-fledged framing was less important.

In the final chapter, I reflect on some shortcomings of my research design. I conclude by discussing the broader implications of my findings for future research and the role of the ECI for improving the EU's democratic credentials.

2 Literature review: Empowering Europeans through participatory democracy?

The extent to which direct democratic tools such as the ECI should be fostered by institutions to allow for equal participation is a highly normative question. What is more, even the question whether or not the European Union should fulfil democratic standards, is still under debate. This literature review aims to put some meat on the bones of these broad questions. In the following, I connect my research question to a number of overlapping academic debates and highlight gaps in the current knowledge of the European Citizens' Initiative. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first part of the literature review is dedicated to normative thinking of EU democracy: Is the EU sufficiently legitimised through member state democracy or does it require its own channels for democratic feedback? I examine this question by introducing the different sides in the debate about the (alleged) democratic deficit of European institutions. I argue that the extent of powers the EU has reached thus far requires it to enhance its democratic legitimacy. While the societal preconditions for parliamentary representation are still underdeveloped, supplementary forms of legitimation such as participatory tools can be used to justify EU-level policies. In the second part of the literature review, I argue that European institutions – in particular the European Commission – have acknowledged the existence of the democratic deficit and as a response have implemented new tools of citizen participation in the wake of the “participatory turn”. I discuss the democratising potential of participatory tools and employ scholarship on participatory democracy as my point of departure to derive theoretical expectations towards the ECI: A positive assessment of the democratising potential of the ECI hinges upon its ability to create opportunities for equal participation to include a maximum range of voices in EU agenda-setting. The third part of this literature review is dedicated to empirical research of the ECI and delineates the latest relevant research findings. I demonstrate that current scholarship has not yet been able to answer the question whether or not the ECI meets criteria of equal participation. The ensuing chapter then formulates a theoretical framework which I use as a starting point for my research agenda.

2.1 The Debate about the EU's Democratic Deficit

The EU's alleged democratic deficit is a contested issue which is closely connected to the question of whether or not citizens should be included in European-level decision making.

Assessments of the EU's democratic quality starkly depend on the normative benchmark which is being applied (Kohler-Koch, 2007) and theorists disagree which core qualities democracies should embody to begin with. This makes it rather difficult to judge the EU's democratic status-quo (Abromeit, 2003). In order to get a better grasp of this debate, I first introduce the camp of scholars who consider the EU to be sufficiently democratic, followed by the arguments of those researchers who argue that the EU is in need of democratic reform. My own argument follows the reasoning of the "reformers": the existence of the democratic deficit has been acknowledged empirically as European institutions have increased their efforts of democratic reform in the wake of the "participatory turn".

The last years have witnessed a trend of rising political disillusionment and alienation of citizens from political systems (Dalton and Welzel, 2014) and it has been argued that the perceived malaise of democracy suffered by developed democracies matches the symptoms of the EU (Warren, 2009a) – but does the EU need to fulfil the same democratic standards as nation states? For example, Majone (1998) scales down the expectations towards the EU in relation to its future and outputs: As long as the majority of voters opposes the idea of a European federation and prefers economic integration, no majoritarian forms of legitimization are necessary. However, if political integration proceeds, the EU would indeed require parliamentary forms of legitimacy. According to Majone (2006), the EU's legitimacy as a regulatory state is ensured through its efficiency-enhancing outputs which per se do not involve issues of redistribution. In the eyes of the citizenry, European bodies become acceptable by enhancing the welfare of society as a whole through such efficient policies. While he acknowledges that occasionally, EU action might have redistributive effects, Majone also argues that states on the losing side of EU policies are easily compensated. In his view, non-majoritarian institutions derive legitimacy from their expertise, accountability and transparency (ibid. 1998).

While Majone focusses on the legitimization of the EU through its outputs, Moravcsik (2002) highlights the procedural dimension of legitimacy. The cooperation between the supranational body and its member states is characterised by a well-defined division of labour which requires varying degrees of citizen participation. In contrast to nation states, the EU is specialising in tasks which are less salient to the public and thus do not require as much citizen engagement. For Moravcsik, the EU is legitimated through its transparent, effective and responsive procedures of policy-making which are limited by checks and balances (Moravcsik, 1998; 2006). Democratic control is exercised by national governments and the EP, whose

powers have been increasingly strengthened (ibid. 1998). Neyer (2010) takes a similar stance: According to him, the EU cannot and does not need to meet normative criteria of democracy akin to nation states. While he acknowledges room for improvement, he considers the EU as legitimated through its practice of justifying decisions and legal reasoning which ensure an inclusion of all interests affected.

Scharpf (2009) points out that the authors presented above root their vision of the European Union as an efficient, non-political problem-solving entity in liberal models of democracy. Theorists of liberal democracy emphasise the importance of constitutional constraints on government, the protection of individual rights and access of all affected interests to policy-making. According to this view, the EU is sufficiently legitimated mostly on the “output-side” – through the production of effective regulations. On the “input-side”, high consensus requirements ensure that no interests are overruled. Being a “government of governments” located in a multi-level set-up which depends on the voluntary compliance of national executives, the EU is sufficiently democratically legitimated through its member states (ibid.).

In contrast to the positions introduced above, other scholars apply more demanding normative standards to EU democracy. Their account of the supranational institution’s legitimacy is built on a different vision for the union’s finalité and leans towards a republican vision for political systems (Scharpf, 2009): In the republican tradition, the main aim of the political process is to shield the common good from interference by individual interests. The pillars of electoral accountability and public deliberation ensure that representatives take into account the well-being of society as a whole. Such types of systems emphasise democratic input in a system of mutual solidarity. According to the republican standard of democracy, the EU is not democratically legitimated (ibid.): The most prominent proponents of this view are Follesdal and Hix (2006), who have formulated a contemporary “standard version” of the democratic deficit of the EU. The two scholars criticise Majone and Moravcsik for what they perceive as misconceptions of the EU: Namely, that the EU does not exclusively produce Pareto-efficient outcomes. In the view of Follesdal and Hix, a large proportion of European policies has redistributive consequences, which would require political contestation and accountability. The consensual decision-making style of the EU constrains the promotion of the common good as governments cannot arrive at solutions that transcend national borders (Scharpf, 2009). Consequently, the EU suffers from an increasing output deficit and in particular, lacking input legitimacy. The criticism of EU democracy put forward by Follesdal,

Hix, and other scholars clusters around two main themes. Theme one: The dominance of executive actors and the implications of the remote decision making style in the EU. Theme two: The shortcomings of representative democracy in the EU for alleviating the negative aspects of executive dominance.

In relation to the first theme, the EU has been criticised for its bias towards executive decision-making. As Follesdal and Hix explain, “The design of the EU means that policy-making at the European level is dominated by executive actors: national ministers in the Council, and government appointees in the Commission” (2006). The authors argue that this has led to a weakening of parliaments, leaving policy making in the hands of a benevolent elite who is not sufficiently bound by accountability mechanisms. It is up to these elitist circles of experts, politicians and technocrats to produce outputs which somehow match the will of European citizens (Hix, 2003). To the extent that Europeanisation can be considered a regional form of globalisation (Kriesi, et al., 2008), the loss of parliamentary control in EU member states forms part of a wider phenomenon connected to the globalisation of national economies. According to Zürn (2004), the succinct economic liberalisation since the Second World War was undertaken mainly by executives, with little oversight by legislatures. He argues that once globalisation gained a momentum of its own, it resulted in a process of societal denationalisation which “[...]has challenged the capacity of national policies to bring about desired social outcomes” (ibid.). In other words, nation states are less capable to control undesired effects arising from interdependent markets. A frequent coping mechanism to solve such complex problems was the creation of international organisations. However, Zürn states that from a normative standpoint, the increasing powers of international organisations are not justifiable as they remove decisions away from public scrutiny.

Executive dominance in the EU has been criticised for producing policy drift (Scharpf, 1999). Policy drift occurs when policies do not reflect the preferences of voters. According to Follesdal and Hix (2006), national parliaments, courts and national corporatist interest group are less able to scrutinise the actions of their governments in the EU than “at home”, which enables executives to follow a more neo-liberal agenda. What is more, organised business interests have strong incentives to lobby European institutions and as a result, policies are skewed in favour of owners of capital. This results in incongruence between the makers and takers of laws (Fossum, 2015). Those affected by policies (citizens) are not involved in the decision-making process. This distance between the makers and takers of policies – that is, executives and voters – decreases the legitimacy of policy outcomes. However, some form of

legitimacy is required to create acceptance of the political system as a whole. If that the ultimate goal of government action is to reflect the views of citizens (Warren, 2009a), the EU clearly does not fulfil standards of democratic legitimacy in terms of input and output.

Against the critique of executive multilateralism, Moravcsik would contend that the remote decision-making mode of the EU is not problematic because the respective issues are simply not salient for voters (2002). In the eyes of Majone (2006), the lack of majoritarian feedback actually legitimises EU policies. For him, it is exactly because European institutions are insulated from citizens that they can produce efficient regulations. In Majone's logic, participation would only lead to redistributive policies, which are illegitimate under conditions of a lacking sense of community and solidarity. Follesdal and Hix (2006) disagree with these views for two reasons: First, salience is partly endogenous to the political process: If EU issues were contested in parliamentary arenas, this would increase the perceived salience among voters. Related to the policy drift argument, deliberation and party contestation would help citizens to form preferences which would result in policy outcomes which differ from the current status quo. Second, politicisation can create, in the long run, the societal preconditions for the acceptance of redistributive policies.

Over the years, the technocratic and remote *modus operandi* of European-level decision making has become less and less legitimate in the eyes of the citizenry. Popular disenchantment with the European project manifested during negative referenda on the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005 and the Irish "no" to the Treaty of Lisbon two years later. These votes reveal that publics no longer agreed with the direction of European integration. Recently, EU legitimacy has been further weakened in the wake of the Eurozone and financial crises. In times of fiscal turmoil, ruling by summit through informal intergovernmental decision making has become the norm (Hurrelmann, 2014). Certain governments dominate others which reflects badly on the legitimacy of supranational structures (Fossum, 2015). To counteract the unforeseen externalities of the European Monetary Union, the EU was forced to engage in redistributive politics, for example through bailouts and bond purchases (Caporaso, et al., 2014). Thus, the last years have shown that regulations coming from Brussels extend far beyond non-debatable technicalities and now interfere with social welfare state policies, producing winners and losers, which cannot be compensated easily. However, redistributive decisions are difficult to justify in the absence of democratic procedures. If the "losers" of certain policies do not have a perspective of shaping outcomes in the future, they will have a harder time accepting the status quo.

The EU's reaction to the financial crisis is symptomatic for its general detachment from citizens, revealing that voters are unable to hold leaders accountable. The informal system of "loose coupling" of institutions to arrive at solutions as fast and efficient as possible "[...]makes it difficult for the citizens to follow what is going on, to participate in a meaningful way by exerting outside pressure on the negotiations, and to hold decision makers to account after an agreement has been reached" (Hurrelmann, 2014, p. 101). In other words, the EU is simply too remote and complicated. Therefore, citizens cannot consider it democratic and do not identify with it (Follesdal and Hix, 2006). Due to the complex nature of the EU, citizens are unable to point out the agents responsible for policies. Thus, voters are deprived of the democratic mechanism of punishing leaders for implementing policies they do not agree with – leaving Europeans frustrated with the impression that they do not have a say in EU politics. The wave of popular support for right wing parties across Europe might be the result of dissatisfaction with the political establishment in general (Henley, et al., 2016). Frustration with the inability to hold executives accountable for the shape of European governance manifests itself in this opposition of principle to the European project as such (Mair, 2007), Brexit being the latest example.

Scholars agree that the tacit consensus which carried the integration process during the early stages of the European project has eroded and the EU finds itself in need for more direct democratic legitimation (Eriksen and Fossum, 2008). Against the prognoses of Moravcsik and Majone that voters do not care about the EU, European issues have become more contested among voters, particularly during the Eurozone crisis (Risse, 2014). The tacit consensus has been replaced by a situation of constraining dissensus: Hooghe and Marks (2009) observe that as European affairs have become more salient for electorates, national executives have to increasingly take into consideration voter preferences. However, the variety of national positions decreases the ability to arrive at European-level solutions. The increased politicisation of EU affairs creates a trade-off between efficient policy-making and the need to include more interests in the process.

One response to counter the negative effects of executive dominance – in academic circles and in practice – was to strengthen national parliaments and the EP. Both national parliamentary arenas and the EP have been empowered through successive treaty reforms. The Lisbon Treaty in particular brought about the biggest formal improvements for legislatures and consequently has been termed "the treaty of parliaments" (Brok and Selmayr, 2008). This brings me to the second theme in the debate about the EU's democratic credentials, as criticisms

of executive dominance are closely linked to the (desired) role of legislatures. In relation to this, I start my discussion with parliaments at the national level and conclude with reflections on the EP.

Traditionally, the two key tasks of national parliaments are scrutiny of government action and representation of citizens (Raunio, 2011). As a result of the growing powers of European institutions and the overall executive dominance on the EU-level, the oversight function of national parliaments has been weakened (Follesdal and Hix, 2006). Over time, national parliamentary discretion has been reduced to transposing EU directives which have already been agreed with in Brussels (Schmidt, 2006). Thus, for a long time, national parliaments have been considered slow adapters to European integration as parliamentarians' self-perception of their roles and functions are deeply embedded within the democratic tradition of the respective country (Wessels, 2005).

In order to counterbalance the creeping loss of authority, national parliaments have been equipped with more formal powers in recent years. By now, all of them have founded European Affairs Committees (EACs), which specialise in government scrutiny on EU matters (Raunio, 2011). As I have mentioned above, in particular the Treaty of Lisbon has strengthened the formal powers of parliaments (national parliaments and the EP). For national parliaments, three main changes should be highlighted (see Auel, 2018 for an excellent overview and assessment). First, national parliamentary powers have been boosted through an upgraded version of the Early Warning Mechanism (EWS): Parliaments are now, under certain conditions, entitled to reject legislative initiatives of the Commission, if the subsidiarity principle is violated (de Wilde, 2012). Second, national parliaments have been formally acknowledged as participants in future Treaty revision procedures. Third, various already existing fora of interparliamentary cooperation have been recognised through the Lisbon Treaty. As a result of their increased competencies in these various institutional entry points, national parliaments can be considered "multi-arena players" (Auel and Neuhold, 2017). However, it is not yet clear whether formal parliamentary powers translate into actual influence in EU policy making as national parliaments are making use of these new opportunities to different extents and (Auel, 2018).

The increased formal powers of national parliaments have been criticised for three reasons. First, specialised EACs are considered to reduce the discussion of EU subjects in full plenary as they operate in the absence of public scrutiny (Raunio, 2011). This, in turn prevents parliaments to fulfil their function as a deliberative forum where the views of citizens are

formed and then passed on to the leaders of the country. What is more, if parliaments give their governments very strict mandates because they scrutinise them too much, this could tie the hands of governments when negotiating in Brussels. Benz and Auel state that if parliaments give their governments mandating instructions which are too narrow, this will result in sub-optimal outcomes for the country (Auel and Benz, 2005). If a national parliament and government want to achieve the best outcomes possible, they need to cooperate. But as put forward by Auel and Benz, if such cooperation takes place successfully, it only does so behind closed doors (*ibid.*). Hoerner (2017) confirms this notion by showing that the positions articulated by national parliaments on EU affairs are not tools of debate but rather mere signals of position taking to support or reject government. Even when equipped with very strong formal powers, as is the case with the Austrian parliament, parliamentarians refrain from giving binding opinions on EU issues for two main reasons: an inability to deal with the complexity of the multilevel system and a prevalence of party political considerations over government scrutiny (Pollak and Slominski, 2003). From the perspective of ideal-typical representative democracy, such practices weaken parliaments in their traditional functions of giving voice to citizen interests.

Second, the new Early Warning Mechanism has been criticised for being ineffective and administratively burdensome. Since its inception, the tool was not expected to be very influential because parliaments do not have an incentive to use it frequently (Raunio, 2011). Instead, it installs an additional channel of influence into the complex system of EU-member state cooperation which bypasses governments and thereby actually misses the point of strengthening the parliamentary functions of scrutiny (de Wilde, 2012). Until 2019, the tool has only been used thrice and has been unsuccessful each time. While scholars agree that the new EWS has increased the quality of debates between the Commission and national parliaments (Fromage and Kreilinger, 2017; Huysmans, 2019), the latter have to invest significant time and resources into a tool that is not designed to exert actual influence over policy but is just a subsidiarity check. Thus, the EWS risks to create a situation of further bureaucratisation instead of democratic legitimisation (Auel, 2018, p. 8; de Wilde and Raunio, 2018). Considering the complexities of controlling governments in EU affairs, authors have recommended that national parliaments should focus on their role of connecting with citizens through communication in order to strengthen their representative function. Indeed, more parliamentary debates about European issues would be desirable from a standpoint of democratic legitimacy (Auel and Raunio, 2014).

The third criticism of the democratic legitimacy of national parliaments in European affairs brings me back to their second core function (representation). The criticism is connected to a more general problem: the increasing complexity of modern societies. According to Burns, parliamentarians face three challenges: First, they cannot represent the diversity of interests in modern and increasingly complex societies; second, they lack technical knowledge to grasp policy problems and third, as national MPs consider themselves to represent the general interest of society, they are often not particularly committed to giving voice to marginal groups (Burns, 1999). Consequently, parliaments are no longer able to fulfil their traditional representative functions. Instead, representation is pushed outward into the hands of specialised civil society groups, movements and a variety of other organisations. In light of this societal challenge faced by national parliaments, the same criticism can be applied to the EP. To conclude, while national parliaments have indeed been empowered formally, their actual impact in shaping European policy remains hard to trace and their representative function is limited by the complexity of modern societies.

To alleviate the normative burden of executive dominance, it has been suggested that in addition to the reform of national parliamentary competencies, also the powers of the EP should be increased. Indeed, also the role of the EP has been strengthened vis-à-vis the Council and the Commission through successive treaty changes (Rittberger, 2014). Through the Lisbon treaty, its competencies in legislation, budgetary matters and treaty-making have been strengthened (Herranz-Surrallés, 2014). Scholars have evaluated the formal empowerment of the EP and provide a mixed assessment. The EP has become better at shaping policy outcomes over the years, but its success is dependent on the positions of the Commission and the Council - making it a weaker player in comparison to the other institutions (Kreppel, 2018). Some authors see the EU at a crossroads, facing multiple challenges such as the Eurozone crisis, migration issues and disintegration tendencies and democratic backsliding in member states (Brack and Costa, 2018; Kelemen, 2017; Kelemen and Blauburger, 2017). The EP is affected by these challenges in various ways, in particular in light of the Eurozone crisis, which has triggered a recourse to executive dominance. In economic governance and other policy areas closer to national sovereignty, it is limited by national governments and not always able to attain its preferences (Bressanelli and Chelotti, 2018; Schoeller and Héritier, 2019).

At the same time as the formal empowerment of the EP is curtailed by recent developments, another –even more pressing issue – should not be overlooked: The connection of the EP to the will of European citizens remains unclear and indirect at best. Two related reasons can be found for this disconnect. The first one originates from the working mode of the EP, which is not focussed on communicating with citizens and exacerbates feelings of alienation. The second reason stems from the lacking societal preconditions for parliamentary democracy in the EU.

First, while the argument that European elections are second-order national contest has been somewhat qualified (Hobolt and Wittrock, 2011; Marsh, 1998; Reif and Schmitt, 1980) , a number of obstacles towards democratic legitimacy remain. On the one hand, European issues are having an increasing impact on voters' choices during EP elections (Schäfer and Debus, 2018) and politicised contexts positively impact turnout (Grande, et al., 2016). On the other hand, the EP is still confronted with electoral abstention of citizens who feel alienated and indifferent towards the EU (Schäfer and Debus, 2018). The issue of the perceived distance between the EU and citizens is particularly problematic for the EP as it is the only European-level institution with a direct electoral link. It has somewhat neglected its communication function at the cost of efficiency (Lord, 2018) and is not delivering on the promise of transparency, which further exacerbates its legitimacy problems (Brandsma, 2018; Lord and Pollak, 2010). The lack of publicly visible debates has been criticised because it deprives citizens of the chance to express and form their views on EU policy (Follesdal and Hix, 2006). While some scholars see increased politicisation of EU issues in parliamentary arenas as panacea for the democratic deficit (Follesdal and Hix, 2006), others warn against this medicine. In light of the extent to which the EU affects the daily lives of citizens, Lord and Beetham (2001) request that the EU should meet the same democratic standards as nation states and argue that it requires a fully-fledged parliamentary democracy. Against the call for European parliamentary democracy, Scharpf (2015) holds that majoritarian democracy is neither feasible nor desirable for the EU. He warns that politicisation would increase conflict over European policies while simultaneously decreasing efficiency.

The position of Scharpf brings me to the second reason for the disconnect between the EP and European citizens. According to this position, the underlying reason why representative democracy is not feasible in the EU is that citizens lack the societal preconditions. “There are no Europe-wide media of communication and political debates, no Europe-wide political parties, no Europe-wide party competition focused on highly salient European policy choices,

and no politically accountable European government that must anticipate and respond to the egalitarian control of Europe-wide election returns. There is no theoretical reason to think that these deficits should be written in stone. But at present, input-oriented republican legitimacy cannot be claimed for the Union” (Scharpf, 2009). Citizens perceive actions taken at the European level mainly through a national perspective because a European public sphere is still underdeveloped. So far, there are only segmented public spheres which are limited to certain sectors of society (Benz, 2003). Only provided that a transnational public space emerges, a European identity can develop (Habermas, 2004). If national mass media opened up to each other, awareness of European politics among citizens would be raised. This could trigger both political deliberation and will-formation, two key factors in the development of European democracy (Habermas, 2008). This is because every true democracy needs mass media scrutinizing the work of politicians (ibid.). In a deliberative logic, public opinion then could be used to influence the government via communication and elections (Kohler-Koch, 2007).

For Scharpf and others, it appears unlikely that a European sense of identity will develop any time soon. According to Scharpf (2015), one way out of the recent democratic impasse created by executive dominance – especially as it has aggravated in response to the Eurozone crisis – would be a reversion of powers in EU matters back to the nation state: He argues that in the absence of fully-fledged European representation, national parliaments can be a legitimising voice for multiple demoi. Majone (2006) has a similar view and suggests that a reduction of the competencies of European institutions is the best treatment against the democratic deficit.

Since the Eurozone crisis, even the most severe critics of the – in their eyes so far alleged – democratic deficit have acknowledged that the extended powers of the EU require a broader democratic cushioning to justify the effects of redistributive policies. Democratisation proposals mostly revolve around legitimising EU action through more and better representation via parliamentary channels. Scholarly disagreement mainly centres on the rather black and white question: Is parliamentarism possible in a large polity like the EU or not? At first sight, this focus on parliaments makes sense. Representation as one of the tenets of EU legitimacy is in fact enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. However, the normative debate about the (non-)feasibility of representative democracy in the EU does not fully take into account the actuality of how the institutions work. By comparing its basis for legitimation to nation states, scholars fail to acknowledge the complex nature of the EU. In the course of time, the EU has become much more than just an “ordinary” international organization. It is a polity *sui generis* with

both state-like elements and features of an international organization (Schäfer, 2006). As a whole new type of political system which is composed of national and European institutions alike, the EU is a multi-level political system dominated by different actors and has different sources of legitimation (Richter, 2005). While the societal preconditions for parliamentary democracy in the EU are still not fully developed, some scholars argue that it is in fact possible to supplement EU legitimacy through different forms of post-parliamentary democracy (Lord and Beetham, 2001). Increased possibilities for direct citizen participation have been proposed as one venue for such post-parliamentary legitimation (Abromeit, 1998; Warren, 2009a).

I will show in the ensuing sub-chapter that European institutions themselves have acknowledged their lack of democratic legitimacy among European publics. Consequently, the institutions have engaged in a “charm offensive” by introducing more participatory and consultative mechanisms since the early 2000s. Especially the Commission has reacted to the allegations of lacking democratic legitimacy and started promoting more participation to its decision making processes (Armstrong, 2002). In this so-called “participatory turn”, the institution emphasised its willingness to include stakeholders from civil society (Saurugger, 2010). A number of consultative and participatory tools have been introduced since then, and the European Citizens’ Initiative forms part of these innovations. The term “participatory democracy” invokes a number of normative expectations towards the quality of participatory tools such as the ECI, which I also discuss in the following.

2.2 Participatory democracy and European institutions

As a response to the widespread disillusionment and alienation of citizens from the political system, governments worldwide have made numerous attempts to counter popular disenchantment with politics by introducing forms of stakeholder involvement beyond elections. Participatory budgeting, referenda and deliberative citizen panels are just some of the forms these tools can take (Altman, 2011). Participatory innovations are part of the latest trend of governance-driven democratization (Warren, 2009b). Not only nation states but also the institutions of the EU have been promoting this gradual shift towards the inclusion of more interests into the policy-making process. For instance, policy makers have sought to address the lack of accountability on issues of European integration through referenda on European Union Treaties. EU institutions have been actively attempting to strengthen their legitimacy through increased stakeholder involvement. Ever since the community’s inception, interest

representation has been an important pillar of EU policy making – especially within the Commission. Already in the early stages of European integration, business interests had been given consultative status in order to support the creation of the single market (Greenwood, 2011). The role and variety of interests have been extended during the years to come. In documents of the Commission “The gradual extension is most noticeable in the change of terminology, from ‘consultation’ (1960/70s) to ‘partnership’ (1980/90s) and ‘participation’ (1990/2000s)” (Quittkat and Finke, 2008).

Since the 2000s, the process of this extension of interests included in policy formulation was sped up extensively after the resignation of the Santer Commission. Politically weakened by the legacy of its predecessor, the subsequent college of Commissioners realised the need for more transparency and openness. Concerned with its lack of input legitimacy and seeking support from organised civil society, it sought to improve its democratic credentials by publishing the White Paper on European Governance (Saurugger, 2010). The publication of the White Paper marks the beginning of the rise of participatory democracy in the EU (Saurugger, 2010). It aims at correcting the perceived imbalance between organised and business interests on the one hand, and all other interests on the other (Follesdal, 2003). The introduction of various democratic experiments such as online consultations and stakeholder fora was the result of this participatory turn (Kohler-Koch, 2011; Quittkat and Finke, 2008).

The participatory engineering of the European Commission has been criticised for lacking a clear vision of who should be at the centre of inclusionary efforts. The Commission’s understanding of participation has evolved since the 1970s and more recently has become even more radical. Since the millennium, it favours the establishment of a European public sphere with the individual citizen at the core of inclusionary efforts (Monaghan, 2012). At the same time, civil society inclusion into policy formulation was seen as the ultimate panacea for the democratic deficit (Armstrong, 2002). The institution’s understanding of participatory democracy oscillates between a greater involvement of organised civil society – on the one hand – and individual citizens – on the other hand (Finke, 2007; Kohler-Koch and Buth, 2009). According to the authors mentioned, inclusion of individuals as part of active citizenship contradicts the participation of organised civil society. Beate Kohler-Koch and Vanessa Buth share this view and conclude that while the Commission hopes that civil society will act as transmission belt between the EU and citizens, effective participation of organised civil society organisations (CSOs) and involvement of grassroots members cannot be reconciled (Hüller, 2010; Kohler-Koch and Buth, 2009). Despite this dilemma, academics do not eliminate the

possibility that participatory engineering on the European level might further the formation of a European public sphere in the long run (Finke, 2007) or alleviate the bias towards economic interests to some extent Kohler-Koch (2007).

In general, participatory tools invoke a set of normative expectations which are rooted in deliberative and participatory theories of democracy (Abels, 2009). From the perspective of deliberative democratic theory, EU-level venues for citizen participation are expected to help Europeans build a sense of shared identity. Against the common conception that citizens are not able to identify with the EU, Risse (2014) finds that Europeans are increasingly developing dual identities – a national sense of belonging no longer excludes feeling “European”. Other scholars go further and argue that imagined communities gather not only based on territorial boundaries but on the basis of issues (Castiglione and Warren, 2006) in the form of issue-specific publics (Eder, et al., 1998). According to Heidrun Abromeit (2002), there are already quite a few issue-specific and sectoral communication spheres in the EU which cross national borders. These sectoral communities can serve as starting points for building the societal preconditions for a European public sphere.

The ideas of deliberative theorists are closely connected to theories of participatory democracy. While deliberation in practice is frequently used to arrive at consensual decisions, participatory forums involve majoritarian rule. However, the differences between the two schools should not be overstated. Participationists consider deliberation as important part of the democratic process (Barber, 1984). While deliberative democratic scholars put their analytical focus on communicative processes within society, theorists of participatory democracy are more concerned with the actual decision-making power of different actors. For participationists, giving all interests affected an equal say in the decision will lead to a better implementation of the public will and helps to create a sense of solidarity.

Historically, the roots of participatory democratic thinking have been accredited most frequently to Rousseau. In her interpretation of his writings, Pateman (1970) argues that in his view, participation creates better participants and better government. Participation shapes the attitudes of individuals as far as they are forced to consider the common good and overcome their selfishness. This in turn, sustains the participatory system as a whole because through their involvement, citizens recognise the value of the decision-making process and the well-being of the community. In other words, participatory tools are schools of democracy. For theorists of participation, the fruits of true involvement can only be reaped on the smallest level

possible. For example, Barber offers the view that self-government is best realised on the local and regional levels, while national matters have to remain in the hands of representatives (Barber, 1984). When groups become bigger, such as movements and unions, their participatory structures need to be complemented by cooperation with leaders (Wolfe, 1985). These preconditions – according to Pateman (1970) – are in line with Rousseau’s thinking. His vision for participatory self-government has been formulated in the context of non-industrial, small communities. For him, economic equality and simultaneous interdependence of participants are necessary for the functioning of participatory democracy. To conclude, theories of participatory democracy envision self-government by individuals on the smallest organisational level possible. Thus, one key benchmark to measure the quality of participatory tools can be derived: Normatively desirable participation requires that all interests have equal opportunities to take part in the decision.

Similar to participationists, scholars of EU democracy also frequently refer to the need for equality in participation. While inclusion of all interests affected in the formulation of rules and policies is feasible in the local and regional context, it becomes more and more difficult with increasing size of the citizen body (Dahl, 1998). Self-government through equal participation is already a challenge on the national level, let alone the EU. To solve the problems of scale, governments rely on representative democracy. However, as I have discussed before, the societal preconditions for the acceptance of majority rule are currently missing in the European Union. Thus, to gauge the quality of participation, scholars of EU democracy frequently resort to collective actors such as interest groups or civil society organisations as proxies for citizen inclusion. This dilemma becomes visible in the Commission’s own understanding of participation, which includes both individual citizens and organised civil society. As participation of individual citizens in political processes in European-level policies is difficult to achieve, collective actors from civil society can be considered a transmission belt for conveying popular opinion to EU institutions. Based on this dilemma between individual and collective participation, how can the quality of participatory tools in the EU be gauged? If we accept that collective actors are a proxy for the participation of individual citizens, equality in participation is achieved when political processes in the EU are accessible for a variety of organisations (Kohler-Koch and Finke, 2007).

So far, participatory governance at the supranational level has proved problematic as a cure for the democratic deficit. Scholars find that EU-level participation is still an elitist practice, limited to those groups with vast organizational and financial resources (Persson,

2007). The instruments of citizen participation to Commission decision making have been criticised for being “seriously flawed” and not egalitarian (Hüller, 2010). What is more, participation is biased towards elite actors (Saurugger, 2008) such as business and industry organisations, whereas not-for-profit organisations and citizen organisations have a smaller impact (Marxsen, 2015).

The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI) is the latest tool in the Commission’s box of participatory innovations and has to be seen within the broader context of the alleged democratic deficit of European institutions. Once the proposal for the regulation of the European Citizens’ Initiative had been published, the Commission announced, “All European citizens will be given the opportunity to influence proposed EU laws”⁴. Since the design of the ECI requires collective actors, this statement reflects the dual definition of participation by the Commission. Collecting a total of one million signatures appears hardly possible for “ordinary” citizens. Instead, collective actors such as civil society organisations and NGOs seem to be the addressees of the ECI. Thus, to gauge the equality of participation of the ECI, the focus should be put on organisers of initiatives. If the ECI was to be a tool of political equality, then, theoretically all types of interests should have the same chance of making it to the EU’s agenda, no matter what their financial and organisational background. The democratic quality of the ECI hinges upon whether it ensures equal participation for all groups which seek to launch an initiative. In light of the criticism of previous participatory tools, the question becomes: Will the European Citizens’ Initiative suffer from a similar malaise of elite bias or can it create equal opportunities for participation? Will only well-resourced and well-organised groups be able to collect one million signatures?

2.3 Gaps in current ECI literatures

Previous research on the ECI did not tackle the question whether or not the tool allows for equal participation from an empirical perspective. Researchers were not able to draw on extensive sources of data, in particular during the early stages of the instrument. To provide an overview of current knowledge on the ECI, this section is divided into three topical sections: First, I introduce contributions covering the basics of the ECI: its genesis, functioning and legal

⁴ Commission press release on the launch of the Lisbon Treaty; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-09-1855_en.htm; IP/09/1855; Brussels, 1 December 2009.

classifications. These contributions debate the democratic potential of the tool from different normative perspectives. The second section puts the democratic expectations to the test: I present related findings using data from the ‘pilot initiatives’ and first ECIs. The third section outlines the research gaps in our current understanding of participatory democracy as embodied by the ECI: I conclude this chapter by arguing that there is a feature common to all contributions, namely the unanswered question of the actual democratising benefits of the ECI in terms of equal participation when it comes to the ability of different ECI organisers to collect signatures. The core feature of the ECI, namely the requirement of mass mobilisation, has been somewhat neglected. While it is known that organising an ECI requires substantial resources, it is not clear which resources are necessary and how these resources interact.

The introduction of the ECI in the draft constitutional treaty for the European Union and its subsequent inclusion in the Lisbon Treaty have triggered a wave of comments in blogs, newspapers and academic journals coming from experts, think tanks, direct democracy NGOs and other stakeholders. Before the ECI became active, the earliest volumes on the instrument sought to clarify the technicalities of the instrument. Authors provided evaluations of the regulation on the ECI in terms of its potential functioning in general (Balthasar, 2011; Elfer, 2009; Pichler, 2009; 2010a; 2011; Sigmund, 2011). Others tackle the ECI’s potential from the perspective of organisers by giving tips to initiators on how to launch successful initiatives (Beier, 2011; Ekberg, 2009; Kammel, 2011; Kaufmann, 2011; Pichler, 2010b; c). Serving a similar purpose, some writers explain further details such as the rules for collecting signatures, verification process, number of initiators and the foundations for the minimum number of signatures from each country (Müller-Török and Stein, 2011; Prosser, 2011; Sigmund, 2010).

Classifying and explaining the unknown “creature” ECI was also done by referring to its legal nature: One frequent angle comprises comparisons with national citizens’ initiatives (see for example Schiller, 2009). Authors using this approach find that the ECI represents a combination of national legal best practices: Cuesta-Lopez (2012) shows that the European Citizens’ Initiative is a variation of the agenda initiative known in Austrian, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian and Spanish Constitutions. He finds that the main differences of the ECI to national instruments for citizen participation lie in the political judgement of the Commission before declaring an initiative admissible, the national minimum numbers of signatures and the need to publish the sources of funding of successful ECIs. Behringer (2016) judges the ECI from the perspective of Swiss direct democracy. Insights derived from the Swiss model reveal areas for potential improvement for the ECI to

increase its contribution to European democracy. The areas for further development appear in light of the scope of issues, the outcome of successful initiatives, the control of the Commission over registration and rejection, and the risk of socioeconomic bias of organisers.

Compared to national direct democratic tools, the ECI reveals its limited impact: The Commission retains its gatekeeper role as the main agenda-setter in the EU. The registration or rejection of initiatives lies in the hands of the institution as it is free to decide how restrictive it interprets their respective content. What is more, once an initiative manages to be registered and reaches the one million signatures threshold, the Commission may still decide not to act upon the proposal. Thus, the ECI's contribution to EU democracy depends on whether or not the EU institutions – first and foremost the Commission – will take initiatives seriously (Gross, 2009).

Authors taking the classification exercise to the European level also provide a mixed assessment of the ECI's democratic potential. Vogiatzis argues that the ECI represents not so much a tool of direct democracy but rather an additional opportunity structure for citizen participation – it does not alter the dominance of the community method in European-level decision making (2013). The ECI does not shift the focus of European institutions on output legitimization towards a more input-oriented approach. To ameliorate the risk of becoming a purely symbolic tool, he underlines the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union for reviewing Commission's decisions to reject or amend proposals. Szeligowska and Mincheva (2012) see the ECI as a more informal tool of influence on decision-making which bears complementary resemblance to the already existing participatory mechanisms in the EU system. They also point out the challenges for the Commission in relation to the ECI. Potential burdens on the Commission arise from increased administrative tasks and the obligation to respond to initiatives. Compared to other channels into EU politics for European citizens, the ECI is unique (Conrad, 2011). In contrast to other EU-level participatory mechanisms, the ECI requires substantial mobilisation at the grassroot-level (Bouza García and Del Rio Villar, 2012). Scholars agree that the requirement of mass mobilisation creates great potential as it can stimulate deliberation among European publics and increase the number of stakeholders involved in EU politics.

Classifications of the ECI are closely connected to normative expectations towards the tool's contribution to European democracy. Before the ECI's launch, there was a widespread optimistic belief that the ECI will indeed make the EU more democratic. Many academics

hailed the democratic potential of the ECI with keywords such as: creating a European public sphere, alleviating the democratic deficit, politicisation of EU issues and participatory or even direct democracy. Also from the perspective of European institutions, the introduction of the citizens' initiative tool ties in neatly with the Commission's discursive shift towards a participatory turn and civil society inclusion (Kohler-Koch, 2012). What is more, the way in which CSOs speak about the ECI has been parallel to the discursive shift of the Commission which raised expectations from "improving governance" to a more normative frame of participatory democracy (Greenwood, 2012; Monaghan, 2012). Similarly, Plottka (2013) analyses the discourse around the consultations for the regulation specifying the ECI and finds that the predominant interpretative frame centres around the democratising potential of the ECI to connect citizens with institutions. However, discursive shifts do not always coincide with changes in behaviour. Boussaguet (2016) warns that participatory mechanisms are used by institutions as symbolic instruments. "The Commission, in particular, takes a patronising attitude, is often overselling the democratic quality of its exchange with interest organisations and citizens, and is inclined to give preference to its 'teaching function'" (Kohler-Koch, 2007). If the Commission handles the ECI in a similar vein, it risks undermining the instrument as a whole.

The myriad of normative expectations towards the ECI are rooted in its hybrid nature. While it shares similarities to national instruments of direct democracy, it also needs to be contextualised within European policy making. Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir (2016) explains how the ECI as a hybrid genre of participatory democracy creates confusion for its users (organisers and participants) which may lead to frustration: To understand the ECI, users compare it to their previous experience of similar tools, which influences their expectations towards its functioning and outputs. At the same time, the Commission's understanding of the tool introduces further potential for misunderstanding when it comes to the use of the ECI in practice. The institution promotes a dual vision of the ECI: Both as activator for the involvement of individuals and also as an input mechanism for organised civil society.

In the academic literature, the democratising potential of the ECI has been elaborated from a theoretical perspective which connects organisers, citizens and the Commission. In this view, organisers of ECIs serve as transmission belts of citizen demands towards the Commission. A desired by-product of this transmission is the creation of a public sphere. For instance, Conrad (2013a) argues that the ECI can bridge the gap between citizens and EU institutions by generating communicative power in a Habermasian sense. According to him,

the ECI has the potential to induce civil society networking and mobilisation on a transnational level and thus provides an opportunity for organisers to channel communicative power into EU institutions. While transnational deliberation is not a guaranteed outcome of the ECI due to its design as a participatory tool, it does have the potential to induce European debate (Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir, 2016). Knaut (2016) suggests adapting the concept of public sphere to the context of the EU: As the term “public sphere” and its connection to democracy have evolved in the context of the nation state, they cannot be directly translated to the EU without losing explanatory value. Being not only a political system *sui generis* but also a social reality *sui generis*, the European public sphere which might or might not develop requires new theoretical categories. To this aim, Annette Knaut proposes the idea of Transnational Discursive Spaces (TDS). TDS are fluid, borderless and polycentric networks of communication where actors from diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact. According to her, the ECI can be considered an empirical example of such Transnational Discursive Spaces. Also other authors find evidence for the nascent development of European-level public spheres. For example, Polchow’s case study of Right2Water and European Initiative for Media Pluralism demonstrates how the two initiatives represent different types of TDS (2016). Conrad (2016) finds that the ECI is not a necessary precondition for the emergence of debate – the case of the rejected initiative “Stop TTIP” demonstrates that organisers can stimulate public discussion without being officially registered by the Commission. Elsewhere Conrad (2013a), examines the role of social media for the transmission function of ECI organisers and argues that the internet plays a key role for campaigns. Greenwood and Tuokko (2017) find mixed evidence for the appearance of European communication networks: Ten out of twenty-two ECIs in their dataset have continued their public campaigns after the signature collection period and built transnational networks. To sum up, these pioneer studies provide important first insights into the role of the ECI for fostering transnational debates.

While the concept of transnational public spheres focuses on the communicative interaction between citizens, ECI organisers and institutions, the democratising potential of the ECI has also been explored by scholars in relation to the tool’s ability of activating citizens to engage in EU politics. For instance, Conrad (2013b) argues that the ECI gives citizens from small member states the opportunity to initiate deliberation. Even though France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy have the largest numbers of initiators, the ECI is indeed frequently used by organisers from smaller states. Using Eurobarometer data, Kandyla and Gherghina (2018) perform an analysis of citizen’s motivations to use the ECI as organisers, signees or

supporters. They observe that people who are confident in the EU's political system and who consider themselves more knowledgeable about EU politics are more likely to use the ECI, confirming the potential elite bias of the ECI not only in terms of organisers but also in terms of signees. The results are corroborated by Kentmen-Cin (2014): Citizens with negative attitudes towards the EU are unlikely to seize participatory opportunities granted by the ECI. Also Carrara draws attention to the possibly alienating effects of the ECI for Europeans. Activism in form of ECIs is mainly centred around the internet – organisers set up signature collection websites, twitter and Facebook accounts to connect with signees. As a result of different degrees of access to the internet and the barriers to multilingualism in the member states, the tool thus risks to exclude a large fraction of European populations.

Based on the design of the ECI, it becomes clear that it is not a tool for “ordinary” individuals but rather for organised interests. While the most current typology of ECIs (Conrad and Steingrimsdóttir, 2016) demonstrates that a significant proportion of initiatives was conducted by private citizens without the support of larger organisations, their success in terms of signatures was hampered. In other words, the ECI has not been captured by professional lobbies (Bouza García and Greenwood, 2014). However, collective actors are still more likely to be able to carry the costs involved in launching a European campaign for the collection of one million signatures. Scholars find that “[...]the ECI is not necessarily an expression of citizens' grievances, a sort of collective petition, and confirms that it is an agenda-setting tool for specialised organisations” (Bouza García, 2012b). If the ECI is not a tool for citizens, how can it contribute to enhancing democracy in the EU? Current scholarship on the ECI points to two pathways. The first contribution to EU democracy derives from a diversification of stakeholders involved in EU politics. The second contribution is rooted in the role of ECI organisers as transmission belts for the demands of citizens. Based on the first contribution, academics argue that the ECI is likely to be mainly used by CSOs so far weakly involved in EU affairs, thus making the landscape of interest groups in Brussels more diverse (Bouza García and Del Rio Villar, 2012; Greenwood, 2012). They see potential for the involvement of CSOs so far not active in EU politics. The latter expectation is corroborated by a study of pilot initiatives launched as a test before the introduction of the ECI: In his classification of pilot ECIs according to type of organiser, subject matter, acceptability and intended effects, Bouza García (2012a) finds no evidence that the ECI will be biased towards national organisations, social movements or Brussels-based players. In line with this, Greenwood (2012) predicts that the ECI will activate new CSOs which are not connected to traditional EU NGOs. In a very

recent case study of five initiatives, Oleart and Bouza (2018) demonstrate that the ECI has the potential of altering the “playing field” in which organisers interact with institutions. Skilled campaigners can use the instrument to “upload” national issues to the European sphere by using the number of signature mobilised as a resource. This way they can raise their profile among potential new partners and institutions.

