Abstract. Transnational advocacy is by its nature a matter of strategic venue shopping. Lobbyists originating from European countries, for example, that seek to influence the policies of international organizations are confronted with a complex range national governments, intergovernmental agencies and international organizations. The political science literature has developed interesting insights on venue-shopping, more precisely on how organized interests strategically manoeuvre in an environment with a large supply of policymaking venues. Based on a review of the main insights in the current literature, we develop some hypotheses aiming to explain the extent to which different types of transnational advocates use venue shopping. These hypothesis will be analyzed on the basis of a unique dataset consisting of approximately 500 interviews and surveys with transnational advocates originating in the field of trade and climate. The main advantage of our data is that it allows us to analyze specific institutional factors, organization features (such as resources and organization type) as well as the adopted policy positions.
Introduction

Many policies are not developed in one single policy venue, but often policy debates unfold in multiple venues, situated at various levels of government. The strategic selection and (multiple and reiterative) use of policy venues by policymakers and societal interests in order to advance their policy goals is called venue shopping (Murphy and Kellow 2013). Venue shopping provides opportunities to non-state actors to strategically select which venue and at which level of government to exert influence, even more so with the opening up of international organizations to the participation of interest organizations (Jönsson and Tallberg 2010). Venue shopping is often conceptualized as a core component of political advocacy, and is even seen as “the key variable linking policy venues to policy stability or change” (Pralle 2003, 237). Baumgartner and Jones (1993) have shown that multiple venues might be conducive for policy change and provide opportunities to actors that seek to change the status quo: societal interests and policymakers who lost a political battle in one venue may mobilize and seek attention via other venues to create a level playing field and seek support for their policy views. In a next step, policy advocates may use the new venue to put pressure on policymakers in the venue where they lost the battle, a so-called boomerang effect (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In short, a lost battle in one venue, makes that actors seek to expand conflict and generate policy attention by shifting their attention to other venues. The data we present in this paper shows that this understanding of venue shopping is maybe too limited.

A key feature of venue shopping is that actors may demonstrate a propensity to diversify the venues they address and/or demonstrate some inclination to address venues that are located outside the jurisdiction in which they usually operate. Some policy advocates specialize in one venue, while others target multiple venues. The venue diversification does not have to be restricted to one jurisdictional level, but can cross multiple levels. To give an example: if Greenpeace UK decides to lobby the national government (national level), the Scottish government (subnational level), the European Commission (regional level) and policymakers in the UN (global), several jurisdictional levels are crossed and we call this vertical venue diversification. How we characterize or qualify venue shopping also depends on the jurisdiction or level at which an organization usually operates. For instance, lobbying national governments is a form of vertical venue-shopping for global NGOs (for instance, Greenpeace International), while addressing the UN is an instance of horizontal venue-shopping for such NGOs (but it is vertical venue-shopping for domestically based NGOs).

This paper serves two purposes. First, we aim to identify and characterize different types and forms of venue-shopping among transnational advocates. Second, we seek to clarify
who is more (or less) involved in venue shopping and how we can explain variation in terms of venue-shopping. In order to answer these questions, we first review some literature on venue shopping and based on this we develop our research expectations. Second, we present an analysis with a unique dataset of more than 500 interviews with representatives from organized interests that attended the Ministerial Conference (MC) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**Conceptualizing venue shopping**

As venue shopping refers to the strategies actors develop in order to shape some policy outcome, scholars might be tempted to develop a narrow conception of it and, therefore run “the risk of overstating the opportunities for and frequency of policy change” (Pralle 2003, 234). First of all, advocates are assumed to select venues by making some cost benefit analysis. Organized interests and policymakers seek information about possible venues, assess the chances of success and select the venue where they expect to be successful. This idea is line with what economist would label as an expected utility model. The theory states that when making a decision under risk, actors are expected to take the consequences of choice and their associated probabilities into account (Starmer 2000, 335). In the case of venue-shopping, this would mean that organizations decide to invest time and money in advocating at another venue if they expect to gain something from it.

However, we argue that organized interests do not always select venues with a full understanding of the opportunities and constraints within it. For instance, during some qualitative interviews and our on-the-spot interviews at the MCs and COPs, we noticed that many organizations attended the international conferences, and thus did venue shopping at the international level, to get a sense of what is happening there. In many instances, it appeared that interviewees did not clearly know what they were expecting to gain from attending the event. They saw attendance as part of policy monitoring and a way to develop an insight into useful strategic opportunities. An analysis of our own interview- and survey results shows that less than 13 percent of the organizations attended the last COP in Paris in order to try to impact the content of the treaty. More than 22 percent of the organizations saw networking with like-minded organizations as the most important reason to attend the climate conference in Paris.

