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A case study to voice as alternative to exit in the Environmental Council

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Abstract

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The concerns about EU's future survival are increasing in the post-Brexit reality, at the same time as global challenges, not least mitigating climate change, test countries' ability to cooperate. The EU's ability to function effectively has been put into question by researchers stating that the EU has become adversely politicized, with national-level political battles seeping through in the EU decision-making and weighing it down, and that current scholarship does not understand these disintegrative forces well. Against this background, this case study analyses the Environmental Council's policy debate on the EU's strategic long-term vision for a climate neutral economy, and seeks to confirm Stefano Bartolini's exit/voice theory concepts as useful and relevant tools in analysing the presence of (partial) exit pressures, pressure-relieving mechanisms - venting through exercising one's voice - or signs of adverse politicization in the debate between the member states. This study shows that while Bartolini's concepts are highly relevant and present in the member states interactions in analysing a given situation, their ability to describe adverse forms of politization is limited. The study concludes that the large majority of the member states' interactions is proactive, constructive participation. The most dissatisfied member states take up partial (subject-specific) exit as an alternative mainly for financial reasons rather than out of principle, or for national anti-EU sentiments. In the context of this case study, EU-cooperation is not besieged by adverse politicization but is largely constructive – albeit not unconditional – cooperation.

'Europe will be forged in crises and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for these crises'

Jean Monnet

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1 Introduction

For a supporter of European integration, the recent years have provided little to celebrate. Hardly out of the financial tumult created by the Euro-crisis, the Union has seen political developments in several Member States that turn towards more nationalistic sentiments and harsher tones against the Union. The recent rock-bottom developments of the integrationist agenda being the exit from the EU of the UK, and the debates on article 7 (TEU) procedures against Hungary and Poland.

Even if EU politics has not been totally without success stories in the past few years, it seems obvious that there are more dark clouds looming over the integrationist agenda than there have been – maybe ever before. As negative paths of development are now discussed on the side of the positive ones and the picture of future development of the EU has become more diverse, it has become obvious that the Union has drifted off the path towards an "ever closer Union", and is heading towards a new trajectory and an unwritten future. Whether this is a more permanent course of development or a temporary blip in the curve remains to be seen, but it is also clear that currently we do not fully understand the forces driving these developments.

1.1 Aim of the study

This research contributes to the rather underdeveloped field of European disintegration and the forces behind it. It seems both topical and relevant to understand the forces driving disintegration better, in order to make knowledge-based decisions on how to develop the working ways of the union and provide a well-functioning forum for the cooperation between the member states and the EU institutions.

This paper aims to provide one more piece of the puzzle to a grand disintegration theory in the making. It proposes an approach that tests a theory developed by Stefano Bartolini[1] from 2005 - which provides a more general framework for political structuring and unstructuring with key concepts such as internal restructuring, external consolidation and "having a voice", and thereby aims to contribute to improving our understanding of the disintegrative forces. Bartolini's theory has received the support of several scholars that credit it for being both general and at the same time concrete enough to be useful in describing the development of the EU, but not yet tested enough in practise. I aim to apply Bartolini's theory, mainly the concept of using one's voice as an alternative to (partial) exit, on member states' activity in a recent Council meeting and test whether its concepts can be successfully applied in an empirical setting and its validity as a relevant theory to explain the dynamics of integration/disintegration even in the current post-Brexit reality thereby strengthened. The reasons for choosing Bartolini's theory amongst several other possible ones is explained in chapter 2.3.

Bartolini's theory implies that member states who feel that they have the possibility to constructively exercise their voice and be heard are less prone to grow displeased with the initiative at hand, or in extension with their membership in the union in general. Since analysing how member states "feel" about a certain condition and how they choose to express their possible dissatisfaction is a broad and elusive field of study, this study narrows down on testing Bartolini's theory in the form of a case study, targeted at the member states exercising their voice in recent Environmental Council meeting. With this material, it is possible to do a focused study on the relevant concepts' applicability and to identify which expressions the concepts may get in an empirical setting. Akin to the case study -format, this deductive study aims at providing one empiric building block to a more general theory of disintegration. In chapter 3 I discuss in more detail the strengths and limitations of this approach.

[1] Bartolini, Stefano (2005) *Restructuring Europe: Centre Formation, System Building and Political Structuring between the Nation-State and the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

1.2 Research question

This study therefore puts the general concepts in Bartolini's theory to test, in order to either further validate their relevance in explaining European disintegration with new empirical knowledge, or alternatively point out their weaknesses. If the general concepts relevance can be confirmed in the particular setting of this study, it strengthens the theory's stance as a possible basis for a new "grand disintegration theory", which we are thus far missing. In the opposite case, if the operationalization or application shows to be problematic, it may highlight some weaknesses in the concepts' ability to describe and explain an empiric situation, and therefore point out areas that may need more research before they can be used to form a new theory of disintegration.

The research question is therefore: Are the concepts in the voice/exit theory developed by Stefano Bartolini applicable and useful measures to describe the disintegrative dynamics at play in an empirical (case study) setting?

In other words, I will put the theoretical concepts to test by operationalizing them and applying them to an Environmental Council meeting, and see whether they can successfully be used to identify and describe the disintegrative elements according to Bartolini's theory, and thereby be further validated by this case study. Since the case study setting is a specific Council constellation, at one point in time, it is not a realistic to expect countries to vent dissatisfaction to the extent that they would make threats to leave the Union, thus, "exit" in this study implies indications towards a partial, policy specific exit, i.e. an opt-out from the initiative debated in the Environmental Council. These indications may be explicit or implicit in the member state's statement, and include even situations of expected non-compliance by the member state, or "dragging their feet" in implementing the policy.

In a larger perspective, I wish to contribute to the debate on the future of the Union, and more specifically on the need to develop the Union's working ways so that it will be conductive for well-functioning cooperation for the institutions and the remaining 27 member states.

2 Previous research in European disintegration and the theoretical frame for this study

Compared to the body of literature covering different theories and aspects of European integration, the scholarship on disintegration has been relatively scarce. This has however started to change during the last decade, and literature theorizing around disintegration has now started to mount. Theoretical explanations of forces behind the disintegration of the European Union have been attempted both by classical EU-integration scholars such as Andrew Moravcsik, Lisbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, drawing on their own earlier concepts on Union-building dynamics, as well as others like Stefano Bartolini, Hans Vollaard and Douglas Webber that use more general theories on nation-, state- or polity building to build new disintegration theories on. This chapter will give an overview of both these strands of theorizing to the extent that they are relevant to this study.

2.1 Early (dis)integration theories

The earlier discussions of disintegrative forces in EU literature - that were formed before there were any signs of a British referendum on the horizon - tended to cover only partial or subject-specific opt-outs, since a full-scale exit of a member state was still unforeseeable, and for many, inconceivable.

According to Webber's analysis[2], neofunctionalists, transactionalists, liberal intergovernmentalists and historical institutionalists all minimize the risk of European disintegration, while classical intergovernmentalism was a little more cautious in its predictions of the future. But even if Stanley Hoffman, a classical intergovernmentalist, stated that the authority of supra-national institutions remained 'limited, conditional, dependent and reversible'[3], both he and his later ideological mantel-bearer Moravcsik still estimated that there would be sufficient accord among the big member states to keep the integration process on the rails.[4]

The – more of less – steady trajectory of deepening integration during the first decades of the union seemed to indicate for most scholars that the EU and its predecessors was a unique example of successful regional integration and would keep being so even in the future.

2.2 Exiting the Union becomes a realistic scenario

Some researchers behind classical integration theories, like the postfunctionalist Hooghe and Marks, have tried to explain the disintegration in terms of their previous integration concepts[5]. Others, like Vollaard, claim that disintegration is not just reversed integration, and therefore the conceptualization of the European disintegration cannot be derived from definitions of integration turned upside down.[6] The latest research seems to establish that the previous theoretical integration arguments like the neofunctionalist and the intergovernmentalist, are ill-equipped to go in reverse.[7]

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[2] Webber, Douglas (2014) 'How likely is it that the European Union will disintegrate? A critical analysis of competing theoretical perspectives', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(2), 341 – 365.

[3] Hoffmann, Stanley (1966) 'Obstinate of Obsolete? The fate of the nation-state and the case of Western Europe' *Daedalus,* 95(3), 862-915.

[4] Webber (2014), 344.

[5] Hooghe, Lisbet & Marks, Gary (2008) 'A postfunctionalist theory of European integration: from permissive concensus to constraining dissensus', *British Journal of Political Science* 39(1), 1-23.

[6] Vollaard, Hans (2014) 'Explaining European Disintegration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(5), 1142-1159.

[7] Jones, Erik (2018) 'Towards a theory of disintegration', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25 (3), 440-451.

Jones[8] identifies Hooghe's and Marks' postfunctionalist account on adverse politicization[9] from 2008 as the point in time when the debate on European disintegration opened in earnest.