Regarding the ECIs contribution to the development of a European public sphere, Greenwood (2012) expects already existing EU-level NGOs to become more outward looking as a result of the ECI with regard to their members and potential signees. Bouza García and Del Rio Villar (2012) expect that organisers will act as mediating link between institutions and citizens. Bouza García (2012b) finds evidence for a politicisation of European issues through the ECI: The most frequent issues of the pilot initiatives were “classic” civil society issues such as health, environment, constitutional and enlargement topics as well as social affairs, with fewer issues devoted to the internal market or institutional topics. He expects future initiatives to be evenly divided between those trying to protest against European integration and others which are seeking true influence through consensual proposals. In fact, organisers who are already affiliated with EU policy making are less likely to propose contentious initiatives. Campaigns from other sources were more prone to advance contentious content (Bouza García and Greenwood, 2014). Not all organisers launch initiatives with the aim of collecting signatures, but use the tool to change the framing of an issue, get publicity or expand their network of partners (Bouza García and Greenwood, 2013).

Overall, research on the ECI is still in its infancy – just like the instrument itself. As a result, the small community of scholars who is studying the tool’s development was not able to draw on extensive sources of data. Nevertheless, their pilot contributions provide important first insights and pave the way for future work. The big question underlying all works concerns the democratic potential of the ECI, which academics examine from different angles: the ECI and citizens, the ECI and institutions, its legal nature and organisers’ relation to the ECI. Scholars agree that “ordinary” citizens will find it difficult to understand and use the tool. It has the potential to create elite bias because it requires internet literacy, multilingualism and knowledge of the EU. Results indicate that Europeans who feel more positively about the EU and are more knowledgeable are more likely to use the ECI as organisers, signees or supporters. In relation to European institutions, there is broad consensus that the tool’s future depends on the behaviour of the Commission. If the body decides to interpret initiatives in a restrictive way, the current lack of output from the instrument is likely to create frustration among

Europeans. From a legal perspective, scholars agree that the ECI's current legal design is flawed and requires substantial reform to make it more user-friendly for citizens and organisers. Authors have contextualised the ECI's position within the overall decision-making structure of the EU, revealing the unique nature of the instrument in terms of the requirement of mass mobilisation. However, there is disagreement whether or not the ECI will change the decision making style of the EU. While some argue that it does not alter the Commission's dominant role in EU agenda-setting, others see potential for a true participatory shift which goes beyond lip service. Organisers of initiatives have been granted a central role for the democratising potential of the ECI. The development of a transnational public sphere, scholars argue, is contingent upon the intermediary role of organisers between citizens and institutions. While a number of studies finds first signs of the development of fluid discursive spaces akin to a nascent European public sphere, other evidence suggest that these communicative networks are not lasting. There is however, no contradictory evidence that the ECI has not diversified that number of stakeholders active in the EU. Scholars postulate that the ECI has indeed opened up opportunities for new actors. So far, the tool has not been dominated by lobby groups or commercial interests. Even small groups of citizens not connected to major CSOs have organised ECIs, albeit with limited success in terms of signatures collected.

From the review of the literature on the ECI, it becomes clear that its democratising potential does not so much lie in the "political awakening" of citizens but rather in the key role of ECI organisers. There is broad consensus among scholars that a successful use of the instrument requires resources only available to organised groups such as CSOs, commercial interests and political actors. From this perspective, the contribution of the ECI to an amelioration of the EU's democratic deficit lies in the tool's ability to enable a diversification of organisers and the function of organisers as intermediaries between citizens and institutions. While contributions on the ECI deals with these two topics, they do so mostly from a theoretical perspective by pointing out possible future developments of the tool. The majority of studies was confined to making theoretical predictions about the ECI's future and role for EU democracy. Most of the few contributions which were able to generate first data draw only tentative conclusions.

I consider there to be two connected lacunae in relation to the ECI's democratising potential which remain unanswered by the current literature. Open questions pertain specifically to 1) a deeper empirical enquiry into the quality of diversification of stakeholders and 2) the causal link between organisers' resources and the mobilisation of signees. In relation

to lacuna number one, a few studies provide important first insights into the types of organisers which are attracted by the ECI, with most attention granted to the most successful initiatives in terms of signatures. The findings suggest that the ECI indeed broadens the scope of actors involved in EU agenda-setting. However, the mere numerical increase of stakeholders does not automatically imply equality of participation. “More players” does not automatically translate to “more equal participation”. How can we know that these new players who use the ECI are not just more of the same type of wealthy elite actor already active in Brussels? It is true that the goals of ECI organisers can vary from actual mobilisation to networking and publicity. However, I consider collecting as many signatures as possible the most important strategy for organiser to achieve these goals. Higher numbers of signatures will not only put public pressure on the Commission, but also create attention among potential partner organisations and supporters. If, however, only well-resourced and well-organised groups manage to conduct a successful signature collection campaign, this would only perpetuate the elite bias of EU politics. Thus, the ECI would not fulfil the standard of equal participation of organisers. In other words, I define equal participation in the ECI as the ability of organisers with different levels of resources to collect signatures. The literature so far has not established a definite causal link between levels of resources and campaigning outcomes. Usually, classifications of types of organisers are used as a proxy for judging the resources of ECIs. Scholars imply that higher resources lead to more signatures but it is not evident from the literature which and how much resources are necessary for campaigning. What is more, “failed” ECIs have received little attention, even though much can be learned from these cases: Why do some ECIs mobilise more citizens than others? Are there specific, necessary key resources or is a combination of resources more useful? In relation to the behaviour of organisers, scholars imply that the latter make strategic choices when deciding to conduct an ECI. However, I did not find references to an overarching theoretical framework to explain the behaviour of organisers. Scholars refer to key theoretical concepts such as European public sphere and the democratic deficit, but they do not explore the causal link between campaign strategies and outcomes.

The core distinguishing feature of the citizens’ initiative has been somewhat neglected. That is, the ways in which organisers mobilise signatories. The precondition for creating issue publics and activating the European public sphere is large scale mobilisation of citizens. The second lacuna results from the first: The quality of the diversification of ECI organisers depends on campaigners ability to mobilise signatures. So far, little attention has been given to this link. There is evidence that campaigners use different resources – such as strategic

communication – to motivate people to sign their initiative. However, it is not possible to synthesise findings across cases because these contributions are limited to a handful of illustrative case studies. It is unclear which type of communication succeeds in mobilising citizens. In addition, it is not clear how and which resources affect this link or how resources interact.

I aim to contribute to a better understanding of the ECI in relation to these open questions. I explore the ECI's contribution to EU democracy by examining how different types of organisers mobilise signatures and which strategies lead to more or less successful signature collection campaigns. I propose a theoretical framework to predict the strategies of organisers: Using a social movement resource mobilisation approach, which is rooted in rational choice theories of human behaviour, I explore the link between resources, communication strategies and outcomes of signature collection campaigns. My contribution is embedded in the debate about the democratic deficit of the EU and in particular, the nascent empirical literature on transnational participatory democracy which extends beyond classic channels of representation. By examining the factors for the mobilisation of signatures for ECI campaigns, I seek to deepen the understanding of the functioning of the instrument which has implications for the creation of a European public sphere. In the next chapter, I will detail the theoretical framework which forms the basis for the hypotheses about the mobilisation strategies of ECI organisers.

3 Theoretical framework: ECI organisers as strategic EU-level actors

In this chapter, I am drawing on theories of rational choice (RC) to form hypotheses about the factors shaping the ability of organisers of ECIs to mobilise signatures. The rational choice approach originates from economics, but has also been widely applied by political scientists to study social phenomena. Among the main tenets of rational choice theory are the assumptions that a) collective behaviour can be better understood through the motivations driving individuals and that b) those individuals will make decisions in line with a rational pursuit of their preferences. In the following paragraphs (subchapter 3.1) I will elucidate the basic assumptions of the rational choice approach (in general and in the political sciences) before introducing a specification of RC to the study of social movements and interest groups – the resource mobilisation approach (RMA) in section 3.2. The RMA originates in social movement studies and postulates that the goal attainment of a movement is interlinked with its ability to acquire resources. The ensuing subchapters (3.2.1 – 3.2.4) will then develop hypotheses on the factors shaping the mobilisation success of ECIs based on the RMA. RMA has been criticised for neglecting the ability of social movements to create a shared sense of meaning among supporters. In order to account for the full range of strategies at the disposal of ECI organisers, section 3.3 thus presents the framing approach as a useful perspective to develop a better understanding of the role of meaning-making by collective actors for successful mobilisation.

3.1 Rational choice theories of human behaviour

The core assumptions of rational choice theories of human behaviour as meta-theoretical paradigm are methodological individualism and rationality (Petracca, 1991, p. 289). The former refers to the idea that social phenomena can be explained by the actions of individual human beings. The latter specifies that human beings act in a rational, self-interested and utility-maximising way. From a rational choice perspective, human beings have a preference in mind and calculate the likely costs and benefits of different alternative paths of action while taking into consideration all the information available to them (Scott, 2000, pp. 1-3). What is more, their preferences are modelled to be consistent and transitive (Renwick Monroe, 1991, p. 78) - meaning that individuals have a preference ordering and if their most desired preference cannot be realised they will resort to their second best alternative.

This economic model of human behaviour has become popular among political scientists who have applied it to many different contexts. However, RC has been criticised for positioning human beings in a vacuum by assuming that their preferences are exogenously given (Peters, 1998, p. 1). In the world of politics, the motivations and behaviours of individuals cannot be fully understood in isolation from other political actors and institutions. Scholars of rational choice institutionalism⁵ (RCI) see political institutions as crucial for shaping the choices of individuals and groups by prescribing a set of rules and practices. According to this school of thought, institutions provide a space of bounded rationality necessary for political actors to interact (ibid.). Adherents of rational institutionalist thinking define institutions as “[...]a script that names the actors, their respective behavioural repertoires (or strategies), the sequence in which the actors choose from them, the information they possess when they make their selections, and the outcome resulting from the combination of actor choices” (Shepsle, 2000, p. 24).

RCI and RC have produced parsimonious and testable assumptions about political behaviour and institutions⁶ but their foundations have not remained without criticism. They have been criticised for overemphasising the rationality and egoism of human beings. Critics hold that individuals do not always possess perfect information and their preferences are not always fixed. Preferences can change and also be shaped by the respective view of the world. The biggest ‘divide’ in the institutionalist debate is centred on the question of what drives human behaviour. March and Olsen (1989) refer to these driving forces by differentiating between the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequentiality or consequences in their

⁵ Rational Choice Institutionalism is part of the broader movement of “New Institutionalism”. New Institutionalism itself is a criticism of the “Old Institutionalism” which was concerned with formal and legal analysis of institutions and not with explaining the rationale behind the creation of institutions and how these shape the behaviour of agents. Since the second half of the 20th century, the “institutional revolutionaries” formulated a number of theories under the umbrella of the “New Institutionalism”. New Institutionalism comprises approaches with different underlying assumptions and analytical foci. These can be divided into Normative/ Sociological Institutionalism, Rational Choice Institutionalism, Historical Institutionalism and newer approaches such as discursive institutionalism. However, these branches share the focus on institutions: how they originate, how they persist over time and how they shape behaviour, ideas and preferences. For a more detailed overview of the different schools of institutionalism old and new, see Peters, G. (1998) *Institutional Theory in Political Science - The 'New' Institutionalism* (London: Pinter).

⁶ Also in the study of EU politics and institutions, rational choice has been a very prominent explanatory framework. Both intergovernmentalists and neofunctionalists have made recourse to the different assumptions of rational choice in order to explain European integration, institution building and political behaviour. For an excellent overview see: Pollack, M.A. (2006) *Rational Choice and EU Politics. Handbook of European Union Politics* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd).

formulation of Normative Institutionalism (NI). According to Normative Institutionalism, the preferences of individuals are endogenous to the political process: Preferences are based on ideas, norms, values, routines and identities which in turn are influenced by the political system. The choices an individual makes are a result of his or her view of the world. In NI, “Political institutions are collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations” (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 160). The logic of consequentiality, in contrast, goes back to rational choice theorising as it refers to the cost-benefit calculation of actors when realising their exogenous preferences.

The two logics should not be seen as mutually exclusive as they allow to gain deeper insights into the various motivations behind human behaviour. While RCI and NI are interested in preference formation, they are to a lesser extent concerned with preference realisation. From the perspective of rational choice theory, the pursuit of goals (irrespective of how the goal was formed) can be considered rational. In other words, rational choice models allow for the explanation of any type of preference realisation as this approach is not interested in how these preferences are formed (Saalfeld, 1995, p. 35). In a broad sense, the pursuit of altruistic goals and exogenous preferences can be rational.

3.2 Resource mobilisation approach: Resources for successful mobilisation

The assumption that actors in the political sphere behave rationally in order to achieve the outcomes they desire, has been extended to actors outside of political institutions such as social movements. This branch of the literature is based on the assumptions formulated in the “resource mobilisation approach” (RMA). According to this theoretical approach, “Mobilization is the process by which a group secures collective control over the resources needed for collective action. The major issues, therefore, are the resources controlled by the group prior to mobilization efforts, the processes by which the group pools resources and directs these towards social change, and the extent to which outsiders increase the pool of resources” (Jenkins, 1983, pp. 532-533). Originally, the RMA became popular among social movement researchers in the 1970s. Its novelty lay in the conceptualisation of social movements as strategic actors assembling various resources in order to achieve a variety of goals, instead of holding that “[...]social movement actors were deviant or anomic” (Edwards and Gillham, 2013, p. 1096). In recent years, it has been observed that there are increasing similarities between the behaviours of EU interest groups, NGOs and social movements,

including their interest in popular mobilisation (Diani, 2012; Princen and Kerremans, 2008; Ruzza, 2011).

In fact, a large proportion of the interest group literature implicitly builds on the RMA without explicitly referring to it. Interest groups are usually associated with higher levels of resources than social movements, but the two different types of actors nevertheless have to rely on resources to attain their goals. In the literature on EU interest groups, academics frequently use resource endowment as an explanatory factor for interest group success or failure. In the context of EU policy making, it has been found that resources matter for preference attainment of interest groups in one way or another, even indirectly (Bunea, 2012, p. 567). Interest groups and social movements can be characterised as collective actors seeking to achieve certain goals within the political sphere. Research on both groups has emphasised the role of resources for the success of these collective actors.

In this respect, the RMA can be applied to the study of ECIs as the different initiatives share some characteristics of social movements and interest groups. On the one hand, the ECI is situated within EU interest group research: Because this tool is legally embedded within the EU context, organisers of initiatives can be defined as advocates who seek to change public policy according to their wishes, just as any interest group (Baumgartner, 2007, p. 486). On the other hand, ECIs share similarities with social movements: Even though ECIs are not social movements per se, ECI organisers – just like social movements – seek to mobilise the support of citizens. Therefore, the RMA is a rich theoretical toolkit which can be employed to identify which actions and strategies of European Citizen's initiative organisers lead to successful mobilisation of signatures.

In the literature based on the resource mobilisation approach, the availability of resources is always associated with goal attainment (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004), with goals ranging from getting media attention to changing policy and mobilising citizens. In a similar vein, resources have been characterised in a variety of ways. Freeman (1977) is drawing a distinction between tangible and non-tangible resources. Tangible resources are money and its exchange goods (such as office space) that are used to publicise the movement. Intangible resources include the people working for the organisation and as social movements usually are weak on tangible resources, they rely in particular on intangible values – which is the main difference to interest groups that rely on monetary resources (Freeman, 1999, p. 224). He further differentiates intangible resources into specialised and unspecialised items, with

specialised resources referring to expertise in running social movement activities, access to networks and policy makers as well as status and unspecialised resources referring to the general availability of time and commitment.

Other categorisations of social movement resources usually also draw a distinction between tangible and intangible resources but within the category of intangibles, classify these differently. Whereas Freeman divides intangible resources into specialised and unspecialised which are applicable both as characteristics of people and an organisation at large, Cress and Snow (1996) develop a different categorisation, that goes into more detail about the characteristics of organisations external to a movement. They identify material and human resources, similar to Freeman. However, they extend the taxonomy to moral and informational resources. Moral resources refer to sympathetic statements and participation of external organisations. Informational resources are understood as more technical support from an outside organisation in the form of knowledge transfer and the provision of links to other organisations for resources (ibid., p. 1095). Edwards and McCarthy (2004) develop a similar taxonomy⁷ but add to this two new categories: socio-organisational and cultural resources. Socio-organisational resources subsume a variety of linkages other than informational support as defined by Cress and Snow – which includes all types of infrastructures and networks shared and acquired through other organisations. Cultural resources refer to the tactical knowledge within in a movement concerning the running of activities. Included in this category is the capability of passing on knowledge within a movement as well as the capability to produce ideas and frames that facilitate the recruitment of new members (ibid.).

The broad differentiation of resources relevant for mobilisation and other social movement activities in the literature is thus between tangible and intangible values, with the categorisation within the latter group differing according to the perspective. Intangible values

⁷Edwards, B. and McCarthy, J.D. (2004) 'Resources and Social Movement Mobilization'. In Snow, D.A., Soule, S.A. and Kriesi, H. (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (Malden/ Oxford/ Victoria: Blackwell Publishing), pp. 116-153. differentiate between moral, cultural, socio-organisational, human, and material resources. Moral resources such as legitimacy, solidary support, sympathetic support and celebrity are factors that are usually derived from external sources outside a movement and thus sometimes difficult to acquire. Cultural resources on the other hand can be generated more easily and refer to the availability of the tactical repertoire of actions such as ways of mobilising and organising within social movements. Social-organisational resources are infrastructures, social networks and organisations. Human resources are defined as labour, experience, skills, and expertise as well as leadership. Material resources in this typology are all forms of capital such as money and different forms of property.

are characteristics of the people within the group, the group itself and also refer to the ways outside organisations interact with it. Thus, in order to understand the activities of a movement it is necessary to capture the full range of resources available to them. The authors mentioned in the overview of taxonomies above have also underlined the importance of the connection between the different resources: “These resources are interchangeable, but only up to a point. Money can buy space, but not always vice versa. On the other hand, money can be used to publicize the movement, most of the time, and publicizing the movement can be used to raise money. It is a mistake to judge the affluence of the movement by its monetary contributions” (Freeman, 1999, p. 223). Similarly, cultural resources are closely related to the human resources as “[...]the use of this tactical repertoire also depended upon having the human resource of individuals experienced in using the tactics who could train and lead others in doing so” (Edwards & McCarthy, 2006, p. 126). Table 4 provides an overview of the broad categories of the different taxonomies of resources at the disposal of social movements, which will form the basis for the hypotheses in the ensuing sections.

Table 2 Taxonomy of social movement resources

Material resources	<i>Money and its exchange goods</i> used to publicise the movement (Freeman, 1977)
Immaterial resources	<i>Human resources</i> • staff and volunteers • their level of skills (Freeman, 1977)
	<i>Socio-organisational resources</i> • Links with other movements (moral and informational support) (Cress & Snow, 1996) • Networks and coalitions (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004)
	<i>Cultural resources</i> (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004) • Cultural products • Ideology and shared sense of meaning (collective action frames)

Empirical research interested in social movement outcomes and activities has not been concerned with taxonomy but instead has sought to identify and operationalise the range of different resources relevant for the particular case at hand. The differentiations discussed above are rooted in theoretical considerations and provide a useful starting point for drawing hypotheses. Empirical research has to take into consideration the interconnectedness and translation of one resource into another. The subsequent paragraphs will summarise the main findings on the role of resources for collective actors and synthesise these into hypotheses in relation to the European Citizens’ Initiative. The different resources are discussed in the

following order: Financial resources, human resources, socio-organisational resources, publicity activities and framing.

3.2.1 Financial resources

Money can be seen as a first step in the process of goal attainment of collective actors such as social movements, interest groups and ECI organisers. Barker-Plummer (2002) for example shows how the increased income base through higher membership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) was related to its media visibility. NOW managed to use its resources (money, skills, technology, labour and information) to build a media strategy that increased its coverage by newspapers. Strategic behaviour based on sufficient resources not only leads to increased activity but can also increase funding in form of a self-reinforcing mechanism: For African American civil rights organisations, resources (funding and membership) have been shown to have a positive effect on organisational diversity and tactics (Olzak and Ryo, 2007). Financial support from elites and increased membership lead to more protests and movement activities, which in turn lead to a higher federal civil rights budget (ibid., pp. 1578-1579). Based on these findings, it is thus expected that the same mechanism holds for ECIs. On the one hand, more financial resources will lead to increased numbers of signatures as this money can be translated into other resources that can be used for mobilisation activities. Financial resources can be translated into staff, media strategies, networking and the like. On the other hand, if sufficient financial resources are available and used wisely to mobilise support and gain public attention, this money well spent will enable ECIs to acquire more donations. Thus, in relation to the impact of financial resources on the outcome of an ECI's signature collection campaign, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: The more financial resources an ECI has, the more signatures it will collect.

3.2.2 Human resources

As has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, resources do not only refer to monetary values but can also be understood in different ways. It takes people working in a civil society organisation, social movement or interest group to translate money into real influence. Thus, the effect of financial resources by itself should not be overstated. Andrews, et al. (2010, p. 1227) show that for civic associations, resources only play a secondary role for generating

effective outcomes: It takes organisational capacity built by motivated activists, and leadership to benefit from financial resources and a favourable context. van der Graaf, et al. (2014, p. 18) even go as far as using number of staff as the only indicator for resources and find that higher numbers of staff have a positive impact on social media usage by interest groups. The teams behind ECIs will probably be composed of many volunteers and rarely of paid staff, but according to the literature rooted in the RMA, more staff (unpaid or paid) can have a greater chance of mobilising supporters. Higher numbers of staff are expected to be more likely to translate monetary resources into the outcome desired by the collective actor. Even if no financial resources are available, sufficient volunteers/paid staff can help to promote an ECI's cause in an equally effective manner.

H2: ECIs with higher numbers of staff will be able to collect more signatures.

3.2.3 Socio-organisational resources

The literature on social movements has identified another crucial resource for preference attainment in addition to staff and financial resources – namely networks. These networks are an important socio-organisational resource - referring to a groups' ties to other organisations and people. Frequently, social movements are made up of coalitions between different organisations that chose their allies for strategic reasons such as preserving their legitimacy which enables them to achieve their goals more effectively (Gillham and Edwards, 2011). Also the literature on interest groups has observed how the size of a network coalition matters for preference attainment (Klüver, 2011). Johnson (2008) finds that the size of a movement matters in influencing the political agenda.

Ties with other organisations are important not only for agenda-setting and policy shaping, but also in order to gain access to more resources. Social networks and other organisations frequently hold resources that can be activated (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004, p. 127) and partners help to facilitate mobilisation (McCarthy, 1996, p. 144). Big movements with more funds can organise more protests and therefore have a better chance in shaping policy outcomes (Olzak and Ryo, 2007). In the case of two Dutch citizens' initiatives, building ties with other organizations and foundations resulted in the generation of funding and organisational continuity (van Dam, et al., 2014). Similarly, the viability of Homeless Movement Organisations was only possible through the active sponsorship of a network of other organisations (Cress and Snow, 1996).

It can thus be assumed that the size of the network coalition behind an ECI is also a resource facilitating the acquisition of other resources, such as financial support and the sharing of expertise. Effective ties with partner organisations could increase the chances of reaching a larger pool of people, e.g. through the membership base of partners. It can be expected that initiatives with more partner organisations will also have more volunteers and staff but also more individuals as members who can be mobilised. These members can inform even more people about the ECI. A snowball effect of mobilisation seems likely. Therefore an initiative backed by several organisations/ NGOs/ actors should be able to gather more signatures as it can reach more members. Thus, the processes of signature mobilisation could be eased through partner organisations, in particular by providing more resources.

H3: ECIs with more partner organisations will be able to collect more signatures.

3.2.4 Publicity activities

The literature on resource mobilisation has widely demonstrated how resources in their various guises matter for the preference attainment of collective actors. For collective actors, the combination of financial resources, staff and socio-organisational resources forms the basis for the capacity to act. However, these resources by themselves do not guarantee movement success. Freeman (1999, p. 223) illustrates how a successor branch of the National Organization for Women was able to grow extensively despite its lack of financial resources. By publicising itself through various underground newspapers and conferences, the new branch gained many new members. Such publicity activities concern everything related to connecting to new members and making one's cause known. In a broad sense, they are part of the repertoire of cultural resources of a collective actor. "These [cultural resources] include tacit knowledge about how to accomplish specific tasks like enacting a protest event, holding a news conference, running a meeting, forming an organization, initiating a festival, or surfing the web" (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004, p. 126). Possessing such tacit knowledge is the precondition for running any type of publicity-related activity.

Both the literature on social movements and interest group strategies in the EU have underlined the importance of an active publicity strategy for goal attainment. Attracting public attention can raise the salience of an issue and in turn lead policy makers to respond to this public pressure by creating legislation. This type of advocacy is especially successful at the early stages of the legislative process, namely during agenda-setting (King, et al., 2005).

Maintaining good relations with news outlets is a strategy often found among social movement organisations (Andrews and Caren, 2010; Barker-Plummer, 2002). Also van Dam and colleagues demonstrate the importance of public relations for the success of citizens' initiatives (van Dam, et al., 2014, p. 330): The actions of a local Dutch initiative concerned with creating an ecological corridor (Natuurlijk Grasweggebied) included contacting newspapers, radio stations, sending newsletters, regularly updating website and giving presentations. Social movements also have other tools for creating publicity such as protests, blockades and the like. Also cultural products such as newspapers, literature and others made by the movement help to recruit new adherents (Edwards and McCarthy, 2004, p. 126). Products as simple as stickers, banners belong to this category as well as logos and mascots (van Dam, et al., 2014, p. 330). The range of activities to promote one's cause seems only limited by the creativity of the collective actor. However, certain publicity activities require more resources than others – maintaining effective ties with journalists demands knowledge, sufficient time and money whereas organising a one-time protest event might be less costly.

In contrast to this resource-dependence of certain publicity activities, the internet has opened up opportunities for actors representing less resource strong interests to get in touch with potential supporters. It has been shown that the social media usage of different organisations cannot only be explained by their level of resources but is also a function of membership structure and geographical spread of supporters (van der Graaf, et al., 2014). Social media is used by all types of interests ranging from advocacy groups to companies. It helps them to interact and communicate with citizens (Obar, et al., 2012), reach their members and advance their cause (van der Graaf, et al., 2014, p. 18). In addition to this connecting function, social media platforms also serve the purpose of spreading information, building communities and rallying supporters (Lovejoy and Saxton, 2012).

For the different ECIs, getting public attention is the precondition for finding signees. Such attention can be achieved through websites and social media but also through traditional media, two platforms that also matter for interest groups in other forms of EU agenda-setting (Princen, 2011). In addition, potential signees can be contacted on the streets or during events. I hypothesise that the mobilising potential of an ECI can be amplified by a good publicity strategy which relates to the frequency of publicity activities. In other words, the more often organisers share their message, the more potential signees they can reach. If organisers want to mobilise supporters, they need to mainstream their message through various channels, including traditional and new media. Thus,

H4: The more publicity activities an ECI conducts, the more signatures it will mobilise.

3.3 Framing approach: Strategic communication of ECIs for successful mobilisation

The literature rooted in the resource mobilisation approach provides vast array of examples of how publicity strategies together with financial, human, and socio-organisational resources are important quantitative factors for goal attainment in collective action. However, they do not provide a full picture of what matters for successful mobilisation. Based on the RMA, the pervious paragraphs argue that the more resources a collective actor possesses, the higher are the chances of attaining the desired outcome. The different resources necessary for mobilising signatories interact in different ways depending on the case. While encompassing the full spectrum of strategic resources, these factors do not account for the nature and content of the very idea that is being promoted. Therefore, in this part I am going to demonstrate that it is also the rhetorical quality of arguments provided by collective actors, as well as the salience and cultural resonance of a topic that has been shown to be of importance for achieving goals through collective action. In their account of different resources that matter for collective action through social movement organisations, Edwards and McCarthy (2004, p. 134) mention the self-production of frames as a resource which matters for the success of a movement. Frames are meaning-making devices employed in different forms of communication. The framing approach provides the analytical canvas which enables researchers to make visible the ways in which different actors develop arguments and emphasise certain aspects of an issue and I expect a similar behaviour of ECI organisers.

The ensuing sections will first elaborate on the framing approach and its applications in various disciplines. Second, the chapter concludes with a set of hypotheses on the use of frames by ECI organisers.

3.3.1 A systemic approach to framing: Politics, the media and audiences

Making strategic communication visible and comparable is possible through framing analysis, an analytical perspective that has been first applied to the study of social phenomena by Goffman (1974). He refers to frames as more or less organised interpretational schemata in the brains of individuals (who come from a specific, common cultural context) that help them making sense of social events (ibid., p. 22). In other words, frames are mental “drawers”

acquired through socialisation within a certain culture. When witnessing some kind of situation we can make sense of it by remembering these drawers. For example, if two people stand next to each other on a wooden platform having a conversation, in the Western cultural context this is most likely some kind of theatrical play or performance on a stage. The framing approach has been applied by scholars from many different disciplines, ranging from communication and media studies, sociology, political sciences and psychology (Matthes, 2014, p. 12).

Framing cannot only be understood as an individual cognitive process, but has a systemic component to it as well. It is a collective process of creating meaning, transforming and sharing understanding of a situation or phenomenon within communicative networks. In the context of political communication, framing occurs on four levels: in the minds of individuals, in the minds of elites and professional political communicators, as well as in the culture and in the texts of communications (Entman, et al., 2009, p. 176). In this systemic understanding of framing, a common culture serves as the background narrative from which elements can be taken to create communications that will be understood by members of a society (Entman, 1993, p. 53). These elements can refer to shared discourse, news, entertainment, literature et cetera (Entman, et al., 2009).

Professional communicators use these elements to transport their message. Elites will try to influence the media in order to reach the public. This implies a strategic component to framing. Frames can occur in texts and communications issued by professional communicators (politicians, the media, social movements, NGOs) in which these actors draw attention to a particular aspect of an issue for the sake of promoting a specific interpretation of reality (ibid., p. 176). Like a magnifying glass, frames draw the attention of the observer on certain aspects of an issue, away from other aspects. In this view, frames pervade every single aspect of communication. As a result of the analytical focus that has shifted away from mental processes to strategic communication, the meaning of the term frame has been expanded since the 1970s.

Dominating the prevalent interpretation of a topic is equal to the exertion of political power. “In the realm of politics, framing also helps policy makers and other actors to highlight certain aspects of an issue away from other aspects – which in turn shapes the way people think about an issue and which types of action around it could be taken or not. In this view, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”

(Entman, 1993, p. 52). Frames create salience for an aspect as they highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience, with salience defined as making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences (ibid., p. 53). There is however one limitation Entman points to: Even though scholars might detect certain frames, this does not guarantee that people perceive the message as intended.

The literature on framing effects attempts to establish a causal link between sender and recipient by analysing under which conditions public and individual opinion can be influenced by elites. By putting emphasis on certain aspects of an issue, elites can draw attention away from other interpretations - which could be considered manipulation but also an implicit contract between the public and credible opinion leaders for the former to sort out relevant from irrelevant information for the latter (Druckman, 2001, p. 1045). This way of shaping public opinion has also been applied to analyse how politicians affect vote choice in referendums by using different frames. In the case of direct-democratic campaigns in Switzerland for example, it has been found that politicians pay close attention to the frames of their opponents and focus on policy content instead of political competition when framing their side of the debate (Hänggli and Kriesi, 2010).

Framing analysis is not only applicable to the relationship between politicians and audiences but can also be used to get a better understanding of policy making. Schön and Rein (1994) have introduced the framing approach to public policy analysis. According to the authors, in situations of intractable policy conflict, frames are sense-making devices that set the parameters of a problem. If a problem cannot be solved, this is due to conflicting frames held by the different parties. Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008) do not focus on aspects of conflict resolution but emphasise the difference between individual and collective frames in policy making: whereas individual frames refer to the frames employed by single policy advocates, collective issue definition results from networks of communication.

In EU policy making, different actors try to shape the agenda by pushing forward their interpretation of an issue which in turn brings them closer to shaping policy. They highlight specific aspects of a policy in order to shift the collective debate towards their own interest (Klüver, 2011). Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008) point out that advocates try to foster support for their position by strategically emphasising certain aspects of a policy which they refer to as

framing. The frame needs to be appealing to potential supporters and capture their attention (Princen, 2011, p. 933).

As a result of political framing processes, similar events can be presented in completely different ways. For example, Entman (1991) has shown that the political administration can have a big impact on the way journalists portray facts. In a second step, the way information is presented by the media has effects on audiences. The media provides recipients with frames on a daily basis by making certain events understandable and the definition of media frames also entails the way journalists select and arrange information (For an excellent overview see Scheufele, 1999). Media frames are schemata that pervade news production and political discourse (ibid., p. 106). Media studies examine the effects of news on the audience and why certain interpretive schemata prevail over others. The literature on media effects brings together individual and collective frames to explore how exposure to a media frame affects individuals (Druckman, 2001).

3.3.2 *Social movement mobilisation frames for successful collective action*

In the public realm, many different actors strive to influence public discourse as they wish their interpretation of social reality to be picked up by audiences (Johnston and Noakes, 2005, p. 2). Frames can be part of any type of communication and as a result, the academic community has struggled to develop a unified approach towards framing. The definitions and measurements of frames are highly dependent on the respective research context. The concept has been applied and adapted by scholars from many different disciplines, since it was first introduced in the 1970s. Because of this it has been criticised for having become a catch-all idea without a shared theoretical base and explanatory power (Entman, 1993). Scholars have operationalised frames in many different ways to examine communication in their respective discipline without explaining in detail how decisions about measurement and conceptualisation were made. Establishing causal links is thus not always easy – if conceptualisation is not entirely clear (Matthes, 2014). However, this breadth can also be interpreted as one of the strengths of the framing approach. It is a multiparadigmatic metatheory that can help shed light on the different aspects of strategic communication by testing hypotheses stemming from different theories (D'Angelo, 2002). It can be used for description and as either dependent or independent variable. Conceptualisation problems can be addressed through rigorous clarity and transparency of the researcher as hypotheses and relevant framing elements depend on the context and targeted audience. After introducing the framing approach in the field of social movements in this chapter, the next chapter applies the framing approach, in particular social movement collective action frames, to the study of strategic communication of ECIs and formulates corresponding assumptions.

Over the last 30 years, scholars have started to study targeted communication activities of collective actors such as social movements. In line with the rise of the rational choice approach, it has become widely acknowledged that both social movement entrepreneurs and members of social movements are goal-oriented and strategic actors. But in the 1980s and 90s, the rational choice approach to social movements was criticised for neglecting the meaning work of social movements, which gave rise to the introduction of the framing perspective in order to examine social-psychological processes (ibid., pp. 3-4). The strategic element of communication has been first introduced to social movement studies by Benford and Snow in the late 1980s (Snow and Benford, 1988). This literature understands social movements as actively engaged in the production of meaning by providing certain interpretations of reality which are meant to motivate collective action. Such collective action frames are, in other

words, “[...]action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 164).

Social movements have been found to strategically develop frames in order to motivate collective action and shape public debates in favour of their own interest. Snow and Benford (1992) have formulated the three main purposes that collective action frames have to fulfil for spreading successfully among a population. They need to contain a diagnostic, prognostic and motivational element. The “diagnosis” identifies the problem and attributes responsibility. The “prognosis” formulates a solution. The “motivation” explains why and how people should act upon the problem. In addition to the three core elements, more qualities of social movement collective action frames have been identified – such as resonance, which refers to how well a frame “matches” the targeted audience. According to Snow and Benford (1988), broad resonance can be created by providing a frame that is close to everyday knowledge and formulated in simple language. In a later paper, they detail that resonance interacts with the credibility and salience of a frame (Benford and Snow, 2000).

Credibility can be divided into three components: frame consistency (do the values articulated by the SMO correspond with its actions?), empirical credibility (does the frame correspond with events in the world?) and the credibility of the people articulating the frame (do the articulators of the frame appear knowledgeable?) (ibid., p. 619). In addition to being resonant and understandable, an idea needs to matter to people. In other words, it needs to be salient. Salient frames also contain three elements: centrality (how central are the morals, beliefs and values of the movement to the targeted audience?), experiential commensurability (how close is the frame to everyday life of targeted audience?) and narrative fidelity (how well does the narrative provided by the movement fit with cultural narratives within the targeted audience?) (ibid., p. 621 ff). It is expected that higher salience will be created through frames inducing a sense of moral indignation by referring to basic rights and values. In this way, the target audience is defined in a universal way.

Salient claims come close to what (Snow and Benford, 1992) define as master frames, which contain generic ideas. It is expected that if frames only refer to a small group of people, those outside the group of beneficiaries will not be inclined to sign. Usually, “The scope of the collective action frames associated with most movements is limited to the interests of a particular group or to a set of related problems” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 618). However,

if a social movement manages to formulate a so-called “master frame”, its chances of mobilising people become even greater. Such master frames are generic and contain goals that go beyond those of a specific group of beneficiaries. They can be understood as very flexible frames. Generic frames represent general ideas such as human rights, environmental justice, democracy and other general concepts. Master frames are usually part of the wider political context into which mobilisers tap so as to mobilise participants (Diani, 1996). Master frames are expected to be highly salient if they are close to peoples’ everyday lives and contain central cultural/ political values and beliefs (Noonan, 1995). The theoretical framework of Benford and Snow has been applied by many scholars in different ways and to different contexts. Frames have been conceptualised both as dependent and independent variable.

Studies focusing on social movement frames as dependent variable have contributed to a deeper understanding of their various types and facets as well as the complex circumstances under which they develop. Not only are they contingent upon the political and cultural environment (Reese and Newcombe, 2003). What is more, their generation involves different actors of society: In many cases, social movements are closely interlinked with news media, politicians and the public (Alimi, 2006) and they surely need to know when to carefully seize political opportunities to induce the change they wish to see (Paschel, 2010). The ability of actors to adapt frames to specific contexts increases the likelihood of success. Such actors need not come from within the political system, they can also be its opponents. Because terrorist leaders were able to modify the prognostic, diagnostic and motivational aspects of their frames to inspire terrorist attacks, they managed to spread Islamic Terror during the last two decades (Snow and Byrd, 2007). Due to the complex nature of frame generation, establishing causality is not always the central aim of scholars. Often, careful process tracing and in-depth description are chosen to gain a holistic understanding of framing dynamics (Fetner, 2001; Paschel, 2010).

Different types of outcomes have been attributed to the argumentative techniques of social movements, ranging from the creation of new laws to acquiring members or financial support from government (McCammon, et al., 2007). To the same extent that social movement goals vary, so do the audiences of social movement frames. This is why success is contingent upon the careful formulation of frames. For example, rhetorical quality of frames (articulateness and focus) is crucial for goal attainment. Alongside with organisational, political and tactical variables, “[...]attainment of the outcomes in question[...]should be partly contingent on the development of coherent and well-articulated accounts of the problems and who or what is to blame (diagnostic framing), and what needs to be done in order to remedy it

(prognostic framing)” (Cress and Snow, 2000, pp. 1071-1072). In their comparative study of different homeless movement organisations, focused and articulate frames were present in all successful cases.

The plethora of social movement framing research lead to a situation in which comparability of results is low and thus the formulation of a unified set of shared assumptions has not been possible, making it difficult to formulate hypotheses rooted in literature. Instead, hypotheses have to be carefully justified depending on the context. The type of framing connected to an outcome is often context-dependent and has to be tailored to the situation and target. In the context of US community development organisations, the acquisition of funds from the state is easier for organisations that manage to rhetorically align their goals with those of government (Fitzgerald, 2009). In other cases, disruptive techniques and stark moral claims have been used by movements to produce moral shocks within audiences, but it is not clear whether this leads to the outcomes desired by social movements (Mika, 2006).

The variety of movement goals, frames, framers and frame addressees extends to the way frames have been measured. Usually, frame analysis covers long periods of time to gain an in-depth understanding of their development within a single movement or set of related groups – thus are usually confined to case studies on one issue. Attempts have been made to include frames into analyses of more factors: articulateness of a frame has been measured dichotomically in addition to organisational features (Cress and Snow, 2000). Number of frames employed has also been used to create an additive index to infer that frequently used frames triggered the outcome in question (McCammon, et al., 2007). Frames have been retrieved from newspapers, historic documents, pictures and movement members’ statements and carefully coded after deliberation among researchers.

The framing approach is somewhat contested among social scientists. There is no unified body of theory for which types of frames are more successful in bringing about better mobilisation or are more convincing to policy makers. Hypotheses vary with each case because they are highly context dependent. It has been disputed whether political actors and the media use them deliberately or not (see Koenig, 2004 for a criticism of how framing and frame identification are applied inconsistently). Frame analysis is interpretive and frames are hard to measure as they are often implicit in communication. On the other hand, the initial goal of the approach was to gain a better understanding of processes of sense-making in society. Also in relation to social movement collective action frames, researchers were interested in movement

internal processes and their interactions with adherents and other movements, and not to establish causality. Only recently the explicit requirement has developed to explain outcomes but in these cases framing is measured differently (Cress and Snow, 2000; McCammon, et al., 2007).

3.3.3 ECI organisers as strategic communicators: Mobilisation frames of ECIs

As has been established at the very beginning of this theoretical chapter, ECI organisers are advocates on the EU stage to seeking to change policy according to their wishes. To this aim, they employ certain strategies such as resource mobilisation and publicity activities. The previous subchapters have introduced the framing approach to analyse the communication of different collective actors as a means of gaining a holistic picture of the different strategies at their disposal. The following subchapter will elaborate on the communication activities of ECI organisers by drawing a comparison to collective action frames. In a broad sense, ECI organisers share many similarities to social movement entrepreneurs. Like the latter, the former seek to motivate collective action and mobilise support by promoting a certain idea. Analysing the impact of the different arguments brought forward by initiative organisers can be done by applying the framing approach.

Giving a certain spin to the argumentation of an ECI can make it appealing to a wider audience. For instance, the request for a common European policy on the control and regulation of cannabis production, use and sale as demanded by the organisers of the ECI “Weed like to talk ” can be justified using different argumentative routes. First, a legal integration argument: A common policy on cannabis can be presented as a case of legal non-discrimination and procedural fairness. Why should cannabis be legal in some member states and not in others? Second, a consumer health and safety argument: Controlling drug production and sale can help protect consumer health and curb drug trafficking. Apart from these arguments broad forward by organisers, a third and fourth angle come to mind such as ensuring personal freedom and making Marihuana available EU-wide as pain medication. In terms of perspectives one can add to a certain issue, there is no limit to the imagination. However, depending on the argument chosen, different types of people will feel affected or repelled and thus more or less likely inclined to support the cause with their signature.

If organisers of ECIs are understood as strategic actors, they can be expected to contemplate the content of their initiative, and not only their media strategies and use of

resources. Unlike the two quantitative predictors of goal attainment, the content of an initiative refers to the argumentative structure and ideas behind an ECI – which provides a holistic analysis by adding a qualitative measure. So far, 70⁸ initiatives have been launched and each of them promotes a very distinct and unique topic. While all of them need to satisfy the minimum requirements set by the Commission of not being against basic EU values and pursuing the goal of improving the implementation of the Treaties, their argumentative depth and legal justification varies. The issues promoted range from banning animal testing to keeping the provision of water services in the hands of the public sector and many others. The way organisers make their arguments will resonate with potential signees in different ways and thus have an impact on the propensity of individuals to sign an initiative. It thus seems important to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying argumentative structure of ECIs.

As has been discussed in the chapter on framing, certain qualities of collective action frames make them especially successful in mobilising supporters. These include first and foremost the availability of a complete collective action frame containing diagnostic, prognostic and motivational elements. Diagnostic framing formulates the problem and attributes responsibility. This stage is important as it builds the basis for formulating strategies to deal with the problem at hand (Cress and Snow, 2000, p. 1071). The prognostic qualities of a frame relate to the ways in which it provides a solution to the problem identified. If a coherent solution is provided by framers, this should lead to more signatures. Last but not least, “Motivational framing, the final core framing task, provides a "call to arms" or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive” (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 164).