This, actors do not (and cannot) always have a clear sense of all venues and opportunities before they select one and become active in it. This lack of understanding of the
opportunities and constraints – which venues will give most added value in terms of policy influence – might explain the high volatility that is observed in many interest group communities at different levels of policymaking. At the WTO for example, research has shown that many organizations attend a particular MC, but not subsequent ones (Hanegraaff, Beyers, and Braun 2011, 20). The same is true for advocacy in Brussels: there is a large group of ‘tourists’ that lobby the European Commission and the European Parliament on issues that are specific and often also time-bound. Only a core group of actors has a persistent lobbying presence before the EU institutions (Berkhout and Lowery 2011). Mobilizing in new venues may not be so difficult, but maintaining a durable presence is not evident. If many advocates fail to recognize the opportunities given by a venue, or they realize that a venue is not what they expected and decide to leave, a change in policy is delayed or might never take place.

The notion that actors act according to some expected utility model when lobbying does not imply that all their activities are directed at achieving substantive policy goals. Various external and internal factors complicate the selection of a venue, including the image lobbying a certain venue gives to members or donors of the organization, the general public, and potential allies (Pralle 2003, 241). For instance, a national organization can lobby at international conferences (vertical venue shopping) while this does not generate many direct policy benefits. Yet, all these activities may generate benefits. For instance, they may attract new allies dealing with similar issues. This is one of the most important reasons for many organizations to attend the COP and MC. Key is that much advocacy is monitoring the policy environment, more precisely checking constellations of actors within various venues and the prospect to find allies. One way to learn about what goes on in a particular venue is becoming active in a particular venue. Holyoke (2003, 335) has shown that lobbyists avoid venues where their opponents are strong or “may engage in pro-forma lobbying, reserving their greatest efforts form venues in which the cards are not stacked against them”. The idea thereby is that advocates mostly seek to reach out to venues that are helpful in realizing their policy objectives or venues where the might be able to generate some influence (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Guiraudon 2000; Ley and Weber 2015; Murphy and Kellow 2013).

Venue shopping, regardless of whether the aim is to influence policy directly or is rather geared to monitoring the policy environment, has high transaction costs. It requires resources, such as personnel, to find out which possibilities a new, and often somewhat unfamiliar, venue can provide to an organization (Bernhagen and Mitchell 2009a; Eising 2007a; Wonka 2008). Therefore, we expect that the organizational capabilities affect the probability of groups targeting multiple venues, which has led to the following hypothesis:
H1. *The more resources an interest organization has, the more it engages in venue shopping.*

It is not just the amount of resources that matter, the sources of resources might be equally (or more) important. As demonstrated repeatedly, domestic interest organizations that have strong organizational capabilities and resources at the national level, are more likely to also develop venue shopping at another level (Beyers 2002, 593; see also Beyers and Kerremans 2012a; Kriesi 2007). They already have personal contact with policymakers at the national level, who might facilitate their transnational activities. In some cases, advocates might even travel to global diplomatic conferences as part of a national delegation. Being part of a national delegation gives actors an advantage and helps them to quickly gain insight in what the international venue might bring them in terms policy influence. At the same time, the processes at the national level may also constrain for venue shopping (Beyers 2002, 594). If transnational advocates strongly depend on the national level for their key resources (such as funding and members), they might feel less stimulated, or maybe hindered, to seek influence beyond the national level (for instance lobbying foreign governments or international organizations).

We expect that the impact or resource dependencies will be conditioned by what the core business of organizations is. Organizations can only spend their resources once and sustaining networks with many different venues takes time, expertise about the policy issues and financial resources. Following Buffardi, Pekkanen and Smith (2015, 192), we expect that organizations that do not have political advocacy as their core business but have other priorities (such as providing services to members), are less likely to diversify their venue shopping. These organizations are more likely to remain stuck in one venue, because key importance of service activities requires them to remain focused on one jurisdiction (Beyers and Kerremans 2007). Depending on resources from members situated within one jurisdiction requires to keep close contact with the grass-roots constituency. Such organizations are less likely to go venue shopping. In contrast, those with advocacy as their core business will seek to reach out to multiple venues, also because for them sustaining membership services might be less crucial, while expanding political opportunities is a core task. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

H2. *Organizations with global or regional resources are more likely to go venue shopping than organizations with domestic resources.*
**H3. Organizations that rely on domestic resources and see service provision as their core task are less likely to engage in venue shopping.**

Moreover, as discussed previously, the propensity to advocate policy preferences at a particular venue might be driven by the success advocates expect to gain. It is often argued that groups become active at the international level when they do not have the opportunity to defend or realize their interests at the domestic level (Guiraudon 2000; Kaunert and Léonard 2012; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Poloni-Staudinger 2008). Groups with an unwilling national government can use the international level to put pressure on their national government, a so-called boomerang effect (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Zippel 2009). Lobbying at the international level may thus be seen as compensation for a peripheral domestic position. Research at the European level seems to indicate that this is not the case: for instance, Beyers and Kerremans find a positive relation between a strong domestic embeddedness and extensive multilevel venue shopping (2012b, 278; see also Kriesi 2007).

