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Please cite the final published version:

Jensen, C., & Seeberg, H. B. (2020). On the enemy's turf: Exploring the link between macro- and micro-framing in interest group communication. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(7), 1054-1073.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1659845>

Publication metadata

Title:	On the enemy's turf: Exploring the link between macro- and micro-framing in interest group communication
Author(s):	Carsten Jensen, Henrik Bech Seeberg
Journal:	<i>Journal of European Public Policy</i> , 27(7), 1054-1073
DOI/Link:	https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2019.1659845
Document version:	Accepted manuscript (post-print)

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On the enemy's turf: Exploring the link between macro- and micro-framing in interest group communication

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Abstract. A key strategy of interest groups to influence policy-making is to frame the policy issue, that is, influence how the issue is understood collectively by policy-makers and the public. Hence, scholarly interest in how interest groups' micro-framing of an issue influences and is influenced by the macro-frame, that is, the current collective understanding of the issue, is growing rapidly. To provide a starting point for more systematic analysis, this paper develops a typology of micro-framing strategies that an interest group can use when the macro-frame changes to be misaligned in a hegemonic way with the private interests of the interest group. Based on existing insights in the literature, we derive tentative hypotheses on the sequence of the micro-frame response. We apply the typology to the case of alcohol policy in Denmark. Our typology opens up a new and important avenue for future interest group research.

Key words: Alcohol policy; interest groups; macro-framing; micro-framing.

Strategic communication via so-called framing is a potentially powerful way to affect policy-making. By emphasizing specific aspects of an issue – or defining the debate, as Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008: 436) put it – some policies become more obvious or acceptable to pursue than others (Entman 1993: 53). For instance, whether the use of pesticides in farming is viewed primarily from the perspective of expanding food production or humans’ health environment matters greatly for the regulatory strictness on the area (Baumgartner and Jones 1993: 93–99). In recent years, interest group scholars have consequently been increasingly preoccupied with how interest groups use framing to affect the policy-making process to their own benefit (Baumgartner and Mahoney 2008; Klüver et al. 2015; Binderkrantz 2019).

As emphasized by Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008) and de Bryucker (2017), framing is not a one-way street. Individual interest groups may want to project their favourite frame onto the public agenda, but they are at the same time affected by the frame that happens to dominate the public agenda at any given point. Interest groups are ‘frame takers’ as often as they are ‘frame givers’. Indeed, understanding the intersection between the macro-frame of the public agenda and the micro-frame of individual interest groups constitutes a key interest for the interest group literature (Baumgartner and Mahoney 2008: 436, 445; de Bryucker 2017: 780, 784).

In this paper, we investigate how the macro-frame on the public agenda affects individual interest groups’ micro-framing efforts. More specifically, we ask how an interest group can respond to a change in the macro-frame that goes against the interest group’s goals. That is, what does an interest group do when it suddenly loses control of how its issue is framed? To do so, we develop a typology of possible communicative strategies. The typology differentiates between *exit* from the public agenda (stopping to communicate altogether), *avoidance* (ignoring the unwelcome macro-frame while sticking

to the interest group's preferred frame), *rejection* (engaging with the unwelcome macro-frame but criticizing it), and *acceptance* (engaging with and accepting the unwelcome macro-frame).

Students of interest groups distinguish between the use of member-regarding frames and public-regarding frames, or issue-specific and generic frames (Binderkrantz 2019). Hence, students of interest groups show a large interest in how interest groups use framing to influence policy. Yet, the literature does not offer a typology of micro-framing, and a theory on how interest groups micro-frame is therefore missing. The aim of this paper is to take a first step towards establishing such a theory. Based on existing theory in the literature on the basic interests of interest groups (Berkhout 2013), we propose tentative hypotheses on the order in which interest groups use the four types of micro-frame when the macro-frame changes.

To assess the analytical value of the typology and test the tentative expectations on the sequence of micro-frame response to the macro-frame change, we conduct a longitudinal study of the alcohol policy area in Denmark since the 1990s. As we show using an extensive coding of mass media and legislative activities, this area has witnessed a clear-cut shift in its macro-frame that militates against the preferences of Danish commercial brewers and their association. This radical break in macro-frame allows us to explore – using an encompassing and in-depth coding of press releases – how this particular interest group responded. It turns out that several communicative strategies were employed simultaneously. The initial response was a combination of exit and acceptance, presumably an attempt to create as little fuss as possible by agreeing with the new macro-frame but otherwise staying silent. Subsequently, frame avoidance emerged as the main strategy, arguably revealing an attempt to re-frame the public agenda in a more agreeable direction from the perspective of the brewers and their representatives.

The paper advances the interest group literature in at least four ways. First, theoretically, the paper provides a new analytical typology to capture the relationship between macro- and micro-framing. The typology is generic and applicable to all situations where interest groups operate in a political environment with a public agenda. This kind of typology is much used in party politics research (see, e.g., Bale et al. 2010; Meguid 2008) but only little in interest group research, even if parties and interest groups often face the exact same challenges from the macro-frame. Like interest groups, parties frequently have to respond to changes to the macro-framing, and these typologies have been developed to understand this process. Our typology draws on but also moves beyond the classic distinction in existing interest group research of opposing frames based on private vs public interests (see Binderkrantz 2019). Inspired by these typologies from party research, we sketch a typology to understand interest groups.

Second, theoretically, the paper tentatively tests expectations on the sequence of the micro-frame response to the macro-frame change based on the basic interests of interest groups (Berkhout 2013). Such an exercise is possible through the abrupt change in the macro-frame.