The rhetorical quality of frames has been found to be crucial for the goal attainment of social movement organisations (Cress and Snow, 2000). Rhetorical quality hinges upon the articulation of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational elements of frames. In line with this, other authors have argued that the more problems covered by a frame, the larger the range of social groups that can feel addressed (Gerhards and Rucht, 1992), which helps to increase the potential for mobilisation by the particular frame – an insight that can be applied to the

⁸ 4 initiatives were successful, 16 are currently running, 15 have been withdrawn and 35 were unsuccessful, out of which four reapplied, resulting in a total of 70 initiatives. If one desires to be very precise, the total number is 66 if the four ECIs that have reapplied should not be counted twice – however, as they have launched new campaigns they should be seen as separate initiatives despite the fact that they have been proposed with the same content by the same group of people.

audiences of ECI frames. By covering a range of issues, organisers are able to appeal to a wider range of different audiences. However, including too many potential angles can overload a group's frame (ibid., p. 580; Snow and Benford, 1988, p. 207) if these are not convincingly connected. What is more, the number of solutions should matter for mobilising signees as an indicator of the degree of development of the prognostic framing. In addition, I assume that if the frame contains one or more direct calls to action by signing or other behaviours (motivational framing), more people will actually give their support.

In addition to the completeness of the three core framing elements, the literature on social movements has spelled out another crucial factor for a successful collective action frame: credibility. Broadly speaking, this concept implies the trustworthiness of a person or the truth of a fact. In this sense, correspondence with events taking place in the lifeworld of the audience and the group articulating the frame are invoked (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 619).

H4.1: The more diagnostic elements the framing of an ECI contains, the more signatures it will collect.

H4.2: The more prognostic elements the framing of an ECI contains, the more signatures it will collect

H4.3: The more motivational elements the framing of an ECI contains, the more signatures it will collect.

H4.4: ECIs providing more credibility frames will collect more signatures.

4 Putting theory into practice: Research design, operationalisation, data and sources

Why do some citizens' initiatives collect a lot of signatures and others not? To approach this puzzle, the previous chapters divided the main research question into five hypotheses. I have identified resources (staff, funding, network of partner organisations, publicity activities) and strategic framing as crucial for the goal attainment of ECIs. Further, I have emphasised the interconnectedness of these factors: None of the variables is expected to lead to a successful signature collection campaign by itself. Instead, I hypothesise that a combination of these factors equates to a formula for success. A method that gives particular credit to overlapping causal factors which is also ideally suited for mid-n-sized samples – such as the universe of cases of ECIs – is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). I have compiled an original dataset from multiple sources through a variety of methods of data collection to create a multi-faceted empirical picture which enables me to test my hypotheses. QCA enables me to uncover causal patterns across cases based on combinations of conditions which are connected to the outcome. However, the method does not give insights into the relationship between conditions, such as their temporal sequence or substitutability. In order to expand the findings from QCA, I am also using a case study approach. Through this methodological triangulation, I am strengthening the findings by providing an additional analytical layer.

This chapter proceeds as follows: In the first part (4.1), I detail the logic of QCA and introduce core concepts such as calibration, anchor points and solution paths. In addition, I point to some weaknesses of the approach. In the remainder of this chapter, I dedicate my attention to operationalisation, data collection and calibration. I describe the operationalisation as well as the steps necessary to make the information suitable for the analytical method used. What is more, I detail the different sources from which the data has been retrieved: A survey was the main source of information, followed by secondary sources such as the Commission website, organiser websites and websites of NGOs dealing with the ECI. Part 4.2 deals with the outcome and 4.3-4.4 contain the details for the resources and framing variables. In section 4.5, I lay open the calibration of the data, a process by which the information is made usable for the QCA software.

4.1 The research method: Qualitative Comparative Analysis

This project uses Qualitative Comparative Analysis, which has been first introduced by Ragin (1987) and is a formalisation of the assumptions of set-theory. In set logic, cases are not broken down into variables but instead are assigned membership scores. In fact, a lot of research makes set-theoretic statements without explicitly acknowledging it (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012). To give an example: Germany is a democratic country, whereas North Korea is not. The set membership score in the set of democratic countries for Germany would be 1 and the membership score of North Korea 0, respectively. In its most straightforward form and like in the example just given, sets that display dichotomous membership scores are called crisp sets. However, one can imagine that, as democracy is a very complex social concept, there may be cases that cannot be simply assigned a value of “fully in the set of democratic countries” = 1 or “fully non-democratic” = 0. Think of Hungary, a country that has been dealing with issues of press freedom but still conducts regular elections. It is not fully democratic but not completely undemocratic either. Thus, a purely dichotomous assignment of membership scores cannot reflect the nuances of the concept “democratic country”. In this particular case, partial membership in the set of democratic countries seems more adequate, and such fine-grained membership scores are part of fuzzy sets. Social reality is usually too complex to be dichotomised and in this respect, fuzzy sets offer greater conceptual validity (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010). They give the researcher the possibility to account for differences in the degree of membership based on qualitative anchors.

The process of transforming raw data into fuzzy sets is also referred to as calibration and requires full transparency as to the decisions that have been made by the researcher when assigning membership values to different cases (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010). This process has to be rooted in theory but also needs to reflect substantive knowledge of the cases (Ragin, 2008). The anchor points represent both a qualitative and a quantitative assessment of the data (Ragin, 2009). The point of full inclusion in a set is defined by the value 1, whereas full exclusion by the value 0. Values between those points represent partial membership and are separated by the 0,5 anchor which is the point of “maximum ambiguity”. For cases with a score of 0.5 it is not clear whether they fall in or out of a certain set. Values below 0.5 are out of the set, values above the 0.5 anchor are in the set. It should be noted that “fuzzification” of a condition or an outcome does not yield a purely numerical ranking of the data. Contrary to this overly simple perception of fuzzy sets, they “[...]pinpoint qualitative states while at the same time assessing varying degrees of membership between full inclusion and full exclusion. In

this sense, a fuzzy set can be seen as a continuous variable that has been purposefully calibrated to indicate degree of membership in a well-defined set” (Ragin, 2009). Once membership scores have been assigned, the dataset is ready for analysis. Researches employing QCA seek to identify relationships between different sets that are defined in terms of sufficient and necessary conditions of the outcome under study.

4.1.1 Necessary conditions

Identifying necessary conditions is highly relevant to social scientists and policy makers because the notion of necessity expresses a strong causal link between an outcome and a condition. If a logically relevant condition is so general that it can be considered necessary, it helps researchers to refine theory and empirical typologies around a social concept, and recommend measures to achieve important policy outcomes (Ragin, 2000). “Imagine, for example, that a researcher successfully identifies a necessary condition for ethnic conflict. If political leaders can manipulate this condition, perhaps eliminate it altogether, then they may be able to prevent ethnic conflict.” (Ragin, 2000). In the social sciences, many hypotheses on necessity can be found (See for example, Goertz and Starr, 2003 who have collected an impressive non-exhaustive list of 150 necessary condition hypotheses from various social disciplines). In set-logic terms, necessity can be corroborated if the distribution of cases is such that whenever the outcome under investigation is present, the necessary condition is also present; entailing that the outcome set is a subset of the condition and inversely, the condition is a superset of the outcome. Expressed in other words, the outcome never appears without the condition. To give an example, being female is necessary for becoming pregnant. Not all women are automatically pregnant but in order to become pregnant, a female reproductive system is required. Using set-logic terms, pregnancy is the subset and being female is the corresponding superset: In a Venn diagram, the circle representing the outcome set would be “inside” or “within” the circle capturing the condition set.

Both fuzzy-set and crisp-set QCA can be used to identify necessary conditions in different ways. While cases in crisp sets exclusively take on the values 1 or 0, in fuzzy-set QCA, they are measured through a more fine-grained numerical ranking with any value between 0 and 1. Grasping the concept of necessity is thus easier when looking at crisp set QCA, where each quality is either present or not. To demonstrate the notion of necessity, I have invented an example using imaginary ECIs. To create a hypothetical crisp set, the outcome

“successful signature collection” could be calibrated into a crisp set by separating the set with a single threshold of one million into successful (1) and not successful (0). In this case, all ECIs with over one million signatures are in the set of successful ECIs (1) and the remaining initiatives are out of the set (as a result they take on the value 0). The same holds for calibrating crisp conditions; and for instance, the funding of ECIs could be conceptualised as either high (1) or not high (0), separating the best financed ECIs from the remaining cases. In an XY plot of the two invented crisp sets, initiatives would only fall into each of the four corners of a two-dimensional property space, which is visualised in a two-by-two table (table 3). When is a condition necessary in crisp set QCA? Funding could be considered a fully necessary condition if all ECIs with high funding are also successful – they have collected over one million signatures. In other words, there should be no ECI with a successful signature collection campaign that does not have high amounts of funding. As a result, the upper left corner of the table should be void of cases.

Table 3 Fictional example for necessary and sufficient conditions

Outcome:	1	1	9
Signatures	0	13	25
		0	1
		Condition: Funding	

The upper left corner is not empty: For demonstrative purposes, the table contains one invented ECI with low funding and a high number of signatures. Does one contradictory case make the condition funding irrelevant for the outcome? What about 20 contradictory cases? From here it should become clear that the number of contradictory cases influences the quality of a necessary condition. While one contradictory case might weaken the necessity claim only to a small extent, a higher number of contradictory cases can be problematic. In the humanities, contradictory cases are common. Unlike some impossible occurrences (for example a pregnant man) - in social science, necessity relations can differ in terms of their quality because many concepts are not manifesting in a uniform way. It is logically possible to imagine an initiative that did not have substantial amounts of funding but reached the one million signatures threshold. In this case, there would be an exception to the rule of a necessary condition and the outcome would not be a perfect subset of the condition. QCA as a method, parameters of fit - such as the measures of coverage and consistency - are applied to gauge the strength of a necessary condition. Consistency of a necessary condition refers to the ratio of cases with both

the outcome and the condition, divided by the number of all cases with the outcome. For this measure, a threshold of around 0,9 is recommended (Ragin, 2006). In the above example for which I created two hypothetical crisp sets for ECI signature collection success and funding, the consistency score would be $9/10=0,9$, which would make funding a necessary condition. However, is funding really a fully consistent necessary condition? One aspect might raise scepticism – in the example, there are 25 ECIs with high funding that did not meet the threshold for a successful signature collection campaign. This number appears large, compared to the nine cases displaying both the outcome and the condition. Because the condition set is large in comparison to the outcome, it appears to be trivial given the small overlap between the outcome and the condition. To guard against an over-interpretation of the consistency value, cases meeting the consistency threshold need to be assessed for their empirical relevance by using the measure of coverage, which is an indicator of the size of the condition set in comparison to the overlap between condition and outcome. The coverage value for this example would be $9/34=0,26$, indicating that 26% instances of the condition overlap with the outcome and for 74% of cases, the condition appears without the outcome. In this example, funding can be considered a consistent necessary condition, albeit with lower coverage. Despite the absence of a recommended standard threshold for coverage in the literature on QCA as a method, as a general rule it is commonly accepted that smaller coverage values point to more trivial necessary conditions.

In contrast to crisp-set QCA, establishing necessity for fuzzy sets is slightly more complex. While statements of necessity for crisp sets are based on the number of cases that are either in or out of the set, any assessment of fuzzy sets is based on membership scores. Unlike crisp sets, fuzzy sets do not only allow for full membership and non-membership but also for partial membership in the conditions and the outcome. As a result, a case's membership in a set can differ both in degree and kind. Qualitative anchors are used to differentiate whether a case is a full member (1), neither a member nor a non-member (0,5) or no member (0) of a set and membership values can be assigned theoretically or through mathematical transformation based on a function (direct method of calibration). Statements of necessity in fuzzy-set QCA are based on membership scores. If membership scores across cases are such that for most the instances of the outcome, the membership scores in the condition are bigger than the scores for outcome membership, a necessary condition is present.

An example can help illustrate the analysis of necessity for fuzzy sets. In their journal article about the Europeanization of domestic structural reform programmes, Cacciato, et al.

(2015) define a country's distance from EU2020 targets as one condition set (they call the condition "START"). The EU2020 strategy proposes goals for employment, research and development, climate change, education as well as poverty and social exclusion. Member states can use these targets to orient their national reform programmes. The authors hypothesise that a country's ability to implement domestic structural reforms is influenced by its starting conditions: the closer a country to EU targets, the more easily it will be able to implement national reform policies. Cacciatore, et al. (2015) calculate the average distance of national baselines (employment rate, research and development investment, school attainment and school leavers) to the targets fixed by the EU2020 strategy and assign three thresholds. Full non-membership (0) is marked by cases with the highest distances from EU targets. The cross-over point (0,5) is set to a value including countries with big average deviations. Full members are countries with lower average distances from EU targets. In their analysis of necessity, the authors find a consistency score of 0,70. While the formula for calculating the parameters of fit for fsQCA are more complex than for csQCA, they are based on the same logic. For fsQCA, consistency is calculated based on a division of the minimum membership values of all cases that are both part of the outcome and the condition by the membership values of all cases displaying the outcome. In the example, the condition does not pass the standard threshold of 0,9 and a coverage test would not be required. However, if such a test would be required, the membership scores are also taken into consideration: the formula behind coverage is a division of all cases' membership values in the outcome and the condition by the membership values in the condition alone. By this means, the size difference between the outcome set in comparison to the condition is calculated. A value of 0,82 for the coverage of START as necessary condition indicates a good overlap of the two sets in relation to the condition. In other words, given the size of the outcome set, in 82% instances, the condition and the outcome overlap. If START had met the consistency threshold, it would be an empirically relevant necessary condition. Lower coverage values point towards necessary conditions that are empirically not relevant. For such cases, the condition set is much larger than the outcome set.

Recent methodological advances in QCA have resulted in a third parameter of fit, in addition to the consistency and coverage measures. While coverage captures a potential bias caused by a very large condition set, it does not account for instances where membership in X and Y is almost constant. In other words, membership in both the condition and the outcome is skewed. A second source of trivialness of a necessary condition is connected to such skewed sets, in which both the condition and the outcome display very high or very low values. As a

result, the two sets would be close to equivalents - making inferences about necessity not meaningful. For example, which explanatory conditions would a researcher choose if she was interested in getting a better understanding of the reasons for becoming a mother? Choosing the condition set “pregnancy” would not give any particularly profound analytical insights as it is almost synonymous to the outcome set “motherhood”. Probably, more specific conditions such as age, education level or relationship status would yield more conclusive insights. The coverage measure does not account for the size difference between the absence and presence of a condition and therefore, some conditions could be falsely labelled necessary because skewedness is not detected. Schneider and Wagemann (2012) suggest the “relevance of necessity” measure, which indicates the strength of a necessary condition relative to the absence of the condition and the outcome. It is calculated by dividing the values for the non-occurrence of the condition by the minimum membership values of the non-outcome and the absence of the condition, with higher values indicating non-trivialness.

4.1.2 Sufficient conditions

Analyses of sufficiency are important as they uncover a logical connection within the data that is analytically different to necessary conditions. Sufficiency points to the notion that whenever the outcome is present, also the condition needs to be present, indicating a subset relation (The condition is a subset of the outcome). Imagine a Venn diagram: Here, the circle representing the sufficient condition is always enclosed within the circle of the outcome set. In other words, sufficiency describes the inverse relation of necessity: There can be no occurrence of the condition without the outcome, while occurrences of the outcome without the condition are allowed. Visualised in a two-by-two table, a sufficient condition is present when the lower right corner is void of cases. A hypothetical study aiming to explore the relationship between a state having the euro (€) as currency and EU membership shall serve as an example here. Currently, there are 28 members of the European Union out of which 19 are using the euro as part of their Eurozone membership. In other words, Eurozone membership can be considered a sufficient condition for being a member of the EU. However, because of the causal asymmetry which holds for both sufficiency and necessity relationships, if a positive relationship is found, it cannot simply be reversed to explain the absence of an outcome. Not using the euro is not automatically a sufficient condition for not being an EU-member. In fact, nine countries are EU members without using the currency, so non-Eurozone membership cannot be used to explain an absence of EU membership.

The example of EU membership and using the euro is based on two crisp sets in which membership is either 0 or 1. Parallel to necessity, sufficiency statements for fuzzy sets are slightly more complex as they are based on membership scores that can take on any value between 0 and 1. In an XY plot, sufficient conditions are never to be found below the diagonal connecting the lower left corner with the upper right corner. For fuzzy sets, a sufficient condition is present whenever the membership scores in the outcome are such that they either equal the membership values in the outcome or are smaller (For a more detailed discussion of the logic of sufficiency, see Schneider and Wagemann (2012)). The quality of a sufficient condition is – again, parallel to the assessment of necessary conditions – gauged by using parameters of fit such as the consistency and coverage values. Sufficient conditions are first assessed in terms of consistency and in a second step, the coverage value is calculated. The formulas for the two parameters of fit – as well as those for necessity – have been introduced by Ragin (2006).

The value for consistency of sufficient conditions expresses how much the data supports the subset relationship. For crisp sets, it is calculated by dividing the number of cases that are both members of the condition and the outcome by the number of cases that are member of the condition (this includes cases that display the condition without the outcome). Fully consistent sufficient conditions are those that never occur without the outcome. In the previous example of euro currency as a sufficient condition for EU membership, 28 countries display the outcome and 19 are members of the condition. The consistency value for Eurozone membership would be $19/19=1$ because there is no single non-EU member state not using the common currency. While calculating consistency for crisp sets is rather straightforward, the procedure for identifying consistent fuzzy conditions is slightly more complex: the value is based on a division of the minimum membership scores of each case in the condition and the outcome by the membership values in the condition alone. In other words, the minimum membership values of the cases displaying the condition and the outcome are divided by the membership values in the condition alone. If the membership scores in the condition are equal to or smaller than those for the outcome, the consistency value would be 1. However, should a few cases fall below the diagonal in the XY plot (their membership value in the outcome is smaller than the degree of membership in the condition), the value decreases as the subset relation is not perfect. One caveat related to fuzzy set consistency is worth mentioning: consistency values for fuzzy sets can mask truly contradictory cases (instances where the membership in the condition and outcome are qualitatively different) and therefore the subset

relation needs to be carefully inspected using the XY plot (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). To assess the numerical value, Schneider and Wagemann (2010) suggest a consistency cut-off of 0,70 or higher for sufficient conditions but argue elsewhere that the value can vary on a case by case basis and should be chosen after careful consideration of the empirical evidence (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012).

Only after a satisfying consistency value has been reached for a condition or a more complex solution term, the second step in a sufficiency analysis is the assessment of coverage. Coverage indicates by how much the size of the subset and superset differ. Or, to formulate it as a question: how much of the outcome is explained by the condition? For crisp sets, the coverage value is based on a division of the number of cases that display both the condition and the outcome by the total number of cases displaying the outcome. Coming back to the example of Eurozone membership and EU states, the coverage of Eurozone membership as a sufficient condition for being an EU country is $19/28=0,68$. The calculation of coverage for fuzzy sets is more complex as it takes into account the membership values of all cases, including contradictory cases. Contradictory cases need to be assessed in a separate step using the XY plot (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). For fuzzy sets, the overlap between the condition and the outcome is calculated through a division of the smaller set by the bigger set. Thus, the minimum membership scores of the cases displaying both the condition and the outcome are divided by the membership scores of the outcome (including instances without the condition).

Because QCA as a research strategy allows for multiple solutions to explain an outcome, the coverage value can be further refined to gauge the quality of each of the solution's components by using the measures of raw, unique and solution coverage (Ragin, 2006). The raw coverage of a solution path refers to the overlap of one solution term with the outcome whereas the unique coverage value indicates the overlap of a solution after potential overlaps with other paths have been removed. Solution coverage refers to the entire complex solution term which might be comprised of different paths at the same time.

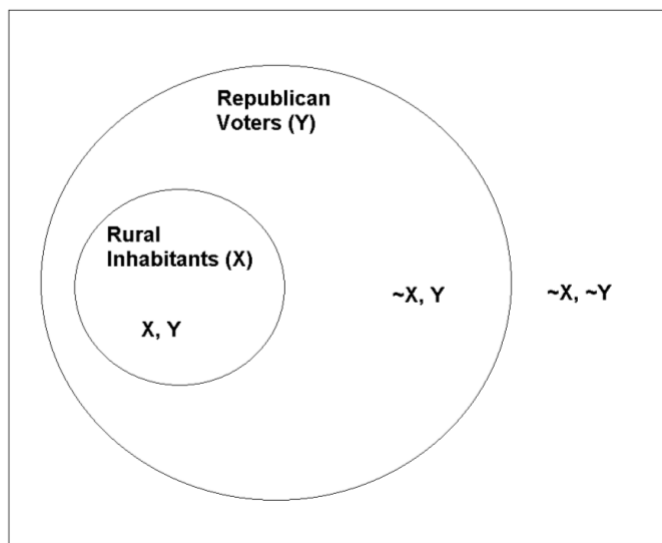
In addition to the consistency measure and the three different coverage measures, the PRI (short for Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency, (Mendel and Ragin, 2012) is one of the latest advancements in QCA methodology to account for simultaneous subset relations which can remain undetected due to high consistency scores. Simultaneous subset relations describe a logically impossible situation in which the condition is a subset of the outcome and

the non-outcome, implying that in one of the states a contradiction exists. This situation is usually caused by skewed membership scores. To detect this, the PRI indicates “[...]how much it helps to know that a given X is specifically a subset of Y and not a subset of $\sim Y$ ” (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012).

From a procedural perspective, sufficiency and its corresponding parameters of fit can be analysed after the truth table has been constructed, which contains the empirical information on the cases. The truth table gives credit to causal complexity as it summarises the multiple “causal recipes” or solution paths connected to the outcome (Ragin, 2008). Each row in the truth table represents a possible combination of conditions and ideally contains at least one corresponding observation. The number of possible combinations of conditions in a truth table is 2^k , with k indicating the number of conditions in the model. The truth table is constructed based on the possible number of combinations of conditions and each case is assigned to one row. Every row which contains the outcome is automatically an expression of sufficiency.

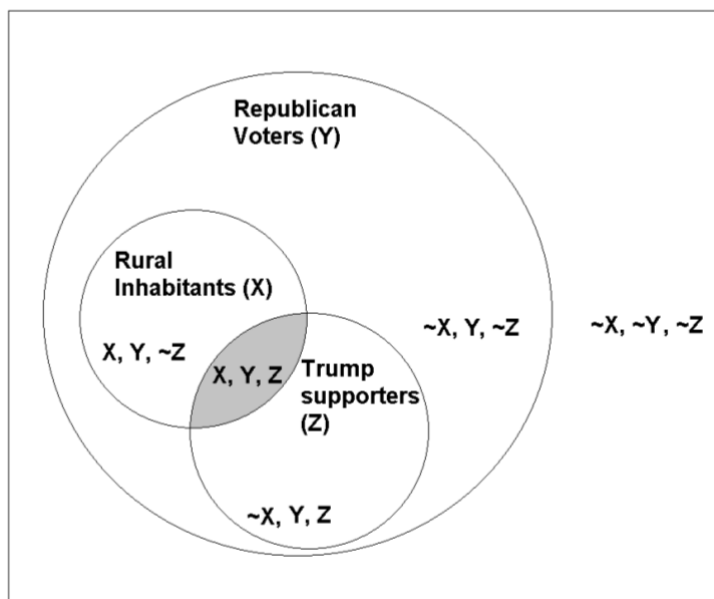
An example by Schneider and Wagemann (2012) helps to illustrate: It is warranted to assume that citizens from rural areas vote for the Republican Party. This relationship indicates that being from a small town is a sufficient condition for being a Republican voter (See graph 4). Thus, the set of people from rural areas (X) is a subset of Republican voters (Y). In other words, whenever we observe the outcome (Y), we observe the condition (X), thus the condition is sufficient for the outcome. Whereas being an American citizen would be a necessary condition for being a Republican Voter. All of this does not mean that all people from small towns vote Republican. Nor does it mean that being from a big city automatically makes a person not vote for the Republican Party, which refers to the idea of causational asymmetry. It just verbalises the set relationship between these two attributes. There may be Republican voters from big cities for example, which is captured in the area marked with $\sim X, Y$ (the tilde symbol “ \sim ” represents the absence of an element: $\sim X$). The fact that being from a small town does not explain the whole set of Republican voters entails that there are multiple conditions leading to the outcome in question. This refers to the idea of equifinality, which is another assumption in set-theoretic analyses: There may be different paths leading to the same outcome, e.g. being a supporter of Donald Trump overlaps with the Republican voter set (Y, Z) (See graph 5). Supporters from small towns voting Republican (set Y, Z). And there may be Trump voters from small towns voting Republican (denoted by the grey area of set X, Y, Z), which illustrates the idea of conjunctural causation: multiple conditions may lead to an outcome together.

Graph 4 Venn diagram for relation of sufficiency



(From Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p.5)

Graph 5 Venn diagram for equifinality and conjunctural causation



(Adapted from Schneider & Wagemann, 2012, p. 5)

QCA identifies solution paths (conjunctions of causal factors) to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena. Social reality is complex and very often, certain conditions act together to cause an outcome or different conditions can lead to the same result. Some conditions may be important in one path but have no role in another path (Jordan, et al., 2011). In this way, QCA represents a methodological middle ground between case studies and large, quantitative studies (but it can also of course be used on very big datasets as the method is not limited in terms of cases). Small-N research can help understand complex relationships but

arriving at conclusions about patterns is more difficult due to the small number of cases. Acquiring and analysing data in case studies is often very complex and hard to replicate, whereas in QCA, the researcher has to explain and document the measurement of the conditions and outcome in a very detailed manner, making the research easier to replicate. For small-N case studies, in-depth knowledge requires extensive collection of data but cannot give insights about possible patterns in more cases (Jordan, et al., 2011).

4.1.3 Shortcomings of QCA

Logical remainders are a common problem in QCA. Logical remainders occur when not all possible combinations of factors are represented by one or more empirical cases. Avoiding logical remainders is almost impossible, but logical remainders can be useful for building new theoretical expectations to be tested in the future when more data is available (Häge, 2007). Logical remainders are usually increased as a result of higher numbers of conditions in a model, as the number of possible combinations of conditions is calculated by 2^k , with k being the number of conditions. There is no golden rule for the number of conditions. It is common practice to use 4 up to 7 conditions for data sets with ten to forty cases (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 2009). “The greater the number of conditions and possible values, the larger the data space which must be filled, by either real or hypothetical cases. Logical remainders are not inherently objectionable, since it is generally impossible to locate cases exhibiting every possible configuration, and the QCA algorithm can produce robust results even with large amounts of ‘empty data space’” (Jordan, et al., 2011, p. 1163). In other words, logical remainders are a common feature in studies using QCA as a method. When logical remainders are present, QCA still produces viable results. The patterns identified from analyses with non-observed cases are less informative than if full information had been present. Therefore, researchers should transparently discuss the consequences and potential pitfalls of logical remainders in their studies.

4.2 Data, sources and operationalisation I: Outcome

After the above introduction of key notions in QCA, I now proceed to the operationalisation of the conditions and outcome identified in the hypothesis chapter. The outcome of interest in this project is the number of signatures which is understood as an indicator of the success or failure of European citizens’ initiatives. During the time of writing, 70 initiatives have been officially

launched and a number of different sources have compiled information on various aspects of these ECIs. One of the main sources used in this project was an online archive maintained by the European Commission⁹. On this Commission registry of all ECIs proposed so far, officially verified numbers of signatures are published for those ECIs that have passed the threshold of one million signatures. For the remaining initiatives, e.g. the ones that ended their signature collection before the twelve months period or that have not reached the one million threshold, two additional sources have been consulted: the European Citizens' Action Service (ECAS) and the ECI Campaign¹⁰. ECAS is a non-profit organisation devoted to the promotion of citizens' rights and democratic participation in the EU. The NGO has compiled a vast array of resources to inform about the participatory tool and supports initiative organisers along the process of conducting and proposing their ECI. What is more, it publishes a newsletter on the ECI ("ECI Watch") to keep track of the latest developments concerning the participatory tool. Together with the think tank Initiative Referendum Institute Europe and the NGO Democracy International, it has founded an ECI Support Centre. The ECI Campaign is a NGO exclusively devoted to the improvement of the implementation of the ECI while also serving as support platform for organisers and important repository of knowledge on initiatives. The information for the ECI "Retaining European Citizenship" was still ongoing at the time of writing; therefore, its number might differ at a later point in time. For successful ECIs, the numbers provided by the European Commission were used and for the remaining cases ECAS and the ECI Campaign served as sources. For two initiatives that were still ongoing during the finalisation of this thesis ("Retaining EU Citizenship" and "Let us reduce the wage and economic differences that tear the EU apart!"), the numbers of signatures were retrieved from their online collection systems¹¹. From all sources mentioned here, it was possible to retrieve information on the number of signatures for 26 initiatives¹². Despite the fact that most

⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>

¹⁰ For more information on the organisations please visit <http://ecas.org/> and <http://www.citizens-initiative.eu>. Numbers were retrieved from: http://www.ecas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ECI-TABLE-final11_28.pdf ("The European Citizens' Initiative Activity File") and <http://www.citizens-initiative.eu/eci/open-closed/>.

¹¹ Links to the online collection website accessed by the researcher on 9 March, 2018: <https://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/31/public/#/?lang=en> and <https://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/33/public/#/>.

¹² For ECIs without officially verified signatures, the numbers reported by ECAS and the ECI Campaign differed in 11 cases (30K, A4G, DEC, ECO2, FRA, LMV2, MP2, T4Y, UBI, VAP, WEE). For ONE, R2W and VIV the numbers differed between all three sources but in these cases the officially verified numbers provided by the Commission were used in the analysis. The differences in the numbers reported by ECAS and the ECI Campaign range between a minimum of 1 for UBI and a maximum of 68165 for MP2, with an average difference between the two sources of 20394 and a median of 4333. When different numbers were reported by the two NGOs and no verified number by the Commission was available, the higher value was included in the analysis.

initiatives have used the online signature collection software provided by the Commission, information on the numbers of signatures for the remaining ECIs was not stored. The online collection tool of the Commission included a breakdown of all signatures by country, information that had to be deleted from the institution's server due to concerns of data protection¹³.

4.3 Data, sources and operationalisation II: ECI resources

In the theoretical chapter, I hypothesise that amount of funding, number of staff and partner organisations as well as the number of publicity activities impact on the number of signatures collected by ECIs. A survey conducted among ECI organisers served as the main source of information on these four conditions. The questionnaire was created using SoSci Survey¹⁴ (Leiner, 2014) and made available to participants on www.soscisurvey.com¹⁵. A pre-test of the survey was conducted on the basis of semi-structured interviews with three ECI organisers, who were able to confirm the applicability of the conditions, the outcome and their measurement as selected by the researcher. On the basis of the pre-test, a refined version of the questionnaire was created and sent out to organisers in four waves. Organisers who did not responded during the previous wave were contacted in the subsequent round. Survey waves one and two were launched in July and October 2015 and waves three and four were sent out in January 2017 and January 2018 in order to include as many cases as possible because the number of initiatives launched was growing constantly. Representatives of all ECIs that had been registered by the Commission since the start of the instrument and those that were bound to be done with the signature collection by the time of the scheduled final data analysis have been contacted.

Potential participants received an e-mail with a link to the survey, which they could fill out in their web browsers or on their mobile phones. E-mail addresses of ECI organisers who were sent the survey link were mainly retrieved from the Commission's registry of ECIs, but

¹³ Information obtained in e-mail correspondence with Directorate-General for Informatics on 8 March, 2015.

¹⁴ SoSci Survey is a software tool developed at the Department of Communication Science and Media Research (IfKW) of the Ludwig-Maximilian-University Munich and University Zurich. It is frequently employed in social science and commercial research, with 13660 research projects conducted in 2014. Since 2006, it is open for public use and constantly updated. It allows to programme surveys with filter questions and a variety of question batteries as well as interviews for up to 5000 participants.

¹⁵ The survey is available in the appendix.

also from the websites of the ECIs. For some initiatives, contact was established through snowball techniques, by telephone, Facebook and twitter. Interviewees from the survey pre-test have also referred the researcher to other organisers who are part of a small network of the “ECI community” engaged in the reform process of the instrument. One difficulty I encountered while contacting participants is connected to the varying levels of formal organisation of the different initiatives which meant that there was no standard procedure of getting in touch and receiving completely filled out survey responses. No single ECIs is like another; they are all structured in different ways as the types of organisers range from private persons to national politicians, MEPs, students, activists, unionists to business people and church representatives. In addition, some organisers stopped using the e-mail addresses created for their ECI which meant that they could not be reached after their campaign ended. Moreover, some initiative organisers did not speak English or German which created language barriers. In the case of DEC, I was able to translate the survey into French in addition to the English and German versions; however, it cannot be ruled out that more organisers were not able to fill out the survey because of lacking resources for translation. In total, the survey was filled out 31 times and full information on 17 initiatives was obtained. For six initiatives, the survey was filled out multiple times in which case the survey with more complete answers in the respective question item was used.

For the variable funding, the survey was used as primary source and compared to the information provided on the Commission’s website where organisers were able to give information on their resources. This number was measured in the amount of funding their initiative disposed of in Euro. Initiatives with over one million supporters were obliged to provide their sources of funding and the amounts on the website of the Commission. Organisers of the remaining initiatives were not obliged to provide this information, but in some cases did so anyway. When the numbers provided in the survey differed from the amount registered with the Commission, the latter was used as it was considered the official source. When no number was provided in the ECI registry, the survey was used as source of information. Information on the numerical indicator for human resources was also retrieved from the survey. It contained questions on the number of full-time and part-time paid staff or volunteers, with part-time personnel counting as 0,5 as opposed to 1 for full-time manpower. For the number of partner organisations, a numerical indicator was used as well. The main source for it was the survey. In cases where no answer was provided in the survey, I checked organisers’ websites and counted the number of partner organisations listed. To gauge the publicity activities of ECIs,

survey participants were given a list of online and offline PR activities that could be conducted in order to promote their ECI, reach potential signees, politicians and the media. Organisers were asked to indicate the frequency (annually, monthly, bi-weekly, weekly, daily, never) with which they had undertaken any of these or other additional activities. Based on the length of the signature collection period, this frequency was then calculated and summed up into a cumulative index of publicity activities. The exhaustiveness of the choices provided on the list was corroborated during a number of preliminary interviews with organisers.

4.4 Data, sources and operationalisation III: ECI mobilisation frames

The final factor that is expected to impact the signature collection outcome of an ECI is the framing of initiatives. In a broad sense, frames are collectively shared cognitive schemata embedded in a common cultural background that help individuals interpret and understand reality. Frames can be employed strategically by public actors, such as politicians or social movements, in order to promote a specific understanding of a situation among their audience in order to advance their own interest or mobilise action (Entman, et al., 2009, p. 179). Parallel to these considerations, organisers of ECIs are expected to strategically communicate (or: “frame”) the content of their initiative in order to mobilise potential signees. Frames that are intended to motivate such collective action need to fulfil three main aspects which in the literature have been termed diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames (Snow and Benford, 1988). The content of these main characteristics of collective action frames can vary along several dimensions such as the range of problems and corresponding causes, the degree of elaboration and number of themes, scope of groups affected and the degree of resonance (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 619). I hypothesise that ECIs formulating more complete frames – frames covering a larger range of themes, problems and corresponding causes as well as providing resonant content through credibility - will mobilise more signatures. In order to gauge and compare the frames employed by the different ECIs, I conducted a qualitative content analysis of all relevant textual material published by organisers based on a codebook which I will introduce in the following sections. Prior to presenting the codebook, I will provide an overview of the sources and selection criteria of the material analysed.

Data on the framing of ECIs has been retrieved from organisers’ websites and from the Commission’s registry because authorship of the textual material provided on these outlets can be clearly attributed to initiative organisers. Each initiative applying for registration with the

Commission is required to provide information on its subject-matter and main objectives, information that has been included in the content analysis. In addition, the Commission's registry gives ECIs the option to upload additional supporting documents such as a draft legal act or annexes containing an elaborated version of its arguments. All ECIs in the dataset have created websites to inform about their initiative and to call for signatures and other forms of support. The content and format on these websites ranges from calls for donations, newsletters, announcements of events, interviews with (famous) supporters, lists of related newspaper articles and media appearances, information about organisers and initiative progress to descriptions of the ECI's rationale and background. By contrast, further links within ECI websites associated to external content were not followed (e.g. links leading to the websites of partner organisations, links to newspaper articles, links to pdf-documents of scientific articles). Only pdf-documents and text content concerning the specific ECI's topic were analysed. All textual content on ECI websites is considered relevant, however excluded from the coding are: legal details, contact pages, shops, picture galleries, login pages for members, comments section, privacy statements, visual and audible material (videos, pictures, campaign songs), as well as general explanations of what the ECI is and how it works as well as all texts on topics not related to an ECI's broader issue because these do not contain information on the specific framing of initiatives. If the same document was available on both the Commission's registry and the initiative website, the text was only coded once. Similarly, on websites where the same statements appeared on each level, such as a link saying "sign here!", this statement was only coded one time because frequency of statements is not considered relevant for gauging the completeness of mobilisation frames. A list of the websites is provided in the appendix. Almost all of the material I coded was in English, however a few texts were written in German and French, which I was also able to include in the analysis. Only in a handful of texts, other languages were used which I was not able to code.

Only content of the websites available during the signature collection period is included in the analysis as the project aims to get a deeper understanding of the factors impacting the signature collection outcome. Any change of these factors after the end of signature collection campaigns cannot have impacted their outcome. Consequently, the material was selected in a way that factored in the time element in two ways. First, the publication date of texts was considered whenever available: If, for example, organisers included a news section on their website that has been updated to track the progress of the initiative after the signature collection period, this information was omitted from the analysis. Second, capturing ECI websites during

the signature collection campaign was possible by using the Wayback Machine¹⁶, which is an internet archive that regularly crawls and stores websites so their state at different past points in time is preserved. The Wayback machine allows users to select a range of specific dates for which they wish to see the state of online content. This service was also helpful because in some cases, the domains of ECIs have been deleted or have changed drastically since the end of their signature collection period. I have included textual material available on ECI websites closest before the end of the signature collection period and whenever this was not possible, I have selected the first available date closest to the day after the end of the signature collection period. The data collection from the Commission's website and ECI websites resulted in a total of 358 documents (PDFs and Word documents that were divided into document groups for each ECI) which I have included in the content analysis of ECI frames. The analysis includes the entire universe of relevant material available from the websites of the initiatives.

The material was analysed using qualitative content analysis, which is performed based on a codebook developed for the specific research questions in this doctoral project. Qualitative content analysis is a research method designed to reduce data in order to uncover latent meaning and break down the material according to the aspects defined by the researcher. The development process of the codebook followed the standards of good practice in qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012) and the main categories are divided into more fine-grained subcategories. For the codebook used in this project, four main categories have been derived from theory and the subcategories have been identified after coding a sample of 10% of the data and subsuming the information therein. After all data has been coded to the point of saturation, I have repeated this process in order to refine the subcategories where necessary. The subcategories represent a more fine-grained reading of the main categories and their data-driven development opens up the theoretical framework to variations and similarities within and across the cases. With the aid of the software ATLAS.ti, the material was divided into segments based on thematic segmentation: Whenever a new topic or idea was introduced in a text, a new unit of meaning (or: segment) was created. Segment size differs from a single document (for example an article informing about an event that is going to take place) to multiple segments within one text (for example a web page informing about the rationale of the specific ECI that is addressing a range of themes). Within each segment, one or more codes

¹⁶ <http://archive.org/web/>

were assigned as the categories are closely linked to each other – I will define the categories in more detail in the following sections.

The four main categories in the codebook are based on the theoretical framework of collective action frames developed by Snow and Benford (1988) for the analysis of mobilisation activities of social movements. Similar to social movements, which seek to mobilise participants to take different types of action through strategic framing, ECI organisers are also expected to strategically communicate (or: “frame”) the content of their initiative in order to mobilise potential signees. Framing refers to the idea that the author of the frame emphasises specific aspects of an issue while omitting others in order to create a certain picture of reality. For example, an ECI asking for the EU-wide legalisation of cannabis can put forward different framings of its cause: Legalisation can be framed as an issue of personal liberty to choose your recreational drug of choice – so it is up to you if you want to drink a glass of wine or smoke a joint. Or alternatively, legalisation can be framed as an issue of regulative efficiency: if all EU states have the same legislation, the regulation of cannabis products becomes easier and cheaper. It can also be presented as a health issue because new legalisation can lead to better regulated and thus, higher quality products. Many other interpretations seem possible. As different aspects can be put forward simultaneously and the literature indicates that more developed frames will lead to more successful mobilisation, the hypothesis to be tested is that ECIs offering multiple interpretations of reality will potentially resonate with more groups of people and thus lead to higher numbers of signatures. In other words, organisers of ECIs are expected to formulate collective action frames in a way that will ideally resonate with different stakeholders so that they are motivated to take action to support the initiative in different ways, e.g. by signing or promoting the ECI themselves. The diagnostic, prognostic, motivational and credibility frames are defined as the main elements of ECI frames which are further specified into 22 subcategories that have been derived from the data. ECIs offering a more complete framing – covering most or all of the 22 subcategories – are expected to yield higher numbers of signatures. Based on the number of framing elements provided by an initiative, the fuzzy-set membership is calculated. The overall number of frames per initiative and the resulting average score across dimensions can be found in the appendix. A detailed description of the fuzzification is provided in chapter 4.5. on calibration. More complete frames are considered to represent more multifaceted arguments boosting the rhetorical quality of an ECI’s framing, which in turn I assume to increase an ECI’s mobilisation potential. The

categories of the codebook will be introduced in the subsequent paragraphs, in the following order: diagnostic frames, prognostic frames, motivational frames and credibility frames.

A reliability test with a second coder was performed on 10% of the material and resulted in a Krippendorff's alpha of 88% across all dimensions of the coding frame¹⁷ (Hayes and Krippendorff, 2007) which meets an acceptable standard (Lombard, et al., 2002). The material for the second coder was selected in a way that maximises variation in relation to the types of documents and codes used by the first coder. In addition, the sample for coder two consisted of documents from each initiative.

4.4.1 Diagnostic frames

Diagnostic frames can be found in textual segments attributing blame, causality and culpable agents (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 616). The segments indicate who is responsible for the problem and statements falling into this category tend to be formulated in a negative way, e.g. by identifying the victims of a problem. During the coding process of the material based on the main categories, I identified four subcategories across all ECIs – they are specified in table 4 below. Because the coding frame is measuring rhetorical quality, the subcategories are conceptually closely linked to each other as this is defined as indicator for coherent ideas. In other words, if I want to convince you of my point of view, I should articulate my argument in a logical way that answers all of your questions. Therefore, an ideal diagnostic frame will clearly spell out to the reader: a) what the problem is and b) who is suffering from its consequences, while also pointing out c) which circumstances lead to the problem and d) which actors are to blame. These four different aspects of the diagnostic framing should ideally appear within one segment simultaneously or across all texts of an ECI.

¹⁷ See table 8.4 in the appendix for the Krippendorff's alpha value of each subcategory.