In 2008, Hooghe and Marks noted that the for the past decade, the developments in the sphere of European integration had resulted into a series of facts that could not be explained with the existing integration theories. To guide the research agenda that could explain the outcomes of referendums, public opinion and populist pressures, they developed a postfunctionalist theory that in their words described the politicization of the European project, which had led from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus. Their theory rested on two main observations, that domestic and European politics had become more tightly coupled as governments have become more responsive to public pressures on European integration, and that identity is decisive for multi-level governance in general, and for regional integration in particular.[10]

Hooghe and Marks also now contest the earlier view of European integration having been elite centred, with little salience to the general public. They state that the experience of the past fifteen years shows that public opinion on European integration is rather well structured, affects national voting and is connected to the basic dimensions that structure contestation in European societies. This has led to elites, that is, partly leaders in positions of authority now having to look over their shoulders when negotiating European issues, and that there now is a higher level of national stubbornness in European negotiations, as the leaders have less room to manoeuvre.[11]

Hooghe and Marks do not use the concept of using one's voice as alternative to exit in their theorizing explicitly, but their concluding remarks around flexibility for recalcitrant member states to opt out or to make it easier for sub-sets of member states to cooperate, as well as the fact that they recognize that community and self-governance, expressed in public opinion and mobilized by political parties lie at the heart of jurisdictional design is reflecting the very same logic. Expressed in other words – albeit a bit simplistically – one could say that as the general public has gained a stronger voice on European matters in the past decade, the elites have found it more difficult to form theirs – or at least seen their possibilities to express it curbed.

2.2.1 New theories start forming

In addition to Hooghe and Marks, several scholars have since then contributed to the understanding of the negative developments in the European project such as Jones, Vollaard, Webber, Zielonka, Eppler, and Jachtenfuchs and Kasack, their main contributions – with particular focus on their view to the voice as an alternative to exit aspects - are reviewed below.

One reoccurring topic of debate in European research has always been whether the Union is a unique entity that creates its own "natural laws", i.e. operates *sui generis* or whether it is just another example of generally applicable international relations – or polity building theories. This division has existed even in disintegration studies, where the earlier theories tended to point to sui generis direction, and explained the disintegrative developments in terms of traits and conditions specific to Europe. Eric Jones however, makes a convincing account on integration and disintegration as processes that have general driving forces, despite the context. According to his theory, integration is a process of reinforcing momentum and builds on its own success, but also relies on this positive feedback. Yet, that feedback has a tendency to diminish and exhaust over time and give rise to ever-strengthening countervailing forces, i.e. disintegration.[12]

[8] Ibid, 448-449.
[9] Hooghe & Marks (2018), 1 – 23.
[10] Ibid, 2.
[11] Ibid, 6-7, 22.
[12] Jones (2018), 440 – 451.

As an attempt to start approaching a more general model for European disintegration, Jones has developed a cumulatively causal model, where both integration and disintegration (related to equality or inequality of opportunity, respectively) are not mutually exclusive mechanisms but may coexist, and points out understanding why one pattern might predominate over the other as the main challenge in understanding disintegration.[13] His theory is therefore tangent to the Marks' and Hooghe's previously mentioned postfunctionalist account, according to which the process of integration might expand beyond a favourable political calculation of costs and benefits, and therefore lead to adverse consequences.

In addition to Jones, also other researchers are looking into previous, more general theories on state- or political community building in attempt to draw from them aspects that are relevant to the developments in the European Union in the past decade(s). While Jones built his concepts on Gunnar Myrdal's 1956 theory of international integration aiming to promote the "equality of opportunity" [14], Hans Vollaard in his paper from 2014[15] has analysed several earlier scholars' theories, like Stefano Bartolini's polity-building theory[16] or Albert Hirschman's 1970's taxonomy of exit, voice and loyalty in political community building[17] and identifies Bartolini theory as a promising basis for explaining European disintegration, and explains it as a holistic theoretical framework in which political boundaries, actors' preferences and behaviour of a different nature can be explained in a political (dis)integration in a coherent way[18].

Stefano Bartolini developed his theoretical framework in 2005 which explains the polity formation in Europe, that has also been echoed by other researchers since then. Bartolini describes the integration process as a "boundary re-definition", where state boundaries (of different kind, like administrative, legal, cultural, economic) are being transcended as the boundaries of the EU are constructed. The integration on the EU level requires in other words some level of national disintegration, when national systems are being adjusted or even dismantled to the benefit of their EU-level counterparts, which may cause dissatisfaction and ultimately lead to a state choosing an exit rather than adjustment.[19]

Bartolini takes up voicing dissatisfaction as an alternative to exit. He builds on the work of previous scholars Stein Rokkan and Albert Hirschman and uses some of their key concepts and concerns. Neither of them dealt specifically with European integration, Hirschman constructed a micro-level theory on individual actors' choices under different conditions of confinement, while Rokkan provided a historical developmental theory on building of nation-states in Europe. While Bartolini finds their theorising consistent and useful even in the context of European integration, he maintains that their theories need to be "transported to Brussels", and built on, to provide the general theory for the integration process of the EU that he sets out to create.[20]

2.2.2 Latest contributions

During the last five years or so the literature within the field of European disintegration has grown even more. Some interesting accounts providing both additional aspects to previous theories as well as analyses on the whole field are briefly introduced below.

In 2014, Jan Zielonka provided a comprehensive account on the negative developments of the Union in his "Is the EU doomed?" book, in which he criticized the Union response to the Greek crises for being

[13] Ibid, 442-444.
[14] Myrdal, Gunnar (1956), *An international economy: Problems and prospects,* New York, Harper & Brothers.
[15] Vollaard (2014), 1142-1159.
[16] Bartolini (2005)
[17] Hirschman, Albert O. (1970), *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
[18] Vollaard (2014), 7.
[19] Bartolini (2005), 4 – 53.
[20] Ibid, xvii.

'a spectacle of confusion, manipulation and incompetence'.[21] Despite his rather harsh analysis, he sees as the most likely outcome that instead of breaking apart, the Union will 'muddle through'[22] and builds his vision on the concept of 'polyphony', which would mean more flexibility, plurality and differentiation.[23] While avoiding the use of the term 'voice' the promotion of plurality can be seen as Zielonka's way of expressing the assumption that increasing the voice opportunities of different actors would lead to decreased disintegrative pressures.

Jachtenfuchs and Kasack offered a further strand of analytical work around the exit/voice concept in European integration with their 2017 piece on sub-unit autonomy theory. They claim that sub-units of a polity (of any kind of federalist structure, but especially the more decentralized ones like the EU) attempt to change the balance between sub-unit autonomy and collective problem-solving by changing their position in two dimensions: exit and voice. 'Exit' measures the degree to which sub-units want to be subject to collective policies, 'voice' measures the influence sub-units seek in collective decisions. Jachtenfuchs and Kasack are clear about not proposing a competing theory to standard integration theories like neofunctionalism or liberal intergovernmentalism, but focus on one problem, – finding the right balance between autonomy and collective problem-solving for the sub-units – and on the strategies of the sub-units for reaching solutions. They make an interesting point in that the strategies and choices of member states vary between the different levels of government and are chosen on an issue-specific basis. A member state's "behaviour" can therefore have very different expressions between different levels of government and policy fields at the same point in time, as strategies for finding the right mix for exit and voice varies. [24]

An even more recent and ambitious attempt to compile the different strands of theorizing around EU-disintegration is Hans Vollaard's book "European disintegration – a search for explanations" from 2018. Vollaard goes through all the theories relevant for EU integration studies – not only the classic integration theories like neo-functionalist or intergovernmentalist but also federalist and comparative imperialist theories as well as general state- and political system building theories and analyses their strengths and weaknesses in their potential to explain the Union's disintegration. He identifies disintegration as a multicausal, complex process which can therefore benefit from aspects of all the aforementioned theories but criticizes the classic integration theories for their state-centric reasoning as well as lack of different possible outcomes that a return to sovereign nation-states. He identifies again – as he did in his 2014 article refereed to earlier in this chapter - Stefano Bartolini's 2005 work on formation of nations and states as the most promising theory to analyse the multifaceted process of political disintegration. [25]

Vollaard also criticizes the state of current EU-studies in general, stating that confusion and contradictions are rife, and that most present-day EU theories fail to recognise disintegration because they have shifted their focus from grand-theorizing the transformation of the entire EU system towards exploring bits and pieces of EU governance, and the impact of EU integration on EU member states. In turn, Vollaard offers propositions on the key interrelationships in the process of European integration and disintegration but acknowledges that more research needs to be done for a more complete picture. His proposals are inspired by Bartolini's (as originally developed by Hirschman) voice-exit-loyalty axis, and aim to develop this theoretical work by providing propositions that can be tested empirically.[26]

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[21] Zielonka, Jan (2014), *Is the EU doomed?*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 20.
[22] Ibid, 30.
[23] Ibid, 98.
[24] Jachtenfuchs, Markus & Kasack, Christiane (2017), 'Balancing sub-unit autonomy and collective problem-solving by varying exit and voice. An analytical framework.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(4), 598 – 614.
[25] Vollaard, Hans (2018), *European Disintegration – a search for explanations,* London, Palgrave Macmillan.
[26] Ibid, 138 – 141.

