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Published Version:
Pritoni, A., Vicentini, G. (2022). Something New on the Western Front. Twenty years of interest group research (1999-2018). POLITICAL STUDIES REVIEW, 20(1), 36-46 [10.1177/1478929920943502].

Availability:
This version is available at: https://hdl.handle.net/11585/990014 since: 2024-10-07

Published:

DOI: http://doi.org/10.1177/1478929920943502

Something New on the Western Front
Twenty years of interest group research (1999-2018)

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ABSTRACT: In a book published in 1998, Baumgartner and Leech argued that interest group research was characterized by 'elegant irrelevance'; ten years later, Beyers and colleagues linked this to a number of conceptual, methodological and disciplinary barriers which render(ed) the accumulation of knowledge in this bulk of literature difficult. Are those same challenges still slowing down the study of interest groups and lobbying? The main aim of this paper is to review all interest group scientific articles published in the top-50 political science journals between 1999 and 2018 in order to answer this question. Our results show a growing community focusing on many themes, preferring quantitative approaches, and analyzing more and more case studies. Interest group research has never before been so lively.

KEYWORDS: Interest groups – Lobbying – Literature review – Methods

Introduction

In a famous book written in 1998, Baumgartner and Leech (1998, 17) defined research on interest groups in the United States as being characterized by 'elegant irrelevance'. Ten years later, Beyers, Eising and Maloney (2008, 1103) recognized that interest group research – both in America and in Europe – continued to represent a 'niche field' in political science. The difficulties encountered by interest group research are not fortuitous. Beyers and his colleagues focused on four main challenges which interest group scholars have had to confront and which rendered the accumulation of knowledge in this bulk of literature arduous.

Firstly, '*…this phenomenon […] is largely an artefact of size: fewer scholars work in the group area than in party politics or policy studies*' (*ibidem*, 1103). Secondly, in the literature there is no consensus even with respect to the very definition of what an interest group is or should be (Baroni *et al*. 2014), which means that too often different works do not 'talk' to one another. The third main challenge stemmed from the fact that – for a long

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time – research agendas on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean proceeded largely separated (Mahoney and Baumgartner 2008, 1253-1256): on the one hand, American scholars have focused mainly on the analysis of lobbying tactics and strategies, as well as on the problem of collective action, in the wake of the seminal work of Mancur Olson (1965); on the other hand, European studies have long preferred to investigate whether interest groups are influential in the policy process. Fourthly, even when the intention to go beyond separate research agendas has become more evident – especially since the beginning of the 2000s – this worthy momentum has long been frustrated by the absence of international datasets, which has made comparative analysis practically impossible (Lowery *et al*. 2008). Only in very recent years have scholars of different nationalities started to work systematically together, following a very interesting comparative perspective[1].

Despite these persistent difficulties, studies on interest groups and lobbying have grown at a remarkable pace especially in recent years: in both the United States (Hojnacki *et al*. 2012; de Figueiredo and Kelleher-Richter 2014) and in Europe (Bunea and Baumgartner 2014), in fact, the 2000s saw the proliferation of interest group studies, which now represent a significant part of the international political science literature. Moreover, the first scientific journal entirely dedicated to the study of interest groups and lobbying has emerged: 'Interest Groups & Advocacy', founded in 2012. The main aim of this literature review is therefore to verify whether, as well as the extent to which, the challenges identified over ten years ago have been overcome and, in turn, the accumulation of knowledge in this bulk of literature is currently easier and more widespread than it was in the past.

To do so, we conducted a quali-quantitative analysis of all scientific articles – containing the words 'interest group(s)', 'pressure group(s)', 'advocacy (groups)', 'lobby(ies)' and 'lobbying' in the title (or subtitle) – published in the top-50 political science scientific journals from January 1999 to December 2018. Furthermore, all articles published in 'Interest Groups & Advocacy' (IG&A) were added to this original corpus, starting with the first issue of 2012. Our research effort is different from other works that have been recently published, discussing more substantive issues in the literature (Beyers *et al*. 2008; Hojnacki *et al*. 2012; de Figueiredo and Kelleher-Richter 2014). More precisely, this article represents a meta-review having the purpose of assessing how interest group research has evolved over years: thus, we analyze the content of articles only indirectly.

