Streams, windows and policy entrepreneurship:

Analysing the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the EU's
Just Transition Fund

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Master's Thesis for the Environment and Society Studies programme
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November 2020

Radboud Universiteit

Preface

Writing and researching this Master's thesis has been a great and exciting journey, during which I have gained a better understanding of EU policymaking, climate policy and social justice. I was drawn to the concept of just transition after learning about climate justice in one of the Master degree courses, and how in many ways it is still underrepresented in climate politics. Combining climate action with social justice to ensure fair climate policies is absolutely needed in the transition to climate neutrality. However, when I started looking into the current EU climate policies, I realised that these synergies seemed to be lacking. Then, on the 14th of January 2020, the European Commission published its proposal for a Just Transition Fund to help the Member States' transition to climate neutrality and I knew this had to be the topic of my research. With the help from my great supervisor Dr. Duncan Liefferink, we narrowed the topic down to focus on the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the Just Transition Fund.

The main aim of this research is to better understand and explain how the Just Transition Fund rose onto the EU decision agenda and how this process influenced the policy formulation. After interviews with policymakers and experts, I noticed that I was in the middle of an exiting web of different actors and factors intertwining, overlapping and influencing the process. The messiness of it all felt overwhelming at times but mostly just exciting – real life policymaking is hardly ever simple and linear. I was lucky to secure an internship at MEP Mauri Pekkarinen's office at the European Parliament, which enabled me to be immersed into the day-to-day policymaking at the heart of the EU in Brussels. I hope that the findings of this research will help enhance the understanding of EU climate policymaking and the different ways through which the process can be influenced from inside and outside of the EU institutions.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Duncan Liefferink for his excellent feedback and great guidance, which helped me enormously during the different stages of this process. I also want to extend my warmest thanks to MEP Mauri Pekkarinen and his office, who taught me so much about EU policymaking and shared their knowledge about the Just Transition Fund with me. Lastly, I would like to thank my mum, my dad, my brother and my grandparents for continuously supporting me throughout this process. Kiitos!

Happy reading!

Taru Leppänen
27th of November 2020 - Lahti, Finland

Summary

In the past five years, climate change considerations have started to gain more focus and volume in EU politics. The European Green Deal presented by Ursula von der Leyen's Commission in December 2019 is historic in its level of climate ambition, especially with the objective that the EU should be climate neutral by 2050. However, an increase in climate action will also increase social inequality and so far, the social dimension of climate policy has received only limited considerations in the EU (EESC, 2017). The Just Transition Fund (JTF) proposal published by the Commission in January 2020 can be seen as the first comprehensive legislative initiative strongly incorporating social justice dimension to climate policy at the EU-level. This is a positive development that hopefully indicates more climate justice considerations in the future.

This research focuses on analysing the policy process of the JTF during the stages of agenda-setting and policy formulation. The aim of this study is to understand the impacts of different actors and factors on the process as well as the interactions between agenda-setting and policy formulation. The central question of this research is: *How did the factors and actors involved in the agenda-setting of the Just Transition Fund influence the policy formulation of the Commission's proposal?* The theoretical framework of this study is built on the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), which is widely used in agenda-setting research. The MSF is adapted to the EU's political context with the help of agenda-setting literature and EU integration theories. A qualitative single case study of the JTF is used to allow the researcher to gain comprehensive knowledge of the process. The data is collected by 15 semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observation. With process tracing, a chronological thick description of the process is reconstructed for in-depth analysis. This research hopes to contribute towards increasing the understanding of the roles different actors and factors play in the agenda-setting and policy formulation of climate policies in the EU.

This research finds that the policy entrepreneurship of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) party and the Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek in the European Parliament (EP) played a key role in pushing the idea of the JTF onto the EU decision agenda. By leveraging the EP's right to decide on the Commission president, the S&D was able to influence a more social justice framing of the JTF proposal. Due to this enabling political context, the S&D was able to exert a surprising degree of influence also on the policy formulation. MEP Buzek was more active during the earlier agenda-setting period. In the Council, Poland was actively promoting the need for a JTF and its refusal to agree on the climate neutrality pledge was seen partially as a strategy to press for its creation. MEP Buzek and Poland both seemed to focus on the energy transition side of the just transition, which was not as prominently present in the Commission's JTF proposal. On the other hand, the policy formulation of the JTF was also considerably influenced by adjacent institutional factors. The ongoing Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations required the JTF proposal to be published quickly in order to be included in the next long-term budget. This in turn pushed the file into DG REGIO in the Commission, which also influenced the policy design. The findings of this research suggest that a holistic framework taking into account both structure and agency enables a more comprehensive analysis of complex EU policymaking processes.

Table of Contents

List of tables and figures

List of tables and figures

List of acronyms

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
CAN	Climate Action Network
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CRIT	Coal Regions in Transition
DG	Directorate-General
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action
DG ENER	Directorate-General for Energy
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EGD	European Green Deal
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European People's Party
EPSC	European Political Strategy Centre
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
ETS	Emission Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
EUCO	European Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITRE	Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
JETF	Just Energy Transition Fund
JRC	Joint Research Centre
JTF	Just Transition Fund
JTM	Just Transition Mechanism
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OLP	Ordinary Legislative Procedure
PE	Policy entrepreneur
PET	Punctuated Equilibrium Theory
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
REGI	Committee on Regional Development
S&D	Socialists and Democrats
UNCCC	United Nations Climate Change Conference
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US	United States
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Introduction

´...we must continue to try to understand the policy process – however irrational or uncontrollable it may seem to be – as a crucial first step towards trying to secure effective policy making´ –Hill (2014, p. 6).

The declaration of a climate emergency by the European Parliament (EP) in November 2019 signals the collective urgency felt in the European Union (EU) about climate change. The EP hastens all EU actors to 'urgently take the concrete action needed in order to fight and contain this [climate change] threat before it is too late' (European Parliament, 2019). The European Commission is along the same lines with their publication of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019, which states that an increase in climate action is needed to ensure that Europe will be on its way to climate neutrality by 2050 (European Commission, 2019). The EU has developed environmental policies since the 1970s and has started to truly focus on climate issues in the past two decades. However, concerns have been raised that the EU climate policies do not address the issue of climate justice enough (EESC, 2017). Climate change often impacts citizens differently and usually disproportionately burdens those, who are less responsible for the situation (von Lucke, 2019; Schlosberg and Collins, 2014). Therefore, climate policymaking should not forget the aspect of social justice when creating legislation. The Paris Agreement in 2015 emphasised the need for just transition when transitioning into climate neutrality, meaning that no one should be left behind in the process (UNFCCC, 2015).

On the 14th of January 2020, the European Commission published its proposal for the establishment of a Just Transition Fund (JTF) (COM(2020)22). This can be seen as the first comprehensive legislative proposal addressing climate justice in Europe. This raises questions about the timing and developments of the policy process. Why did the JTF come out now? How was it elevated to the EU decision agenda? Who influenced the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the proposal? Were there institutional factors in place, which helped its creation? Understanding agenda-setting is crucial to any policy process, because agenda-setting determines the issues that will receive consideration from decision-makers (Princen, 2007). If an issue is not elevated to the agenda, there will be no policy on it. Kingdon's (1984) Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) is utilised in this study to analyse the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF. The MSF is chosen, since it is actor-based, situational and aims to also consider contextual factors. The framework is especially useful in multi-level, ambiguous and complex policy processes, since it sees policymaking to be dynamic rather than linear (Ackrill, Kay and Zahariadis, 2013). Due to its dynamism and flexibility, it has been used by multiple scholars in EU agenda-setting analysis (see Zahariadis, 2008; Ackrill et al., 2013; Herweg, 2016). Some element of the MSF will need to be adapted to better reflect the EU policy context.

1.1. Research aim and research questions

This study aims to understand and explain the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF by analysing the factors and actors involved. This includes researching individual actors, groups inside and outside of the EU as well as EU institutions and Member States. Institutional aspects as well as national and international events are also considered. The research has descriptive and explanatory elements. In order to understand the policy process, it must first be chronologically reconstructed and then analysed to discover patterns and possible causality. The MSF is utilised as the theoretical lens for this study. The core elements of MSF include three independent streams (problem, political and policy) as well as policy windows and policy

entrepreneurship. When indicators or events create recognition for an issue in the problem or political stream, it opens a policy window for policy change. Skillful actors with policy entrepreneurship will use this moment to couple the three streams and push their preferred solutions to the agenda (Kingdon, 2014; Ackrill, Kay and Zahariadis, 2013).

The main research question of the study is: *How did the factors and actors involved in the agenda-setting of the Just Transition Fund influence the policy formulation of the Commission's proposal?*

This study analyses the temporal order of the agenda-setting process and its influences on the policy formulation focusing on two key concepts: policy entrepreneurship (agency) and policy windows (context). To make answering the main research question easier and to help structure the research in general, the creation of subquestions is recommended (van Thiel, 2014). The subquestions of this research are:

- What policy choices were made considering the Just Transition Fund proposal?
- How did the Just Transition Fund rise onto the EU decision agenda?
- How did policy entrepreneurship influence the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the Just Transition Fund?
- Did the nature of the policy window(s) affect the agenda-setting and policy formulation?

These subquestions also aid the operationalisation of the research, especially when designing the interview guide and variables for coding. The case of JTF is chosen, since there is no prior EU regulation on just transition and the issue emerged to the agenda relatively rapidly. The timeframe of this study starts from the year 2015 and ends to the publication of the Commission's JTF proposal in January 2020. This timeframe was chosen, because just transition gained attention in international and EU policy communities from 2015 onwards. Evaluation of the decision-making process, implementation or monitoring of the policy is out of the scope of this research, since at the time of writing, the file is in the middle of the legislative process and has yet to be approved and adopted.

1.2 Scientific and societal relevance

1.2.1 Scientific relevance
This research is scientifically relevant, since it contributes to the EU policy studies, especially agenda-setting literature. Many experienced agenda-setting scholars have called for more empirical studies testing theories and discovering possible patterns and conditions under which agenda and policy change does or does not occur (see for example Ackrill et al., 2013; Princen, 2013b). Especially research focusing on the interlinkages between agenda-setting and policy formulation is still underdeveloped in the EU literature. This research aims to contribute to filling this research gap. Analysing how issues emerge as public policy problems and how the agenda-setting process affects policy formulation increases the understanding of the whole policy process. Furthermore, many studies using the MSF to explain agenda-setting focus on analysing only the policy entrepreneurship (especially the Commission's) rather than utilising the whole framework (see for example Edler and James, 2015; Schön-Quinlivan and Scipioni, 2017; Jones et al., 2016). The amount of MSF literature in the EU context taking into account both agency and institutional context in the analysis is still quite limited, even though some scholars are furthering this line of research (see Herweg, 2016; Bache, 2013; Copeland and

James, 2014). This research aims to contribute to this theoretical literature by adapting the framework to the EU context and incorporating more institutional factors into the analysis.

Most of the current literature on just transition in the context of climate change focus on the theoretical and definitional issues of just transition, rather than the policy process itself. Just transition is also mainly researched at the national level, for instance in the United States (US), Australia and Germany (see Snell, 2018; Mayer, 2018; McCauley and Heffron, 2018; Weller, 2019). This research contributes to the novel strand of EU just transition literature, which will no doubt increase rapidly now that the Commission has published its JTF proposal and raised just transition as one of its priorities going forward. Currently, many policy papers exist evaluating its content and proposing changes (see for example Galgóczi, 2019; Treadwell and Lübbeke, 2019) but academic literature about just transition in the EU is still scarce. Thus, the subject's novelty makes it relevant and an interesting topic for research.

1.2.2 Societal relevance

Climate change is arguably the greatest and most serious challenge of our generation. There is an urgent need to accelerate the overall systemic transformation to climate neutrality all over the world. However, the transition is not only a technical exercise but inherently includes a social justice dimension. This study is relevant at the societal level, since it addresses the topic of just transition, which is an important but somewhat overlooked concept in the EU's climate policy. However, transforming the energy production and greenhouse gas intensive industries is highly important, since according to Eurostat (2017) energy industries and industrial processes still account for almost 40% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. A transition away from fossil fuels will inevitably affect some more negatively than others. Ensuring a just transition for workers, communities and regions is an important step to truly accelerate this vital transition and is therefore a very relevant topic for research. As the political guidelines of the new Commission indicate, climate action will be on top of the EU agenda for decades to come and warrants extensive research (von der Leyen, 2019). This research aims to understand the dynamics and interactions at play, analyse the strategies employed by different actors as well as uncover possible biases of the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF. This might help to better understand the agenda-setting processes of other climate issues as well. Furthermore, the findings of this research could increase awareness on how actors can utilise the policy process to their advantage and use their skills to elevate climate issues to the agenda rapidly and influence policy formulation in the EU.