While he concludes that the full disintegration of the EU is unlikely, a lot depends on the EU's ability to process dissatisfaction among member states, which calls for more ways to effective use of voice.[27]

In 2019 Webber concluded – like Hooghe and Marks almost a decade earlier – that the developments in the EU (dis)integration had once again defied the existing theories and that the divergent outcomes of the crises of the last decade could not be explained with the prevailing "grand theories". Webber criticizes the postfunctionalist account on EU disintegration as too pessimistic and offers his take on a "hegemonic-stability-theoretical approach" as a more convincing explanation of recent political integration and disintegration. He agrees with Hooghe and Marks on that the EU has been politicized in a higher extent than before, and highlights that the reason why the grand theories are failing to explain the developments towards integration or disintegration is that these two processes are unfolding simultaneously. The point of departure in his analysis is not the member states' possibilities to affect decisions or threat with departure as such, but he explains the integrative or disintegrative outcomes of crisis in terms of to which extent there's been a hegemonic power among actors that has been able to have the economic and political dominance to take the lead and affect the outcome of proceedings (most often Germany in recent crises, except ECB during the euro-crises).[28]

Recent developments within the area of "grand theories" include also Hodson & Puetter's contribution to the intergovernmentalist theory by adding a concept of disequilibrium to it. In their 2018 contribution they state that the EU is in a state of disequilibrium and lament over the EU-scholars perceived sensitivity towards talking about the Union's demise.[29] In their consequent text in 2019 they develop the argumentation, and counter the postfunctionalist concept of constraining dissensus by claiming that the member state's governments have been rather successful in circumventing Eurosceptic challenger parties, but that this has in turn contributed to the EU's political disequilibrium, which has the potential to become destructive. Their "new intergovernmentalism" poses that it is the EU's tendency to produce policy outputs that polarise politics in ways that cast doubt on the future of the Union. Their concept of disequilibrium builds on the idea that there are integrationist and consensus-seeking elites on one side and public scepticism and about the benefits of the European integration and declining trust one the other side of the equilibrium, and that the imbalance is increasing. [30]

Hodson & Puetter's account can therefore be seen as a confirmation on the view of Hooghe & Marks in that a politization of EU affairs has indeed taken place, and national political elites have lost some of their previous freedom of using their voice to the benefit of the larger, more Eurosceptic national publics. On the contrary to Hooghe and Marks however, they do not see this as having had a direct constraining effect on integration as such, but that in elites' relative success in circumventing the public voice they are creating an increasingly instable situation as regards the future of the Union.

What consequences this might have to the new intergovernmentalist and postfunctionalist theories is still to be laid out by the relevant scholars, but it is certain that further research into the issues of the general public versus the political elites in forming their opinions and exercising their voice and which consequences this might have to further European (dis)integration remains a highly salient research topic.

While these new theories and contributions by different researchers provide a rather kaleidoscopic picture to European disintegration as they are emerging, they remain to a large extent to be tested as the

[27] Ibid, 249 – 250.
[28] Webber, Douglas (2019), 'Trends in European political (dis)integration. An analysis of postfunctionalist and other explanations' *Journal of European Public Policy,* 26(8), 1134 – 1152.
[29] Hodson, Dermot & Puetter, Uwe (2018), 'Studying Europe after the fall: four thoughts on post-EU studies.' *Journal of European Public Policy,* 25(3), 465 – 474.
[30] Hodson, Dermot & Puetter, Uwe (2019), 'The European Union in disequilibrium: new intergovernmentalism, postfunctionalism and integration theory in the post-Maastricht period.' *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(8), 1153 – 1171.

history unfolds. As we gather more empirical material to use for testing them the researchers in this field will be better able to see which ones can gain traction after being put against empirical evidence.

2.3 Theoretical frame and delineations of this study

Based on prior research on European disintegration it can be concluded that disintegrative processes that we see in action in the EU today seem to be multicausal, since no single clear answer or reason have emerged as the driving force behind the disintegration. The process is complex and multidimensional, and to attempt to make a broad analysis of the situation is beyond the scale of a master's thesis. As Marks has pointed out, these kinds of attempts easily turn into 'a theory of almost everything'.[31] Therefore, I have chosen one aspect, or driving force, of more general character to analyse; Bartolini's voice/exit axis. It has gained the acceptance within the field as several later researchers repeatedly refer and come back to it.[32] It is also both general enough to explain disintegrative processes in different settings and defined enough to render itself to operationalization for empiric study.

In this chapter, I will describe Bartolini's theory in more detail as well as describe how the theoretical base for this case study builds on Bartolini's theory and concepts, and how the empiric data of this study is expected to interact with the theory. How Bartolini's theory will guide the operationalization of the research question in this study will be described in detail in chapter 3.4.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bartolini uses Hirschman's "voice-exit" paradigm and describes it as an establishment of a negative association between them two – opportunities for exit reduce the need or willingness for voice, while their absence enhances them.[33] Exit and voice are thus analysed in their capacity to function as mechanisms of recovery in organizational performance.

Bartolini however develops and modifies Hirschman's paradigm in the European context. Hirschman originally thought that exit-mechanisms were typical of economic transactions, while voice mechanisms were typical of political interactions, where the usual alternative to voice is acquiescence or indifference, rather than exit. In Hirschman's early theories, voice was viewed as a residual of exit; those who do not exit are candidates for voice; voice feeds on either inelastic demand or on lack of opportunity to exit. Therefore, the role of voice increases as the opportunity for exit declines, to the point where, "with exit wholly unavailable, voice must carry the entire burden of alerting management of its failing".[34] Hirschman also originally considered exit as essentially costless when it was available, and only later developed his theory to cover loyalty, and the potential costs of exit even in situations in which loyalty is absent.[35]

Bartolini does not assume that the main reference point is exit but sees voice and exit options as alternatives to each other, where multiple variables play in and affect actors' tendency to choose their way of action. He also theorizes around the issue of cost of exit to different actors in a far more nuanced way than Hirschman did; Bartolini acknowledges that exit is an individual actor's choice but that its cost varies and, therefore, not all actors have the same possibilities and opportunities for exit. He therefore concludes that there is a differentiated distribution of the opportunities to exit among actors, and that this leads to the possibility that the "dissatisfied-mobiles" – those who might and have realistic

[31] Marks, Gary (2012), 'Europe and its Empires: From Rome to the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 50(1), 1-20.
[32] See for example Vollaard (2014) and (2018), Jachtenfuchs and Kasak (2017)
[33] Hirschman, (1970), 15-16, 24.
[34] Ibid, 34.
[35] Hirschman, Albert O. (Ed.) (1981), 'Exit, voice and loyalty: further reflections and a survey of recent contributions', *Essays in Trespassing, Economics to Politics and Beyond*, Cambridge, Cambrigde University Press, 222-223.

opportunities to exit – make the organisation particularly sensitive to their needs, and indeed, so much so that the organisation tries to anticipate the course of action that will most likely prevent their exit.[36]

Furthermore, Bartolini theorizes further that the exit options of some will probably have an impact on the options of the others, and exit choices may well provoke reactions of voice in those who do not possess or who do not want to use this option. Inequality of exit, together with its consequences for organisational performance, can thus be seen as a source of conflict in itself. How much (partial) exit is permitted from an organisation is a controversial internal issue concerning the extent to which the organisation can or should control its membership boundaries. Growing and unequally distributed exit options may be the basis for conflicts among those who want to restrict those options and those who want to open them up.[37]

How effectively "voice" can be exercised depends on the organization and institutional infrastructure available for expressing dissatisfaction. It depends, in other words, on political structuring[38]. When a political formation is highly structured, voice can be rather easily mobilized at low costs. Bartolini also goes into depth in defining negotiation as a way for an actor to make itself heard. According to him, negotiation is a communicative interaction in which actors make threats (emerging damages and declining advantages) and symbolic messages concerning facts and knowledge, values and beliefs, to obtain the most favourable terms of exchange. The symbolic element is best represented by that amount of persuasion by which the perception and the values of the other actor can be influenced, but also affected by the presence of alternative courses of action to the negotiation itself. [39]

Finally, Bartolini theorizes around the meaning of loyalty and solidarity for his theory. He states that loyalty is not a behavioural response different from exit and voice, a "silence-non-exit". Instead, Bartolini agrees with Dowding et al[40] on that it appears to be more of a psychological condition that mediates the relationship between exit and voice. It is seen as something that can, to a certain extent, neutralize the tendency of quality-conscious members to be the first to exit. Loyalty is an affective or emotional relationship to the organisation or group that one belongs to, and makes it difficult (if not impossible) to contemplate the possibility of abandoning such a group or organisation. In other words, loyalty seems to suspend the instrumental calculations that preside over the choice of exiting or non-exiting. Loyalty is thus a sort of "internalized boundary".[41]

The most relevant parts of Bartolini's theory in relation to this study are therefore the aspects that relate to voicing satisfaction/dissatisfaction or exit as an alternative, loyalty, and negotiating, and how this mechanism operates as a sort of vent that lowers the pressure that would otherwise push an actor towards choosing an exit. The voice and exit concepts will be operationalized and identified in the empiric material, whereas expressions of loyalty, solidarity signs of negotiation tactics such as threats as analysed as mediators on the voice/exit axis.

One has to be aware that Bartolini's theory is broader than these concepts and covers more aspects that are also relevant when an actor is choosing a line of behaviour, that relate to the structural factors of a polity like centre-formation and system-building. These aspects are not researched in this study, indeed structural factors might be better analysed by other means than looking into member states behaviour in a case study setting, which is the core of this study. Therefore, only the lines of reasoning in Bartolini's theory that relate to behavioural choices of a member state in a given situation are applied and tested in

[36] Bartolini (2005), 11.
[37] Ibid, 11.
[38] Bartolini (2005), 36.
[39] Ibid, 30.
[40] Dowding, Keith & al. (2000), 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Analytical and Empirical Developments', *European Journal of Political Reserach*, 37, 469-95, 477-88.
[41] Bartolini (2005), 31.

this study, and this kind of partial application will also only give answers, and information, that relate to this strand of his theorizing.