Table 4 Definition of diagnostic frames

Code name	Definition	Examples
1_DIA_PROBLEM	What is the problem? Examples of the problem and its consequences that show their manifestation in the world. Problem descriptions can be connected to mentions of causes of the problem (1_DIA_CAUSE) or responsible agents (1_DIA_RESPONSIBILITY).	<p>"The EU has clear road safety and environmental goals but these are not yet met."</p> <p>"Ecocide is the extensive damage to, destruction of or loss of ecosystems of a given territory."</p>
1_DIA_CAUSE	<p>What causes the problem? Which circumstances lead to the problem?</p> <p>What are the reasons why there is a problem to be solved? This code can appear in conjunction with 1_DIA_PROBLEM as it can be seen as a more detailed approach to the problem description by giving underlying explanations concerning the circumstances under which the problem arose.</p>	<p>"Ecocide is a crime of strict liability committed by natural and legal persons."</p> <p>"Many people do not know that water related diseases such as diarrhea and cholera are not caused by a lack of water but by polluted water."</p> <p>"[...]the economic crisis has led to many people being cut off from water and sanitation services."</p>

1_DIA_RESPONSIBILITY	<p>Which persons, organisations or groups are responsible for the problem? Segments identifying the responsible entity imply that the culpable agent would also have the power to act against the problem but until now they have not acted at all or in an unsatisfactory manner. 1_DIA_CAUSE in contrast, describes abstract reasons and circumstances leading to the problem, whereas 1_DIA_RESPONSIBILITY refers to the actual active agents connected to it. Typical questions include: Whose fault is it? Who has not done enough? The category names actor(s) and entities, and does not just describe the problem or the cause. Usually, this would be indicated by segments referring to the Commission, governments, etc.</p>	<p>“[...]the European Union is not supposed to promote abortion.”</p> <p>"The practice by the World Bank and its regional counterparts to promote privatization of water services in the Global South must be challenged and changed."</p> <p>“[...]the EP allowed the Article on electronic cigarettes of the Tobacco Products Directive to pass. This controversial, rushed and unacceptable legislation born of ignorance endangers the future of vaping [...]”</p>
1_DIA_AFFECTED	<p>Who is affected by the problem? This category includes mentions of individuals, groups, administrative entities, living beings or other more abstract things (e.g. the environment) that are affected in a negative way and/ or even suffering because of the problem.</p>	<p>“It’s probably not a surprise to you that we love our cows... The sad truth is many of our bovine friends around Europe are not happy cows [...]”</p> <p>“Vulnerable road users like cyclists and pedestrians are in danger if it comes to an encounter with a car.”</p> <p>“Citizens will be the ones paying for this and the poor will be the worst affected.”</p>

4.4.2 *Prognostic frames*

Prognostic frames delineate solutions to the problems articulated in the diagnostic frames. The two concepts are closely linked but differ inasmuch as the problem definition is likely to limit the range of possible solutions (Benford and Snow, 2000). Both terms are rooted in medicine, where health professionals first classify a patients' disease by examining their symptoms during the diagnostic procedure and in a second step, forecast the outcome of the disease in the prognosis. Just as treatment options vary, previous studies have identified prognoses ranging from concrete plans of action to vague utopias of a better society. For example, in their study of frames of riots in Parisian banlieues, Snow, et al. (2007) differentiate between six concrete prognostic frames that include police action, policy reforms, and other direct measures such as stakeholder dialogue forums. Additionally, prognoses can prescribe solutions by embedding them within more abstract ideas such as religion, freedom, etc. The categories in the codebook aim to capture this range of abstraction. What is more, the coding process revealed five subcategories which complement each other and if present simultaneously, strengthen argumentative coherence - similar to diagnostic frames. The first two categories detail the outcome of the ECI (what the world will look like if the demands are implemented) and suggest ways to implement the solution. The third category points to preconditions and obstacles to the desirable state in the future while the last two categories identify responsible actors for implementation as well as benefactors of ameliorative action.

Table 5 Definition of prognostic frames

Code name	Definition	Examples
2_PRO_OUTCOME	<p>What is the aim of the ECI? What do organisers want to happen?</p> <p>What will the future look like with the ECI has been implemented?</p> <p>What are some positive effects of implementing the ECI's demands? This category can describe implications and consequences following from the solution suggested, thus this category frequently appears in conjunction with 2_PRO_SOLUTION.</p>	<p>"Our goal is to enhance EU exchange programmes – such as Erasmus or the European Voluntary Service (EVS) – in order to contribute to a united Europe based on solidarity among citizens."</p> <p>"LET ME VOTE aims to reduce the democratic deficit [...]"</p>
2_PRO_SOLUTION	<p>How should the outcome desired be achieved, e.g. through which actions will the outcome be reached? What is the solution to the problem addressed by the ECI? How does the solution proposed by the ECI work exactly? This code can appear together with 2_PRO_OUTCOME, when the path to reaching the outcome is described in connection to what the aim is.</p>	<p>"We hope to improve the lives of the EU's 23m dairy cows through the introduction of effective legislation to protect their health and welfare"</p> <p>"[...] in order to put an end to front companies and opaque legal arrangements, it is imperative to adopt measures which impose, in a uniform way within the European Union, transparency and therefore access to information on the actual beneficiaries [...]"</p>

2_PRO_PRECONDITIONS_ OBSTACLES	<p>What are some preconditions and obstacles before the outcome can be implemented? Beyond describing what needs to be done to implement a goal (PRO_SOLUTION), this category points to possible problems along the way.</p>	<p>"[...]lack of funding is the main barrier to going abroad[...]"</p> <p>"Sustainable and equitable allocation of water resources depends on cooperation among community members..."</p>
2_PRO_RESPONSIBILITY	<p>Which person, institution or other (collective) actor is responsible for implementing the solution proposed by the ECI? In contrast to "DIA_RESPONSIBILITY", this category combines suggestions of ameliorative action with identifications of the actor responsible for change.</p>	<p>"We believe that the EU needs to re-focus its integration efforts on the level of individual European citizens to build a genuine European union of people, not states..."</p> <p>"The introduction of the Unconditional Basic Income and possible introductory steps are within the respective areas of responsibility of the Member States of the European Union."</p>
2_PRO_BENEFACTORS	<p>Who will benefit from the changes the ECI is aiming to bring about? This category includes mentions of individuals, groups, administrative entities, living beings or other more abstract things (e.g. the environment) whose lives will be improved.</p>	<p>"[...]We seek to inspire and mobilise European citizens to call for a specific directive that guarantees improved animal welfare for dairy cows."</p> <p>"End roaming fees across Europe now, complete the European common market for all mobile phone customers."</p>

4.4.3 Motivational frames

Based on the definition Benford and Snow, “Motivational framing, the final core framing task, provides a "call to arms" or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive” (2000, p. 164). For social movements, statements of this category fulfil the task of attracting and mobilising members through content spanning from concrete calls for action to abstract constructions of common beliefs and identity. By the same token, ECIs are expected to devise different motivational frames to reach the goals of their initiative. In the process of developing the codebook, I found that the motivational frames of ECIs frequently include very practical propositions. They are present whenever segments of the text call upon potential signees to take different forms of action to promote the initiative or simply ask people to give their signature. Such statements can directly address potential supporters (“Sign the initiative now!”, “Share with your friends!”) or give instructions how promote the ECI (e.g. how to paint a poster, how to put up an information stand, etc.).

Table 6 Definition of motivational frames

Code name	Definition	Examples
3_MOT_SIGN	Are the organisers giving statements encouraging people to sign the initiative, e.g. are there direct calls to sign?	"Sign the petition! Pledge your support." "Sign! the European Citizens' Initiative WATER and SANITATION are a HUMAN RIGHT
3_MOT_COMMUNICATION	This category includes all calls for communication either between supporters and organisers or between supporters and third parties. Are organisers asking supporters to engage in direct written or oral communication with others in order to promote the ECI? Are they asking supporters to communicate the content of the initiative to outsiders (family, friends, politicians...) using social media or simply word of mouth? Alternatively, are signees being encouraged to get in touch with organisers with the aim of boosting an ECI's campaign? In contrast to 3_MOT_ACTION IDEAS, this category exclusively refers to communication and not to other activities such as invitations to attend a protest.	"And don't hesitate to tell us about your own ideas and send in your photos." "Promote this campaign in your network and use all media available: Facebook, twitter, e-mails, meetings, newsletters and magazines!" "And we need your help! Please promote this campaign and ask your friends, family and colleagues to sign too. But we really need your help to ensure this campaign gains real momentum."

3_MOT_ACTION IDEAS	<p>Are organisers giving examples of action in order to inspire supporters to get active for the ECI? In contrast to 3_MOT_COMMUNICATION, the category implies activity beyond direct spoken or written communication: Organisers ask supporters to do something. This includes action ideas, examples of activities already done by others or instruction manuals for different types of action. The category includes concrete ideas but also general statements such as “we need your help!”</p>	<p>"You can help to make that happen!"</p> <p>"Show support - Print off our End Ecocide in Europe posters and flyers and put them somewhere for people to see - Change your Facebook picture so it includes the End Ecocide in Europe logo"</p> <p>"Badges! You can show your support and spread the word by using one of our badges on your blog or website. Click the chosen image to obtain its embed code. Alternatively you can simply download one and embed it yourself."</p>
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4.4.4 Credibility frames

The subcategories introduced so far capture the variable features within the three core elements of collective action frames. Another aspect that can fluctuate within collective action frames of different social movements is the way how credibility is addressed. Generally, credibility implies trustworthiness of a person or the truth of a fact. Benford and Snow (2000, p. 619) argue that credibility can resonate with the target audience through the presence of three different factors: Empirical credibility, frame consistency and credibility of frame articulators. For credibility frames of ECIs, the coding process revealed most subcategories. ECI organisers articulated empirical credibility in many different ways; e.g. by citing newspaper reports and scientific evidence or providing background information on the history of the issue. A few times, segments contained best practices of cities and municipalities that already implemented the demands of the initiative. Whenever evidence of the problem manifesting "out there in the real world" is provided, it serves the purpose of convincing potential signees that the ECI's issue is relevant. The second aspect, frame consistency, refers to the idea that the actions and claims of frame articulators are congruent. Thus, the actions of ECI organisers should match their statements. This concept is captured in the category "CRED_EXAMPLES_action" which contains examples of activity by organisers and their supporters on behalf of the initiative. The last aspect - credibility of frame articulators - alludes to the status, expertise and knowledge of organisers, partner organisations and famous supporters. For example, level of education or professional status can invoke credibility (Meyer and Whittier, 1994). If the speaker appears to be knowledgeable/ authoritative/ competent enough to judge the issue, I expect that potential signees can be mobilised more easily. For example, a professor giving an interview in support of the respective ECI is more likely to convey a sense of expertise than a layperson. Across the three aspects of credibility, a factor specific to the context of the European citizens' initiative emerged from the coding process, namely the legal aspect. Because the ECI is an agenda-setting initiative with the ultimate aim of creating EU-legislation, many organisers have provided examples of existing legislation and/ or propose legislation themselves, which is captured in the subcategory "CRED_EXAMPLES_legal". Accordingly, legal arguments can simultaneously imply empirical credibility and credibility of frame articulators.

Table 7 Definition of credibility frames

Code name	Definition	Examples
4_CRED_EXAMPLES_action	<p>Are ECI organisers and ECI supporters taking action in order to promote the initiative's cause? This category includes mentions of things that have already been done or are going to be done in order to promote the ECI and to achieve the goals contained within its proposal. This could also be examples of successful action from similar movements and reports of successes of the ECI that have already been reached. This category does not contain statements directly addressed at potential supporters aiming to motivate them.</p>	<p>"An Italian group dedicated their holidays to support the 30 km/h campaign. They cycled the well-known "Elberadweg" from Hamburg to Dresden wearing their 30-km/h-T-Shirts and investigating German 30-km/h zones, including a photographic documentation. See more photos here"</p> <p>"Trade unions in Finland were the first to get people signed up to our European Citizens' Initiative, collecting almost 400 signatures on paper during the annual world village festival in Helsinki."</p>
4_CRED_ORGANISERS	<p>Are the organisers providing information about themselves and their background? This category includes information about the organisers and the citizens' committee.</p>	<p>"We are all volunteers without financial resources but with £ 1, or another small donation we can achieve a lot."</p> <p>"A group of committed citizens from all over Europe are the people behind this initiative. Get to know the European Citizens' Committee which acts as a resource group for volunteers, partners and other stakeholders, as well as the representative towards the European Commission and external stakeholders. Get to know the geographic coordinator from your region."</p>

4_CRED_MEDIA	<p>Is the media reporting about the ECI and its cause? In this category, citations, lists and/ or summaries of newspaper articles, website content, blogs, videos, radio interviews, etc. dealing with the issue of the ECI can be found. This category also contains news content on the broader issue of an ECI without necessarily mentioning the initiative instrument, which is considered as empirical relevance of the topic.</p>	<p>"Below, you find a number of examples that could potentially count as ecocide. The Guardian has also identified 10 ecocide hotspots."</p> <p>"Our ECI on TV in Lithuania with Juožas and Ignas Wednesday, November 21, 2012 - 14:20"</p>
4_CRED_SUPPORTER	<p>Are famous personalities supporting the ECI? Such segments mention famous individuals (TV personalities, politicians, MEPs) supporting the ECI and their activities, e.g. publicly known figures pledging their support for the ECI or the ECI's cause in broader terms.</p>	<p>"Pope offers support to pro-life initiative to give legal recognition to human embryos"</p> <p>"Our ambassador for the European transport initiative "30 km/h, making the roads worth living" Professor Dr. Hermann Knoflacher, is Professor Emeritus and Director of the Institute for Transport Planning and Traffic Engineering at the University of Vienna. He has been working in transport since 1963[...]"</p>
4_CRED_EXAMPLES_ legal	<p>Is the ECI giving legal examples to support its relevance? Is the ECI putting forward a legislative proposal? The category also gives examples of existing legislation containing the ECIs proposals. This includes laws from outside the EU ("best practices"), the legal proposal by the ECI itself or legal</p>	<p>"[...]encourage cooperation between the Member States (according to Art 156 TFEU) aiming to explore the Unconditional Basic Income (UBI) as a tool to improve their respective social security systems."</p>

	<p>paragraphs supporting the ECI's cause (e.g. the ECI is citing existing EU laws to justify its goals).</p>	<p>“There is already an international crime against the environment during war time (see Article 8(2)(b) of the Rome Statute)[...]”</p>
4_CRED_BACKGROUND	<p>Are organisers providing (historical) background information or general clarifications of their issue? This category also includes background information about the respective ECI itself such as how it came about and status updates on signature collection or administrative stage.</p>	<p>"[...]the idea to make ecocide a crime[...]has been around since the 1950s. Ecocide was almost included as one of the international Crimes Against Peace alongside Genocide but dropped at the eleventh hour[...]"</p> <p>““Water as a Human Right!” is the first up and running ECI ever and the campaign covers all 27 Member States in the 23 official languages of the European Union.”</p>

4_CRED_SCIENCE_quote	<p>Are organisers citing scientific evidence to support their ECI?</p> <p>This could be done through mentions of studies with citations of the respective research report or links to the document.</p>	<p>"This research was carried out by EUGENT – European Association for Deceleration. We are grateful for the support of “Dr. Joachim and Hanna Schmidt-Foundation for Environment and Transport”"</p> <p>"The research paper Ecocide is the Missing 5th Crime Against Peace (attached) published by the Human Rights Consortium, School of Advanced Studies, University of London, demonstrates that an international crime of Ecocide had been within the minds of the international community for over a decade and builds on existing EU and international treaties, statutes and directives."</p>
4_CRED_EXAMPLES_cities	<p>Are there cities, towns, villages where the outcome suggested is already being implemented? Such cases are serving as best practices.</p>	<p>"160 cities and villages in Europe have already implemented wide areas with 30 km/h (20mph). See the amazing list of the pioneers."</p> <p>“Here, cities and municipalities even draw back single privatization. Let’s take the example of Berlin[...]"</p>

4_CRED_PARTNERS	<p>Are there information about or mentions of partner organisations of the ECI (partner organisations, NGOs) and their activities, e.g. when pledging their support to the initiative or performing activities for the promotion of cause of the ECI or activities for connected issues? The subcategory can occur in conjunction with the category “EXAMPLES_action”, when activities of partner organisations are reported.</p>	<p>"Other European or international organisations that support the initiative include the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), and Public Services international, EPSU’s sister organisation at global level. At national level there are many more organisations supporting this ECI. You can see their logos at the bottom of the homepage of this site."</p>
4_CRED_SCIENCE_ no quote	<p>Are organisers supporting their claims by using scientific evidence, however without citation or clear identification of the source so that it can be found, in contrast to the category “CRED_SCIENCE_quote”?</p>	<p>"Evidence shows that this leads to increasing prices and lower quality of services."</p> <p>“We did a bit of dairy detective work, commissioning some European research in the industry, and we found[...]"</p>

4.5 Calibration

Before results can be produced using QCA, this method necessitates a few preparatory steps concerning the so-called calibration of the data. The logical foundations of the calibration procedure as part of set-theoretic approaches have been discussed in detail in the previous sections. In a nutshell, during calibration, cases are assigned membership scores ranging between 0 and 1 in order to capture the quality of a case's membership in the respective set. Whereas crisp-set QCA dichotomises case membership scores, fuzzy sets provide a more fine-grained classification of the data by assigning multiple scores. In this project, the data is calibrated into fuzzy sets or "fuzzified". In order to create a fuzzy set, three anchors are determined: First, the threshold above which a case counts as more in a set than others (full inclusion=1). Second, the crossover point of set membership (cases with ambiguous set membership have fuzzy values of 0,5) and third, the point of full exclusion from a set (=0). The anchor points are rooted in careful consideration of theory and empirical knowledge about the universe of cases at hand.

Based on the anchors, the data is transformed into fuzzy scores. Whenever the data lends itself to an assignment by hand, it can be categorised by the researcher manually. For instance, if the dataset is based on a scale between 0 and 10, the fuzzification of these values is rather straightforward. The fuzzy set will comprise values between 0 and 1: 0; 0,1; 0,2; 0,3 up to 1. In addition to the assignment by hand, Ragin has introduced the "direct method" for fuzzification of raw data based on a piecewise logistic function, which is used as a default setting in different QCA softwares (For a more detailed introduction into the logic of membership functions, please consider Ragin, 2008; Thiem and Dusa, 2013). As the values for all of the variables in my dataset are not based on ordinal scales and thus do not lend themselves to categorization by hand, I have chosen the transformation through the direct method. In the next paragraphs, I will go into detail about how the anchor points were chosen and provide the fuzzy scores.

4.5.1 *Number of signatures*

The outcome of interest in this project is the number of signatures as an indicator of the effectiveness of an ECI's mobilisation activities. According to this definition, the more signatures an ECI has collected, the more it can be considered successful. But exactly how many signatures does an ECI require to become a "success story"? By setting three thresholds

to define membership in the set of successful ECIs, four groups of cases with varying degrees of success are created. The first group contains fully successful ECIs. For this group, signatures have been calibrated using a score for full inclusion of one million signatures. This cutoff point is based on the legal requirement formulated in the regulation on the ECI: In order to be officially considered by the Commission, organisers need to collect at least one million statements of support. Initiatives with one million or more signatures will be examined by the Commission and organisers are invited to a public hearing with the EP. In addition, the organisers will meet with Commission representatives to plead their case and subsequently receive a formal response concerning their proposal. Thus, meeting this threshold is the only possibility for an ECI to trigger a legislative proposal by the Commission. This threshold results in R2W and ONE being full members of the outcome set. All remaining cases have collected significantly fewer signatures than the two frontrunners. The first initiative in the dataset below the threshold for full inclusion is the case “EU Directive on Dairy Cow Welfare” (COW) with 293511 signatures, reaching less than a third of the required amount. To give credit to this clear difference between the two frontrunners and all remaining ECIs, the crossover point considers the distribution of the values of the ECIs that have not reached the official threshold. On average, the remaining cases have 198262 less signatures than COW. The crossover point is thus set to 198262, putting all ECIs with below average differences from COW below the 0,5 mark and thereby they are all qualified as more unsuccessful than successful regarding the signature criterion. Full exclusion is marked by the middle point between the cases 30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!” (30K) with 44310 signatures and “An end to front companies in order to secure a fairer Europe” (FRO) with 7820 signatures. The point for full exclusion was chosen to start with FRO as it marks the first case in the set with less than 1% of the required statements of support, which includes the cases LMV, A4G, DEC and T4Y. These five cases are defined as completely out of the set of successful ECIs (group 4). All other cases with signatures ranging between the numbers of COW and 30K are considered “more out than in of the set”, forming group 3. 30K marks the start of this group because it can still be considered not completely unsuccessful despite its failure in collecting a substantive amount of signatures. The initiative is known to have achieved substantive impact beyond its signature gathering campaign. Not only did it trigger the introduction of speed limits in 13 European cities, it has also almost doubled its partners and prompted debate on its cause (Agthe, 2014). The original numbers and the fuzzy values resulting from the suggested calibration of signatures are shown in table 8.

Table 8 Calibration of outcome SIGNATURES (SIG)

ECI	Number of signatures	Membership degree for SIGNATURES
ONE	1721626	1
R2W	1659543	1
COW	293511	0,6
UBI	285042	0,58
MP	200000	0,5
VAP	181555	0,43
WEE	178627	0,42
TAR	145000	0,3
ECO	119317	0,21
FRA	70584	0,1
30K	44310	0,07
FRO	7820	0,04
LMV	3604	0,03
A4G	1052	0,03
DEC	754	0,03
T4Y	563	0,03

4.5.2 Funding

The main aim of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of the factors impacting the outcome of an ECI's signature collection. Hypothesis 1 has identified financial resources as a key factor for success. More funding is expected to be connected to a more successful signature collection campaign. The condition is operationalised as the amount of funding at the disposal of ECI organisers during the signature collection campaign. For the set of ECIs with high amounts of funding, there are big differences in this variable. COW, with 345567€ has had more than twice as much funding in comparison to the initiative with the second highest number (ONE with 159219€). Based on this clear difference, the threshold for full inclusion in the set of ECIs with high amounts of financial resources is marked by the middle point between the two cases. On average, the remaining cases deviate from the maximum amount by 324150€. The point of ambiguity for funding has been set to 22712€, which is based on the subtraction of the average distance from the maximum. The cases ONE and R2W are part of the group between the average and the cut-off point for full inclusion into the set. All remaining cases

have above average distances to the maximum and fall below the 0,5 point. The point of full exclusion from the set is 1€ and contains the cases DEC, T4Y, LMV, FRO, WEE and VAP.

Table 9 Calibration of condition FUNDING (FU)

ECI	Amount of funding (€)	Membership degree for FUNDING
COW	345567	0,98
ONE	159219	0,85
R2W	140000	0,82
A4G	12500	0,21
30K	12050	0,2
FRA	7000	0,12
ECO	3324	0,07
UBI	2580	0,07
MP	2000	0,06
TAR	2000	0,06
DEC	0	0,05
FRO	0	0,05
LMV	0	0,05
T4Y	0	0,05
VAP	0	0,05
WEE	0	0,05

4.5.3 Staff

Hypothesis 2 has identified staff as another factor shaping the success rates of initiatives. The variable has been operationalised to include the number of staff, volunteers and part-time personnel. Similar to the variable funding, big differences can be observed between the case with the highest number of personnel and the case with the second highest number. In the survey, ONE declared to have received support from 511 people followed by UBI with 110 volunteers. To give credit to this strong difference, the crossover point for full inclusion into the set of ECIs with high numbers of staff was set to the middle point between the two cases (311). All cases with below average distances from the maximum are considered to be out of the set of ECIs with high numbers of staff. Therefore, the point of ambiguity has been set to 21, which is the difference between the maximum number of staff and the average distance from this maximum. The cut-off point for exclusion from the set is based on the legal requirement for ECI registration which indicates that in order to be able to launch an ECI in

the first place, organisers have to form and provide the details of a citizens' committee of at least 7 people. Thus, the point of exclusion from the set of "high number of staff" is set to 7 so that it includes all ECIs below this threshold. As a result, the point of full exclusion from the set of ECIs with high numbers of staff is marked by the case DEC as this is the first case with fewer employees than the number of people required at the registration of an ECI. Any ECI with less than 7 supporting members can be considered not to have made full use of the potential of the citizens' committee and is thus not included in the set of ECIs that had substantial numbers of human resources.

Table 10 Calibration of condition STAFF (HR)

ECI	Number of staff	Membership degree for STAFF
ONE	511	0,99
UBI	110	0,71
WEE	63	0,61
FRA	40	0,55
ECO	39	0,55
MP	17	0,3
VAP	17	0,3
T4Y	8	0,06
COW	7	0,05
DEC	6	0,04
30K	5	0,03
FRO	4,5	0,03
LMV	4	0,03
A4G	2	0,02
R2W	2	0,02
TAR	2	0,02

4.5.4 Socio-organisational resources

The theoretical chapter has identified socio-organisational resources as a key resource for successful signature collection campaigns. In the previous chapter, socio-organisational ties of an ECI have been operationalised as its number of partner organisations. Such partner organisations can provide the infrastructure, expertise, membership base and other forms of support necessary to conduct a signature collection campaign. Therefore, higher numbers of partner organisations are expected to result in higher numbers of signatures. Within the variable

partner organisations – similar to funding and staff – the distribution of values is dominated by a clear frontrunner. R2W, with 208 partners, has more than twice as many partner organisations than the ECI with the second largest number for this variable (ECO, 95 partner organisations). The cut-off point for full inclusion in the set of ECIs with a high number of partner organisations has therefore been set to the middle point between the two cases (152). The point of ambiguity for inclusion has been set to 20, which is the middle point between the cases ONE with 28 partners and COW with a network of 12 supporting organisations. ONE was considered to be the last member in the set of ECIs with high numbers of partner organisations because it is known to have been based on a big network of national organisations affiliated with the Catholic Church. Thus, the number of 28 represents a network of partner organisations of substantial size. All initiatives below this cut-off point are defined as not disposing of a substantial number of partners and have above average distances from the maximum value. The point of full exclusion from the set was put to 2 because having less than two partner organisations was not considered a network. LMV with 4 partners is the last ECI in the set over this threshold, making TAR, DEC and T4Y full non-members of the set with one or no partners.

Table 11 Calibration of condition PARTNER_ORGANISATIONS (PO)

ECI	Number of partner organisations	Membership degree for PARTNER_ORGANISATIONS
R2W	208	0,99
ECO	95	0,84
30K	87	0,82
FRA	65	0,73
UBI	61	0,71
ONE	28	0,54
A4G	28	0,54
COW	12	0,21
FRO	12	0,21
WEE	11	0,19
MP	8	0,12
VAP	5	0,08
LMV	4	0,07
TAR	1	0,04
DEC	0	0,04
T4Y	0	0,04

4.5.5 Publicity activities

Another important factor for signature collection success identified from the literature is the amount of publicity activities that organisers conduct during the time of their signature collection campaign in order to receive public attention. Similar to the other variables presented so far, the range of the number of publicity activities conducted by each ECI varies to a great extent, from 1612 self-reported activities for 30K to 40 in the case of COW. The three ECIs with the largest values close to each other are 30K and ONE. The cut-off for full inclusion in the set has been defined using the middle point between the value for the last ECI in the top two (ONE) and TAR, which is 1272. The point of ambiguity is marked by the middle point between R2W and WEE (582). R2W was considered to be part of the set of ECIs with high numbers of publicity activities, because it is known to have conducted vast publicity activities in order to achieve a signature collection outcome of over one million. On the website of R2W, a regularly updated list of promotional activities conducted by national partners from different countries is provided, where numerous events even took place on the same day. The point of full exclusion is set to 104 which is the middle point between VAP and COW. The reason why COW is considered to be completely out of the set of ECIs with high numbers of publicity activities is that the initiative's organisers withdrew it after only two months of campaigning and therefore have had substantially less time to organise promotional events.

Table 12 Calibration of condition PUBLICITY_ACTIVITIES (PU)

ECI	Number of publicity activities	Membership degree for PUBLICITY_ACTIVITIES
30K	1612	0,99
ONE	1556	0,98
TAR	988	0,85
ECO	932	0,82
MP	920	0,81
A4G	898	0,79
DEC	796	0,71
T4Y	762	0,68
R2W	661	0,58
WEE	503	0,38
FRA	412	0,26
FRO	292	0,14
UBI	238	0,11
LMV	237	0,11
VAP	168	0,07
COW	40	0,03

4.5.6 Mobilisation frames

A well-developed framing is considered to be influential for conducting a successful signature collection campaign. In order to gauge the completeness of an ECIs frames, a codebook was developed which formed the basis for a ranking of the ECIs. ECIs which provided all 22 core framing elements received a framing score of 1 which forms the basis for the fuzzification into membership scores. Parallel to the grouping observed within the previously introduced variable, three clear forerunners within this condition can be observed. 30K, R2W and ECO have all provided complete or close to complete frames. The cut-off point for full inclusion in the set of ECIs with a fully developed framing is thus set to the middle point between ECO, being the third member in the group, and its follower ONE. The point of ambiguity of inclusion in the set of ECIs with a complete framing was set to 0,66 which is the difference between the maximum value and the average deviation from it, putting all cases with below average deviations from the maximum out of the set of ECIs with high numbers of framing elements. The cut-off point for full exclusion from the set is 0,22 which represents the notional completeness score of a case with only one frame per element.

Table 13 Calibration of condition FRAMING (FR)

ECI	Framing Score	Membership degree for FRAMING
30K	1	0,98
R2W	1	0,98
ECO	0,98	0,98
ONE	0,84	0,89
COW	0,83	0,88
MP	0,78	0,8
UBI	0,76	0,76
LMV	0,68	0,56
VAP	0,68	0,56
A4G	0,63	0,45
WEE	0,59	0,38
FRO	0,56	0,34
FRA	0,52	0,28
DEC	0,51	0,27
TAR	0,45	0,2
T4Y	0,43	0,18

5 Analysis I: Outcome “successful signature collection campaign”

In this chapter, I perform the analysis of the data to test my hypothesis. First, I will conduct the QCA to identify solution paths connected to the outcome. At the end of this chapter, I provide a case study to shed light on the unfolding of conditions in the solution path for successful ECIs. In chapter 6, I perform the same sequence of steps (QCA and case study) to understand the factors connected to the failure of ECIs.

In QCA, the analysis of necessity has to be performed prior to all other steps as it cannot be inferred with full certainty from the truth table. This procedure is recommended to avoid two common problems: Hidden necessary conditions and false necessary conditions (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). First, the test of sufficiency can mask potential necessary conditions because they are falsely removed from a sufficient path. If a condition appears in all solution paths, the rule of parsimony dictates that logically redundant components are deleted in the minimisation procedure; however, this component may be necessary (Ragin, 2000). Joint coverage and consistency values for a sufficient solution containing several components can obscure a highly relevant necessary condition. Therefore, single conditions first need to be tested for high coverage and consistency to detect necessity. A second pitfall arises from false necessary conditions caused by inconsistent truth table rows. Even if the minimisation yields a solution in which one condition appears in each term, it does not automatically warrant the conclusion that it is necessary. A closer look at the truth table might reveal that the minimisation excluded inconsistent rows which did not contain the alleged necessary condition. Each of these reservations points to the broader need of treating necessity claims with care, especially in the face of limited diversity. Whenever a truth table is not fully specified, the absence of some cases makes it difficult to make general claims and what is more, the mere numerical presence of a necessary condition still requires the researcher to evaluate the plausibility of the conclusion (Ragin, 2000).

Bearing in mind these details, I am conducting an analysis of necessity for the occurrence and non-occurrence of the outcome in the following paragraphs. I will look at each condition and its absence separately and present an analysis of functional equivalents.

5.1 Necessary conditions

To find necessary conditions for the outcome, I have calculated the parameters of fit for the presence and absence of each condition (the absence of a condition is denoted by the tilde symbol “~”), which are presented in table 14. The absence of a condition is the inversion of its membership scores, which is calculated by subtracting the values from 1. Including the negated conditions into the analysis is important to detect patterns which might contradict the hypotheses. In a first step, the consistency values need to be checked because they are the precondition for any further analytical step. Consistency indicates how far the membership scores support the claim that a condition is necessary. The consistency score is calculated by taking the minimum membership values of all cases that are both part of the outcome and the condition and dividing this number by the membership values of all conditions displaying the outcome. An accepted standard for a consistent necessary condition is at least 0,9 (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). Table 14 reveals that all conditions and their negation, except for framing, have values below the standard consistency threshold. Thus, the majority of the conditions on their own do not qualify as necessary which confirms the notion of conjunctural causation. In other words, not one factor by itself is expected to be connected to the outcome but some kind of combination (or: conjunction) of factors. At this point, the hypotheses are supported insofar as no negated set contradicts the expectations from the theoretical chapter.

Table 14: Consistency and coverage of necessary conditions, outcome SIG

Condition	Consistency	Coverage
Funding	0,56	0,79
~Funding	0,58	0,25
Staff	0,59	0,73
~Staff	0,75	0,34
Partner organisations	0,62	0,53
~Partner organisations	0,65	0,35
Publicity activities	0,66	0,42
~Publicity activities	0,61	0,42
Framing	0,96	0,54
~Framing	0,40	0,33

The condition framing passes the consistency threshold of 0,9 with a very high value of 0,96 indicating its superset relationship with the outcome. In other words, 96% of the membership values of the outcome overlap with the condition. The XY plot (graph 6) for framing as a necessary condition confirms the necessity relationship: All five ECIs which were able to conduct a successful signature collection campaign also achieved high framing scores

(COW, MP, ONE, R2W, UBI). For necessity in fuzzy sets, most cases should fall below the diagonal connecting the lower left corner with the upper left corner of the plot as these cases have higher membership in the condition than in the outcome (which makes the former a superset of the latter). Two cases in the lower left corner are above the diagonal: WEE and TAR. While they lower the consistency score, they are not relevant to the statement of necessity as they are neither members of the condition nor the outcome. In other words, while for TAR and WEE, membership scores in the condition are below those in the outcome, this pertains to the absence of both sets. While cases in the lower right and left corner do not disconfirm necessity, they do not support it either.

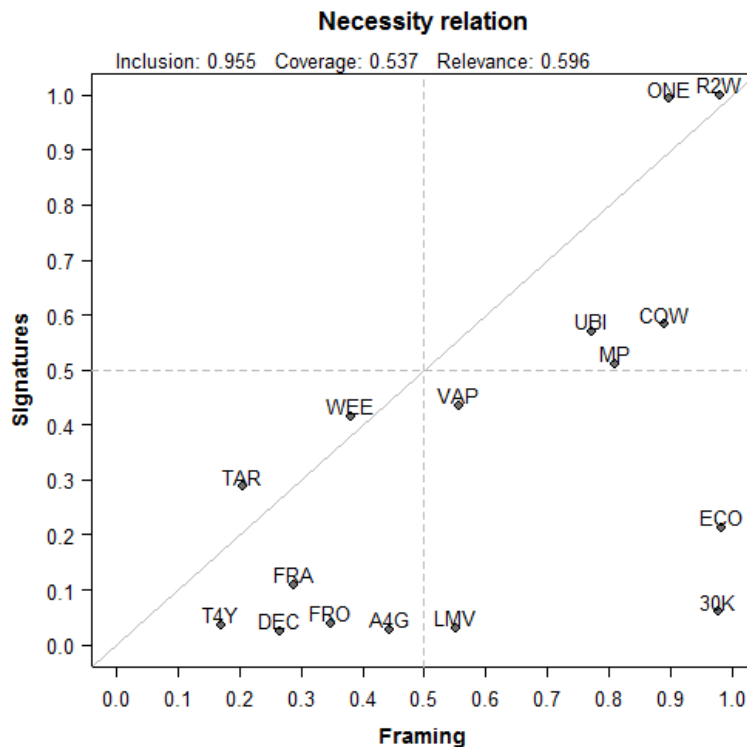
Because framing passes the consistency test, in a subsequent step, the calculation of coverage provides a tool for assessing the condition's empirical relevance. The formula behind coverage is a division of all cases' membership values in the outcome and the condition by the membership values in the condition alone; showing the size difference between the overlap of the outcome and the condition relative to the overall size of the condition set. This step is important because if membership in the condition is much bigger than membership in the outcome and the condition together, a necessary condition's relevance needs to be carefully examined. The software computes a coverage value of 0,54, which means that the condition appears without the outcome for 0,46 instances of the condition. In other words, the condition set is almost twice as big as the outcome. What does this value mean? Unlike consistency, there is no standard threshold for the coverage value and the indicator has to be assessed on a case by case basis. However, very small coverage numbers indicate a condition set that is so universal that it appears almost all the time and therefore, does not provide any explanatory value. Braumoeller and Goertz cite an example from Downs to demonstrate how some conditions are trivially necessary, such as the presence of gravity for the occurrence of war (Braumoeller and Goertz, 2000; Downs, 1989). If the condition appears very often without the outcome, the condition can be considered irrelevant; because it is close to a constant. The coverage value of 0,54 for the set of ECIs with overlapping high membership in the condition framing and the outcome set of initiatives with a successful signature collection campaign shows that framing is not a universal set – its coverage score is too big to consider it a trivial condition.

Because the coverage score for framing as a necessary condition for the outcome “successful signature collection campaign” is a summary of the relevant membership scores, necessity cannot be inferred from the numerical indicator alone. Its value for the membership

in the set “complete framing” (0,54) is connected to the distribution of the condition and indicates that – while it is not a universal condition – it is almost twice as big as the outcome set. The XY plot (see graph 6) gives a clearer picture of the distribution of the membership values to detect deviant cases which are not visible from the coverage score alone. Remember, for a truly necessary condition to appear, there should be no single case in the upper left corner of the plot because this would contradict the superset relationship between condition and outcome: Cases in the upper left corner of the plot represent instances of a successful signature collection without a fully developed framing. No such case is present in the plot, therefore, no contradictory evidence against a necessity relation exists.

Four cases in the lower right corner have put forward complete frames but did not collect a lot of signatures. Thus, in four out of nine cases, the condition is not connected to the outcome. Based on this, can framing be considered a necessary condition for signature collection success? The membership values of the four cases in the lower right corner can help to get a better understanding of the meaning of the coverage value. Inside the lower right of the plot, VAP and LMV are located very close to the vertical middle line. This indicates that they are very close to the 0,5 cut-off point for exclusion from the condition set. While these two cases display the condition, they only do so to a small extent - with the lowest membership values of all ECIs which are still above the cut-off for inclusion. What does this mean? VAP and LMV are still in the set of initiatives with a well-articulated framing, but they are located on the lower spectrum of the condition. In this respect, they can be considered less relevant for the strength of the necessary condition. In contrast to this, ECO and 30K (in the same corner of the plot) are on the other side of the spectrum. They are full members of the condition and have provided all framing elements identified in the codebook while at the same time they did not make it into the group of ECIs with above average numbers of signatures. Thus, these two ECIs are more problematic to the statement of necessity than VAP and LMV. The latter group lowers the coverage score less than the former. From a logical perspective, none of the four initiatives in the lower right corner of the plot contradict the necessity relationship because in their presence, the condition is still a superset of the outcome. However, it is surprising that ECO and 30K formulated all mobilisation framing elements and at the same time did not manage to collect a lot of signatures.

Graph 6 Analysis of necessity: Outcome SIG, condition FR



The most important cases for necessity are located in the upper right corner of the plot. The upper right corner of the graph contains five cases which are simultaneous members of the condition and the outcome set (COW, MP, ONE, R2W, UBI). Three cases are located below the diagonal (COW, MP and UBI), making them perfect instances of framing as a necessary condition for a successful signature collection campaign, because membership in the condition exceeds membership in the outcome. Thus, these three cases fully support the claim of necessity. Interestingly, within this group, R2W and ONE are slightly above the diagonal as their membership in the outcome set exceeds membership in the condition. While they are not deviant cases in kind, they appear to be deviant cases in degree. In this respect, they would weaken the relationship of necessity, albeit only to a very small extent. A closer look at the qualitative information behind the fuzzy scores helps qualify this statement: For example, R2W is among the ECI with the most signatures thus far, making it a full member of the outcome set. During the analysis of framing elements of ECIs, I have found that R2W has fulfilled all core framing tasks – thus I have assigned it the highest possible score across all dimensions, which makes it a full member of the set. However, the method of direct calibration resulted in a fuzzy score of 0,98, which means that even though numerically, R2W is not a full member of the set, it is so from a logical perspective. As a result, R2W does not logically contradict the statement of necessity. The case only weakens the parameters of fit from a numerical

perspective. The second ECI with a successful signature collection campaign located above the diagonal is ONE. Its fuzzy set membership in the condition framing is 0,89 while its score for the outcome is 1. It did not – unlike R2W – formulate a complete frame to argue its cause. Consequently, only ONE contradicts the statement of necessity in degree, albeit only to a small extent.

In addition to the consistency and coverage values, the relevance measure helps to get a better understanding of the quality of a potential necessary condition. The coverage measure does not account for the size difference between the absence and presence of a condition and therefore, some conditions could be falsely labelled necessary because skewedness is not detected. A skewed set is present if most membership values fall close to one or close to zero within the property space of the plot. In other words, if both the outcome and the condition are much bigger than the membership values for their absence, the problem of limited diversity arises. As a result of limited diversity, inferences about necessity become problematic. To account for possible false conclusions related to this type of distribution of the data, Schneider and Wagemann (2012) developed the “relevance of necessity” measure, which indicates the strength of a necessary condition relative to the absence of both the condition and the outcome. It is calculated by dividing the values for the non-occurrence of the condition by the minimum membership values of the non-outcome and the absence of the condition, with higher values indicating non-trivialness. For framing as a necessary condition, the software computes a relevance value of 0,60 which is bigger than its coverage score, which I have discussed in the previous paragraphs (0,54). Seven out of sixteen cases are neither members of the condition nor the outcome, indicating that membership values are fairly balanced. Thus, the condition and the outcome are not constants and membership is not skewed.

To conclude, the results points to the very important role of a fully developed mobilisation frame for a successful signature collection campaign. The data contains a clear pattern confirming the relationship between the two sets, which is supported by the parameters of fit. Only two out of seven cases with very high framing scores do not form part of the group of initiatives with high numbers of signatures. It appears that ECIs with a good argumentation - offering different perspectives of an issue - will resonate more with potential signees. There is no single case in the dataset that logically contradicts the necessity relationship between the condition and the outcome. Not one ECI without a high framing score managed to collect above average amounts of signatures. While the hypothesis needs to be tested on more ECIs to establish the necessity claim with fuller certainty, my data shows a strong overlap between the

condition and the outcome. The findings show that ECIs which manage to convince signees through multi-faceted argumentation can conduct a successful signature collection campaign, irrespective of their level of resource endowment. This in turn supports the democratic strength of the ECI as an instrument: ECIs do not have to be strong on resources in order to be successful. In fact, a good argumentative strategy by itself is a predictor of the outcome. Thus, also ECIs that are not affluent can be successful in terms of signature collection if they manage to convince potential signees with a good argumentation that does not miss out any logical steps. This means that also new interest groups and activists who are not embedded within a big network of partner organisations, with staff, money and many public events can collect above-average numbers of signatures.

After pointing out the necessary role of framing for ECI signature collection success, I will now turn to the role of the resource-related conditions. The data shows that no resource by itself was necessary for the outcome, which is surprising given that there has been wide criticism about how conducting an ECI campaign and collecting over one million statements of support exceeds the financial abilities of organisers which makes the ECI not an instrument for citizens but for interest groups. In table 14, no condition or its absence (other than the presence of framing) surpasses the consistency threshold for necessity of 0,9. This leads me to believe that it might not be one resource in particular that is crucial for signature collection success, but that one resource can compensate for the lack of another if they are combined. The idea that resources need to be combined because no single condition within this group affects the outcome by itself is connected to the concept of conjunctural causation. It is theoretically possible that a combination of resources will lead to a successful signature collection. In QCA, such hypotheses can be tested by joining single conditions if they are considered functional equivalents. In this procedure, two or more sets are combined through the logical OR operator into a new set by adding the respective membership values. Functional equivalents are present if conditions differ according to the context but actually represent the same overarching theoretical concept (Adcock and Collier, 2001), which is the case for the different types of resources of ECIs. Such an overarching concept indicates that the single conditions are connected and could be replaced by one another or unfold their effect in combination with their equivalents. Whenever conditions are joined into a new larger one, the individual parts are called SUIN conditions. A SUIN condition is defined as “a single condition, which is unnecessary part of a logical OR combination that, in turn, is insufficient, but necessary for the outcome. Any statement of necessity that includes at least one logical AND and one logical

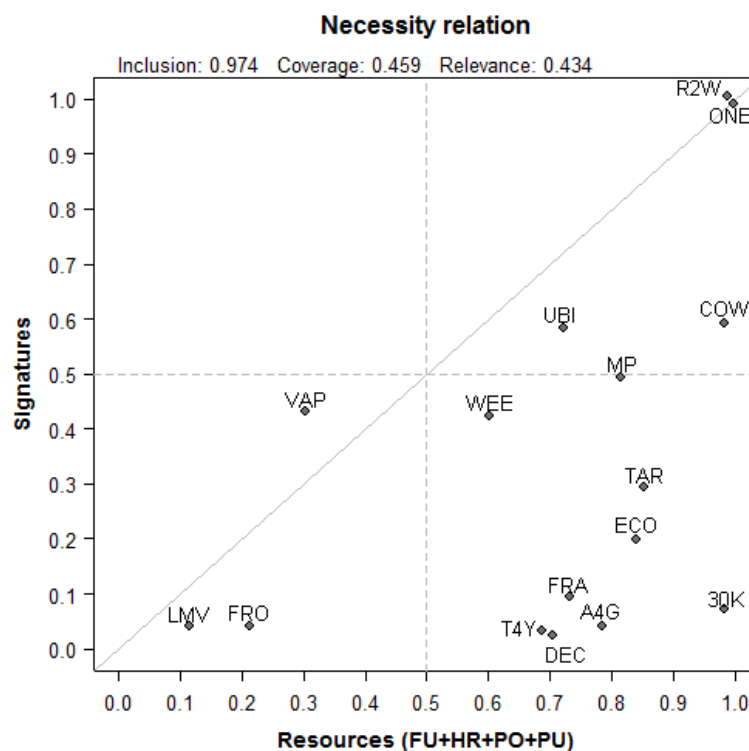
OR operator contains at least one SUIN condition” (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). The procedure of joining single sets into one overarching concept is common in many social science research works. Mahoney, et al. (2009) show SUIN conditions in the democratic peace literature: For example, while repression and fraudulent elections by themselves do not automatically lead to war, they form part of the overarching concept of nondemocracy which has been found to be necessary for war to occur. In this case, repression and fraudulent elections are SUIN conditions.

