

Master Thesis

The influence of strategic communication on the adoption of state-owned product labels

Lorenz Klingele

1st Supervisor: Dr. Kleoniki Pouikli

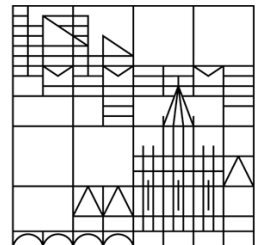
2nd Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ines Mergel

June 28, 2024



**Utrecht
University**

Universität
Konstanz



Lorenz Klingele
Kantstraße 138
10623 Berlin
l.t.klingele@students.uu.nl
1655477

Lorenz Klingele
Kantstraße 138
10623 Berlin
lorenz.klingele@uni-konstanz.de
01/865810

Table of content

Abstract	1
1. Introduction	1
a. <i>Relevance</i>	5
2. State of the art.....	6
3. Theoretical framework	8
a. <i>The advocacy coalition framework</i>	8
b. <i>Decision making gap</i>	10
c. <i>The role of associations in the German policy progress</i>	10
d. <i>Strategic communication</i>	11
5. Research design	14
a. <i>Qualitative research</i>	14
b. <i>Most similar systems design</i>	15
c. <i>Multiple case study</i>	15
d. <i>Case selection</i>	18
f. <i>Data analysis</i>	21
g. <i>Quality criteria</i>	22
h. <i>Validity, reliability and generalisability</i>	23
6. Results.....	24
a. <i>Context of the Green Button</i>	24
b. <i>Success factors of the Green Button</i>	26
i. <i>Resource allocation</i>	26
ii. <i>Direct contact</i>	26
iii. <i>Bypassing the associations</i>	27
iv. <i>The Green Button as a voluntary (administrative) label</i>	27
v. <i>Commitment</i>	28
vi. <i>Market analysis/ clear and sound background for the initiative</i>	28
vii. <i>Support network</i>	28
viii. <i>Meta-label approach</i>	29
ix. <i>Speed/ efficiency</i>	29
c. <i>The role of strategic communication in the context of the Green Button</i>	29
d. <i>The context of the Animal Welfare Label</i>	32
e. <i>Reasons for failure of the Animal Welfare Label</i>	34
i. <i>Resource allocation</i>	34
ii. <i>No task force</i>	34
iv. <i>Legislative approach</i>	35
v. <i>Commitment issues</i>	35
vi. <i>Inner-party resistance</i>	36
vii. <i>Associations bring up their own label</i>	36
viii. <i>No coherent strategy</i>	37
f. <i>The role of strategic communication in the context of the Animal Welfare Label</i>	37
7. Discussion	39

a.	<i>The success of the Green Button</i>	39
b.	<i>The Failure of the Animal Welfare Label</i>	43
c.	<i>The influence of strategic communication</i>	47
8.	Conclusion	50
a.	<i>Limitations</i>	51
9.	Appendix	52
a.	<i>Code aggregation</i>	52
i.	Inductive codes	52
ii.	Deductive codes	53
b.	<i>Codebook</i>	54
c.	<i>Consent form</i>	62
d.	<i>Interview guide</i>	63
e.	<i>Document overview</i>	65
10.	References	74

List of figures

Figure 1: Eight stages of strategic communication. Reference: Author's own illustration. Based on Bruhn et al., 2016 12

Figure 2: Theoretical framework..... 14

Figure 3: Timeline Green Button 25

Figure 4: Timeline Animal Welfare Label..... 33

Figure 5: Ways of influence..... 43

Figure 6: The influence of Strategic Communication 48

List of tables

Table 1: Overview Green Button & Animal Welfare Label 16

Table 2: Interview partners 20

Abstract

This thesis investigates the influence of strategic communication as a complement to the Advocacy Coalition Framework in the adoption of state-initiated product labels. The objective is to examine the impact of associations on governmental initiatives and how the government can use strategic communication to steer these initiatives towards success. A multiple case study approach is employed, focusing on the German product labels Green Button and Animal Welfare Label within a most similar system design. To this end, expert interviews were conducted and internal documents were analysed using qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal that associations exert significant influence on the implementation of government projects to advance their interests, utilizing three different ways. Strategic communication emerges as a crucial tool for ensuring the success of governmental projects, such as labels, despite these influences. It acts as an influential mediator between the government and associations.

1. Introduction

In the face of climate change and increasing social disparities, the concept of personal responsibility is becoming increasingly important (Bamberg et al., 2018; Whitmarsh et al., 2013). Current consumption patterns contribute significantly to negative externalities, or "hidden costs" (Lambert, 2017), that cause harm to the environment and society. This situation is untenable given the climate crisis and social pressures, particularly in the Global South. Further, the Global North's consumption exceeds ecological limits and is therefore unsustainable, resulting in the Global South bearing the consequences (Shirinov, 2021). Firstly, due to their geographical locations, countries in the Global South are disproportionately affected by climate impacts. Secondly, many consumer goods for the Global North, such as textiles and animal feed, are produced in the Global South, exacerbating the burden on these regions (BMZ, 2024). One effective method to encourage more sustainable consumer behaviour is through product labels (Baldwin et al., 2011; Spence, 1974).

Product labels can guide consumers towards more sustainable choices by providing information on the environmental footprint and social impact of products. These

labels are created by various entities: private companies, civil societies, and official institutions such as the European Union or national governments. Labels from private companies often serve marketing interests, which can lead to "greenwashing" (Bosch et al., 2023; Seberini et al., 2024), while civil society labels, though often stricter, lack widespread adoption due to high compliance requirements (Bratt et al., 2011). State-owned labels, on the other hand, have the potential to establish harmonized standards while bridging the gap between greenwashing of companies and to ambitious goals by civil society. Consequently, it is likely to have the most significant impact in encouraging consumers towards more sustainable behaviour. Furthermore, state-initiated product labels can serve as a tool for governmental actions addressing environmental pollution, climate change, and human rights violations, as mandated by international agreements such as the Paris Climate Agreement, the UN Human Rights Convention, and initiatives like the European Green Deal (A/RES/217(III), 1948; COM(2019) 640 final, 2019; United Nations, 2015).

Nevertheless, state-initiated labels are faced by significant political challenges in implementation (McConnell & 't Hart, 2019). The EU also standardizes some official labels (like the EU eco label or the CE mark), but these represent only a portion of the labels available on the market (Belson, 2012; Darnall & Aragón-Correa, 2014). The European Union primarily focuses on standardized requirements, such as ingredients or allergens, which must be listed on all products across the Union. (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2019; Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2023).

At the same time companies often feel threatened by new labels since they may not always be willing to meet the standards certain labels require (Föll, 2011; Laux, 2022). This challenge is particularly prominent for state-owned labels, which may be mandated to display these labels on their products. The debate around implementing new state-initiated labels often centres on whether their use should be compulsory or voluntary (Messer et al., 2017). Companies generally prefer voluntary labelling to avoid stringent mandatory requirements and compliance costs. In response, companies often seek to prevent new product labels or modify new ones in their favour in the adoption process, aiming to make compliance easier and

less costly (Kurzer & Cooper, 2013; Parker et al., 2017). This creates a conflict of interest. Civil society and political entities foster new labelling to address environmental, social, or ethical concerns, while companies resist changes that could lead to labour-intensive transformations or increased costs. Thus, the inclination to change the status quo to address societal concerns contrasts with the desire to maintain it for economic interests.

Current consumer behaviour makes clear, that the status quo must not be maintained, since the consequences cannot be overseen. It impacts the environment, particularly in the textile and meat industries, which together account for 25% of human-caused CO₂ emissions (Cobbing et al., 2022; Europäisches Parlament, 2024; Leibrich, 2021; Umweltbundesamt, 2023). More specifically the textile sector contributes 10% of these emissions through energy-intensive production processes, while also polluting and consuming immense water resources (Europäisches Parlament, 2024; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2021). Social issues in the textile industry include child labour, insufficient wages, lack of social security, prohibition of collective bargaining, and inadequate worker safety, predominantly in the Global South, where over 70% of textiles for the European market are produced (European Commission, 2022; Haupt et al., 2021).

Similarly, meat production has severe environmental impacts, accounting for 15% of global CO₂ emissions (Funke et al., 2022; Klenert et al., 2023; Umweltbundesamt, 2023). It also requires substantial water resources, with approximately 15,000 litres per kilogram (Beltermann et al., 2022). Consumers and animal welfare organizations increasingly oppose conventional livestock farming due to its negative impacts on animals, the environment, and farmers, who face financial uncertainties and tough price negotiations, leading to dissatisfaction and distress (Deutsche Umwelthilfe e. V., 2022; Kremer-Schillings, 2023; Poggel, 2023).

Attempts to address the previously mentioned problems concerns the initiatives “Green Button” and “Animal Welfare Label” by the German government. Both initiatives refer to state-initiated labels aimed to incentivise consumers to buy more sustainable products. In reality only the Green Button was adopted while the Animal

Welfare Label failed. Despite the different outcome, interestingly both had high similarities, which will be discussed in chapter 5c.

Namely, the Green Button is a state label for sustainable textiles, ensuring compliance with human rights and environmental standards along the supply chain. Criteria include prohibitions on child and forced labour, minimum wages, occupational safety, and restrictions on hazardous chemicals and pollutant-tested natural fibres. Initially, the Green Button focused on final production, but plans are in place to extend it to all production phases. Introduced in 2019 by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, it is based on a defined code of conduct. Companies must meet 46 social and environmental standards to use the label, with compliance checked annually by independent auditors (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 2024; Müller, 2022).

Regarding the Animal Welfare Label, which was a planned state quality label for meat from species-appropriate livestock farming, was intended to mark higher standards than legally required. Initially voluntary, the drafts were criticized as inadequate, leading to the label's failure. The label has been stalled in the German parliament since 2019. Discussions about a mandatory label were influenced by the established housing form labelling in trade, which has gained nationwide recognition and market establishment by companies (Michel-Berger, 2021; Spiegel, 2021).

To understand why the Green Button label succeeded in the adoption process while the Animal Welfare Label did not, this thesis conducts a multiple case study with the aforementioned cases in a most similar system design. For this, around 60 internal paper were examined and eleven expert interviews were held. To analyse these cases, the thesis will employ the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) (Sabatier, 1988) and the concept of strategic communication (Hallahan et al., 2007). While the ACF focuses on the conditions necessary for policy change, it does not address the processes in detail, presenting a gap that this thesis seeks to fill. Strategic communication, widely used in the private sector, could be an effective tool in the public sector to steer processes toward predefined goals and could be a fitting complement to the ACF.

Moreover, particular attention will be given to the market side, influencing the adoption of state-owned product labels. As previously discussed, companies often oppose product labels that do not align with their interests, actively lobbying against such initiatives (Kurzer & Cooper, 2013; Parker et al., 2017). To achieve this objective, companies frequently organize into associations to consolidate resources and amplify their collective influence (Kowal, 2018). In some cases, even civil society opposes new labels because they fail to meet certain objectives deemed important by these groups (Boström & Klintman, 2008). For simplicity, these civil society organizations are referred to as "associations" in this analysis, as they exhibit comparable patterns.

Given these challenges, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question:

RQ: How does strategic communication as complement of the advocacy coalition framework function as a mediator between government and associations in the adoption of state-initiated product labels?

a. Relevance

The relevance of this work is evident on several levels. As shown in Chapter 1, the textile and livestock farming sectors are responsible for enormous negative externalities (like emissions and negative social impacts) (Lambert, 2017), which must be addressed in view of realising a sustainable future. The Green Button and the Animal Welfare Label attempt to address these issues through economic instruments and gentle pressure, an argument often put forward by the business sector as the optimal solution. The failure of such initiatives not only fails to address the aforementioned problems but also leads to additional negative consequences. Significant resources, including personnel, time, and money, are squandered, which could have been more effectively allocated elsewhere. Moreover, there is a practical loss of prestige and legitimacy for the responsible entities. (Strünck, 2022). This is particularly problematic for politicians, as they depend on re-election (Ciucci, 2016). Therefore, and due to legal requirements in Germany (§47 GGO, 2020), the responsible parties must already find a consensus and a common direction within their own government in advance to ensure the necessary support and political will. Nonetheless, it comes to the failure of the Animal Welfare Label.

From a theoretical perspective, there is a lack of substantial research in this area. The literature review has shown that while there are studies on why government initiatives fail and the role associations play in this, it is not clear how these failures can be prevented and how stakeholders (e.g., associations) can be steered. This is particularly important as theoretical insights can be very helpful in practice. Even established analytical frameworks such as the Advocacy Coalition Framework require updating and supplementation with more sophisticated tools, as their original methods are considered too simplistic for comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, the concept of strategic communication is well established in private sector research but not in the public sector. Although there is some notable literature on the role of strategic communication in politics, extensive research in this area is lacking, creating a significant research gap (Hoffjann, 2021; Ihlen et al., 2022; Riley & Hollihan, 2012; Wenzelburger & Hörisch, 2016).

2. State of the art

Product labels, whether organized by private companies (often through associations) for marketing purposes, by civil society to achieve ambitious sustainability goals, or by governments to nudge consumers towards sustainable products while pressuring companies to provide them, each have their own respective drawbacks.

While product label influence consumer behaviour by highlighting and promoting products positively (Deutsches Institut für Qualitätsstandards und -prüfung e.V., 2018) established especially by private companies or associations can lead to “greenwashing” – a practice of conveying a false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products are more environmentally sound than they actually are (Bosch et al., 2023; Seberini et al., 2024). The EU and its member states are addressing this issue by allowing companies to use terms such as “sustainable” only if they meet specific criteria, stated in the “Green Claims Directive” (European Commission, 2023). Additionally, member states try to inform consumers about the validity of certain labels to prevent greenwashing (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 2015). However, these efforts do not tackle the core issue: the consumption of products with high negative

externalities. Therefore, the government is striving to introduce its own labels to the market, not always fully doing so.

The failure of state initiatives can be traced back to numerous causes. Often it is due to a lack of support from political parties, interest groups, or the public. Ideological differences and political resistance can also contribute to the rejection. The complexity and ambiguity of a legislative proposal can raise concerns and thus promote failure. Scarcity of resources, whether financial or human, can significantly affect the effectiveness of an initiative (Kingdon & Stano, 1984; Sabatier, 1988; Weaver, 2009). Changes in the political climate and pressure from public opinion also play a significant role (Brettschneider, 2020; McConnell et al., 2020; Wallace et al., 2020). Also, necessary compromises could dilute the original goals and facilitate failure. Procedural problems, such as legal inadequacies or disregarding procedural rules, can further hinder the process (Benz, 2005; Dunlop, 2020; Howlett et al., 2015; McConnell, 2015; Mueller, 2020; Robertson, 1988; Shapiro, 2016). However, the amount of communication also increasingly emerges as an indicator of the success or failure of new initiatives. Research suggests that dialogue-oriented communication not only increases participation but also mutual understanding and approval (Brettschneider, 2020; Schmalz, 2019). Therefore, successful governmental initiatives often require broad support, a thorough understanding of the political landscape, and effective communication with all involved stakeholders.

Furthermore, it has become apparent in the literature review that communication within the policy-making process seems to play a role. Especially when the legislator is required to negotiate with stakeholders, such as associations, by law. Therefore, it becomes more important how policymakers can implement projects or legislative initiatives. A promising explanatory approach for this is strategic communication which entails achieving a specific goal through targeted communication and a predefined plan (see chapter 3d). Although this is rarely applied in political and administrative science, it is very successful in the business sector.

Ultimately, as shown by the studied literature, there are currently no scientific insights into why two very similar cases result in two different outcomes. Therefore,

I aim to investigate why the Green Button as a state-controlled label succeeded and the Animal Welfare Label did not.

3. Theoretical framework

For the theoretical framework, I am employing the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), a widely recognized analytical tool for understanding political change. To enhance this framework, I am integrating the concept of strategic communication. This integration is significant due to two key reasons.

Firstly, strategic communication focuses on stakeholder engagement, which is crucial in policy implementation. In the context of policy implementation, various stakeholders advocate for their interests, especially when they are legally obligated to do so, as seen in the multiple case studies considered for this reason.

Secondly, by incorporating strategic communication, I aim to strengthen the ACF. While the ACF effectively analyses political change, it overlooks the mechanisms of policy system implementation and change. Thus, integrating strategic communication addresses this gap, providing a more comprehensive analytical framework.

a. The advocacy coalition framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) offers a comprehensive approach to analyse the dynamics of policy development and change within political systems. Originally developed by Paul Sabatier and Henk Jenkins-Smith in (1988), the ACF provides a nuanced understanding of how various actors, both within and outside government structures, engage in complex interactions in order to shape policy outcomes. The framework aims to explain how policy changes occur over time, particularly in situations characterized by conflicting interests, diverse stakeholders, and uncertainty about the best course of action (Weible & Sabatier, 2007).