1.3 Reading guide

The introductory chapter introduced the topic of this study and presented the problem statement as well as research aims and questions. Scientific and societal relevance were also discussed. Chapter 2 introduces and defines the core concepts of this research and offers an extensive overview of the relevant theoretical literature. Different theories of public policy and agenda-setting are critically introduced, and justifications are given for the chosen approach. Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework of this study based heavily on the MSF and adapted to the EU context. Chapter 4 is concerned with the methodological aspects of this research. The chapter outlines the research paradigm, research strategy and the operationalisation of the study. Chosen research methods as well as the reliability, validity and ethical considerations for this qualitative research are also covered in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the results and analyses the findings of the research, reconstructing a chronological description of the process. The concluding chapter first reiterates the results, then interprets the research findings and discusses their possible implications for broader scholarship. The chapter also considers the limitations of this study and gives recommendations for further research.

2. Background and literature review

Chapter introduction
This chapter gives general background context to the research topic, reviews relevant literature and critically introduces theoretical approaches to agenda-setting. First, the concept of just transition is defined and its place in the EU academic literature investigated. Second, the current EU policymaking dynamics and EU integration theories are discussed. Third, the chapter introduces and compares some of the main theoretical approaches to public policy from economics and political science to illustrate where the conceptual framework sits in relation to these broader theories. Fourth, it critically compares and contrasts three different agenda-setting theories and justifies the utilisation of the MSF in this research. Finally, the dynamics of EU policy formulation are introduced and relevant literature on EU agenda-setting and climate policy presented.

2.1 Just transition

2.1.1 Just transition and climate justice
For a long time, climate change discourse was mainly focused on executing mitigation and adaptation in the most effective way. Geographical differences might have been taken into account (burden-sharing) but social justice – especially distributional aspects at the community and individual level – did not receive much attention (Gardiner, 2011). Recently, this has started to change as more attention is paid to the concept of climate justice. The Mary Robinson Foundation defines climate justice as linking 'human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly.' (Mary Robinson Foundation, n.d.). The concept of climate justice derives from and is closely associated with the broader environmental justice movement.

In general, just transition means taking into account the social cost and social justice when transitioning to green, low-carbon society (Mayer, 2018; Heffron and McCauley, 2018). The term has its origins in the 1970s United States (US), where stricter environmental policies pushed trade unions to battle the 'jobs vs environment' dichotomy. In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept gained global visibility and lately it has been closely linked to the climate justice discourse (Stevis and Felli, 2015). The European Commission (2019) sees just transition as 'leaving no one behind' when it comes to the transition to climate neutrality. Interestingly, Newell and Mulvaney (2013) point out the difficulties faced by policymakers when they try to effectively fight climate change and ensure a just transition without too much trade off. For instance, coal plants need to be shut down in order to achieve low-carbon transition and emission reductions, but this might increase social inequality and energy poverty among the citizens. As Snell (2018) remarks, some advocates of just transition emphasise the social justice side whereas others underscore the more ecological aspects.

2.1.2 Just transition and EU policy
The past few decades have seen a steady rise of climate issues onto the EU agenda. The EGD and the political guidelines of the new Commission reiterate that climate policy is seen as a top priority in EU policymaking. However, most of the EU's climate mitigation policy has focused on curbing greenhouse gas emission with less regard to social justice (Schiellerup, et al., 2009). Climate justice advocates underline that social dimensions must be considered, since any climate actions will inevitably be inequal and impact some more than others (EESC, 2017;

Friends of the Earth Europe, n.d.). However, many previous climate policies use a lot of technical language of 'clean energy transition' and 'competitive climate neutral economy' and only some social justice rhetoric. Terms like 'socially just' or 'fair' transition, start to appear in EU legislative documents first after 2010 and mainly in passing. In the past few years, social dimensions and the narrative of climate justice seem to be more prominently present in EU climate and energy policy documents. Terms such as 'energy poverty', 'fair transition' and 'socially just transition' are appearing more often. Even though no comprehensive conclusions can be drawn from this, it could be argued that the past five years have seen a certain shift toward more climate justice considerations in EU policy. The JTF is a concrete example of this, combining climate policy with social justice, since its objective is to assist regions negatively impacted by the transition to climate neutrality. However, the amount of academic literature focusing on just transition in the EU is relatively scarce. Hiteva (2013) investigates energy poverty and vulnerability in the context of the EU's low-carbon transition, which touches on just transition issues. Pianta and Lucchese (2020) analyse the EGD and its aim to achieve a just transition, mainly focusing on workers. They argue that the EGD is not ambitious enough considering the scale of the transformation and more green industrial policies are needed. Evidently there is room for further research on this novel and exciting topic at the EU-level.

2.2 EU policymaking

2.2.1 Aspects of EU policymaking

The EU is a supranational organisation consisting of 27 Member States, which have agreed to transfer some of their sovereignty to the EU institutions. The EU can create regulations and directives that the Member States need to follow and transpose to their national legislations. However, it has only limited enforcement capabilities to ensure that the Member States follow legislative decisions and is therefore seen largely as a consensus-seeking organisation (Jordan and Adelle, 2013). Furthermore, the EU functions under the subsidiary principle, which means that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level. In other words, action is taken at the EU-level only if it is deemed to be more effective than at national, regional or local levels.

The four EU institutions involved in policymaking are: the European Commission (the Commission), the Council of the European Union (the Council), the European Parliament (EP) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Commission has the sole right to initiate legislation and submit proposals. It is therefore the formal agenda-setter of the EU (Princen, 2007). The EP and the Council are co-legislators of the decision-making process and hold veto power. They also have the formal right to request the Commission to investigate and create proposals on certain issues. Therefore, the EP and the Council have a limited formal channel to initiate legislative proposals (Corbett, Jacobs and Neville, 2016). Legislation is approved after both the Council and the EP accept it. The negotiations are usually rather labourous and time-consuming. Therefore, early agreements based on trilogue negotiations between the Commission, the EP and the Council have been increasing in recent years. Trilogues are informal meetings between the three institutions to reach early agreements on legislative proposals. The trilogues are a relatively new element in EU policymaking and aim to increase its effectiveness (Naurin, 2015). Rulings from the ECJ will force other EU institutions to react and can therefore also influence agenda-setting but somewhat more indirectly. Interest groups and lobbyists can also influence EU agenda-setting but do it usually through more informal channels (Sherrington, 2000).

The multi-level nature of EU policymaking is often highlighted as a unique and complex environment. Even though policies are made at the EU-level, considerable influence still

resides within Member States. In addition, international events also influence EU policymaking, creating a fragmented, multi-scale policymaking arena, with several institutions, policy communities and other players involved (Zahariadis, 2008). This kind of policy environment allows many access points for issues and actors to enter the agenda-setting process (Peters, 1994). The existence of multiple venues allows actors to seek receptiveness to their ideas from different institutions and committees. This also creates ambiguity in the institutional structures, since overlapping competences might result in an issue being worked at in different EU committees at the same time (Princen, 2013a). Furthermore, since the EU follows the subsidiarity principle, the actors involved in EU agenda-setting must also justify why the issue must be considered at the EU level rather than be dealt with at the national level.

2.2.2 EU integration theories

Well into the 1980s, the study of EU politics was focused on understanding how cooperation between nation states had developed into such a system (Princen, 2016). In other words, how to explain EU integration. The first two approaches that emerged to explain EU integration were neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism. Neofunctionalism argues that EU integration deepens through a spillover effect (Haas, 1958). When states cooperate in one policy area, they soon notice that it is beneficial to extend the cooperation into other areas as well. The integration process is further accelerated due to the transfer of allegiances from national political elites to the EU-level (Princen, 2016). On the contrary, intergovernmentalists state that the Member States make conscious decisions about expanding cooperation based on their national interests (Moravcsik 1993). Mainly the Member States, rather than the EU institutions, have direct influence over policy outcomes in the EU and their preferences are shaped by national conditions. The more economically dominant national actors will have more bargaining power also at the EU-level (Boasson and Wettestad, 2016).

In addition to the more traditional approaches to explain EU integration, a supranational approach has emerged, focusing on the multi-level governance structure of the EU. Supranationalism portrays the EU institutions as having considerable autonomy from national governments and the ability to utilise the Member States' gaps in control over day-to-day EU integration and policymaking (Marks, Hooghe and Blank 1996). Hence, the relative power of the EU institutions in EU policymaking is substantially higher than what intergovernmentalism suggests. EU institutions, Member States, regional authorities as well as interest groups are all involved in the EU governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). The supranationalist approach has been occupying the mainstream understanding of EU integration in recent times. However, some scholars argue that after the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the EU has seen a large-scale broadening of its competences without an increase in supranationalism. 'New intergovernmentalism' suggests that the old intergovernmentalist-supranationalist dichotomy fails to explain the recent developments in the EU, since both define integration in terms of transferring competences to supranational institutions. However, integration currently happens in more intergovernmental terms through deliberation and consensus between the Member States rather than increasing the powers of the Community institutions (Bickerton, Hodson and Puetter, 2015). Hence, the current deepening of integration is led mainly by coordination between the Member States and different semi-autonomous EU agencies.

This brief overview illustrates that explaining integration was the main focus of EU studies for a long time and still continues to be an important part of the scholarship. There is a clear absence of day-to-day politics and agenda-setting from the early research topics. Agenda-setting research emerged late to the policy studies scholarship in general (around the 1960s), but agenda-setting studies focusing on the EU were first published in the early 1990s. The first

comprehensive study on agenda-setting was done by Peters in 1994. Next, Pollack (1997) focused on the conditions under which the Member States were willing to delegate agenda-setting authority to the Commission. The increase in agenda-setting literature in the 1990s corresponds with the 'governance turn' in EU studies, during which scholars started to research the governance and decision-making processes of the EU as well, rather than just integration (Rosamond, 2000, p. 110; Princen, 2016). The agenda-setting literature has been increasing steadily ever since, albeit still being limited in comparison to other aspect of the policy process.

2.3 Agenda-setting

2.3.1 Definitions and assumptions

Agenda-setting literature belongs to the broader scholarship of policy studies, which focuses on analysing the making of public policy. Considered a multidisciplinary approach, it draws on different schools of thought, including political science, economics and sociology (House and Araral, 2012). Policy process research in turn can be seen as the 'study of the interactions over time between public policy and its surrounding actors, events, and context, as well as the policy or policies' outcomes' (Weible, 2014, p. 4). This research is a part the policy process research, aiming to shed light on the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF. The word agenda is the plural form of the Latin word *agendum*, meaning 'a thing to be done'. Zahariadis (2016) defines agenda as 'a contextual list of actionable government priorities' (p. 5). Kingdon (2014) distinguishes between a governmental agenda and a decision agenda. Governmental agenda is a broader, more general list of subjects to which people in and out of government are paying attention to at a given time. Decision agenda consists of a smaller set of items within the governmental agenda to which decision-makers are focusing on. Others differentiate between a political agenda, a public agenda and a media agenda, which all affect one another (Princen, 2013a). This research uses Kingdon's categorisation, focusing on the decision agenda.

Agenda-setting literature starts with the assumption that attention in public policymaking is scarce and therefore individuals as well as institutions are forced to establish priorities (Zahariadis, 2016). Increasing the attention paid to an issue is a vital aspect of the agenda-setting process, since 'mobilization of interest is what agenda-setting is all about' (Princen, 2011, p. 929). Agenda-setting is thus a highly political process – issues do not gain attention and rise onto the agenda by themselves. Advocates of a certain solution spend considerable time defining the issue in a way that increases its chances of being elevated to the decision agenda. This reveals the inherent asymmetry and bias of the agenda-setting process. The one controlling the issues that are considered for the agenda has considerable power in the policymaking process, since issue will be given legislative attention only after they are on the decision agenda. Therefore, the concept of power is another core element of agenda-setting. Research on political agendas first emerged in the United States in the 1960s. At this point, the pluralist view of power in decision-making was dominant, which believes that all actors with a legitimate problem can gain access to the policy process and be heard (Dahl, 1961). Schattschneider (1960) disagrees, stating that decision-making is unequal and not all issues have the same chance of being considered and elevated to the agenda. He describes a 'mobilization of bias', where some issues in the policy process are in and other are out. Bachrach and Baratz (1963) agree, pointing out that power can be used covertly to make 'nondecisions', ensuring that certain issues stay out of the agenda. The concepts of issue definition and problem framing also closely link with power, since the way the problem is framed also affects its chances of rising to the agenda at a given time (Kingdon, 2014).