Our results are rather promising for interest group research: not only is the community clearly growing in its main numbers, but scholars currently study similar things in (much more) similar ways, which allows the accumulation of knowledge to be easier. Moreover, comparative studies are now more widespread than in the past. All this led interest group literature to be more cited over years and, in turn, (a little bit) more central within political science as a whole. There is still much to be done, obviously. Yet interest group research has never before been so lively.

How we structured our dataset (1999-2018)

As many other recent literature reviews, in this study we focus solely on articles published in scientific journals. Theoretically, the decision to circumscribe the analysis to scientific articles allows a greater uniformity with respect to the unit of analysis and focuses our attention on scientific products which have the greatest impact on the accumulation of knowledge in a given area of research[2] (Bastow *et al*. 2014, 38). Practically, a different choice would have made the construction of the database an insuperable effort for just two researchers (the authors of this article).

The main criterion for identifying the journals to scrutinize – together with 'Interest Groups & Advocacy – was the *Impact Factor* for the year 2017 (the last available at the time of dataset construction): the top-50 political science journals have therefore been selected. Once journals were identified, the next step was to agree on the criterion (or criteria) through which to select articles to analyze. All the original articles published on IG&A have been taken into consideration: 104 pieces of research published between May 2012 and December 2018. With respect to all other journals, instead, we have scrutinized their online archives from January 1999 to December 2018, looking for articles whose titles (or sub-titles) included at least one of the following (combinations of) words: 'interest group'; 'interest groups'; 'lobby'; 'lobbies'; 'lobbying'; 'pressure group'; 'pressure groups', 'advocacy'; and 'advocacy group(s)'. As a result, this meta-review examines 453 scientific articles published in 43 journals[3] between January 1999 and December 2018[4].

Our choice to start the analysis in 1999 follows two interlinked aims: firstly, precisely because of the abovementioned book by Baumgartner and Leech in 1998, it is interesting to analyze what has happened since their well-known claim on the 'elegant irrelevance' of interest group research. Secondly, our decision to focus on the period 1999-2018 is also useful to compare two equal sub-periods of ten years: the former before the aforementioned article by Beyers and colleagues (2008), and the latter after that same article. In this way, we are able to ascertain whether the challenges they identified to accumulation of knowledge in interest group and lobbying research remain in place.

For each of the 453 articles we sampled, we collected the following information: *a)* author(s); *b)* year of publication; *c)* journal of publication; *d)* topic under scrutiny; *e)* research design; *f)* case or cases studied. Yet, if the detection of author(s), year, journal and case(s) studied is almost immediate, the same cannot be said with regard either to the topic analyzed, or the research design. With regard to both these dimensions, in fact, it is first necessary to propose a classification of the different categories which constitute them.

On this, let us first clarify that we opted for a mutually exclusive classification scheme for both topics and methods: this means that the same article cannot be assigned to more than one category of the classification. Secondly, between the alternatives of proceeding inductively – i.e. starting from the empirical analysis of articles in order to identify dimensions of variation approximating different coding categories – or deductively – i.e. starting from a theory-driven classification scheme to differentiate among articles – the latter option has been preferred. More precisely, the attribution of a given article to a particular topic category depends on the research question and, as a consequence, the dependent variable of the study[5]. However, research questions are almost unlimited, as well as topics to be studied. To reduce complexity, we thus decided to make use of the well-known 'influence production process' (IPP) theorized by David Lowery and Virginia Gray (2004, 164). As a result, we identified four broad topic categories which more or less resemble the consecutive stages of the IPP: *i)* 'IPP 1 – Collective action and mobilization'; *ii)* 'IPP 2 – Organization maintenance and population ecology studies'; *iii)* 'IPP 3 – Lobbying and institutional access'; *iv)* 'IPP 4 – Policy influence/policy success'. We also added a fifth residual category ('Other') to code articles which cannot belong to any of the former categories[6].