Coming back to SUIN conditions for ECI success: In the theoretical part, I hypothesise that there are two explanations for an effective signature collection campaign: resources and a fully developed mobilisation frame. Based on the literature on social movements and EU interest groups, I have argued that resources can be operationalised in different ways and that collective actors such as ECIs need multiple assets such as staff, funding, partner organisations and publicity strategies for their goal attainment. In addition, the relevant literature finds that money and its exchange goods, as well as immaterial resources such as networks, staff and publicity are closely connected. I thus define funding, staff, partner organisations and publicity activities of ECIs as functional equivalents, which means that I consider them to be part of the higher-order concept “ECI resources”. Therefore, I have joined them into one condition by using the logical OR operator, which creates a bigger set from the single conditions by adding the membership values. Graph 7 displays the membership values of the cases for the set of all ECI resources as a necessary condition for the outcome. A first glance at the plot reveals that there is no contradictory evidence against the superset relationship: no single case falls into the upper left corner. The consistency value is very high (0,97), which is a typical result for joined conditions: because four sets have been combined, it is easier to create a superset. A consistency score of 0,97 indicates that almost the entire outcome overlaps with the condition. In contrast to the values for framing as a necessary condition, the coverage value for the set of all resources is lower (0,46 for the union of all resources opposed to 0,54 for framing by itself). The coverage value of 0,46 for the union of resources reflects how it is not a trivial condition because eight out of thirteen cases display condition membership without the outcome; the condition can hardly be considered a universal set. However, the relevance measure paints a different picture. For the relevance of the union of conditions, the value of 0,43 for the union is also lower than for framing (0,60). It appears to be similar to the coverage value but the plot reveals that only three cases are not part of the condition. In other words, only three initiatives did not have above average membership scores in at least one of the resource sets. Thus, the

condition set is skewed in favour of high membership, which makes it a weaker predictor of a successful signature collection campaign than the framing score. Resources are a superset of the outcome but the plot also shows that eight out of thirteen initiatives could not achieve above average amounts of signatures. A closer look at the membership scores of the five successful ECIs in the union condition reveals that within this group, the most successful ECIs also had most resources at their disposal.

To conclude, while no resource in isolation leads to a successful signature collection campaign, the presence of all resources combined represents a necessary condition for success which supports the idea that they are interchangeable. In other words, the results for the test of necessity corroborate all my hypotheses: Both framing and the union of resources are predictors of ECI success. However, the spread of the data also shows that there are disparities between the ECIs. Overall, more initiatives failed than succeeded despite above-average membership scores in one of the resource conditions. In addition, resources are not spread equally as the most successful ECIs were also among the cases with the highest membership across most resource sets.

Graph 7 Analysis of necessity: Outcome SIG, condition higher order concept resources (FU+HR+PO+PU)



5.2 Sufficient conditions

After having found in the previous chapter that framing and the conjunction of resources are individually and combined necessary conditions for the outcome, sufficiency is analysed in the following sections. I have explained in more detail in the previous chapter that the analysis of necessity precedes the assessment of sufficiency when applying QCA as a method, the reason being that the truth table algorithm used for identifying sufficient conditions can mask necessary conditions.

5.2.1 *Truth table analysis*

In the theoretical chapter, I have identified five causal conditions that are connected to the outcome “successful signature collection campaign”. When do I consider a signature collection campaign to be successful? I define success in terms of procedural requirement and of the spread of the data. Any initiative that has collected (or: mobilised) over one million or above average numbers of people is in the group of successful ECIs. As little is known about the actual impact of ECIs as of yet, the number of signatures is the best proxy for the potential political influence of initiatives in the future because higher numbers of supporters signal public preferences to the Commission more strongly. Which causal conditions are connected to a successful signature collection campaign? The relevant literature suggests that positive mobilisation outcomes are connected to a) the availability of resources and b) a well-articulated framing. Based on these insights, I have operationalised the resources of an ECI through a more fine-grained categorisation into four groups: financial resources, staff, partner organisations and cultural resources (publicity activities). To account for the topics addressed by the different initiatives, the condition “framing” captures their argumentative breadth. Based on these five conditions, there are $2^5=32$ combinations of conditions or “ideal types”. In other words, the truth table consists of 32 potential rows. Using the dataset which I have created, the software assigns each case to the row which it fits best based on the case’s minimum membership score across the combination of conditions (which has to be higher than 0,5 to count as member of the row). A few cases correspond to the same ideal type: LMV and VAP are member of the

same row and so are the three cases DEC, TAR and T4Y. Thus, 13 of the causal combinations are supported through empirical evidence.¹⁸

After each case has been assigned to a truth table row, consistency is assessed in order to determine whether the row is sufficient or not. Similar to consistency of necessary conditions, consistency for sufficient conditions is an indicator of the degree of the subset relation. In other words, the consistency score gives information about how much the empirical information supports the claim that a subset relation is present (“How much do the condition and the outcome overlap?” Thus, a perfect subset relation would be indicated by a score of 1). The more cases deviate from the subset relation the smaller consistency becomes. For fuzzy sets, consistency is calculated by dividing the minimum membership values of all cases displaying the outcome and the condition by the membership values of all cases displaying the outcome. Consistency values below 0.5 indicate that more than half of the empirical information contradicts a subset relation. In the methodological QCA literature, consistency is sometimes also referred to as “inclusion” or “consistency inclusion” (in table 15, the abbreviation “incl” has been used) because the term refers to the degree to which the condition is included in the outcome. In the truth table, the causal combinations are ranked from highest to lowest inclusion score. As the number of cases displaying the outcome is rather small and given the distribution of raw consistency in the truth table, I have chosen a consistency cut-off of 0.7. This means that if 70% of the membership values in the condition are enclosed within the outcome set, I consider a causal recipe to be sufficient for the outcome. Each row with a consistency value above the threshold is assigned the output value 1 indicating that it can be considered sufficient. In addition, the software reports the PRI score which is a more conservative consistency value as it corrects the inclusion score for simultaneous subset relations. Thus, while higher PRI scores support the claim that a subset relation is present, lower values indicate that the respective truth table row is also a subset of the non-occurrence of the outcome – warranting a closer look to avoid incorrect inferences.

¹⁸ I have obtained full information on 16 cases, which means that the truth table automatically contains logical remainders. For fuzzy sets, a remainder row is defined as causal combination that is not supported by empirical evidence because no single case has membership of higher than 0.5 in it. Such limited diversity is a common problem in the social sciences: Even if a combination of conditions is logically plausible, there is not always enough empirical evidence to cover all causal recipes Schneider, C.Q. and Wagemann, C. (2012) *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences: a guide to qualitative comparative analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)..

Table 15 Truth table for the analysis of sufficiency, outcome SIG

Funding	Staff	Partner Organisations	Publicity Activities	Framing	Output value	No. of cases	Incl.	PRI	Cases
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0,983	0,963	ONE
0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0,822	0,364	UBI
0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0,792	0,053	WEE
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0,785	0,618	R2W
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0,737	0,293	COW
0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0,699	0,238	ECO
0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0,681	0,052	FRA
0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0,544	0,011	MP
0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0,534	0,008	LMV, VAP
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0,520	0,020	A4G
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,476	0,007	FRO
0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0,429	0,096	30K
0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0,348	0,005	DEC, TAR, T4Y

The software computed inclusion scores above 0,7 for the first five rows in the truth table, containing the cases ONE, UBI, WEE, R2W and COW. While the consistency values are based on all cases in the dataset, only those initiatives that have membership above 0,5 in the pathway are included in the column “cases”. Every initiative that has conducted a successful signature collection campaign is included in a causal combination that is considered to be sufficient for the outcome. Within the five rows which have surpassed the inclusion cut-off, three groups can be distinguished. Group one includes the two most successful ECIs – Right2Water (R2W) and One of Us (ONE): their high consistency is corroborated by matching high PRI scores. Based on this, the causal paths represented by the two cases can be considered sufficient for the occurrence of a successful signature collection. Within the second group, the cases UBI and COW have received high consistency scores but do not share equally high PRI scores. Both UBI and COW are empirical manifestations of the outcome and the solution. They have membership greater than 0,5 in the causal recipe and are also ECIs that have collected above average numbers of signatures. The reason why the PRI scores for the two paths are low is that the conditions are numerical subsets of the presence and the absence of the outcome. However, the cases are in the set of ECIs with a successful signature collection and thus the paths cannot be considered sufficient for the non-outcome. While being sufficient for the

outcome, they represent inconsistencies in degree – I will explain this situation in more detail during the minimisation procedure which I conduct at the end of this chapter. Based on this, I still consider the two paths sufficient for the outcome. The third causal path contains one case, namely the citizens’ initiative “Weed like to talk” (WEE). While the path’s consistency is high (0,792), the PRI score of 0,05 indicates that the row has a strong overlap with the non-outcome. The reason why this combination reached a consistency value above the cut-off is connected to the overall membership scores across cases. However, only WEE holds a membership higher than 0,5 in the path. But WEE’s membership in the condition is lower than 0,5 which makes it a true logical contradiction. In other words, while WEE is a good empirical instance of the path, it is not a member of the outcome. Therefore, the causal recipe can be dismissed as sufficient for the outcome. Beyond WEE, no empirical evidence supporting the path exists. Thus, I cannot include the path in the minimisation procedure. The remaining nine rows which did not pass the consistency test do not contain cases which are instances of the outcome and as a result also have very low PRI scores.

The truth table reveals four solution paths which are sufficient for the outcome, each of which is represented by one case. Expressed in terms of Boolean algebra – which lies at the core of set logic, the solution looks like this:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{(a) } FU*HR*PO*PU*FR + \\
 & \text{(b) } \sim FU*HR*PO*\sim PU*FR + \\
 & \text{(c) } FU*\sim HR*PO*PU*FR + \\
 & \text{(d) } FU*\sim HR*\sim PO*\sim PU*FR \\
 & \rightarrow SIG
 \end{aligned}$$

This expression indicates that all of these causal paths are subsets of the outcome. The four paths are called conjunctions or unions and have been joined using the “*”-operator which is the symbol for a Boolean multiplication: for example, in path (a), each single condition has to be present which means that a case has to have a membership value of at least above 0,5 in each set in order to be considered member of the path. The overall membership in the path is then calculated by using the minimum value across all five components (minimum rule). Each conjunction forming part of this solution is also called “primitive expression”, as no simplifying operations on the term have been performed yet. The four unions (conjunctions) have been combined using the “+”-symbol which is a logical operator indicating that they are logical alternatives which are part of a disjunction. What does this mean? In other words, if a

case is either part of condition (a), (b), (c) or (d), this will be sufficient for the outcome. All four rows represent equifinal solutions. A disjunction refers to different parts of a solution which can be substituted. A case's membership in the entire solution term is based on its maximum value in either of the parts (maximum rule), which is also referred to as Boolean addition – thus, the “+”-symbol is used. This complex expression is a disjunction composed of four conjunctions.

However, this long and complex statement expressing that each causal recipe leading to a successful signature collection is sufficient for the outcome is neither surprising nor does it give any particular analytical insight. Instead, it would be much more interesting to isolate particular conditions *across* cases that produce the outcome as this would yield much more universal findings. In other words, can the solution term be expressed more simply? Luckily, the methodological toolkit of QCA can help with this. The method foresees a condensation of the causal paths into a more parsimonious solution term through logical minimisation – which is a procedure using the basic rules of Boolean algebra (for more detailed information on the principles of this logic, see Ragin (1987)).

5.2.2 *Conservative solution*

The first minimisation approach produces the “conservative” solution because it does not make any assumptions about cases that are not manifest in the data (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). The conservative solution is solely based on the empirical information contained in the truth table. How is the primitive expression consisting of the four parts (a), (b), (c) and (d) minimised? According to the rules of Boolean algebra, if two expressions are identical except for one condition, then this particular condition can be dropped to summarise the two expressions (Ragin, 1987). If you take a look at row (a) and (c), you might notice that they are almost identical except for the condition HR. Row (a) contains the condition while row (c) does not. In fact, the two rows represent the two most successful ECIs in the dataset: One of us (a) and Right2Water (c). While ONE has high membership in each condition and the outcome set, R2W only differs in as much as the initiative did not have substantial numbers of staff. Considering the fact that both initiatives achieved similar outcomes with over 1,6 million (R2W) and 1,7 million (ONE) signatures, it appears that staff can be considered to have had a marginal effect in comparison to the other conditions. Thus, the rows can be combined into $FU * PO * PU * FR$ by dropping HR and $*\sim HR$ from the respective expression. The rows (b) and

(d) differ in more than one condition and cannot be reduced. Based on this I arrive at the conservative solution consisting of three solution paths (A), (B) and (C) (see table 16).

Table 16 Analysis of sufficient conditions (conservative solution), outcome SIG

	(A)FU*PO* PU*FR	(B)~FU*HR*PO* ~PU*FR	(C)FU*~HR* ~PO*~PU*FR
Consistency	0,837	0,822	0,737
PRI	0,757	0,364	0,293
Raw coverage	0,347	0,276	0,237
Unique coverage	0,215	0,158	0,107
Cases covered	Right2Water, One of Us	Unconditional Basic Income	Happy Cows

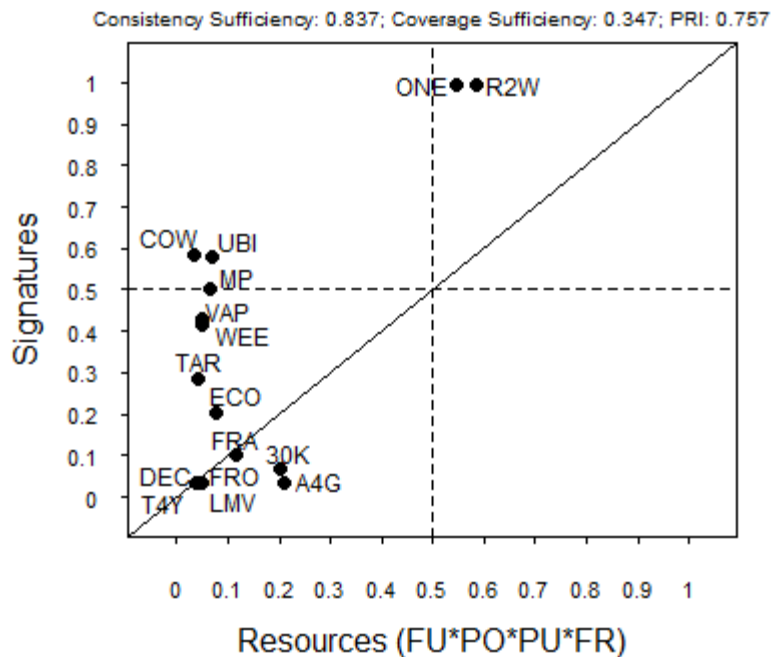
Notes: inclusion of combined solution: 0,787; PRI of combined solution: 0,621; combined solution coverage: 0,613

Across the three components of the solution, the consistency values are high. Solution (A) – containing the cases R2W and ONE – displays a corresponding PRI score of 0,76 which indicates the path's sufficient connection to the outcome. The values for raw and unique consistency are rather low for all components, which is due to the small sample size and they should therefore not be over-interpreted. Raw coverage measures the explanatory strength of a single path across all cases while unique coverage is computed for the respective single row only. Thus, unique coverage is always lower than raw coverage.

Path (A) is visualised in graph 8: The minimum membership scores of all cases in the condition FU*PO*PU*FR in the x-axis are plotted against the membership scores in the outcome set (y-axis). The graph neatly demonstrates that the cases R2W and ONE are perfect instances of the subset relation as they are located above the diagonal in the upper right corner. In other words, they are “typical cases” or “onliers” for the solution path (Schneider and Rohlfing, 2013) Moving clockwise, the lower right corner is void of cases, which means that no contradictory evidence exists: as the condition is a perfect subset of the outcome, no instance of the solution path should exist without the outcome – which is the case. The lower left corner contains the majority of cases which are not relevant to the analysis of the outcome as they are not members of the respective set. In the upper left corner, two cases remain unexplained:

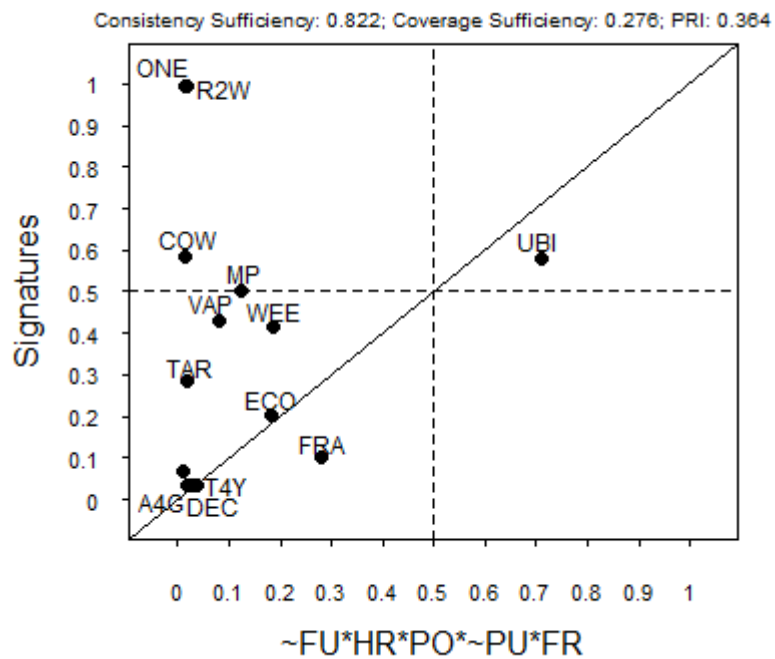
COW and UBI. They are cases with above average numbers of signatures, however they do not share membership in path (A).

Graph 8 Conservative solution path A, outcome SIG

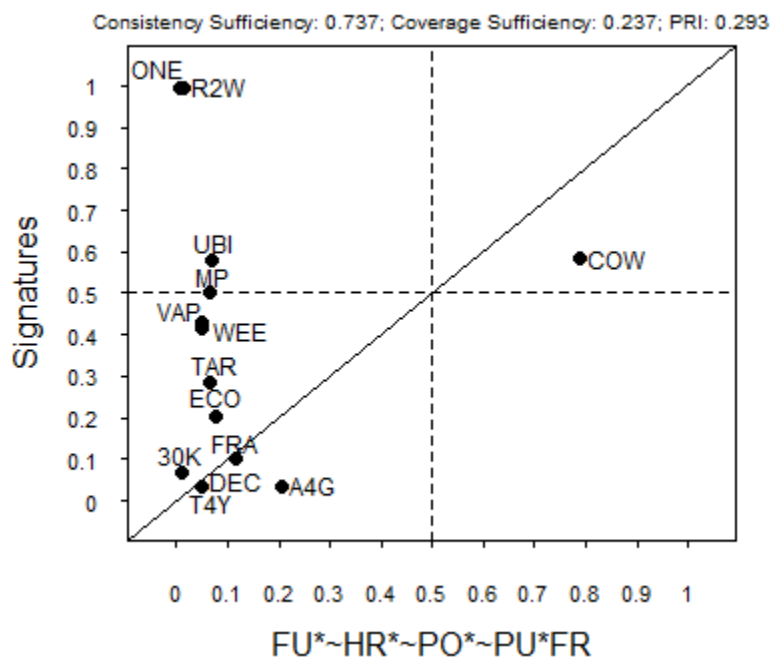


Path (B) and (C) have not been covered by solution (A) and thus I now turn to a separate interpretation of the two. As I have mentioned in the discussion of the truth table, the PRI scores for the two paths are low. This circumstance is caused by their inconsistency in degree. Graphs 9 and 10 help to get a clearer picture of what this means: while the two cases covered by these paths (COW and UBI) do not contradict the sufficiency claim fully (they are still members of the condition), they are not capturing a perfect subset relation. As they are located below the diagonal, their membership in the outcome is lower than in the condition set.

Graph 9 Conservative solution path B, outcome SIG



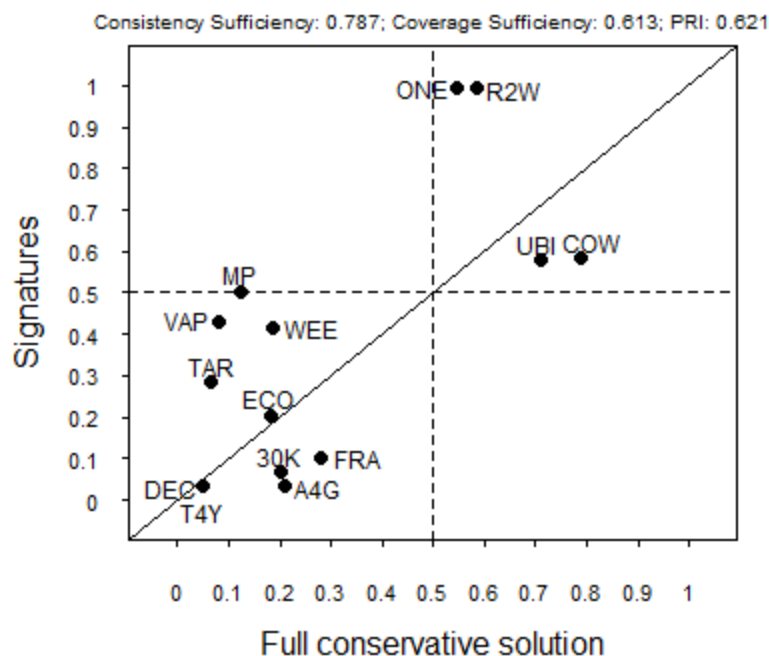
Graph 10 Conservative solution path C, outcome SIG



The entire expression containing path (A), (B) and (C) as conjunction is visualised in graph 11. Because the components have been summarised, no instance of the outcome remains unexplained. The location of the cases representing the rows of the solution remain the same in comparison to the plots for the separate components. Overall, the individual parts of the

conservative solution corroborate the findings for necessary conditions and help to specify their respective roles for the outcome. It is very interesting to note that framing is present in each part of the solution while the conditions for the different resources are present to varying extents. Funding and partner organisations are part of two out of three unions while staff and publicity activities are present just once. Thus, while a union of all resources was a necessary condition for the outcome, funding and partner organisations appear to be more relevant than other resources in the analysis of sufficiency. Despite the minimisation procedure, the conservative solution remains still somewhat complex and can be further minimised by using directional expectations in the following paragraphs.

Graph 11 Full conservative solution path, outcome SIG



5.2.3 Intermediate Solution

The conservative solution has produced three equifinal unions of conditions that are connected to the outcome. However, the path still appears to be more complex than necessary and is rather an expression of the cases in the dataset than a simplification of the evidence. In QCA, solutions differ in terms of their degree of complexity and the goal is to arrive at a more parsimonious expression. If there are strong theoretical reasons to believe that certain conditions contribute to the outcome, the minimisation procedure can be enhanced by using directional expectations on logical remainders; revealing a new and more parsimonious solution term. The simplified solution never contradicts the empirical evidence and by making such assumptions on

remainder rows, the so-called “intermediate solution term” is produced (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012). Directional expectations help to eliminate conditions from the conservative solution to arrive at a shorter expression. I have strong theoretical reasons to expect that all conditions in their presence contribute to a successful signature collection campaign. Based on this, the software produces the two-fold intermediate solution term which is a superset of the conservative solution:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{(A.i.) } FU*FR + \\ & \text{(B.i.) } HR*PO \sim PU*FR \\ & \rightarrow \text{SIG} \end{aligned}$$

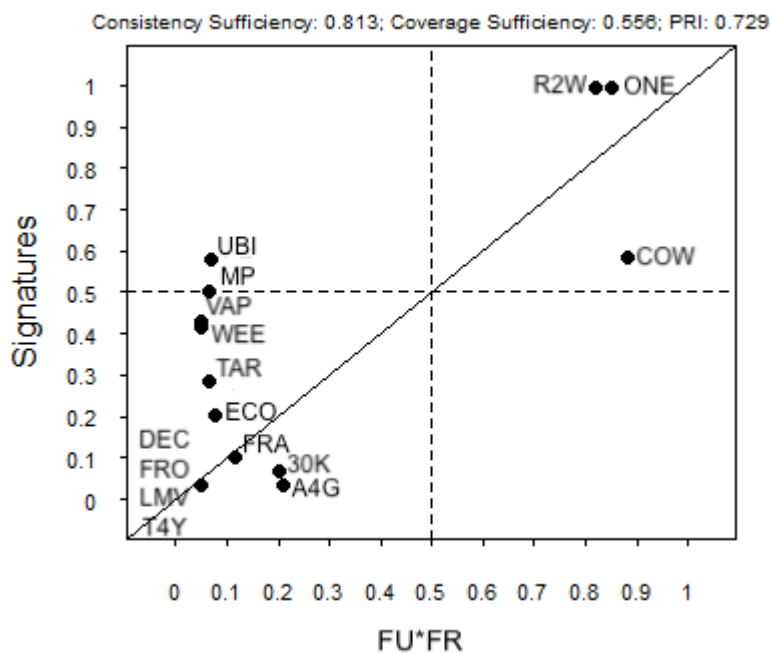
Part (A.i.) of the solution is based on the terms (A) and (C) of the conservative solution. Because none of the conditions in their absence are expected to have any impact on the outcome, they are eliminated altogether from this component of the solution term. The parameters of fit for the new solution component (please take a look at table 17) are similar to those for the two conservative solution components. As two terms have been summarised for solution (A.i.), the unique and raw coverage values have increased. For part (B.i.), the expression was simplified by eliminating $\sim FU$, as this contradicts the evidence from the complementary expression. For this new solution part, the parameters of fit remain roughly the same as well. For the overall solution term composed of (A.i.) and (B.i.), the parameters of fit have increased, indicating that the expression is a better fit for the data than the more complex solution.

Table 17 Analysis of sufficient conditions (intermediate solution with directional expectations 1,1,1,1), outcome SIG

	(A.i.) FU*FR	(B.i.) HR*PO ~PU*FR
Consistency	0,813	0,825
PRI	0,729	0,364
Raw coverage	0,556	0,283
Unique coverage	0,432	0,158
Cases covered	Happy Cows, Right2Water, One of Us	Unconditional Basic Income

Notes: inclusion of combined solution: 0,795; PRI of combined solution: 0,670; combined solution coverage: 0,714

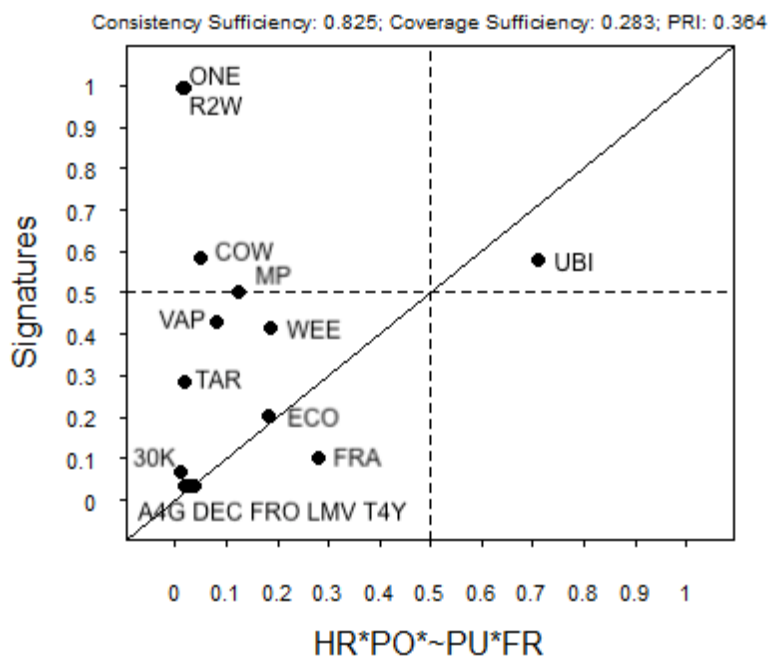
Graph 12 Intermediate solution path A.i, outcome SIG



Graph 12 displays the membership of the cases in solution (A.i.). As it is a combination of the conservative solution components (A) and (C), the location of all cases except for COW remains the same. The case COW moves to the upper right corner of the plot, confirming the sufficiency relationship between the condition and the outcome. UBI, however, remains unexplained by the path which makes it a different class of case. It is very interesting to note

that this set confirms the findings from the analysis of necessity. Framing by itself has been a necessary condition for success and is present in both (A.i.) and (B.i.) which confirms its important role for signature collection campaigns. While in the analysis of necessity, funding was a sufficient but unnecessary component of an insufficient but necessary expression (“SUIN condition”), in the analysis of sufficiency, it is an INUS condition (“insufficient but necessary part of a condition which is unnecessary but sufficient for the result”). The remaining conditions connected to resources have been dropped from the solution path and only funding remains, which points to its role as possible gateway resource – a concept which I will further explore in the process-tracing of the outlier cases for this path.

Graph 13 Intermediate solution path B.i, outcome SIG



Solution path (B.i.) (visualised in graph 13) contains one case: UBI. The distribution of cases and the parameters of fit are almost identical to the conservative solution (B) as most of its components have remained the same. Only the condition ~FU has been dropped during the minimisation procedure as it contradicts solution path A.i.. The absence of publicity activities (~PU) has remained inside the path. I have theoretical reason to not expect the absence of publicity activities to substantially contribute to the result, thus, I do not include it in the interpretation. While it is one characteristic of the case UBI, it contradicts the directional expectations. Framing is also a sufficient condition in this path which confirms its relevance for the outcome. The union of the two resources staff and partner organisations is also part of this sufficient path. This is very interesting given path (A.i.), where funding is the only

resource-related condition, warranting the interpretation that an overlap of the two other conditions staff and partner organisations is possibly a substitute for funding. I will further develop this argument during the in-depth case study in the ensuing subchapter.

To conclude, the minimisation procedure has supported the theoretical expectations for all conditions identified in the hypothesis chapter. What is more, the solution paths help to fine-tune the relationship between the conditions. Due to logical remainders, not all possible combinations of conditions could be included in the dataset. This issue was solved through an extended analysis including positive directional expectations for the remaining combinations of conditions. Interestingly, funding has been found to be only of limited importance as it was only present in one single path in the interim solution for sufficiency. While framing has been found to be a necessary condition for a successful signature collection campaign, two classes of successful cases appeared from the analysis of sufficiency. First, ECIs with high amounts of financial support and second, ECIs with a combination of above-average numbers of staff and partner organisations. I will further explore the relationship between the three sufficient conditions and the necessary condition framing in the ensuing case studies.

5.3 Case study: Right2Water

The analysis in the previous sections have revealed a number of solution paths connected to a successful signature collection campaign. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of conditions, I am performing a typical case study analysis in the ensuing sections.

So far, the necessity test, truth table analysis and minimisation procedure have revealed the explanatory power of the different conditions for the outcome. During the analysis of necessary conditions, the role of framing was of particular importance. In fact, framing is the only condition that was necessary for the outcome. For resources, the picture was less clear-cut. No particular resource in isolation from other factors was able to trigger a successful signature collection campaign. Instead, it appears that different types of resources function in a mutually substitutable fashion (functional equivalents) – confirming the findings of previous research. In other words, it appears from the analysis that whenever one resource is missing, other resources could possibly be used to compensate for this lack. Overall, the union of resources combined with framing was necessary for success. Throughout the truth table analysis and minimisation, two equifinal sufficient paths surfaced. On the one hand, an overlap

of funding and framing was sufficient for the outcome. On the other hand, the path HR*PO*FR completes the picture. For this path, the absence of publicity activities has been dropped from the solution as I have no theoretical reason to believe that it contributes to the outcome. The key role of argumentative strength is confirmed by the sufficiency analysis: It is interesting to note that framing is part of all solution paths, both necessary and sufficient. The appearance of different resources in the two sufficient paths confirms my expectations about their mutual substitutability which arose during the necessity analysis. While one sufficient path involves funding as the only resource, the second sufficient solution combines staff and partner organisations. While sharing the necessary condition framing, the two intermediate solution paths describe two different classes of ECIs: initiatives with financial resources as opposed to ECIs which were not affluent. This warrants a few questions which cannot be answered by QCA alone: Are staff and partner organisations substitutes for funding? How do these resources interact? And: How did framing influence the outcome, also in connection to the other conditions? These questions form the basis for a more in-depth analysis of the mechanisms underlying the two sufficient solutions paths.

The sufficient solution paths reveal patterns across cases but as I have mentioned above, a few open questions remain. For example, while in the necessity assessment, the different resources appear to be mutual substitutes, the findings cannot tell us which resources exactly can be interchanged and what their connection to framing is. The sufficient paths give a hint as to which resources might be interchangeable because the first path only contains funding and the second one combines staff and partner organisations. However, the exact role of the individual resources and their connection to framing remains unclear. In addition, the temporal sequence of the factors cannot be inferred by using fuzzy set QCA.

Case study analysis is a suitable strategy to tackle these types of open questions arising from cross-case approaches such as QCA. Elsewhere (Schneider and Rohlfing, 2013; Schneider and Wagemann, 2012), it has been recommended to complement findings from set-logical analyses with an in-depth assessment of a single case or multiple cases if needed and doable. Therein lies the added value of case study analysis in its different formats such as process tracing: In-depth studies help us to understand even better the complex unfolding of causes across time and space: This way, the type of causal relationship between the conditions in QCA can be identified, be it interactive causality or causal chain (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, p. 79ff). In their paper on complementary strategies for QCA, Schneider and Rohlfing formulate case selection principles for different types of analytical goals: While typical cases

can be used to shed light on the mechanisms underlying the causal chain, deviant cases help to identify omitted factors (ibid., p. 278). At this point it is worth mentioning that case study analyses are not the best method to provide generalisations beyond the investigated objects. However, this is not my main focus. Instead, I seek to support and shed light on the findings of the general patterns retrieved from the QCA through an additional case study. My goal is to examine the relationship between the conditions and to demonstrate the accuracy of the model I have developed.

As I have briefly mentioned above, typical cases render themselves particularly useful to an investigation of the underlying mechanisms between causal conditions. In relationships of necessity, typical cases are located in the upper right corner of the XY plot, below the diagonal. For sufficiency, typical cases are such that they are located above the diagonal in the upper right corner of graphs plotting the membership scores in the outcome against membership in the condition. R2W represents the most typical case of the solution paths both for necessity and sufficiency. For necessity, it is the most ideal typical representation of an ECI with both a complete framing and high levels of resources. For sufficiency, it combines very high membership in the path $FU*FR$ with membership in the outcome. In addition, the initiative R2W is of high social relevance. Right2Water is not only among the very first initiatives ever registered, it was also the first campaign to reach the threshold of one million signatures (even before the end of the signature collection period). What is more, it is among the ECIs that have received substantial institutional attention both by the Commission and the EP, which has produced a lot of documentation to draw from. Beyond its exemplary membership scores, all of these considerations make R2W an adequate and relevant case to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms of the conditions. I am disentangling the unfolding of the conditions and their relationship in the solution terms using documentation from different sources such as official documents, publications of the initiative itself, research reports as well as my own data collected during the survey and framing analysis. Before discussing the factors shaping the campaign of R2W, I commence with an overview of the key characteristics and achievements of the initiative to demonstrate the relevance of the case selected.

5.3.1 Background of Right2Water

Right2Water pursued the main goal of stopping the privatisation of public water services. The initiative was registered on 10 May 2012 under the official title “Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!”. Beyond the call not to subject water management and supply to internal market rules, organisers were calling upon the Commission to propose legislation guaranteeing the human right to water and sanitation in the member states. In addition, the Commission was asked to step up its efforts to achieve universal access to water worldwide. In a nutshell, organisers opposed the Commission’s market-based vision for water (van den Berge, et al., 2018). The initiative was mainly organised by the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and collected a total of 1659543 verified signatures. The self-reported number of signatures is 1884790 but member state authorities corrected the initially higher number for falsified statements of support. In addition, the certificates from France and Denmark were not included in the official number as they have been submitted after the deadline. More than 80% of the signatures were collected online (Berg and Głogowski, 2014), pointing to the central role of online campaigning for R2W.

The demands of R2W are embedded within the global context of the ongoing struggle around water (Bieler, 2017; Fattori, 2013) and the organisers of the initiative could draw from previous experience in campaigning for water issues (van den Berge, 2014). Already in the early 1990s, EPSU members campaigned against water privatisation and started building alliances with other organisations, which contributed to the creation of a UN resolution on water as a human right (Bieler, 2015). What is more, starting November 2006, people behind EPSU together with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) have been involved in the organisation of one of the pilot initiatives to test out the feasibility of the ECI instrument (Fischbach-Pyttel, 2017). Prompted by recurring pushes for the privatisation of water by the Commission during the early 2000s, EPSU and other unions first reflected on the possibility of launching an ECI in 2008 as part of their membership in the European Water Movement (Bieler, 2015). In the aftermath of the financial crisis, more institutional demands for a liberalisation of public services arose, especially towards Ireland, Greece and Portugal (Bieler, 2015). These pressures and the tremendous success of a referendum in Italy with 1.4 million signatures on the same issue was among one of the triggers for the decision to launch an ECI, as one of the ambassadors of Right2Water and organiser of the Italian referendum puts it: “Thanks to the space opened up following the successful 2011 referendum in Italy, the ECI was promoted and sponsored with considerable foresight and a huge organisational effort by

the European Federation of Public Service Unions” (Fattori, 2013). Fueled by these circumstances, it was in 2009, during one of their congresses that EPSU members officially decided to campaign against water privatisation using the European Citizens’ Initiative – three years before the official launch of the direct democratic tool.

After the preparatory phase, the signature collection campaign of Right2Water was off to a slow start as signature collection turned out more difficult than expected for a number of reasons. In the first weeks after the launch, campaigners did not reach signees who were not members of the movement and therefore new strategies for R2W had to be contemplated (van den Berge, et al., 2018). What is more, the online signature collection software provided by the Commission was suffering from unforeseen disruptions since April 2012. The glitches even compelled the launch of an ECI by a group of IT experts who requested a more user-friendly and better functioning online collection platform (under the name “central public online collection platform for the European Citizens’ Initiative”) (Anglmayer, 2015). Therefore, the Commission extended the deadline for signature collection by a few months for the first initiatives which had been affected by the glitches. Due to the technical difficulties, R2W was able to start collecting signatures online four months after its actual launch – it was the first initiative able to implement the online collection software as it was the only campaign employing a private contractor (Susha and Grönlund, 2014). One of the main organisers of the water campaign, Jerry van den Berge, estimated that the software flaws cost the initiative a few thousand signatures (van den Berge, 2014). The requirements to provide personal data when signing an initiative differ in each member state and many people refrained from giving their support to R2W when they were asked to reveal such information. In relation to this, van den Berge also states that “The personal identity number requirement was a big obstacle. In fact, it was the biggest barrier to collecting signatures in France, Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. Without this requirement, the number of signatures in these countries could have been at least doubled” (van den Berge, 2014). The people behind R2W judged the novelty of the citizens’ initiative as both an asset and a liability: While receiving media attention for being among the first initiatives, activists were also struggling to collect signatures as they had to keep explaining to signees how the instrument works (ibid.). In other words, R2W could have collected more signatures if not impeded by these obstacles.

5.3.2 *Assessing the institutional response to Right2Water*

After initial struggles, signatures skyrocketed in early 2013 and organisers collected the required one million signatures a few months before the end of their campaigning period (Berg and Głogowski, 2014). The public pressure created by the initiative's momentum compelled Commissioner Michel Barnier – who was responsible for the Internal Market at the time – to issue a statement on 21 June 2013, months before the official end of the signature collection period. In his open letter, the Commissioner pledges that privatisation of water services was never the intention of the directive and that water will be excluded from the concessions directive¹⁹. As a result of the extended deadline, the campaigners of the water initiative finished their signature collection on 9 September 2013 and handed the signatures to the Commission on 20 December 2013, after the responsible authorities in the respective member states had verified the signatures. As part of the official procedure, representatives of the campaign met with Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič on 17 February 2014 and participated in a public hearing at the EP in order to elaborate on their requests.

In its response to the successful ECI Right2Water from 19 March 2014²⁰, the Commission acknowledges the link between water and the right to life, human dignity as well as an adequate standard of living. In the document, the Commission first summarises previous EU action related to water and EU contributions to the improvement of the quality of water and access to water. However, while the institution underlines that the provision of water services is excluded from EU rules on public procurement, the Commission also states that the legislation of concessions in the water sector are a matter of national sovereignty. The decision how to provide water and sanitation services (publicly or by private companies) is not to be made by European institution but falls in the hands of national authorities. The Commission explicitly mentions its neutrality in terms of national, regional and local decisions for water provision and invites member states to act in accordance with the citizens' initiative. The institution emphasises the role of transparency in the water sector in the area of data management of urban wastewater and drinking water as well as in terms of a more transparent dialogue between stakeholders. At the same time, the Commission also proposes other areas of action for itself: in response to R2W, it plans to reinforce the implementation of EU water quality legislation on the national level, launch public consultations on the implementation of

¹⁹ Directive 2014/23/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the award of concession contracts.

²⁰ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-277_en.htm

the Drinking Water Directive, and cooperate with existing initiatives to provide a wider set of benchmarks for water services and explore the idea of benchmarking water quality. What is more, the institution wants to continue its previous work through environmental as well as developmental policies and infrastructural funding.

As a follow-up, the Commission enacted its promises in five different areas (European Commission, 2018) development cooperation, transparency and benchmarking, the European Pillar of Social Rights, implementation and review of existing legislation and lastly, legislative action. First, in the field of development cooperation: On 2 June 2014, the institution published a communication identifying water and sanitation as key priority area for its development framework and since then continues stimulating innovative approaches for development assistance. Second, in the field of transparency and benchmarking of water quality and services, two stakeholder meetings have been held in September 2014 and October 2015. Third, together with the EP and the Council, access to essential services such as water and sanitation were enshrined as part of the “European Pillar of Social Rights”, a declaration of principles and rights promoted by the European institutions on 17 November 2017. Fourth, to engage in discussions with stakeholders on the implementation report on the Water Framework and Floods Directives, the European Commission's Environment Directorate-General, organised the so-called “4th European Water Conference” from 23-24 March 2015. Finally, the Commission took legislative action. The Drinking Water Directive was amended on 28 October 2015 with the aim of creating a better monitoring system of the quality of drinking water. Most recently (February 2018), Commissioners adopted another legislative proposal for the revision of the Directive on Drinking Water – which is a direct consequence of the public consultation on the Quality of Drinking Water in June-September 2014 to which almost 6000 people responded. The major focus of the proposal lies in an improved access to water guaranteed by member states themselves, especially for people most in need. In addition, the College of Commissioners announced a proposal on minimum quality requirements for reused water after their evaluation of the corresponding public consultation.