2.4 Key concepts - definitions

The theoretical concepts will be operationalized and applied to a real life situation where member states in a given setting have the option of utilize their voice and be heard, to make visible, and analyse which choices member states have made in expressing them. Drawing from Bartolini, the study will look in depth to whether a member state decides to express their voice, what they are choosing to express, whether expressions of dissatisfaction vs. satisfaction towards the debated initiative can be captured and analysed with the concepts, and whether they can be used to tease out opt-out (partial exit) tendencies. Possible broader dissatisfaction, that goes beyond the initiative under debate is equally of interest, as it may say something of the underlying motivations or the more general level of discontent of the Member State. In this context, even utterances of loyalty, solidarity, or the lack of thereof will be identified and analysed.

Exercising one's voice is a broad variety of activities of different kind of verbal or written expressions, that can vary in strength from asking questions to making a full revolt. In relation to this study, the key concept of "voice" as a venting mechanism is therefore any verbal utterance made in the empirical setting of this study, the Environmental Council meeting, where the meaning content indicates such a tendency. These utterances will be classified as having a positive, negative or neutral meaning content.

Exiting behaviour on the other hand could also include a wide variety of actions of different severity, but this case study is mainly interested in utterances indicating exiting from the initiative under negotiation – the long-term vision for a sustainable future – i.e. a partial exit or opt-out. Also expected non-compliance or reluctance to implement the initiative may be seen as expressions of partial exit. Even other expressions of displeasement towards other policy areas or the EU in more general will also analysed, as they may say something of linkages to dissatisfaction with other policy initiatives or the member state's general attitude to the EU.

2.5 Related fields of research

While this case study is mainly anchored in field of disintegration theory, it takes place in a negotiation setting where several forces are at play simultaneously. As mentioned in chapter 2.3 Bartolini sees negotiations as communicative interaction in which actors make threats and symbolic messages concerning facts and knowledge, values and beliefs, to obtain the most favourable terms of exchange. How these or other aspects might affect the choice of statements a negotiating party decides to make as a part of their negotiating strategy is a whole research field in itself, and closely related to this case study. While Bartolini seems rather insensitive to the possible existence of a variety of motives present at a negotiation setting – his theory builds less on *why* a statement is made, than *that* it is indeed made - other scholars offer slightly different views whose relevance should also be considered in determining the validity of this study.

Firstly, a strand of negotiation research is looking into how national party politics affects member states' behaviour in EU decision making and is closely related to studies on Euroscepticism.[42] Especially de Vries looks into the dynamics of Euroscepticism and its effects on integrations, and concludes that national opinions towards the EU are both highly diverse and responsive to policy changes, which

[42] See for example: König, Thomas & Luig, Bernd (2017) 'The impact of EU decision-making on national parties' attitudes towards European integration', *European Union Politics,* 18(3), 362 – 381, Wratil, Christopher (2017) 'Modes of government responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence from the Council negotiation positions', *European Union Politics*, 19(1), 52 – 74, or De Vries, Catherine E. Euroscepticism and the Future of the European Integration, Oxford scholarship online.

according to her should imply that political elites are more likely to craft policies that are closely aligned with the public opinion.[43]

This line of theorizing does not contest the theoretical setup of this study, since it is the very expressions of national sentiments that this study wants to analyse, regardless of what political considerations lie behind them. In trying to ensure that the utterances made in the empirical setting that I am analysing really do reflect the "true" national sentiment and are not for example a case of tit-for-tat dealing between member states, i.e. bargaining between different policy initiatives, I will apply a triangulation method to control for how well the environmental ministers stay in line with their national opinion. The triangulation is described in more detail in the context of discussing the validity aspects of this study in chapter 4.

If we however consider that not all statements made in a negotiation are necessarily "true" reflections of national policy-specific politics but a result of bargaining between two or more member states between different policy fields, or tainted by feelings of loyalty towards another negotiation party, the picture could become more blurred and it might be more difficult to draw conclusions based just on Bartolini's theory, i.e. the internal validity of the study might be weakened. The existing research seems to establish however that there is no evidence that such bargaining is wide-spread, on the contrary, the previous research concludes that positions defended by member states in the Council are best explained by political-economic, issue-specific interests.[44] In building coalitions, countries are most likely to cooperate with like-minded states with similar structural positions, and negotiations take place under a "long shadow of the future", meaning that negotiators are more likely to act constructively when they know they will have to interact again and again.[45] This indicates that while it may happen that the policy-specific position of a member state gets affected by cross-policy considerations or bargaining between different negotiations, it is a rather limited phenomenon. Further, one could reasonably assume that while policy debates take place in front of a camera, as in this case study, the accountability of the politicians towards their national audiences is even higher.

A further aspect is how an expected non-compliance (incorrect or absent implementation of joint decisions) of one member states might affect other states' choices, which has been studied by Johansson.[46] The results of his study indicate that while the non-compliance risks are considered by the member states' negotiators, they are insensitive to the level of that risk, as well as the reason for it.

All things considered, negotiation research provides further aspects to have in mind while analysing the results of this study, but they don't seem to contrast the proposed research approach, i.e. building the analytical frame on the voice/exit axis. In analysing the results, however, one has to be mindful of the possibility of cross-policy bargaining and try to identify this kind of "distortion", since such statements would lower the validity of the results.

[43] De Vries, Catherine E. (2018) Euroscepticism and the Future of the European Integration, Oxford scholarship online, 208.
[44] Naurin, Daniel (2018) 'Liberal Intergovernmentalism in the Councils of the EU: A Baseline Theory?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(7), 1526 – 1543, 1537.
[45] Huhe, Narisong, Naurin, Daniel, Thomson, Robert (2018) 'The evolution of Political Networks: Evidence from the Council of the European Union' *European Union Politics,* 19(1), 25-51
[46] Johansson, Markus (2018) Cooperation and Expected Policy Compliance in the Council of the EU, CERGU's Working Paper Series 2018:3, University of Gothenburg

3 Research design and methodology

3.1 Research approach and epistemological considerations

This study assumes a deductive stance, taking its starting point in established EU disintegration theory and applying it to a real-life situation and thereby test the theory, and answer the research questions. As an outcome, we should know how well the real-life situation is explained by the theoretical frame, but hopefully also some new insights and a deeper understanding has emerged from the findings. This does not however imply that the study has inductive elements, the ambition is not to complete or alter existing theories, but to test their applicability and possibly point out weak points in their potential to explain the matter at hand. If gaps in concepts or the theory are identified, further research may be warranted to contribute to the theory and fill them out.

The epistemological orientation of this study is naturalistic/objectivistic in its assumption that the research process will analyse and unveil information of the subject at hand that is objectively "true" to the case at hand. Despite the views of some scholars (see for example Denzin & Lincoln[47]) on qualitative research always being constructivist in its nature, the opposite may also be true. As Gray[48] points out there are no widely accepted rules within qualitative research what comes to from which starting point data should be approached, whether it should be presented objectively, or is it given meaning by a fundamentally subjective and interpretative process by the researcher. Closely linked to this is the question of reflexivity – the voice of the researcher – and the role it plays in presenting the study. Gray proposes a practical approach in which reflexivity is embraced to the extent that is in line with the researcher's attitudes towards epistemology and the research design.[49] This study claims an objectivist stance and follows Gray's proposal in trying to minimize reflexivity and guaranteeing an objective research rigour by repeatability of the analysis, transparency in categorizing and traceability of conclusions, as explained in more detail the methodology section below.

3.2 Research strategy and method

This study will be carried out in a form of a single case study, and as Titcher et al.[50] have stated, a case study is rather a research strategy than a methodology, and consists of studying a particular phenomenon using one or more objects of investigation in its real context. In following Grays advice[51] on case studies benefitting from a prior development of a theoretical position to help direct the data collection and analysis process, and to define the focus of the study, the exit/voice axis theory explained in 2.3 has been used to frame this case study and the design of the data analysis tool.

There are several imaginable ways to learn about how member states behaviour reflects the exit/voice theory, and so other methodological approaches could also have been considered. More quantitative approached could have been chosen, analysing bibliographical sources that could have provided a more longitudinal view to the general topic. One could also imagine choosing a certain member state, or a selection of member states, and its/their communication in a certain context or series of contexts to be analysed, in order to learn something about how this/these member state(s) uses voice and expresses dissatisfaction. Alternatively, one could imagine taking a certain situation where all member states are present, analyse all their communication and acquire a picture on the state of things in the whole union, and possible make comparisons or draw parallels between the choices of all member states. I have chosen to apply the latter approach in this study, including all member states, in a single setting. While

[47] Denzin, Norman & Lincoln, Yvonna (2005) The SAGE handbook on qualitative research, 3rd ed, London, SAGE Publications.
[48] Gray, David E. (2014) *Doing research in the real world*, 3rd ed. London, SAGE publications, 602.
[49] Ibid, 607.
[50] Titcher, Stefan & al. (2000) 'Methods of text and discourse analysis', London, Sage Publications, 43.
[51] Gray (2014), 267.

both approaches may offer insights, the latter approach seems more interesting for its helicopter view that include all member states and therefore say something of the state of the Union, in that given point of time. Further, this choice is in line with Yin's argument on how case studies can play an essential role in theory development, which is the core purpose in this study.[52]

3.3 Choice of case for the study and unit of analysis

Whether a case study is carried out as a single- or multiple-case study, the choice of the case to examined as well as the definition of the unit of analysis are all decisions that have to be taken so that they best serve the purpose and objectives of the study.[53] Since it is not the purpose of this study to develop a new theory or produce generalizable results or comparisons, but rather to gain a deep understanding and insight, the single case format has been chosen. Single-case studies can be carried out for several different purposes according to Titcher & al[54] as well as Gray[55] and this study would mostly fall into the testing of hypothesis (Titcher) or for detailed examination of a small sample of interest (Gray).