We hypothesize that when domestic organizations decide about the venue(s) at which they lobby they consider two factors: to what extent do they agree with the position of the government and to what extent do they think they will have an impact on the position of their government. We hypothesize that interest groups who see their national governments as opponent, are more likely to go venue shopping. However, we think that the effect of political alignment with the national government is conditioned by how much an organization thinks it is able to influence the national government. If organizations have a vision that differs from the position of their national government, they might feel forced to advocate their position elsewhere, for example to policymakers from other countries or to representatives of international organizations (such as the UN and the EU), and use these other levels – as a boomerang – to put pressure on their own government. At the same time, if organizations have a different position from the national government, but are still convinced that they can persuade their government (for instance because the government is prepared to talk with a diverse array of interests), they might decide to spend most resources on the national policymaking system and not go venue shopping. This has led us to the following hypothesis:

**H4. Organizations who disagree with their national government are more likely to go venue shopping the less they think they have an impact on their national government.**

**Background on the international conferences**

In order to answer the research questions, we rely on a unique set of data collected
during interviews with transnational advocates active in the fields of trade and climate. In December 2015, the United Nations organized the 21st COP on climate change and in that same month, the World Trade Organization organized its 10th MC. During these conferences, delegations from member-countries negotiate about important policy issues. The MC takes place every two years and the COP is held at least once a year.

At the UNFCCC, the representation of non-state actors is highly welcomed (Hadden 2015). Once organizations are present at the COPs, they can attend most meetings and are invited to exchange views with policymakers through side events and position papers. Besides, the official representatives of the different non-state actors can express their opinions on the negotiations in the formal meetings. Moreover, although negotiations have been difficult during the COP in Copenhagen in 2009, agreements continue to be made within the UNFCCC and with that come policymaking processes that states and non-state actors try to influence. Transnational advocacy is somewhat constrained by the UNFCCC’s admission procedure and the limitation of the number of non-state actors present at COPs. First, in order to be able to attend the COPs, organizations have to register with the UN secretariat more than a year in advance. Another option is to participate as part of a delegation of another organization or to gain access to a member state delegation, but also here the number of badges are scarce. This has to do with the second difficulty, the huge density of the organizations that attend the COPs. For the latest COP in Paris, there were 1620 organizations with accreditation and many attended as part of a (national) delegation. Böhmelt (2013) found that at recent COPs, around 18 percent of national delegations’ members were representatives of civil society. With all these advocates, the COPs are now massive events where everyone seeks attention from and access to policymakers.

The WTO Ministerial Conferences can also be attended by organized interests. The accreditation process does not take as long as for the UNFCCC and all accredited organizations are able to attend the WTO Ministerial Conference with four representatives. During an MC, organized interests ranging from business organizations to research organizations to NGOs can provide position papers that are distributed by the WTO Secretariat to the members, although they are not allowed to express their positions in the general sessions of the MC. Besides, NGOs are briefed regularly on the progress by the External Relations team of the WTO, but the information presented, however, covers mostly decisions that have already been made (or a list of the non-decisions). Information on the ongoing negotiations is only scarcely disclosed. All this limits the opportunities of organized interests to influence ongoing trade negotiations. In addition, the setup of the MC in Nairobi
constrained informal interactions between policymakers and organized interests. Several interview respondents pointed out that they felt an atmosphere of “bullying the NGOs” (for instance, there was a separate entrance for organized interests and their meeting rooms were outside the building). Furthermore, WTO negotiations have proven to be difficult, as illustrated by a representative of business stakeholders in Brussels: “after 2008 basically, we have been experiencing a series of impasses. We had a bright moment in Bali, but we see that now we have an impasse again”. One could thus argue that the UNFCCC’s political opportunity structure is somewhat more favorable towards non-state actors (compared to the WTO). This leads to the question whether we observe more venue shopping within the UNFCCC than within the WTO?

**Data collection**

With a team of four researchers, we conducted interviews at the COPs and MCs with representatives of the civil society, businesses and policymakers. In total, we conducted 270 interviews at the climate conference and 131 interviews at the trade conference. Of all the interviews conducted in December 2015, 228 respondents represented non-state actors and 146 were policymakers. The rest consisted of representatives of international organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization or the Global Green Growth Institute (N=30).

Each day of the conference and specified per interviewer we have noted down how many interviews we did and the rejections we received. For example, on the fourth day of the COP in Paris, one of the authors did 15 interviews, but also received 9 rejections. Based on these notes, we are able to show that the response rate is almost 50%. Here one needs to bear in mind that the rejections could be from both policymakers, representatives of international organizations and representatives of interest groups. We were unable to specify the response rates per group of actors, since we simply approached people on the conference sites and did often not know what type of actor we invited for an interview. Also, sometimes advocates were invited (unintentionally) two or three times by different interviewers or they refused the first invitation but then agreed when invited again.