As for methods, our first step was to distinguish between empirical articles and theoretical articles. The former present original empirical data, whereas the latter do not. It is obvious that there is theory in both theoretical and empirical articles. However, while empirical articles test their theoretical expectations on real-world data, theoretical articles – even when they demonstrate the plausibility of their framework – generally make use of data simulations. Then, the attribution of a given empirical article to a particular methods category depends on the unit of analysis of the study, which the research question is linked with. On this, we thus differentiate among: *i)* 'E1 – Qualitative case study'; *ii)* 'E2 – Small-N qualitative comparison'; *iii)* 'E3 – Large-N quantitative analysis'; *iv)* 'E4 – Social Network Analysis'; *v)* 'E5 – Qualitative comparative analysis'. This means that, for example, if a study presents data on thousands interest groups in a single country, it is coded as either 'Large-N quantitative analysis' or 'qualitative case study' if the unit of analysis is the individual interest group or the whole interest system, respectively. Instead, where theoretical articles are concerned, we identified the following four coding categories: *i)* 'T1 – Conceptual analysis'; *ii)* 'T2 – Theoretical model'; *iii)* 'T3 – Discussion on methods'; *iv)* 'T4 – Literature review'). For more details on the coding of both topics and methods, please see the Online Appendix (Table A2).

Finally, the coding procedure was developed practically in two steps: first, each article was coded separately by each author; second, contradictory cases – i.e., articles that were coded differently by different coders (approximately 10% of the whole sample with regard to topics and 5% of the whole sample with respect to methods) – were solved jointly in a subsequent stage.

Where is interest group research going? A multi-dimensional analytical framework

Interest group research has traditionally faced various challenges to the accumulation of knowledge. Building on previous work – above all, that of Beyers, Eising and Maloney in 2008 – this analysis focuses on four problems especially: *i)* the fact that only a small community of scholars studies interest groups and lobbying; *ii)* the conceptual shortcomings characterizing this bulk of literature; *iii)* the fact that – traditionally – research agendas in the US and in Europe have proceeded largely separately; *iv)* the (relative) absence of comparative studies.

To assess whether the community of lobbying scholars is still 'small' or, on the contrary, is growing/dropping at a significant pace, we focus on three specific indicators: *a)* the absolute number of authors of scientific articles on interest groups and lobbying in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018; *b)* the total number of countries analyzed in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018; *c)* the total number of geo-political areas analyzed in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018. The first indicator aims at 'measuring' the community with respect to its actual size, whereas the second and the third indicator deal with that size of the community from a territorial point of view[7].

The second challenge characterizing interest group research is the fact that scholars do not agree even on the very conceptual foundations of their own (sub-)discipline. First of all, there is no agreement on what the empirical object of scientific research is: in the literature there are scholars who prefer the so-called 'organizational definition' of interest group, and scholars who opt for the so-called 'behavioral definition' of interest groups (Baroni *et al*. 2014). In the former case, only associational groups are studied, whereas in the latter private firms, institutions and even individuals are also analyzed. Thus, the accumulation of knowledge clashes with the fact that the unit of analysis is not always the same. Secondly, even when we all agree on the definition of the unit of analysis, different scholars use different terms to indicate the same empirical object: 'interest group', 'pressure group', 'lobby', 'organized interest', are all terms that are frequently used in the literature. However, they are not always completely interchangeable. Again, this means that the accumulation of knowledge in interest group research is rather problematic.

To ascertain whether interest group research has become more conceptually consistent over recent decades, we focus on two specific indicators: *a)* the percentage of scientific articles exclusively devoted to conceptual analysis in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018; *b)* the level of 'terminological differentiation' characterizing all articles published in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018. While the former is easily understandable (it simply coincides with the methods category ‘T1 – Conceptual analysis’), the latter merits some methodological clarification. Firstly, we count how many articles had the term ‘interest group’, ‘pressure group’, ‘advocacy group’ and ‘lobby/lobbying’, in their title/sub-title in both periods (1999-2008 and 2009-2018, respectively). Secondly, we calculated a Gini Coefficient[8] to measure the extent to which the distribution of terms was (more or less) equally distributed, which would mean that scholars did not clearly prefer a particular term over the others, or had (more or less) concentrated around a particular term, which would mean that the aforementioned level of ‘terminological differentiation’ within the discipline is reasonably low. Thirdly, when comparing the Gini Coefficient for the 1999-2008 period and the 2009-2018 period, a *growing* coefficient means that we are in the presence of a *lowering* terminological differentiation, and vice versa.