Qualitative research usually works with purposive non-probability sampling.[56] So also for this study, I have chosen a purposive sampling that seeks to identify an information-rich case that can be studied in depth. So, the case to be chosen needed to fulfil following criteria; all member states present, have the possibility to express themselves about an issue, and the possibility for me to witness this situation in its entirety. Additionally, to increase the chance for rich findings, it was desirable that a) the issue at hand were of major importance to the member states so that it would be in their interest to use the opportunity to influence the discussion/decision, b) situation took place as high up in the political hierarchy as possible, where the political considerations of a member states could be assumed to be expressed to the largest extent. This leads us to look at the interactions within the Council, and its different constellations, and the difficulties imposed to the researcher by the Council's relative opaqueness of its interactions (compared to, for example, the European Parliament).

The head-of-state level meetings take place outside the eye of the public, and only "door-step" interviews, press statements and other partial accounts of the intended or actualised actions are available, and therefore a full analysis is not viable. On the ministerial Council level, however, practises are a little more open, albeit to varying degree. Different constellations seem to have different traditions in how their meetings are made available to the general public via on-line live streaming[57]. Still, actual debates by member states' ministers are to a large extent held behind closed doors. However, during its Presidency during the first half of 2019, Finland had transparency as one of its overarching priorities, and as one expression of this the amount of the on-line streaming of meetings were increased. This gives researchers new opportunities to observe the workings of the ministerial council meetings. According the transparency report 'Openness and Transparency during Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union - Presidency Report' [58], two ministerial meetings ranked highest on how much public interest they raised. I chose one of them for my study for the salience of its topic, which is the meeting of the Environmental Council (ENVI) on 4th October 2019 and the policy debate on the EU's long-term environmental strategy under the title 'Clean planet for all'. The ENVI meeting in its entirety can be watched at Councils home page[59]. The reasoning behind the choice is that it fulfils all

[52] Yin, R. K. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods , 4th edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
[53] Gray (2014), 268-271.
[54] Titcher & al. (2000), 44.
[55] Gray (2014), 266.
[56] Ibid, 174.
[57] European Council (2019) https://video.consilium.europa.eu/en
[58] European Council (2019) https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14856-2019-INIT/en/pdf
[59] European Council (2019) https://video.consilium.europa.eu/en/webcast/bc03699a-bf41-4610-ba2e-5bdff21a8b6c

the criteria I set for the choice, happens on the highest observable political level and the issue can be assumed to be somewhat contentious and raise rich expressions from member states.

As a cross-sectional research limited in its timeframe to one single event, this study will offer a snapshot picture to the phenomena, without any claims for sustainability of results over time.

The unit of analysis for this case study can therefore be defined as the verbal utterances of all member states during the policy debate 'clean planet for all" during the ENVI-meeting on 4th October 2019.

3.4 Method

The choice of method – qualitative content/text analysis – for this study was guided by the research design, and in order to get as relevant an analysis as possible in relation to the research question. The 'nature' of the case (multi-lingual meeting, observed through a video recording) also poses some challenges that need to be considered. A wider discourse analysis (including both verbal and non-verbal information of the situation) would not be suitable, as the video format only shows a limited number of events that took place in the setting. Therefore, the member states' statements have been transcribed in verbatim, to allow a thorough content analysis, following mainly Philipp Mayring's qualitative content analysis principles, as described by Titcher & al.[60]

Mayring borrows from the classical – quantitative – content analysis the use of categories in a process he calls *structuring*. In this process, after determining the unit of the analysis, the dimensions of structuring are established on some theoretical base, definitions and categories are fixed and the material appraised accordingly. Categories are used to "filter out" particular structures or content of the material.[61] This method is applied in this study for its suitability to be used to answer the type of research question posed. The categories are an operationalization of Bartolini's voice/exit axis theory, and therefore utterances of interest in relation to the theory can be filtered out for further analysis. Mayring explicitly includes analysing the context and cotext of the material in his explicatory process. In this study, the main focus is on the cotext – in addition to the apparent content meaning – since the video format limits the observation of the context and, and the meaning content and the cotext are in any case the main interest in relation to the research question to be answered.

Therefore, the main focus in the data categories will be in the meaning content of the member states' statements. One further aspect to account for is the meeting participants' possibility to decide whether they express themselves in their native tongue or in English, and a number of statements are therefore "processed" through simultaneous interpretation to English in the video recording. This leads to the situation where choice of individual words should not be given crucial importance, since there may be some distortion in the translating process as opposed to the intended nuances in the original language. The meaning content is therefore analysed on a sentence rather than word -level, and in relation of the whole statement (cotext).

In line with both Mayring's principles and as described by Titcher & al. a priori, tentative, broader categories for the analysis were defined based on the theoretical frame for the study, keeping in mind the theoretical voice/exit basis. After a round of focused reading of the transcribed statements, a review and amendment of the categories followed resulting in a refined structure with more specific, narrowly defined categories to improve the "filter" that could tease out the expressions on the voice/exit axis, and this was then then systematically applied to the text. No need for further changes to the categories emerged during the analysis, which would have led to the analysis to be done again.

The final categories used for the structuring process are as follows:

[60] Titcher & al. (2000) 58-66.
[61] Ibid, 64.

Table 1: Structuring categories

(I) Expressions of satisfaction	(I.a) towards the content, the subject matter	(I.a.1) "plain" support
		(I.a.2) support, but rather..
		(I.a.3) support, but more
	(I.b) towards the way issue has been handled or other structural matters relating to the functioning of the decision-making	(I.b.1) "plain" support
		(I.b.2) support, but rather..
		(I.b.3) support, but more
(II) Expressions of dissatisfacti	(II.a) towards the content, the subject matter	(II.a.1) "plain" dissatisfaction (venting)
		(II.a.2) "no, unless.." (venting)
		(II.a.3) "no, cannot accept.." (exiting)
	(II.b) towards the way issue has been handled or other structural matters relating to the functioning of the decision-making	(II.b.1) "plain" dissatisfaction (venting)
		(II.b.2) "no, unless.." (venting)
		(II.b.3) "no, cannot accept.." (exiting)
(III) Other expressions		

Expressions of satisfaction or dissatisfaction directed either to the factual content matter in the subject of negotiation, or towards a larger context; how the Commission/Council has been performing or other aspects related to the general functioning of the Union decision-making. These categories are further divided to sub-categories, where (I.a.1) and (I.b.1) cover utterances of support without any suggestions for changes (reasons for support may still be stated), (I.a.2) and (I.b.2) cover utterances where support is expressed, but changes to substance that would in the MS's mind improve the content are made (but support is not conditioned to these suggested changes) and (I.a.3) and (I.b.3) where support is expressed, not changes are proposed but more, i.e. higher level of ambition .

Similarly, it is expected that the expressions of dissatisfaction can be made "purely" for the purpose of stating the discontent or negative opinion (II.a.1 and II.b.1) or to demand a change, i.e. support is still possible if certain conditions are met: (II.a.2) and (II.b.2) stating conditions which would be necessary for acceptance, or (II.a.3) and (II.b.3) expressing "red lines", conditions that a MS cannot accept and would not want to be part of, or indicates it would not fulfil (partial exit)

The category III for other expressions was used for "neutral" utterances that cannot be interpreted to have either positive or negative content towards either the subject matter or functioning of the Union These utterances seem to function as justifications or background descriptions for other statements, but have no direct satisfaction/dissatisfaction content towards the subject/the Union as such.

3.5 Data

The data for this study consists of the member states' statements during the policy debate on the EU's long-term environmental strategy at the ENVI-meeting. Member states are represented by their environmental ministers, who convey the national opinions. The statements were transcribed in verbatim, by the researcher herself. It should also be noted that no parascribing or summarizing of the transcripts were made, but the statements were kept in their original form throughout the study. Since the transcripts resulted in an amount that was perceived treatable as such, it seemed more logical to apply the categories of analysis on the verbatim transcripts in order to preserve as much as possible of the original content of the utterances and minimize researcher inference.

It should also be noted that the data material acquired from the ENVI-meeting is complete in the sense that all member states took the floor to express their national preferences and concerns (except the member state holding the Presidency, which is customary) and therefore allows for a thorough analysis to be made. Some data was lost due to unclear pronunciation by speakers, but to such a small extent that it did not lower the quality of the analysis.

4 Discussion on quality aspects and ethics

The general quality aspects of all research – validity and reliability – can be further examined and detailed from the perspective of the chosen research strategy, case study, as well as the method, content analysis.

4.1 Validity

Gray introduces the concepts of construct validity, internal validity and external validity, as well as defines conditions for reliability that are specific to the case study -format.[62]

Construct validity refers to the quality of conceptualization or operationalization of the relevant concepts, and has been taken in to account in this study by paying careful attention to that the concepts as explained in chapter 2.4 are clear and well defined, as well as by the fact that the process for their operationalization has been explained in detail in chapter 3.4.