2.3.2 Traditional agenda-setting theories

Scholars have established many theories to understand the dynamics of the policymaking process. The rational decision-making model based on economics views decision-makers as rational individuals, who posses all relevant information and aim to maximise their self-interest (Whitford, 2012). This approach functions well with Lasswell's (1956) policy cycle, in which policy process follows clear cyclical stages: problem definition, agenda-setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. Policymaking is seen as linear: problems are defined after which solutions are searched. Institutional factors and context in which policy is made receive little attention. The rational choice theory has been widely used to explain policymaking especially in the beginning of the discipline but has also received a considerable amount of criticism (see Lindblom, 1959; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, Kingdon, 2014). Policymaking is often complex, messy and non-linear. No decision-maker can be completely rational, since they are influenced by underlying values and cannot possibly receive and process all necessary information to make a solely rational decision (Kingdon, 2014). Even though the rational model focuses on individual decision-makers and is therefore actor-based, it also gives the actors little agency in decision-making, since the decision chosen should be the one, which ensures the maximisation of self-interest.

Incrementalism emerged as an alternative to rational choice theory. Charles Lindblom (1959) states that it is impossible for decision-makers to know and consider all alternatives to a problem, since human comprehension is limited and decision-makers' time for consideration is restricted. Hence, they have what Simon (1957) labelled as 'bounded rationality' (p. 198). Incrementalism sees policymaking as the process of 'muddling through', meaning that democracies change their policies mainly through incremental adjustment rather than in 'leaps and bounds' (Lindblom, 1959, p. 84). Thus, incrementalism is less equipped to explain sudden changes in policy and consequently might not be able to explain swift agenda changes particularly well (Kingdon, 2014).

Institutionalism focuses on institutions and their role in determining political behaviour. Institutions influence the structures of political processes, discourses and even actors' preferences, setting the 'rules of the game'. Institutions are not seen as static but rather evolving. They develop their own interests and try to expand their power (Chari and Kritzinger, 2006). Institutionalism is therefore largely a structural approach. New institutionalism takes a bit more nuanced view, focusing not only on institutions but also on how actors pursue their interests and make decisions within institutional constraints (Ingram and Silverman, 2002) Historical, sociological and rational institutionalism are well-known strands within this approach. The first one argues that history, sequences and path dependency affect institutions and thus shape political behaviour and change. (Hill, 2014). Sociological institutionalism focuses more on the cultural context of the institutions stating that developments and outcomes of political processes are predictable to a certain extent, since they are placed in a certain cultural context even before they are created (Chari and Kritzinger, 2006). Rational institutionalism sees actors in policy processes as rational, instrumental and trying to maximise their utility. However, they encounter restrictions by the rule-based constrains created by the institutional environment, which influence their behaviour (Chari and Kritzinger, 2006). Rational institutionalism seems to answer some of the critiques given to rational choice theory by incorporating the institutional environment to the approach, thus giving it more nuance. Institutionalism in general has been quite influential in policy studies, since the differences between political systems and histories often impact the policy decisions made and should therefore be included in the analysis.

Different socioeconomic approaches all share the basic notion that structures are the main explanatory factor in social, political and economic situations. Marxist theorists argue that the capitalist economic system forces certain choices, leaving actors with limited agency (Hill, 2014). Globalism sees the global economic structure as a significant factor in socio-economic organisation (Held and McGrew, 2007). These approaches are rigid in their structural focus and therefore of little help when trying to analyse agenda-setting and policy formulation, which are by default agency-focused and actor-based processes. Both of these approaches are widely used in more system-level scholarship, such as International Relations.

As described, many schools of thought have created theories to explain and understand politics and policymaking. The rational choice approaches view of decision-makers as utility maximisers is simplistic and largely disregards institutions, context and non-rational elements of decision-makers. Structural approaches are limited in their capacity to explain (especially rapid) policy change. Furthermore, the limited or non-existent role given to agency inevitably leaves certain factors outside of the analysis. Therefore, they can only offer a partial explanation on what is going on (Baumgartner et al., 2009). New institutionalist approaches are more nuanced and 'seek to grapple with *both* macro-level social structures and individual agency' (House and Araral, 2012, p. 115, emphasis original). They are widely used to analyse policy processes, but they are generally better equipped to explain stability rather than change, since their emphasis on structural elements is still dominant (Hill, 2014). The agency included is quite rational and does not really take into account more non-rational and constructivist notions of agency, such as ideas, knowledge, framing, values and the creation of meaning. Consequently, starting from the 1980s, more dynamic approaches emerged to explain agenda-setting, focusing on agency as well as ideas and knowledge.

2.3.3 Multidimensional approaches to agenda-setting

More synthetic approaches to explain agenda-setting have emerged, combining multiple explanatory variables. Three influential multidimensional approaches will be introduced: Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) and Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). These approaches draw on Simon's (1957) concept of bounded rationality, meaning that no human is completely rational, and all decision-making is limited by the restrictions on one's cognitive ability, available information and time. This section gives a critical overview of the three approaches and justifies the selection of the MSF as the theoretical lens for this research.

Multiple Streams Framework

Kingdon (1984) created MSF to explain agenda-setting in the United States at the federal level. Taking bounded rationality as a starting point, the MSF emphasises the power of ideas, ambiguity and temporal order in policymaking. It does not completely disregard rationality but sees it as one aspect of policymaking rather than the central element (Zahariadis, 2008). The MSF is inspired by Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972) garbage can model, in which choice opportunity in organised anarchies is described as 'a garbage can into which various kind of problems and policies are dumped' by the actors involved (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 2). A decision is an outcome of the interactions between relatively independent streams within the organisation. The MSF builds on this idea of streams, defining three relatively autonomous ones (problem, policy and political) in the agenda-setting process. The streams come together in critical junctures when a policy window opens either in problem or political stream and skillful policy entrepreneurs seize the opportunity to couple the three streams together to initiate policy change. In contrast to structuralism and institutionalism, MSF places strong importance on agency in the policy process, as indicated by the strong emphasis of the actions

of policy entrepreneurs in coupling the streams. The agency-focus and adaptability of the MSF makes it a great tool for empirical analysis.

The MSF has also received certain amount of criticism. Sabatier (2007) argues that the fluid structure and operationalisation of the approach as well as the lack of explicit hypotheses make falsification difficult. Ambiguous and figurative language have also been pointed out as making analysis more difficult (Herweg, 2016). Furthermore, the MSF is a very actor-based approach. This focus on actors means that a relatively limited consideration is given to the institutional factors involved, mainly in the form of policy windows. Mucciaroni (1992) critiques the MSF for this lack of institutional focus and suggests that the framework's situational analysis should be enriched by the inclusion of structural elements to explore 'how the organizational structures and decision-making processes of institutions shape, constrain, and facilitate problems and solutions in reaching the agenda' (p. 482). Furthermore, the MSF has been used to explain agenda-setting in many different political systems, due to the perceived universality of its concepts. However, many scholars underline the importance of adapting the framework before taking it out of the US context. (Zahariadis, 2008; Ackrill et al., 2013; Herweg, Huß and Zohlnhöfer, 2015). Without proper adaptation the MSF loses some of its explanatory power.

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) starts out from the observation that policymaking is often characterised by long periods of stability punctured by brief episodes of radical change. The allocation of attention in an agenda-setting process is at the core of this approach. Decision-makers cannot consider all issues at all times due to bounded rationality. This limited attention of policymakers often enforces existing policies, since new information goes mainly unnoticed. However, when a new issue occupies the attention of policymakers, a wholesale shift in perspectives and existing policies may ensue. Discussions of policy issues are usually disaggregated into smaller policy subsystems. When a policy subsystem focuses on a single issue, it emphasises certain elements of it. This is called a 'policy image' (Green-Pedersen and Princen, 2016). As long as the dominant policy image is not contested with another framing of the issue, policy stability continues. Due to the structure of policy monopolies and policy images, actors seeking to change a policy might frame the problem differently and seek a more receptive audience in another policy subsystem. This is called 'venue-shopping' (Princen, 2013b). Rapid change can happen in policy venues less committed to the existing policy, if an issue receives enough attention.

PET is a versatile policymaking theory, since it incorporates both the elements of stability and change into one framework. It is especially useful in explaining rapid policy change in policy sectors that have experienced long periods of stability. The PET has received similar critiques about limits to universality and lack of institutional factors as the MSF. Both approaches are similar in aiming to explain how certain environments operate and produce specific kinds of policy change and stability as well as how actors shape those environments (Cairney and Jones, 2016). In many cases, the MSF and the PET can operate side by side offering different ways to interpret events. Elements of them can also be combined for analysis (Cairney and Jones, 2016). For example, the concepts of framing and venue-shopping from the PET have been utilised in explaining agenda-setting in the EU context (see Princen, 2010; 2013b).

Advocacy Coalition Framework

Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) emphasises policy subsystems, the importance of shared beliefs and technical information as well as the concept of policy learning (Sabatier, 1988). Different subsystems compete in the policy process by defending and promoting their

ideas and beliefs about problems and solutions. The particularity of the ACF is its view that decision-makers, bureaucrats, researchers and journalists can all be in the same advocacy coalition, sharing beliefs and furthering collective issues. The framework is useful in explaining the whole policy process but can be also utilised to research agenda-setting. An advocacy coalition will resist policy change that challenges the deep core beliefs of the subsystem Therefore, either an external shock is needed to create policy change or new knowledge must emerge within the coalition. In the EU context, for example Nedergaard (2008) uses this lens to explain the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy of 2003.

ACF has been criticised for neglecting the institutional constrains and individual behaviour from the approach. Since the unit of analysis is coalitions and the policy process is mainly analysed at the meso-level of policy subsystems, the influences of individual actors cannot be properly analysed. Furthermore, John (2013) argues that ACF lacks nuance in explain the policy process, since it depends heavily on an internal or external shock for policy change. If these shocks do not happen, does a policy stay stable indefinitely? The ACF is an interesting approach but does not fit this research, since its unit of analysis is relatively restricted.

All three of the approaches described above can be used in explaining agenda-setting and policy change. Including concepts such as beliefs, ideas and framing into the mix bring also more constructivist aspects to agenda-setting analysis (Zahariadis, 2008). For this research, the MSF is chosen, since it enables the analysis of agency at the individual as well as meso-level (groups and networks). The focus on individual level is absent from the ACF. Due to its universal nature, the MSF also offers more theoretical flexibility and adaptability to different contexts than PET and ACF. Furthermore, the MSF can accommodate a level of ambiguity, fluidity, issue complexity and overlapping competences, which are often present in EU politics (Ackrill et al. 2013; Princen, 2007). The concept of policy window includes institutional aspects and allows the MSF to incorporate some notion of context into the framework even if it is still quite limited. The PET can explain agenda-setting well but also lacks institutional dimension. However, the PET concepts of framing and venue-shopping have been used in EU policy studies and are added to the framework of this research to enhance the analysis of the strategies employed by policy entrepreneurs.

2.4 Policy formulation
Policy formulation is generally seen as the stage in the policy process between agenda-setting and decision-making. Agenda-setting and policy formulation are closely interconnected and 'there is often a very strong and complex interaction' between the two (Hill, 2014, p. 162). Due to this close interaction of these two stages, the MSF can be extended to analyse the policy formulation stage with less adaptation than when analysing later stages of policymaking. However, there are different views in the literature on what the policy formulation stage includes. Hill (2014) defines everything between agenda-setting and implementation as policy formulation. The classic Lasswellian policy cycle places policy formulation after agenda-setting and before decision-making. In the EU literature, the policymaking stage of the policy process is divided into two separate sections: policy formulation and decision-making (Adelle, Jordan and Turnpenny, 2013). In the policy formulation phase, the policy options are identified and shaped in the Commission. Since the Commission exclusively holds the formal right of policy initiation, it is a central player when it comes to both agenda-setting and policy formulation (Adelle et al., 2013). However, this does not mean that other actors cannot aim to influence the policy formulation process. The Council and the EP can both aim to frame the problem in a certain way to influence the Commissions policy choices. Furthermore, Member States can present their own initiatives to the Commission. In certain policy areas, the

Commission might be reacting to Member States' initiatives rather than creating their own. Interest groups and associations are also involved in the process, offering their views and expertise on different issues (Knill and Liefferink, 2007). The concept of framing will be discussed further in the next chapter.

After the Commission has published its policy proposal, the decision-making phase starts, during which the proposal is passed onto to the Council and the EP. At this stage, the Commission's power to influence the process is considerably smaller. The Council is still seen as the most important actor in the EU legislative process and has a lot of influence over the final version of the legislation (Knill and Liefferink, 2007). However, it should be noted that the EP has increased its relative power throughout the years. These institutions are co-legislators and both must accept a proposal before it be adopted, apart from a few sensitive issues, which the Council decides (Rittberger and Winzen, 2015). EU dynamics differ from many national legislative processes, where the institution initiating legislation is also closely involved in the decision-making phase. This research understands policy formulation in the EU terms, encompassing the identification and shaping of policy options by the Commission and culminating in the publication of a policy proposal. This research will exclusively focus on this 'Commission phase' and does not extend to the decision-making stage. This supports the aim of this research to understand the dynamics of the actors and factors during agenda-setting and their influences on policy formulation.