Rather than being a strict theory or model, the ACF serves as a framework for analysis and is one of the most widely used perspectives in policy research (Schubert & Bandelow, 2009). It aims to (1) understand policy dynamics, (2) identify advocacy coalitions, (3) analyse policy beliefs and learning, (4) explain policy

change, and (5) provide a systematic framework for analysing and researching policy processes across different policy domains (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1994).

The ACF makes various basic assumptions. Firstly, the ACF assumes that policy decisions are made in policy subsystems (Bandelow, 2022). These subsystems are a network of specialised actors who deal with a policy problem (Sabatier, 1993b). They include actors (the advocacy coalitions) with clear positions and can consist of interest groups, parliamentary specialists and government administrations. The involved stakeholders then negotiate the corresponding positions and try to achieve their respective positions (Sabatier, 1993a).

Furthermore, Sabatier and James-Smith (1994) postulate that the advocacy coalitions have a belief system. This means that they hold certain beliefs that are relatively stable and do not change easily. The authors distinguish between three different belief levels: (1) deep normative core beliefs, which are fundamental; (2) policy core beliefs, i.e. general perceptions and values in relation to the policy field; and (3) secondary aspects deal with specific beliefs and attitudes, for example in relation to the choice of instruments for realising core beliefs.

The authors assume that political positions can only be effectively enforced through a coalition of actors. Therefore policy-related core beliefs in the policy field must be identifiable and actors with matching core beliefs must coordinate their actions. The strength of a coalition depends on resources such as "money, expertise, number of supporters, and legal authority" (Sabatier, 1993a).

In 2007, Sabatier and Weible (2007) expanded their work to include more contemporary answers. Firstly, they added 'political opportunity structures', which include the number of veto points or other institutional elements of political systems. Sabatier and Weible refer here to pluralism as a contrast to corporatism. A further specification concerns the role of the actors' resources in the subsystems. For example, public opinion and information are also recognised as playing an increasingly important role. Finally, they discuss internal shocks and negotiated agreements as two additional ways of bringing about political change, in addition to policy learning and external shocks (Weible & Sabatier, 2007).

By systematically examining these key components, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes driving policy change, the interactions among different actors and coalitions, and the factors shaping policy outcomes within complex political systems. The ACF offers a valuable analytical framework for studying the complexities of policy-making and governance in diverse societal contexts (Bandelow, 2022).

b. Decision making gap

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) lacks a comprehensive understanding how subsystems drive policy change (Bandelow, 2022). While acknowledging policy dynamics, it overlooks the critical role of policy functionals, particularly advocacy coalitions within subsystems, in navigating policymaking (Kukkonen et al., 2017). Policymakers must adeptly manage stakeholders and strategically communicate to advance their agendas, highlighting the importance of strategic communication.

Sabatier (1993a) identifies interest groups, parliamentary specialists, and government administrations as key subsystem actors, with interest groups, such as associations, influencing policy change processes. Interest groups utilize various strategies, including advocacy, lobbying, and grassroots mobilization, bolstered by resources like campaign contributions and expertise. They may also engage in litigation and coalition building to amplify their impact and advocate for reforms. Media and public relations are used strategically to raise awareness and garner support for policy agendas (Dür, 2013; Dür & De Bièvre, 2007; Fourinaies & Hall, 2018). In countries like Germany, interest group participation can be legally mandated in policymaking processes (§47 GGO, 2020).

c. The role of associations in the German policy progress

The participation of associations is an important and legal step in German policy making. The German government commits itself to an involvement of associations since the 'Weimar Republic' (Deutscher Bundestag, 2022). The idea behind this is to give the leading federal ministries the opportunity to correct draft laws if they are based on incorrect factual premises. Additionally, this procedure should help identify potential resistance early on (§47 GGO, 2020).

d. Strategic communication

Strategic communication encompasses all controlled communication processes that contribute to task definition and fulfilment. It particularly focuses on coordinating actions and clarifying interests between an organization and its stakeholders (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016). According to Zerfaß (2014), entrepreneurial actions must be strategically oriented to succeed, meaning communication should be intentional, purposeful, and aimed at achieving specific organizational goals (Hallahan et al., 2007). Strategic communication supports the successful achievement of these goals and the creation of intangible values by conveying information, interpretations, images, and constructions of reality. This involves framing, where interpretative patterns are consciously created to guide how people process issues (Mast, 2015; Wehling, 2018). Frames can define problems, make moral judgments, or support specific actions (Matthes, 2009).

The concept of "license to operate," or creating legitimacy, is central to understanding an organization's motivation in achieving its goals (Zerfaß, 2014; Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016). Goals can vary, from successful election campaigns and gaining market share to building a good reputation. In the competition for the attention of customers, interest groups, government representatives, investors, donors, or the general public, organizations must make strategic decisions on how to generate public attention (Hallahan et al., 2007). The term "organization" broadly encompasses companies, NGOs, interest groups, governments, public bodies, or politicians, all of which engage with their environment as corporate actors (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016; Zerfaß & Huck, 2007).

At the core is an actor, referred to as an organization, pursuing a goal. This requires a subject, or addressee, who accepts and ideally supports the organization's goal. Planning processes must be oriented toward the addressee, considering communicative conditions and adapting to changes. The term "strategic" deals with goals, themes, challenges, and problems that are essential for the survival and sustainable success of an organization (Bruhn et al., 2016; Zerfaß & Huck, 2007). Strategic communication can be understood as an attempt to influence opinions, attitudes, and beliefs based on utility calculations (Röttger et al., 2020). According to Zerfaß et al. (2013), strategic communication has four central characteristics:

- It is deliberate and goal-oriented.
- Aims for a specific outcome
- Involves responsible individuals.
- Communicates with the public.

This goal-setting follows a functionalist perspective, emphasizing effectiveness, efficiency, and success orientation (Wehmeier & Schoeneborn, 2017). Successful

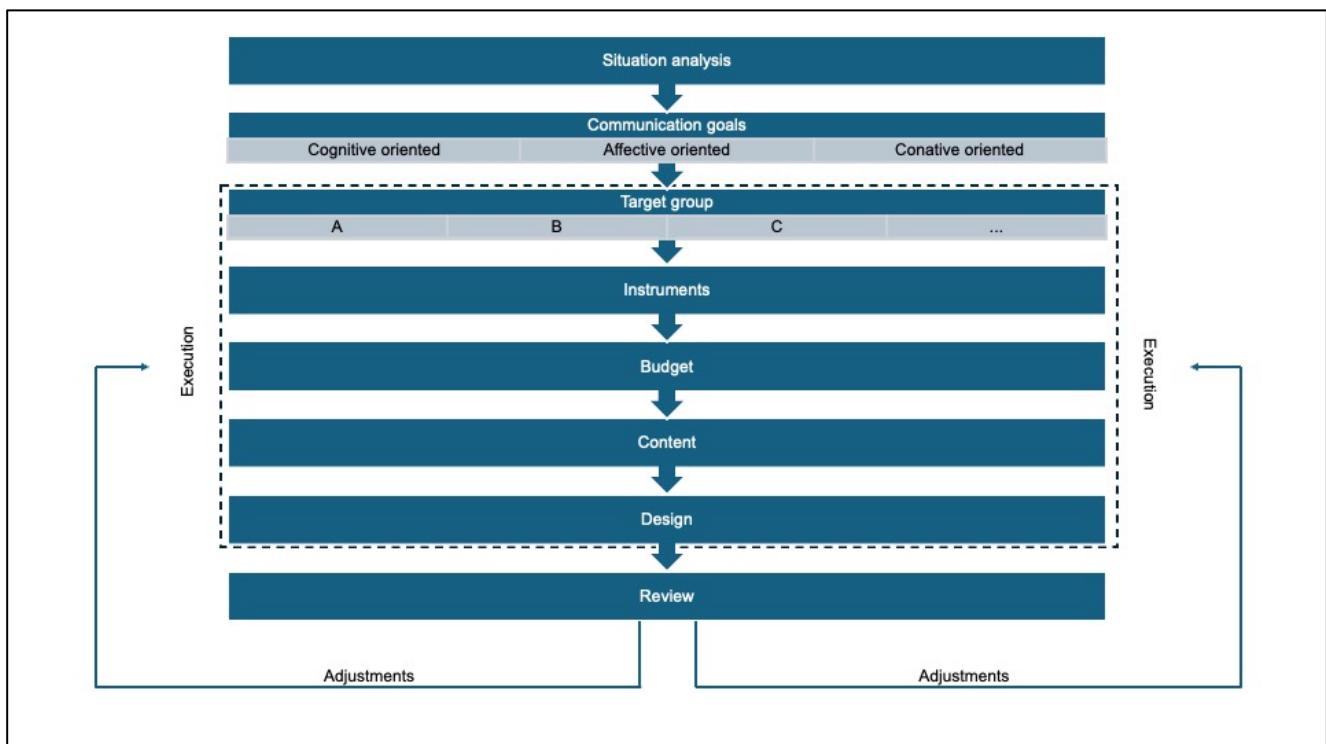


Figure 1: Eight stages of strategic communication. Reference: Author's own illustration. Based on Bruhn et al., 2016

communication requires systematic and long-term planning to address and overcome respective communication policy challenges (Bruhn et al., 2016). Bruhn et al. (2016) describe an eight-step process for communication planning: situational analysis, defining communication goals, identifying target groups, determining communication instruments, budgeting, content formulation, effective message design, and performance monitoring (Bentele et al., 2014; Bruhn, 2014, 2016; Bruhn et al., 2016).

Situational analysis involves gathering data to identify opportunities, risks, strengths, and weaknesses, laying the foundation for a successful communication strategy. Communication goals are then defined, based on strategic positioning and categorized as cognitive, affective, or conative. Identifying key target groups is next,

classified into A-target (strategically important), B-target (general public), and C-target (less strategic importance). Appropriate communication instruments are then selected, followed by budgeting on inter-instrument and intra-instrument levels. Content formulation and message design ensure practical implementation and coherence, and finally, performance monitoring evaluates the effectiveness of the communication strategy. Strategic communication operates within a tension between economic efficiency and societal acceptance. Reputation and legitimacy are primarily dependent on stakeholder attribution (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016), while targeted communication is laborious and expensive. Insights from economics suggest that management must orient itself towards economic, legal, and moral aspects, commonly referred to as value-oriented leadership (Schwalbach & Schwerk, 2014; Steinmann, 2006). Investments in strategic communication are investments in intangible assets such as reputation, legitimacy, trust, and appreciation (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016).

Strategic communication is increasingly recognized as "soft power" and a value-added factor (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016; Zerfaß & Huck, 2007). It requires integrated use of communication instruments to achieve organizational goals and overcome challenges. Interaction is necessary for reconciling interests and coordinating actions (Zerfaß & Dühring, 2016). According to Bruhn (2014), there is no universally applicable solution for integrated communication; each organization and project must adapt to its specific context. However, Bruhn identifies five factors for a successful communication concept: setting integrated communication goals focused on stakeholders, thorough planning, developing a clear strategic concept, implementing organizational measures for control, and tailoring communication to the addressee.

4. The steering role of strategic communication

As the ACF focuses on advocacy coalitions in political subsystems, which mutually influence each other and strive to advance their respective agendas it does not address how these processes occur. This gap is intended to be bridged by strategic communication. Since strategic communication aims to achieve a specific, pre-defined goal involving all stakeholders with minimal cost, this concept becomes particularly interesting in implementing new political initiatives (Hallahan et al.,

2007). This is especially relevant to the present work, as the German Federal Government (§47 GGO, 2020), in its rules of procedure, commits to involving interest groups in the policy-making process and making appropriate adjustments. Therefore, stakeholder engagement plays an important role, which has overlapping goals and approaches with those of strategic communication (Dmytriyev et al., 2021; Kujala et al., 2022; Mitchell, 2015).

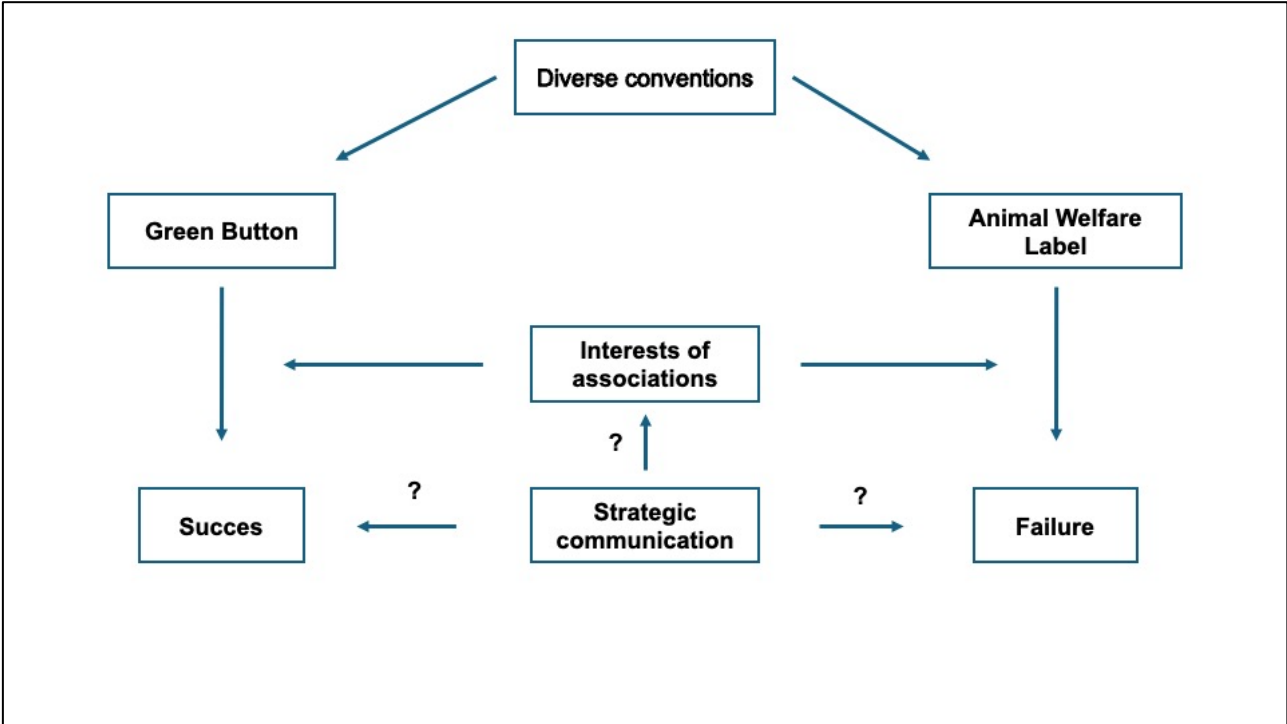


Figure 2: Theoretical framework

5. Research design

When deciding between qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, the nature of the research question is crucial (King et al., 2021). Quantitative methods often facilitate generalization due to larger sample sizes and statistical modelling, which can provide robust results. Qualitative methods, while covering fewer cases, provide in-depth insights. Haverland and Yanow (2012) stress the importance of clearly articulating the chosen logic of inquiry. Although this study adopts an interpretivist rather than a positivist approach, both methods share a common logic of inference and can be systematic and scientific (King et al., 2021; Plümper, 2012).

a. Qualitative research

To answer the research question, a qualitative research approach was chosen. The choice is appropriate when there is little knowledge about a research area and it

needs to be newly explored, indicating a research gap (Yin, 2009). This design allows for initial open analyses of the dataset (Gläser & Laudel, 2010). Two significant factors influencing this choice are the limited existing research and the subject area undergoing significant social change due to evolving societal and communication patterns (Gläser & Laudel, 2010). For the analysis, a qualitative content analysis (QCA) according to Mayring (2015) has been selected. This approach is suitable for identifying frames within texts, such as in transcripts of interviews and documents (Oswald, 2022; Scheufele, 2004). Deductive codes referencing the focus area are created – based on the cited literature on strategic communication, but primarily inductive codes will be used, as the topic is not covered extensively by scholars, allowing for new findings to contribute to research (Gläser & Laudel, 2010).

b. Most similar systems design

This approach is based on comparing closely similar cases that exhibit contrary outcomes in their dependent variables. Essentially, it involves analysing why two systems or processes produce divergent results. The rationale behind this method is that studying similar cases with different outcomes allows researchers to better manage extraneous factors and pinpoint the independent variable driving the nature of the dependent variable. This approach offers the advantage of excluding confusing or irrelevant variables by initially identifying two closely matched cases. Such cases share numerous control variables (see table 1), which contribute to their similarity, while differing primarily in the independent variable influencing the presence or absence of the dependent variable (Anckar, 2008; Steinmetz, 2019).

c. Multiple case study

To answer my research question I choose an exploratory approach while using a multiple case study design, as described by Yin (2009). The aim is to gain a broader understanding of the underlying phenomenon by examining two cases. It is particularly suitable for complex phenomena where various contexts, conditions, or variables may be involved. Therefore I want to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among the two cases to gain deeper insights and develop theoretical concepts (Yin, 2009).