The third problem characterizing interest group research deals with the fact that ‘*…the two scholarly communities [American and European] operated substantially in separate spheres from at least the 1970s…*’ (Mahoney and Baumgartner 2008, 1255). Is this still a characteristic of the most recent literature? To answer this question, we focus on two specific indicators: *a)* the level of correspondence between the US research agenda and the European research agenda with regard to topics studied and *b)* with respect to methods used, in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018. To measure such correspondence, we recur to a tool that is frequently used to measure the proportionality between two percentage distributions. The formula, which builds upon the method of Least Squares, is as follows:

$$\text{Index (0-100)} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - y_i)^2}$$

This index is a well-known way of calculating average distances, and is commonly used for measuring the level of proportionality in electoral systems (Gallagher 1991). It ranges from 0 to 100: the lower the value, the higher the proportionality between the two percentage distributions, and vice versa. More precisely, in this work the two percentage distributions are represented by the distribution of topics and research designs in all articles analyzing the US, on the one hand, and the distribution of topics and research designs in all articles analyzing EU or European countries, on the other. The lower the value of the Index, the higher the level of proportionality between the two, and, in turn, the higher the level of correspondence between the US and EU research agendas.

The fourth and final challenge facing interest group research concerns the fact that comparative studies have long been rather limited (Coen 2007, 333-334; Bunea and Baumgartner 2014, 1424). But does that tendency remain? To answer this question, we focus on two specific indicators: *a)* the percentage of comparative research design articles on the total of scientific articles published in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018; *b)* the absolute number of articles openly comparing US and EU (and/or European countries) in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018.

Discussion of the findings

The discussion of the findings is organized into two subsequent steps: firstly, we present the overall picture, classifying all 453 articles under analysis on the basis of research questions and research designs. Secondly, we focus on the indicators discussed in section 3 to analyze whether (as well as how much) interest group literature have been dealing with the main challenges to accumulation of knowledge from 1999-2008 to 2009-2018.

Table 1 *Interest group research: topics and methods (1999-2018)*

Topic / Method	*E1*	*E2*	*E3*	*E4*	*E5*	*T1*	*T2*	*T3*	*T4*	*Tot N*	*Tot %*
IPP 1	3	1	17	0	1	0	3	0	0	*25*	*5.5*
IPP 2	2	3	29	1	0	0	2	0	0	*37*	*8.2*
IPP 3	20	23	139	3	0	0	15	1	5	*206*	*45.5*
IPP 4	24	12	111	5	0	1	12	5	4	*174*	*38.4*
Other	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	5	*11*	*2.4*
Tot N	49	39	297	9	1	3	32	9	14	*453*	*100.0*
Tot %	*10.8*	*8.6*	*65.6*	*2.0*	*0.2*	*0.7*	*7.1*	*2.0*	*3.1*	*100.0*	

Notes:

Topics: IPP 1 = first stage of the Influence Production Process (Collective action and mobilization); IPP 2 = second stage of the Influence Production Process (Organization maintenance and population ecology studies); IPP 3 = third stage of the Influence Production Process (Lobbying and institutional access); IPP 4 = fourth stage of the Influence Production Process (Policy influence/policy success); Other = residual category

Methods: E1 = empirical research design: Qualitative case study; E2 = empirical research design: Small-N qualitative comparison; E3 = empirical research design: Large-N quantitative analysis; E4 = empirical research design: Social Network Analysis (SNA); E5 = empirical research design: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA); T1 = theoretical research design: Conceptual analysis; T2 = theoretical research design: Theoretical model; T3 = theoretical research design: Discussion on methods; T4 = theoretical research design: Literature review

Source: Authors' own elaboration

As for topics, around 75% of articles concern either lobbying and institutional access (IPP 3), or policy influence and policy success (IPP 4). This means that – among the consecutive stages of the IPP – final stages are preferred to earlier ones. This is not unexpected: research into the influence/success that interest groups bring to bear in the policy process represents a sort of 'Holy Grail' for the discipline (Leech 2010, 534). Moreover, the analysis of lobbying behavior, in all its peculiar aspects (direct lobbying *vs*. indirect lobbying; coalition formation; issue niches and specialization; etc.), has been at the core of this bulk of literature from the very beginning.

As for methodological approaches, research on interest groups – as with most recent political science studies, regardless of the subject under scrutiny – is above all empirical quantitative research. Firstly, empirical articles largely exceed theoretical articles: 87% (N = 395) to 13% (N = 58). Secondly, in the vast majority of cases, empirical works utilize a Large-N statistical analysis where multivariate regression is the preferred tool for empirically testing theoretical hypotheses. However, the case study is also a research design quite frequently chosen by scholars of interest groups: in this regard, it is worth noting to signal specific studies of particularly relevant policy processes, where a given interest group was (un)able to exert influence on policy outcomes – a clear example, in this respect, is the analysis by Dür and Mateo (2014) of the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement – or in depth works on lobbying regulation in a particular political context (Greenwood 2011).