2.5 EU climate policy and agenda-setting literature

Climate policy agenda-setting has received some interest in the EU academic literature. Keskitalo, Westerhoff and Juhola (2012) use the MSF to analyse climate adaptation on four EU member states. Even though they conclude that the multi-level approach used in the MSF is useful for their analysis, their study compares agenda-setting processes in different member states rather than at the EU-level. Thaler (2016) researches agenda coordination between the Commission and the Council in energy policy, which also includes an environmental agenda. The focus is more on the rise of intergovernmentalism and agenda-coordination rather than dynamics of agenda-setting. Research on climate policy in the EU outside of agenda-setting has focused on different elements. A comprehensive insight into the development of EU climate policy and its increasing importance has been done by Boasson and Wettestad (2016). Other research has investigated the coordination and integration of climate and energy policy (see Wettestad, Eikeland and Nilsson 2012; Szulecki et al., 2016), climate diplomacy and climate policy leadership in the EU (Oberthür and Roche Kelly, 2008) as well as economic impacts of climate policy (Böhringer et al., 2009). Hitherto only a limited amount of research has focused solely on climate policy agenda-setting and policy formulation.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the core themes of this research and defined the central concepts used. The origins of just transition and the relevant research in the EU context were introduced. The key aspects of EU policymaking and integration theories were introduced in order to show the place of this research in the wider context of EU policy studies and political science literature. The second part of the chapter focused on outlining the theoretical underpinnings of agenda-setting studies and justifying the choice of the MSF as the theoretical lens for this research. The next chapter will explain the MSF in detail and create the conceptual framework of this research.

3. Conceptual framework

Chapter introduction
The agenda-setting process is inherently complex, but some agenda-setting theories have a tendency to address a set of relatively narrow theoretical principles. This is understandable for clarity but often creates incomplete and sometimes conflicting explanations of policy change (Kamieniecki, 2000). Therefore, a framework that aims to conceptualise multiple causal processes of policymaking is useful (Cairney, 2013; John, 2012). The conceptual framework of this research is based on the MSF. Consequently, the research assumes bounded rationality, stresses temporal order, ambiguity and the power of ideas in policymaking. Taking note of the limitations created by a narrow set of theoretical principles, the concepts of venue-shopping and framing are added from the PET, which have already been used in EU agenda-setting analysis (Princen, 2011; 2013b; Zahariadis, 2008). However, this actor-based framework must be balanced with a similarly substantive analysis of the institutional factors to ensure a more holistic analysis. As the sociologist Anthony Giddens articulates '[a]ll human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is also conditioned and constrained by the very world of their creation' (Giddens, 1981, p. 54). Thus, incorporating constructive and institutional elements to the analysis of the agenda-setting and policy formulation is important. To achieve this, a rigorous adaptation of the MSF to the EU context is needed. It is especially important to adapt the political stream to the EU political environment and identify the characteristics of different kinds of policy windows present. This chapter introduces the MSF in detail and describes the adaptations of the core concepts to the EU context. Then, the conceptual framework of this research is presented and its dynamics explained.

3.1 Multiple Streams Framework in the EU context
The MSF defines three distinguishable streams that interact in the policy process: the problem stream, the political stream and the policy stream. The three streams function rather autonomously from one another. In critical times, when a policy window opens, coupling of the streams by policy entrepreneurs will create an opportunity for agenda change. However, in order for the coupling to be possible when a policy window opens, each stream must meet certain conditions to make it 'ripe' for coupling. If these conditions are not met, a policy window might open but agenda change does not happen (Herweg, 2016, Kingdon, 2014) There are therefore two sets of causal mechanisms in the MSF that explain agenda change: the opening of a policy window and the coupling of the streams by policy entrepreneurs. This research uses the broader term of policy entrepreneurship alongside the term policy entrepreneur to enable other than individual actors to be included. The term policy entrepreneurship is also actionable. This will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

The need to adapt the MSF before using it to analyse different political systems has been extensively discussed in the agenda-setting scholarship (see Herweg, 2016; Cairney and Jones, 2016; Zahariadis, 2008). Kingdon derived the original theoretical framework inductively when analysing the policy process of a specific unit of analysis (US federal level) in specific sectors (health and transport). Even though the elements of the MSF are seen as universally applicable, questions have been raised about whether or not the MSF can explain agenda-setting in other contexts without being adequately adapted (Herweg, 2016; Ackrill et al., 2013). The EU is a supranational entity with multi-level governance structure, different time cycles, fluid participation and multiple policy venues. Institutional ambiguity also exists, which means that an issue might be worked on in different institutions or committees simultaneously. This is a

result of multiple factors including sometimes relatively weak hierarchy in the Commission, different agendas across the EU institutions and overlapping competences (Ackrill et al., 2013). Member State also seek to further the national agendas at the EU-level. Hence, the political and institutional context of the EU differs greatly from the political structures of the US. It is therefore important to adapt the MSF to the EU political context. This research will mainly follow the adaptation of Herweg (2016) and Zahariadis (2008) but will also include notions of policy window spillovers from Ackrill and Kay (2011).

3.1.1 Problem stream

The problem stream consists of the various conditions the government, decision-makers and citizens want addressed. Issues are discovered in the problem stream through different indicators, focusing events and feedback (Kingdon, 2014). Decision-makers will pay attention to some issues more than others and some conditions will be recognised as problems and defined as such. 'Problems are not simply the conditions or external events themselves: there is also a perceptual, interpretive element' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 109-10). Therefore, problem recognition and framing by actors involved in the process play a great role in agenda-setting. Problems can also fade from agenda prominence either because decision-makers lack the political will to act or they feel that they have already addressed the issue.

Indicators
Kingdon (2014) notes that many indicators continuously exist in the political world. Governmental and non-governmental agencies alike monitor various events and activities. Changes in some indicators, such as highway deaths or infant mortality, give information about a problem. Furthermore, studies conducted about a specific problem can also uncover new useful information. For example, new information about air pollution could indicate to the decision-makers that the condition is becoming a public policy problem and should be addressed. Indicators hardly open a problem policy window themselves. They are rather utilised to understand the current state of a problem or changes in it, which can in turn be used to argue that it deserves a place on the decision agenda.

Focusing events
A focusing event is 'a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem, a powerful symbol that catches on, or the personal experience of a policy maker' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 95). An example of a crisis that requires immediate policy action and jumps quickly to the top of the decision agenda could be a plane crash or a financial crisis. These kinds of events usually open an unpredictable problem window. Alternatively, a powerful symbol could serve as a focusing event. This could be a new technological invention perceived to help solve policy problems, such as artificial intelligence. Something that a policy maker has themselves experienced can also give more focus to an issue. Kingdon (2014) notes that large scale focusing events in policymaking are relatively rare.

Feedback
Policymakers can also receive information about problems through feedback. For example, feedback from the implementation of another governmental program might highlight new problems that should be addresses. This feedback can come from within the government or can be articulated by interest groups and civil society actors. Decision-makers can receive feedback also in conferences, public events and directly from the citizens (Kingdon, 2014). In the EU, the Commission organises stakeholder consultations regularly to receive feedback from external actors.

The problem stream does not require much adaptation to the EU context, since all the three elements exist rather universally in most political systems. The problem stream counts ripe for coupling when one of the elements raise attention to an issue and the issue is interpreted as being problematic in some or all EU institutions (Herweg, 2016).

3.1.2 Political stream

In Kingdon's (1984) model, the political stream consists of the government, the parliament, national mood and interest groups. Main elements to influence agenda change are administrative turnover, election results, ideological distribution in the Congress and pressure group campaigns. Developments in the political stream have 'a powerful effect on agendas, as new agenda items become prominent and others are shelved until a more propitious time' (Kingdon, 2014, p.145). The EU's multi-level political system differs greatly from Kingdon's original unit of study, the US federal system. The Commission, the Council and the EP are all part of the legislative work and other EU agencies, such as the European Council, are also involved. In an ideal coupling situation, all of the EU institutions would be receptive to an idea. However, since the Commission has monopoly over legislative initiative, its backing is enough to elevate an issue to the agenda. Therefore, the political stream is considered ripe when at least the Commission is behind an idea (Herweg, 2016). However, significant adaptations of the political stream are needed to ensure the MSF's explanatory value in the EU context. Before discussing these adaptations, a short overview of the EU's political structure is warranted.

The Commission

The Commission is often seen as a unitary actor furthering the Community's interests and aiming to expand its influence and scope. However, Wonka (2015) argues that it is more fruitful to see the Commission as a heterogenous collective actor with its own intra-institutional dynamics and conflicts. The political leadership currently consists of the Commission president and 26 Commissioners with their cabinets as well as a general secretariat. The administrative side includes 33 different Directorate-Generals (DG), each responsible for a certain policy area, as well as other agencies. The Commission is the formal agenda-setter of the EU. Its other tasks include monitoring the implementation of EU law and participation in decision-making negotiations mainly as the mediator between the Council and the EP. The Commission also represents the EU in international negotiations alongside the Member States.

The European Council

During the early years of the EU, the European Council was more of a forum where the heads of governments of the EU Member States met informally and on an ad hoc basis. From the 1970s onwards, the meetings became more institutionalised but it was the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 that granted the European Council the status of a formal EU institution. It also created the positions of the president of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs (Wurzel, 2013). The European Council is not one of the legislative institutions of the EU, rather focusing on the EU's long-term agenda as well as overall political direction and priorities. The 'Conclusions of the Presidency' documents issued after every formal meeting serve as an indication of the themes the European Council considers as important, which in turn might impact the decision agenda of the EU (Naurin, 2015). More recent literature has argued that the European Council has become more active in internal policymaking and has taken some stances in climate policy, which the Commission has later used as a basis of some of its legislative proposals. In some instances, the European Council has assisted to resolve conflicts within the Council (Wurzel, Liefferink and De Lullo, 2019). Hence, even though the European Council is not formally one of the legislative institutions, its structural leadership qualities enable it to influence the policymaking process to an extent.

The Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union or 'the Council' is still considered to be the most important legislative EU institution. This is due to the fact that no legislation in the EU can pass without the Council's approval (Naurin, 2015). The Council of ministers has 10 configurations, which are attended by the ministers of each Member State depending on the issue. Most decision in the Council are nowadays taken with Qualified Majority Voting (QMV), meaning that a legislative decision is accepted when 55% of the members of the Council, representing 65% of the EU citizens vote for it. The Council as an institution is by no means a uniform actor but has a distinctive intergovernmental character to it. A cognitive divide has emerged in environmental and climate policy between the Western and the Eastern European states. The West pushing for more ambitious policies and the East being more cautious and concerned about the impacts low-carbon economy and climate neutrality could do to their economic growth (Wurzel et al., 2019). The Council does not have a formal right to initiate legislation, but it (and the EP) can request the Commission to submit a legislative proposal, which grants both limited agenda-setting powers.

The European Parliament

The legislative powers of the EP have been gradually increasing throughout the years. In 1979 the Council was merely required to consult the EP in legislative matters, but it did not have to take the EP's advice or amendments into account. Treaty revisions of Maastricht 1993 introduced the process of co-decision, which was further developed in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1998. Under the co-decision procedure both the Council and the EP have a deciding vote and veto power in the legislative process, and both institutions may amend a proposal (Burns, 2013). This changed their relative power relations in decision-making, since now the Council could not approve a legislation without the approval of the EP in most policy themes. Most recently, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty declared the co-decision procedure as the standard legislative process of the EU and renamed it the Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP). In addition, the annual budget, the MFF as well as the nomination of the Commission must be approved by the EP, which also extends its powers. In terms of environmental and climate policy, the EP has been seen as the environmental champion of the EU institutions, pushing for stricter environmental policies (Burns, 2013). However, recently there has been a shift toward more modest environmental and climate ambitions inside the EP, mainly due to the more diverse national interests of the Member States. It has been argued that most of the EPs current impact on agenda-setting and policy formulation is more symbolic rather than concrete (Burns, 2017). This will be reflected on in the conclusions chapter.

Political and administrative changes

After the short overview of the EU institutions, the main elements of the MSF are now adapted to the EU context, mainly following the scholarship of Herweg (2016), Zahariadis (2008) and Ackrill et al. (2013). The concept of administrative turnover consists of the start of a new Commission or changes in the EP after an election. Changes in individual key personnel in the EU institutions might also be considered if it has a clear impact on agenda-setting. The seat distribution among different groups has an impact on the EP's priorities and what issues are likely to be pushed onto the agenda (Zahariadis, 2008). Therefore, the election results and their possible impact on agenda-setting is included in the adapted framework. No comprehensive research on the partisan affiliations in the Council could be found and therefore this research follows the lead from Zahariadis (2008) and Herweg (2016) and rather considers the national affiliations in the Council. Due to its intergovernmental nature, the Council mainly consists of

the aggregated national interests of the Member States, which could have an impact on agenda-setting and policy formulation (Herweg, 2016).