Third, methodically, the paper highlights the importance of an in-depth coding of both the macro-frame and interest groups' micro-frame – and of coding data across a relatively long period. Without a detailed coding, it is not possible to distinguish between the various communicative strategies, while the long timeframe allows for an analysis of the effects of *changes* in macro-frames on *changes* in micro-frames.

Last, substantially, the paper shows how macro-frames have a pervasive impact on individual interest groups – but also that this does not imply that the interest groups are left as passive frame takers. Rather, changing macro-frames initiate a flurry of communicative responses that all make sense from the perspective of an influence-seeking interest group.

Framing and interest groups

The conventional definition of a frame comes from Entman (1993: 53):

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

In the context of interest groups, it is important to distinguish between macro-frames and micro-frames (Baumgartner and Mahoney 2008). The frame that dominates the public agenda – and, hence, sets the tone for policy-making – is the macro-frame. No interest group can single-handedly define the macro-frame. This is because macro-frames are the product of an interaction between the goals of political actors (many with opposing views), new information about policy-relevant problems, and the institutional entrenchment of the previous macro-frame (Baumgartner and Jones 1993: 25–38). Yet, the fact that an interest group cannot decide the macro-frame of course does not imply that it cannot influence it to some degree. With skills and patience, and perhaps a bit of luck, other actors may adopt an interest group's favoured frame, eventually either moderating or overtaking the old macro-frame. The frames of individual interest groups are labelled micro-frames.

There is by now an emerging literature on interest group framing that either studies macro-framing or micro-framing (e.g., Klüver et al. 2015; Binderkrantz 2019). We have learned a great deal from this research. Yet, as pointed out by Baumgartner and Mahoney (2008: 436, 445) and de Bryucker (2017: 780, 784), there is now a need for a better understanding of how the two types of framing interact. If we only focus on micro-frames, we cannot understand how macro-frames come about

exactly because they are not the product of individual frames but of collective definition processes. Since macro-frames normally direct policy-making, we also miss the ability to understand how interest groups affect policy via framing. Conversely, by only looking at macro-frames, we fail to see how individual interest groups try to colour the macro-frame. A full picture requires us to study the interaction between macro- and micro-frames.

Our ambition is to explore this interaction. We do so by investigating how macro-frames that are misaligned with the goals of interest groups condition the use of micro-frames. As implied by Schattschneider (1960) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993), individual political actors are frame takers before they are frame givers. The macro-frame defines the ideational context in which actors have to operate today – no matter what frame the actor would like see as the dominant macro-frame tomorrow. In the words of Miller and Riechert (2001: 112), the macro-frame

...can so dominate that others are delegitimized and given no credence in the media and public discourse. When this occurs the dominant frame could be said to be acting hegemonically, rendering ‘natural’ the prevailing definition of the situation.

Even if an actor disagrees with the macro-frame, the actor still needs to deal with it to remain an effective political force. From the perspective of interest group research, this makes it vital to understand *how* interest groups handle misaligned macro-frames. This is the purpose of the rest of the paper. In the building of our typology, we assume that interest groups behave rationally in the sense that their framing aligns with their basic interests. That is to say that we are developing a typology to a scenario in which an issue has been around for a long time together with the interest groups. Their interests are well-established and the change in the macro-frame reshuffles much used frames rather

than breeds an entirely new issue or introduces a completely new way of viewing an issue in which interest groups have to find out their interests (unlike the policy development on biotechnology in the EU in the 1990s, cf. Daviter (2009)).

Interest groups' frame strategies

An interest group that finds itself on the receiving end of a misaligned macro-frame – that is, one that militates against the interest group's policy goals – have a menu of options available. We can organise the menu along two dimensions. The first is the degree of engagement with the macro-frame. Either an interest group actively engages with the macro-frame, or it ignores it. As argued by Riker (1996) in the context of political campaigns, actors can often be better off by ignoring an issue rather than engaging with it, although some modicum of engagement is frequently unavoidable (Sigelman and Buell 2004). It is plausible that the same logic applies to interest groups and macro-frames because engagement might both be interpreted as agreement and increase the salience of the issue, potentially leading to undesired policies (given that policies are likely to be guided by the unwelcome macro-frame). As an alternative, an interest group may opt for lobbying inside parliament (Binderkrantz et al. 2015).

The second dimension is the degree to which the interest group promotes its own preferred micro-frame. In some instances, pushing one's own micro-frame may be a bad idea if it happens to be seen as inappropriate because of the macro-frame (De Bruycker 2019: 107–108). Other times, it may be more feasible to promote the micro-frame even though it resonates poorly with the macro-frame. This dilemma probably often emerges for an interest group: It has to decide between promoting its narrow private-regarding, or member-based, frame (to sell more alcohol) vs promoting a broader public-regarding frame (e.g., to protect public health). This dilemma is well known in interest group

research (Binderkrantz 2019; de Bruyker 2019), and hence, we simply embed this central dilemma in our typology.

In combination, the two dimensions create four strategies. The first, and perhaps most basic, is to simply stop trying to affect the macro-frame altogether. It may be that the dominant macro-frame is so hostile to the interest group – because there is a manifest clash between its narrow member interest and the public interest – and perhaps also so deeply entrenched or hegemonic that it appears either a waste of time or even counter-productive to remain active. The interest group is obviously in a bad position. It is unlikely to be able to persuade anyone with its narrow, member-based micro-frame because it fits so poorly with the public-regarding macro-frame and because the latter is so widely accepted at this point by most other relevant actors. In this scenario, it makes more sense to either exit or accept the macro-frame. This is the *exit* strategy.