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1 In 2013, the first global agreement was reached by the WTO, the so-called Bali Package. The Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo, said: “For the first time in our history, the WTO has truly delivered. We’re back in business… Bali is just the beginning” (http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2013/12/trade-deal-reached-boost-global-commerce-201312763653722874.html). However, the deal collapsed over the implementation and India’s withdrawal of support on one of the key deliverables – the trade facilitation protocol (http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21611088-indias-scuppering-latest-trade-talks-leaves-no-one-better-bailing-out). Only in late 2014, the US and India managed to agree on aspects of the implementation, but the full package has still not been implemented (http://www.bbc.com/news/business-30033130).
Table 1a. On-the-spot interviews UNFCCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attempts</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Response rate in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM/IO</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1b. On-the-spot interviews WTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attempts</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Response rate in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM/IO</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These 401 interviews were combined with data that we collected through a web-survey immediately after both conferences. Between January and April 2016, we sent out surveys to all representatives of non-state actor organizations (NGOs, businesses, universities etc.) and country delegation that we did not manage to interview while we were in Paris and Nairobi. The questionnaires, which were only slightly changed, were sent out quickly after the conferences took place. In this way, we tried to reduce memory loss among the respondents; what happened during the conference was still fresh in their mind. A total of 3352 people received an invitation to complete a questionnaire. The respondents were selected on the basis of the provisional list of participants for the UNFCCC, this list includes the non-state stakeholders organizations, international organizations and states that received accreditation and the representatives of these organizations. In addition, we sent the questionnaire to everyone from whom we received a business card during our time in Paris, but whom we did not manage to interview.

Unfortunately, such a list does not exist for the WTO. There is only a list of accredited organizations and we had to web search people that were most likely to participate on behalf of these organizations. For example, we searched on the websites of these organizations for ‘international trade’-experts, or staff members in charge of public affairs. Searching country representatives was even more difficult. Due to tensions between China and Chinese Taipei, the WTO secretariat is not allowed to distribute the list of participating countries. Instead, we provided the secretariat with a list of countries that were still missing in our database and received the contact details of the focal points of these delegations. In doing this, we tried to make sure that there was an equal distribution among the different continents, but we also

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2 The majority of the changes were linguistic, for example we asked respondents why they ‘were’ present in Paris and Nairobi. We also had to introduce some of the questions more extensively, since we were no longer able to give an oral explanation.
made sure to select small and bigger countries. Moreover, we selected countries that represent the different coalitions within the WTO, such as the ACP Group or the Cotton-4. In total, we received the contact details of 25 country delegations and sent our surveys to a further 9 participants of whom we received a business card during the conference in Nairobi. At the WTO, only a very limited number of international organizations is allowed to participate due to tensions among states. Therefore, we were unable to send a survey to representatives of these organizations.

Table 2a. Surveys UNFCCC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sent</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Response rate in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3014</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b. Surveys WTO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sent</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Response rate in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSA</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of all the invitations for the survey that we sent (N=3352), 470 respondents completed the survey. That is a response rate of 14.5%. This rate is relatively good given the fact that we achieved this by only sending out two electronic reminders, after two weeks and four weeks. Besides, one has to bear in mind that our organizations come from all over the world and many organizations active at these conferences lack a website that is up-to-date and an email-address that is working.³

For this paper, we have added the on-the-spot interviews to the survey data (even the surveys that were not fully completed were taken into account), which has led to a data-set of 730 interviews with representatives of interest organizations. In the interviews and surveys, we have asked various question about the level on which they are mobilized. The results below show that the majority of the actors in our analysis are, according to their self-assessment, mobilized on the global level.

Data analysis

In both the interviews and surveys, we have asked various question about the level on

³ Of the organizations that we interviewed/surveyed, around 50 had no website or the website was not functioning.
which they are mobilized. The results below show that the majority of the actors in our sample are, according to their self-assessment, mobilized on the global level. That is, of the 638 actors we surveyed, 48 percent claimed to be active at the global level (n=307), 16 percent at the regional level (i.e. are particular regional set of countries, such as Central Africa or Europe, n=101) and 36 percent at the national level (n=230). We also coded the websites of all organizations that were present at the UN Climate Conference in Paris (N=1745) and the Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in 2015 (N=269). For each organization, we have coded their level of mobilization in which we make a distinction between the ‘resource level of mobilization’ and the ‘political level of mobilization’ (Beyers and Hanegraaff 2015). The first refers to the origin of the organizational resources. In this respect, resources are financial, material, or other support from donors, sponsors, patrons, or members. The second concerns the location or geographical level where most resources are spent. For instance, a Dutch NGOs, which collects most of its resources in the Netherlands, may promote human rights or rural development in some Asian countries. Similar as with resources, the scope of political activities might be national, supranational or global.