European mood
Kingdon (2014) sees national mood to mean that a relatively large group of people in a given country are thinking along similar lines. National mood changes from time to time and has an impact on policy agendas and outcomes. In the EU context, Zahariadis (2008) coins the term 'European mood' to encompass this (p. 518). However, the term 'European mood' is challenging for a few reasons. First, public mobilisation at the EU level is still limited and does not play as big of a role in EU politics as it does at the national level. Second, from the EU institutions, only the EP is directly accountable to the public and the voters' interests are usually shaped by national level concerns (Princen, 2007). Hence, a truly European public sphere does not yet exist, which is a prerequisite for a European mood (Herweg, 2016). Due to these reasons, this research follows Herweg's logic and excludes the concept of 'European mood' from the adapted political stream.

Interest group campaigns
Organised political forces also operate in the political stream. Kingdon (2014) notes that they can impede or push for agenda change depending on the campaigns they execute. For example, industry representatives might want to keep the status quo but civil society actors might push for change. In this study, the term interest group encompasses both private and public interest organisations, meaning that businesses, trade unions and civil society organisation are all included. Numerous interest groups aim to influence policymakers at the EU-level. As Mazey and Richardson (2015) point out, lobbying is a natural part of politics and developed democracies have highly developed lobbying systems. The EU's multi-level political system and multiple institutions make it an ideal arena for lobbying, since interest groups can use many strategies to influence the Commission, The EP and the Council. Even though a definite number is hard to estimate, the 12,000 representatives currently registered in the Commission's Transparency Registry give an indication of the magnitude of lobbying in EU politics.

Herweg (2016) excludes interest group campaigns from her adaptation, arguing that the influence of interest groups in EU policymaking is not well researched and that scholarship has produced contradictory findings (referring to Dür, 2008). She argues that since solid empirical evidence is lacking, it is difficult to translate interest group influence into the EU context. This research argues that the part interest groups play in EU politics is too fundamental to leave them out of the framework. Furthermore, academics have researched the influence interest groups have in EU policymaking, arguing that especially the provision of expertise and information open up channels for influence (Chalmers, 2013; Binderkrantz and Rasmussen, 2015). They do however note that measuring influence, like any other abstract concept (such as power or beliefs), has its difficulties (Adelle and Anderson, 2013). In an attempt to mitigate this difficulty, this research investigates the influence interest groups had in raising awareness of just transition and influencing the problem framing of the policy proposal. This will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

3.1.3 Policy stream
Borrowing from biological sciences and evolutionary theory, Kingdon (2014) sees ideas as floating in a 'primeval soup', competing to win acceptance in the policy stream (p. 116). These ideas are generated in policy communities involving different experts and go through several rounds of debate and argumentation. Some ideas survive the journey, some combine together, and some fade out. From all the ideas floating around, only a few will receive serious

consideration (Zahariadis, 2014). Contrary to the rational policy cycle model, in which people first become aware of a problem and then consider alternatives as solutions, solutions actually 'float around in and near government, searching for problems to which to become attached or political events that increase their likelihood of adoption' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 172). Solutions might exist before problems, making the policy process more fluid and nonlinear.

Survival criteria

According to Kingdon (2014), there are certain criteria, which can enhance the odds of an idea's survival: technical feasibility, value acceptability within the policy community, tolerable cost, anticipated public acceptance and reasonable receptivity among elected decision-makers. Technical feasibility means that the proposal must be worked out and thought through so well that it can actually work in reality. Value acceptability means that the proposal's values are compatible with the values of the specialists in the policy communities. In addition, it helps if the solution has a tolerable, realistic cost and receptiveness among elected officials (Kingdon, 2014). The EU policy communities are by default more heterogenous than policy communities in national policymaking (Bache, 2013). Herweg (2016) suggests that due to this heterogeneity, the criteria for survival of a policy idea should be relaxed to include only technical feasibility. Due to the different priorities between the Member States, it would be unlikely for them to agree on values, costs and normative aspects. The policy stream is therefore considered ripe for agenda change when at least one technically feasible solution exists.

3.1.4 Policy windows

A core assumption of the MSF is that agenda change happens in the critical junctures, when all three streams confluence creating a 'policy window' (Zahariadis, 2014, p. 34). Policy windows are defined by Kingdon (1995) as 'opportunit[ies] for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems' (p. 165). They define the context in which policy is made and can act as a catalyst for the adoption of certain policies (Zahariadis, 2014). For a policy window to open, all three streams must be favourably aligned and coupled by a policy entrepreneur. A focusing event, such as a natural disaster, can open a policy window in the problem stream. If policy makers become convinced that a problem is pressing due to a focusing event, they reach for the policy stream to look for readily available solutions and alternatives. On the contrary, a change in administration can open a window in the political stream. A new administration might adopt a given theme as a priority. They will then most likely look for different proposals to address the issue from the the policy stream rather than ready solutions. In order to enhance the contextual side of the MSF framework, it is important to describe the nature and characteristics of different policy windows.

Predictability

Kingdon (1984) notes that many of the policy windows correspond to certain institutionalised events, such as elections, administration change, policy reforms or budgetary cycles. This means that the decision-makers and policy entrepreneurs expect a window to open in the political stream at a certain time and are prepared for it. These windows might also accommodate a wider range of alternatives, since the decision-makers are not just searching for a quick fix to a pressing problem. Alternatively, focusing events or decisions of key policymakers can open unpredictable windows (Howlett, 1998). A natural disaster cannot be predicted in advanced and certain changes in key personnel on a policy file can be unforeseen. Therefore, the PEs need to be prepared and ready to advocate their problem framing and solution on short notice. The operationalisation of the policy window concept can aid the analysis to investigate whether or not the nature of the policy window has influence beyond the agenda-setting process.

Spillovers

The duration of an open policy window can differ. Kingdon (2014) notes that usually policy windows are fleeting and do not stay open for long. However, he uses the concept of spillover borrowed from Haas (1958) to explain that sometimes an issue could create a precedent that might affect adjacent policy arenas. A new standardisation of a building regulation might affect the process of standardisation in another sector. Hence, a spillover might keep a policy window open. Ackrill and Kay (2011) label these 'exogenous' spillovers and note that because of the institutional ambiguity of the EU, also 'endogenous' spillovers can happen, meaning that one policy issue can occupy multiple policy arenas at the same time (p. 73). When a decision is taken in one of the policy arenas, it might causally affect decisions on that same issue in other arenas. Endogenous spillover can keep the same policy window open for the same issue, because ambiguous authority over who controls the issue allows for extended contestation. Both of these elements will be considered when analysing the influence of the institutional aspects on JTF policy formulation.

3.1.5 Policy entrepreneurs and policy entrepreneurship

Policy entrepreneurs (PEs) are advocates who are 'willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position in return for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive, or solidary benefits' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 179). In general, PEs aim to initiate action and push their proposal and policies forward. They must skillfully attach problems to their preferred solutions through problem definition and find politicians receptible to their preferences. PEs are also vital to agenda change according to the MSF, since after a policy window opens, PEs couple the three streams and seek to push their pet ideas and solutions to the agenda. The likelihood of coupling success increases if the PE has entrepreneurial qualities, frames the issue successfully, chooses the right venue and has softened up the different streams for the preferred solution before a window opens (Zahariadis, 2008). Successful PEs might be able to exert considerable influence on agenda-setting and policy formulation. Kingdon's concept of policy entrepreneur has been criticised for focusing too much on the policy stream and seeing only individuals as policy entrepreneurs (Knaggård, 2015; Zahariadis, 2008; Ackrill et al., 2013). In the EU context, the broader term 'policy entrepreneurship' has been coined to encompass not only individual policy entrepreneurs but also coalitions or networks of actors, Member States, EU institutions and the EU as whole (Ackrill et al., 2013). This term is used in this research alongside 'policy entrepreneur' to describe other (not individual) actors as well as the action itself (i.e. someone exercising policy entrepreneurship).

Entrepreneurial qualities

Kingdon (2014) underlines that the most important qualities of a PE are persistence, resources and access. They spend a considerable time 'softening up the system', which means talking to decision-makers about their preferred alternatives, creating coalitions and keeping the issue alive even when the topic is not high on the agenda (Kingdon, 2014, p.181). This softening up is helpful when a policy window opens, since a successful PE will already have backing for their idea due to their persistence and hard work during the quieter period. They can also use their position to gain access to the right meetings. Mintrom and Norman (2009) follow similar lines, arguing that displaying social acuity, defining problems, building teams and leading by example are central elements to policy entrepreneurs.

Venue-shopping

PEs can use a variety of strategies to get their preferred solution to the agenda. In the EU context, fruitful strategies of venue-shopping and framing described in PET have been

identified (Zahariadis, 2008; Ackrill et al. 2013; Princen, 2013b) Venues are considered to be the institutional loci where authoritative decisions are made (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Venue-shopping means that actors attempt to shift the policymaking from one venue to another. The concept of venue-shopping has been widely used in EU policy studies (see for example Princen, 2007; Guiraudon, 2000; Ydersbond, 2014). The EU creates an ideal environment for venue-shopping analysis, since in addition to being a venue in itself, it also holds multiple venues inside it. PEs can attempt to engage in 'vertical venue-shopping' (from Member State to EU and even global level) as well as 'horizontal venue-shopping' (across EU institutions) (Princen, 2009, p. 28). For instance, an environmental issue, such as pollution, could be considered under health policy and go nowhere. A change in problem definition i.e. reframing the issue in internal market terms could push it into another policymaking venue and create policy change.

Framing
A key element in gaining attention to an issue is how it is defined or framed (Kingdon, 1995; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Issues and proposals do not enter the policy process predefined but are highly contested. The contestation about what an issue is 'really' about is in itself an essential part of the process (Princen, 2007). Information in an agenda-setting process is not value neutral and therefore PEs can develop frames that convey meaning to different audiences in order to influence or manipulate the policy process (Schön and Rein, 1994). The MSF already touches upon the concept of framing but PET develops it further and links it with venue-shopping. Reframing the way in which a problem is seen can create a momentum for an attempted venue shift (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). The inclusion of these elements to the conceptual framework is done to further enhance the analysis of different PE strategies during the EU agenda-setting and policy formulation.

3.2 Policy formulation
In this research, policy formulation is understood as the stage in the policy process between agenda-setting and decision-making. In the policy formulation stage, the Commission creates and publishes a policy proposal. As Adelle et al. (2013) articulate, the Commission is responsible for the identification and shaping of policy options. Main choices that the Commission must make for a policy proposal include: problem definition, policy objective, policy scope, type of policy, funding allocation and possible expiry date among others. Therefore, policy formulation includes both technical decisions as well as political and strategic considerations. In order to make more precise analysis possible, this research focuses on two elements through which the Commission's policy formulation could be influenced: problem framing and policy design. It should be noted that an abstract term like 'influence' is somewhat difficult to define and measure. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines influence generally as 'to have an effect on the condition or development of' something, mostly through indirect or intangible means. Influence in this research is less about the direct force of actors, such as Robert Dahl's (1957) famous concept of A's direct power over B, and more about persuasion, coalition building and framing. In this research, the level of influence on problem framing considering the Commission's JTF proposal is analysed through comparing the proposal's problem frame to the framings of the different PEs and insights gained from the interviews. The influence on policy design will be analysed by looking at the policy choices made in the JTF (for example scope and criteria) as well as more strategic and political considerations.

3.3 Dynamics of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research is agency-focused but recognises that institutional aspects shape the agenda-setting process by molding the context in which decisions are made. The more agency-focused approach gives policy entrepreneurship a crucial role to play in agenda change. However, the MSF has been criticised for the underdevelopment of the PE concept (Akrill et al., 2013). Therefore, this study adds framing and venue-shopping to the framework. This increases the more constructivist aspects of the study, since the agents are seen as capable of also shaping the structures they operate in. 'Entrepreneurs create meaning; they do not just alter beliefs or preferences' (Zahariadis, 2008, p. 526). The framework is adapted to the multi-level governance structure of the EU and seeks to create a holistic approach by incorporating agency and structure to the framework in a balanced manner. The conceptual framework for this research is illustrated in Figure 1. It outlines the subconcepts defined above for each of the three streams as well as the policy windows and policy entrepreneurship. The aspects focusing on policy formulation are also included. The conceptual framework is used as a starting point in the operationalisation of this research described in Chapter 4.
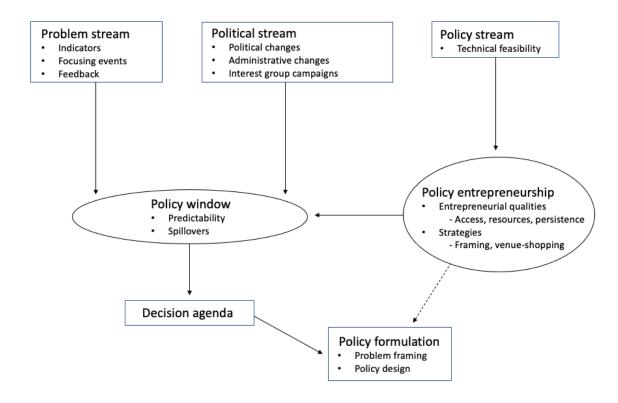

Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Source: own image

Chapter conclusion

This chapter introduced the MSF in detail and explained the different conceptual elements of Kingdon's original theory. The changes adopted to the framework to fit the EU context were clearly outlined and followed the works of EU policy studies scholars. Additional elements for the enhancement of the framework in the EU context were introduced. These include framing and venue-shopping from the PET and the different characteristics of the policy windows. Finally, the conceptual framework of this research was presented.