Yet, the fact that we can see only nine social network analyses is rather perplexing: much of the possibility of influencing the policy process (also) depends on the ability of groups to build lasting relationships with allied organizations, policymakers and politico-institutional actors (Varone *et al*. 2017). Thus, reconstructing such networks should be of utmost importance for interest group scholars who focus on policy influence.

In any case, the main aim of our meta-analysis is to verify whether, as well as the extent to which, the challenges identified over ten years ago have been overcome and, in turn, the accumulation of knowledge in interest group literature is currently easier and more widespread than it was in the past. See, on this, Table 2, which compares the 1999-2008 period and the 2009-2018 period with regard to indicators discussed in section 3.

Data in Table 2 pave the way for a few interesting considerations. First of all, the interest group community is not so ‘small’ anymore. Over the last ten years more and more scholars have chosen to focus their scientific attention on interest groups and lobbying. The number of authors publishing an article on this area in top-ranked scientific journals more than doubled between 1999-2008 and 2009-2018: from 165 to 380. Moreover, the interest group community is also expanding its territorial boundaries: while studies published in 1999-2008 were particularly focused on a limited number of countries, and did not cover all geo-political areas, interest group research in 2009-2018 is spread all over the world. Previously unknown areas – such as for example Eastern Europe (Cekik 2017) and Africa (Irwin 2015) – are currently studied by interest group scholars.

On the contrary, with regard to the second challenge to accumulation of knowledge in interest groups research – i.e. conceptual shortcomings – we cannot appreciate any significant difference between the two sub-periods taken into account. This disregard for conceptual analysis and discussion of terms and definitions is not inexplicable: over the course of the last thirty years, and precisely since the 'grand theories of interest group representation' – i.e. pluralism and neo-corporatism – proved not fully able to understand and explain recent dynamics in interest group politics, scholars agreed on the need to limit the complexity of research questions and to focus on middle-range theories (Lowery *et al*. 2008, 1235). As a consequence, the terms and definitions used depend on the particular research question.

Table 2 *Where is interest group research going? A comparison between 1999-2008 and 2009-2018*

Challenge #1: small community	*1999-2008*	*2009-2018*
Total number of different authors	165	380
Total number of analyzed countries[2]	20 (170)	43 (138)
Total number of analyzed geo-political areas[3]	5 (Asia, Oceania, North America, South America, Western Europe)	7 (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Oceania, North America, South America, Western Europe)
Challenge #2: conceptual shortcomings	*1999-2008*	*2009-2018*
Percentage (%) of articles on conceptual analysis	0.0	0.9
Gini Coefficient (terminological differentiation)	0.54	0.51
Challenge #3: divergent research agendas	*1999-2008*	*2009-2018*
Correspondence between US and EU research agendas: topics	14.0	7.3
Correspondence between US and EU research agendas: methods	47.3	15.0
Challenge #4: comparative studies	*1999-2008*	*2009-2018*
Percentage (%) of articles with a comparative research design	14.6	18.5
Number of articles comparing US and EU (or EU countries)	14	23

Notes:
Gini Coefficient varies between 0 (maximum dispersion = highest terminological differentiation) and 1 (maximum concentration = lowest terminological differentiation)
The Index of disproportionality used to measure correspondence varies between 0 (minimum disproportionality and maximum correspondence) and 100 (maximum disproportionality and minimum correspondence)

Source: Authors' own elaboration

[2] We present two different numbers here: the former originates from the sum of all countries that are analyzed in case-studies or Small-N qualitative comparison articles; the latter represents the broader Large-N study of the sub-period under scrutiny: Fredriksson *et al*. (2007) for 1999-2008 and Hanegraaff *et al*. (2015) for 2009-2018.

[3] The count of geo-political areas derives exclusively from case studies and Small-N qualitative comparison articles. This is because we want to give particular emphasis on analyses in which the territorial context matters: contextual considerations are far more relevant when cases under scrutiny are not copious.