As can be seen in Table 3, the majority of the organizations that we identified for the latest COP and MC retrieve resources from the same level as the level where they invest it in. Yet, in 33 percent of the cases there is no clear alignment between resource dependencies and political mobilization (Beyers and Hanegraaff 2015). For example, an organization that gets its money from a US-based constituency has a ‘national’ resource level of mobilization, but if it campaigns on human rights in Central Africa, its political level of mobilization is ‘regional’. For example, more than 80 percent of the organizations that mobilize at the national level gains their resources from the national level (N=155 out of 186); these are actors with an overall low propensity to venue shopping. We call them – quite straightforward – ‘national’ organizations. However, of all the national organizations we identified 18 percent (N=51 out of 279) with the regional and global level as their primary location for political activities and 26 percent is active at multiple levels at the same time (for example, the national and the international level). These 126 domestically rooted organizations are ‘multi-level venue-shoppers’. Note also that multi-level playing is more likely to go upwards, namely from the national level to the global/regional level. Organizations that gain their resources from the regional or global level (N=79+273) are much less likely to mobilize at the national level

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4 This somewhat deviates from earlier research (Hanegraaff et al. 2015; Hanegraaff, Beyers, and Braun 2011), which show that most groups that lobby at international venues are national groups.
We call this propensity ‘reverse multi-level venue shopping’. The next part of our analysis will build on this categorization.

Table 3. Resources and political levels of mobilization at the COP and MC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political level of mobilization</th>
<th>Resources level of mobilization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>national</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>national</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regional</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This website coding offers us some insight into the general orientation of transnational advocates that are active in the areas of trade and climate. It does not tell us much about how these actors operate in concrete lobbying campaigns, though. Therefore, in the interviews held at the diplomat conferences and the online survey, we have asked respondents about the strategies they used in the year up to the conference with respect to a particular policy topic. These strategies include, among others, organizing protest activities, talking to the media and collaborating with other non-state actors. Since we are for this paper only interested in venue shopping, we focus on the strategies that refer to approaching policymaking venues (and we ignore the strategies of talking to the media or contacting other organized interests). The following items were used:

For the last year, could you indicate, roughly, whether you have used the following strategies never, sometimes, regularly, often or very often related to this issue?

- Talk to the government
- Talk to intergovernmental organizations (IOs)
- Talk to foreign governments or delegates

5 The policy topic was randomly selected from a list of policy topics or issues that was identified as salient to the organization.
6 The interviews were partly issue-centered, meaning that in the beginning of the interview/survey a respondent had to answer the following question: Based on qualitative interviews and desk research, we identified a list of issues that are currently discussed during the negotiations. For each of these issues, we would like to know how important this issue is for your organization compared to other issues you work on. For the UNFCCC, we identified six issues, such as the degrees-goal, and for the MC nine issues were identified, such as export subsidies in agriculture. From all the issues that the respondent marked as ‘important’ or ‘very important’, one issue was randomly selected and we asked several questions concerning this issue.
It is important to note that with this question we are not measuring the activities that respondents were doing at the global conference itself, but are focusing on the activities of non-state actors in the year up to the conference. These three strategies all represent policymaking venues and thus allow us to detect venue shopping.

**Figure 1. Venues contacted by non-state actors during year up to the conference (in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>never</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talk to government</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk to intergovernmental organizations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk to foreign governments or delegates</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Figure 1, most non-state actors, 56 percent, are often in contact with the national government.\(^7\) Most organizations also seem to be in regular contact with intergovernmental organizations, such as the WTO, the UN or the EU. Foreign governments or delegates on the other hand, are not approached very often.\(^8\) One third of the national organizations never talked to foreign governments or delegates in the year up to the UN Climate Conference or the WTO Ministerial Conference.

Based on the website coding of the resources and political levels of mobilization, we have created one variable called ‘level of mobilization’ (see Table 3). This variable consists of five categories: the first category are the *purely national organizations* (those that receive and spend their resources primarily at the national level, N=173), the second category are *national multi-level players* (those that receive their resources mostly from the national level, but spend it on the regional or global level, N=124), the third category are *purely transnational actors* (they receive their resources mostly from the regional or global level and also spend it there, N=356), the fourth category are *reversed multi-level players* (those that receive

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\(^7\) In case that an organization is not mobilized on the national level, the government refers to the government of the country that the organization is based in.

\(^8\) This question was only asked to organizations that originate from the national level, i.e. national level organizations (according to self-assessment).
resources mostly from the regional or global level, but spend it on the national level, N=15) and the final category are truly multilevel players (organizations that receive their resources from both the national and the regional or global level and also spend it at multiple levels, N=40). For each of the venues discussed above, we have looked at the participation of these different categories of actors.

**Figure 2. National government contacted by categories of actors during year up to the conference (in percentages)**

Figure 2 shows us that the majority of all types of actors have talked to a national government in the year up to the international conference. This percentage is highest among reversed multi-level players and truly multi-level players (respectively 64 and 62 percent). What is surprising is that this percentage is lowest among the purely national actors and, more strikingly, 12 percent of the organizations that receive resources from the national level and also spend it at the national level, never talked to their national government (and 36 percent ‘sometimes’).