Table 1: Overview Green Button & Animal Welfare Label

Control variable	Green Button	Animal Welfare Label
Outcome (dependent variable)	Success	No success
Government	Merkel IV	Merkel IV
Leading coalition parties	CDU + CSU (Union)	CDU + CSU (Union)
Level	National	National
Idea	Voluntary label for producers, that exceed the state requirements.	Voluntary label for producers, that exceed the state requirements.
Societal benefit	<p>(1) Environmental protection.</p> <p>(2) Social mechanisms (Improving working conditions, fair wages, healthcare coverage, accident prevention, elimination of child labour, and protection of human rights).</p> <p>(3) Incentive for consumers to buy (more expensive) products with label, to change status quo.</p>	<p>(1) Environmental protection.</p> <p>(2) Social mechanisms (Improving working conditions, fair prices for products).</p> <p>(3) Incentives for consumers to buy (more expensive) products with label to change status-quo.</p>
Producers' benefit	Label as advertisement to achieve higher revenues on the market.	Label as advertisement to achieve higher revenues on the market.

Problem pressure

(1) Catastrophic conditions in production facilities.

(2) Major impact on environmental and climate protection.

(3) External shocks (like destruction of fabrics with hundreds of causalities).

(1) Catastrophic conditions in production facilities.

(2) Major impact on environmental and climate protection.

(3) External shocks (like leaks of PeTA).

Scope

Estimate: All members of the Textile Alliance (50% market share) should get the Green Button for at least one of their products (Interview 2).

Estimate: 1-20% of meat-producing businesses would use labels because they fulfil the requirements. The rest cannot and would have to trade without labels (which would also have an effect).

Burdens for success

(1) Coalition partner (SPD) opposed the label (after initial support) because the label was voluntary based and the scope too narrow.

(2) Organisations opposed the label, because the scope was too broad.

(3) Only the EU is allowed to launch non-voluntary market label.

(1) Coalition partner (SPD) opposed the label (after initial support) because the label was voluntary based and the scope too little.

(2) Organisations opposed the label, because the scope was too broad.

(3) The private market launched its own label, to beat the government.

(4) Only the EU is allowed to launch non-voluntary market label.

d. Case selection

Due to their uniqueness, I have chosen to focus on the Green Button and Animal Welfare Label for my case selection. Not only are they highly relevant to society but also follow the logic of the most similar systems design. Their control variables are very similar, yet their outcomes are opposite. While the Green Button is a success of the Merkel IV government, the opposite is true for the Animal welfare Label.

Germany has been chosen as the geographical focus due to the central role associations play in the political process. In Germany, associations must be involved in new legislation (§47 GGO), a requirement that is uniquely extensive within the EU. Associations in Germany advocate strongly for economic interests, highlighting their significant influence. Additionally, Germany's position as the most populous country with the largest economic activity within the EU underscores its relevance. Furthermore, focusing solely on Germany enhances the comparability of cases, as examining two cases from different countries could compromise validity and reliability.

e. Data collection

For the data collection, I employed a two-pronged approach. Firstly, I gathered all internal and external material available from the German government, leveraging insights gained from my internship at the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. Additionally, I utilized documents from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, since both were the key actors (see appendix). Furthermore, I integrated contemporary public discourse from mass media sources such as Germany's largest newspaper "Bild" or specialist magazines, which have reported on the two distinct labels. By utilizing multiple sources of evidence and ensuring data convergence in a triangulation fashion, the study upholds a high level of validity (Gläser & Laudel, 2010; Yin, 2009).

Secondly, I conducted expert interviews with a diverse sample including politicians, employees from relevant ministries, and external stakeholders such as organisations. Interviews are valued for their effectiveness in eliciting detailed insights into individual thought processes (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). Their semi-structured format allows for flexibility, enabling exploration of unexpected responses that may enrich the research (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). Moreover, this approach fosters rapport-building while ensuring a core set of questions that maintain internal validity.

Interview partners were selected from a pool of employees in the two responsible ministries for development and agriculture. The selection criteria ensured that only staff directly involved in the respective seal were included. Additionally, efforts were undertaken to involve employees from all hierarchical levels. This ranged from operational level staff (who possess detailed knowledge) to high-level staff (heads of division and project managers who have a comprehensive overview and interact with external stakeholders) to top-level staff, including senior officials of the ministry. To ensure that the interviewees did not solely represent their respective ministry's interests when answering the questions, former employees were also selected. All interviews were conducted anonymously, allowing respondents to speak freely. This anonymity was assured to all participants in writing (see appendix). To identify all relevant employees, a list of the responsible departments with the corresponding employees was created. Personal conversations at the ministerial level were particularly helpful in identifying these names. Subsequently, these individuals were contacted by phone and then by email.

Additionally, the most important associations were included in the survey. For the Animal Welfare Label, these associations are listed on the Ministry of Agriculture's website, where all statements are also available. Out of 32 associations contacted, eight agreed to an interview. Three were selected: one representing farmers' interests, one representing traders' interests, and a civil society organization representing animal welfare interests. To identify the appropriate associations for the Green Button, internal documents from the Ministry of Development were evaluated. Three relevant associations were identified as particularly pertinent to the research. They were also contacted in writing, and all agreed to an interview.

Ultimately, three interviews were conducted with ministry employees and two with associations. This discrepancy is due to the fact that one association representative had worked for the other important association during the study period, and thus could provide answers for both associations.

Table 2: Interview partners

Number	Topic	Who	Position	Level	Length of interview
1	Green Button	Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation	-	High Level	50:56 minutes
2	Green Button	Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation	-	High Level	56:16 minutes
3	Green Button	Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation	-	Working Level	51:15 minutes
4	Green Button	Leading association (B2B)	Against label	High level	57:01 minutes
5	Green Button	Leading association (B2C)	Pro label	High level	45:26 minutes
6	Animal Welfare Label	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture	-	Top level	63:32 minutes
7	Animal Welfare Label	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture	-	Working level	49:42 minutes
8	Animal Welfare Label	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture	-	Working level	61:06 minutes
9	Animal Welfare Label	Leading meat producer association	Against label	High level	68:43 minutes

10	Animal Welfare Label	Leading animal welfare association	Against label	High level	50:15 minutes
11	Animal Welfare Label	Leading retailer association	Pro label	High level	38:46 minutes

In selecting the data, only information pertaining to the period from March 2018 to December 2021 was included. This is due to the fact that both labels were initiated by the Merkel IV government, which was in power to that time. The name of this government, consisting of two party families (Union and SPD), is Merkel IV, indicating then Chancellor Angela Merkel's fourth cabinet. This chronological delineation is intended to ensure the comparability of the cases.

f. Data analysis

To evaluate the interviews, they have been recorded and transcribed afterwards. This is crucial for the analysis of the conversations, as it allows for an exact assessment of what the interviewees have said. From these insights, it can be understood how the two federal ministries have attempted to adopt their initiatives and what role the respective organizations have played.

With the interviewee's consent, the transcripts are generated with the interview recording using the free AI software "noScribe". As there are no universally accepted rules for transcription, I transcribed the interviews verbatim, without breaks, breaths, or filler words such as "hmm" or "well" (Gläser & Laudel, 2010). The coding procedure, for which the widely used software program MaxQDA has been used, followed Saldana (2016) and included the process of deductive coding, and inductive open and axial coding, upon which the final codes of the interviews will be synthesized.

Coding is conducted in two cycles as proposed by Saldana (2016). In the first cycle, the interviews are transcribed based on the four coding methods by Saldana (2016) suggests: Attributive Coding, Structural Coding, Descriptive Coding and In Vivo Coding. Attribute Coding involves coding contextual data of interview participants, considering attributes like the date of the interview and countries where they have studied or have lived, while omitting others for reasons of anonymity, population

homogeneity, or lack of relevance to the research question. Structural Coding identifies large text segments about broader issues or topics, serving as a basis for deeper qualitative analysis and quantitative reporting on topic frequency (Namey et al., 2008). Descriptive Coding categorizes interview responses with descriptive nouns to summarize data in a word or short phrase, forming the basis for qualitative inquiry and facilitating organized analysis and further analytical work (Saldana, 2016; Wolcott, 1994). In Vivo Coding captures meaningful and exceptionally informative responses, integrating them into the thesis to enhance the understanding of the findings.

In the second cycle of coding, transcripts are recoded using categories created inductively in the first cycle to ensure consistency and identify differences and similarities. This process reduces the number of categories and links seemingly unrelated facts to synthesize relevant information from the data. This iterative approach aims to create a threefold data structure based on Gioia et al. (2013), concept, allowing researchers to trace the assignment of concepts to higher aggregated dimensions (see code aggregation in the appendix).

For better comprehensibility, each code was precisely defined in how it was coded and which text segments it encompasses. For this, the guidelines from Mayring (2007) were used. These definitions are detailed in the codebook (see appendix).

Quality assurance in qualitative social research will be addressed through three central criteria adapted from Kaiser (2014): intersubjective comprehensibility, theory-guided approach, researcher neutrality, and openness to new insights and alternative interpretation systems.

g. Quality criteria

The presentation of quality criteria follows Ospina et al. (2018), as they are well structured and are recognized for the quality criteria of qualitative research in public administration. Among others, Mergel et al. (2019) use these criteria in their papers. Ospina (2018) names as the first step (1) “*clarify epistemological and theoretical assumptions*”. The epistemological and theoretical assumptions are presented and justified in the Theoretical Framework. Further, Ospina states (2) “*articulate the logic*

behind choosing a qualitative research tradition". This point is explained in the research design of this thesis. The main motivation for this decision is the largely unexplored field of knowledge and the initially unclear reasons whether strategic communication plays a role in the relationship between governments and associations. Quantitative methods would be an incorrect approach here, as there are no datasets available and they would be difficult to create in this case. Another step is (3) *"explain the criteria for case selection and clarify the sampling strategy"*. This point is elaborated in Chapter 5d. How the data is collected, evaluated, and interpreted is transparently presented in this work. The aggregation table and the codebook in the appendix also help with this. Thus, this work follows step (4) of Ospina (2018) *"be transparent about how the qualitative data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted"*. The language of this work is both academic and lively, supplemented with direct quotes from the interviews. This corresponds to step (5) *"ensure a writing style consistent with your chosen qualitative research tradition and explore creative writing possibilities"*. The limitations are described in Chapter 8a, thereby following step (6) *"consider the broad range of standards of quality in qualitative research and report on the limitations of the study"*.

h. Validity, reliability and generalisability

In ensuring the reliability, validity, and generalizability of this thesis, several strategies based on Yin (2009) are employed. Reliability is maintained by using a consistent and transparent research process, such as the systematic documentation of procedures and standardised coding methods for data analysis. This includes the verbatim transcription of interviews and the application of coding cycles to ensure consistency and reproducibility.

Validity is strengthened through multiple approaches: construct validity is ensured by using various sources of evidence (e.g., government documents, media reports, and expert interviews) to corroborate findings; internal validity is enhanced through pattern matching and explanation building in the case study analysis, allowing for a deeper understanding of the causal relationships.

External validity, or generalizability, is addressed through a multiple case study design, specifically the "most similar systems design." This method involves

comparing cases with similar contexts but different outcomes, allowing for the identification of factors that influence these outcomes. By carefully selecting cases that are similar in crucial aspects but differ in their dependent variables, the findings can be analytically generalized to similar situations beyond the specific instances studied, thereby providing broader insights into the phenomena under investigation.

6. Results

In this chapter, the research results will be outlined, with a detailed discussion to follow in Chapter 7. At first the focus will first be on the Green Button, exploring the factors that contributed to its successful adoption and the role that strategic communication played in the process. It will be followed by an examination of the Animal Welfare Label, investigating the reasons behind its failure in the adoption process and evaluating whether strategic communication was effectively utilised.

a. Context of the Green Button

On April 24, 2013, the Rana Plaza textile factory in Bangladesh collapsed, killing over 1,000 people and injuring more than 2,000. Scenes went around the world with desperate relatives trying to rescue those trapped in the rubble (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2018). Before the collapse, over 5,000 seamstresses worked in the factory under harsh conditions, producing clothing for the entire world. That disaster shocked the public, including Germany's former Minister for Development, Mr. Müller, who vowed to ensure that such a tragedy would never happen again (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2021). Approximately a year later, he founded the "Alliance for Sustainable Textiles", or Textile Alliance (Interview 1, 2, 3). This multi-stakeholder initiative, launched in 2014 by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, aims to improve social, ecological, and economic conditions along the entire textile supply chain. Companies, NGOs, trade unions, standard organisations, and the government voluntarily organize within that alliance to collaboratively implement sustainable practices (Bündnis für nachhaltige Textilien, 2024).

According to interviewees 1, 2, and 3, the collapse of the Rana Plaza Factory and the subsequent founding of the Textile Alliance laid the foundation for the Green Button. Minister Müller, who began his second term in chancellor Merkel's fourth

cabinet in 2018, immediately set to work on implementing the Green Button concept he had previously envisioned. He assembled a team and developed a plan to bring this idea to fruition (Interview 1, 2, 3). Just eighteen months later, the Green Button was ready for the market and was launched (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 2019).

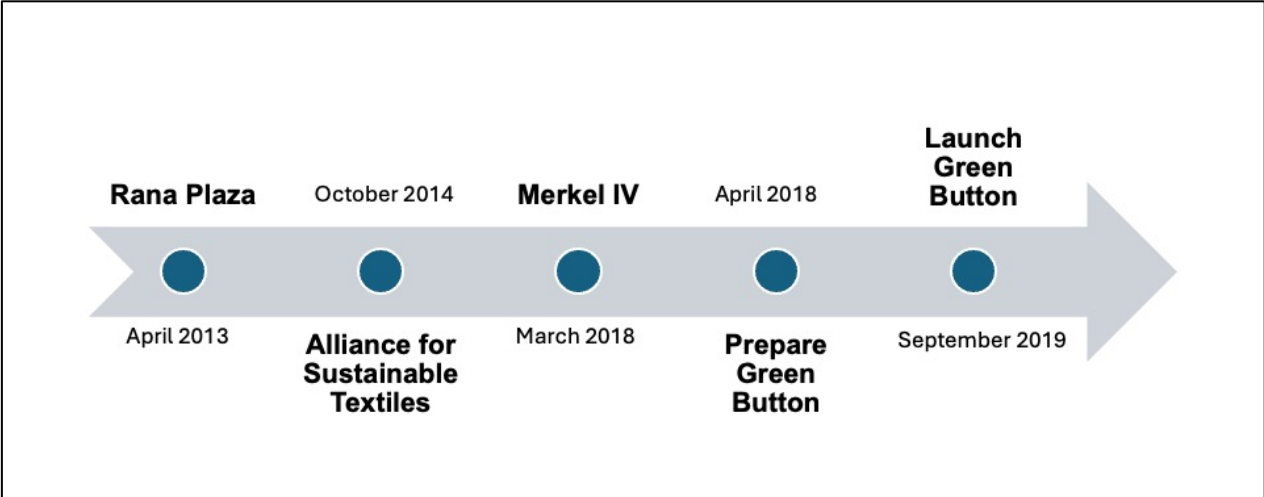


Figure 3: Timeline Green Button

The idea behind the Green Button is to label textiles that are produced in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner. Companies can voluntarily apply for the label and, after passing the necessary audits, use and advertise the label. The Green Button aims to help consumers make sustainable purchasing decisions while promoting fair working conditions and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 2024). It employs a meta-labelling approach, meaning it builds on and integrates existing, recognised sustainability certifications to ensure comprehensive and trustworthy standards (Probe, 2018).