Internal validity relates to causality and what can be learnt of the study, does it enable shedding light on the phenomena it claims to be? Causal aspects are not strong in this study, as it focuses on the existence of certain conditions rather than makes claims about the reasons for their appearance, even if causal reasoning is present in the underlying theoretical framework. On the latter aspect, whether the study can provide answers to the questions it poses is a critical aspect of any research, and the related considerations have guided the design of this study from epistemological considerations to the choice of method, to ensure a high level of internal validity. In the conclusions chapter, these issues are touched upon again, to analyse whether the research design has functioned with the expected level of validity.

Internal validity also makes reference of the researcher inference to the data. The risk for researcher inference to the actual data in this case is low, since the source data is open for public and recorded and kept in its original form by the Council, and the transcripts are written in verbatim without parascribing that might open up for researcher bias.

External validity relates to the issue of generalizability of the results, which is one of the most problematic issue for case studies in general, and single case studies in particular. This study makes no claims of generalizability of its results, instead it seeks to arrive to an as thorough as possible understanding of the member states expressed views in one given situation with the theoretical concepts used, and makes claims of the usability of these concepts in this situation.

Even if generalizable results are not the aim of this research, it is still of interest in regard to the general relevance of this study to explaining disintegration as a phenomenon, how well the studied material reflects the member states general attitudes and opinions or whether they are one-off occurrences. In order to strengthen the analytical reasoning and external validity, a triangulation to another empirical study, the Eurobarometer, has been made. Member states statements in the Environmental Council are therefore projected on the background of the public opinion in that current member state, as expressed in relevant parts of the Eurobarometer survey. The triangulation method is explained in more detail in chapter 4.1.1. below.

Interesting aspects to generalizability of results of case studies have been offered by Yin, according to whom "analytic generalization" occurs when a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study.[63] The conclusions of this study will be reflected on also in this light in the conclusions chapter 6.

[62] Gray (2014), 279 – 282.
[63] Yin (2009), 38

In addition to the quality criteria relevant for the case study -format, criteria related to the use of the content analysis method are specified by Krippendorff[64] as following: material-oriented, result-oriented and process-oriented validity, and stability, replicability and precision as aspects of reliability. Without going deeper into the definitions of these aspects here I can state that they are covered mainly by the same conditions as described above; transparency of the categorization, documentation of the analysis, and un-distortion of the material. One interesting aspect in this classification is however the material-oriented semantic validity; how does the researcher ensure that the understanding of the meaning is appropriate? While there can't be any guarantees of the right understanding, every measure has been taken in getting familiar with the transcripts by reading and re-reading them, as well as listening and re-listening of the original audio to make sure that no aspects are missed or misinterpreted, as well as noting which parts are emphasized. Finally, it is up to possible post-research scrutiny to question my semantic understanding.

Therefore, I see no major problems with the different validity aspects that could not be mitigated with the measures described above.

4.1.1 Triangulation of results

In order to increase the relevance as well as external validity, I have a used a triangulation method in analysing the results, i.e. used other, more generally valid data to see if it supports or contradicts the results of this analysis. The choice of data to use for the triangulation was also a subject of some considerations, since several methods could have been possible, and their respective relevance needed to be assessed. The political party manifestos of the governing parties in the member states offer one possible source of data in scrutinizing how well the member states reflect their national views during the meeting. However, albeit not fully unanimously, the existing research seems to conclude that there is little evidence that party ideology plays a major role in the intergovernmental negotiations.[65] Several researchers have concluded that in researching which factors influence a member states decisions to make interventions in the Council, a government's position on the left/right scale or pro/anti-integration dimension do not directly affect member state negotiation behaviour, but structural characteristics of the policy space associated with the proposal under negotiation do[66] and that issue-specific interests dominate over party ideology, and changes to party composition of governments do not matter much.[67] The member states' negotiation position are most often a reflection of the structural and domestic interests of states.[68]

Therefore, a more relevant source of data for triangulation of the results would be data that measures the attitude of the population, and therefore defines the more general domestic interest constraints that the Council members can be expected to adhere to. Therefore, I have chosen two questions from the Eurobarometer, which is an established "thermometer" to measure the sentiments in the member states towards the European Union in general and several policy areas more specifically.[69] The Eurobarometer has been used for this purpose in previous research, for example Stephanie Bailer[70] has done this in her research analysing structural and strategic interests in Council. The Eurobarometer survey used in this study has been carried out during the autumn of 2019, so it reflects the sentiments that were present in the public opinion around the time Environmental Council meeting took place. Two questions from the barometer that had the highest relevance to this study were chosen; one related to the general attitude

[64] Titcher & al. (2000), 66.
[65] Huhe, Naurin & Thomson (2018), 27
[66] Cross, James P. (2011) 'Interventions and negotiation in the Council of Ministers of the European Union', *European Union Politics*, 13(1), 47- 69, 64
[67] Naurin (2018), 1537
[68] Bailer, Stefanie (2011) 'Research report: Structural, Domestic and Strategic Interests in the European Union: Negotiation Positions in the Council of Ministers' *Negotiation Journal,* 27(4), 447 – 476, 467
[69] European Commission: Eurobarometer autumn 2019. Retrieved 2020-07-06.
[70] Bailer (2011), 458

towards the Union (QA13.2 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: your country could better face the future outside the EU) and one towards the policy issue at hand (QA3a What do you think are the two most important issues facing your country at the moment? - the percentage of respondents choosing environment, climate and energy issues) to be used as a background to reflect the extracted results on. How the analysing on the data was compared/validated in relation to the Eurobarometer data is shown in more detail in results chapters 5.2.2, 5.2.4 and 5.2.5.

4.2 Reliability

Conditions for reliability are met if the findings and conclusions of one researcher can be replicated by another researcher doing the same case study. Conditions that ensure high reliability can for example include the involvement of several researchers being involved in the same research, in continuous dialogue, or alternatively conscientious documentation of the procedures. Since the first option was not available for this study, attention has been paid to ensure the latter. The repeatability of this study is also high, since the source data is public. The transcript can be acquired from the researcher in full, which allows for full transparency and later scrutiny of the categorization and coding made. These factors are deemed to be sufficient to guarantee high objectivity and counter-act the researcher applying her previous knowledge or personal views or experiences of certain member states positioning, so that the results of the study are based merely on the material that has been analysed.

4.3 Ethical considerations

Concerning ethical aspects, since the recording that will be analysed is publicly available online and the participants have known at the time they are making their statements that they will be recorded and published, there are no ethical dilemmas related to the data, or need to seek separate participant consent for this research.

There are no vulnerable groups, sensitive topics or confidential information involved in this research.

5 The voice/exit axis in ENVI Council – analysis and results

5.1 Some remarks on the analysis

The structuring exercise confirmed that the categories constructed for this purpose were suitable to extract, or "filter", expressions of interest for further analysis. The deeper analysis was focused on the member states that made several statements of discontentment. Therefore, it should be noted that the member states that expressed only neutral or positive sentiments were not analysed in detail. This does not imply that those statements are not relevant to the topic, in fact it is of importance that the expressed discontentment is put in relation to the levels of contentment expressed, even if detailed examination of the latter is not the focus of this study.

In shifting the utterances through the category filter, there were some cases where the intended meaning of the utterance was not clear, and its assignment to a category therefore not obvious. For this analysis, one important aspect to observe was whether the member state in question was conditioning its support to certain stated factors, or whether it was merely communicating its preferences for future steps without conditioning. Unfortunately, some of the Ministers did not make (or possibly did not want to make) this distinction clear. Examples of expressions that were problematic were for example "It is necessary that *condition x* is taken into account..", but not stating whether it was necessary in order for that member state to give its support, or whether they just deemed that it was a necessary precondition for the long term environmental strategy to be successful. Also in expressions of the type "It is important for *member state a* that.." it was sometimes unclear and difficult to derive from the cotext how important it was, in other words whether the mentioned condition was crucial for their support, or rather a stated preference (and also other outcomes might be acceptable).

In these kinds of cases, in order to assign these utterances to a category, the meaning content of the utterance was derived from the larger context of the whole statement made by that member state. This seemed to work to a satisfactory degree, and all utterances could be assigned to a category with reasonable confidence. This kind of interpretation led however to the situation where similar utterances, like the ones mentioned including words such as "important" or "necessary" by different member states could have been assigned to different categories, due to the larger context being different between them.

The number of these unclear statements was however relatively low in total, so possible misinterpretation would only have a minor impact on the overall results. Steps were also taken to ensure a systematic approach between member states categorization exercise, by carrying it out in a focused manner in a limited period of time, immediately followed by a control-reading round.

5.2. The level of (un)happiness in the Environmental Council

The first thing to note concerning the statements made during the ENVI-meeting by the Ministers of Environment is that they all chose to speak. All member states participated actively in the policy debate – and this choice was not dependent on the member states's position in relation to the topic at hand. Even ones with profoundly positive and supportive statements took the opportunity and used their allotted time – and exceeded it in almost all cases - to talk. There were therefore no signs of quiet acquiescence, since even approving attitudes were aired exhaustively.

5.2.1 Member States express contentment to a large degree

One of the most striking aspect in the results is the clear overweight of positive statements; of the units of analysis, the utterances, around two thirds fell into categories expressing satisfaction/support. The last third consisted of equal portions of neutral and dissatisfied utterances. A total of 11 member states [71] expressed no dissatisfaction at all, but this didn't mean that they didn't have opinions or preferences;

[71] DK, NL, ES, FR, AT, EE, PT, BE, HR, EL, LV

on the contrary, the most positive member states were highly active in proposing ways forward and pointing out factors that could or should be taken into account in further work, or would be preferred by their country (without conditioning their support to these factors). It seems therefore that even "positive venting" occurred in a high degree at the ENVI meeting.