The institution’s response to Right2Water and the subsequent follow-up have prompted mixed reactions. On the one hand, some authors argue that the campaigners of R2W – in comparison to the other successful ECIs – have received by far the most favourable response by the Commission (Cheneval, 2016). On the other hand, the initiative did not trigger a concrete legislative initiative incorporating its actual demands concerning the human right to water. The assessment can be broken down according to the ECI’s three demands: First, did the

Commission stop the subjection of water management and supply to internal market rules? Second, did the Commission propose legislation guaranteeing the human right to water in the EU? And, third, the Commission increase its efforts towards universal access to water?

Concerning the requested stop to the liberalisation of the public provision of water and sanitation services: The fact that the Commission decided to exclude water services from the Concessions Directive is a partial success for organisers of the initiative. For now, contracts for the provision of water are not subject to European public procurement rules, such as tendering across the EU. However, member state authorities are still free to economically liberalise access to water. What is more, current practices of the Commission point to a prevalent market approach to water: In an article on the impact of R2W, Bieler (2015) argues that the proclaimed neutrality of the Commission towards national decisions on the provision of water and sanitation services is in fact not the case: The institution has continued to push for further liberalisation of the water market in Greece, Portugal and Italy as part of the austerity measures with the Troika. What is more, the door remains open for liberalisation of water services the future. Trade agreements such as the Comprehensive Trade and Economic Agreement (CETA) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) encourage competition between contracting countries (ibid., 2017).

The second aspect of R2W's demands involved the elevation of the access to clean and affordable water to a human right. On its website, the Commission lists the 4th European Water Conference as part of its follow-up to the ECI. At the conference in March 2015, policy makers and stakeholders discussed the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive. The organisers of R2W reacted negatively to the meeting by stating that the conference programme excludes the human right to water. In 2017, policy makers declared the aim of providing essential services such as water and sanitation in the "European Pillar of Social Rights", however, the pledge does not amount to the demands of R2W for legislative action. First concrete legislative steps were taken by the Commission in February 2018 when the amended drinking water directive was proposed. R2W campaigners welcomed the action but do not see their core demands met (Right2Water, 2018).

Third, did the Commission increase its efforts towards universal access to water? According to the assessment of Bieler (2015), EU foreign policy has not changed drastically (Bieler, 2015). During the consultations on transparency and benchmarking in 2014/2015, ECI organisers lamented that no additional budget for development cooperation

regarding the supply of water had been created and that the overall amount of funding was still too small. The consultations on benchmarking and transparency in the water sector were welcomed by initiative organisers and supporters, who participated in the dialogue meetings in 2014 and 2015. Among the topics discussed were: the development of voluntary indicators gauging the quality of water and water prices, as well as benchmarks for the general quality of water provision and transparent information for citizens. EPSU responded that benchmarking is just one among many instruments necessary to ensure the human right to water and that it has to be complemented by other actions. According to EPSU, benchmarking cannot guarantee access to clean water and affordability and organisers argue that the Commission's response does not address the core demands of the water initiative (EPSU, 2014).

Overall, the events taking place after the submission of the first successful ECI show a disconnect between European institutions and activists. The piecemeal and lengthy follow-up by the Commission stands in contrast to the incremental reform demanded by the water initiative and shows the political constraints the institution is facing as it is partially bound by the willingness of member state authorities. Both the EP and the European Economic and Social Council (EESC) have commented on the Commission's reaction to R2W echoing the concerns of the initiative. The EP concluded in its opinion from September 2015 that the Commission's response lacks ambition and does not include proposals going beyond past commitments (European Parliament, 2015). Similarly, EESC urges the Commission to propose legislation in line with the initiative's demands in its 2014 opinion (European Economic and Social Committee, 2014). Overall, the reaction of EPSU and R2W campaigners to the Commission's response and follow-up to their initiative can be summarised as follows: "[...]there is a difference in the point of departure between where the Commission starts from and where we as ECI started from and it seems that we are moving, somehow in the same direction, but also on different wave lengths" (EPSU, 2014, p. 1).

Despite this sobering assessment, a number of positive changes can be observed. The organisers state a partial success as they managed to trigger discussion and awareness among citizens, gained visibility for EPSU and established new alliances (van den Berge, et al., 2018). What is more, the campaign has set a certain standard for future discussion on water (van den Berge, 2014). Jerry van den Berge, one of the main organisers of the campaign, puts expectations towards the citizens' initiative in perspective: "The ECI must be seen for what it is: an agenda-setting tool for citizens to initiate a Europe-wide debate on a certain topic and turn the attention of the Commission, as well as the media and general public, to the subject".

(ibid.). Based on this minimal definition, the campaign has indeed achieved maximum results. Beyond that, the initiative triggered changes in a number of countries. As Bieler expresses it (2015), the ECI has left a legacy: The success of R2W motivated Spanish and Irish mass mobilisation against water privatisation and recently, the Slovenian government introduced a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to drinkable water. Campaigners of R2W are still active in their monitoring of EU and national action in the water sector, using their network built from the initiative.

The previous discussion of the outcomes of the water initiative in the last years since its launch up until the most recent events illustrate the potential impact of a successful ECI. The policies and institutional activities inspired by Right2Water can be seen as a direct result of its campaigning efforts during the twelve-month signature collection period. Without the excessive number of almost two million signatures, the campaign would very likely not have left such a long lasting impression on European and national policy makers. I now return to the role of each condition for shaping the campaigning results of R2W. I will discuss the role of each factor in the order of the hypotheses: funding, human resources, partner organisations, publicity activities and framing. To conclude, I will retrace their connection to the solution terms of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

5.3.3 Interaction and unfolding of conditions in the Right2Water ECI campaign

With a total campaigning budget of €140000, R2W is among the six initiatives with the highest amount of funding. It ranks sixth after the initiatives EU Directive on Dairy Cow Welfare (€345567), Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides (328399€), Fair Transport Europe - equal treatment for all transport workers (€322000), One of Us (€159219), and Swissout (150000€). In 2009, €100000 of the total sum of R2W's budget were reserved by EPSU ahead of the start of the signature collection and a similar amount of money was spent by national organisations for their activities connected to R2W (The ECI Campaign, 2018), which reflects the organisational structure of the campaign as a cooperation between different national actors coordinated by EPSU.

A substantial portion of the funding was used to pay for human resources as many of the tasks connected to the campaign involved staff costs. Expenditures were mainly connected to translation services, the preparation of the online collection system, legal advice, the campaign website, managing the return management of signatures for the verification process

and coordinating volunteers (The ECI Campaign, 2018). These various tasks require a level of technical skill and expertise which is hardly possible to attain without professional (contracted) support. While two people were on payroll for the entire signature collection period, many others volunteered and during peak moments, more colleagues supported the core campaign staff (van den Berge, 2014).

The way EPSU organised its campaign together with its partner organisations was crucial for the success of the movement. The campaign was carried by a unique coalition of unions, churches, civil society groups and a myriad of NGOs rallying behind the idea of the right to water for different reasons. In their publication, van den Berge, et al. (2018) trace the steps that led to the broad coalition behind R2W as establishing a network of partner organisations was among the first activities of EPSU during the preparation of the ECI. In November 2011, activists from the longstanding water justice movement declared their support, followed by European organisations such as the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Food and Water Europe (FWE), and the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG). Once the campaign was launched in April 2012, the coalition sought further allies among religious groups, as well as development, consumer and other civil society organisations. In addition to the coalition of partner organisations, over a hundred groups endorsed the campaign. Interestingly, the organisers of the initiative purposefully did not seek out the support of any political party in order to keep the campaign's broad appeal (Bieler, 2017). Almost 50% of the organisations involved in the campaign were unions, followed by water movement groups (16%), the global justice movement (12%) and the remaining organisation types making up between seven to one percent of the overall number of partner organisations (Lesske, 2015). According to one of the ambassadors of R2W, Tommaso Fattori, EPSU spearheaded a broader social movement, in particular after the momentum of the Italian Forum of Water Movements' referendum and once the European Water Movement had been formed (2013). Organisationally, EPSU is an umbrella organisation comprising over 265 unions with a membership base of over 8 million public service workers. Its organisational set-up enabled R2W to launch 27 separate national campaigns tailored to the national context in terms of water policies, public opinion and the presence of national (social movement) organisations (van den Berge, et al., 2018) – albeit with different levels of success. On top of the broad coalition, EPSU's campaign staff coordinated the initiative in terms of administration from their Brussels office, while simultaneously,

representatives of the national EPSU members served as “crucial backbone and leadership of the campaign at the European level” (Bieler, 2015).

In the theoretical chapter, I have hypothesised the following connection between publicity activities and signatures: The more frequently organisers publicise their initiative, the more signatures they will be able to mobilise. I have defined publicity activities as any type of activity (online or offline) that will lead to increased awareness of an ECI among potential signees, media outlets and public figures as I expect increased awareness of an initiative to positively influence the number of signatures. In the survey, I asked organisers to indicate how often they conducted publicity activities such as: contacting different media outlets or public figures, collecting signatures on the street, online campaigning, sending newsletters, distributing campaign items, participating in conferences or holding workshops. Organisers were free to add items to the list if one of their campaigning activities was not covered. Among the initiatives in the dataset, Right2Water has conducted an above-average number of publicity activities. According to their survey answers, the main focus of the campaign was to contact media outlets (TV, newspapers, radio, online news sites) and online campaigning via Twitter and Facebook. The focus on social media is reflected in the large proportion of signatures R2W received online: 80% of its supporters signed through the online collection software. In relation to the campaign websites, translation services were vital for the Greek, Hungarian and Lithuanian part of the movement. Once the content was available in the national language, the campaigns took off (van den Berge, 2014). The European-level coordination team of Right2Water devised a well-thought-out publicity strategy. They decided to focus the campaigning activities on European countries with a bigger mobilisation potential in relation to the issue of water and recruited 67 different famous people as “campaign ambassadors” to stimulate publicity (van den Berge, et al., 2018). As one of the organisers explained, the ECI was most successful in countries where media attention and the support of celebrities coincided with campaigning capacity (van den Berge, 2014). For example, in Lithuania campaigners had particularly good links with the media and were covered by TV programmes on a number of occasions (Bieler, 2015) or in the Slovak case, Facebook was vital for the campaign. EPSU coordinated the campaign from Brussels, but could not influence events on the national and local level beyond the provision of campaign materials and information (van den Berge, et al., 2018).

The case of R2W strongly suggests that increased publicity activity can lead to a successful signature collection campaign, but the intermediate solution term has revealed that

the outcome is also connected lower numbers of publicity activities. In other words, within the dataset, there is evidence that below-average numbers of publicity activities lead to a successful signature collection campaign. While this might appear like a contradiction of the findings at first sight, the experience of R2W helps to qualify this statement: In fact, it was not the amount of events but a few key public appearances are linked to sharp rises in the number of supporters. Some campaign events did not seem to affect the number of signatures while others were extremely successful as the cases of Italy and Germany demonstrate. In Italy, the national threshold was met after the publication of a video featuring three celebrities supporting the initiative clip (van den Berge, et al., 2018). For the German branch of the campaign, two TV shows fuelled the initiative's jump over the one million signatures hurdle. Once the issue of the campaign was discussed in public television twice (ARD Monitor in December 2012 and a comedy show in January 2013), over one million signatures were collected within just 8 weeks. In particular, the sketch from the political satire show "Neues aus der Anstalt" featuring the well-known comedian Erwin Penzig stirred a lot of public attention (van den Berge, et al., 2018). As a result to the viral video clip, R2W collected by far the most signatures in Germany (over 1,2 million in total).

In addition to the hypotheses involving resources such as finances, staff, partner organisations or publicity events, I have formulated a set of hypotheses connected to the mobilisation frames employed by the different ECIs. In a nutshell, I argue that ECIs with higher argumentative strength will mobilise more signatures. I define argumentative strength of an initiative in terms of the completeness of its frame. In a broad sense, frames are interpretational schemata which help individuals living in the same society to make sense of social events (Goffman, 1974). In the world of politics, to dominate the frame is to hold power. Professional communicators such as policy makers, journalists and the like use frames as strategic communication devices to highlight certain aspects of an issue while leaving other aspects in the background. "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993). In line with this, I expect organisers of ECIs to strategically chose certain frames over others in order to mobilise signatures. Based on the insights from the research on social movement frames, I argue that organisers have to provide certain core framing tasks in order to mobilise collective support. In a next step, I have translated the core framing tasks into a codebook which helps me to compare the argumentative strength of ECIs

across the broad range of their topics. According to this approach, ECIs which fulfil most or all framing tasks will be more likely to generate higher numbers of signatures.

Indeed, the results of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis confirm the hypothesis. A complete framing is both a necessary condition and part of all sufficient solutions connected to a successful signature collection campaign. In line with this, also the organisers of Right2Water have provided a complete frame – they fulfilled all core framing tasks contained in the codebook. In comparison to the remaining ECIs, it scored highest together with 30K, followed by ECO, ONE and COW. The core framing tasks relevant for ECIs are: diagnostic, prognostic, motivational and credibility frames. Diagnostic frames define the problem, prognostic frames propose a solution and motivational frames encourage action by supporters. Credibility frames seek to prove the relevance of the cause and demonstrate the competence of organisers. In the following, I will illustrate how the campaigners of R2W were able to create a mobilisation frame with coherent core framing components.

The core message of R2W is very straight forward, which made it possible for organisers to extend and apply it to many different problem contexts. The main goals are already included in the initiative's title: "Water is a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!". Within the diagnostic frames, organisers highlighted the ways in which water is connected to a number of problems. According to the campaigners, they strategically selected a human-rights and anti-austerity frame to contrast the institutional ideas of market liberalisation, which organisers perceived as "[...]neoliberal wave of privatisation and 'austeritarian post-democracy'" (Fattori, 2013). The human-rights approach includes the issue of development aid outside of Europe as well as the provision of water and sanitation for communities in need in the member states. In publications of the campaign, organisers reiterate that the lack of water and sanitation is one of the biggest human rights issues of our time when considering how many people are affected. Within their descriptions of the problem, organisers successfully manage to convey a clear message. They identify the problem and its cause; they name the persons affected and the entities responsible for the lamentable situation. The main problem they emphasise is easy to grasp: insufficient access to water and sanitation. They argumentatively connect the lack of clean water and sanitation to bigger inequalities on a global scale. On the website of R2W, activists illustrate how in developing countries, water is related to the fight against hunger, diseases, education and democratic empowerment. Polluted water affects the health and wellbeing of young children, women and in particular, mothers. What is more, lack of basic sanitation can lead to school drop-out by young girls. The problems brought

forward are made more credible through various citations of studies, recent documents by the UN pushing for the human right to water and the Millennium Development Goals.

The second topical dimension of the diagnostic frames is related to the market-approach to water. The market-approach entails a successive privatisation of water services, meaning that for-profit companies are responsible for water instead of public service providers. The campaigners of R2W find a number of problems with this shift. They argue that privatisation leads to worse quality and more expensive water. A number of studies are cited as part of the credibility frames to strengthen these claims. In fact, companies lack incentives to invest in the water infrastructure where this does not lead to profits. More examples for the negative effects of the market-approach to water are summarised on the campaign's website. In the wake of the financial crisis, austerity measures have led to low-income communities being cut off from the network. Not only these communities are affected, but privatisation leads to higher prices for all EU citizens. An additional problem of privatisation is a lack of transparent decision making and debate when companies receive concessions, which is portrayed as an issue of democracy. Other stakeholders affected are staff of the public service providers and private companies. While the first group is likely to lose their jobs due to privatisation, the second group within the private companies will be at a disadvantage through less rights granted by their employers compared to unionised public service works. While privatisation is the problem, its roots lie in the idea that marketization will deliver cheaper and better services. The entities responsible for the problem are named: Private companies making profits from water, European governments, members of the EP and the Commission who are not taking legislative action to ameliorate the situation. In fact, organisers blame the Commission in particular as they perceive that the institution continues to encourage privatisation.

After diagnosing the issue, prognostic frames are used by frame-articulators to convince audiences of a particular solution: In the case of R2W, the diagnoses set the scene for the prognoses. This logical coherence equips the campaign with a well-articulated argumentation, which, in turn makes it more convincing to potential supporters. According to R2W, the solution to the problem of privatisation lies in a fundamental shift. Based on this prognostic frame, the problem will be solved once the Commission changes its mind-set in relation to water from a market-approach to a rights-based logic. It is hoped that this precondition will encourage the institution to commit to the right to water through different actions. Within the prognostic frame, campaigners formulate solutions targeted at the Commission and national governments: The Commission should propose legislation implementing the human right to

water, promote national implementation and increase its development assistance. R2W furthermore envisions the Commission to use its political power to urge other international institutions such as the UN and the World Bank to support the right to water more and provide financial support for the public sector as well as people in need. The solutions are presented in the form of clear policy proposals based on expertise and knowledge of the sector. The outcomes resulting from the solution are in line with the diagnostic frames. While the problems mentioned by organisers emphasise the disadvantage of lack of access to clean water and sanitation to low-income communities, workers and EU citizens, the prognostic frames present the benefits of solving these issues. Benefactors are defined in a universal way: not only will the poor profit, the health and wellbeing of future generations and society as a whole will be safeguarded by implementing the human right to water.

In line with the literature on mobilisation frames, I have also analysed the dimension of motivational and credibility frames of ECIs. Once the problem and the solution have been identified, motivational frames which seek to encourage action by movement members. Credibility frames serves as pointers for the competence and relevance of an initiative's cause. In terms of motivational framing, the organisers of R2W have provided specific calls for action on their website, targeted at the supporters of the initiative. They suggest promoting the ECI through one's network, social media and in public spaces. Event ideas and the progress of the campaign are updated regularly – serving as demonstrations of the campaign's relevance. Cultural products such as a campaign anthem, R2W merchandise and quizzes are advertised. What is more, supporters are encouraged to get in touch with organisers, creating a dynamic and communicative environment surrounding the campaign. As I have mentioned before, the diagnostic frames of R2W were frequently supported by background information through scientific studies, examples or historical evidence. Organisers and famous supporters are named and links to journalistic material are provided to further demonstrate campaign credibility.

The central role of the frames employed by R2W becomes even more obvious once they are reconnected to the remaining causal conditions. EPSU, who was the initiator of the campaign, was able to extend its own interests in the area of water (safeguarding the public provision of water services and boosting the rights of public service workers) by creating a broad and inclusive framing of the issue. As the qualitative comparative analysis shows, framing is a necessary condition for the success of this ECI. In line with the sufficient solution path, the master frame of water as a human right was extended to many different issues and

thusly enabled organisers of R2W to expand their pre-existing network of partner organisations. Women's groups, development organisations, the church, environmental NGOs and unions rallied behind the specific aspect of water affecting them and equipped the campaign with additional manpower. In line with the second sufficient solution path, the evidence from the R2W campaign shows that framing together with the financial resources sponsored by EPSU led to success.

To conclude, R2W reveals a clear sequence between the causal conditions and helps to qualify their significance and interconnectedness. What is more, in the course of the case study, new factors have surfaced. Beyond its resources, the framing of the campaign was crucial for signature collection as it enabled organisers to rally support from citizens and find more partner organisations. The campaigning message was straightforward enough to create broad consensus among supporters. While framing acted as a necessary condition which accompanied the campaign throughout its life-span, a few starting conditions can be identified. Unlike other initiatives, which have to start building a campaign from scratch, the organisers of R2W were able to use a pre-existing infrastructure of partner organisations and funding. EPSU reserved funding ahead of the launch of their campaign which enabled them to employ staff who coordinated activists from partner organisations in other countries. Being embedded within a European network of unions in the public service sector, the Brussels office of EPSU served as focal point for the national campaigns. Due to the campaign's broad framing, organisers of R2W were able to recruit new partner organisations and thereby expanded their network. While R2W conducted many publicity events, a few key TV programmes in Germany helped signatures to skyrocket, showing that it is not the number of publicity events but their reach, which matters. A new factor which I did not consider in the hypothesis section was identified: The knowledge and experience of staff appears to have influenced the initiative's outcome. EPSU and the organisational team behind the initiative have campaigned for water-related issues in the past. They were able to familiarise with the use of the citizens' initiative tool on the European level by organising one of the pilot referendums together with ETUC. In addition, R2W seized the moment of favourable public opinion by building its campaign on the momentum created by the Italian referendum on water. Unfortunately, the insights from R2W cannot be extended beyond the dataset and did not provide additional evidence about the interchangeability of resources that was detected during the analysis of necessity. However, the case demonstrates the clear relevance of all factors identified in the hypothesis section and can serve as a blue print for future initiatives.

6 Analysis II: Non-outcome “failed signature collection campaign”

The analysis so far has shown that a fully-developed frame is necessary for a successful signature collection campaign. Framing is a necessary condition and in the dataset always appears together with the sufficient solution paths involving the remaining conditions. In the sufficient paths, all resources, despite publicity, lead to the outcome in their presence. The role of publicity has been qualified using case study evidence from the initiative Right2Water: while it is not the number of events and activities that lead to more signatures, it is the reach of the specific event or TV programme that help to make an initiative known.

Do these findings mean that the absence of resources and an incomplete mobilisation frame will lead to an unsuccessful ECI? In fact, the findings for the occurrence of a successful ECI campaign cannot be used to explain a failed signature collection. It would be wrong to assume that because framing and the union of resources are necessary conditions for the outcome, their absence will result in the non-occurrence of the outcome. While the membership values for the negation of a concept are mirror images of its presence, the parameters of fit are not. Thus, the negation of the outcome (or, in QCA terminology, the non-outcome, non-occurrence of the outcome or negative outcome) requires a separate analysis.

Gaining a better understanding of the conditions connected to a failed signature collection is especially interesting because many more ECIs have not collected substantial amounts of signatures than those that have been successful. In the dataset, eleven out of 16 initiatives have reached below average numbers of signatures. Beyond the dataset, from the entire universe of ECIs, only four passed the threshold of one million signatures, which makes failure the more common outcome. Gaining a better understanding of the reasons for lower numbers of signatures can thus add important insights into the ECI and Europe-wide movements in general. Identifying factors connected to a failed signature collection campaign can add a perspective to making recommendations for improving the instrument and understanding what was missing for most initiatives. In respect to the hypotheses, I assume an inverse connection of the conditions to the non-occurrence of the outcome. In other words, I expect that fewer resources and a less well-developed framing will lead to lower membership scores in the outcome set “unsuccessful signature collection”. In the following chapters, I perform the same sequence of steps as in the analysis of the positive outcome. First, I conduct the necessity test, followed by the sufficiency analysis. To conclude, I qualify the solution paths identified through QCA by performing a case study analysis using the exemplary cases

“30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!” and “Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs”, as these two cases best represent the solution paths.

6.1 Necessary conditions

The analytical steps for finding necessary conditions connected to the non-occurrence of the outcome follow the same sequence. In a first step, the data is tested for necessary conditions through the consistency score followed by the coverage score, which are displayed in table 18 for the presence and absence of each condition as a necessary condition for the non-occurrence of the outcome “high numbers of signatures”. The presence of no condition passes the consistency threshold, which supports the direction of the hypotheses: the availability of a resource or a well-developed frame is never connected to the outcome through a relationship of necessity. The absence of the condition funding passes the consistency threshold with a value of 0,93 which means that for 93% of the membership scores of the outcome, the condition is also present. In other words, almost all ECIs with below average signatures also have below average funding. The condition’s coverage value is 0,81, which points to its empirical relevance because a great proportion of the condition coincides with membership in the outcome.

Table 18 Consistency and coverage of necessary conditions, outcome ~SIG

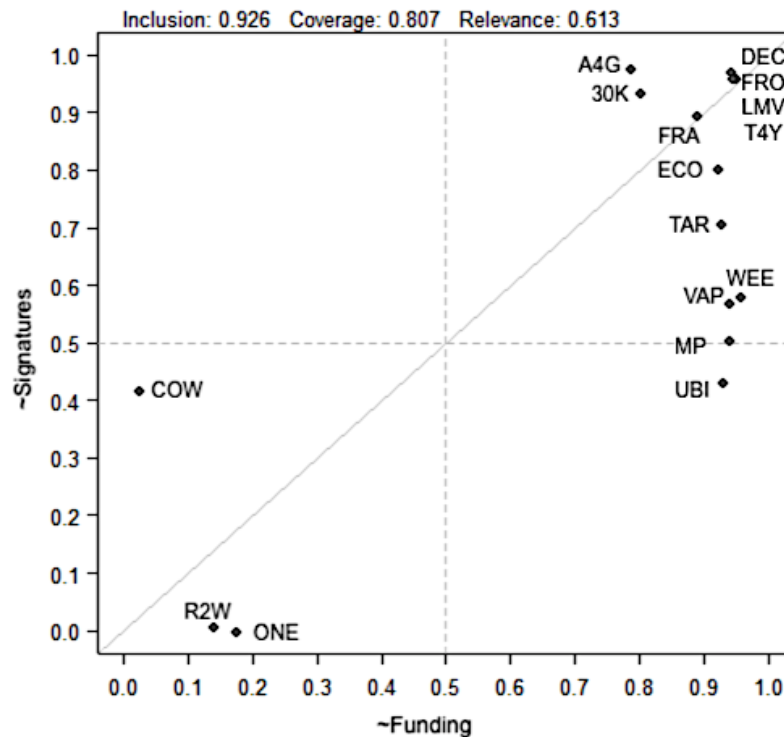
Condition	Consistency	Coverage
Funding	0,14	0,41
~Funding	0,93	0,81
Staff	0,28	0,69
~Staff	0,89	0,81
Partner organisations	0,41	0,7
~Partner organisations	0,73	0,79
Publicity activities	0,59	0,75
~Publicity activities	0,55	0,76
Framing	0,59	0,66
~Framing	0,59	0,96

The plot of the condition and the outcome (graph 14) gives a relevance value of 0,61 which appears reasonably high enough not to consider both sets as skewed. However, a look at the plot reveals that most cases are clustered in the upper right corner of the plot. Funds are spread very thinly among ECIs and only three ECIs in the dataset were very well financed:

COW, ONE and R2W had between 345567€ and 140000€. The relevance measure is high because membership values in the condition for these three cases are very close to 0 for both sets. The plot shows the big distance between the two groups of well-financed ECIs located on the very right and ECIs with below average funding close to the very left vertical line of the plot. What is more, there is not a single ECI with higher financial assets that did not collect above average amounts of signatures. The cases FRA, ECO, TAR, WEE and VAP are perfect instances of the necessity relation because their membership in the condition exceeds their membership in the outcome. A4G, 30K, T4Y, DEC and FRO are deviant in degree to the pattern of necessity as their membership in the condition is slightly lower than their membership in the outcome. The location of the cases MP and UBI in the plot is surprising: their membership in the condition set is close to zero, however they are still in the set of initiatives that managed to collect above average numbers of signatures. In fact, they are especially surprising when compared to COW. COW, the Happy Cows initiative – which was organised by the ice cream producer Ben and Jerry’s – was engaged in establishing welfare standards for cows across the EU to ensure their protection. Campaigners behind the Happy Cows initiative have had the highest amount of funding by far, with over 340000€. Paradoxically, COW has a similar fuzzy value to MP and UBI in terms of signatures. UBI achieved 285042 and MP collected 200000 statements of support with roughly 7% of the funding the Happy Cows initiative had, while COW collected 293511 signatures. All of these numbers of signatures represent above average outcomes. Given its very high financial assets, COW should have been able to achieve a much higher amount of signatures. However, a closer look at the time frame of the signature collection for the Happy Cows initiative reveals that the organisers only campaigned for two months while UBI and MP made use of the full signature collection period of twelve months. This background information helps to resolve the contradiction between the two groups of cases. COW simply did not take enough time to collect signatures. To conclude, the data clearly shows that low funding necessarily leads to lower signatures. Only the cases MP and UBI managed to collect above average numbers of signatures despite very low finances. However, when looking at how UBI and MP differ from COW in terms of signatures, it becomes obvious that the two former score much higher than the Happy Cows initiative on the remaining resource dimensions. For instance, UBI has the second highest number of staff in the entire data set and MP conducted four times more publicity activities than UBI and over 20 times more than COW. While findings for the non-outcome cannot be used to make inferences about the occurrence of a successful signature

collection campaign with full certainty, the three cases warrant the notion that one resource could be replaced by another.

Graph 14 Analysis of necessity: Outcome ~SIG, condition ~FU

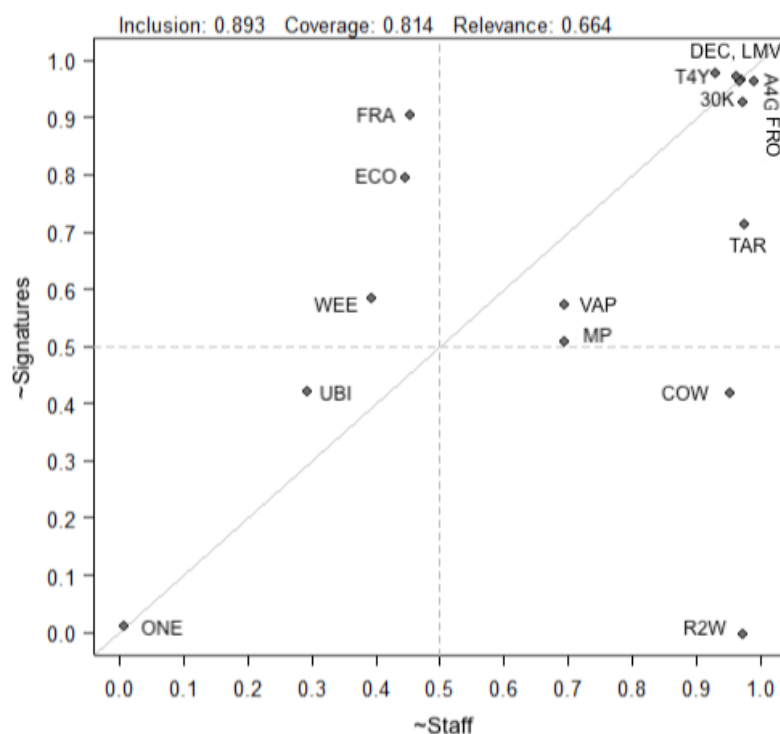


The above findings show how insufficient funding is connected to an unsuccessful signature collection campaign. A second condition appears to be relevant when ECIs do not collect a lot of signatures: low numbers of staff. In fact, the parameters of fit for this condition are similar to those for ~funding. However, the plot (graph 15) paints a different picture – which I will discuss in the next paragraph after inspecting the parameters of fit. The empirical relevance of ~staff for a negative outcome is reflected in the high consistency inclusion score of 0,89. As the data set is relatively small (n=16), the value can be considered close enough to the standard consistency threshold of 0,9. A big proportion of the outcome is covered by the condition: Only the cases ECO, FRA and WEE display the outcome without the condition and the majority of cases (nine ECIs) are located in the upper right corner, fully confirming the necessity relationship. For the nine cases in the upper right corner of the plot, the absence of high numbers of staff is necessarily connected to the absence of a successful signature collection campaign. Equal to the absence of funding, the coverage value for ~staff is also 0,81, which points to its empirical relevance because a great proportion of condition membership coincides with membership in the outcome. What is more, the relevance value of 0,66 which

is slightly higher than the score for the absence of funding, points to a balanced distribution across both sets.

As I have mentioned in the previous paragraph, while the parameters of fit for the absence of staff are similar to the values for ECIs with low funding, the plot reveals that the two conditions differ. Graph 14 shows that low funding and simultaneous low signatures are very common among ECIs – membership in the two sets is skewed but the evidence strongly points towards a necessity relationship as there are no contradictory cases. For low numbers of employees, the picture is different. In graph 15, three cases (ECO, FRA and WEE) are located in the upper left corner. They contradict the claim of necessity for \sim staff as these initiatives collected lower numbers of signatures while having above average numbers of staff. For \sim funding as a necessary condition for \sim signatures, the three cases have been perfect instances. This leads me to conclude that while resources are interchangeable for conducting a successful signature collection campaign, the absence of funding is particularly relevant when ECIs fail.

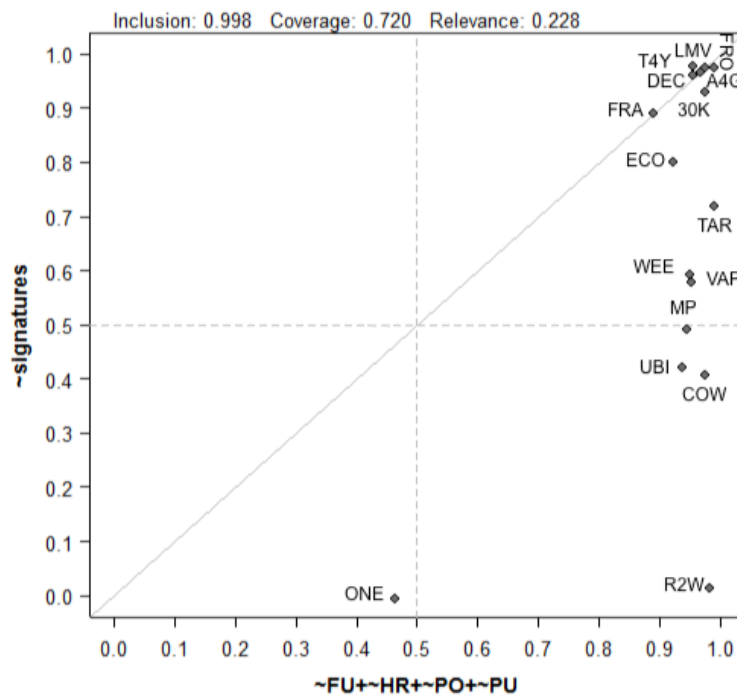
Graph 15 Analysis of necessity: Outcome \sim SIG, condition \sim HR



In the previous chapter, the analysis of necessity for all resources joined into the higher order concept “ECI resources” resulted in the finding that funding, staff, partner organisations and publicity activities are interchangeable factors relevant for positive ECI results. Mirroring this approach, I hypothesise that while staff and funding by themselves are already necessary

for ECI failure, the combined absence of all resources will also result in unsuccessful ECI campaigns. In order to test this hypothesis, I have joined the negation of all resources into the new set “absence of resources”. The membership value in the new condition for each case is the maximum of one condition across all conditions. Similar to the union of all conditions in their presence, in graph 16 no single initiative contradicts the necessity relationship, which is reflected in the highest possible consistency value of 1. Interestingly, only ONE – which is the ECI that collected the highest number of signatures among all in the dataset – did not have a single resource that was below average. The remaining initiatives are distributed close to the value 1 for the absence of resources which means that almost all ECIs scored very low on at least one resource dimension. The coverage value for the union (0,72) is relatively high and points to the empirical relevance of the condition, while its relevance (0,23) is the lowest compared to the other necessary conditions analysed so far because the simultaneous set membership in \sim signatures and \sim resources is so skewed. In this sense, the joined condition is similar to \sim funding, however the coverage and relevance measures of the latter make it a stronger predictor of low signatures. Thus, while the absence of the combined set of resources is very common, it is a weaker predictor of ECI failure than the absence of funding.

Graph 16 Analysis of necessity: Outcome \sim SIG, condition “absence of all resources” (\sim FU+ \sim HR+ \sim PO+ \sim PU)



To conclude, the data reveals a number of necessary conditions for the success and failure of ECI signature collection campaigns. For a positive outcome, either a complete

framing or resources are necessary, with resources being functional equivalents. The two components of this solution formula are expected and yet surprising at the same time. While the importance of resources is intuitive, their interchangeability opens the door for less-well financed, albeit well-connected or active NGOs with substantial numbers of volunteers. What is more, the finding that framing leads to ECI success is very important in relation to the democratic value of the instrument. In contrast to the commonly held belief that the word “citizen” is a misleading component of the European Citizen’s initiative because it requires substantial resources, organisational capacity as well as professionalism, the results show that if organisers manage to formulate convincing arguments, this is by itself enough to collect above average numbers of signatures. In this sense, the ECI is less elitist than expected which opens the door for new organisations to the Brussels stage.

Because a failed signature collection campaign was more common than success, I have dedicated a separate analysis chapter to ECIs with below average numbers of signatures. The results show that just like failed signature collection, low resources are common among ECIs. However, while resources are functional equivalents for successful ECIs – ECIs can use one resource to compensate for the lack of another resource – their negations are not interchangeable for unsuccessful initiatives. In fact, the absence of two specific resources is strongly connected to low numbers of signatures. Low funding and low numbers of staff are particularly relevant when ECIs do not make it. Thus, ECI failure and success can be considered qualitatively and analytically different states. The discussion of necessary conditions has revealed isolated and combined factors that have to be present for a certain outcome to occur. In the subsequent paragraphs, I present the analysis of sufficient conditions which uncovers solution formulas for combinations of conditions that are subsets of the outcome.

6.2 Sufficient conditions

During the analysis of necessity I have found that the absence of below-average numbers of staff and resources are necessary conditions for the non-occurrence of a successful signature collection campaign. This stands in contrast to the findings for the positive occurrence of the outcome, where no resource by itself was necessary. Instead, conditions can be considered functional equivalents. Following the standards of good practice in QCA as a method, I am

now conducting the analysis of sufficiency for the non-occurrence of a successful signature collection campaign.

6.2.1 *Truth table analysis*

Parallel to the procedure for sufficient conditions related to the outcome, the analysis of the non-outcome follows the same sequence. First, I will create a truth table which forms the basis for the different solution formulas and their minimisation. I expect the failure of ECIs to be related to the absence of the conditions. So far, the results from the analysis of necessity confirm my expectations. All ECIs with low funding and few staff failed in their signature collection. Beyond the analysis of necessary conditions, QCA allows me to widen the results by including a test for sufficiency. In other words, which conditions are sufficient when ECIs fail? During the analysis of sufficiency, I assess to what extent a condition or combination of conditions is a subset of the outcome. The procedure sets off by assigning the cases to most suitable ideal type in the truth table row. Recall the truth table for the outcome which incorporated 32 logically possible combinations of conditions based on the number of conditions. For the analysis of the non-outcome, I am using the negation of the five conditions and consequently, the second truth table contains the same number of rows as the first one – five to the power of two. The inclusion score determines the membership value above which a row is considered sufficient for the outcome under analysis. In the dataset and outside of it, the failure of European Citizens' Initiatives constitutes the more common outcome. Four initiatives in my dataset have collected above-average numbers of signatures compared to twelve cases which I consider as instances of a failed signature collection campaign. Beyond the dataset, only a hand full of initiatives has managed to exceed the official requirement of one million statements of support. Based on the distribution of the outcome value, the findings for sufficient conditions for the non-outcome can be strengthened by raising the inclusion score to 0,9.

Table 19 summarises the information about sufficient conditions for the absence of a successful signature collection. Like in the first truth table, the cases LMV and VAP on the one hand, and DEC, TAR and T4Y on the other hand, correspond to the same ideal types, resulting in a total of thirteen truth table rows. The lower four rows did not surpass the sufficiency threshold, leaving nine sufficient paths. Across the sufficient causal paths, very high inclusion values above 0,9 have been reached which are represented by all twelve ECIs which are considered failed. The PRI scores match the values for inclusion, creating a uniform picture of

sufficiency. Consequently, all causal combinations for ECIs with below average numbers of signatures represent sufficient paths towards the negative outcome.

Table 19 Truth table for the analysis of sufficiency, outcome ~SIG

\sim Funding	\sim Staff	\sim Partner Organisations	\sim Publicity Activities	\sim Framing	Output value	No. of cases	Incl.	PRI	Cases
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0,996	0,993	FRO
1	1	1	1	0	1	2	0,996	0,992	LMV, VAP
1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0,990	0,980	A4G
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0,982	0,948	FRA
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0,977	0,894	WEE
1	1	1	0	1	1	3	0,974	0,961	DEC, TAR, T4Y
1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0,940	0,904	30K
1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0,934	0,854	MP
1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0,906	0,762	ECO
1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0,824	0,372	UBI
0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0,774	0,392	COW
0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0,652	0,382	R2W
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0,546	0,037	ONE

The nine sufficient truth table rows represent alternative paths towards the non-outcome. In Boolean notation, the primitive components of the overall solution can be expressed like this:

(a) \sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO* \sim PU* \sim FR +

(b) \sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO* \sim PU*FR +

(c) \sim FU* \sim HR*PO*PU* \sim FR +

(d) \sim FU*HR*PO* \sim PU* \sim FR +

(e) \sim FU*HR* \sim PO* \sim PU* \sim FR +

(f) \sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO*PU* \sim FR +

(g) \sim FU* \sim HR*PO*PU*FR +

(h) \sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO*PU*FR +

(i) $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$

$\rightarrow \sim\text{SIG}$

6.2.2 Conservative solution

The solution formula for the non-outcome comprising nine different primitive expressions is very complex, making a substantive interpretation of the results difficult. The information contained in the truth table can be condensed through minimisation. The first type of minimisation is called conservative solution as it uses the empirical information from the truth table without making any assumptions about logical remainders. Redundant components are dropped without making any assumptions beyond the dataset. The conservative minimisation offers a solution term with four components (table 20).

Table 20 Analysis of sufficient conditions (conservative solution), outcome $\sim\text{SIG}$

	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PU}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\sim\text{PU}*$ $\sim \text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*$ FR
Consistency	0,927	0,917	0,978	0,901
PRI	0,894	0,881	0,933	0,856
Raw coverage	0,672	0,539	0,198	0,295
Unique coverage	0,214	0,031	0,044	0,032
Cases covered	MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y; LMV, VAP; FRO	30K; A4G; MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y	FRA, WEE	ECO, 30K

* *Notes:* number of multiple-covered cases: 5; inclusion of combined solution: 0,909; PRI of combined solution: 0,880; combined solution coverage: 0,864

The first component $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}$ summarises rows (a), (b), (h) and (f). The rows all share the three conditions $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}$ but differ in terms of the conditions PU and FR.

While row (a) contains PU and FR in their negation, row (h) displays their presence – thus, they do not appear decisive in the path and can be dropped. The same holds for row (b) and (f), which diametrically comprehend $\sim\text{PU}*\text{FR}$ (row (b)) and $\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$ (row (f)). We are left with:

(a) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$

(h) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$

(b) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\text{FR}$

(f) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$

The conservative solution component $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PU}$ embodies rows (c), (f), (g) and (h). Using the same principle as previously, if rows differ only in relation to a specific component, this part of the solution can be dropped. For example, row (c) and (h) are identical except for the conditions PO and FR. While row (c) contains $\text{PO}*\sim\text{FR}$, in row (h) they are the opposite: $\sim\text{PO}*\text{FR}$ – thus, the software deletes them. Rows (g) and (f) boil down to the same principle: $\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{FR}$ (f) versus $\text{PO}*\text{FR}$ (g), leaving us with the following equation:

(c) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR} +$

(h) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$

(f) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$

(g) $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$

The third column in table 20 (solution path C) reveals the causal path $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR} \rightarrow \sim\text{SIG}$. The condition PO was dropped from rows (d) and (e) because the expression differs only in this one particular aspect. See here:

(d) $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$

(e) $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$.