When the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) engaged with relevant associations during the consultation process, two main camps emerged. On one side stood human rights and environmental groups, who felt the ministry's goals were not ambitious enough (Interview 1, 2, 3). They also criticized existing loopholes that companies could exploit (Interview 2). On the other side were associations concerned that the goals were too extensive. They feared disadvantages, criticised high costs, and questioned practicality, believing that the

Textile Alliance already adequately addressed those issues. The ministry found itself in between them, striving to reconcile both sides to enable the most successful implementation possible (Interview 1, 2, 3).

b. Success factors of the Green Button

There are several reasons why the Green Button was adopted successful. The following section will line out the key elements of success in ten points.

i. Resource allocation

The most prominent reason for the successful adoption of the Green Button was the significant resource allocation. In every interview related to the Green Button (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), it was evident that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) dedicated substantial personnel resources to the project. Eight individuals were assigned exclusively to implement the Green Button. They were specifically selected, transferred from other departments, and in some cases, appointed personally by the minister himself (Interviews 1, 2, 3). That is noteworthy as projects typically involve far fewer personnel. Ministries are usually organized into divisions that handle multiple topics simultaneously and average about eight people per division (Interviews 1, 4). This eight-member team was part of a larger, specially established unit of about 20 people who handled related topics crucial to the success of the Green Button (Interview 1). Notably, the team managed the overall concept, covering strategy, legal issues, and communication, and sought external assistance from consulting firms and companies with relevant experience. This information is corroborated by the interviews (1, 2, 3) and internal documents reviewed for this study.

ii. Direct contact

Another key factor was the direct involvement of associations and companies. Both the examined documents and interviews (1, 2, 3) reveal that contact was made with environmental and business associations, as well as major companies like Aldi, Lidl, Tchibo, Trigema, Vaude, Müller, and Hugo Boss, to name just a few. The rationale was to benefit from those companies' expertise, develop practical solutions together, and foster acceptance (Interviews 1, 2, 3). Interestingly, the usual channels of association involvement were complemented by direct engagement with the affected companies. That approach aimed to find supporters who would adopt and

use the label, ensuring market acceptance and dissemination (Interviews 2, 3). Additionally, the ministry recognised that associations, which included some of the directly contacted companies, had conflicting interests. Business associations mostly opposed the Green Button, fearing excessive bureaucratic burden and high costs. A head of one association even called the label a "crazy idea" (Ferber, 2018; Interviews 1, 2, 3). Consequently, the ministry circumvented the associations by directly engaging with relevant companies. Minister Müller personally contacted the companies, making phone calls and sending letters (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), which impressed the recipients and underscored the initiative's importance (Interviews 4, 5).

iii. Bypassing the associations

That strategy proved effective when it became clear that associations were not convinced by the concept, withheld crucial information from their member companies, and even spread false claims to further their own interests (Interviews 1, 2, 3). The ministry's decision to bypass the associations meant companies now had direct access to information from the ministry, reversing the usual dynamic where associations served as intermediaries (Interviews 1, 2, 3).

iv. The Green Button as a voluntary (administrative) label

That was possible because the BMZ employed a clever tactic. Typically, associations must be involved in legislative processes. However, the Green Button was designed as a voluntary, non-mandatory label, thus not requiring legislation. It is essentially a certification awarded by the federal government, allowing the ministry to choose its partners. Additionally, other federal ministries and states were not required to be involved. That was a deliberate choice, as the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in particular, attempted to influence and halt the label at the urging of various associations (Interviews 1, 2). Another advantage of the voluntary label is the positive branding it offers. Companies meeting the requirements can use the label for positive marketing, while those that cannot are not compelled to display labels highlighting environmental damage or child labour, as might be the case with mandatory labels (Interviews 1, 2, 3).

v. Commitment

Minister Müller's personal engagement with associations and companies demonstrated his strong commitment, a point emphasised by all interview partners (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). They noted his determination to implement the label and drive change, earning him significant respect from environmental and social organisations as well as leading companies (Interviews 1, 2, 3). His commitment was also evident in the media coverage (Höfler, 2019; Schäfers, 2019; Stehkämpfer, 2019). His high level of commitment was reflected internally within the ministry. Besides allocating significant personnel resources to the project, he frequently engaged with the responsible staff, visiting their workplaces, reviewing drafts with them, actively inquiring about current statuses, assigning tasks, and contributing ideas (Interviews 1, 2, 3). That level of involvement is atypical for a federal minister and contrasts with usual ministerial procedures.

vi. Market analysis/ clear and sound background for the initiative

Two circumstances played a crucial role in the engagement with companies and associations. First, Ernst & Young conducted a market analysis beforehand (Interview 1). Second, minister Müller had laid the groundwork during his previous tenure by establishing the "Alliance for Sustainable Textiles", or in short textile alliance, which brought together companies and associations aiming to address and eliminate environmental and social issues in the textile industry. Those prior efforts provided clarity on the textile market's structure, key players, and their positions, making it easier to engage with them (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

vii. Support network

From the network of the textile alliance, the minister formed a "support network" that backed the label, assisted with its implementation, and later used it for their products. That support was crucial, as the ministry was not solely driving the label's implementation but had broad support from the business sector, positively influencing public perception and lobbying efforts (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4). Close collaboration with stakeholders provided practical insights, allowing the ministry to address potential issues proactively (Interviews 1, 2, 3).

viii. Meta-label approach

Moreover, the Green Button follows a so-called meta-label approach. This means that the Green Button integrates several already existing labels instead of creating entirely new standards. Specifically, a company can receive the Green Button if it meets certain environmental and social criteria and proves this compliance with existing labels. That way, the Green Button does not need to start from scratch by setting and verifying all standards itself; the organizations behind the respective labels handle that. The Green Button only needs to check if the relevant labels are present. That approach not only saves a lot of work and avoids redundant structures but also helps to convince opponents of the concept, as it is relatively unbureaucratic (Probe, 2018). Additionally, the respondents of the associations noted that it has the charming advantage of bringing "*order to the jungle of labels*" (Interview 5, line 113-115) by consolidating many labels into one while still being ambitious (Interview 4, 5).

ix. Speed/ efficiency

Lastly, the rapid implementation of the Green Button is noteworthy. Interview partner 2 pointed out that projects should be initiated in the first year of a legislative period to avoid time constraints later on. The Green Button was launched at the beginning of the new legislative term, with a team established promptly. Within four months, this team developed a final concept, achievable only through significant personnel investment and extensive overtime (Interviews 1, 2, 3). For a ministry, that is exceptionally fast, as such projects typically take more than a year.

c. The role of strategic communication in the context of the Green Button

To examine the role of strategic communication in the implementation of the Green Button and to present the findings, the relevant steps will be analysed based on the characteristics of the concept (see Figure 1) to determine the extent to which they were applied.

Initially, it can be stated that the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) communicated strategically in line with the proposed concept. The concept begins with a situational analysis, which assesses the current situation, identifies problems, maps out market actors, and understands their needs and

expectations. For the Green Button initiative, the consultancy firm Ernst & Young was commissioned for that purpose (Interview 1). Additionally, the BMZ already had relevant knowledge. They were well-informed about the market situation, which is part of their regular ministry work. Therefore, they were aware of the impacts of global textile production on the European/German market and how textiles are produced. That understanding is evident from the examined documents. However, the most crucial analytical tool was the previously established and frequently mentioned "Textile Alliance." It provided the ministry with the opportunity to engage directly with market participants. The interaction occurred not only at regular alliance meetings but also through personal exchanges, as a relationship of trust had already been established through collaboration (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). That facilitated mutual understanding and knowledge of the positions and needs of associations and their member companies.

The communication goals of the ministry became particularly clear through document analysis. The goal was to convince the associations and, more importantly, the companies within them to support the Green Button and participate in the initiative. Additionally, it is evident that the ministry, especially minister Müller, aimed to maintain the upper hand in arguments. He consistently emphasised ethical responsibility and highlighted the benefits of the Green Button and its significance for each company.

The analysis and communication goals practically defined the target group. Primarily, those were environmental, social, and especially economic associations. Moreover, the ministry targeted prominent companies within those economic associations to convince them of the concept and gain their participation in the Green Button initiative. During negotiations with the associations, those companies became increasingly important, as the associations did not always accurately represent the interests of their member companies. Although not directly involved at that stage, another target audience was the public and consumers. This highlighted the importance of the Green Button and generated the necessary attention and a certain level of pressure for action. That is evident from all the interviews (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and the documents.

The most critical instrument was personal communication. That included face-to-face meetings within the Textile Alliance, industry meetings where various stakeholders discussed common issues, phone calls, and personal letters. Those letters, analysed and evaluated in this study, were mainly written by the minister himself and addressed directly to the CEOs and responsible parties of the relevant associations and companies. He also relied on personal engagement and anecdotes, writing those letters by hand, which, according to Interview 5, resonated well with the recipients.

Exact figures regarding the budget were not available. However, it is likely that no detailed documentation exists. That is primarily because significant human resources were deployed. As previously mentioned, eight people worked on the Green Button, embedded in a working group of about 20 individuals (Interviews 1, 3). No reliable figures were found for the budget allocated to the consultancy firm Ernst & Young. Public relations measures to promote the Green Button were not included in this study, as it falls outside of the scope, given that the Green Button had already been adopted by that time.

For addressing the associations, the content focused on their ethical responsibilities and the benefits. Environmental and social associations were informed that the Green Button pursued ambitious goals and was not just another seal but promised real change. This is evident from Interviews 1, 2, 3, and the analysed documents. Economic associations were shown that the Green Button would be an economic advantage, as consumers increasingly value sustainability (Interview 2).

The communication design was tailored to the instruments used. Given that direct exchange was the most important tool, the ministry focused on constructivism and simplicity. This meant trying to engage constructively with the associations, listening to and incorporating their concerns and needs, and taking them seriously (Interviews 1, 2, 3). They aimed to keep communication as simple and clear as possible, using straightforward and comprehensible messages to avoid misunderstandings. As Interview Partner 3 noted: *"You have to simplify, condense. Communication is the art of omission so that only the core message remains and is correct."* However, this was not always successful. *"And in those rounds, it was always okay, clear, sure,*

and then three days later, a press release: The Green Button doesn't deliver what it promises" (Interview 2).

Throughout the process, communication was continuously reviewed and adjusted to the situation. As discussed in the previous paragraph, not everyone could or wanted to understand the goals (Interview 2), requiring further explanations. One association even contacted the Bild-Zeitung (Germany's largest daily newspaper) (Interview 2), resulting in an article titled "*Tampons and Straitjackets to Get Eco-Label*" (Rustler, 2019). The article clarified that companies could apply for the Green Button for such products since they are made from textiles, although the headline implied otherwise. In response, the ministry maintained contact with the associations, as their goodwill was still needed. Simultaneously, they intensified contact with supportive companies, as there were some who welcomed and wanted the label and participated constructively in the process (Interviews 1, 2, 3).

d. The context of the Animal Welfare Label

In December 2005, the idea of introducing an animal welfare label emerged in the Ministry of Agriculture under minister Seehofer. The motivation behind that initiative was the dissatisfaction with the existing practices in Germany's livestock farming and their negative impacts. The idea was to encourage consumers and farmers to rethink their practices through a voluntary approach. Minister Seehofer's staff was tasked with developing a corresponding concept, but the minister failed to implement the plan (Interview 8). Before the end of his term, he stepped down from his position as minister. This is because he became governor of his home-state Bavaria.

Subsequent ministers continued to attempt to bring such a label to market (Interview 8), but none succeeded. Although minister Klöckner presented a concept after lengthy negotiations in February 2019 (Spiegel, 2019), it has never reached the Bundestag for approval (Spiegel, 2021).

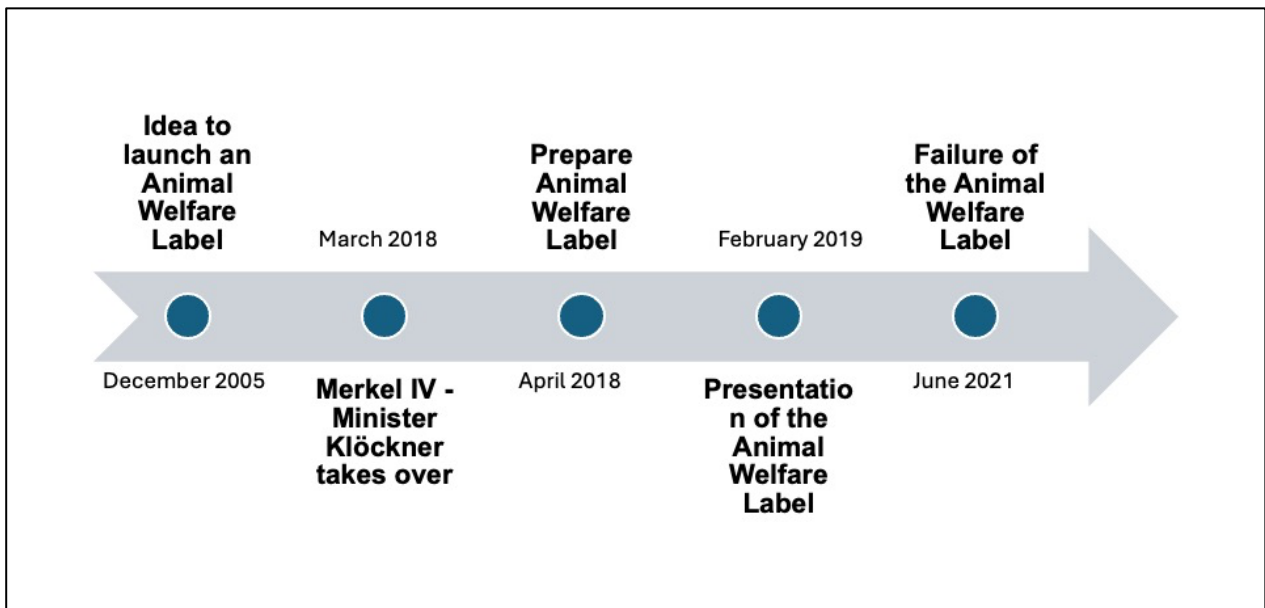


Figure 4: Timeline Animal Welfare Label

The idea behind minister Klöckner's animal welfare label was a multi-tiered system that set higher animal welfare standards than the legal minimum requirements. Farmers and producers would apply for the label, and after passing an auditing, could mark their products accordingly. The label aimed to help consumers identify animal-friendly products easily, enabling more conscious purchasing decisions. Additionally, the increased demand for such products was intended to drive long-term improvements in livestock farming conditions across the industry (Spiegel, 2019).

Despite general support for the project and approval of the necessary legislative changes by the federal government (Interview 6, 7), significant opposition emerged during stakeholder consultations, similar to the Green Button initiative. Environmental and animal welfare groups opposed the label, arguing that the draft was not ambitious enough and amounted to greenwashing (Interview 8, 11). On the other side, economic associations - including farmers, butchers, and retailers - rejected the label, claiming it went too far, would put them in a bad light, and was impractical (Interviews 8, 9, 10). The ministry found itself in the middle, trying to reconcile both sides and bring the label onto the market.

e. Reasons for failure of the Animal Welfare Label

The Animal Welfare Label failed for various reasons, which are detailed below. However, the research results clearly indicate that business associations and civil society organizations (for simplification termed as associations in the following) played a significant role in its failure. Interviewee 8 stated: "*the associations had the greatest influence of all*" (183-184). The associations had various lobbying tactics against the label, as elaborated further. In response, the responsible Ministry of Agriculture did not have an adequate answer and lacked a proper strategy to address that resistance. That was despite the longstanding clarity of the opposition and counterarguments over the years.

i. Resource allocation

The most prominent reason, mentioned in all interviews (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) and especially noticeable when compared to the Green Button, is the lack of resources. During the study period (March 2018 to December 2021), only three people on average were working on the Animal Welfare Label alongside their regular departmental duties. Additionally, no special network of experts, communication specialists, or lawyers was established; instead, existing structures were relied upon. While the involved individuals were experts in their fields, they could not focus exclusively on that issue (Interviews 6, 7, 8).

ii. No task force

Another significant factor is the absence of a dedicated expert team or task force to address the entire spectrum of related issues dynamically. For comparison, about 20 people were dedicated to such a team for the Green Button (Interview 1). Interestingly, there had been a similar task force under a different minister in the past, but it was dissolved during the study period (Interview 3).

iii. Too much time has been spent

The fact that a task force for the implementation of the Animal Welfare Label existed under a different minister highlights another key point. The implementation process was time-consuming. Over nearly 15 years, five ministers, all from the same political party family (the Union), were involved in attempts to introduce the label but were unsuccessful (Interview 8). Interview partner 8 mentioned that the responsible

ministers lacked both the will and the power to introduce the label, primarily due to the strong opposition from farmers' associations. These associations broadly resisted the project, feeling that it portrayed them negatively and subjected them to public judgment. During the study period, there was not enough time to get the label approved and enacted by the Bundestag and enacted (Interview 7).

iv. Legislative approach

The requirement for Bundestag approval highlights another issue: the Animal Welfare Label was initially not intended to be voluntary. This decision was primarily driven by associations advocating for a level playing field with consistent conditions for everyone in the market.

The plan was to integrate the label within a supportive legislative framework, necessitating approval from other ministries and the Bundestag. Farmers were calling for subsidies to finance changes in livestock farming and improve conditions, which required new legislation. Additionally, there was a debate on whether to make the label mandatory for all providers or to keep it voluntary. Regardless, both approaches included plans to financially support farmers in upgrading their facilities to meet higher welfare standards.