The "positive venting" assumption is evident when looking at how the utterances fall into the subcategories in the satisfied group. In that, the most "popular" category is the one that includes supportive expressions towards the subject matter, that at the same time provide advice, preferences, necessary steps ahead etc (I.a.2). For example "We really welcome the ambition… and we need to ensure that investments take place to create new opportunities in regions that stand to lose from the transition" (NL) or "France welcomes having a just transition fund and from the start, France has supported these initiatives. These tools now need to be a part of a range of different measures.." (FR). This can be compared to the category of "plain" support with far less utterances, i.e. expressing satisfaction with the state of things, possibly giving reasons for why the member state is satisfied, but not going further in their reasoning, or showing the same kind of proactive participation as in the previous category (I.a.2)

To strengthen the conclusion of a mainly positive atmosphere at ENVI, it should be stated that no member state expressed only dissatisfied comments. Even the 5 member states [72] that had the most dissatisfied comments also had several positive remarks.

The remainder of the results chapter will focus on analysing in more detail the expressions of dissatisfaction, since these are the ones that can give better insight to the applicability of the exit/voice axel, and in that case where utterances of different member states can be placed on this axel, and if indeed the results can demonstrate something of the state of the cooperation in the ENVI setting.

5.2.2 Signs of dissatisfaction

The "unhappy" member states, i.e. the ones that made utterances of dissatisfaction/reservation at the ENVI Council are listed in Table 2, in a tentative falling order by the level of dissatisfaction expressed, the most dissatisfied state being Bulgaria.

The table also shows the same member states' results for two of the autumn 2019 Eurobarometer survey questions; QA13.2 shows the percentage of respondents that had stated "agree" to the question on whether they agreed or disagreed that their country could better face the future outside the EU. QA3.a on the other hand tells us the percentage of respondents in that member state that had given "the environment, climate and energy issues" as one of the most important issues facing their country. In the first column, the EU27-average is also given for the respective questions. The country-specific analyses are examined against the background of the information on the public opinion towards the EU as well as environmental issues provided by these questions in the Eurobarometer.

Table 2: Level of MS dissatisfaction, from high to low

Member State	BG	CZ	PL	SK	IT	RO	MT	LT	HU	DE	IE	SE	SI	LU	CY
QA13.2, % (EU27: 29)	28	35	42	27	40	40	14	20	35	18	22	24	47	26	34
QA3.a, % (EU27: 21)	7	14	14	11	11	12	35	4	10	34	12	37	9	24	9

QA13.2 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: your country could better face the future outside the EU. (Agree, %)
QA3a What do you think are the two most important issues facing your country at the moment? (The environment, climate and energy issues, %)

[72] BG, CZ, PL, SK, IT

Scrutinizing the countries that form the top 5 of the list of the dissatisfied countries, the picture is very consistent; all the countries' populations have reported dissatisfaction even in the Eurobarometer towards the union on levels close to or above the EU-average, and at the same time, given low priority to environmental issues. These countries can therefore be said to be acting consistently, and in line with the popular sentiments in their country. This observation runs counter to the idea of EU-decision making run by political elites, and instead confirms the theory of EU decision making becoming more and more democratic and responsive. That national public opinion is reflected in these member states' behaviour seems clear. But whether this has gone so far as to become adverse politicization of EU decision making is more difficult to establish in the limited material of this study.

Adverse politicization according to Hooghe and Marks – national parties seeking votes by politicizing EU-level questions in their (national-level) campaigning which leads to raising the heat of the debate, narrow the substantive ground of possible agreement and make key actors (governments) less willing to compromise[73] – would imply that government representatives would be expected to be stamping their feet on controversial topics and trying to score political points for national debates in EU-for a, but in the case of ENVI-Council this kind of behaviour was not apparent. Even the five most dissatisfied countries could still be said to be acting reasonably constructively; there were very few ultimatums or threats made, and the ones that were made were mainly related to ministers wanting to protect their country against expected high cost of implementing a proposal, rather than campaigning on politicized EU-issues. Adverse politization can therefore not be identified from this material.

5.2.3 Member state -specific analyses

Below I will analyse the 5 most critical countries in detail starting from the mildest of the 5, Italy, and advancing to the most dissatisfied, Bulgaria. The analysis concentrates on the emergent traits of the statements for that MS after the structuring exercise, and highlights and analyses utterances of voice or exit tendencies. The rest of the dissatisfied MS – 10 mildly critical countries – are analysed in a summary manner, highlighting some common factors but also some emerging specific features for this group.

Italy

In the case of Italy, the formulations were in general rather mild and although they seemed to see the long-term environmental strategy as a threat to economic growth and the job market, having "considerate impact on companies and citizens". Italy was not against establishing an long-term EU-strategy as such, or any particular aspects of its planned content, but conditioned their support so that certain safeguards against the foreseen effects of the strategy would be included in the strategy; "it will be necessary to protect the consumers" and "it will be necessary to come up with measures to promote the labour market". It could be understood that any perceived adverse effects to consumers or the labour market would be Italy's red lines and failure to mitigate these effects could lead to Italy rejecting the strategy. This was however not spelled out clearly, which leaves Italy's statement open to interpretation (and more freedom to manoeuvre for themselves).

Italy was therefore clearly reserved, but not flagging with any intentions to opt out of the initiative, more stating the conditions that would be necessary for them to go ahead. They could therefore be said to be exhaustively venting by making lengthy statements against possible effects of the policy-initiative but stopping short from expressively stating propensity to opt out. This might be due to loyalty factors, since Italy is the only "old" member state in the top 5 of dissatisfied MS their political cost for partial exit is probably higher than for the other 4, newer MS. The overt expressions for reservation should however alert the listener of the imminent risk for Italy withdrawing its support if the reasons for their concerns are not addressed.

Slovakia

Slovakia like Italy does not openly oppose the strategy as a whole, but some possible consequences of it; "we have to ensure that this transition does not lead to high cost for private households, particularly

[73] Hooghe & Marks (2009), 22.

for those on low income", "Slovakia does not want to end up in energy poverty, which might be the result if nuclear energy was to be disadvantaged in the strategy" and "It's very important for Slovakia that … security of supply and technological neutrality is respected, and nuclear power is part and parcel of this." Slovakia also states that increased investment and financial instruments will be needed.

In all, Slovakia seems to point out – in dissatisfied but still relatively mild and constructive terms – which aspects they need be included in the strategy as a whole in order to support it and makes a plea for them to be taken into account. Like Italy, Slovakia does not make immediate threats for opting out, but the references to importance of nuclear energy points out very clearly a further red line not to cross. Slovakia is using its voice mainly to make very clear that their support is conditional to the treatment of nuclear power, and therefore an opt-out could reasonably be expected is this demand is not met.

Poland

Poland's reservations circle around financial issues, not the desirability of the climate strategy as such – they even state that the strategy is an indisputable priority. However, they make a strong case both for *increasing* the intended funding; "the existing EU framework and facilities are insufficient to implement such an ambitious goal" "Poland expects that the European Commission will suggest relative support mechanisms", "the transition fund.. should be multiplied against what is currently being considered" as well as *distributing* it "fairly"; "we can't accept a situation where money will be allocated only to countries and regions which have already fulfilled some climate requirements.., this wouldn't be fair". In other words, PL seems to be saying that if a situation where their status as a member state that has so far had lower climate ambitions would be to their detriment in allocating transformation funds, this would render the whole strategy unacceptable for them, even if the content as such is a priority for them. Their requirement for a "balanced, sensible and fair manner" for implementation might indicate that they would opt out, and continue to have lower climate ambitions in case they would not receive their "fair" share of the financing. The financing aspects are however the only clear – albeit very strong - red line for Poland, no other unwanted elements in the strategy can be identified in their statement.

Poland is using its voice to ensure that the financial aspects that are of high importance to them are being addressed, and could also be seen as venting for frustration on the financing structures of the Union in a larger context, since no allocation of funds in relation to this policy initiative has yet been presented, and is as such a sign of concern. Having in mind the discussions on the possibility of withdrawing EU funding during TEU art 7 procedures, it is even more likely that this venting is a sign of larger alarm than the environmental strategy. Threats for partial exit are however not made explicitly.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is the second most dissatisfied member state, and this seeps through their entire statement. They do not express support for the initiative, although they don't exactly shoot it down either. They point out that the EU stands for only 9% of global green house emissions and that it would be necessary to push for more ambitious involvement of worse emitters globally. However, it seems that they could go along if certain aspects – mostly financial, both in increasing the amounts and their "fair" allocation, very similar to PL – are ensured, and make this a red line for them. They go however even further by demanding that climate neutrality would be a target to be achieved on the EU-level, not necessarily on the MS-level. This would in a sense create a loophole for a member state to be able to endorse the climate strategy without having to fulfil its ambitions in their own country, which would seriously undermine the idea of a joint effort, and indicates risk for non-compliance or dragging their feet in the implementation phase.