For talking to intergovernmental organizations, the Figure 3 is in line with what we would expect. The large majority of purely transnational actors is often in contact with representatives of IOs. Reversed multi-level players (national organizations) and truly multi-level players are also often in contact with intergovernmental organizations. Yet, most striking are the strong differences between the three types of national organizations. On the one hand, we have national actors that were identified in the web-coding as multi-level players. Respondents representing such organizations show a much stronger propensity to talk to IOs (56 percent ‘often’ and 24 percent ‘sometimes’) compared to national organizations.
Whether organizations contacted foreign governments or delegates was only asked to organizations that are, according to their self-assessment during the interview, mobilized on the national level. Figure 4 shows that a large group, 43 percent, of organizations that receive their resources from the national level and also spend it on this level (the truly national organizations), never talked to representatives of foreign governments in the year up the international conferences in Paris and Nairobi. Organizations that receive most of their resources from the regional or global level and spend it on the national level (reversed multi-level players) indeed tend to talk to national governments often.
In short, it seems that a resource dependency towards the national level, depresses political activities targeted at this level (Figure 2, for actors active in the area of trade and climate), but also that these actors show generally lower levels of advocacy activity. If we combine the data of the three figures, it is striking to observe that these actors consistently show the highest percentages in the categories ‘never’ and ‘sometimes’. Apparently, a low level of venue shopping reflects an overall lower level of political activity.

In this paper we focus on the venue shopping-behavior of two types of actors: interests mobilized at the national level (such as ActionAid Uganda) and organizations mobilized at the international level (for example multinationals such KPMG or the NGO WWF International). As discussed previously: venue shopping is not the same for these two types of organizations. For groups that are mobilized on the regional or international level, talking to intergovernmental organizations is not a strong instance of venue-shopping. For an organization such as BusinessEurope, for example, targeting the European institutions is their core business and the natural focus of their advocacy efforts. What is venue-shopping for these types of actors, though, is talking to national governments. For domestic organizations, the national government is their natural advocacy focus. What we consider venue-shopping for them is talking to representatives of intergovernmental organizations and/or approaching foreign governments. The fact that national governments are the natural focus for domestic organizations is also confirmed by Mokken-scaling (in R’s Mokken-package). The procedure presumes that test results for ‘difficult’ (higher ranked items) items are conditional on success with ‘easier’ (ore lower ranked) test items. In this case, the more ‘difficult’ and distant venue – such as ‘talking to foreign governments’ – is preceded by the more ‘easy’ venue of talking to the national government. The overall H-coefficient of homogeneity is 0.484 (s.e.=0.055) which means that there is a moderate, almost strong, fit of the model. In addition, the H-values for all three items lie well above the 0.3 threshold (for talking to the government, the H coefficient is 0.425 with a standard error of 0.069, for intergovernmental organizations it is 0.515 with a standard error of 0.055 and talking to foreign governments has an H coefficient of 0.508 with a standard error of 0.058). These results clearly conform the cumulative nature of venue-shopping, namely that shopping at foreign governments and IOs is conditional on whether or not national governments were approached.

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9 We have also checked for the assumptions of unidimensionality, latent monotonicity and non-intersection and none of these assumptions were violated: $0 \leq H_{ij} \leq 1$, for all $i \neq j$; $0 \leq H_j \leq 1$, for all $j$; and $0 \leq H \leq 1$).
For our independent variables, we used a combination of interview-questions and the abovementioned website-coding. In order to measure the extent of agreement with the national government, we use the following question:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the position of your government with regard to this issue?

This question was only asked to representatives of a domestic interest organization (since organizations that are mobilized on the regional or international level do not have one national government to deal with). The question consisted of five answer categories ranging from completely ‘disagree’ to ‘completely agree’. The variable is not normally distributed, most respondents in our sample said that they agree/completely with their government (N=71). However, there is also a large group that disagrees (N=47). For the analysis, we have decided to recode the variable into three answer categories: disagreement with the government, neither disagree nor agree and agreement with the government. The majority of the respondents agrees with the government (N=99), while a large group also disagrees (N=57) (see also Beyers and Hanegraaff 2016).

To assess to what extent an organization thinks it has an impact on the position of the national government (for the expected influence model), we have used the following question:

- You may try to impact different actors or outcomes. With regard to this issue, do you feel you have strong, moderate, limited or no impact on the position of your government?

The variable has four answer categories: strong, moderate, limited or no impact on the position of the national government. Again, this question was only asked to representatives of organizations mobilized on the national level (N=198). There are few organizations that believe they have no impact on their national government (N=28) and few organizations that believe to have a strong impact (N=37). The majority of the actors believes to have a limited (N=61) or moderate (N=64) impact on the position of their own government.

To gauge whether an organization mainly deals with membership services or policy influencing, the so-called organizational focus, we have used the question:

- If you have to put a percentage on it: how much of your time do you spend on membership services and how much on policy influencing?

In the surveys, respondents had the possibility to write down any percentage, ranging from 0-100. In the interviews, this was technically not possible and we gave respondents answer categories: 0, 10, 20, 30 etc. until 100. This means that the survey data might be slightly more nuanced, with respondent stating that they spend 75 percent of their time on
membership services. The combined variable of membership services has a mean of 50.68 percent with a standard deviation on 26.4. This means that the majority of our respondents answered that they spend roughly half of their time on providing services to members and the other half of their time on policy influencing. For the purpose of analyzing the effect of core business on venue-shopping, we have recoded the variable based on the percentiles. The first percentiles ranges from 0-30 percent, the second from 30-50 percent, the third from 50-70 percent and the fourth is above 70 percent.