One proposal was to increase taxes on meat products and allocate those funds for this purpose. However, this idea was not pursued due to concerns about European law (Interviews 1, 3, 4). Both approaches required the creation of corresponding laws, needing approval. Whether the label is voluntary or not makes no difference to this issue.

v. Commitment issues

However, there was a lack of political will and sufficient commitment to push the initiative through, which all interviewees identified as one of the biggest problems (Interviews 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). It was not apparent until the end that the Animal Welfare Label was genuinely desired. The role of then-minister Klöckner was particularly noted. Although she reportedly wanted the label, she failed to push it through against resistance and effectively communicate this externally (Interviews 8, 9, 10, 11). A ministry official stated that the minister lacked the "*courage*" to enforce the label against opposition (Interview 8, line 134).

vi. Inner-party resistance

The resistance to the initiative was enormous. Initially, it enjoyed support from the government and its parties. The Ministry of Agriculture, under minister Klöckner, worked with the so-called Borchert Commission, which included various stakeholders from politics, science, industry, and civil society, including relevant associations (Interviews 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). However, the tide turned, and a broad coalition against the project emerged. Economic associations, including farmers, butchers, and traders, opposed the label because they found the goals too ambitious and did not want or were unable to meet the requirements (Interviews 8, 9, 10). Civil society groups found the goals not ambitious enough and thus also opposed the initiative (Interviews 8, 11). Both groups lobbied against the project through various means, including numerous meetings, personal letters, and public forums, as reflected in all interviews and reviewed documents (Interviews 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). They also expressed their opposition in internal discussions. Notably, they influenced Bundestag members from the same party as Minister Klöckner (the Union) and other federal ministries (Interview 8). Their influence was significant: *"One could say that the associations had the greatest influence because they had their people in there (in the Bundestag). One (MP) was the district farmers' association president, the next was the deputy president of the German Raiffeisen Association"* (Interview 8, lines 183-186).

vii. Associations bring up their own label

An example of this counterstrategy is the 2019 introduction of the Livestock Label by economic associations. This label rated meat products based on how the animals were kept, from 1 (poor) to 4 (very good, equivalent to organic quality). Interviews revealed a clear strategy behind that label. On the one hand, the trade sector wanted to change Livestock practices, and since the federal government failed to introduce a label, the economic associations took matters into their own hands (Interviews 9, 10). On the other hand, this label is significantly less ambitious than what a state label would have been (Interviews 8, 11). According to interviewees, the motive was not entirely positive. The associations aimed to undermine the federal ministry's goals by creating a label, making a state label unnecessary since they had already established one (Interviews 8, 11). *"They knew that if the federal government did something, it would be stricter and more coherent. It was very important to them that*

the lowest level of the label was something that didn't exist or only existed abroad" (Interview 8, lines 75-78).

viii. No coherent strategy

In contrast, the Federal Ministry under minister Klöckner lacked a coherent strategy. Although discussions were held with the relevant associations to convince them of the label, there was no clear strategy that could lead to long-term success. Interviewees indicated that ultimately, time ran out (Interviews 6, 7, 8). The associations employed a deliberate *"delaying tactic"* (Interview 8, line 256). Even within the ministry, support waned as employees no longer wanted to engage with the issue and considered the project *"dead"* (Interview 8, lines 538-540).

f. The role of strategic communication in the context of the Animal Welfare Label

Evaluating strategic communication in the context of the Animal Welfare Label proves more complex than with the Green Button, as the concept is less apparent here.

A situational analysis was conducted by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, similar to the Green Button. Staying informed about current market conditions and their implications is part of regular ministerial work. Relevant stakeholders are well-known due to regular interactions and internal lists tracking which associations are critical for specific initiatives (Interview 7). Additionally, Interview Partner 8 mentioned a feasibility study for the Animal Welfare Label conducted by the University of Göttingen. However, this study was commissioned by a previous minister, Ilse Aigner, not during minister Klöckner's tenure (Interview 8), making it at least five years old. No consultancy contracts were issued during the examined period (Drucksache 19/21632, 2020).

Communication goals were similar to those of the Green Button: convincing the affected associations of the planned Animal Welfare Label. However, unlike the Green Button, the aim was to reach a consensus to ensure legislative implementation. The Animal Welfare Label required mandatory inclusion of associations, needing approval from both the Bundestag and the federal states (Interview 8). Thus, aligning the interests of market-oriented associations with those

of environmental and animal welfare groups was essential to avoid jeopardising adoption (Interviews 6, 7, 8).

Target groups included environmental and animal welfare associations, as well as economic associations representing farmers, slaughterhouses, and retailers. This is evident from the examined documents and all interviews (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Economic associations were particularly relevant because they would need to implement the label's requirements in the future (Interviews 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) and had significant influence on the adoption process. As previously discussed, that influence was partly due to members of minister Klöckner's party holding key positions within those associations (Interview 8).

Details about the budget for the Animal Welfare Label remain unclear. Interviews revealed that about three people within the ministry were working on it (Interviews 6, 7), and a government response to an opposition party inquiry in 2020 indicated that four people were involved, with costs amounting to 304,000 € (Drucksache 19/21632, 2020). However, the document does not clarify their exact roles or the involvement of subordinate authorities. It also states that no consultancy fees were paid during the period in question. There were expenditures of approximately 85,000 € for informational materials. Most likely to inform the public and stakeholders about the label, to gain attention to the topic. In total, a budget of 20 million € was allocated for the Animal Welfare Label, but how this money was spent exactly remains unclear (Drucksache 19/21632, 2020).

Communication content emphasised ethical responsibility towards animals and the environment. This approach, however, was less effective with meat producers, who needed financial support to implement higher animal welfare standards and a market willing to pay more for ethically produced meat (Interviews 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). The ministry attempted to assure producers in personal chats that the government would help finance barn upgrades and that consumer behaviour will shift towards buying more expensive, ethically produced meat. Both messages were deemed unconvincing due to significant legal and practical doubts about government financial support and existing evidence that consumers did not opt for more

expensive products despite being informed about animal welfare conditions (Interviews 9, 10, 11).

Details on the communication design are not fully available. Direct engagement was used to discuss and incorporate stakeholders' concerns into the label's design (Interview 8), but many associations remained unconvinced and viewed the ministry's messages as not credible (Interviews 9, 10, 11).

It is unclear if the ministry reviewed its communication strategy. The findings suggest that did not happen, as the messages sent were largely considered unconvincing, and the ministry, particularly minister Klöckner, failed to gain the upper hand in the debate and influence the associations accordingly (Interviews 9, 10, 11). Additionally, there was no noticeable change in strategy over time to address this issue. Interview 8 highlights that the associations were heavily influenced by members of the minister's own party, yet no strategic adjustments were made to counter that influence.

7. Discussion

a. The success of the Green Button

Various factors contributed to the successful adoption of the Green Button. The results indicated that this success is due to nine different reasons. The evaluation of the interviews and documents suggests that this is attributed to the leadership strength of the responsible minister and the strategic approach of his team. This insight is particularly evident when compared to the failed case of the Animal Welfare Label.

In the evaluation of the results, it becomes particularly clear that the introduction of the Green Button was strategic and well-thought-out. This is evident, on the one hand, from the fact that sufficient personnel resources were provided for its implementation from the outset and, on the other hand, that the project was considered within a broader context. The eight employees assigned to the project were part of a task force that also managed the Textile Alliance and the later Supply Chain Due Diligence Act. This allowed resources to be used efficiently and the Green Button to be conceived holistically. The evaluation has already shown that

the Textile Alliance is considered a precursor to the Green Button. That alliance includes companies committed to changing the status quo in the textile sector and implementing more sustainable methods. Those companies can be seen as key players in the successful adoption of the Green Button. They had already committed to stricter standards, so the Green Button was a useful development for them, allowing them to showcase their commitment publicly. This resulted in a valuable support network for the ministry that wanted the Green Button - including well-known companies like Aldi and Lidl. As evidenced by internal documents and interviews, this network was actively engaged by the ministry. The companies were kept informed about current developments and plans, and support was solicited. Minister Müller wrote many companies handwritten letters to companies appealing to their morals but also highlighting their advantages. *"After four years of collaboration in the Textile Alliance, we should jointly send this signal to the market with premium products. I definitely want you and the 'Otto Group' to be part of it"* (Document 7).

Those actions were part of a larger strategy. A close examination of the studied interviews and documents reveals that the ministry followed the steps of strategic communication. First, the situation was analysed. Through the Textile Alliance and regular ministry work, the status quo in the textile sector and its implications were understood well. Additionally, the market's (economic) interests were clear. Subsequently, the communication goals were established. All letters to companies and associations make it clear that the addressees were to be convinced of the concept to affect a "real" change in the market, under the premise that this was possible while respecting economic interests (Documents 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15). However, the target group was not limited to market participants already aligned with the intended goals (members of the Textile Alliance) but also included other market participants. One of the goals was for the Green Button to gain broad acceptance in the market and be featured on as many products as possible to ensure its success (Interviews 1, 2, 3). The instruments used included the regular means of association participation (letters, requests for statements, expert groups) as well as personal letters, personal (even private) visits (Interview 2), and numerous public statements by the minister to emphasise the necessity of the label. Although no precise information can be given about the budget, the high number of employees alone suggests it was significant. In terms of content, personal

messages and individual responsibility were emphasised, which is reflected in the design as well. Interestingly, communication was continuously adjusted to the circumstances. This is evident, for example, from the change of the ministry's press officer to the largest opponent of the Green Button, the association textile+mode. This was perceived by those responsible as "*betrayal*" (Interview 3, line 310). For this reason, the communication addressees (companies and associations) were given as much information as necessary but as little as possible (Interview 3). When resistance arose, the respective stakeholders were contacted directly to clarify open points (Interview 1).

However, the research did not clarify whether the concept of strategic communication was consciously chosen and followed. Interviewee 3 emphasised that a classical strategy "*as science envisions it*" (lines 505-506) was not applied. He described it as "*fatal*" (line 510), as it would involve documenting the strategy in writing, which could be dangerous if the information leaked to outsiders or if the situation changed. The press officer's change can be seen as such a case. Nonetheless, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether in writing or not, a clear strategy can be recognised, which ultimately proved successful.

In addition to strategic communication with the associations, the evaluation of the data reveals another very important factor for the success of the Green Button: leadership strength. Interviewees 1, 2, and 3 attributed "commitment" and dedication to the minister regarding the Green Button. That was especially important in dealing with associations. The evaluation of all data clearly shows the influential role of the associations (Interviews 2, 3, 8). Associations that saw the Green Button and did not want it used three main ways to exert their influence. The first way was through influence via member of the parliament and the Ministry of Economics. Both lobbied significantly against the label and wanted to prevent it (Interview 3). In response, the responsible ministry excluded other ministries (except for the Ministry of the Environment, which traditionally works closely with the Ministry of Development (Interview 1)). This was possible because the Green Button is a government label, and no laws requiring approval from other departments needed to be passed (Interview 3). Furthermore, minister Müller's prominent role was repeatedly mentioned, as he frequently made it clear that he fully supported the idea

of the Green Button and that it was necessary (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). As a result, all stakeholders understood that there was a strong political will behind this. Finally, Interviewee 3 described the strategy of "endurance," indicating that dealing with political resistance also involves waiting for it to resolve over time.

The second way of exerting influence is the informational strength of the associations. Interviewee 2 emphasised that associations are often used by the media as experts on new initiatives, and their statements are published. This significantly influences public perception. Here, the clear public positioning by minister Müller, who also corrected false statements, was helpful.

The third way of exerting influence is market acceptance. If associations and companies do not accept or use a new label, it loses significance. Therefore, it was crucial for the ministry to ensure that as many companies as possible use the Green Button to make it successful (Interviews 1, 2, 3). To ensure that, the ministry engaged in close exchanges with them to convince them of the Green Button. That has already been discussed and is part of strategic communication. Thus, it becomes evident that multiple factors contributed to the success of the Green Button. On the one hand, strategic communication and, on the other hand, leadership strength were essential to steer the process. It is clear that strategic communication acted as an influential mediator between the ministry and the associations to manage them and mitigate resistance. An important aspect here was partially bypassing the overarching associations by directly involving many companies, which is part of the adjustment processes within the strategic communication. That significantly reduced the influence of the associations.

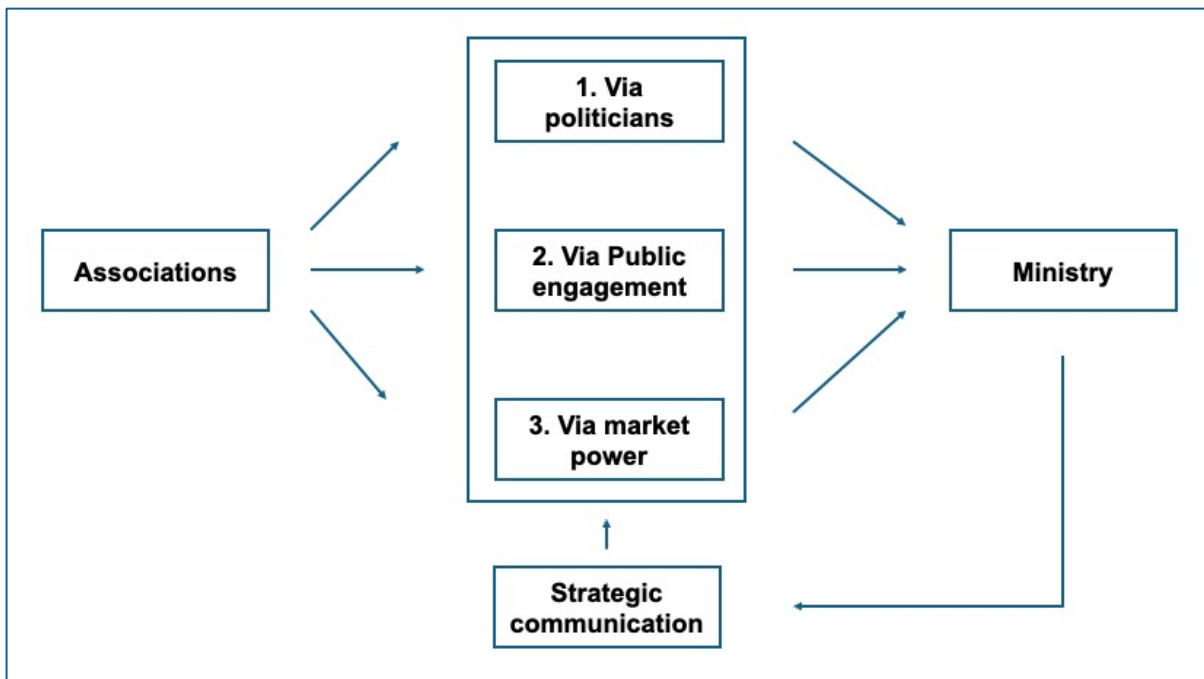


Figure 5: Ways of influence

b. The Failure of the Animal Welfare Label

The evaluation of the results showed that various factors were responsible for the failure of the Animal Welfare Label. The interviews and documents revealed eight main reasons for this failure. Similar to the Green Button, these reasons can be grouped under the themes of strategy and leadership.

The topic of the Animal Welfare Label proves to be more complex than the Green Button. That is because the Animal Welfare Label, due to its chosen approach, was in a more complex environment, and the pursued strategy, if any, is not clearly recognisable. To improve animal welfare in Germany, the responsible Ministry of Agriculture set up the so-called "Borchert Commission," consisting of associations, farmers, scientists, and politicians. In addition to a label, the commission primarily relied on accompanying measures to improve livestock farming standards. Interviewee 9 stated: *"No farmer changes conditions just because there is a label. A farmer changes because he gains a market advantage or because the transition and the resulting additional costs are subsidised."* Therefore, the commission developed further measures to enable farmers to achieve better livestock farming standards. Improved animal welfare is associated with high costs for corresponding

renovations. To enable that, the state should generously support barn renovations, which would require new laws. That aimed to secure the support of farmers and the economy, as value creation would remain in Germany. However, this path was difficult due to concerns about European law. A mandatory label for all would also mean renovation aid for all farmers. However, such a label would also apply to non-German products in the European internal market, making European farmers eligible for subsidies, as discrimination would violate European treaties (Interview 9). The ministry wanted to avoid that as it would be unaffordable. Consequently, a mandatory label could not be subsidised.

Even with a voluntary label, farmers wanted financial support from the state, as they felt disadvantaged otherwise (Interview 9). To finance that, the Borchert Commission proposed increasing the value-added tax on meat to fund the subsidies. Nevertheless, under European law, all meat products would have to be taxed higher, regardless of their origin, which would entitle non-German farmers to subsidies. The agricultural associations are open to a tax increase on meat, provided the revenue is allocated as subsidies to farmers for restructuring and environmental measures (Interview 9). However, that proposal faces a significant hurdle due to EU law, which mandates that subsidies must be available to all EU farmers, including those from countries like Spain. Consequently, that makes the targeted support for German farmers unfeasible (Interview 9).

The described situation made the Animal Welfare Label complicated and was ultimately one of the reasons for its failure. On the one hand, economic associations (farmers, etc.) were not against a label but wanted state subsidies for barn renovations, which could only be financed through new tax revenues, but those would violate European law (Interview 9). On the other hand, environmental and animal welfare associations wanted an ambitious and mandatory Animal Welfare Label (Interview 11). In that complex field, the ministry and the responsible minister made several mistakes.