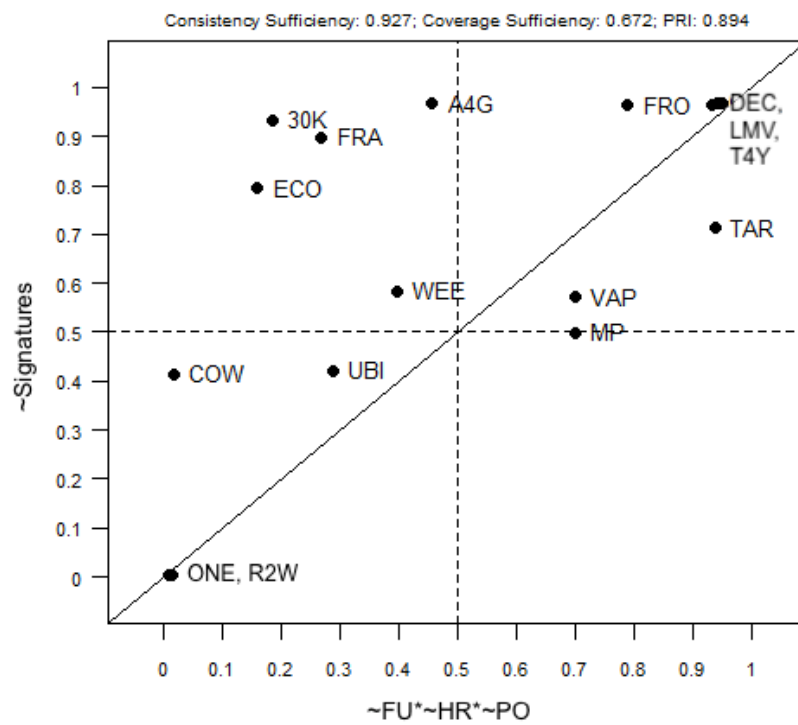
The last part of the conservative solution is based on rows (g) and (i) which have been simplified by dropping the condition HR:

(g) $\sim\text{FU} * \sim\text{HR} * \text{PO} * \text{PU} * \text{FR}$

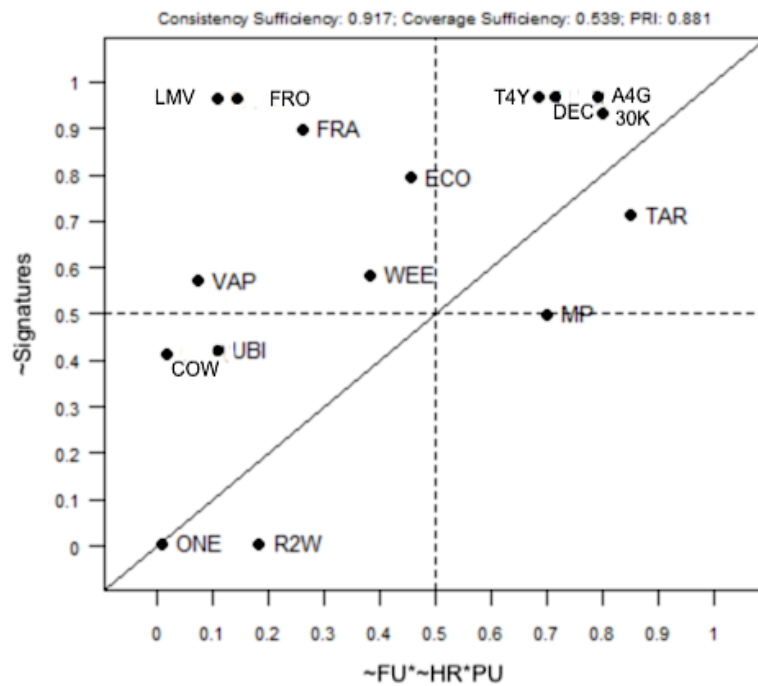
(i) $\sim\text{FU} * \text{HR} * \text{PO} * \text{PU} * \text{FR}$.

A few cases are covered by multiple paths. For example, MP is contained in solution (A) and (B) or 30K, which is covered by (B) and (D). This is not an unusual situation in QCA. In set logic, it is possible for a case to have membership values above 0,5 in multiple causal combinations. Graphs 17, 18, 19 and 20 visualise the cases which are covered by each path. Moving from the left side to the right side of the plots for an interpretation of the graphs. All cases in the lower left are not relevant to the analysis of the non-outcome as they are instances of successful signature collection campaigns. The upper left corner of the plot contains cases which are not explained by the path. Now, to the right: In all four graphs, the lower right corner remains empty as such cases would represent logical contradictions to the statement of sufficiency (the outcome must not occur without the condition). The upper right corners of the plots demand closer attention along the diagonal. Cases above the diagonal have higher membership in the outcome than in the condition, making them perfect instances of sufficiency. Cases below the diagonal in the upper right corner have higher membership in the condition than in the outcome, making them contradictions in degree but not disconfirmations of the sufficiency relationship.

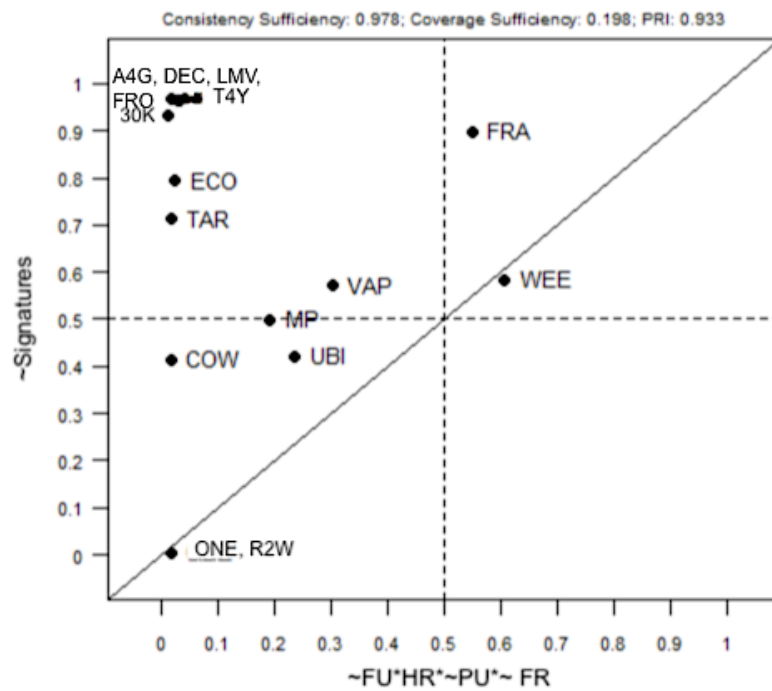
Graph 17 Conservative solution path A, outcome ~SIG



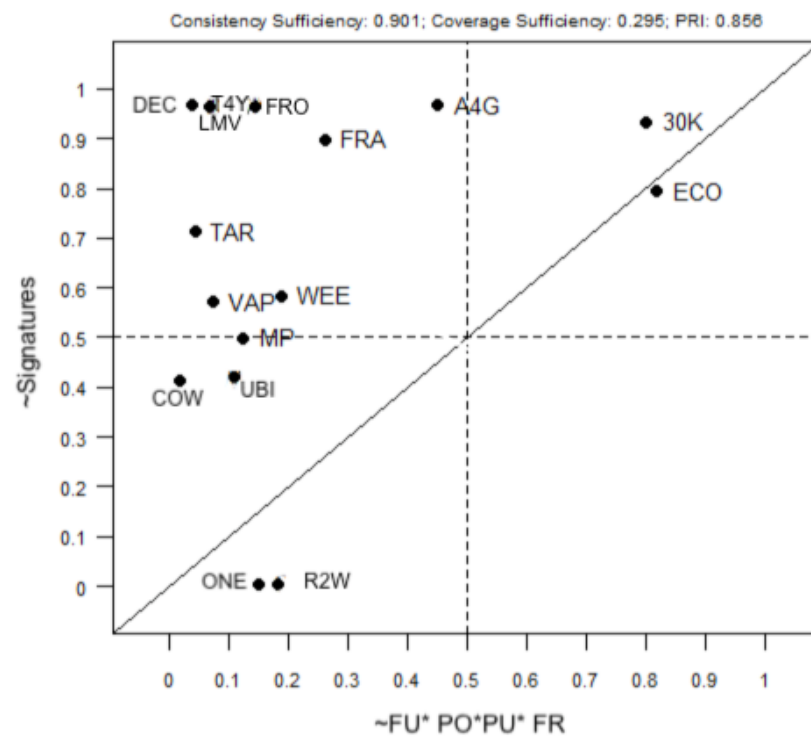
Graph 18 Conservative solution path B, outcome ~SIG



Graph 19 Conservative solution path C, outcome ~SIG



Graph 20 Conservative solution path D, outcome ~SIG



The overall explanatory power of the complex solution is high, while the quality of the individual components differ: Paths A and B are stronger predictors of the outcome than C and D. Across all components (A, B, C, D) the consistency is very high with values of 0,901 or more. In addition, the high combined inclusion supports the validity of the complex path. The high consistency values prove that a large portion of the outcome values coincide with the causal paths (in this case: over 90%) and the corresponding PRI scores demonstrate that no case contradicts the findings. In graph 17, the cases FRO, DEC, LMV and T4Y can be considered perfect instances of the sufficiency relationship between \sim SIG and the path \sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO. The path has, compared to the other three, the highest values for unique and raw coverage – indicating a strong overlap with the outcome. What is more, the causal combination of the absence of funding, staff and partner organisations is also most in line with the theoretical expectations and covers most cases. Compared to path A, path B has similar high parameters of fit - except the value for unique coverage. Path B, in fact, explains the lowest portion of the outcome by itself because the causal path is enclosed within the remaining paths. Interestingly, path B contains the condition PU in its presence which contradicts the theoretical expectations. The path shows that a few ECIs failed in their signature collection despite having conducted above average publicity activities. Graph 18 reveals the cases A4G, 30K, DEC and T4Y as ideal types of the sufficient path. I will explore the relevance of publicity activities for the absence of signature collection success in more depth in the discussion of the cases.

Compared to paths A and B, the two remaining paths are weaker predictors of the outcome for a number of reasons. First, paths C and D cover the smallest number of cases: Only one case per path counts as fully explained because it is above the diagonal in the upper right corner. Graph 19 reveals that only the case FRA can be considered a sufficient instance and in graph 20, the case 30K best confirms the sufficiency relationship. The second reason for the weaker explanatory power of the two paths lies in their raw coverage, which is much lower than for the other two paths. Third, the two paths slightly contradict the theoretical expectations. While solution component C includes cases with above average numbers of staff, path D holds three conditions (PO, PU; and FR) in their presence. From the mixed quality of the individual paths it appears necessary to further condense the solution into a more uniform path. Thus, in the next section I will minimise the causal path by forming directional expectations.

6.2.3 *Intermediate solution*

The conservative solution term delivers mixed evidence for the factors connected to the negative outcome, making a substantive interpretation cumbersome. The complex causal path consisting of four equifinal components can be clarified by making use of directional expectations. Due to logical remainders, the information in the truth table could only be condensed into four components which differ in their explanatory strength and the number of cases covered. However, by using directional expectations, the causal paths can be further minimised into a more parsimonious expression. Path A from the conservative solution term was the strongest causal path in terms of the number of cases covered and the parameters of fit. It included three out of five conditions in its absence. Based on this preliminary finding and my theoretical expectation that also the absence of publicity activities and framing are connected to ECI failure, I introduce five directional expectations to the minimisation procedure: I have strong theoretical reason to believe that all conditions in their absence contribute to the occurrence of the non-outcome.

Based on the directional expectations, the minimisation procedure results in two different intermediate solution terms. This situation is not uncommon in QCA as the software sometimes produces two models if redundancies in the conservative solution can be resolved in more than one way²¹. In current applications of QCA, researchers usually do not inform the reader about such model ambiguities or are possibly themselves unaware of their existence because a number of software applications do not report multiple solution terms, which can lead to false conclusions concerning the outcome (Baumgartner and Thiem, 2017). To create full transparency, I am thus presenting both models and discussing my selection criteria for the model I interpret substantially in the subsequent paragraphs. In table 21 and 22, two alternative intermediate solutions are presented. They are almost identical except for one component. Each model contains the components $\sim\text{FU}*\text{PU}$ and $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{FR}$. While model 1 (table 21) comprises the component $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}$, in model 2 (table 22) this expression is extended by adding $\sim\text{PO}$.

²¹ Model ambiguities arise in QCA as a result of so-called „orphan columns“ in the prime implicant chart. Orphan columns are not covered by essential prime implicants but instead by multiple nonessential prime implicants. Baumgartner, M. and Thiem, A. (2017) 'Model Ambiguities in Configurational Comparative Research'. *Sociological Methods & Research*, Vol. 46, No. 4, pp. 954-987. have introduced the notion of orphan columns in their very informative paper on the sources and remedies of model ambiguities.

Table 21 Analysis of sufficient conditions (model 1, intermediate solution with directional expectations 1,1,1,1,1), outcome: ~SIG

	(A.i.) ~FU*~HR	(B.i.) ~FU*PU	(C.i.) ~FU*~FR
Consistency	0,923	0,885	0,963
PRI	0,896	0,841	0,947
Raw coverage	0,823	0,571	0,578
Unique coverage	0,132	0,032	0,043
Cases covered	30K; A4G; MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y; LMV, VAP; FRO	ECO; 30K; A4G; MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y	FRA; WEE; A4G; DEC, TAR, T4Y; FRO

Notes: inclusion of combined solution: 0,902; PRI of combined solution: 0,872; combined solution coverage: 0,897, number of multiple-covered cases: 7

Table 22 Analysis of sufficient conditions (model 2, intermediate solution with directional expectations 1,1,1,1,1), outcome: ~SIG

	(D.i.) ~FU*~HR*~PO	(E.i.) ~FU* PU	(F.i.) ~FU*~FR
Consistency	0,927	0,885	0,963
PRI	0,894	0,841	0,947
Raw coverage	0,672	0,571	0,578
Unique coverage	0,106	0,140	0,060
Cases covered	MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y; LMV, VAP; FRO	ECO; 30K; A4G; MP; DEC, TAR, T4Y	FRA; WEE; A4G; DEC, TAR, T4Y; FRO

Notes: inclusion of combined solution: 0,900; PRI of combined solution: 0,869; combined solution coverage: 0,880, number of multiple-covered cases: 6

When two alternative sufficient solutions are present in QCA, this is due to model ambiguity. Table 23 reveals that the prime implicants of the truth table are the source of model ambiguity in the case of this analysis. The first two columns contain essential prime implicants (I am using the terminology of Baumgartner and Thiem (2017) here) – these are implicants which uniquely cover one truth table row each. In this case, the prime implicant ~FU*PU

uniquely covers the first column $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$ (case ECO) and the prime implicant $\sim\text{FR}$ uniquely covers the second column $\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$ (case FRA) of the truth table (table 19). Their status as prime implicants makes them essential to any solution term. Model ambiguities arise due to orphan columns, which are columns only covered by one or more non-essential prime implicants. The penultimate column in the prime implicant chart is such an orphan. It is covered by the remaining non-essential components $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}$ and $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{PO}$. Thus, the information in the truth table can be minimised in two different ways, resulting in two alternative models. In other words, because the row ($\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\text{FR}$) for cases LMV and VAP is covered by two different non-essential prime implicants, it can be summarised in two different ways. Thus, two alternative intermediate solutions arise.

Table 23 Prime implicant chart for intermediate solution, model 2

Prime implicants	$\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\text{PU}*\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\text{FR}$	$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}*\sim\text{PU}*\sim\text{FR}$
$\sim\text{FR}$	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X
$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}$	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X
$\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{PO}$	-	-	X	-	-	X	X	X	X
$\sim\text{FU}*\text{PU}$	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	-
Cases	ECO	FRA	WEE	30K	A4G	MP	DEC, TAR, T4Y	LMV, VAP	FRO

In a situation of model ambiguity, one solution term needs to be chosen as basis for the substantial interpretation of results. There are three different ways of selecting the model for further analysis and interpretation. The first approach is grounded within the general aim of configurational methods – to reduce complexity: By focussing on the most parsimonious model with the least number of conditions, the information in the truth table is reduced to a minimum.

The second approach is to focus on the model that best fits the data by choosing the solution with the best parameters of fit. The third approach reconnects the solution back to theory: Researchers are sometimes advised to select the one model that is most appropriate for their theoretical expectations (Ragin, et al., 2008).

The shortest model is not always the best because often times more complex causal chains represent real life much better (Baumgartner and Thiem, 2017). While the two solutions are almost identical, model 2 contains more information than the other one. Model 1 omits the condition $\sim PO$, and by basing the interpretation on this shorter expression, important information is potentially lost. The two models have almost identically high parameters of fit, with the values for model 1 being only slightly higher. Both models are equally in line with my theoretical expectations apart from the condition PU, which appears in both solutions in its presence, in disjunction with the condition $\sim funding$. The fact that publicity activities form part of both sufficient solution paths is somewhat surprising and runs counter the hypotheses. I will explore the role of publicity activities in more detail in the ensuing case studies. As I have argued above, choosing the more parsimonious causal recipe can obscure the causal mechanisms at work and therefore I am focussing my interpretation on model 2.

Model 2 contains three equifinal disjunctions which are combined through logical “+” (additive logic) and are connected to the non-outcome in a relationship of sufficiency. The causal recipe looks like this:

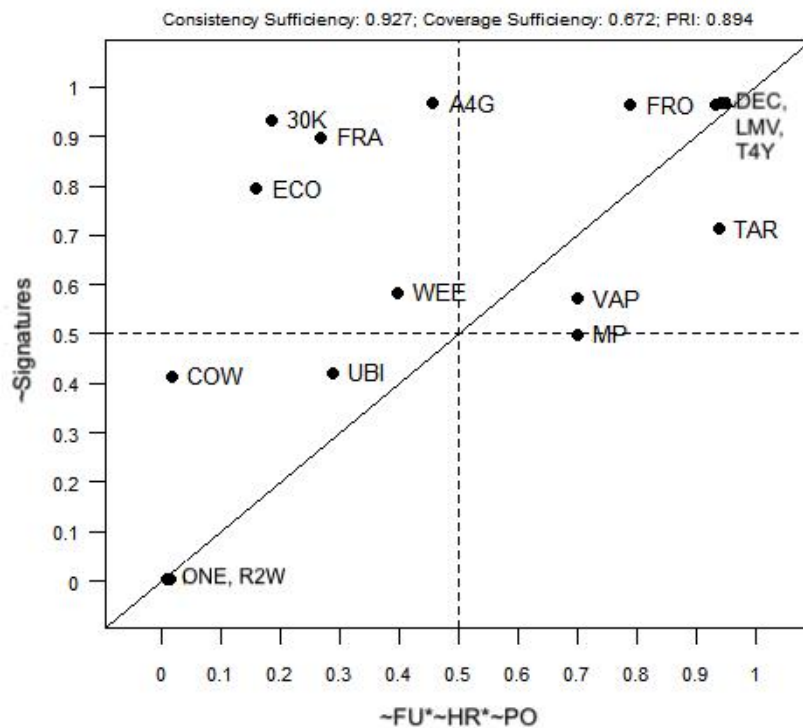
$$\begin{aligned} & (D.i.) \sim FU * \sim HR * \sim PO + \\ & (E.i.) \sim FU * PU + \\ & (F.i.) \sim FU * \sim FR \\ & \rightarrow \sim SIG \end{aligned}$$

Table 22 offers a summary of the overall good fit of model 2 for explaining the non-outcome. The consistency values are high for all solution components. With a range between 0,885 and 0,963, the inclusion scores point towards a good sufficiency relationship. In other words, between 88% and 96% of the data support the notion that the conditions are subsets of the negative outcome. The corresponding PRI scores eliminate any doubt that the conditions may be connected to the inversion of the non-outcome. The raw coverage values around 0,6 each disclose the big overlap between the membership values in the condition and the outcome. The first path ((D.i) $\sim FU * \sim HR * \sim PO$) has the highest value for raw coverage and represents the best fit for the non-outcome. In terms of unique coverage – the coverage of the individual

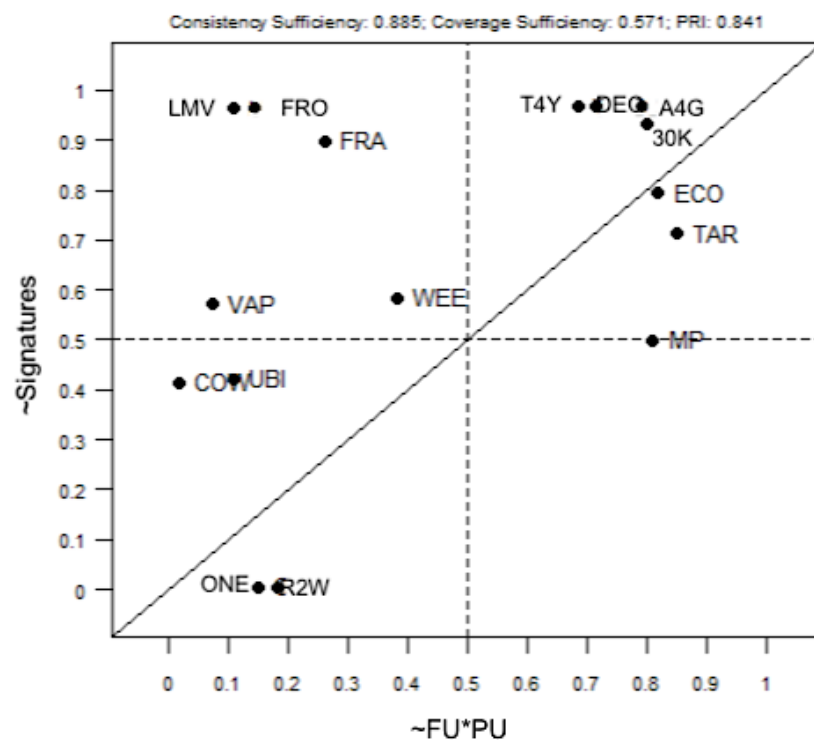
paths isolated from overlaps with each other – are lower. However, given that three paths form part of the solution, this comes as no surprise. For the parameters of fit of the entire solution, high values across all scores indicate the good fit of the model.

All individual components and the overall model of the intermediate solution term are visualised in the graphs 21-24. Across all plots for the individual solutions (graphs 21-23), five different cases remain unexplained each (unexplained cases for sufficient conditions are located in the upper left corner of the xy plots). In the overall solution (see graph 24), all cases are explained. None of the causal recipes are afflicted by contradictory cases – instances of the conditions occurring without the outcome. While cases in the lower corner are irrelevant for the analysis, the cases in the upper right corner are most interesting for claims of sufficiency. The upper right corner's explanatory value can be further specified by differentiating between cases above the diagonal and those below the diagonal. For all cases above the diagonal, the sufficiency relationship can be confirmed as here the membership values in the non-outcome exceed those for the causal path. Cases below the diagonal do not contradict sufficiency but weaken it in degree as here, the membership values for the solution are lower than for the outcome. In terms of cases explained, graphs 21, 22 and 23 provide similar outputs as far as the number of cases is concerned, with 4-5 ECIs per plot. While four cases are perfect instances of the respective sufficiency relationship in graphs 21 and 22, three cases are contradictions in degree, albeit to different extents. See for example graph 22 for the solution path $\sim\text{FU}*\text{PU}$: here, the case ECO is located almost on the diagonal – thus, it is a very small contradiction to the sufficiency claim. In plot 23, for path $\sim\text{FU}*\text{FR}$ plotted against the non-outcome, the smallest number of contradictions in degree arise. In fact, the cases TAR and WEE are quite close to the diagonal. The path just mentioned is also the one with the highest sufficiency and PRI scores, making it one of the two better suiting paths, alongside $\sim\text{FU}*\sim\text{HR}*\sim\text{PO}$.

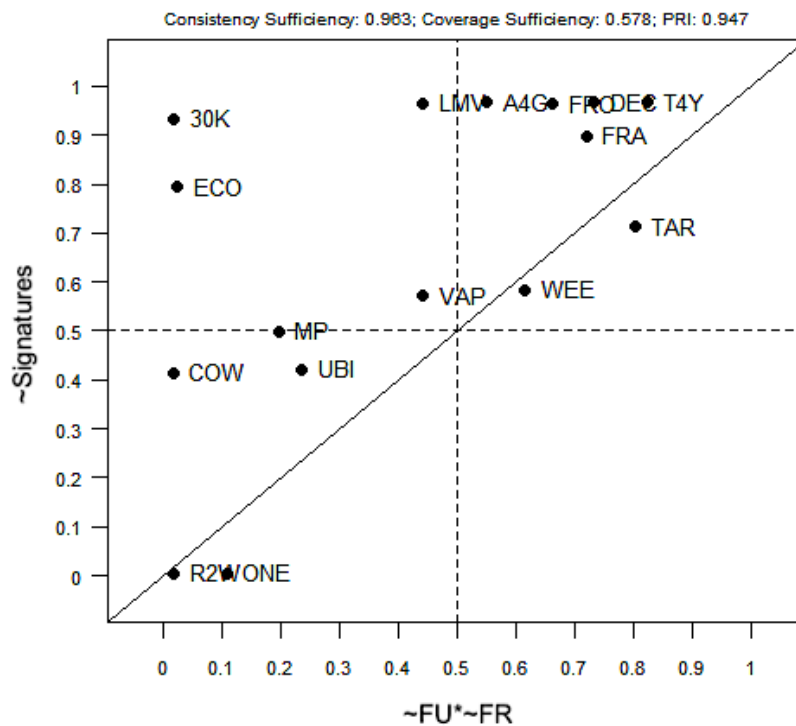
Graph 21 Intermediate solution path D.i, outcome ~SIG



Graph 22 Intermediate solution path E.i, outcome ~SIG

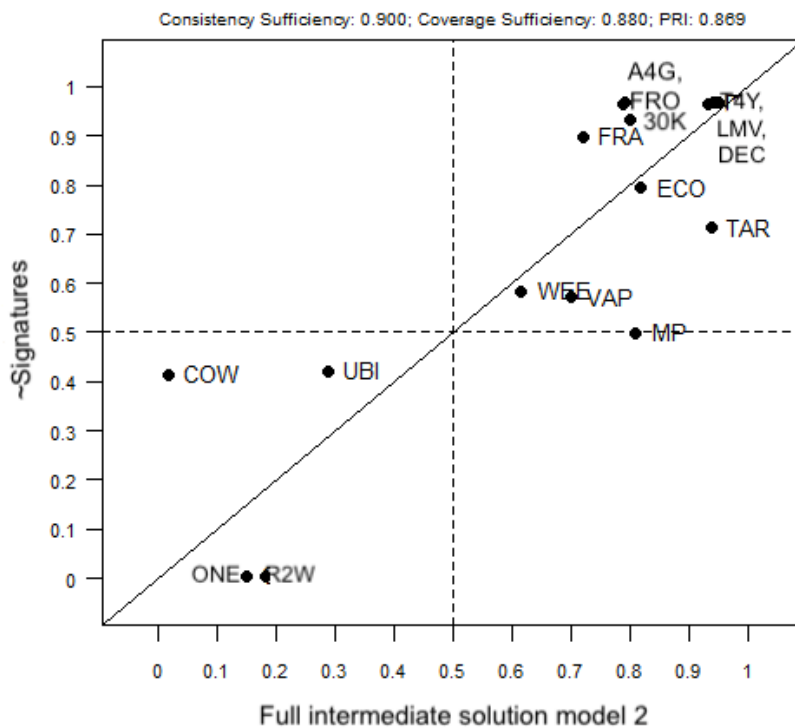


Graph 23 Intermediate solution path F.i, outcome ~SIG



Graph 24 visualises the combination of all sufficient solution components and is the best explanation for the non-outcome. Seven out of twelve failed ECIs are perfectly covered by the overall path while five cases are slight contradictions in degree. Again, WEE and ECO contradict the sufficiency statement to a far lesser extent than the remaining three cases below the diagonal.

Graph 24 Full sufficient path (full intermediate solution from model 2), outcome ~SIG



Interestingly, the absence of funding forms part of all solution components, confirming the important role of this particular resource which has been already identified during the analysis of necessity. While path D.i. comprises all resources apart from publicity activities in their absence, path F.i. combines absent funding and a less well-developed framing. In contrast to the latter two paths, solution E.i. connects low funding in combination with above-average publicity activities to failed signature collection campaigns. At first sight, path E.i. appears to contradict the hypothesis on publicity events (In the hypothesis section, I expected greater numbers of publicity events to lead to higher numbers of signatures, and in parallel the inverse relationship for below-average numbers of publicity events and low numbers of signatures is hypothesised. Thus, ECIs which conducted fewer publicity events are expected to yield fewer statements of support). However, by reconnecting the path to the findings from the previous chapter and case study knowledge for negative cases, I will show that the finding helps to make an important clarification in terms of the role of publicity activities. In the following sections, I will illustrate the mechanisms underlying the necessary conditions and intermediate solution paths. Parallel to the case study of R2W, I use secondary literature and documents published by initiatives for this part of the analysis. While information on successful ECIs is vast, failed initiatives have received by far much less public and scholarly attention – making it more challenging to draw a coherent and encompassing picture of a single case. Thus, for the in-depth analysis of the negative outcome, I am drawing on evidence from multiple exemplary

initiatives which best depict the specific solution path. For the illustration of necessary conditions, I rely on the exemplary case 30K. For the components of the intermediate sufficient solution, I use additional information from DEC, which is an exemplary case for all three components (D.i., E.i., F.i.).

6.3 Case studies: “30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!” and “Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs”

During the analysis of necessary conditions, below-average amounts of funding and low numbers of staff were always leading to an unsuccessful signature collection campaign. In other words, based on the data present, lack of funding and low numbers of staff are inevitably linked to the failure of an ECI. The case of 30K (“30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!”) is a good empirical instance of the necessity relationship found in the previous QCA. In addition to 30K, the case of DEC (“Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs”) will be used to exemplify the sufficient solution paths.

6.3.1 Background of 30K: Necessary conditions for failure

The main demand of this initiative is an EU-wide 30km/h speed limit for residential areas. Following the strong support of a 30km/h speed limit by the EP in its “Report on Road Safety” on 8 July 2011, the main organiser behind 30K, Heike Aghte, first developed the idea of initiating action on the European level (Aghte, 2014, p. 47). She is the general secretary of the European Alliance for Deceleration (EUGENT), an NGO based in Germany dedicated to implementing the positive effects of a speed limit – particularly in relation to the environment and a better culture of mobility. Aghte used the first days after the release of the parliamentary report to form a coalition with another German NGO (FUSS e.V. which is promoting pedestrians’ needs in traffic)²². After a preparatory phase of roughly one year, the organisation proposed its initiative to the European Commission and was registered on 13 November 2012. Activists finished their campaign after one year with a result of 44310 signatures.

In comparison to the other initiatives in the dataset, 30K had a low number of staff. According to the survey, five people were actively working during the signature collection

²² For more information see website of EUGENT: <http://de.30kmh.eu/eugent/>.

period. The highest number in this set belongs to the initiative One of Us, which declared that over 500 people had been working for its campaign. Also EPSU's Right2Water initiative was supported by a substantial number of activists from national branches of the organisation. As a result of the low staffing, organisers of the speed limit initiative have struggled with a number of difficulties throughout the lifecycle of their campaign – ranging from technical problems, administrative burdens to the coordination of the network of partner organisations (Aghte, 2014). Before submitting their proposal to the Commission, it took several months and outside legal advice to draft the text. After taking this initial hurdle, organisers were overwhelmed by the ensuing administrative load and technical requirements. The online collection of signatures only started five months after the launch of the campaign, as organisers were struggling to use the software due to technical problems. Most of the campaign's budget (€7000 from a total of €12050) was spent on fixing glitches arising from the online collection software and renting servers. Once collecting signatures online became possible, additional problems arose when it took another month to provide translations for the campaign's website. After sending a complaint letter to the Commission, organisers received technical help and were able to start the campaign in all countries shortly before Christmas 2012. Unfortunately for campaigners, the software glitches were finally under control only in late 2013 – when the speed limit initiative came to an end. However, 30K's signature collection period was not prolonged – unlike other initiatives which suffered from similar technical disruptions the months before. As a result of this delayed start, the campaign missed out on a number of opportunities to advertise itself as several press events did not take place and morale among activists was lowered (Aghte, 2014, p. 48). To conclude, the two the necessary conditions “below-average amounts of funding” and “below-average numbers of staff” seem to have interacted in the case of 30K, together with unexpected events such as technical glitches and a lacking capacity of campaign staff to handle these problems.

6.3.2 *Interaction and unfolding of sufficient conditions for unsuccessful ECIs 30K and DEC*

With a total budget of €12050 – most of which was spent to make the OCS work – the speed limit initiative is among the ECIs with the lowest amount of funding in the dataset. Donors were mainly private persons and a handful German NGOs from the mobility sector. In contrast to this, three of the successful ECIs (COW, ONE, R2W) had budgets almost ten to thirty times the size of 30K's finances. Roughly a third of the total budget was reserved ahead of the campaign start while later contributions followed while 30K was running the signature

collection. In comparison to more successful cases such as R2W, 30K's infrastructure and support system was not as well equipped and prepared for the complicated process of launching a European Citizens' Initiative. While the people behind the water initiative followed the same sequence of steps as 30K, (reserving money and building a coalition of partner organisations), the size of the network and funding of R2W were substantially bigger.

During the analysis of sufficient conditions for the failure of ECIs, I detected three alternative combinations of factors leading to fewer signatures. While the paths are different, they also share similarities. For instance, low budgets are common to all cases of ECI failure. The first sufficient path D.i. (\sim FU* \sim HR* \sim PO) combines the two necessary conditions with low numbers of partner organisations. In other words, when initiatives have low funding, few activists and a small network of partner organisations, this is a sufficient combination of conditions implying a failed signature collection campaign. This finding is an extension of the findings from the literature on social movements which suggests that partner organisations can compensate for a lack of resources. The evidence for the cases TAR, VAP, DEC, T4Y, FRO and LMV is most in line with this result. Unfortunately, the case study of 30K did not yield any insights into the unfolding of these three conditions beyond the finding that absent funding and low numbers of staff seem to be negative starting conditions.

The second sufficient solution posits that a lack of funds and high numbers of publicity activity are connected to lower numbers of signatures. Mirroring the hypotheses for the positive outcome, I expected that lower numbers of publicity events will lead to fewer signatures. The finding that low funding together with above-average frequencies of publicity events is sufficient for the failure of ECIs appears to contradict my theoretical expectations. However, returning to the example of R2W from the previous chapter and 30K which displays these features for the non-outcome, light can be shed on the counterintuitive role of publicity activities. According to the organisers of R2W, it was not the frequency of publicity events that made their initiative succeed. Sharp rises in signatures for this ECI can be reconnected to a few key appearances in popular TV programmes. Thus, it is the reach of the publicity event that makes or breaks an ECI. In other words, an active publicity strategy does not automatically lead to a successful signature collection when it remains unnoticed by the public. People behind the speed limit initiative, in contrast to R2W, managed to organise an above-average number of publicity activities in comparison to the other initiatives in the dataset. While they experienced a similar effect as organisers of the water initiative, their events triggered rises in signatures with a smaller magnitude. For example, the head organisers of 30K noted that press

conferences prompted peaks, but that they did not manage to reach mainstream media beyond sectoral publics (Aghte, 2014, pp. 49-50).

Finally, the last sufficient path towards the non-outcome combines lack of funding with a below-average amount of core framing elements. In other words, for ECIs in the dataset with small amounts of funding (or no funding at all) and an incomplete argumentation, failure follows. Seven cases embody this mechanism: A4G, WEE, FRO, FRA, DEC, TAR and T4Y. While it is beyond the scope of my project to measure the salience of the topics of the different initiatives to European citizens, the level of completeness of ECI mobilisation frames can serve as proxy to gauge the attractiveness of different issues to potential signees. For instance, the organisers of the water initiative formulated a master frame combining human rights and anti-austerity. At the same time, they provided credibility through scientific evidence, regular campaign updates or media reports and demonstrated the causes' salience by embedding it within the context of current UN actions. What is more, R2W's long-term impact is likely to be rooted within the detailed manner in which their proposals were formulated. They provided a clear policy vision, which, five years later is beginning to enter into force. Based on these insights, it is likely, that among other factors, initiatives with a less than complete set of core framing elements did not manage to transport a similarly universal message. Considering the example of the initiative DEC ("Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs"). Supported by 754 signees, DEC is among the ECIs with the lowest number of signatures in the dataset and beyond. Mainly organised by one private person and without partner organisations or funding, the initiative's main goal was to promote more responsible waste management and to ban the use of incineration plants. The reasons why this initiative did not motivate mass-mobilisation for its demands are, among the lack of resources, its less than complete framing. Most items on the campaign's website are mainly available in French – only a portion of the content is available in English. Also on the Commission's ECI registration page, no translation other than the original version is available. While French is one of the official EU languages, only providing text in one language limits the potential reach of the initiative, despite an environmental topic that might be of relevance to citizens outside of French-speaking countries. What is more, in comparison to successful ECIs, DEC published much less material during its signature collection period. To give an example: For the framing analysis, I collected over 140 documents (including website content) for the water initiative while the material published by the initiative on waste management comprised a total of five PDF documents. After the end of the campaign, a number of items (media reports, organiser

statements) were added to DEC's website. However, these documents are not relevant for the outcome of the signature collection and are thus not included in the framing analysis. In the documents forming part of the analysis, the initiative formulates a clear and detailed policy outcome it wishes to see implemented by the Commission. Organisers ask the Commission for the proposal of a directive regulating a more sustainable waste management by member states. The diagnostic frame includes the responsible entity and the formulation of a solution with seven concrete steps. However, beyond this, the initiative did not spell out a detailed prognostic narrative, motivational or credibility framing. Neither benefactors nor groups affected by the problem are named. In its formal registration document sent to the Commission, organisers point to the existence of possible risks of waste incineration and include a list of corresponding links to scientific articles. Most of the communication of the initiative was targeted at European institutions and not so much EU citizens. In this sense, ECIs have to establish a balance between attracting signees and providing the Commission with proposals in line with the institution's technical and legal logic. In the case of DEC, organisers did not reach signees with their issue – as the low number of signatures suggests.

In conclusion, as the absence of above-average signatures is the much more common outcome of European Citizens' Initiatives both in the dataset and beyond (many more ECIs have failed than succeeded in collecting over one million signatures), a separate analysis of the negative outcome seems not only warranted but also highly relevant. Understanding the circumstances leading to failed ECIs can help giving recommendations to future initiatives and policy makers who seek to improve the application of the instrument. Beyond the social relevance of failed ECIs, the methodological procedure of QCA requires that the analysis of the non-outcome is conducted separately. The findings for the outcome cannot be transferred to the non-outcome as they are qualitatively different states and not mirror images. In fact, the previous chapter has revealed that the presence of a complete ECI framing is a the most important condition for success. Framing was both a necessary condition as well as part of all sufficient solution paths for above-average numbers of signatures. For the absence of above-average numbers of signatures, an incomplete framing was only part of one sufficient component of the intermediate solution. Instead, absent funding appeared as key factor for ECI failure as the negative condition appeared as necessary and sufficient across the equifinal sufficient solutions. In addition, low numbers of staff have appeared as necessary for failed signature collection campaigns. These two conditions combined seem to be unfavourable starting conditions, as the case study of 30K demonstrated. Surprisingly, the two necessary

conditions interacted with two additional factors: external events such as technical problems and lacking expertise of staff. Three sufficient paths appeared from the Qualitative Comparative Analysis. The first path suggests that a threefold lack of funding, staff and partner organisations leads to failure. The second path includes lack of funding with above-average publicity activity. Finally, the third path points to the role of an incomplete mobilisation frame unfolding together with low to no funding at all. Unfortunately, public interest in failed ECIs is rather low and therefore, only little information is available. Thus, the sequence of causal factors could not be fleshed out for the non-outcome through the case studies to a similar extent as for the outcome. However, staying with the comparison of the findings for the outcome and non-outcome, the direction of my hypotheses have been confirmed overall (the negative outcome is connected to the absence of the conditions, while the presence of the outcome appears with the presence of the conditions) apart for the condition “publicity activities”. In fact, the absence of above-average numbers of publicity activities is connected to successful signature collection campaigns, while for ECI failure, higher numbers of publicity activities were present in the second sufficient path. This pattern in the data serves as an important finding to qualify the role of publicity for ECI campaigns. The case studies of the initiatives Right2Water and “30km/h – Making the Streets Liveable!” in the previous chapter shed light on the impact of public attention on signature collection outcomes: It is not the number of publicity acts that matters but key events – such as appearances in famous TV shows – can trigger sharp rises in public

7 Conclusions

In this final chapter, I reconnect the findings of my research with the corresponding academic debates and suggest avenues for further inquiry. I present an outlook for the possible future of the ECI and reflect on my approach's limitations. In particular, I discuss my contribution to closing a number of gaps in the current knowledge about the ECI and beyond. My contribution can be divided into two main areas. First, on an empirical level, my findings broaden the understanding of various types of collective actors in the EU, ranging from social movements, civil society groups and other organised interests. The project sheds light on the purposive behaviour of collective actors and their ability to connect with the citizenry in order to mobilise support for their goals. The second contribution is situated on both a normative and theoretical level. My findings allow me to draw conclusions in relation to the debate about the EU's democratic deficit and the connection of democratic theory to the ECI. I also argue that the theoretical framework and methodological approach I chose extends beyond the current approaches towards hypothesis testing in relation to the ECI and can be applied to other contexts involving collective action. In addition to presenting my contributions, I also critically assess the shortcomings of the approach and propose avenues for future research. To conclude, I reflect on the potential future of the ECI in light of its ongoing reform.

7.1 Findings and contribution

At the outset of this dissertation, I sought to gain a deeper understanding of two interrelated research puzzles. Firstly, I asked the question: "How and to what extent can the European Citizens' Initiative alleviate the elite-bias of European policy making?". Secondly, I addressed the empirical puzzle of varying success rates of ECIs in terms of their numbers of signatures. I connect these two puzzles by arguing that the ability of different types of organisers to collect as many signatures as possible feeds into the democratising potential of the ECI to European policy making. Previous research has not addressed the empirical puzzle behind ECI success rates and failed to provide a conclusive empirical picture of the tool's potential to diversify EU stakeholders. By providing a novel research design as well as analytical framework, I seek to fill these gaps. My project is situated within the growing body of literature about participatory democratic channels that extend beyond elections. In recent years, online campaigning and extra-parliamentary tools of participation and opinion formation have started gaining relevance, making the ECI, with its prevalence of online signature collection, a modern and

relevant research subject. In light of the proven positive effects of direct democracy on policy congruence, responsiveness of policy makers and the activation of citizens, the ECI serves as a so far unexplored test case for the European context. Studying European level mobilisation is relevant to understanding future patterns of politicisation. My work yields insights about the ECI's functioning which can form the basis for improving the tool in practice or serve as a guide for future organisers.

Another novelty of my project lies in the research design, which adds a new theoretical perspective as well as empirical approach to the study of collective action in the EU. The lens of the Resource Mobilisation Approach has not yet been combined with framing analysis. While scholars of social movements and interest groups underline the importance of resources and communication for goal attainment of collective actors, the two schools of thought are usually applied in separation. I combine the two approaches to provide a comprehensive picture of ECI activities. Methodologically, the use of QCA allows me to test hypotheses on both resource conditions as well as framing in order to explore their connection. By performing case study analyses of the different solution paths retrieved from QCA, I shed light on the sequence and underlying connection between different factors. Through this approach, I identify patterns across initiatives and provide an in-depth exploration of causality. The research design is applicable to other types of mobilisation on many different organisational levels. For instance, due to the universal nature of the conditions that I have developed, this analytical framework can not only be applied to national or regional citizen initiatives but also to other types of political mobilisation undertaken by social movements or even political parties. Causal factors can be added, changed and summarised based on the respective research context.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this research project is that the state of EU democracy is less desperate than commonly assumed. In contrast to the frequent criticism that EU politics is dominated by lobbyists with access and sufficient resources, the findings show that the ECI can indeed open a space for interest groups with lower resources to influence the agenda of the Commission. Surprisingly, the argumentative framing of ECIs matters more for collecting signatures than the amount of funds available to a campaign. This indicates that EU politics is not solely dominated by lobbyists and technocrats pursuing an agenda that is distant from the lives and needs of Europeans. On the contrary, the ECI requires grass roots mobilisation in order for an initiative to be successful. Another positive sign for the state of EU democracy is the fact that through the ECI, organisers of initiatives have established lively transnational communication networks, which can be considered nascent manifestations of

Transnational Discursive Spaces or issue-specific communication spheres exceeding national borders.

However, expectations raised during the introduction of the ECI were not fully met in reality. While institutional discourse emphasised the empowerment of the “real” citizens of Europe, the actual functioning of the ECI shows that conducting a successful campaign is hardly possible for a group of private persons. The ECI requires organisational resources, transnational networks and strategic planning. Rather than activating citizens directly, organised groups serve as transmission belts for the opinion formation of citizens.