If your research question concerns the extent to which groups are influential in policy-making, you *must* use a behavioral definition of interest groups instead of an organizational one. This is because it is not only associational groups that lobby to reach policy outcomes: private firms, institutions and individuals also do so. Studying policy influence/success from a purely associational perspective would be partial, or even misleading. Yet, if your research question deals with the mobilization of members, or the relationship between group leadership and followership, you *must* use an organizational definition of interest group instead of a behavioral one. It would make little sense to analyze the abovementioned topics with regard to firms, institutions or, even more so, individuals. Put another way: abandoning 'grand theories' to focus on middle-range theories means that one no longer needs concepts and terms that are common to all interest group scholars; on the contrary, one should pick the most appropriate concepts and terms to one's particular research question.

As for our third challenge – i.e. the correspondence between US research and European research agendas – it seems that the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean are getting closer and closer, especially from a methodological point of view. In the last ten years, US and European scholars have been dealing with similar research questions using similar research designs, to an extent to which they did not in the previous decade. While this trend is quite limited with regard to topics (though this probably depends on the fact that research agendas on topics were already quite similar in 1999-2008), it appears really striking for research designs. This finding does not result from a simultaneous evolution of both 'schools' that are currently approaching (around) halfway. It is not that Europeans have been getting more and more 'Americanized' and Americans have been getting more and more 'Europeanized'. Only the former holds true. While US scholars already approached interest group research from a predominantly empirical quantitative perspective in 1999-2008, European scholars began their 'quantitative turn' only in the last decade. This means that, at the moment, both US and European studies are more empirical and more quantitative than ever[9].

Finally, the 2009-2018 period is more characterized by comparative analyses. Prominent examples in this respect are Rasmussen's and colleagues' (2017) study on the role of public opinion in advocacy success in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, or Dür's and Mateo's (2013) work on lobbying strategies in five European countries (Austria, Germany, Ireland, Latvia and Spain). Furthermore, recent studies are not only limited to a particular geo-political area – for examples, Western European countries – but also concern the comparison between the EU and the US more than before. On this, a recent outstanding example is the study on lobbying styles of both American and European lobbyists by Hanegraaff, Poletti and Beyers (2017).

Overall, this meta-review should comfort lobbying scholars: interest group research has never before been so lively. The community is growing. Moreover, even though scholars within this community do not always speak the same language, they generally study similar things in similar ways. Finally, comparative studies are now more widespread than in the past. All this led interest group articles to be more cited – from 1,007 citations per year in the 1999-2008 period to 1,936 citations per year in the 2009-2018 period[10], in so confirming that accumulation of knowledge in this bulk of literature is now easier than it was in the past – and will probably help in further consolidating the (sub-)discipline in near future, especially from a middle-range theories point of view (Lowery *et al*. 2008, 1235).

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

[1] See, for example, the INTEREURO Project (Beyers *et al*. 2014), the INTERARENA Project (Binderkrantz *et al*. 2015) and the COMPARATIVE INTEREST GROUP SURVEY Project (Beyers *et al*. 2020).

[2] Scientific articles reach a wider audience and are characterized by a greater number of citations (Bunea and Baumgartner 2014, 1415).

[3] To the already mentioned 104 articles published in IG&A, we added 349 articles published in 42 out of the top-50 political science journals. Eight journals, in fact, have not published any article that satisfied the selection criteria during the time frame considered.

[4] We analyze 124 articles published between 1999 and 2008, and 329 articles published between 2009 and 2018.

[5] This means that, for example, when we had to code articles where authors investigated how a particular (combination of) lobbying tactic(s) resulted useful for exerting policy influence/success, we coded 'policy influence/success' rather than 'lobbying and institutional access'.

[6] When articles present more than one research question or concern general methodological questions that cannot be linked with a particular stage of the IPP.

[7] Originally, we decided to take into consideration a fourth indicator: the percentage of single author articles published in 1999-2008 and in 2009-2018. However, if the same number of authors starts co-authoring more often than before, that would not imply – *per se* – that the community is growing. Paradoxically, depending on the structure of co-authorships (i.e. who co-authors with whom and how promiscuously), we might even imagine a scenario in which the aggregate number of co-authorships grows while the exclusivity of co-author networks also increases.

[8] The Gini Coefficient (or Gini Index) measures the inequality among values of a frequency distribution. A Gini coefficient of zero expresses perfect equality, where all values are the same. A Gini coefficient of 1 expresses maximal inequality among values.

[9] Thus, our study disconfirms what Bunea and Baumgartner (2014, 1424-1426) claimed a few years ago. However, it is in line with what Eising and others (2017, 940) have argued more recently.

[10] Data gathered from Google Scholar at the day of writing (5th May, 2020).

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