A closer examination of the strategic communication reveals that important steps outlined by Bruhn et al. (2016), as thoroughly presented here, were followed. However, critical errors were made at key points. After evaluating the results, it

became clear that the ministry had conducted a situational analysis. This analysis stemmed not only from the usual work of the ministry but also from the activities of the Borchert Commission. The Commission not only developed proposals for improving animal welfare but also assessed the status quo (Interview 9), which must have enabled an accurate situational analysis.

The communication goals were clear: to convince all stakeholders of the concept and highlight its individual benefits. For farmers, that included better prices and working conditions with organically produced meat; for animal welfare organisations, it meant improved housing conditions for animals. That also defined the target audience. The chosen instruments included the regular involvement of associations, direct correspondence, joint meetings and discussions, personal phone calls with the minister, and the Borchert Commission, which brought all relevant stakeholders together and had already reached a compromise on this issue.

The first significant error became apparent with the budget. Although the budget was estimated at around 20 million euros (Drucksache 19/21632), it remained unclear how it was used. It was unlikely spent on staff, as only about three people were employed for the label under minister Klöckner. That number was too low, especially given the complexity of the situation and in comparison, to the Green Button initiative. Additionally, the content could have been more targeted towards the audience. Interviewee 9 emphasised that no farmer would change their housing conditions because of the label. They would do so if they were subsidised or if it was economically viable. However, they did not believe in subsidies due to legal issues at the European level, nor in the economic benefits. That scepticism stemmed from the so-called consumption-demand paradox, mentioned by several interviewees. Most consumers claim in surveys that they are willing to pay more for sustainably produced meat with high animal welfare standards. However, sales figures tell a different story. Most consumers buy conventional meat without significant animal welfare standards (Interviews 8, 9, 10, 11). This concern should have been addressed for the farmers.

The probably biggest problem, however, was that the communication strategy was not continuously reviewed and adjusted. The associations significantly influenced

the project. Interviewee 8 highlighted that in the conversation: *"One could say that the associations had the greatest influence because they had their people inside (in the parliament). One was the district farmers' association president, the next was the vice-president of the German Raiffeisen Association"* (lines 183-186). From the ministry's perspective, that is certainly regrettable, but if one truly wants to implement a project, a suitable counter-strategy must be found. However, the ministry continued to pursue the regular discussions approach and tried to convince the associations of the concept (Interview 8). An adjustment of the approach was not evident from the data evaluation. This is critical because of the associations' influence, with their members holding seats in parliament, directly impacting the political process. For a strategy adjustment and implementation of the label, the *"courage"* (Interview 8, line 134) or the *"political will"* (Interview 9, line 54) was lacking.

The associations, similar to those involved with the Green Button initiative, utilised three methods to influence the process (see Figure 5). The first method was through politicians. As previously discussed, many members of parliament from minister Klöckner's party (Union) are also part of associations and lobbied against the label. The second method was public engagement. Media outlets shared statements from associations claiming that the label was insufficient and that the government was unwilling to subsidise barn renovations (Interviews 8, 9, 10, 11). The third method was leveraging their market power. That issue mirrors the challenge faced by the Green Button initiative: if no companies adopt a voluntary label, it becomes ineffective. In that case, the associations took it a step further by establishing their own label in 2019. That label informed consumers about animal livestock conditions, rendering the state-owned label obsolete (Interview 8).

Another major problem was the long duration of the project, which the responsible minister had inherited from her predecessors. By the time she took office, the idea was already more than ten years old. Several of her predecessors had gone public with a draft of the animal welfare label, all of which failed. That led to a sense of fatigue and annoyance with that issue among both the public and the ministry's employees. No one really wanted to believe anymore that there would actually be an animal welfare label (Interview 8).

The fatigue and lack of belief were exacerbated by the minister's lack of commitment. In public perception, it was not clear if she really wanted the Animal Welfare Label (Interviews 8, 9). This question also arises when internally considering a possible strategy and strategic communication. The personnel resources for such a complex issue were very limited. Developing a label like that with two to three people is certainly ambitious, especially if it is to comply with laws on promoting barn renovations. The dissolution of a previously established staff unit, or the failure to reintroduce it, also raises questions in that direction (Interviews 7, 8).

Another key factor in the failure of the Animal Welfare Label was a lack of leadership strength and commitment. While minister Müller consistently promoted the Green Button in public and private, the responsible minister Klöckner did not demonstrate the same level of commitment to the Animal Welfare Label. This is evidenced by the lack of public statements and insufficient direct engagement with companies and associations. As a result, there was a lack of clear political will, which weakened the position of the ministry and reduced the chances of success.

In summary, the failure of the Animal Welfare Label can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of comprehensive strategy, insufficient stakeholder involvement, and a lack of leadership strength and commitment. Those issues resulted in inadequate support for the label and ultimately led to its failure.

c. The influence of strategic communication

The results of the study demonstrate that strategic communication had an impact on the respective outcomes of the examined labels. It contributed to the success of the Green Button label, whereas its incomplete application was identified as one of the reasons for the failure of the Animal Welfare Label. However, the study does not conclusively determine whether the strategic concepts were consciously or unconsciously applied. Strategic communication has proven particularly effective in managing stakeholders, such as associations, during the adoption of new governmental initiatives. In the examined cases, federal ministries had differing interests compared to the associations with whom they were in dialogue. While ministries aimed to introduce the Green Button and Animal Welfare Label,

associations from business and civil society sought to prevent them for various reasons. Strategic communication facilitates the identification of key stakeholders and their interests in advance, ensuring adequate planning for resource allocation, tools, and content to engage with associations and achieve negotiation success. Moreover, strategic communication emphasises continuous evaluation and potential adjustments to measures. The results indicate that those practices were effectively implemented with the Green Button but overlooked crucial steps with the Animal Welfare Label, contributing to its failure.

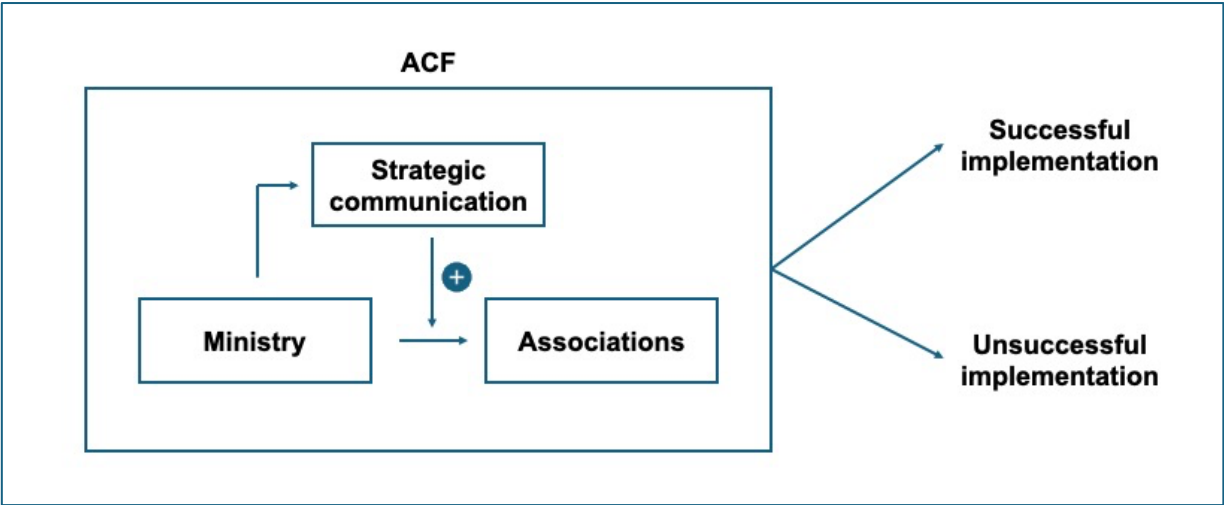


Figure 6: The influence of strategic communication

However, it is essential to reiterate that strategic communication was just one factor contributing to the successful adoption of the Green Button and the failure of the Animal Welfare Label, as discussed comprehensively in the results section. It is crucial to highlight the central role of the responsible minister in determining whether a project will be effectively pursued. When committed, the minister allocates sufficient resources (especially personnel and funding), departs from conventional ministry approaches, and effectively advocates for the project internally and externally. That becomes particularly significant amidst opposition, enabling the minister to maintain dominance in debates and address internal and governmental resistance. Conversely, without such commitment, initiatives like the examined product labels face dim prospects, especially when contentious, as observed with the Animal Welfare Label.

Furthermore, this study illustrates that strategic communication aligns effectively with the Advocacy Coalition Framework and complements it. This integration

enhances understanding of how policy subsystems interact and the pathways they utilise. For governments engaging with associations, three distinct pathways are primarily utilised, as depicted in figure five. Armed with this knowledge, governments can anticipate those dynamics, prepare strategic actions, and respond accordingly.

d. Practical implications

After evaluating the results and subsequent discussion, it became clear that strategic communication is a crucial mediator in the success or failure of government initiatives, such as product labels. The Green Button has demonstrated how it can be done. A combination of strategic planning, communication, close collaboration with stakeholders like associations, political courage, and determination are key factors in helping a project succeed and gain acceptance. It became particularly evident that the role of the responsible person (the minister) is very important and whether they are fully committed to the label or not. This determines the subsequent steps and resource allocation, which are critical for success.

The Animal Welfare Label clearly highlighted the differences from the Green Button and the mistakes made. Without the appropriate leadership (from the minister), it becomes difficult to implement and adopt a project successfully. In the case studied, this was evident through the lack of resource allocation and the failure to counteract the influence of associations. From the cases studied, several recommendations emerge that can help successfully adopt a project like government product labels:

- Leadership: Without strong leadership from the responsible minister, implementation will be difficult.
- Commitment: Full commitment at all levels is necessary to help a project succeed.
- Strategy: Clear strategy is needed for implementation. Strategic communication can assist not only in planning but also in dealing with changing situations.
- Resources: Without sufficient resources, projects struggle to be successfully implemented.

8. Conclusion

The present master's thesis demonstrates that strategic communication is a crucial mediator in the success or failure of government initiatives. That was investigated through a multiple case study of state-owned product labels in Germany. The cases examined include the Green Button from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, which has been successfully adopted in the market, and the Animal Welfare Label from the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, which failed to gain traction. Both cases show that associations exert significant influence on political processes to advance their interests, ranging from modifying the initiative to stopping it altogether. In the case of the Animal Welfare Label, associations halted the initiative through massive influence, rendering years of work worthless. To ensure a government initiative successfully navigates the process without being obstructed by associations, strategic communication was introduced and examined as a concept. Strategic communication involves achieving predefined goals using a toolbox of strategic means. The results clearly indicate that this concept was applied to the Green Button but not to the Animal Welfare Label, affecting the outcomes.

For the investigation, strategic communication was integrated into the Advocacy Coalition Framework, successfully extending it. It was shown that strategic communication functions well in examining how subsystems interact and how they can be managed. Approximately 50 internal documents were analysed and 11 expert interviews were conducted, with the findings subsequently analysed using qualitative content analysis.

A brief summary of the results would state that associations can influence government initiatives in three different ways and significantly shape them to their advantage. To withstand that as the responsible ministry, it requires leadership strength, political will, sufficient resources, a support network, and, as an overarching framework, strategic communication. It is important to note that the communication process must be continuously evaluated and adjusted to the situation.

a. Limitations

This master's thesis has methodological limitations, which are presented below for transparency reasons. Although the selection of different cases from a similar context ensures good generalisability (Yin, 2009), the case selection took place exclusively in Germany. Therefore, these results may only be transferable to other countries to a limited extent, as associations are not necessarily involved in the political process to the same extent in every country as they are in Germany. Furthermore, Yin (2009) describes that case studies have a narrow focus and are therefore only conditionally generalisable, potential subjectivity in interpretation affecting validity, challenges with reliability in qualitative data analysis, and the considerable time and resource investment required for comprehensive studies.

In addition, expert interviews are subjective to some extent (Entman, 1993), as interviewees can respond as they wish and sometimes pursue their own interests. That includes false statements (Gläser and Laudel, 2010). However, that issue was addressed with a large selection of different experts. Furthermore, care was taken to ensure that the experts came from ministries, associations, and civil society. All experts were also assured anonymity, which enabled open and free discussion (Gläser and Laudel, 2010). That made it easy to compare and contextualise the answers. False statements could not be identified in this evaluation. Due to the solo authorship requirement of the thesis, the interviews were coded solely by the author. Although using multiple coders can help reduce coder bias in the analysis (Saldana, 2013), the interpretations were verified with selected participants to assess their reliability.

Nevertheless, despite these drawbacks, case study research remains valuable for offering detailed insights into complex phenomena. Moreover, I guarantee operationalization through a well-defined research question and pertinent cases. Additionally, my research design incorporates diverse data sources. Ensuring validity, I systematically gather data for analysis and interpretation (Yin, 2009).

9. Appendix

a. Code aggregation

i. Inductive codes

1 st order concepts	2 nd order themes	Aggregate dimensions
Used channels by associations to influence process	Ways to influence political process	Strategy by associations
Member of the Parliament as advocates		
Strategy by associations		
Key actors	Key actors	Key actors
Credibility	Role of the minister	Role of the minister
Commitment		
Backing		
Overall strategy	Predefined steps	Strategy by the respective ministry
Pragmatism		
Why associations get involved		
Learning	Adjustments	
The strategy has to be adjusted according to the situation		
Obstacles	Internal obstacles	Challenges
Influence factor of associations		
Reasons for failure		
Inner-governmental opposition		
Inner-party opposition		
Betrayal		
Obstacles	External obstacles	
Reasons for failure		

Consumption-demand paradox		
Missed chances	Mistakes	
Time frame		
Speed is a key factor for success		
The process was too slow		
Success factors	Success factors	Success factors

ii. Deductive codes

1 st order concepts	2 nd order themes	Aggregate dimensions
Campaigns	Stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder engagement
Motivation		
Association participation		
Actions of associations	Actions of associations	Circumstances
Policy change	Advocacy coalition framework	
Policy dynamics		
Coalitions		
Deep core beliefs		
Review	Strategic communication	Communication strategy
Design		
Content		
Resources		
Instruments		
Target group		
Communication goals		
Situation analysis		
Actors		
Communication strategies		
Argumentation against the label	Position of the association	

Demands of the associations		
Communication with the associations		
Incentives for the associations		
Position of the association		
Argumentation for the label	Argumentation for the label	

b. Codebook

Name	Number of codes
1 Inductive codes	0
1.1 Credibility	2
1.2 Consumption-demand paradox	8
1.3 Used channels by associations to influence process	41
1.3.1 Member of the Parliament as advocate	3
1.4 Effect of associations' influence	17
1.5 Key actors	25
1.6 Commitment	8
1.6.1 Without commitment it is difficult to implement a project successfully	5
1.6.2 Commitment is a key for a successful implementation	18
1.7 Overall strategy	47
1.7.1 Pragmatism by the ministry	9
1.7.2 Why associations get involved	25
1.7.3 Strategy by associations	37
1.8 Learnings	15
1.8.1 The strategy has to be adjusted according to the situation	3

1.9 Backing	20
1.10 Obstacles	31
1.10.1 Inner-party opposition	5
1.10.2 Betrayal	3
1.10.3 Inner-governmental opposition	15
1.11 Time frame	14
1.11.1 Speed is a key factor for success	10
1.11.2 The process was too slow	7
1.12 Influence factor of associations	34
1.13 Success factors	57
1.14 Reasons for failure	31
1.14.1 Missed chances	3
2 Deductive codes	1
2.1 Actions of the associations	22
2.1.1 Campaigns	3
2.2 Motivation	36
2.3 Association participation	16
2.4 ACF	2
2.4.1 Policy Change	8
2.4.2 Policy Dynamics	14
2.4.3 Coalitions	39
2.4.4 Deep Core Beliefs	18
2.5 Strategic Communication	18
2.5.1 Review	9
2.5.2 Design	8
2.5.3 Content	15
2.5.4 Resources	26
2.5.5 Instruments	28
2.5.6 Target group	22
2.5.7 Communication goals	8
2.5.8 Situation analysis	12
2.5.8.1 Actors	13
2.5.9 Communication strategies	38
2.5.10 Argumentation against the label	40
2.5.11 Demands of the associations	11

2.5.12 Communication with the associations	30
2.5.13 Incentives for the associations	11
2.5.14 Argumentation for the label	26
2.6 Position of the association	54

1 Inductive codes

The inductive category collects all inductive created codes and sub-codes which are not part of the predefined theoretical framework, but complement them.

1.1 Credibility

This in-vivo code deals with all statements about the needed credibility of responsible functionaries to set up a label.