An alternative to exit is *avoidance*. Here, the interest group ignores the macro-frame while sticking to its own micro-frame. Both the exit and avoidance strategies ignore the macro-frame, but the latter is more offensive in the sense that it actively promotes the micro-frame, whereas the former does not. The third strategy is *rejection*. This strategy implies that the interest group engages with the macro-frame but does so in a critical way. Typically, this will entail questioning the validity of the macro-frame by advocating the merits of the interest group's micro-frame. The fourth and final strategy is *acceptance*. Here, the interest group engages with the macro-frame without mentioning its own preferred micro-frame. In a sense, this is a situation of full surrender because the interest group entirely buys into the dominant frame even though it flies in the face of its own goals.

[Table 1]

Table 1 summarises the four strategies. It is important to note that although the table shows categorical distinctions, in reality, we should think more in terms of differences in degree. Few interest groups will

probably only engage with the misaligned macro-frame or, alternatively, completely ignore it.

Similarly, when it comes to the promotion of the micro-frame, few interest groups are likely to entirely neglect their own micro-frame or, alternatively, only talk about that specific frame. Still, we believe the typology is helpful because it allows us to more systematically explore the potential ways in which interest groups can respond to a misaligned macro-frame.

Because the different strategies will in real life presumably manifest themselves as differences of degree rather than differences of kind, several strategies can be employed at the same time. An interest group may, for instance, simultaneously reduce its engagement with the macro-frame and accept it. In this scenario, the interest group tries to stay under the radar by agreeing with the macro-frame but otherwise staying quiet. In another scenario, the interest group can combine a reduced engagement with rejection, producing a slightly more assertive strategy. Yet, interest groups may not only employ multiple strategies at the same time but also over time. One strategy may be more appropriate right after the change in macro-frame, while another strategy is better later on.

The typology does not *per se* inform us about when any particular strategy is more likely to be chosen over another. Because the context of interest groups varies so much, it is probably not possible to deduce a firm theory about strategy selection. However, it is still possible to put up some tentative expectations.

For this exercise, a natural starting point is to consider the basic interests of an interest group. In his much-used interest typology, Berkhout (2013) delineates three types of interests: (1) an interest group's need to cater to its members, (2) its need to influence policy, and (3) its need to maintain a public image (see also Klüver et al. 2015: 484–487). If we put this together with two key factors about the macro-frame, namely the degree to which the macro-frame is misaligned with the goals of the

interest group and the degree to which the macro-frame is hegemonic, we can sketch some rough potential outcomes.

In a situation where the macro-frame becomes both very misaligned and hegemonic, the public image of the interest group is almost inevitably and immediately scratched (De Bruycker 2019: 107–108). As Berkhout (2013: 232) explains, a tainted image undermines the credibility of the interest group and therefore its ability to influence policy. While this is a problem not only in the short-term but also in the long-term, it is potentially fixable through micro-framing and heavy news engagement. However, more importantly, there is a real danger that stricter regulation is enacted along with the turn-around of the macro-frame. This is much worse because it is permanent. The interest group is not part of policy-making in the parliament, and it is therefore far more difficult for the interest group to revert a bad policy decision than a bad policy image. Moreover, a tainted image only poses a threat of stricter regulation, whereas the enactment of policy change by definition entails stricter regulation if the macro-frame changes. Hence, we should expect interest groups to put policy influence (2) before public image (3). Given budget constraints, the first response is therefore to throw all resources into policy influence and, in consequence, pursue the *exit strategy* (assuming fixed resources). Only when the immediate threat of stricter policy is avoided, the interest groups will turn to protect its public image and, therefore, turn to an *engagement strategy*. This is a prediction that De Bruycker (2019: 106–108) also makes in his study of interest group framing in the EU.

This means that the interest group entirely sidesteps the basic interest of its members (3), namely to promote the private interest (Berkhout 2013). However, members usually have nowhere else to go, and most of them will probably also acquiesce to the order of response by the interest group as avoiding stricter policy and a tainted public image is also in their long-term interest. However, the private interest is the *raison d'être* of interest groups, and the interest groups will eventually – and as

soon as possible – return to its starting point and, therefore, adopt the *rejection strategy*. This sequence – with the rejection strategy last – is probably particularly pronounced for business associations (as opposed to public interest associations) because their private (economic) interest more often and more directly collides with the public (health, moral, or security) interest (Binderkrantz et al. 2015; Binderkrantz 2019). Some business associations might be able to use a frame that aligns their private interests with the public interests, as when a banking union emphasises the ramifications of stricter financial regulation for economic recovery (public interest) rather than the detrimental effects on its profits (private interest) (Binderkrantz 2019: 1). Yet, especially for a manufacturer (e.g., of pesticides, nuclear energy, alcohol, cigarettes) (Baumgartner and Jones 1993), there is probably little space to orchestrate a (fake) correspondence between its private interest and the public interest, since its survival relies on a market that the public interests invariably restrict (De Bruycker 2019). It is hard to make the case that stricter regulation of alcohol consumption somehow negatively affects the public interest.

This order of response obviously depends on how misaligned and hegemonic the turn in the macro-frame is. Our tentative expectations build on the premise that the macro-frame is very misaligned and very hegemonic. However, it does not have to be. If the macro-frame is either less misaligned or less hegemonic, avoidance and rejection become more realistic. Both strategies, but perhaps especially rejection, have the potential of changing the macro-frame to the benefit of the interest group in question. Finally, if the macro-frame is hegemonic, but not particularly misaligned, it may be more rational to simply accept the macro-frame as it is because it does not deviate too much from what the interest group wanted in the first place and because change will be so hard to accomplish.