4. Methodology

Chapter introduction
This chapter explains the methodological choices made in this research. First, the research paradigm this study follows is explained. Then, the research strategy developed in line with the chosen research paradigm is described. The operationalisation of the conceptual framework for coding the data and guiding the interviews is illustrated after which the research methods, data collection and data analysis are outlined. This chapter closes by discussing the reliability, validity and ethical considerations relevant to this research.

4.1 Research paradigm
A paradigm is the basic belief system that represents the worldview of the holder and deals with first principles (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). A paradigm is based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. Because of the metaphysical nature of the paradigms, it is not possible to establish their ultimate truthfulness. Hence, debate and dialogue exist between different paradigms. Ontological considerations are preoccupied with what constitutes reality, meaning what is. Realist ontology believes that objects exist independent of the knower and thus a discoverable reality and universal laws exist independently from the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Pring, 2000). Relativist ontology understands reality as subjective. There is no one true reality, but many socially constructed realities (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Epistemological issues concern the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen et al. 2007) They focus on 'what is (or should be) seen as acceptable knowledge in a discipline' (Bryman, 2016, p. 27). Methodology is the strategy behind the choice of particular research methods, which derives from the ontological and epistemological choices (Crotty, 1998).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) distinguish between four paradigms: positivist, post-positivist, Critical Theory and constructivist. The researcher paradigm of this study is constructivist. The ontological assumption is that there are many socially constructed realities and no universal knowledge exists (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This approach is often used in social science research, since it enables the researcher to study a certain social phenomenon in its natural context and interpret the findings to gain deeper understanding of the situation (Bryman, 2016). Since this study focuses on understanding and explaining the agenda-setting and policy formulation process of the JTF, this approach is warranted. Interpretivist epistemology assumes that the researcher and the object of the research are interactively linked and create the findings of the research through that interaction (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Universal, replicable knowledge cannot be produced, since it is created in a certain situational setting in a socially constructed world. This research conducts semi-structured interviews, which are situational, subjective and cannot fully be replicated in another setting. Methodologically, constructivism is dialectical, meaning that the research aims to understand the interactions between individuals and their different perspectives, taking into account the context they are in (Creswell, 2009).

Policy research revolves around institutions, contexts, actions of individuals and ideas, which are nearly impossible to understand without interacting with the individuals involved in the process and interpretating their narratives. However, policymaking is still a 'real world' process and as Bryman (2016) states, constructivist researchers can also admit to the 'pre-existence of their object of interest' (be it organisations, institutions or culture) but at the same time stress the 'active role of individuals in the social construction of social reality' (p. 34). Since this research studies policymaking and hopes to discover some generalisable patterns, it is on the more on the pragmatic side of constructivism.

4.2 Research strategy

Having a research strategy is important, since it creates a guideline for the research (Bryman, 2016). This research uses a qualitative approach, since the aim of the research is to understand the context, underlying aspects and the influence of actors and factors in the agenda-setting and policy formulation process. This kind of an inquiry would be difficult to do quantitatively, since numbers and surveys are not great at indicating intentions and taking into account context or underlying aspects. The research methodology of this research is a case study, which is often used to study social phenomena. A case study is an appropriate methodology for a study, which aims to answer a broad research question by presenting a thorough understanding of how the process develops (Swanborn, 2010). The case study chosen for this research is the agenda-setting and policy formulation process of the Just Transition Fund. This case is chosen, since no case study research on this topic exist yet. Furthermore, there is no prior legislative policy on just transition at the EU-level, so the case enables the analysis on how a completely novel issue rose to the decision agenda.

Only one case is chosen, since the study aims to gather comprehensive and detailed data to explain and understand a complex multi-level process with multiple variables. A solid conceptual framework is established for the research in Chapter 3, Figure 1, making the starting point of this research deductive, even though no rigid hypotheses are formulated. However, during the analysis, the research is open for new concepts and indicators outside of the set framework if they emerge during coding and data analysis, which give the analysis also an inductive character. The research question is formulated in relatively open terms to leave room for possible inductive elements. The role of the researcher should receive consideration in a case study approach (Yin, 2009). The researcher has openly acknowledged her ontological and epistemological positions and does not aim to claim objectivity when conducting this research. The choice of constructivist paradigm for this study reflects the researcher's belief that knowledge is constructed through interactions. In social science research, it has been generally accepted that the researcher cannot be completely objective (Denscombe, 2009). Therefore, the researcher must be aware of her underlying values and assumptions and consciously aim to counter any biases that might arise from the the research process and interpretation of the data. The method of triangulation is chosen to assist with the mitigation of possible biases.

4.3 Operationalisation

In the operationalisation stage, theoretical concepts are translated into measurable entities. In qualitative research this does not necessarily mean turning abstract concepts into numbers but to variables and values that can be analysed (van Thiel, 2014). The operationalisation shows what will be measured, whereas research strategy informs how the measurement will be conducted. The operationalisation of this research derives from the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 1). The subquestions outlined in Chapter 1 were broken down to theoretical concepts and linked with the appropriate variables. After this, the interview questions were created which informed the interview guide in Appendix 3. The full details of the operationalisation can be found in Table 1. The variables of the operationalisation were also used as a starting point for data coding. However, as mentioned above, this research is inductive in a sense that it is open for the possibility of adding new elements to the framework if the analysis indicates that it is necessary. The conceptual framework and the operationalisation will be reflected on in Chapter 6.

Research question	Theoretical concept	Variable	Indicators	Example interview questions (full interview guide in Appendix 3)
How did the JTF rise onto the EU decision agenda?	Problem stream	Focusing events	Crises, external events, symbols	Why did the JTF come out now? Why did it not come out sooner? Did international or national events have influence? Did previous policies affect the emergence of Just Transition Fund to the agenda?
		Indicators	Reports, surveys	
		Feedback	Monitoring, evaluation of existing policies, direct feedback	
	Political stream	Political and administrative changes	Commission, EU elections, staff turnover, Council presidency, national affiliations	Were there changes within the EU institutions during the development of the JTF that impacted the process? How were outside stakeholders involved? Did European elections influence the development of the Just Transition Fund?
		Interest group campaigns	Networks, coalitions, interest groups, lobbying	
	Policy stream	Technical feasibility	Available solutions	What ideas were there to address the issue of just transition? Were they supported?
How did policy entrepreneurship influence the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF?	Policy entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial qualities	Access, resources, persistence	Who was heavily involved in the process in and outside of EU institutions? Were there different ideas of just transition?
		Strategies	Framing, venue-shopping	
Did the nature of the policy window(s) affect the agenda-setting and policy formulation?	Policy window	Nature and character of the policy window	Predictability Spillovers	How did just transition become a priority in EU policy? Did other policy processes or decisions affect the JTF process?
What policy choices were made considering the JTF proposal?	Policy formulation	Aspects of the proposal	Problem framing Policy design	What problem was the Just Transition Fund addressing? Which choices were made in the Just Transition Fund proposal and why?

Table 1. Operationalisation of the research. Source: own table

4.4 Research methods, data collection and data analysis

4.4.1 Research methods

Typically, a case study research takes a holistic approach, meaning that a large body of qualitative data is gathered to gain a deep understanding of the chosen case in its own context (Swanborn, 2010). The researcher uses three qualitative research methods in this research: semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observation. These three have been selected, since they enable in-depth analysis of the policy process by combining comprehensive policy text analysis, observations of EU policymaking and the personal accounts of the interviewees. It is important to include the narratives and experiences of the policymakers, politicians and experts involved, since not everything about a process can be discovered from text alone

(Bowen, 2009). The method of process tracing is also used in this research. Process tracing is a method of within-case analysis, which draws 'descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence' (Collier, 2011, p. 824). It underscores the importance of temporal sequences and fine-grained knowledge and is used in social sciences both to explain change and causation as well as develop and evaluate theories (Collier, 2011; Bennet, 2010). Following these elements, this research creates a chronological reconstruction of the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF and gathers knowledge from the participants of that process. Triangulation is used to increase the validity of the data and findings. Triangulation is 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). This is done to seek convergence and corroboration through using different data sources, giving the research a slight post-positivist flair (Bowen, 2009).

4.4.2 Data collection

For the semi-structured interviews, the research used non-probability sampling, which means that the researcher makes a purposive selection of the interviewees. This method is usually used when only a few units of study are available and the choices reflect the theoretical foundations of the study (van Thiel, 2014). Since the aim of this study is to understand and reconstruct the JTF policy process in detail, interviewing participants involved in the process to gain in-depth knowledge is vital. This need for selected and informed participants is also reflected in the agency-focused conceptual framework. Thus, a probability sampling would not aid the analysis. The purposive interviews also led to the discovery of some grey literature and policy documents relevant to the study, enhancing the quality of the research. 15 interviews were conducted with EU Commission officials, European Parliament staff, Council of Regions staff, other EU officials, Member State officials as well as interest group policy experts. Officials in the EU institutions were mainly chosen due to their visible involvement in the JTF process. The Commission has a core role in agenda-setting and policy formulation and therefore interviewees from different DGs were selected. Interviewees who were closely involved but not publicly visible were found through the recommendations of other interviewees. A Finnish government official was interviewed in view of Finland's Council presidency from June 2019 to December 2019. Scholars have argued that the Council presidency has some influence over the Council's priorities (Vaznonytė, 2020). Interest group experts were mainly chosen after researching policy briefs about the JTF but also about the EU's energy, climate and social policies prior to the JTF.

Document analysis is 'a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material' (Bowen, 2009, p.27). In this research, both academic and grey literature were consulted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process. The document analysis included both official peer-review academic books and journals as well as communications, proposals and press releases from the Commission, the EP and the Council. Articles, reports and blog posts from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other relevant organisations were also consulted. Document analysis was used to analyse the JTF, to create an understanding of the chronological process of JTF and to help generate interview questions.

Observation was used in a limited capacity to support the interviews and document analysis. The start of the researcher's internship at the European Parliament in March 2020 gave her a great opportunity to observe the inner workings of the EP. MEP Pekkarinen is personally interested in the JTF and the researcher was able to follow the legislative process closely and conduct background research on the topic. The researcher was also able to observe the day-to-day workings of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and the Committee

on Regional Development (REGI). Furthermore, she participated in exclusive Commission webinars regarding the JTF proposal. Unfortunately, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, most of the internship was conducted remotely, limiting the possibilities for further observation. However, in the initial research design it was already decided that observation would play only a limited role to support the data gathered from interviews and document analysis. Therefore, this change did not significantly impact the research.

4.4.3 Data analysis

All 15 interviews were conducted remotely via an online platform or per phone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Other participants did not wish to be recorded and therefore written notes were taken during the interviews. Understandably not all participants wished to be recorded, since they were closely involved in the legislative process of the Just Transition Fund. The data was analysed and coded using an online qualitative research platform ATLAS.ti, which was recommended to the researcher at the university's research methods module. Online newspaper articles and press releases were also analysed and coded on the ATLAS.ti platform. The coding was planned and executed using the operationalised variables from the conceptual framework (Table 1) and the interview guide (Appendix 3) as starting points. Contrary to quantitative research, data analysis in qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher's own interpretation. Sensitivity and awareness to the researcher's subjectivity and possible bias are important to acknowledge (Denscombe, 2009).

4.5 Reliability and validity of the research

If a research has high external reliability, it can be repeated and same results will be achieved. External reliability is higher in quantitative than qualitative research. (van Thiel, 2014). This is because the researcher is better able to control the conditions of a laboratory experiment or a multiple choice survey than a semi-structured interview. For this research, replicability is difficult to achieve due to the nature of the data collection. The level of freedom allowed to the interviewees in their answers lowers the external validity. Furthermore, interviews and document analysis require interpretation from the side of the researcher. Even if it is not possible to exactly repeat a qualitative case study, this research will use triangulation (document analysis, observation and semi-structured interviews) to increase the reliability and validity of the research. Internal reliability is a measure of how well a given test actually measures what it is supposed to measure. This concept is important in quantitative research with numbers, rigid variables and hypotheses but it is harder to transfer to qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). In qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) see reliability more as 'dependability' of the research, meaning that another researcher can follow, audit and critique the research process. This research process and coding has been clearly documented to enhance the dependability of this research.