1.2 Consumption-demand paradox

This in-vivo code deals with all statements about a consumption-demand paradox of consumers, who wish higher ambitions in environmental, social or animal protection but act in the opposite way and buy mainly non-sustainable products, which do not fulfill these criteria.

1.3 Used channels by associations to influence process

This code shows all channels, associations used to influence the political process for implementing a label.

1.3.1 Member of the Parliament as advocate

This code deals with the statement that Member of the national Parliament (Bundestag) works as advocates for associations, because they were part of or even fulfilled an high-level function within these.

1.4 Effect of associations' influence

This code describes the actual effect of the associations' actions on the implementing process.

1.5 Key actors

This code summarizes alle key actors in both cases, who were in charge in the label process. Either on the state side, or on the association side.

1.6 Commitment

This in-vivo code summarizes all statements about the needed commitment to get a label done.

1.6.1 Without commitment it is difficult to implement a project successfully

This in-vivo sub-code include all statements about the difficulty to implement a label successful without commitment, especially from high-level officials.

1.6.2 Commitment is a key for a successful implementation

This in-vivo sub-code deals with all statements that commitment is an important key aspect for the successful implementation of labels.

1.7 Overall strategy

This code combines all aspects of the overall strategy of the ministry to implement the label successful and of the associations to promote their positions and influence the process.

1.7.1 Pragmatism by the ministry

This code describes pragmatic measures of the different stakeholders to adjust their strategy to the current situation.

1.7.2 Why associations get involved

This code describes why associations get involved in the implementing process by the respective ministries.

1.7.3 Strategy by associations

This code describes the associations' strategies to influence the label process in their interest.

1.8 Learnings

This code collects all statements about the personal learnings of the interviewees within the label process and shows important event and critical junctures.

1.8.1 The strategy has to be adjusted according to the situation

This sub-code shows statements about an adjusted strategy by the different stakeholders, according to the changed and current situation.

1.9 Backing

This in-vivo code collects all statements about the "backing" by high-level officials within the ministries, who supported their employees to fulfill their job and reach the common goal: the successful implementation of the respective label.

1.10 Obstacles

This code collects all obstacles within the implementing process of the respective label.

1.10.1 Inner-party opposition

This sub-code shows the inner-party opposition, within the same party family, to stop the successful implementation of the respective label.

1.10.2 Betrayal

This in vivo code deals with the statement of a "betrayal" in the label process, when an high-level employee changed sides, left the ministry and started working for an association with opposite interest.

1.10.3 Inner-governmental opposition

This sub-code shows the inner-governmental opposition, by the coalition partner (the co-party) to stop the successful implementation of the respective label.

1.11 Time frame

This code describes the time frame of the respective label. The subcodes deal with the respective speed, the code describes the chronology.

1.11.1 Speed is a key factor for success

This in-vivo sub-code collect all statements about the aspect of speed as a key factor for the successful implementation of the respective label.

1.11.2 The process was to slow

This in-vivo sub-code combines all statements about the aspect, that a certain process was too slow and was a hindrance for the successful implementation of the respective label.

1.12 Influence factor of associations

This code describes how high the influence of associations on the legal process is, whether it is high or irrelevant.

1.13 Success factors

This code deals with all success factors of the "Green Button" label.

1.14 Reasons for failure

This code deals with all aspects of the failure of the "Animal Welfare" label.

1.14.1 Missed chances

This in-vivo sub-code deals with the missed chances for the successful implementation process of the "Animal Welfare" label.

2 Deductive codes

The deductive category collects all deductive created codes from the theoretical framework.

2.1 Actions of the associations

This code collects all actions by the associations to influence the label process in their favor.

2.1.1 Campaigns

This sub-code collects all campaigns by the associations to influence the label process in their favor.

2.2 Motivation

This code describes the motivation for implementing a label.

2.3 Association participation

This code shows when associations participated in any way in the label process.

2.4 ACF

The ACF code combines all aspects of the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework'.

2.4.1 Policy Change

This code combines the aspect of policy change, as part of the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework'.

2.4.2 Policy Dynamics

This code combines the aspect of policy dynamics, as part of the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework'.

2.4.3 Coalitions

This code combines the aspect of coalitions, as part of the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework'.

2.4.4 Deep Core Beliefs

This code combines the aspect of deep core beliefs by stakeholders, as part of the 'Advocacy Coalition Framework'.

2.5 Strategic communication

This code collects all aspects of the concept strategic communication.

2.5.1 Review

This code combines the aspect of review, whether there was one before the implementation process started and how it looked like or if there was none, as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.2 Design

This code shows the design of the respective communication as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.3 Content

This code shows the content of the respective communication as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.4 Resources

This code involves all used resources by the ministry and the associations to make the own position clear and influence the process.

2.5.5 Instruments

This code shows the instruments of the respective communication as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.6 Target group

This code shows the target group of the respective communication as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.7 Communication goals

This code shows the communication goals of the respective communication as part of the strategic communication.

2.5.8 Situation analysis

This code involves whether there was a situation analysis as part of a strategic process, to plan the respective communication strategy, and how it looked like.

2.5.8.1 Actors

This code shows all actors who were detected as important, as part of the situation analysis, to involve in the communication process.

2.5.9 Communication strategies

This code involves all general communication strategies by the ministries, as part of the strategic communication or not.

2.5.10 Argumentation against the label

This code involves all arguments by multiple stakeholders, especially the associations, against the respective label.

2.5.11 Demands of the associations

This code shows the demands of the associations to keep their interest.

2.5.12 Communication with the associations

This code combines all communication by the ministries with the associations.

2.5.13 Incentives for the associations

This code shows the incentives of the associations within one of the labels and how the respective ministry tried to present those to the association.

2.5.14 Argumentation for the label

This code combines all arguments for the respective label and why this is needed and useful.

2.6 Position of the association

This code describes which position certain associations had.

c. Consent form

Consent form for the collection and processing of personal interview data

Research Project:

The Inclusion of Associations in the Legislative Process in Germany

Interviewer:

Lorenz Klingele, Utrecht University

Interview Date:

Description of the Research Project:

This research aims to investigate how associations are involved in the legislative process in Germany and how they exert influence through two case studies. Additionally, it seeks to determine how the lead ministry handles and potentially influences this process.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. For further scientific analysis of the interview texts, all information that could lead to the identification of the person will be altered or removed from the text. In scientific publications, interviews will only be quoted in excerpts to ensure that the resulting overall context of events does not lead to the identification of the person by third parties.

Personal contact data will be stored separately from interview data and made inaccessible to third parties. After the completion of the research project, your contact data will be automatically deleted unless you expressly agree to further storage for the purpose of being contacted for related research projects. Of course, you can object to extended storage at any time.

Participation in the interviews is voluntary. You have the option to terminate an interview at any time, decline further interviews, and withdraw your consent to the recording and transcription of the interview without any disadvantages.

I agree to participate in an interview as part of the aforementioned research project.

Name, First Name, Date, Signature (Interviewer):

Klinge, Lorenz, 30.04.2024

Name, First Name, Date, Signature (Interviewee):

d. Interview guide

Short introduction of the interviewer and the research project. Warm up talk with the interviewees and verbal information about recording and signing the form of consent.

- Please tell me something about yourself and your position.
- Who is your association, what do you do, and what do you stand for? // Which ministry are you working in, what is your position and what was your label related job?
- Why did the animal welfare label fail? // Why was the Green Button successful?
- What was the prevailing motivation for implementing the label at that time?
- Why are associations involved in the process?
 - Why was your association involved in this case?

- Is it common for associations to be involved in processes that do not result in laws?
- What influence do associations have on the success or failure of federal government projects?
- How did the Federal Ministry involve you in the labeling process? // How did your ministry involve associations in the labeling process?
- How did the Federal Ministry consult your association?
- Why did it consult your association? // How did your ministry pick an association?
- How was the communication between the Federal Ministry and the associations conducted?
 - Was it an open, appreciative exchange, or was it communication for its own sake?
 - What should have been done differently in the communication?
- What strategy did the Federal Ministry pursue at that time for the successful implementation of the label?
- What was your association's position on the introduction of the animal welfare label at that time?
- How did you represent this position to the legislators? // How did your ministry represent its position to the associations?
 - How did they handle your position?
- Did the associations coordinate their activities with each other?
- What resources were available to you for the implementation of the label (personnel, money, power, etc.)? // What resources were available to you to influence the adoption process?
- How could the failure of the animal welfare label have been prevented?
- Imagine you are on the other side (in the Ministry) and want to introduce a label. What would you have done differently?
- What insights have you personally gained from the process?
- What else would you like to share with me that we have not discussed yet?

e. Document overview

Number	Type	Content	Date	Actors	Label
1	Personal letter by minister Müller to Hess Natur	Minister Müller try to convince the “Hess Natur” Company to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister Müller Andrea Sybille Ebinger (CEO Hess natur) 	Green Button
2	Personal letter by minister Müller to Hugo Boss	Minister Müller try to convince the “Hugo Boss” company to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister Müller Mark Langer (CEO Hugo Boss) 	Green Button
3	Status: Establishment of the Green Button Support Group	Goal and steps to set up an independent advisory board and circle of supporters to establish the Green Button as leading textile label on the <u>international</u> textile market.	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Division 114 	Green Button
4	Interview with Ingeborg Neuman	The “ <i>textil+mode</i> ” association (combines 1.400 companies with 135.000 employess in	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ingeborg Neuman (President of <i>textil+mode</i> and vice- 	Green Button

	(textil+mode and BDI)	Germany) and the “Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie” association (central organisation of German industry) want to protect minister Müller from himself and warn against label		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • president of <i>Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie</i> • <i>Focus magazine</i> 	
5	Factsheet	General informations about the Green Button and FAQ	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development • Green Button office 	Green Button
6	Personal letter by Primark to minister Müller	Thank you for your personal visit and request for more information on the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolfgang Korgman (DG Primark Germany and Austria) • Minister Müller 	Green Button
7	Personal letter by minister Müller to the Otto Group	Invitation for a personal chat to talk about the Green Button	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Dr. Johannes Merck (Chief CSR of the Otto Group) 	Green Button

8	Interview with Nadja Bergstein (Tchibo)	Statement that the textile sector has to become more sustainable. The Green Button can be a step in this direction, even the fact that it is ambitious.	September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nadja Bergstein (Director of Tchibo) • Spiegel magazine 	Green Button
9	Personal letter by minister Müller to Dr. Michael Otto	Minister Müller try to convince Michael Otto (founder of the Otto Group) to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Dr. Michael Otto (founder of the Otto Group) 	Green Button
10	Personal letter by minister Müller to Thomas Linnemayr (Tchibo)	Minister Müller try to convince Thomas Linnemayr to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Thomas Linnemayr (CEO Tchibo) 	Green Button
11	Personal letter by Thomas Linnemayr (Tchibo) to minister Müller	Tchibo complies with the Green Button and suggest a Green Button trial	March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Linnemayr (CEO Tchibo) • Minister Müller 	Green Button

12	Personal letter by minister Müller to Wolfgang Grupp (CEO and founder of Trigema)	Thank you for the visit and try to convince Trigema to comply with the Green Button	September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Wolfgang Grupp (Trigema) 	Green Button
13	Personal letter by minister Müller to Dr. Antje von Dewitz (CEO of VAUDE)	Try to convince VAUDE to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Dr. Antje von Dewitz (CEO of VAUDE) 	Green Button
14	Personal letter by minister Müller to Klaus Gehrig (Chairman of the Supervisory Board Lidl & Kaufland)	Try to convince Lidl & Kaufland to comply with the Green Button	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Klaus Gehring (Chairman of the Supervisory Board Lidl & Kaufland) 	Green Button
15	Personal letter by minister Müller to Heike Hess (President of the	Try to convince the Naturtextilien association to comply with the Green Button.	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Müller • Heike Hess (President of the Naturtextilien association). 	Green Button

	Naturtextilien association)				
16	Personal letter of Matthias Oppitz (Chairman of the Management Board of Lidl Germany) to minister Müller	Thank you for the personal visit at a Lidl store and support to proceed with the Green Button	April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthias Oppitz (Chairman of the Management Board of Lidl Germany) • Minister Müller 	Green Button
17	Acquisition concept for the Green Button	Concept of convincing stakeholders for the Green Button. Which channels and messages to use, use of multipliers, important events to get in touch with companies, next steps and tasks.	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development • Green Button office 	Green Button
18	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be more ambitious	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Schweitzer Stiftung für unsere Mitwelt 	Animal Welfare Label
19	Statement by association	Pro label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft 	Animal Welfare Label

20	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be more ambitious	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbeitsgemeinschaft für artgerechte Nutztierhaltung e.V. 	Animal Welfare Label
21	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be more ambitious and it has to be compulsory for all.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUND 	Animal Welfare Label
22	Statement by association	Against the label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bund für Lebensmittelrecht und Lebensmittelkunde 	Animal Welfare Label
23	Statement by association	Against the label, because it is not ambitious enough.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bund gegen Missbrauch der Tiere 	Animal Welfare Label
24	Statement by association	In general pro label, but some adjustments have to be made.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bund ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft 	Animal Welfare Label
25	Statement by association	Neutral position, but the label is not very ambitious.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundestierärztekammer 	Animal Welfare Label
26	Statement by association		July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundesverband der Beamteten Tierärzte 	Animal Welfare Label
27	Statement by association	Pro label, but more information is needed, how the label could look like.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bundesverband des Deutschen Lebensmittelhandels 	Animal Welfare Label

28	Statement by association	Against the label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundesverband Großhandel, Außenhandel und Dienstleistung e.V. 	Animal Welfare Label
29	Statement by association	Against the label, but if there is one, it has to be compulsory for everyone.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundesverband Rind und Schwein 	Animal Welfare Label
30	Statement by association	Against the label, because such a label is nonsense without any effect.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bundesverband Vieh und Fleisch 	Animal Welfare Label
31	Statement by association	Pro label, but some adjustment has to be made.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutsche Landwirtschafts Gesellschaft 	Animal Welfare Label
32	Statement by association	Against the label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutscher Bauernverband 	Animal Welfare Label
33	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be voluntary.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutscher Raiffeisenverband 	Animal Welfare Label
34	Statement by association	Pro label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutscher Tierschutzbund 	Animal Welfare Label
35	Statement by association	Neutral position.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deutscher Verband Neutraler Kontroll- und Klassifizierungsunternehmen 	Animal Welfare Label

36	Statement by association	Pro label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Die Verbraucher Initiative 	Animal Welfare Label
37	Statement by association	Pro label, but it is not ambitious enough	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foodwatch 	Animal Welfare Label
38	Statement by association	No clear position.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germanwatch 	Animal Welfare Label
39	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be more ambitious.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gesellschaft für ganzheitliche Tiermedizin 	Animal Welfare Label
40	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be more ambitious and compulsory for everyone.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenpeace 	Animal Welfare Label
41	Statement by association	Pro label, but some adjustments has to be made.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative Tierwohl 	Animal Welfare Label
42	Statement by association	Pro label, if there is financial support by the government for farmers.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interessensgemeinschaft der Schweinehalter Deutschlands 	Animal Welfare Label
43	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be compulsory and farmers need support by the government.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuland 	Animal Welfare Label

44	Statement by association	Neutral position	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH 	Animal Welfare Label
45	Statement by association	Against label.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verband der Fleischwirtschaft 	Animal Welfare Label
46	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be compulsory for everyone.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband 	Animal Welfare Label
47	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be compulsory for everyone.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vier Pfoten 	Animal Welfare Label
48	Statement by association	Pro label	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welttierschutzgesellschaft 	Animal Welfare Label
49	Statement by association	Pro label, but it has to be compulsory for everyone.	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zentralverband der Deutschen Geflügelwirtschaft 	Animal Welfare Label

10. References

- Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien (GGO), (2020).
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (1948).
- Anckar, C. (2008). On the Applicability of the Most Similar Systems Design and the Most Different Systems Design in Comparative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11, 389-401.
- Baldwin, R., Cave, M., Lodge, M., Baldwin, R., Cave, M., & Lodge, M. (2011). Chapter 2 - Why Regulate? In *Understanding Regulation: Theory, Strategy, and Practice* (pp. 0). Oxford University Press.
- Bamberg, S., Rees, J. H., & Schulte, M. (2018). 8 - Environmental protection through societal change: What psychology knows about collective climate action—and what it needs to find out. In S. Clayton & C. Manning (Eds.), *Psychology and Climate Change* (pp. 185-213). Academic Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-813130-5.00008-4>
- Bandelow, N. C. (2022). Advocacy coalition framework. In *Handbuch Policy-Forschung* (pp. 305-324). Springer.
- Belson, J. (2012). Ecolabels: ownership, use, and the public interest. *Trademark Rep.*, 102, 1254.
- Beltermann, E., Flemisch, T., & Wittlich, H. (2022). 15.000 Liter Wasser für ein Kilo Rindfleisch. *Der Tagesspiegel*.
- Bentele, G., Bohse, R., Hitschfeld, U., & Krebber, F. (2014). *Akzeptanz in der Medien-und Protestgesellschaft: Zur Debatte um Legitimation, öffentliches Vertrauen, Transparenz und Partizipation*. Springer-Verlag.
- Benz, A. (2005). Kein Ausweg aus der Politikverflechtung? — Warum die Bundesstaatskommission scheiterte, aber nicht scheitern musste. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 46(2), 204-214. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24199971>
- BMZ. (2024). *Umwelt- und Sozialstandards in der Textilwirtschaft verbessern*. Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung.
- Boeije, H., & Bleijenbergh, I. (2019). *Analyseren in kwalitatief onderzoek*. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Bosch, M., Obeso, E., & Palao, A. (2023). *Greenwashing in the fast fashion industry: The role of consumer education*. Jönköping University.