Research Design

To test the use of the micro-frame typology in relation to a macro-frame, our research design needs to meet three conditions to be successful. A first requirement is to maximise variation on the macro-frame. Ideally, the macro-frame has to shift from being relatively well-aligned with the goals of the interest group (i.e., to highlight the economic interests in alcohol production that directly align with the private, member-based interest of the interest group) to clearly misaligned and hegemonic (by emphasising the social, health, and moral hazards of alcohol consumption corresponding to the public health). Maximising the variation on the independent variable like this maximizes the opportunity to see the full variation on the dependent variable. As pointed out by King et al. (1994: 130), this is the appropriate case selection criteria when exploring a new argument such as ours.

The second requirement is a valid measurement of the micro-frame. To gauge the true interest group response to the change in the macro-frame, it is necessary to have an unmediated indicator on the communicative *intent* of the interest group. This is no easy task as it rules out the mass media as a source. The mass media normally aim to include multiple sources with conflicting viewpoints. Incidentally, this is why the dominant frame in the mass media is typically regarded as a good proxy of the macro-frame exactly because it captures the modal frame on an area (Baumgartner and Jones 1993: 50–51). Yet, conversely, if we relied on mass media reports to assess the interest group's micro-frame, we would run a serious risk of confusing the micro- and the macro-frame. Hence, we need a policy area with an interest group that consistently and publicly communicates its views on the issue outside the media.

The third requirement is that the interest group population has to be constant over time. Research shows that most interest group populations are not constant over time (Fisker 2015). Yet, if interest groups form and dissolve over the period under study, a change in the micro-frame of the interest group

may have to do with dynamics internal to the population more than a change in the macro-frame. The analysis would not be able to tell. Moreover, to avoid dynamics in advocacy coalitions (Mahoney 2007) and other dynamics internal to the interest group population, a population consisting of only a few interest groups would help the analysis.

Apart from identifying a case that fulfils these three criteria, we also have to consider how to study changes to the macro-frame. As explained by Baumgartner (2013), a change in a macro-frame is comparable to a paradigm shift, as conceptualized by Hall (1993). Consequently, a change in the macro-frame involves not only an altered discourse but also that actors come to favour new policies and that this actually spills over into new regulation, too. An analysis of a change in the macro-frame, in sum, involves studying (1) the discourse on the area, (2) the type of policy changes that actors call for, and (3) actual policy changes as legislated by the authorities.

Case selection and data

In order to test how macro-frames affect interest groups' micro-framing, we analyse the case of alcohol in Denmark from the late 1990s to the early 2010s. Denmark belongs to the cluster of countries that, historically, is best described as classic corporatist with a high degree of formal involvement of interest groups in the policy-making process (Binderkrantz and Christiansen 2015). With this privileged access to parliament and the bureaucracy, we should expect that Danish interest groups are not as involved and as experienced in public advocacy, that is, micro-framing, as they would have been in a more pluralist country with more open competition. Hence, if we find clear patterns in the micro-framing of the Danish interest groups and, hence, a sign of clear strategic behaviour, we should at least expect to be able to find the same patterns in more plural societies.

The Danish case is appealing because it provides a major change in the macro-frame that was not initiated by the interest group, as explained below. This allows us a rather clear-cut case to study how the macro-frame influences an interest group's micro-frame. This fulfils our first case selection criteria. The area of alcohol is useful for analysis because its scope is fairly limited (in contrast to, say, integration of immigrants) and can be clearly defined over time. The area concerns production, marketing, and sale of alcoholic beverages as well as consumers' access to and consumption of these products. This clear demarcation also helps to identify the interest group population, which is rather stable over time. In Denmark, the Danish Brewers' Association ('Bryggeriforeningen') was established in 1899 and today represents 51 small and large breweries – Carlsberg being the most important – who employ about 3,500 people and produce 98 percent of all alcohol sold in Denmark. It is the most important, if not the only genuine, interest group on the area. This implies that the interest group population is very stable and consists of only one significant interest group, fulfilling our third case selection requirement.

A final reason for studying the Danish Brewers' Association is that it issues quite a large number of press releases and does so regularly ($n = 257$). We have been able to collect them through a web-search engine ('Netarkivet', accessed through the Danish Royal Library) through which we visited the webpage of the Brewers' Association back to 2003. In this way, we have a direct, unfiltered measure of the micro-frame in fulfilment of our second criteria. These press releases can be used to measure an interest group's micro-framing because they are crafted and issued to be picked up by the media and to reach a large audience. Press releases are short and easy to draft and publish, and we can therefore expect them to be widely used. Studies using press releases are therefore becoming more widespread in party research (see, e.g., Sagarzazu and Klüver 2017), and they are slowly emerging also in interest group research (Boumans 2018). This is not to say that press releases provide the full picture of an

interest group's public affairs strategy. An interest group probably also relies on personal connections to journalists. Yet, to get an issue across, we expect that a call to a journalist is usually supplemented with the issuing of a press release.

To measure the micro-frame, the press releases were content coded into nine categories: VAT, packaging, shopping at the German border (a major issue in Denmark, which has higher prices than Germany), marketing, organisation, VAT on products sold at the German border, nutrition, consumer, and social responsibility. We grouped the former six categories into a 'business frame' that reflects what is typically termed the narrow economic or private interests of the Brewers Association and the latter three into a non-business frame, which may be viewed as reflecting the public interests and, hence, a response to the 'danger frame' of the public agenda (cf. immediately below). Such a business vs health hazard and security separation is common in other framing studies (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Euchner et al. 2013).