External validity of a research indicates that it is transferable, meaning that the results can be generalised (van Thiel, 2014). The external validity of this research is relatively low due to the qualitative methods used. The case study approach employed in this research gains in-depth understanding of a certain situation or social phenomenon, but the results are difficult to generalise. However, this research can contribute to the agenda-setting literature by offering empirical findings of one particular case that can be compared and added to other studies. Furthermore, the mainly deductive conceptual framework offers the possibility to draw some (albeit limited) theoretical generalisations. Internal validity looks at the choices made concerning the design of the study and how the research proceeds. The more rigorously the study is performed, the more confident one can be about the findings (Flyvberg, 2006). In this

research, data collection, interviews and coding are done by one researcher, which minimalises variation in the interpretation of data or disruptions in data organisation. All changes and revisions in data collection or coding have been clearly recorded.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations must be taken into account when conducting any research, since they link directly with the integrity of the study (Bryman, 2016). Diener and Crandall (1978) divide ethical issues into four main areas: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and possible deception of the participants. This research did not engage in any experiments and can therefore be considered generally safe for participants. All the interviewees participated voluntarily and were aware that they were interviewed for a Master's thesis. The research subject and research aims were explained to them in advance, so no deception was involved. Either written or verbal consent for the interview was received from all interviewees. The consent form used can be found in Appendix 2. The researcher was very careful when storing the interview transcripts and recordings to ensure privacy and data protection of the participants. The researcher sent the transcripts to those interviewees who wished to see theirs before they were included in the study. All interviews were semi-structured, following a general interview guide. The researcher tried to avoid leading questions but was not successful at times. It should be noted that these were the first academic interviews the researcher has conducted and even though prior knowledge of interview conduct was sought, articulation and question formulation could have been more precise, especially in the beginning. However, the researcher learned during the process to ask more general questions and not to bring her own assumptions forward.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter introduced the main research paradigms and identified this research as constructivist in nature. The case study research strategy was outlined and justified, aligning well with the qualitative nature of this study. A single case study of the JTF is chosen to enable the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of the process. The data collection and analysis were explained as well as the reliability and validity of this study assessed, concluding that this research is somewhat difficult to replicate and generalise. Internal validity of this research is boosted with rigorous research design and documentation of any changes. Finally, the chapter illustrated how ethical considerations were taken into account during the interview process.

5. Findings and results

Chapter introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected from document research, 15 semi-structured interviews and observation, starting by outlining the elements and aspects of the Just Transition Fund proposal. Then, the method of process tracing is utilised to present a thick chronological description of the main events concerning the JTF. This allows the researcher to include the analysis within the description of the process, placing importance on the views of the interviewees as well as data found in EU documents, articles and memos. The description is divided into three parts: the early years from 2015 to 2018, the rise to the decision agenda in 2019 and the policy formulation process of the Commission.

5.1 Overview of the Just Transition Fund proposal

The Just Transition Fund is a central part of the broader Just Transition Mechanism (JTM), which is illustrated in Figure 2. The JTM is seen as a key tool to realise the European Green Deal and its Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. The JTM is a concrete example of climate justice considerations being included in EU policy, since it aims to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition moving away from fossil fuels, such as oil, coal, peat and oil shale. It will provide financial and technical support to workers, communities, regions and companies most negatively affected by the transition (European Commission, 2020a). The mechanism consists of three pillars:

1. The Just Transition Fund, which is a shared management instrument supporting the regions bearing significant negative socioeconomic impacts of the transition via grants.
2. Just transition scheme under InvestEU focusing on leveraging private investment for just transition projects.
3. European Investment Bank loan facility, which aims to leverage public financing.

This research will concentrate on the Just Transition Fund (the first pillar). The other two pillars offer loans under the EU's financial institutions but the JTF offers grants to Member States struggling with the transition. The Commission published a proposal for the establishment of a Just Transition Fund (COM(2020)22) on the 14th of January 2020 (European Commission, 2020b). The JTF contributes to a specific object of 'enabling regions and people to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards a climate neutral economy' (European Commission, 2020b, p. 13). The JTF is under Cohesion Policy and has been prepared by DG REGIO. The JTF is built on Commission's earlier initiative, the Coal Regions in Transition (CRIT) platform, which was started in late 2017 to assist certain coal regions in the EU with their transition away from coal (i.e. coal phase-out) (Widuto, 2019; Interview 12). The January proposal proposed a funding of €7.5 billion, which would be complimented with mandatory transfers from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) as well as complementary resources from national co-funding. The estimated total budget for the fund would therefore reach up to €30-50 billion. Funding from the JTF is available for all Member States and it supports not only coal regions but also regions with carbon heavy industry and other fossil fuels.
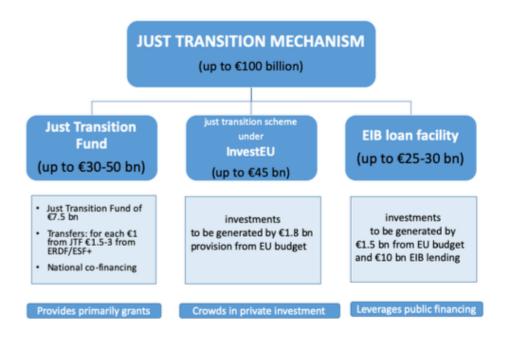
Figure 2. Structure of the Just Transition Mechanism. Source: European Commission, 2020a.

The JTF is under shared management, which means that the management of the fund is shared between the EU and the Member States. The Commission decides the allocation method and criteria but the Member States are responsible for the allocation of funds to the regions in their respective countries. However, the regions requesting financial support through the JTF need to provide Territorial Just Transition Plans explaining the initiatives they are requesting support for. Those initiatives must align with the scope and objective of the JTF and be approved by the Commission in the bilateral negotiations with the Member States. The JTF has a narrow and specified scope of supported initiatives, including the reskilling of workers, economic diversification and investment in companies and research. This is notably narrower than for example in the ERDF and ESF+. At the time of writing in late 2020, the JTF is being negotiated in the Council and in the EP and thus the legislative process is still ongoing. Therefore, changes in budget, criteria and/or scope can occur before the file is adopted.

5.2 Agenda-setting – the early years 2015-2018

The idea of just transition fits quite nicely with the EU's values of solidarity and cohesion. In a way, it can be seen as a natural extension of the earlier burden-sharing agreements by intertwining climate policy with social justice (Interview 12). The term 'just transition' started appearing in EU documents in 2010. A search done on the EUR-Lex portal, which hosts all official EU documents, illustrates the increase in the term's usage in EU documents between 2010 and 2019. The advanced search in EUR-Lex was done with the term "just transition" in the title or in the text and only documents in English were included. As Figure 3 shows, just transition was mentioned in 11 different documents before the year 2015 and in 66 documents from 2015 onwards. A sharp increase in the volume of documents mentioning just transition can be seen to start from the year 2018. Interestingly, the most productive authors using the term 'just transition' are the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) (34 documents) and the EP (24 documents). Notably, there is hardly any mention of climate change or climate policy together with just transition in the documents before 2015. The terms used when

discussing climate change and energy transition are 'sustainable economy', 'green economy', and 'green jobs', just transition is used more under labour and social policy. After 2015, there is an increase in linking just transition with climate change and climate justice. For this research, the interesting timeframe starts from 2015, since documents and interviews alike indicate that the issue started gaining more traction then.
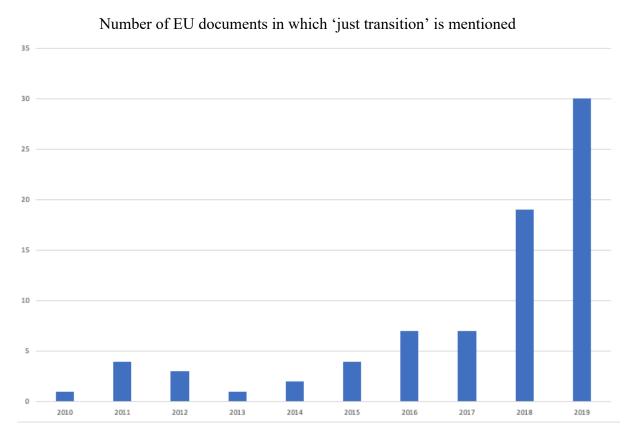
Number of EU documents in which 'just transition' is mentioned

Figure 3. The graph illustrates the number of documents per year in which 'just transition' is mentioned at least once in the title and/or in the text. Search done in EUR-Lex https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html Source: own image.

The data gathered from the EUR-Lex search gives a general indication of the temporal origins of the just transition in legal EU documents. However, this research does not attempt to find out where the idea of just transition in the EU originally came from. Kingdon (2014) notes that trying to seek the origin of an idea is rather pointless, since an idea does not have a proximate source, and tracing through history trying to find it does not have a logical stopping point. At worst, the researcher might be plunged into a spiral of infinite regress. Thus, the dynamics of how an idea gets onto the decision agenda are more interesting for analysis than its exact origin.

In 2015, just transition was increasingly discussed at the international level. The Paris Agreement highlighted it as a central issue, stating the importance of '*taking into account* the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities' (UNFCCC, 2015, p. 21, emphasis original). International Labour Organisation (ILO) published its guidelines for a just transition also in 2015. During this period, the concept of just transition and its links to climate policy and climate justice had become a more visible part of global climate policy. Interviewees

also confirmed that the issue was starting to be discussed more in the EU policy communities after the Paris Agreement (Interviews 8, 9 and 11). Interestingly however, none of the interviewees saw the global level events as playing a central role in the EU agenda-setting process of the JTF. Early in this research, the researcher thought that international level aspects would have pushed the issue of just transition to the EU-level. However, it seems that even though global level decisions were known at the EU-level, they played more of a background role, raising awareness in the policy communities and increasing dialogue but not creating any decisive developments (Interviews 2, 8 and 14).

5.2.1 The 2016 Emission Trading Scheme reform and failed agenda change

As a Commission official (Interview 13) noted, many things were happening in parallel considering just transition and the JTF in the EU after 2015. There are mentions of just transition in the *Clean energy for all Europeans* legislative package of 2016. However, the terms 'social', 'just' or 'fair' are scarcely present in documents during that period, which indicates that the social dimension of the energy transition was not yet in the focus. During the same time, the EESC was active in publishing own-initiative reports about just transition and climate justice in general (EESC, 2017). They also included a concrete call for a JTF to support the low-carbon transition in their resolution for the Commission's working programme for 2017 (EESC, 2016). The first concrete proposal for a Just Transition Fund in the EU was put forward by the S&D party in the EP. They were working closely together with the trade unions, who pitched the idea to the S&D MEP Edouard Martin. MEP Martin was a member of the ITRE Committee and with his lead, the S&D tabled amendments calling for the creation of a JTF to the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) reform 4 file ((EU)2018/410) in 2016 (Interview 14). The goal of the fund was to use 2% of the ETS revenues for 'cushioning the social impact of climate policies in regions which combine a high share of workers in carbon-dependent sectors and a GDP per capita well below the EU-average' (European Parliament, 2016, p. 105). The activities funded by this JTF would be closely linked to the labour market and participation of local social partners would be a must. Projects that could be financed under the fund included reskilling and upskilling workers, support in job search, social protection measures and business creation. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as well as the network of Mayors were also supporting the idea of a JTF inside the ETS (Interview 11).

The Commission's original ETS reform 4 proposal did not include a JTF and neither did the Council's position. The S&D was successful in getting the amendments included in the Parliament's official position but it did not end up in the final agreed reform. A Modernisation Fund was established under the ETS instead. Its scope of support included also some just transition initiatives. However, as one of the NGO energy policy expert notes (Interview 11), the Fund has mainly been used to finance other modernisation efforts with a limited amount of funding going toward just transition projects. A trade union policy advisor (Interview 14) closely linked to the process noted that the EP was receptive to the idea but the Commission and especially the Council were not really on board. The negotiations inside the Council are often not transparent and therefore it is hard to know the Council's reasons for being reluctant towards the JTF (Interviews 11 and 14).

A situation can arise where a policy window is open and two streams are ready for coupling but the third is not. Kingdon (2014) notes that 'the probability of an item rising to the *decision* agenda is dramatically increased' if all three streams are joined (p. 178, emphasis original). In the case of the JTF in 2016, the policy stream was ready with a feasible solution advocated by the S&D and the trade unions. The S&D exercised policy entrepreneurship by framing the issue through a social justice and workers' rights lens and using the ETS reform as a venue to get the

issue onto the decision agenda. However, the problem stream did not have enough indicators, feedback or focusing events for a wide-spread problem recognition outside the EP. The fact that the Commission did not seem to be on board was problematic for the political stream, since its readiness for coupling necessitates that the formal agenda-setter is on board. Of course, the backing of the Council is also needed to pass a legislation, but the Commission's backing will get the issue onto the decision agenda. The ETS reform opened a predictable policy window in the political stream. Participants could anticipate it, since the time cycles of policy reforms are well-known in advance. The issue of the JTF did not get onto the decision agenda even though a policy window was open because the problem stream was not ripe and the political stream was only partially ripe. In addition, the policy entrepreneurship of the S&D was not strong enough to soften up the other EU institutions to the idea. Due to the aforementioned aspects the agenda change failed to take place in 2016.