- Boström, M., & Klintman, M. (2008). *Eco-standards, product labelling and green consumerism*. Springer.
- Bratt, C., Hallstedt, S., Robèrt, K.-H., Broman, G., & Oldmark, J. (2011). Assessment of eco-labelling criteria development from a strategic sustainability perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 19(14), 1631-1638.
- Brettschneider, F. (2020). *Bau-und Infrastrukturprojekte: Dialogorientierte Kommunikation als Erfolgsfaktor*. Springer-Verlag.
- Bruhn, M. (2014). Marketingorganisation. Die Basis einer marktorientierten Unternehmenssteuerung. *ZfbF*, 724.
- Bruhn, M. (2016). Strategische Planung und Umsetzung einer Integrierten Kommunikation: Die Anbieterperspektive. *Handbuch Strategische Kommunikation: Grundlagen–Innovative Ansätze–Praktische Umsetzungen*, 103-128.
- Bruhn, M., Esch, F.-R., & Langner, T. (2016). Handbuch Instrumente der Kommunikation. *Grundlagen, innovative Ansätze, praktische Umsetzungen (2. Aufl.)*. Wiesbaden.
- Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung. (2015). *Verbaucherportal Siegelklarheit.de*
- Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung. (2019). *Minister Gerd Müller stellt staatliches Textilsiegel „Grüner Knopf“ vor*
- Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. (2018). Vor fünf Jahren: Textilfabrik Rana Plaza in Bangladesch eingestürzt. *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*.
- Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. (2019). *Welche Gütesiegel gibt es?*
- Bündnis für nachhaltige Textilien. (2024). *Das Bündnis*.
- Ciucci, R. (2016). *Reputation und Vertrauen für NPO* [Interview].
- Cobbing, M., Daaj, S., Kopp, M., & Wohlgemuth, V. (2022). *Vergiftete Geschenke - Von der Spende zur Müllhalde: Wie Textilmüll als Secondhand-Kleidung getrennt nach Ostafrika exportiert wird*.
- The European Green Deal, (2019).
- Darnall, N., & Aragón-Correa, J. A. (2014). Can Ecolabels Influence Firms' Sustainability Strategy and Stakeholder Behavior? *Organization & Environment*, 27(4), 319-327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026614562963>
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. (2024). *Der Grüne Knopf*.

- Deutsche Umwelthilfe e. V. (2022). *Repräsentative Umfrage: 90 Prozent der Menschen in Deutschland fordern Verbot von Reserveantibiotika in der Massentierhaltung.*
- Deutscher Bundestag. (2022). *Verbändebeteiligung bei Gestzentwürfen*
 Untertitel: *Ursprünge, Intention und aktuelle Rechtslage bezüglich § 47 Abs. 3 der Gemeinsamen Geschäftsordnung der Bun.*
- Deutsches Institut für Qualitätsstandards und -prüfung e.V. (2018). *Gütesiegel - Was ist das und wie wird es vergeben?*
- Dmytriiev, S. D., Freeman, R. E., & Hörisch, J. (2021). The relationship between stakeholder theory and corporate social responsibility: Differences, similarities, and implications for social issues in management. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(6), 1441-1470.
- Drucksache 19/21632. (2020). *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frank Sitta, Dr. Gero Clemens Hocker, Carina Konrad, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP.*
- Dunlop, C. A. (2020). Policy learning and policy failure: Definitions, dimensions and intersections. In *Policy Learning and Policy Failure* (pp. 1-22). Policy Press.
- Dür, A. (2013). Interest groups in the European Union: How powerful are they? In *Interest Group Politics in Europe* (pp. 110-128). Routledge.
- Dür, A., & De Bièvre, D. (2007). The question of interest group influence. *Journal of Public Policy*, 27(1), 1-12.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of communication*, 43(4), 51-58.
- Europäisches Parlament. (2024). *Umweltauswirkungen von Textilproduktion und -abfällen (Infografik)*. Europäisches Parlament.
- European Commission. (2022). *Fragen und Antworten zur EU-Strategie für nachhaltige und kreislauffähige Textilien.*
- Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive), (2023).
- Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. (2023). *EU-wide uniform food labelling.*
- Föll, R. (2011). *Lebensmittelsiegel im Spannungsfeld zwischen Verbraucherinformation und Industrienutzen* Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg].

- Fourinaies, A., & Hall, A. B. (2018). How do interest groups seek access to committees? *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(1), 132-147.
- Funke, F., Mattauch, L., van den Bijgaart, I., Hepburn, C., Godfray, H. C. J., Klenert, D., Springmann, M., & Treich, N. (2022). Toward Optimal Meat Pricing: Is it Time to Tax Meat Consumption? . *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 16.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Gläser, J., & Laudel, G. (2010). *Experteninterviews und qualitative Inhaltsanalyse*. Springer-Verlag.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International journal of strategic communication*, 1(1), 3-35.
- Haupt, S., Lichter, J., & May, C. (2021). *Sorgfaltspflichten entlang globaler Lieferketten*.
- Haverland, M., & Yanow, D. (2012). A hitchhiker's guide to the public administration research universe: surviving conversations on methodologies and methods. *Public Administration Review*, 72(3), 401-408.
- Hoffjann, O. (2021). The politician as a player: Political strategic communication as a play. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 45(3), 267-289.
- Höfler, N. (2019). Herr Minister, tragen Sie fair produzierte Unterwäsche unter Ihrem weißen Hemd? *stern*.
- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Wu, X. (2015). Understanding the persistence of policy failures: The role of politics, governance and uncertainty. *Public Policy and Administration*, 30(3-4), 209-220.
- Ihlen, Ø., Lock, I., & Raknes, K. (2022). Democracy, strategic communication and lobbying. In *Research Handbook on Strategic Communication* (pp. 166-177). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kaiser, R. (2014). *Qualitative experteninterviews*. Springer.
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (2021). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press.
- Kingdon, J. W., & Stano, E. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies* (Vol. 45). Little, Brown Boston.

- Klenert, D., Funke, F., & Cai, M. (2023). Meat taxes in Europe can be designed to avoid overburdening low-income consumers. *nature food*
- Kowal, M. S. (2018). Corporate politicking, together: trade association ties, lobbying, and campaign giving. *Business and Politics*, 20(1), 98-131.
- Kremer-Schillings, W. (2023). *Satt und unzufrieden: Bauer Willi und das Dilemma der Essensmacher*. Westend Verlag GmbH.
- Kujala, J., Sachs, S., Leinonen, H., Heikkinen, A., & Laude, D. (2022). Stakeholder Engagement: Past, Present, and Future. *Business & Society*, 61, 1136-1196.
- Kukkonen, A., Ylä-Anttila, T., & Broadbent, J. (2017). Advocacy coalitions, beliefs and climate change policy in the United States. *Public Administration*, 95(3), 713-729.
- Kurzer, P., & Cooper, A. (2013). Biased or not? Organized interests and the case of EU food information labeling. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(5), 722-740.
- Lambert, T. A. (2017). Chapter 4 - Externalities. In T. A. Lambert (Ed.), *How to Regulate: A Guide for Policymakers* (pp. 22-59). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/9781316534885.005>
- Laux, P. (2022). *Erfolgreiche Marketing-Kommunikation im Spannungsfeld zwischen Aufklärung und Manipulation am Beispiel von Bio Siegeln* [Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt].
- Leibrich, S. (2021). Schmutzige Wäsche. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.
- Mast, C. (2015). Was ist Unternehmenskommunikation. *Handbuch Sprache der Wirtschaft*, 3.
- Matthes, J. (2009). What's in a frame? A content analysis of media framing studies in the world's leading communication journals, 1990-2005. *Journalism & mass communication quarterly*, 86(2), 349-367.
- Mayring, P. (2015). Qualitative content analysis: Theoretical background and procedures. *Approaches to qualitative research in mathematics education: Examples of methodology and methods*, 365-380.
- McConnell, A. (2015). What is policy failure? A primer to help navigate the maze. *Public Policy and Administration*, 30(3-4), 221-242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076714565416>
- McConnell, A., & 't Hart, P. (2019). Inaction and public policy: understanding why policymakers 'do nothing'. *Policy Sciences*, 52(4), 645-661.

- McConnell, A., Grealy, L., & Lea, T. (2020). Policy success for whom? A framework for analysis. *Policy Sciences*, 53(4), 589-608. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-020-09406-y>
- Mergel, I., Edelmann, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly*, 36(4), 101385. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.06.002>
- Messer, K. D., Costanigro, M., & Kaiser, H. M. (2017). Labeling food processes: the good, the bad and the ugly. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, 39(3), 407-427.
- Michel-Berger, S. (2021). Tierwohllabel: Wir man Tierwohl nach Julia Klöckners Scheitern fördert. *agrarheute*.
- Mitchell, K. (2015). Rethinking the 'Erasmus Effect' on European Identity. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(2), 330-348. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12152>
- Mueller, B. (2020). Why public policies fail: Policymaking under complexity. *Economia*, 21(2), 311-323.
- Müller, G. (2022). Unternehmerische Verantwortung einfordern, Nachhaltigkeit fördern: Warum wir umdenken und umlenken müssen. In A. Herzner & R. Schmidpeter (Eds.), *CSR in Süddeutschland: Unternehmerischer Erfolg und Nachhaltigkeit im Einklang* (pp. 19-28). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-61959-9_2
- Namey, E., Guest, G., Thairu, L., & Johnson, L. (2008). Data reduction techniques for large qualitative data sets. *Handbook for team-based qualitative research*, 2(1), 137-161.
- Ospina, S. M., Esteve, M., & Lee, S. (2018). Assessing qualitative studies in public administration research. *Public Administration Review*, 78(4), 593-605.
- Oswald, M. (2022). Strategisches framing. In *Strategisches Framing: Eine Einführung* (pp. 39-145). Springer.
- Parker, C., Carey, R., De Costa, J., & Scrinis, G. (2017). Labelling for consumer choice as regulatory policy? The case of animal welfare. *Regulation and Governance*.
- Plümper, T. (2012). Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1524/9783486716153>

- Poggel, I.-R. (2023). *Kundenbedürfnisse und Wahrnehmung der Angebote in der Landwirtschaftlichen Direktvermarktung* Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg].
- Probe, A. (2018). Staatliches Meta-Siegel Grüner Knopf soll 2019 kommen. *TextilWirtschaft*.
- Riley, P., & Hollihan, T. A. (2012). Strategic communication: How governments frame arguments in the media. *Exploring argumentative contexts*, 4, 59.
- Robertson, D. B. (1988). Planned incapacity to succeed? Policy-making structure and policy failure. *Review of Policy Research*, 8(2), 241-263.
- Röttger, U., Donges, P., & Zerfaß, A. (2020). Public Affairs: Strategische Kommunikation an der Schnittstelle von Wirtschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft. *Handbuch Public Affairs: Politische Kommunikation für Unternehmen und Organisationen*, 1-24.
- Rustler, S. (2019). Tampons und Zwangsjacken sollen Öko-Siegel bekommen. *Bild*.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1988). An Advocacy Coalition Framework of Policy Change and the Role of Policy-Oriented Learning Therein. *Policy Sciences*, 21(2/3), 129-168. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4532139>
- Sabatier, P. A. (1993a). *Advocacy-Koalitionen, Policy-Wandel und Policy-Lernen: Eine Alternative zur Phasenheuristik*. Springer.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1993b). Policy change over a decade or more. *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*, 13, 33.
- Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (1994). Evaluating the Advocacy Coalition Framework. *Journal of Public Policy*, 14(2).
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (J. Seaman, Ed.). SAGE.
- Schäfers, M. (2019). Der Grüne Knopf startet - und sorgt für viel Streit. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.
- Scheufele, B. (2004). Framing-effects approach: A theoretical and methodological critique.
- Schmalz, I. M. (2019). Kosten-und Nutzenaspekte von Konflikt und Akzeptanz. *Akzeptanz von Großprojekten: Eine Betrachtung von Konflikten, Kosten-und Nutzenaspekten und Kommunikation*, 81-104.
- Schubert, K., & Bandelow, N. C. (2009). Politikfeldanalyse: Dimensionen und Fragestellungen. *Lehrbuch der Politikfeldanalyse*, 2(2), 1-21.

- Schwalbach, J., & Schwerk, A. (2014). Corporate Governance und Corporate social responsibility: Grundlagen und Konsequenzen für die Kommunikation. *Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation: Strategie-Management-Wertschöpfung*, 203-218.
- Seberini, A., Izáková, K., & Tokovska, M. (2024). Greenwashing – The Dark Side of Eco-Friendly Marketing. A Case Study from Slovakia. *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.5800>
- Shapiro, S. (2016). *Analysis and public policy: successes, failures and directions for reform*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Shirinov, A. Q. (2021). Earth overshoot day and the case of central Asian countries (Human development vs. running out of resources). *Science and Education*, 2(2), 28-33.
- Spence, M. (1974). Competitive and optimal responses to signals: An analysis of efficiency and distribution. *Journal of Economic theory*, 7(3), 296-332.
- Spiegel. (2019). „Tiere sind Mitgeschöpfe, keine Wegwerfware“. *Spiegel*.
- Spiegel. (2021). Staatliches Tierwohl-Gütesiegel gescheitert. *Spiegel*.
- Stehkämpfer, B. (2019). „Grüner Knopf“ für fair produzierte Textilien. *Deutsche Welle*.
- Steinmann, H. (2006). Unternehmensethik. Integration in das Lehrgebäude der Managementlehre. *Handbuch Kompetenzmanagement*, 15-27.
- Steinmetz, J. (2019). *Politics, Power, and Purpose: An Orientation to Political Science*. Fort Hays State University
- Strünck, C. (2022). Regieren als Verhandeln: Problemlösungskapazitäten und Legitimationsressourcen von korporatistischen Verhandlungen und Policy-Netzwerken. In *Handbuch Regierungsforschung* (pp. 475-485). Springer.
- Süddeutsche Zeitung. (2021). Müller: Unglück wie Rana Plaza darf sich nie wiederholen. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.
- Umweltbundesamt. (2023). *Fragen und Antworten zu Tierhaltung und Ernährung*.
- Paris Agreement, (2015).
- Wallace, H., Pollack, M. A., Roederer-Rynning, C., & Young, A. R. (2020). *Policy-making in the European Union*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Weaver, R. K. (2009). But will it work? Implementation analysis to improve government performance. *Contract*.

- Wehling, E. (2018). *Politisches Framing: Wie eine Nation sich ihr Denken einredet- und daraus Politik macht*. Ullstein Buchverlage.
- Wehmeier, S., & Schoeneborn, D. (2017). *Strategische Kommunikation im Spannungsfeld zwischen Intention und Emergenz*. Springer.
- Weible, C. M., & Sabatier, P. A. (2007). A guide to the advocacy coalition framework. *Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods*, 123.
- Wenzelburger, G., & Hörisch, F. (2016). Unpopular social policy reform and strategic communication: an introduction. In (Vol. 18, pp. 113-121): Taylor & Francis.
- Whitmarsh, L., O'Neill, S., & Lorenzoni, I. (2013). Public engagement with climate change: what do we know and where do we go from here? *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, 9(1), 7-25.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretation*. Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study Research Design and Methods* (Vol. 5). SAGE.
- Zerfaß, A. (2014). Unternehmenskommunikation und Kommunikationsmanagement: Strategie, Management und Controlling. *Handbuch Unternehmenskommunikation: Strategie-Management-Wertschöpfung*, 21-79.
- Zerfaß, A., & Dühring, L. (2016). Strategische Kommunikation–Zentrale Fragestellungen aus Sicht der Unternehmenskommunikation. *Handbuch Strategische Kommunikation: Grundlagen–Innovative Ansätze–Praktische Umsetzungen*, 49-74.
- Zerfaß, A., & Huck, S. (2007). Innovation, communication, and leadership: New developments in strategic communication. *International journal of strategic communication*, 1(2), 107-122.
- Zerfaß, A., Rademacher, L., & Wehmeier, S. (2013). *Organisationskommunikation und Public Relations*. Springer.