We operationalise *exit* as the absence of press releases (on any topic), and acceptance, rejection, and avoidance are distinguished by the content of a press releases. Moreover, we can see *exit* in newspaper articles if they do not mention the interest group as a participant in the debate. Press releases and/or media activity implies that the interest group is active in the debate, but we need content coding of press releases to determine how it engages. We operationalise *acceptance* as the press releases that focus on the macro-frame and accepts the danger frame, *rejection* as the press releases that focus on the macro-frame but rejects the danger frame and/or use the micro business frame, and *avoidance* as the press releases that focus on another topic than the danger and business frames.

As noted before, a change in macro-frame implies both a new public discourse and (calls for) new policies (Hall 1993; Baumgartner 2013). To measure the public discourse and calls for new policies, we collected and coded 645 articles from 1990 to 2013 from two major Danish newspapers,

Berlingske and Politiken. The first is considered to be leaning to the right and the latter to the left. We coded five possible topics: health topics (physical/mental health; physical/mental addictions; abuse of the addictive product; incurred health care costs), crime topics (any illegal activity, including illegal production, sale, or consumption; tax evasion; violence), moral topics (sinfulness; moral wrongdoing other than crime; objection against traditional morals), enterprise topics (any legal commercial activity and the regulation thereof, including the introduction of new products; taxes/tax revenue for the state; and profits from production and sale), and neutral topics (a residual category that includes topics that do not fit the previous four topics). We grouped the former three discourses into a danger frame (i.e., alcohol being a danger to a people's health, moral habitus, or society) and the latter two into a business frame (for a similar approach, see Euchner et al. 2013). We include the (relatively small) category of neutral topics here because they do not go against the interests of the Brewers' Association and, as such, do not require a strategic response. When it comes to the danger frame, it should be noted that health is by far the main component, while moral topics and crime topics make up only a small and rather constant proportion.

To measure the dominant preference for policy change expressed on the public agenda, we recorded the first policy goal mentioned in the article, that is, if the activity should be liberalised or restricted (or if the status quo should be maintained). Using the same articles, we also coded the first actor mentioned to analyse the degree of engagement of the interest group (the first dimension of micro-framing). To measure policy changes, we were inspired by previous alcohol policy coding (Brand et al. 2007) and searched the Danish national database on primary laws for all relevant legislation in the period of analysis. Relevant legislation includes regulation of drunk driving, VAT on alcoholic beverages, and consumer access to such beverages. Table A1 in the appendix provides an overview.

Empirical Analysis

In the following, we will, first, describe the change in the macro-frame on alcohol in Denmark 1990–2015. We will go through the three parts of the macro-frame, namely (1) the discourse, (2) calls for new policies, and (3) actual policy changes. After that, we analyse the micro-frame response of the Danish Brewers' Association and focus on the four strategies: (1) exit, (2) avoid, (3) reject, and (4) accept – as well as how they were combined synchronically and diachronically.

Macro-frame I: the discourse

The discourse in the macro-frame on alcohol in Denmark witnessed a dramatic development beginning in 2004–5 amidst a series of marked policy restrictions on the area (discussed below). Traditionally, Denmark has had a comparatively liberal alcohol policy (Butler et al. 2017: 165-166). In an international context, alcohol consumption reached a high of 11–12 litres per citizen (15+) in the early 1980s and stayed there. Yet, despite increasing international, scientific evidence of social and health risks of alcohol consumption and targeted focus from the WHO, Danish politicians did not consider this a problem, at least not until a survey that received intense media coverage revealed that ‘Danish youngsters consume more alcohol, are more intoxication-oriented and experience more alcohol-related problems than other European youngsters’ (Butler et al. 2017: 180). Suddenly, local evidence emerged, and this was a wake-up call that resulted in a sweeping change in Danish alcohol policy. Importantly, as this brief overview shows, this change was exogenous more than endogenous in the sense that the Brewers' Association did not falter or changed strategy and, hence, opened up for this change.

This change is immediately visible in our data on the discourse. Since the early 1990s, when our data begin, the discourse in the macro-frame has been almost equally divided between the business and

danger frames. This is visible from the intertwined lines before 2004–5 in Figure 1A. However, suddenly, in 2004–5, the balance tips. The business frame virtually collapses, and the danger frame jumps upwards. This is a full-blown transformation of the discourse in the macro-frame against the interests of the alcohol industry. The macro-frame could hardly be more misaligned with the goals of the alcohol industry. For the next 10 years or so until 2015, the non-business discourse in the macro-frame remains dominant, although it is also worth observing that the dominance tapers somewhat off after a few years. In the early years after the shift, the macro-frame is both very misaligned and hegemonic, while the macro-frame in the latter part remains misaligned but arguably somewhat less hegemonic.

[Figure 1]

Macro-frame II: calls for policy change

To further substantiate the macro-frame transformation, we look at preferences expressed in the mass media for liberalisation, restrictions, and status quo on the alcohol area (see also Figure A1 in the online appendix). From a situation until 2003–4 when calls for liberalisation and restrictions were somewhat at par, media stories become almost entirely focused on restrictions to alcohol after 2003–4. The call for restrictions takes a steep, quick climb and continues to rise for the rest of the period. Meanwhile, the call for liberalisation moves to a persistently low level, and the call for the status quo drops even further. Hence, also on this indicator, we see how the macro-frame abruptly turns against the interest of the alcohol enterprise in 2004–5.