Scholarship on the European Citizens’ Initiative mainly focusses on the most successful initiatives, while not fully taking into account cases, which did not achieve a significant number of signatures. Furthermore, there are no studies that systematically connect the organisational features of initiatives with campaign results. In contrast to this, my approach stems from the conviction that in order to understand the ECI’s contribution to EU democracy and European policy-making, we need to grasp the reasons for both failure and success of campaigns. In the course of this research, I sought to arrive at a deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms between the strategic behaviour of initiative organisers and the outcomes of their signature collection campaigns. To this aim, I created an original dataset comprising the full spectrum of ECI outcomes – ranging from highly successful to failed campaigns.

The outcome of interest throughout my research endeavour is the number of signatures of the different types of initiatives as an indicator of the degree of actual and potential success. I deem signatures to be a central factor for the ECI as the requirement of mass mobilisation distinguishes the direct democratic tool from other channels of influence on EU agenda-setting and policy making. While goals of initiatives can vary from creating legislation, getting publicity, changing the framing of an issue to building a bigger network of partner organisations (Bouza García and Greenwood, 2013), these goals are more attainable if more signatures have been collected. I argue that ECIs with higher numbers of signatures have a better chance of influencing the European Commission and national politicians. The impact of an ECI can last beyond the signature collection campaign if organisers decide to pursue their agenda through other channels and stay engaged to their cause. However, I expect the number of signatures to influence the attention an initiative receives from institutions and the wider public. So far, ECIs with the most supporters have received by far most media coverage. In the absence of clear policy output based on the ECI, except for the initiative Right2Water, number

of signatures is the best indicator for ECI success or failure. I consider the number of signatures of any given ECI as the degree of mobilisation, with effective mobilisation being connected to the achievement of the outcomes desired by an ECI. Getting an initiative beyond the threshold of one million supporters will always trigger a response by the Commission and bear the chance of creating European-wide legislation. The number of signatures and the factors associated with signature collection success or failure are thus at the centre of my study.

In a nutshell, my findings corroborate my hypotheses but also open up new perspectives on the participation of civil society and interest groups in the EU. The first part of the analysis chapter is dedicated to the outcome. I define a positive occurrence of the outcome as a signature collection, which yielded above-average values considering the spread of values within the dataset. Initiatives with one million or more signatures are perfect instances of a successful signature collection campaign and thus received the highest fuzzy scores. During the analysis of necessity, only framing appeared as a non-trivial superset of the outcome with very high parameters of fit. In other words, a fully-developed framing is a necessary condition for a successful signature collection campaign. This is somewhat surprising as I expected resources to play a more crucial role for the mobilisation of supporters. Based on the idea that funding, staff, network and publicity can be joined into the higher-order concept “ECI resources”, I created a conjunction of these factors, which I tested as a single necessary condition. While the combination of all resources received a similar coverage to framing, its consistency and relevance values were lower. Thus, framing by itself is a stronger predictor for success than all resources taken together. The relevance of framing as a necessary condition warrants a more positive assessment of the ECI’s democratising potential than previous scholarship has granted. In the presence of an encompassing argumentation covering the core aspects of mobilisation frames, initiatives can be successful without abundant resources. This new insight strengthens the potential of the ECI as a tool for empowering smaller organisations without a big budget. My findings suggest that the ECI can indeed open the agenda-setting stage to new organisations, which are not part of an elitist circle of Brussels-based interest groups. The result that no resource by itself is connected to the outcome but rather a combination of resources, confirms the idea of conjunctural causation – my data demonstrates that resources can be used by ECI organisers interchangeably. However, resources are a weaker predictor of ECI success than argumentative strength.

After the assessment of necessity, the second step of QCA is a sufficiency analysis. Unlike necessity, sufficiency indicates that the condition is a subset of the outcome: whenever

the outcome occurs, the condition is present. Sufficient conditions are determined through truth table analysis. Based on their membership scores, cases are assigned to the ideal typical combination of factors, which they suit best. Based on the number of conditions in the model (5), 32 possible combinations of conditions can be identified (2⁵). All four successful ECIs in the dataset are located within sufficient truth table rows, which demonstrates the strength and adequacy of the conditions chosen. The minimisation procedure using directional expectations yields two equifinal solution paths. Path one indicates that funding together with a complete framing leads to success. Three cases are covered by the path (R2W, ONE and COW). The second path reveals the combination of staff, partner organisations and framing as sufficient for a successful signature collection campaign (UBI). The presence of framing in both paths corroborates its importance, which has already been identified in the analysis of necessity. Comparing the remaining factors in each path, it appears as if different resources (funding in path one and staff together with partner organisations for path two) might act as substitutes.

To gain a better understanding of the interplay between the factors and explore the interchangeability of resources, I have selected the case of R2W to perform a typical case study. I consider the initiative Right2Water a typical case for both solution paths because not only does it fit with the first path, it also contains elements of the second solution which have been minimised from path one to eliminate complexity (partner organisations). What is more, the first path – of which R2W is most representative – has yielded higher parameters of fit than the second path. Not only does R2W stand out as a good representative of the solutions, it is also an initiative of high social relevance, being the first ECI to ever surpass the official threshold of the Commission. Thus, the case study demonstrates that despite lower numbers in staff (compared to other ECIs), the combination of funding, network and publicity proved to be sufficient for success. While these three conditions were sufficient for success, the argumentative strategy of R2W was a necessary condition for its trajectory. Through encompassing mobilisation frames, the organisers of Right2Water were able to unite a broad coalition of supporting organisations behind them. The universal nature of water has led to a commitment of the Commission against privatisation.

The connection between the conditions becomes apparent when taking a closer look at the process leading to R2W's success. EPSU, who was one of the main actors behind this initiative, reserved a substantial amount of funding (100.000€) before the official campaign launch and over the course of the signature collection campaign, spent another 40.000€. The money was used mostly to pay for human resources involving translations, IT and campaign

management. Parallel to the reservation of funds, organisers of R2W started building a broad coalition of partner organisations. The campaign was coordinated in the EPSU headquarters in Brussels while staff of national member organisations used their networks to organised separate activities and media appearances. While R2W reported above-average numbers of publicity activities with a focus on online-campaigning, the mention of the initiative on German television boosted the number of signatures. This insight helps to qualify the role of publicity activities. As the factor only appeared in one sufficient solution path in its absence, I conclude that it is not the overall number of publicity activities but their quality which matters, as was the case for R2W with one decisive media appearance.

The framing of the R2W campaign was the necessary factor, which activated the remaining resources. The organisers combined their own fight against privatisation of water services with the decade long struggle for recognition of water as a human right. They successfully provided diagnostic frames, which suggested precise steps to be taken by policy makers while putting forward a simple message (“Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!”). This way, organisers built an alliance with NGOs from the water sector and many other stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds. The prognostic frames were coherent with the diagnoses and featured a similar combination of global aspirations while maintaining concrete examples of people affected and possible outcomes if no action is taken by politicians. In their communications, which were updated frequently on the initiative website, organisers provided a range of motivational frames and demonstrated credibility by citing research, legal documents and providing examples of their own activities.

According to the logic of the method QCA, the reasons for failure of ECIs cannot be extrapolated from the analysis of success. Thus, I conducted a separate analysis of the non-outcome. The results show that across all unsuccessful ECIs, absent funding and low numbers of staff are necessary conditions for failure. Furthermore, the dominance of the factor “absent funding” is corroborated by its presence in all three intermediate solution paths. Using the case 30K, I demonstrate how an overall small amount of resources is connected to lower mobilisation. The organisers of 30K spent most of their funding to deal with technical issues connected to the online collection software. It took five months into the campaign until supporters were able to sign online and another month until the website was available in different languages. Clearly, the small network of organisers struggled with administrative and technical burdens, which hampered their ability to actually advertise their cause. Similar to

R2W, the organisers behind 30K reported peaks in signatures after publicity activities such as press conferences. Sufficient path two reveals that above average publicity is connected to failure – while this result appears counterintuitive at first, it mirrors the insights from the case study analysis of the outcome: While many ECIs displayed high numbers of publicity activities, only a few key appearances in mainstream media actually boosted the number of signatures for the successful initiatives. It appears as if a lot of publicity activities are required to increase an initiatives’ chances of having at least a few key public events. Why some initiatives managed to land such key appearances is a question for future, more in-depth analyses. Last but not least, the intermediate path number three indicates that below average funding and a lack of a complete mobilisation frame are sufficient for the failure of ECIs.

Overall, the findings draw an ambivalent picture of the ECI in terms of its potential contribution to EU democracy. The analysis of the outcome reveals that framing is a necessary condition for success – thus, the ECI has the potential to give organisers with salient topics the chance to shape the agenda of the EU irrespective of their standing in Brussels and level of resources. In other words, against the frequent criticism of its elitist nature, the ECI can indeed be used successfully by new organisations who are not the “usual” powerful players. The case study of R2W demonstrates that resources and partner organisation are the first steps in the preparation of a campaign accompanied by a strong framing. A surprising finding was connected to the way organisers advertise their initiatives. The quality of certain key public appearances proved to be more crucial than the quantity of publicity activities. The factors behind failure show that absent funding or low staff numbers were most common. This lends reason to speculate about the relationship between these factors: it might be that when ECIs fail to mobilise signatures, they stumble at the initial hurdles of acquiring manpower and funds for getting started in the first place.

With a few exceptions, most organisers provided well-developed mobilisation frames, which shows that developing a good argumentative strategy is possible despite lacking funds. However, the degree of change an initiative can achieve is limited on various levels. Legally, organisers can only propose topics, which are not manifestly against EU Treaties, and the Commission retains the right to reject an ECI at any stage. What is more, while resources played a minor role *across* the cases, the two ECIs which actually reached the threshold of one million signatures had above-average amounts of funding (at least 140.000€). The findings for the non-outcome corroborate that while framing is necessary for success, a certain threshold of resources is required to active the message of an ECI.

7.2 Challenges and avenues for future research

At this point, it is also important to identify a few shortcomings of my approach. The choice of QCA as a method and logical approach bears a number of potential pitfalls. Having been developed by Charles Ragin in the late 1980s based on Boolean logic as crisp set QCA, the relatively new method has been criticised mainly by proponents of the more widely established and standardised statistical approaches. Most critics target the newer variants of QCA such as fsQCA more so than crisp set QCA. They point out that QCA can lead to wrong inferences because small changes in key parameters such as choice of membership function, frequency inclusion threshold or inclusion scores change the results (Hug and Tsebelis, 2002; Krogslund, et al., 2017; Thiem and Dusa, 2013). What is more, they argue that QCA leads to conformation bias as it produces results even from random conditions.

A critical assessment of methods and falsification studies are important in order to avoid a dogmatic belief in the truth of the results presented. However, it appears as if the core of the criticism against QCA is rooted in a mistaken understanding of what the method and approach are aiming to achieve. Unlike quantitative approaches which seek to generate generalizable results based on probabilities, users of QCA do not claim to provide prognoses or make statements that go beyond the data. The aim of QCA is to explore patterns only across cases in the dataset based on careful theoretical reasoning. The conditions and outcome should never be selected randomly, but the researcher must justify his or her choices based on knowledge of the cases and theoretical reasoning. Through maximum transparency of the authors in relation to the cut-off points and calibration procedure, the audience will be able to follow their logic.

I have sought to provide a similar level of transparency throughout the research process. In the theoretical chapters, I put forward my argument why I am convinced that the hypotheses are adequate for the research context: As the organisers behind ECIs share similarities with lobby groups, NGOs and social movements in the EU context, they can be expected to follow similar behavioural patterns. Previous research corroborates that resources and an adequate communication strategy are crucial factors for any type of mobilisation. Furthermore, in the research design chapter, I lay open the calibration of conditions and the outcome as well as the membership function used. As the solution paths are contingent upon the cut-off points, (Krogslund, et al., 2017, p. 25) I carefully chose mine. Little is known about which minimum amounts of the conditions may make or break an ECI's success. Thus, the spread of the data of the conditions serves as the best available basis for my thresholds in order to create a first exploration of explanatory patterns. The cut-off points for the outcome are rooted in the legal

requirements for launching an ECI successfully as well as the spread of the values within the dataset.

In the future, other scholars may choose different variables and cut-off points based on their conceptualisation of the ECI and test my results by gauging the factors I selected in other ways. For instance, the resource conditions could have been combined into one index while simultaneously including external factors such as salience of the issue and institutional positions towards it. As the research questions pertained to factors internal to the different ECIs, I excluded external factors from the analysis. I introduced selected conditions first by themselves and subsequently in conjunction when it was theoretically justifiable, as was the case for the higher order concept “resources”. My aim was to provide a first exploration of the role of conditions individually and to test their interaction. Bound by limited resources myself, I was not able to take into consideration other potential external factors of causality. Their relevance remains to be determined by future research. For instance, I was also not able to give credit to the different modes of organisation of ECIs. While some of them were composed of campaigns with a clear organisational centre in a particular country, some were organised in more federal ways, while yet again others had a completely decentralised structure. The various modes of organisational structure in turn potentially shape the different levels of mobilisation (Parks, 2015). This perspective might yield valuable additional insights. My focus lay on creating a research framework to study ECIs irrespective of their internal structure or external political opportunity structure. Another interesting perspective for studying the ECI would be to consider the impact of time on the strategies of organisers. An application of temporal QCA could be a useful tool to judge the influence of learning, previous campaigning experience or the unfolding of the conditions over time, which was, unfortunately beyond the scope of this analysis.

Against the second criticism of QCA, scholars have found that the choice of the underlying transformational function does not alter the results; given that the crossover point remains the same and case membership is not skewed. The membership scores and parameters of fit might change as a result of the transformational function but the cases will remain in the same truth table row (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, p. 288). In order to avoid false inference, I have examined the solution paths using the method of in-depth case study analysis. This way I opened up space for studying the sequence of the factors and the ways they interact. Combining QCA with other methods in a multi-method approach has been suggested elsewhere as a useful strategy for qualifying the findings of truth table analysis (Schneider and Rohlfing,

2013). The evidence I found through the in-depth accounts of R2W, 30K and DEC supports and qualifies the findings from the truth table analyses for the outcome and non-outcome.

While QCA was the most suitable choice for my research questions and the size of the dataset, I have to mention some challenges I faced throughout the process of writing this dissertation. On the one hand, QCA is a method, which is very open to different types of data as it was developed to bridge the divide between quantitative and qualitative methods. It enables the researcher to combine both qualitative and purely numerical information to systematically understand more cases than a case study would allow. On the other hand, it requires full information on all conditions and the outcome. Thus, despite having collected information on over 30 cases, I had to reduce the case number by almost half due to incomplete data points. I identified two main reasons for missing information on the conditions and the outcome. First, the Commission only stores the number of signatures for ECIs temporarily due to concerns of data protection, which increases the difficulty of data collection. Once a signature collection campaign has been closed and was not successful, the statements of support will be deleted by member state authorities in order to protect personal information of signees. Getting in touch with organisers proved to be a second challenge. Organisers of less successful ECIs were particularly hard to reach. A few people admitted that they had lost motivation for the instrument due to frustration with the tedious procedures.

Readers may also challenge me for the way I have defined the outcome condition. The sole focus on signatures may obscure an ECI's achievements in policy-making. Of course, the success or failure of an ECI goes beyond the numerical value of number of signatures. In particular, collecting less than one million signatures should not be considered a failure per se as some organisers might actually have other goals in mind such as connecting citizens from all over Europe, creating debates, finding funding or partner organisations for future projects. From a democratic standpoint, what matters most beyond the results of the signature collection campaign, is the actual introduction of the proposal of an ECI into EU law. However, as the legislative procedure in the EU is lengthy, I was not able to take into consideration the actual impact of initiatives in terms of policy formulation and agenda-setting. For instance, over six years after its launch, the initiative R2W can be considered to have triggered the EU water conference hosted in Vienna in autumn 2018. While this does not represent a tangible policy output, this development reveals that the institution is granting importance to the issue of water. In the absence of policies originating from the ECI, from a theoretical perspective, the potential impact of any given ECI rises with its ability to collect signatures. Similar to social movement

research, the amount of signatures can be understood as the degree of mobilisation with effective mobilisation being connected to the achievement of movement outcomes. Getting an initiative beyond the threshold of one million supporters will always trigger a response by the Commission and bear the chance of creating European-wide legislation. The number of signatures and the factors associated with signature collection success or failure are thus at the closest proxy for the creation of legislation through an ECI.

7.3 Concluding reflections

In this doctoral project, I have sought to shed light on the underlying patterns, which shape the success or failure of ECIs. The ECI is the first transnational instrument of citizen-participation and agenda-setting worldwide and represents a highly interesting and uncharted research subject. The tool has great potential for creating sectoral European public spheres and alleviating the democratic deficit of the EU. So far, well-organised lobbies and interest groups with substantial resources and inside-access were the most important non-institutional actors influencing EU policies. The ECI has been accused of perpetuating this bias through the cumbersome administrative requirements and organisational efforts required for launching an initiative. On a normative level, the legitimacy of the supranational polity can only be strengthened if the tool allows new, non-established interests to alter the status quo of policy influence through entering the European stage by collecting as many signatures as possible. If this is the case, the ECI could truly act as an institutionalised input mechanism for European citizens, raise awareness for and create a common discourse on European issues. The types of interests that can use the ECI successfully should go beyond the “usual suspects” in the EU and enable groups with fewer resources to mobilise citizens.

My findings allow to draw mixed conclusions. On the one hand, the tool, with its inbuilt limitations, shows great promise in altering the status quo of European agenda-setting, because it has the potential to accommodate interests from outside the “Brussels bubble”. The empirical evidence suggests that argumentative strategy is far more relevant for success than resources – thus, at least in theory, enabling new actors to put forward proposals and influence EU agenda-setting. On the other hand, my findings confirm that well-organised groups dominate the ECI, not least because the two most successful initiatives in the dataset were among those with the highest levels of resources. On a normative level, the findings have several implications for EU democracy. The mere design of the ECI and the story behind its nascence reveal the preference

of the Commission towards a professionalization of actors participating in agenda setting. While the introduction of the tool shows the institution's willingness to open up its decision-making process to a bigger range of stakeholders, it is also bound by lengthy decision-making procedures and the preferences of member state officials who are the final decision takers in the EU.

A reform process of the ECI was launched by the Commission in 2015. Simultaneously, a coalition of NGOs and former ECI organisers has been actively pushing towards improvements of the regulation specifying the functioning of the citizens' initiative. A number of cosmetic improvements were introduced by the Commission, which point to the same ambivalent direction as my findings. In 2017, a public consultation for civil society organisations and public authorities was held by the Commission in order to improve the tool. Subsequently, in December 2018, the EP has supported the institution's reform proposal. While a few administrative requirements have been reduced, the biggest obstacles to actually set the agenda of the institution remain in place. Since 2019, the updated, more user-friendly regulation on the ECI allows citizens' committees to choose the start date of the signature collection period, translation services are provided by the Commission and organisers are not held personally liable in case of data protection breaches. Nevertheless, there seems to be an effort by the Commission to keep the ECI as non-political as possible: Organisers are still not able to propose changes of the Treaties and at no stage is the Commission obliged to propose legislation based on a successful ECI. The improvements to the ECI remain non-controversial and not substantial. In order to create something more than a toothless tiger, the regulation should include stronger political consequences for successful ECIs: A mandatory legal proposal by the Commission, a mandatory report on the ECI's topic by the EP as well as unified rules for the data needed from signees across all European countries, which would simplify the signature collection process to a large extent.

The ECI's current inadequacies and limited policy impact are intertwined with the unclear finalité of the EU. While the union's impact has extended far beyond economic integration into the realms of social justice and welfare, member state governments as well as the Commission are reluctant to introduce real politicisation to the European level. The current filter mechanisms in the design of the ECI hardly allow for controversial proposals. In the long run, the tool's potential impact hinges upon the willingness of national and European policy makers to accept more political debate and controversy.

8 Appendix

8.1 List of references

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8.2 Survey

Variablen-Übersicht

<https://www.soscisurvey.de/admin/index.php>

Variablen-Übersicht

Fragebogen-Interne Daten

Im Datensatz finden Sie neben Ihren Fragen folgende zusätzliche Variablen, sofern Sie die entsprechende Option beim Herunterladen des Datensatzes nicht deaktivieren.

CASE Fortlaufende Nummer der Versuchsperson

REF Referenz, falls solch eine im Link zum Fragebogen übergeben wurde

LASTPAGE Nummer der Seite im Fragebogens, die zuletzt bearbeitet und abgeschickt wurde

QUESTNNR Kennung des Fragebogens, der bearbeitet wurde

MODE Information, ob der Fragebogen im Pretest oder durch einen Projektmitarbeiter gestartet wurde

STARTED Zeitpunkt, zu dem der Teilnehmer den Fragebogen aufgerufen hat

FINISHED Information, ob der Fragebogen bis zur letzten Seite ausgefüllt wurde

TIME_001... Zeit, die ein Teilnehmer auf einer Fragebogen-Seite verbracht hat

Bitte beachten Sie, dass Sie die Fragebogen-internen Variablen nicht mit der Funktion `value()` auslesen können. Für Interview-Nummer und Referenz stehen aber die PHP-Funktionen [PHP-Funktion caseNumber\(\)](#) und [PHP-Funktion reference\(\)](#) zur Verfügung.

Details über die zusätzlichen Variablen stehen in der Anleitung: [Zusätzliche Variablen in der Datenausgabe](#)

Section GE: General

[GE01]  Dropdown Selection

Name

"What is the name of your ECI?"

GE01 Name

1 = "30 km/h - making the streets liveable!"

2 = Act 4 Growth

29 = An end to front companies in order to secure a fairer Europe

3 = Central public online collection platform for the European Citizen Initiative

4 = DO NOT COUNT EDUCATION SPENDING AS PART OF THE DEFICIT! EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT!

5 = End Ecocide in Europe: A Citizens' Initiative to give the Earth Rights (First Submission)

32 = End Ecocide in Europe: A Citizens' Initiative to give the Earth Rights (Second Submission)

6 = EU Directive on Dairy Cow Welfare

7 = European Free Vaping Initiative

8 = European Initiative for Media Pluralism (First Submission)

30 = European Initiative for Media Pluralism (Second Submission)

27 = Fair Transport Europe – equal treatment for all transport workers

26 = For a socially fair Europe! Encouraging a stronger cooperation between EU Member States to fight poverty in Europe

9 = Fraternité 2020 - Mobility, Progress, Europe.

10 = High Quality European Education for All

11 = Kündigung Personenfreiheit Schweiz

12 = Let me vote (First Submission)

31 = Let me vote (Second Submission)

13 = MOVEROPE

14 = NEW DEAL 4 EUROPE - FOR A EUROPEAN SPECIAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT (First Submission)

34 = NEW DEAL 4 EUROPE - FOR A EUROPEAN SPECIAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT (Second Submission)

25 = « On The Wire »

15 = One Of Us

16 = Pour une gestion responsable des déchets, contre les incinérateurs

17 = Single Communication Tariff Act (First Submission)

33 = Single Communication Tariff Act (Second Submission)

28 = STOP PLASTIC IN THE SEA

18 = Stop vivisection

19 = Suspension of the EU Climate & Energy Package.

20 = Teach for Youth -- Upgrade to Erasmus 2.0

21 = Turn me Off!

22 = Unconditional Basic Income (UBI) - Exploring a pathway towards emancipatory welfare conditions in the EU

23 = Water and sanitation are a human right! Water is a public good, not a commodity!

24 = Weed like to talk

-9 = Not answered

Section LE: Level

[LE01] Selection Level "Some ECIs were coordinated exclusively at the European-level whereas others had additional country teams whi..."
LE01 Level 1 = I was part of a country team. 2 = I was part of a European-level campaigning team. 3 = My European-level team was also a national campaigning team. -9 = Not answered

Section EU: European Level

[EU01] Text Input HR Start "How many people were on YOUR European-level team BEFORE the beginning of the signature collection phase?"
EU01_01 Full-time paid staff EU01_02 Part-time paid staff EU01_03 Unpaid staff (interns/ volunteers/ etc.) Free input (integer) EU01_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know EU01_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know EU01_03a Unpaid staff (interns/ volunteers/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked

[EU02] Text Input HR Add "Did additional people join your European-level team DURING the signature collection phase?"
EU02_01 Full-time paid staff EU02_02 Part-time paid staff EU02_03 Unpaid staff (interns/ volunteers/ etc.) Free input (integer) EU02_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know EU02_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know EU02_03a Unpaid staff (interns/ volunteers/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked

[EU03] Text Input PO Start "Partner organisations such as NGOs, civil society groups, companies and think tanks can be important allies ..."
EU03_01 EU-level partner organisations EU03_02 National-level partner organisations EU03_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) EU03_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know EU03_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know EU03_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked

[EU04] Text Input PO Add "Did your European-level campaigning team gain additional partners DURING the signature collection phase?"
EU04_01 EU-level partner organisations EU04_02 National-level partner organisations EU04_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) EU04_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know

EU04_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know

EU04_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know

1 = Not checked

2 = Checked

[EU05] Text Input

FU Start

"Funding is an important feature of any kind of organisation. How much funding did YOUR European-level team a..."

EU05_01 We had roughly ... €.

Free input (integer)

EU05_01a We had roughly ... €.: I don't know

1 = Not checked

2 = Checked

[EU06] Selection

FU Add

"Did your European-level team raise additional funding DURING the signature collection period?"

EU06 FU Add

1 = No, our start capital was sufficient.

2 = Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of

3 = I don't know.

-9 = Not answered

EU06_02 Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of

Free text

[EU08] Scale (fully labeled)

PU Media

"Publicity plays a large role in campaigning for signatures."

EU08_01 TV

EU08_02 Newspapers

EU08_03 Radio

EU08_04 Online media (online newspapers etc.)

1 = daily

2 = weekly

3 = fortnightly

4 = monthly

5 = never

-1 = I don't know

-9 = Not answered

[EU09] Scale (fully labeled)

PU Campaigning

"How often did YOUR European-level team use any of these activities to make your initiative known?"

EU09_08 Collecting signatures on the street

EU09_09 Street protests

EU09_14 Twitter account

EU09_16 Facebook page

EU09_20 Distributing campaign items (badges, posters, T-Shirts, flyers, stickers, etc.)

EU09_24 E-mail newsletter

EU09_25 Contacting politicians, civil servants and figures of public interest

EU09_26 Participating in conferences, public debates, consultations, summits

EU09_28 Holding workshops

1 = never

2 = monthly

3 = fortnightly

4 = weekly

5 = daily

-1 = I don't know


-9 = Not answered

[EU10] Text Input

PU Other

"Did you use any other activities to make your ECI known that have not been mentioned so far? How often did y..."
EU10_01 [01] Free text
[EU11] Scale (fully labeled) OT Important "According to your opinion, how important were the following factors for your signature collection campaign?"
EU11_01 Media strategies EU11_02 Events EU11_03 Funding EU11_04 Partner organisations EU11_05 Personnel/ volunteers 1 = not important at all 2 = of little importance 3 = of average importance 4 = very important 5 = absolutely essential -9 = Not answered
[EU12] Text Input OT Extra "Are there any other factors that influenced the amount of signatures of your ECI that have not been mentione..."
EU12_01 [01] Free text

Section NA: National Level


[NA15]  Dropdown Selection Country "In which country did your team work?"
NA15 Country 1 = Austria 2 = Belgium 3 = Bulgaria 4 = Croatia 5 = Cyprus 6 = Czech Republic 7 = Denmark 8 = Estonia 9 = Finland 10 = France 11 = Germany 12 = Greece 13 = Hungary 14 = Ireland 15 = Italy 16 = Latvia 17 = Lithuania 18 = Luxembourg 19 = Malta 20 = Netherlands 21 = Poland 22 = Portugal 23 = Romania 24 = Slovakia 25 = Slovenia 26 = Spain 27 = Sweden 28 = United Kingdom -9 = Not answered
[NA01] Text Input HR Start "How many people were on YOUR country team BEFORE the signature collection campaign started?"
NA01_01 Full-time paid staff

NA01_02 Part-time paid staff NA01_03 Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.) Free input (integer) NA01_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know NA01_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know NA01_03a Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[NA02] Text Input HR Add "Did more people join your country team DURING the signature collection period?" NA02_01 Full-time paid staff NA02_02 Part-time paid staff NA02_03 Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.) Free input (integer) NA02_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know NA02_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know NA02_03a Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[NA03] Text Input PO Start "Partner organisations such as NGOs, civil society groups, companies and think tanks can be important allies ..." NA03_01 EU-level partner organisations NA03_02 National-level partner organisations NA03_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) NA03_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know NA03_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know NA03_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[NA04] Text Input PO Add "DURING the signature collection phase, did your country-level campaigning team find additional partner organ..." NA04_01 EU-level partner organisations NA04_02 National-level partner organisations NA04_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) NA04_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know NA04_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know NA04_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[NA05] Text Input FU Start "Funding is an important feature of any kind of organisation. How much funding did YOUR country-level team ap..." NA05_01 We had roughly ... €. Free input (integer) NA05_01a We had roughly ... €.: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[NA06] Selection FU Add

<p>"Did your country team raise additional funding DURING the signature collection period?"</p> <p>NA06 FU Add</p> <p>1 = No, our start capital was sufficient. 2 = Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of 3 = I don't know. -9 = Not answered</p> <p>NA06_02 Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of Free text</p>
<p>[NA08] Scale (fully labeled) PU Media "Publicity plays a large role in campaigning for signatures."</p> <p>NA08_01 TV NA08_02 Newspapers NA08_03 Radio NA08_04 Online media (online newspapers etc.)</p> <p>1 = never 2 = monthly 3 = fortnightly 4 = weekly 5 = daily -1 = I don't know -9 = Not answered</p>
<p>[NA09] Scale (fully labeled) PU Campaigning "How often did your country team use any of these activities to make your initiative known?"</p> <p>NA09_08 Collecting signatures on the street NA09_09 Street protests NA09_14 Twitter account NA09_16 Facebook page NA09_20 Distributing campaign items (badges, posters, T-Shirts, flyers, stickers, etc.) NA09_24 E-mail newsletter NA09_25 Contacting politicians, civil servants and figures of public interest NA09_26 Participating in conferences, public debates, consultations, summits NA09_28 Holding workshops</p> <p>1 = never 2 = monthly 3 = fortnightly 4 = weekly 5 = daily -1 = I don't know -9 = Not answered</p>
<p>[NA10] Text Input PU Other "Did you use any other activities to make your ECI known that have not been mentioned so far? How often did y..."</p> <p>NA10_01 [01] Free text</p>
<p>[NA11] Scale (fully labeled) OT Important "According to your opinion, how important were the following factors for your signature collection campaign?"</p> <p>NA11_01 Media strategies NA11_02 Events NA11_03 Funding NA11_04 Partner organisations NA11_05 Personnel/ volunteers</p> <p>1 = not important at all 2 = of little importance 3 = of average importance</p>

4 = very important 5 = absolutely essential -9 = Not answered
[NA12] Text Input OT Extra "Are there any other factors that influenced the amount of signatures of your ECI that have not been mentione..."
NA12_01 [01] Free text

Section BO: Both Levels

[BO14]  Multiple Choice Country "In which country/ which countries was your organisational team mainly based?"
BO14_CN Country: Number of non-exclusive options selected Integer BO14_01 Austria BO14_02 Belgium BO14_03 Bulgaria BO14_04 Croatia BO14_05 Cyprus BO14_06 Czech Republic BO14_07 Denmark BO14_08 Estonia BO14_09 Finland BO14_10 France BO14_11 Germany BO14_12 Greece BO14_13 Hungary BO14_14 Ireland BO14_15 Italy BO14_16 Latvia BO14_17 Lithuania BO14_18 Luxembourg BO14_19 Malta BO14_20 Netherlands BO14_21 Poland BO14_22 Portugal BO14_23 Romania BO14_24 Slovakia BO14_25 Slovenia BO14_26 Spain BO14_27 Sweden BO14_28 United Kingdom 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[BO01] Text Input HR Start "How many people were on the organisational team of your initiative BEFORE the signature collection phase?"
BO01_01 Full-time paid staff BO01_02 Part-time paid staff BO01_03 Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.) Free input (integer) BO01_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know

BO01_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know BO01_03a Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[BO02] Text Input HR Add "Did more people join your organisational team DURING the signature collection phase?" BO02_01 Full-time paid staff Free text BO02_01a Full-time paid staff: I don't know BO02_02a Part-time paid staff: I don't know BO02_03a Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.): I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked BO02_02 Part-time paid staff BO02_03 Unpaid staff (volunteers/ interns/ etc.) Free input (integer)
[BO03] Text Input PO Start "Partner organisations such as NGOs, civil society groups, companies and think tanks can be important allies ..." BO03_01 EU-level partner organisations BO03_02 National-level partner organisations BO03_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) BO03_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know BO03_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know BO03_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[BO04] Text Input PO Add "Did you find additional partners DURING the signature collection period?" BO04_01 EU-level partner organisations BO04_02 National-level partner organisations BO04_03 Local partner organisations Free input (integer) BO04_01a EU-level partner organisations: I don't know BO04_02a National-level partner organisations: I don't know BO04_03a Local partner organisations: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[BO05] Text Input FU Start "Funding is an important feature of any kind of organisation. How much funding did your ECI approximately hav..." BO05_01 We had roughly ... €. Free input (integer) BO05_01a We had roughly ... €.: I don't know 1 = Not checked 2 = Checked
[BO06] Selection FU Add "Did you raise additional funding DURING the signature collection period?" BO06 FU Add 1 = No, our start capital was sufficient.

<p>2 = Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of</p> <p>3 = I don't know.</p> <p>-9 = Not answered</p> <p>BO06_02 Yes, we were able to raise additional funds to the extent of</p> <p>Free text</p>
<p>[BO08] Scale (fully labeled)</p> <p>PU Media</p> <p>"Publicity plays a large role in campaigning for signatures."</p> <p>BO08_01 TV</p> <p>BO08_02 Newspapers</p> <p>BO08_03 Radio</p> <p>BO08_04 Online media (online newspapers etc.)</p> <p>1 = never</p> <p>2 = monthly</p> <p>3 = fortnightly</p> <p>4 = weekly</p> <p>5 = daily</p> <p>-1 = I don't know</p> <p>-9 = Not answered</p>
<p>[BO09] Scale (fully labeled)</p> <p>PU Campaigning</p> <p>"How often did you use any of these activities to make your initiative known?"</p> <p>BO09_08 Collecting signatures on the street</p> <p>BO09_09 Street protests</p> <p>BO09_14 Twitter account</p> <p>BO09_16 Facebook page</p> <p>BO09_20 Distributing campaign items (badges, posters, T-Shirts, flyers, stickers, etc.)</p> <p>BO09_24 E-mail newsletter</p> <p>BO09_25 Contacting politicians, civil servants and figures of public interest</p> <p>BO09_26 Participating in conferences, public debates, consultations, summits</p> <p>BO09_27 Holding workshops</p> <p>1 = never</p> <p>2 = monthly</p> <p>3 = fortnightly</p> <p>4 = weekly</p> <p>5 = daily</p> <p>-1 = I don't know</p> <p>-9 = Not answered</p>
<p>[BO10] Text Input</p> <p>PU Other</p> <p>"Did you use any other activities to make your ECI known that have not been mentioned so far? How often did y..."</p> <p>BO10_01 [01]</p> <p>Free text</p>
<p>[BO11] Scale (fully labeled)</p> <p>OT Important</p> <p>"According to your opinion, how important were the following factors for your signature collection campaign?"</p> <p>BO11_01 Media strategies</p> <p>BO11_02 Events</p> <p>BO11_03 Funding</p> <p>BO11_04 Partner organisations</p> <p>BO11_05 Personnel/ volunteers</p> <p>1 = not important at all</p> <p>2 = of little importance</p> <p>3 = of average importance</p> <p>4 = very important</p> <p>5 = absolutely essential</p> <p>-9 = Not answered</p>

[BO12] Text Input OT Extra "Are there any other factors that influenced the amount of signatures of your ECI that have not been mentione..."
BO12_01 [01] Free text

8.3 List of websites used for framing analysis

ECI	Commission registry link	ECI Website
30K	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000014	www.en.30kmh.eu
A4G	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000004	www.act4growth.org
COW	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000004	www.happycows.eu
DEC	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000009	http://ice.id.st
ECO2	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000002	www.endecocide.eu
FRA	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000001	www.F2020.eu
FRO	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2014/000004	http://www.transparencyforall.org
LMV2	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000003	http://www.letmevote.eu
MP1	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000013	http://www.mediainitiative.eu
MP2	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000007	http://www.mediainitiative.eu
ONE	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/successful/details/2012/000005	http://www.oneofus.eu
R2W	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/successful/details/2012/000003	http://www.right2water.eu
T4Y	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000005	http://teachforyouth.wix.com/teachforyouth
TAR2	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2012/000016	http://www.onesingletariff.com
UBI	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000001	http://www.basicincomeinitiative.eu
VAP	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000009	http://www.efvi.eu
WEE	http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2013/000008	http://weedliketotalk.wixsite.com/wltd

8.4 Completeness scores for ECI mobilisation frames by initiative

Completeness scores for framing elements of ECIs

Total possible number of diagnostic framing elements: 4

Total possible number of prognostic framing elements: 5

Total possible number of motivational framing elements: 3

Total possible number of credibility framing elements: 10

Case	Diagnostic framing elements	Completeness score diagnostic framing	Prognostic framing elements	Completeness score prognostic framing	Motivational framing elements	Completeness score motivational framing	Credibility framing elements	Completeness score credibility framing	Completeness score across dimensions*
30K	4	1,00	5	1,00	3	1,00	10	1,00	1,00
R2W	4	1,00	5	1,00	3	1,00	10	1,00	1,00
ECO	4	1,00	5	1,00	3	1,00	9	0,90	0,98
ONE	3	0,75	4	0,80	3	1,00	8	0,80	0,84
COW	4	1,00	4	0,80	3	1,00	5	0,50	0,83
MP	2	0,50	5	1,00	3	1,00	6	0,60	0,78
UBI	1	0,25	5	1,00	3	1,00	8	0,80	0,76
VAP	3	0,75	4	0,80	2	0,67	5	0,50	0,68
LMV	2	0,50	3	0,60	3	1,00	6	0,60	0,68
A4G	2	0,50	3	0,60	3	1,00	4	0,40	0,63
WEE	1	0,25	4	0,80	3	1,00	3	0,30	0,59
FRO	4	1,00	4	0,80	1	0,33	1	0,10	0,56
FRAT	1	0,25	5	1,00	1	0,33	5	0,50	0,52
DEC	1	0,25	3	0,60	3	1,00	2	0,20	0,51
TAR	2	0,50	3	0,60	0	0,00	7	0,70	0,45
T4Y	2	0,50	3	0,60	1	0,33	3	0,30	0,43
Average	3	0,63	4	0,81	2	0,79	6	0,58	0,70
Median	2	0,5	4	0,8	3	1	5,5	0,55	0,68

*all dimension are attributed equal weight

8.5 Reliability test of coding for ECI mobilisation frames

Name of category	percentage agreement	coder 2	coder 1	Krippendorff's alpha
1 DIA_AFFECTED	78,26%	18	23	86,50%
1 DIA_CAUSE	76,92%	10	13	86,00%
1 DIA_PROBLEM	72,55%	37	51	81,00%
1 DIA_RESPONSIBILITY	90,91%	10	11	90,00%
2 PRO_BENEFACTORS	75,86%	22	29	85,00%
2 PRO_OUTCOME	75,00%	48	64	81,00%
2 PRO_PRECONDITIONS OBSTACLES	100,00%	3	3	100,00%
2 PRO_RESPONSIBILITY	90,91%	10	11	85,00%
2 PRO_SOLUTION	77,42%	24	31	72,00%
3 MOT_ACTION IDEAS	92,31%	12	13	96,00%
3 MOT_COMMUNICATE	77,78%	7	9	87,00%
3 MOT_SIGN	100,00%	3	3	100,00%
4 CRED_BACKGROUND	81,82%	9	11	90,00%
4 CRED_EXAMPLES action	65,00%	13	20	77,00%
4 CRED_EXAMPLES cities	100,00%	1	1	100,00%
4 CRED_EXAMPLES legal	84,85%	28	33	91,00%
4 CRED_MEDIA	100,00%	1	1	100,00%
4 CRED_ORGANISERS	60,00%	3	5	75,00%
4 CRED_PARTNERS	83,33%	5	6	91,00%
4 CRED_SCIENCE no quote	75,00%	3	4	89,00%
4 CRED_SCIENCE quote	80,00%	4	5	86,00%
4 CRED_SUPPORTER	75,00%	3	4	86,00%
Sum		274	351	
Average	82,41%			87,93%
Median	79,13%			86,75%

8.6 English abstract

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is the first transnational instrument of citizen-participation and agenda-setting worldwide. Its potential for creating a European public sphere and alleviating the democratic deficit has been widely praised. This dissertation argues that the ECI can meet these normative expectations only to a limited extent. Given the administrative hurdles, it cannot be considered a direct link between European institutions and citizens. Rather, the tool serves as additional input mechanism for organised interests, which act as transmissions belts for the demands of citizens. In light of the elite-bias of European policy-making, the democratising potential of the ECI depends on the equal ability of different types of organisers to collect as many signatures as possible, irrespective of their level of resources. Literature on national/regional forms of citizen participation and social movements as well as literature on interest group strategies in the EU provide the basis for drawing up hypotheses about how an ECI can maximize its amount of signatures. A survey conducted with

representatives of initiatives and a content analysis of materials published by initiative organisers provide the data for drawing conclusions. Information on financial endowment, human resources, network of partner organisations, publicity strategies and framing serve as starting points for a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Case studies are used to identify in-depth causal mechanism between different factors. The findings show that in the presence of an encompassing argumentation covering the core aspects of mobilisation frames, even initiatives without significant resources can successfully collect signatures. Surprisingly, framing is a stronger predictor of success than level of resources. This warrants a more positive assessment of the ECI's democratising potential. The factors behind failure show that absent funding or low staff numbers were most common, revealing that when initiatives fail, they stumble at the first stages of setting up a campaign.

8.7 German abstract/ Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die Europäische Bürgerinitiative (EBI) ist das erste transnationale Instrument für Bürgerbeteiligung und Agenda-Setting weltweit. Das Potential der EBI eine gemeinsame europäische Öffentlichkeit zu stärken und das Demokratiedefizit der EU zu senken, wird häufig hervorgehoben. Aufgrund der administrativen Hürden funktioniert die EBI jedoch nicht als direkte Verbindung zwischen europäischen Institutionen und Bürgern. Stattdessen sollte das Instrument als zusätzlicher Input-Mechanismus für organisierte Interessen betrachtet werden, die zum Meinungsbildungsprozess der europäischen Bürger beitragen und deren aggregierte Präferenzen an die EU-Institutionen weiterleiten. Da politische Entscheidungen in der EU meist von Eliten dominiert werden, hängt das demokratisierende Potential der EBI davon ab, ob unterschiedliche Organisatoren erfolgreich Unterschriften sammeln können, auch wenn ihnen dafür wenige Ressourcen zur Verfügung stehen. Um herauszufinden, welche Faktoren entscheidend sind, um eine erfolgreiche Unterschriftensammlung zu organisieren, werden Hypothesen gebildet basierend auf der Literatur zu nationalen/regionalen Formen der Bürgerpartizipation, sozialen Bewegungen und dem strategischen Verhalten von organisierten Interessensgruppen. Eine Umfrage unter RepräsentantInnen von Initiativen und eine Inhaltsanalyse von Materialien, welche von OrganisatorInnen publiziert wurden, bilden die Datengrundlage. Als Ausgangspunkte für die Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) dienen Informationen über finanzielle Ressourcen, MitarbeiterInnen, Partnerorganisation, Publizitäts- und Marketingstrategien sowie Framing. Um tiefere kausale Zusammenhänge herauszuarbeiten, werden Fallstudien verwendet. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass selbst Initiativen

mit geringen Ressourcen mit Hilfe einer umfassenden Argumentationsstrategie, welche alle Kernelemente von Mobilisierungsframes enthält, erfolgreich Unterschriften sammeln können. Überraschend ist, dass Framing einen stärkeren Einfluss auf Erfolg hat als Ressourcen. Daher ist der demokratische Mehrwert der EBI positiver zu bewerten. Fehlende finanzielle Ressourcen oder unzureichende Mitarbeiterzahlen sind die häufigsten Gründe für das Scheitern von Initiativen. Daraus lässt sich ableiten, dass erfolglose Initiativen bereits an den ersten Hürden einer Kampagne scheitern.