Information with regards to the location or level where most organizational resources are gained from is based on our own website-coding. For the purpose of this paper, we created a simple dummy variable in which 1 means that an organization mostly depends on national resources and 0 refers to resources gained from the regional and global level. In order to measure the amount of organizational resources, we use the staff size according to the information provided on the website. Since the number of staff ranges from 0 to almost 330,000, we have created four categories based on the quartiles. The first category ranges from 0-10.5 staff members, the second category from 10.5-27, the third from 27 until 147 staff members and the fourth category includes all organizations with more than 147 people working fulltime.

For the preliminary analysis in this paper, we have decided to run two logistic regression models. The first model explains why national organizations decide target intergovernmental organizations and the second model tries to get an insight in why national organizations address delegates of foreign governments or not. The variables were re-coded into dummy variables: all organizations that never talked to an IO or foreign government received a 0, the organizations that talked sometimes, regularly, often or very often to these venues received a 1.

For hypothesis 4, we expect to observe a relationship between venue-shopping and agreement with the national government and that this is conditioned by the self-perceived influence of organizations on the national government. Before further exploring this hypothesis through a regression analysis, we first present a simple cross tabulation (Table 4) of agreement with the government and influence on the position of the government. A bivariate correlation analysis between these two variables shows that a significant correlation (0.190**) between the agreement with the government and the perceived influence on the government. The table shows, first of all, that half of the organizations that we have

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10 The questions of agreement with the government and self-perceived influence were only asked to organizations that are mobilized on the national level (according to self-assessment, N=188).
interviewed agrees with their government (N=94). However, there is also a relatively large group of 29 percent (N=54) that does not agree with the national government. Interestingly, 34 percent (N=18) of these organizations does think that it has a ‘moderate’ or even a ‘strong’ impact on the position of their government. These organizations thus believe that they are able to change the position of the government in their favor. Of the organizations that do agree with the government, 37 percent does not believe to have any impact on the position of their government or only thinks they have a limited impact.

Table 4. Agreement with the government and perceived influence on the government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement with the government</th>
<th>Perceived influence on the government</th>
<th>no impact</th>
<th>limited impact</th>
<th>moderate impact</th>
<th>strong impact</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>N 14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 26%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither disagree nor agree</td>
<td>N 5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>N 9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>N 28</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 15%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 presents the results of four logistic regression models and shows that there are differences between venue-shopping at intergovernmental organizations and contacting foreign governments. Our first hypothesis, regarding the amount of resources is confirmed for both venues: domestic organizations with substantial resources (here measured as a high number of staff) are more likely to approach other venues besides the national government. The results also show that the strength of this effect differs among the venues, resources better predict why a national organization lobbies foreign government than why it approaches IOs. Another interesting finding is that the effect only becomes significant a very high level of staff resources: those organizations with 147 staff members are more likely to approach IOs and foreign governments than organizations with only 10 staff members.

The results also demonstrate that venue-shopping at foreign governments is not only a matter of resources. The origin of the resources is also important: organizations that depend on the national level, are less much likely to go venue-shopping when confronted with specific policy issues. Given the fact that the source of resources is not significant for targeting IOs, Hypothesis 2 is only partially confirmed. The logistic regression models also confirm our third hypothesis, namely that there is an interaction between the origin of resources and the core business of an organization that explains why organizations engage in
venue-shopping or not. Compared to organizations that only spend 0 to 30 percent of their
time on providing services to members, those organizations from whom membership services
are more of a core task, are less likely to go venue shopping. This is not the case for all
categories of organizations, which might be explained by the fact that there is an interaction
effect with the sources of resources (resource level of mobilization). Our models indicate that
if national organizations consider membership services important, but not a core task of the
organization (they do not spend more than 50 percent on it), and they depend on the national
level for their resources, these organizations are more likely to go venue-shopping. True, the
effects are not very strong though, and further research into the interdependence between
sources of resources and the core business of an organization is necessary.