Macro-frame III: actual policy change

This change in the discourse towards especially health and call for restrictions coincides with a large shift in the policy regulation of the alcohol area. Before the early 2000s, regulation of consumers' access to alcohol is very limited, and new legislation is mostly directed at offering publicly funded treatment to alcoholics. This changes rather quickly in the early 2000s. Legislation is introduced to limit the access to alcohol in bars and pubs (see also Table A1 and Figure A2 in the online appendix), beginning in 2002 with the introduction of wider legal opportunities for the police to withdraw the liquor license to a bar that does not serve alcohol in an appropriate way. In 2004, the change intensifies with an increase in the legal age from 15 to 16 years to buy alcohol in shops and groceries. Moreover, restrictions are introduced to the access to use bars for private functions. In particular, alcohol sale becomes prohibited if the host is under 18 years old. At this time, booking a bar was a very common way of celebrating a birthday for young people. Moreover, soft drinks mixed with alcohol with an alcohol level equivalent to a beer were very popular among young people, and the increase in VAT in 2004 therefore intends to limit the sale. Meanwhile, and also as a clear sign of the anti-alcohol turn, the punishment for drunk-driving as well as for causing accidents through drunk-driving is increased markedly in two steps in 2005. First, the maximum penalty for inadvertent manslaughter or damage to a person while driving drunk is increased. Second, an unusually high fine for drunk-driving is introduced that is equivalent to the offender's monthly salary multiplied by his/her blood alcohol level. Hence, through several measures, the regulation of access to and consumption of alcohol is severely restricted in 2004–2005. Hence, 2004–7 marks a concentration of policy changes. After a few years of rest, a second wave of policy change emerges in 2010–2013.

Summing up, the macro-frame sees a paradigmatic change in 2004–5. This includes both a largescale change in the discourse and regulatory environment. After a few years, however, things revert towards normal, at least in terms of the discourse, which becomes less misaligned and

hegemonic. Overall, with these large changes in the macro-frame, we should expect to see a clear subsequent change also in the micro-frame of the Danish Brewers' Association. We will analyse this in the following.

Micro-frame I: degree of engagement – stay or leave?

The clear change in the macro-frame provides a perfect testing ground to see how interest groups adjust their micro-framing to the macro-frame. How did the Danish Brewers' Association react to the hostile turn of the macro-frame?

Beginning with our first dimension of interest groups' framing strategy, which focuses on the degree of engagement, the fat black line in Figure 1B represents the presence of commercial actors – the Danish Brewers' Association and its members – in the media compared to experts (dashed line), users (dotted line), and social-medical actors (dash-dotted line). Before the change in the macro-frame in 2004–5, commercial actors have a steady and even slightly increasing presence in the media during the 1990s and early 2000s. They are in the media far more often than users or social-medical actors but still substantially less than experts are. However, with the change in the macro-frame in 2004–5, the commercial actors clearly retreat and remain much more silent on the issue in the remaining period. Meanwhile, experts pervade the media. This would suggest that commercial actors partly use the exit strategy (rather than the avoidance strategy, in which they remain as active as before) by toning down their presence, although without leaving the area entirely. Before 2005, their average presence in the media is 15.4 percent, and after 2005, their presence is down at 10.2 (this difference is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$).

Micro-frame II: type of engagement – reject or accept?

Parallel to this partial exit, the Danish Brewers' Association – within the boundaries of its reduced engagement with the issue – immediately changes its approach to the issue. As is visible in Figure 1C, in its own press releases, it promotes a business frame until about 2006. During this period, it spends 64.6 percent of its press releases on the frame, while it only spends on average 18.8 percent of its press releases on the danger frame. However, in 2007, the Danish Brewers' Association follows the switch in the macro-frame and almost entirely leaves the business frame and adopts the danger frame. For the next five years, the business frame makes up only 36.9 percent of its engagement with the issue, while the danger frame jumps to 57.3 percent. These changes in the use of the frames are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

The Danish Brewers' Association maintains the danger frame, which is consonant with the new macro-frame but counter to its own long-term interests, until the macro-frame begins to regress towards its previous longer-term trend (see Figure 1A) where the business and the danger frames again carry a more equal weight. At this point – after having focused on the danger frame for about five years – the balance shifts again, and the Danish Brewers' Association returns to predominantly promoting a business frame. Back where it began, it spends 55.9 percent of its engagement on the business frame and only 34.1 on the danger frame. The change back to the old pattern is statistically significantly different from the levels in the period 2008–2012 ($p < 0.05$).

These changes in the micro-frame are very visible if we look closer at the content of the press releases issued by the Danish Brewers' Association. Before 2005, the press releases are very much focused on reducing VAT on beverages. The press releases refer to the illegal market, which, according to the Danish Brewers' Association, can only be eliminated by making legal purchases cheaper and thereby more attractive to users. Hence, several press releases simply describe the problem with the

illegal market in the following way: “Illegal trading with beer and soft drinks is becoming a national sport...” (October 2005).

In 2006, the Danish Brewers’ Association begins to issue press releases of a very different kind. The press releases are now focused narrowly on ‘the limits to alcohol consumption, the unacceptable behaviour connected to excessive alcohol consumption including drink driving, and the need to keep a steady focus on the 15 percent of the population that drinks too much’ (December 2006). In other press releases, the Danish Brewers’ Association urges consumers – particularly youngsters – to use their common sense (August 2007). The CEO of the Danish Brewers’ Association, Niels Hald, frequently calls for further steps to stem alcohol consumption among children and young people. That said, the Danish Brewers’ Association repeatedly leaves it to the parents (rather than the beer producers) to take on the responsibility for their kids’ alcohol habits.