A strong red line for the Czech republic is also that nuclear energy will not be disadvantaged in the strategy; "nuclear energy mustn't be disadvantaged", "The right of the member state to determine their own energy mix and the principle of technology neutrality must be respected". It is rather clear from their statement that they do not consider the long-term strategy as an essential EU-priority and could well consider opting out without a high level of financial support from EU-funds, or in case there are

indications of the strategy disadvantaging nuclear energy. This is venting of serious dissatisfaction, in rather blunt language. In addition, partial exit in form of non-compliance is clearly present.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria as the most dissatisfied member state makes a case not just against many of the same aspects than PL and CZ, but also the process of discussing the initiative. They make similar statements on the importance of financial aspects; "without adequate long-term financing strategy, the required level of development of low-carbon industries would not be possible", "..adequate financing measures, beyond existing EU-funds, which should ensure a fair transition in the most affected member states". They also refer to nuclear energy by stating energy neutrality as one of the most important principles for Bulgaria. These demands are being made with very clear expressions, although not directly threating. But on top of this - as the only member state – they are clearly dissatisfied by the initiative as such and how the process of its negotiation has been handled; "The approach to negotiating ambitious political goals before having clear details how they can be achieved does not provide clarity..", they are opposing certain parts of the planned strategy; "we cannot accept an increase in our individual goal with regard to non-ETS sectors", "we do not support the proposals to include this sector [transport] in the emissions trading system", and they call for greater subsidiarity by emphasizing necessary flexibility in the strategy, allowing the member state to decide for themselves by stating as the most important principles "taking into account national specificities" and "allowing adequate margin for member states in setting their long-term policies".

Bulgaria can therefore be interpreted as having several red lines, but on top of that also publicly discrediting the negotiation process. On the other hand, the statement "Bulgaria considers that the transition to climate neutrality should be socially and economically just", leaves the listener to believe that the aim of the initiative is still acceptable for BG, but with a heavy load of conditions, as well as discontentment over the process. This is definitely using their voice, and could be interpreted as heavy venting, with references for exiting the initiative. Bulgaria, as one of the most recent ones to join the EU, does not show signs of loyalty or solidarity, which indicates their political cost for partial exit is lower than for example for Italy.

5.2.4 Results of the 5 most dissatisfied member states

Seen against the results of the relevant Eurobarometer questions as explained above, the findings on these most dissatisfied member states seems logical. Their respective public opinions towards the EU are either close to the EU-average or on the negative side of the scale, and they all show low importance being attained to environmental issues. Thus, the relevance of the results is strengthened by this triangulation method.

The results show that the most dissatisfied member states all use their voice extensively to express the dissatisfaction and explain the reasons for it, and are all venting their frustration in varying intensity. Indications towards, or overt statements to, opting out are present in all of their statements. The operationalizing of the concepts has been able to tease out from the material that not only are the concepts present, but also enabled a more nuanced analysis on their severity in relation to each other. Different types of partial exit have also been identified, threats of opting out of the initiative as well as reluctance towards the foreseen implementation, i.e. non-compliance.

5.2.5 The mildly dissatisfied member states

Looking at the rest of the member states that expressed dissatisfaction - the 10 countries[74] that have made minor reservations - the picture gets more diverse. For some of them, the same reasoning seems to apply as for the more dissatisfied member states (relatively high anti-EU sentiment in the population, combined with low priority for environmental issues); this seems to be the case for RO, HU, SI and

[74] RO, MT, LT, HU, DE, IE, SE, SI, LU, CY

CY, so they could be seen as giving a voice to the popular dissatisfaction in their countries, albeit in a very mild form, since all of them are also expressing support to a bigger extent than dissatisfaction.

On the other hand, MT population expresses an exceptionally positive attitude towards the EU with only 14% thinking it would do better outside as well as gives high priority to environmental issues. Still, MT expresses clear reservations. Same goes for DE to some extent, even if they rank slightly higher in anti EU sentiment than MT, 18%, they are still overwhelmingly a pro-EU member state. On the other hand, HU ranks higher in their anti-EU sentiment than some of the countries in the top 5 of dissatisfied member states in the ENVI, and gives a lower priority to environmental issues, but still has only a few reservations and does not use its voice much, where one could have expected more in the light of their Eurobarometer results.

Even if it might seem that the Environmental ministers from these countries do not reflect the public opinion of their countries, drawing any relevant conclusions on them is challenging since the amount of reservations expressed is low for each of them. It seems more likely that one or two reservations fits into the margin even for member states that are profoundly positive towards the initiative. When looking closer into the details of these individual reservations, they seem to handle more of negotiation tactics, member states setting red lines on *how* the long-term strategy is to be finalized, rather than on the actual policy output. This can be seen in otherwise positive DE's reservation, where they open for financial support for weaker regions, but demand it be tied to objectives that make "a significant contribution to a climate responsible development". Similarly, SE who otherwise talks warmly of the ambitions and wants the EU to work together and take global leadership in climate action, still sets a clear condition with stating that the overall EU expenditure should not increase

Overall, it can be said that even for these states, their statements of dissatisfaction can be identified and analysed with the voice/exit concepts, but the relevance of the findings cannot be confirmed with the Eurobarometer.

6 Conclusions

While the negotiation situation observed in the case study may not be easy to solve for the Presidency – some member states only agree to go along if they get generous financing, and others demand that the strategy should not increase spending, there are no major indicators on adverse politicization, i.e. signs that member states would primarily be fishing for points for national political arenas. The reservations are mainly relevant to the policy initiative at hand, and only major red lines relating to national political preferences are the ones from CZ and BG concerning their right to decide on their national energy mix, i.e. they want to retain the right to use nuclear energy without that disadvantaging them in the allocation of climate action funds. This is an important aspect, but, compared to the mass of constructive negotiation tactics and proactive supportive suggestions from member states still a relatively minor friction.

To counter the expressed dissatisfaction, the majority of member states is expressing loyalty in wanting to achieve things together, wanting to put the EU in the global forefront and willing to support weaker regions throughout the Union. In their case, Bartolini's ideas of loyalty acting as an internalized boundary that makes exiting more difficult, seems to materialize in these expressions.

As to the main question to be answered by this study, was the voice/exit axel visible in the Environmental council, could Bartolini's theory and concepts be used to explain the findings of this case study, the answer is: certainly – to some extent. The concepts render themselves to empirical research with relative ease and give useful tools to analyse the findings. Member states clearly use their voice, and vent pressures, and the Council setting seems to be a suitable political structure for them to do so. A variety of positions in relation to where on the voice/exit axel a member state is can be identified, and the concepts help capture them in a meaningful and structured way. Venting pressures as well as negotiation tactics, making threats as well as conveying symbolic messages, values, beliefs as well as expressions of loyalty are all alive and well in the ENVI Council interactions. Therefore, the concepts clearly add dimensions to the analysis that might otherwise be missed, and help our understanding in the face of the complex reality of the development of a salient policy initiative.

On the other hand, in cases of serious venting, it has been more difficult in this study to identify whether the venting as such relieves exit (opt-out) pressures, or whether some more concrete results would be expected after the voicing of dissatisfaction, to change the course of the member state. In other words, the concepts have been useful to understand the elements present in a situation but explaining causal linkages has proven difficult. This is in part due to the case study -format, which with its snap shot picture on the ENVI allows us to come only so far. The conclusion is that I was able to scrutinize the situation with the voice/exit concepts, but the setting does not allow conclusions to be made on what the implications of the findings are to the future of the policy issue at hand.

Therefore, the results also raise new questions, as they do not help the analysis to reach any final conclusion on the *effect* of using its voice to the consecutive position of the member state towards the initiative. This would be necessary to understand to be able to say with any reasonable confidence something about in which direction the cooperation around the initiative is headed. Are countries negative because the initiative poses serious problems for them, or do they try to leverage more financing, or are they trying to gain political points on the national field by opposing EU-initiatives and how far would they be willing to go in undermining the Union for their national benefit? Do they get happier by voicing their concerns, or are more concrete outcomes necessary? All crucial questions, and this study proves that Bartolini helps us to understand the situation better by providing analytical tools to take apart a complex situation to manageable size bits, but this study cannot conclude whether the concepts prove as useful in describing developments over time, or whether they are able to identify just the elements that prove the most important for the development of this policy initiative in the future.

6.2 Theoretical and policy implications

This study joins to the chorus of the scholars that have on a more theoretical grounds previously identified Bartolini's theory as having the possible makings of a grand disintegration theory, since Bartolini's theoretical concepts are strengthened by the empirical evidence used in this study. Yin's analytical generalization as described in chapter 4.1 seems therefore possible in this case.

For policy developers, both in relation to the policy-area specific initiatives as well as anyone interested in developing the working ways of the Union would do well in utilizing Bartolini's concepts in helping them to understand the forces at play. Furthermore, analyses on voicing dissatisfaction can and should be used when navigating the negotiation field by the consecutive Presidencies in order mitigate sources of conflict and pressure for partial exits.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

With what has been stated in chapters above, further longitudinal empirical research would be helpful to better understand how the voice/exit concepts - the usefulness of which has been shown in this study – may help to explain developments over time, and therefore possible also be useful in predicting, or steering, future developments.

In relation to this case study, further research on how the dissatisfied countries' positions develop as the negotiations proceed, and more specifically, whether venting has had pressure-relieving consequences, would be highly interesting. In addition to studies that cover longer stretches of time on the development of a certain negotiation, in-depth interview studies on the most dissatisfied member states motivations as well as their reflections on how they experience that their dissatisfaction has been received and addressed would provide important dimensions to understanding disintegration.

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