Hypothesis 4 is not confirmed. Even though the variables of agreement with the
government and self-perceived influence on the position of the national government are
significantly correlated, there does not seem to be an interaction effect on venue shopping in a
multivariate analysis. Besides, the extent to which non-state actors believe they have an
impact on the position of their national government does not explain whether they approach
IOs or foreign governments. What the model on contacting foreign governments does show,
though, is that those organizations that agree with their national government are significantly
more likely to approach foreign governments. This suggests that we need to further look into
the relationship between perceived influence and agreement with the government and the
effect on venue shopping.
Table 5. Logistic regression models of venue shopping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact IOs With all interaction tests</th>
<th>Contact IOs Significant interaction tests</th>
<th>Contact foreign governments With all interaction tests</th>
<th>Contact foreign governments Significant interaction tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>Coef. (s.e.)</td>
<td>Coef. (s.e.)</td>
<td>Coef. (s.e.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.872 (1.355))</td>
<td>0.895 (1.234)</td>
<td>0.710 (1.370)</td>
<td>1.150 (1.224)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (10.50-27 staff)</td>
<td>-0.042 (0.689)</td>
<td>0.060 (0.676)</td>
<td>0.276 (0.629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (27-147 staff)</td>
<td>0.970 (0.765)</td>
<td>1.027 (0.756)</td>
<td>0.278 (0.593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources (&gt; 147 staff)</td>
<td>1.591* (0.930)</td>
<td>1.558 (0.908)*</td>
<td>1.660** (0.787)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource level of mobilization (national)</td>
<td>-1.908 (1.298)</td>
<td>-1.729 (1.242)</td>
<td>-2.842** (1.246)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on position government</td>
<td>1.448 (0.951)</td>
<td>1.156 (0.767)</td>
<td>1.573 (1.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement with the government (neither…nor)</td>
<td>16.514 (1471.083)</td>
<td>0.016 (0.772)</td>
<td>-0.507 (2.328)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement with the government (agree)</td>
<td>0.377 (1.657)</td>
<td>0.955 (0.646)</td>
<td>17.027 (1313.798)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on position government * Agreement with the government (neither…nor)</td>
<td>-16.742 (1471.084)</td>
<td>0.148 (2.392)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on position government * Agreement with the government (agree)</td>
<td>0.608 (1.785)</td>
<td>-16.113 (1313.798)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (30-50% membership services)</td>
<td>-3.289** (1.483)</td>
<td>-3.124 (1.427)**</td>
<td>-2.642* (1.494)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (50-70% membership services)</td>
<td>-0.686 (1.618)</td>
<td>-0.587 (1.586)</td>
<td>-0.526 (1.587)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (&gt;70% membership services)</td>
<td>-1.721 (1.468)</td>
<td>-1.729 (1.242)</td>
<td>-2.341* (1.357)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (30-50%) * Resource level of mobilization</td>
<td>3.163 (1.725)*</td>
<td>2.939 (1.663)*</td>
<td>3.142* (1.679)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (50-70%) * Resource level of mobilization</td>
<td>2.954 (2.068)</td>
<td>2.684 (1.987)</td>
<td>1.410 (1.728)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational focus (&gt;70%) * Resource level of mobilization</td>
<td>2.767 (1.797)</td>
<td>2.133 (1.715)</td>
<td>2.548 (1.564)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*=0.1, **=0.05, ***=0.01
Conclusion

In this paper we conceptualized venue shopping as the strategies that non-state actors develop in order to shape policy outcomes. We distinguished between horizontal and vertical venue shopping, where horizontal venue shopping refers to advocating preferences at multiple venues within one jurisdictional level and vertical venue shopping crosses multiple jurisdictional levels. We also identified some problems with the conceptualization of venue shopping. First, organized interests are often assumed to strategically select the venues they become active at, based on a cost-benefit analysis or more precisely the expected policy success. However, venues are not always chosen strategically. Organizations may select specific venues without being aware of all the opportunities the venue provides. Second, influencing specific policy outcomes is not the sole reason for organizations to become active at a certain venue: organizations might become active at, for example, the international level, to attract new allies or to show the members and donors that they are actively working on some particular issues. We argue that venue shopping is not only driven by strategic cost-benefit considerations, but is also steered by structural factors, such as the domestic embeddedness of the non-state actors and from which level their resources come (i.e. Beyers and Kerremans 2012c; Pralle 2003).

Next to conceptualizing venue shopping, we also tried to explain which type of non-state actors are more likely to be involved in venue shopping. Here our preliminary analysis leads to two relevant findings. First, based on a comparison of the interview and survey data with our own web coding of resource level of mobilization and political level of mobilization, we have developed a new categorization for actors in the context of venue shopping. The first type of actors are the purely ‘national’ organizations that receive money from the national level and also spend it there. The second type of actors are ‘multi-level venue-shoppers’, these organizations receive money from the national level, but they spend it on the regional and/or global level as well. The third type of actors are truly ‘transnational’ organizations that receive money from regional and/or global level and also spend it there. The fourth type of actors are the ‘reverse multi-level venue-shoppers’. These venue-shoppers are regional or global organizations that mobilize at the national level. Our analysis has shown that venue-shopping is more likely to go upwards, i.e. from the national level to the regional/global level, than the other way around. Second, the results of the logistic regression analyses indicate that venue shopping is to a large extent explained by the amount of resources and the sources of resources, where the latter is conditioned by the core business of an organization. National organizations with a high number of staff are more likely to contact IOs or foreign...
governments than organizations with only a few people working for them, which is in line
with previous research on advocacy at the European level (Bernhagen and Mitchell 2009b;
Eising 2007b; Wonka 2008). Our analysis adds that if organizations receive their resources
from the national level, it matters how important providing services to members is to them.
Organizations that depend on the national level for their resources and find membership
services a core task, are less likely to go venue shopping. The logistic regression models do
not confirm our expectations with regards to agreement with the government and self-
perceived influence on the position of the government. In the future, we plan to further look
into the relationship between these two variables and their effect on venue shopping.
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