Micro-frame: A two-pronged and two-staged strategy

The framing strategy employed by the Danish Brewers’ Association is two-pronged and two-staged. It is two-pronged in the sense that the Danish Brewers’ Association at the same time retreats on the issue, using a partial exit strategy, and employs an acceptance strategy, embracing the danger frame. It is two-staged in the sense that the Danish Brewers’ Association first acts as a frame taker by closely trailing the macro-frame, even when it dramatically turns against its long-term interests. However, after a while, the interest group gradually returns to its preferred business frame, essentially reverting to the role of (aspirational) frame giver, although the overall activity level remains depressed.

This two-pronged and two-staged strategy corresponds to our theoretical framework based on the basic interests of interest groups, namely to (1) influence policy, (2) uphold a public image, and (3) cater to the members (Berkhout 2013). With such a severe and abrupt change in the macro-frame, it is,

on the one hand, no surprise that the Danish Brewers' Association is unprepared to maintain its solid presence in the media and wholeheartedly embrace the new hostile danger frame. Based on the presumption that the dominance of the danger frame jeopardises future sales revenues, further pushing this frame militates against its long-term interests. This means that, on the one hand, staying quiet appears reasonable. Moreover, it resonates with the idea that the Brewers' Association puts the risk of a permanently stricter policy first and allocates most of its resources to avoid this. Yet, on the other hand, the Brewers' Association as a minimum had to show to policy-makers and the public that it shares the concerns being raised as part of the new frame. Not adhering to the new macro-frame might provoke further restrictive policy measures in the shorter run against its interests as this may be seen as provocative and untimely. Moreover, by accommodating the concerns raised in the danger frame, the Brewers' Association protects its public image. The result is a combined exit and acceptance strategy, which is then substituted for a combined exit and avoidance strategy after the smoke of the major reforms in the mid-2000s has settled and the Brewer Association returns to cater to its members' private interests. Hence, in correspondence with our theoretical framework, when an interest group enters the enemy's turf, it appears to put policy (1) before its public image (2) and only cater to its members (3) when policy and image is not severely threatened.

Conclusion

The analysis underlines the analytical value of thinking about how macro-frames constrain the micro-frames of interest groups. We presented a typology of strategic responses to misaligned macro-frames (i.e., macro-frames that go against the goals of an interest group) as well as a case study that allowed us to assess the merits of the typology and test tentative expectations on the sequence of micro-framing. In our study, the new macro-frame was both very misaligned and hegemonic. This was especially true in

the first period after the break, after which the macro-frame became less hegemonic, although still misaligned. In line with the discussion in the theory section, the combination of a misaligned and hegemonic macro-frame led the Danish Brewers' Association to adopt both an exit and acceptance strategy. At first, they used the micro-framing strategy to avoid stricter regulation and protect their public image. Later on, with a less hegemonic macro-frame, avoidance became more prominent but still in combination with exit. As soon as this became possible, the interest groups switched to its core strategy, namely to advance its members' private interests. Hence, our analysis touches on a classic conflict for interest groups, namely on how to navigate when private and public interests collide. To us, our findings suggest that our framework not only allows us to categorise micro-frame strategies based on this private-public distinction but also allows us to begin to understand what drives the choice of strategies.

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Words: 7700

Supplemental data for this article can be accessed at ... (publisher provides doi).

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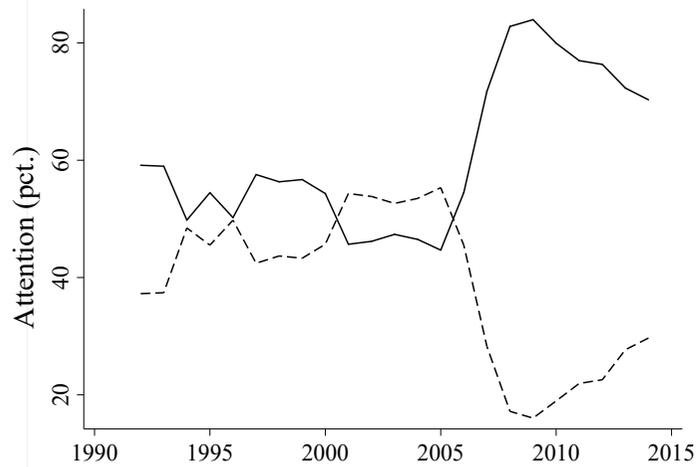
Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank the reviewers and editors for comments on the manuscript in addition to Arco Timmermans, Helene Helboe Pedersen, and Anne Binderkrantz and participants at the MPSA in 2018. The study was funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark (grant number 1317-0005).

Table 1. A typology over interest groups' frame strategies

		Engage with macro-frame?	
		No	Yes
Promote own micro-frame?	No	<i>Exit</i>	<i>Acceptance</i>
	Yes	<i>Avoidance</i>	<i>Rejection</i>

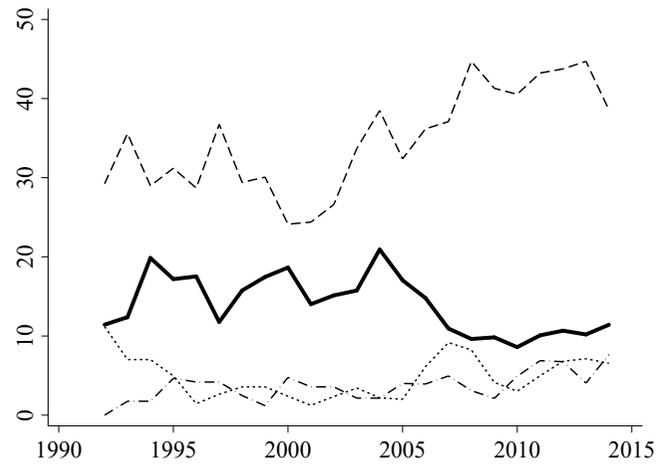
Figure 1. The development in the macro-frame (A) and micro-frame (B, C) on alcohol policy in Denmark, 1990-2015.

(A) The development in the dominant frame on the issue of alcohol in Denmark 1990-2015.



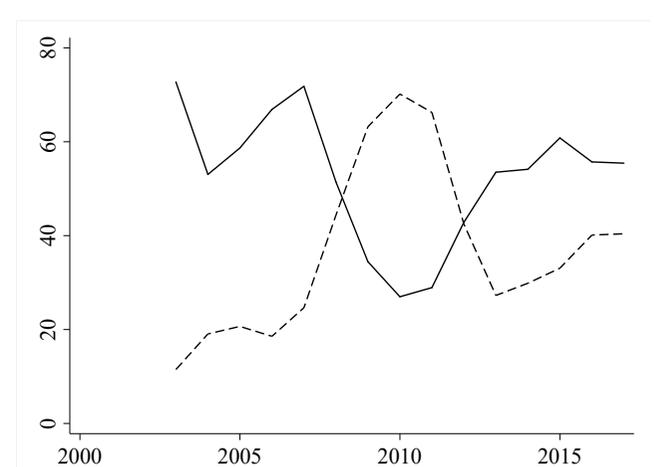
Note: The solid line marks the danger frame. The dashed line marks the business frame.

(B) Actors in the media on alcohol stories.



Note: Commercial actors (solid line). Experts (dashed line). Users (dotted line). Social-medical actors (dash-dot line).

(C) Frame used by the Danish Brewers' Association.



Note: Business frame (solid line). Danger frame (dashed line).

**On the enemy's turf: Exploring the link between macro- and micro-framing in
interest group communication**

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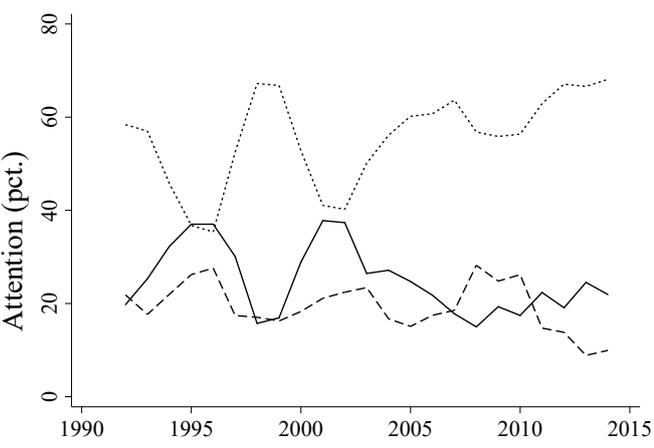
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Online Appendix

Figure A1. Calls for policy change



Note: Calls to liberalize (solid line). Calls for status quo (dashed line). Calls for restrictions (dotted line).

Table A1. Policy changes (adopted laws) on alcohol.

Year	ID	Content	Change
1998	L100	Blood alcohol level reduced from 0.8 to 0.5.	R
1998	L17	Minimum age of 15 to buy alcohol in shops and groceries	R
2000	L21	Alcohol sale from shops and groceries allowed on Sundays before 20 PM	R
2002	L79	VAT on alcohol reduced from 275DKK/liter to 150DKK/liter	L
2002	L17	The legal opportunities for the police to withdraw a liquor license to a bar are increased.	
2003	L86	VAT on packaging of beer and soda reduced by 80 percent.	L
2004	L95	Minimum age increased to 16 to buy alcohol in shops and groceries. Owners are punished with a penalty for violations.	R
2004	L163	Restrictions in the access to use bars for private functions. If the host is under 18 years old, alcohol sale is prohibited.	R
2004	L125	Increase on VAT on alcohol soft drinks and decrease on VAT on beer and wine.	L/R
2005	L7	Punishment for drink-driving increased: Maximum penalty increased to 1 year and 6 months. A fine of the monthly salary multiplied by the blood alcohol level is introduced for first time drink-driving. An unconditional confiscation of the vehicle is introduced for repeated drink-driving.	R
2005	L161	The penalty for inadvertent manslaughter or damage to a person is increased if the crime is committed in relation to drink-driving.	R
2005	L158	Limits on the hours of alcohol sale from shops and groceries are removed.	L
2007	L180	Exhalation tests are introduced as evidence in cases of drink-driving.	R
2010	L197	Prohibition of alcohol sale with a content of 18.5pct or more in bars and shops to people under 18 years.	R
2010	L179	The penalty for inadvertent manslaughter or damage to a person is increased from 10-12 months in prison to 16-18 months if the crime is committed in relation to drink-driving.	R
2010	L216	The VAT on alcohol soft drinks is increased.	R
2011	L33	The VAT on beer and wine is increased.	R

Note: "R" is restrictions, "L" is liberalization.

Figure A2. Policy changes