The next substantial policy development concerning just transition was the establishment of the Commission's CRIT platform in late 2017. DG Energy (ENER) had been asked to create a pro-active coal policy and the CRIT platform was their pilot initiative to support the coal regions' energy transition (Interview 13). The CRIT is mentioned in the JTF proposal as the basis for the legislation. However, the CRIT is focused on coal and the energy transition of certain regions, whereas the JTF includes also other fossil fuels, greenhouse gas intensive industries and is open to all Member States. Furthermore, the CRIT is mainly an information diffusion platform without a designated budget, through which the Commission helps regions to access funding from other EU funds. This differs from the JTF, which is a fund in itself and has its own budget. Nonetheless, the establishment of the CRIT platform indicates that at this point the Commission was seriously considering just transition as a policy issue. Interviewees mentioned Vice President Šefčovič and Klaus-Dieter Borchardt from DG ENER as key players inside the Commission to push this forward (Interviews 3, 13, 14 and 15). They were also working closely with a Polish MEP Jerzy Buzek from the European People's Party (EPP) (Interview 15). Even though the Juncker Cabinet was not very engaged in the social justice side of the energy transition, certain actors inside the Commission, such as the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), were doing preparatory work on the issue (Interviews 8 and 15). As a Finnish governmental official closely following the JTF process (Interview 9) articulated, the publication of the CRIT initiative gave the Member States indication that a legislative proposal considering just transition was most likely in the pipeline.

The concept of just transition was not only discussed within the EU institutions. Interest groups were also involved in the conversation. Jacques Delors Institute published a comprehensive *Making the Energy Transition a European Success* report in 2017. It included a chapter called 'A Social Pact for the Energy Transition', which laid out recommendations on how to bring about a just transition (Pellerin-Carlin et al., 2017). During the same year, the 'Europe Beyond Coal' collective NGO campaign was launched, bringing together many important European NGOs under one umbrella. The campaign's main aim is to catalyse and hasten the coal phase-out and the transition to clean renewable energy. It also includes a working group focusing on just transition (Europe Beyond Coal, n.d.; Interview 11). Over 30 NGOs are taking part, including WWF, CAN Europe, Client Earth, Greenpeace and CEE Bankwatch. The campaign underlines the importance of not leaving anyone behind and taking into account the social justice dimension when planning the transition. At the same time, it emphasises the need to set a deadline for the phase-out and avoid delays. Some NGO interviewees expressed fears that the JTF is not big enough to support the full transition and might give the Member States an excuse to keep using other cohesion funds unsustainably (Interviews 3, 11 and 14). This

framing is interesting, since it sees just transition as a central problem in Europe but is somewhat skeptical of the JTF in its current form as the solution.

5.2.2 Just Energy Transition Fund 2018 and the nonexistent policy window

The year 2018 saw developments at the national and international levels. Germany, which uses coal to produce around 40% of its electricity, created the national Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment, otherwise known as the Coal Commission (Löhle, 2020). Its imperative was to create a strategy for phasing out coal in Germany. Just transition featured heavily in the report, which was titled *A Roadmap for a Just Transition from Coal to Renewables*. (Agora Energiewende und Aurora Energy Research, 2019). This was the first major Member State level policy on just transition in the EU. This created more visibility for the problem also at the EU-level, since Germany is relatively influential among the Member States. Interestingly, interviewees pointed out that even though Germany was active at the Member State level on just transition, it stayed more on the sidelines in the EU debate (Interviews 2 and 15). Poland was the leading Member State pushing for the JTF in the Council, alongside the Baltic States and Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Interview 2 and 4). At the international level, during the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP) in late 2018 in Katowice, Poland over 50 of the participating countries agreed to support *the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration* (UNCCC, 2018). The host country Poland played a key role in getting the declaration out, which helped to increase the attention for just transition both at the international and EU-level (Interview 14). Interviewees also mentioned that Poland in the Council and MEP Buzek in the EP were advocating for a similar framing to achieve just transition focusing on the support for the energy transition itself, rather than just the socioeconomic impacts (Interviews 8, 14 and 15). This could be due to MEP Buzek being Polish and having served previously as Poland's prime minister and therefore understanding the challenges faced in Poland especially considering the energy transition.

In 2018, the Commission commissioned an extensive 182-page Joint Research Centre (JRC) report *EU Coal Regions: Opportunities and Challenges Ahead* (Alves Dias et al., 2018). The report maps out the current coal infrastructure in the EU, future developments and coal mine closures as well as impacts on jobs and regions. The report informed the JTF proposal and the researcher observed it being used in many of the Commission's just transition webinars during the spring of 2020. This indicates that the data gathered was also consulted in the context of the JTF and highlights even further that the Commission saw just transition as a policy problem already in 2018.

The EP accepted a resolution for the creation of a Just Energy Transition Fund (JETF) with a broad majority as a part of an interim report on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 (European Parliament, 2018). The MFF consists of the total budget the EU has at its disposal for the next 7-year period. The 2018 JETF proposal came from the ITRE Committee and the rapporteur for the file was MEP Buzek. The resolution proposed a €4.8 billion fund to support the energy transition of the coal regions in the EU. The passing of the resolution seemed to mark a shift in the space just transition occupied in the EU policy arena. One EU official called Buzek's JETF the 'missing piece' of the just transition policy process, since it proposed monetary allocation unlike the CRIT (Interview 12). Jerzy Buzek was also mentioned as a key individual in pushing for just transition in 10 of the 15 interviews. He is a political heavy weight, who has served as Poland's prime minister, the president of the European Parliament and the chair of the ITRE committee under the Juncker Commission. He was invited to speak at Commission events considering CRIT and just transition. The Vice President Šefčovič was especially receptive to these ideas and pushed them in the Commission

(Interview 7 and 14). MEP Buzek did his most visible work in the EP, where he secured backing for the JETF in the ITRE committee and then a broad cross-party support for the resolution in the plenary in 2018. (Interview 8 and 12). In an interview given to the Polish newspaper Biznes Alert (2019) MEP Buzek recounted how he was able to reach a broad compromise in the Parliament for JETF:

'In the same way like we reach all compromises within the EP – from roaming through the gas directive to mining regions: by presenting arguments, through negotiations and dialogue with representatives of various political groups. There is no other effective way. It is no coincidence that as the chairman of the ITRE committee, I organized a study trip to Silesia for group of MEP's.'

In essence, he possesses the entrepreneurial qualities deemed central to a great policy entrepreneur: resources, access and persistence. The call for the establishment of a €4.8 billion JETF was to 'address societal, socio-economic and environmental impacts on workers and communities adversely affected by the transition from coal and carbon dependence' (European Parliament, 2018, p. 184). When looking at strategical elements, the framing of the JETF took into account the socioeconomic impacts and was focused on coal and carbon dependence specifically. However, interviewees mentioned that both MEP Buzek and DG ENER wanted to include support for companies and regions *during* the energy transition (Interview 12). This is not prominent in the JETF text but was mentioned by multiple interviewees and well as directly mentioned in a Commission webinar (Interviews 1, 3, 4 and 7). Hence, their framing of the just transition was more energy, industry and transition focused. In terms of venue-shopping in the EU, he started from a venue he had strong influence over as the chair (ITRE Committee) and then extended the proposal to the EP plenary. At the same time, he was working with the Commission (especially DG ENER) on the CRIT and was in contact with other EU institutions such as European Committee of the Regions (CoR) (Interviews 12, 5 and 6). A think tank energy policy expert states that: '…[if] there's one person that played a big role in the let's say campaign, so to say for the Just Transition Fund that's definitely him, there's no question about it.' (Interview 8). He was able to use his position and resources to soften up the different policy communities within the EU to the idea of just transition, so when the time was right to push for change, they would be receptive to the idea.

The late 2018 presented another possibility for agenda change in the JTF policy process. All three streams were ready for coupling and active policy entrepreneurship existed to execute it. However, there was no clear policy window open. The JETF was proposed in the EP's interim MFF resolution in November 2018 but the Commission had published their updated MFF proposal already in May 2018. Since the negotiations were already quite far along, the Commission was reluctant to try to add extra budgetary measures (Interviews 9, 10 and 11). They would have most likely not been accepted from the Council either. Even though Kingdon (2014) notes that budget negotiations open a policy window, the negotiations were so far along that the window can be considered practically closed. If the Council would have accepted new budgetary measures at this point, it could have risked prolonging the negotiations even further. Hence, the timing was just not right, even though all of the streams seemed to be ripe for agenda change.

5.3 New Commission, policy window and the rise onto the decision agenda in 2019

In 2019, there were multiple institutionalised changes in the EU that were known to happen. In May 2019, the EP elections for the 9th term took place. The new Commission entered into office in December 2019. Furthermore, the MFF negotiations did not reach a conclusion in 2019 but were extended to 2020. The time cycles of these institutional events created an

interesting landscape for agenda-setting. Even though the European elections do not open a policy window themselves, since the EP does not have the competence to set the formal agenda, the election results can still alter the dynamics of the EP and change the issue they try to elevate to the agenda (Franklin and Hobolt, 2015). The changing of the Commission and the (re)start of the budget negotiations opened overlapping policy windows in the political stream.

5.3.1 The EP elections

The 2019 EP elections saw the seat distribution in the EP became more fragmented. The elections saw a 'green wave' meaning that the Greens increased their seats in the EP (Interview 15). Furthermore, the two biggest parties (the EPP and the S&D) lost their single majority (Dennison et al., 2019). This might mean more ad hoc coalitions and broader compromises in the EP, since more parties need to agree for an initiative to pass. The green wave can be seen at least partially to be linked to the increased climate change concerns among the EU citizens. In 2019, they ranked climate change as the second most important issue facing the EU in the Eurobarometer survey (Figure 4). The importance of climate change grew from 11% to 22%, leaving behind issues such as terrorism and the economic situation. This sent a clear message to the decision-makers about the importance of climate change concerns among citizens and made it a key theme in the 2019 elections (Interviews 4, 10 and 15). Even though there is no established public sphere at the EU-level to contribute to a conclusive 'European mood', this shift in focus still provided indicators in the problem stream that the public saw climate change as a serious problem.
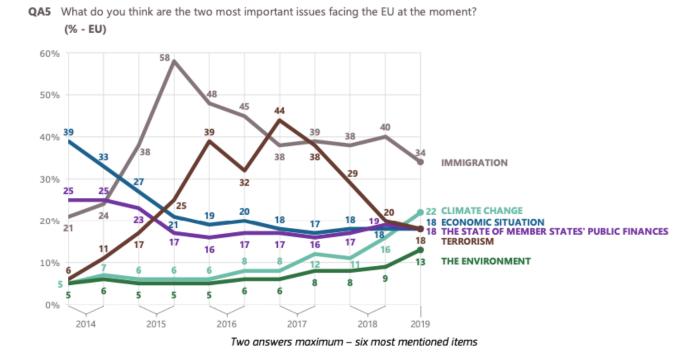

QA5 What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?
(% - EU)

Two answers maximum – six most mentioned items

Figure 4. Public opinion in the EU 2019. European Union, 2019. *Standard Eurobarometer 91 – Spring 2019: Public opinion in the European Union, First results*, p. 20.

5.3.2 The new Commission

The new European Commission entered into office in December 2019. As any new administration, the new Commission sets its own agenda to indicate its policy priorities, which are articulated in the political guidelines of the Commission president as well as in its annual working programmes. The appointment of the new Commission opened a predictable institutionalised policy window in the political stream. The predictable nature of the policy window enabled PEs to plan their strategies in advance, since they knew that the new Commission would most likely adopt new priorities and be open to suggestions. As will be seen, this policy window was decisive in getting the JTF onto the EU's decision agenda.

The EU's institutional landscape is complex, with many institutions involved in the legislative process. Therefore, inter-institutional dynamics must also be taken into account when analysing agenda-setting. As mentioned before, the EP has increased its relative power *vis-à-vis* the other EU institutions in the past decades. The EP must approve the budget and it has the power to approve or dismiss the political leadership of the Commission. The EP votes to accept the president-elect and then the whole Commission, which gives the parties of the EP considerable power to make policy demands and suggestions for the new Commission. The Council is the intergovernmental part of EU policymaking and has a powerful role, since no legislation can pass without the Council's approval. Therefore, the Commission seeks to ensure that the Council and the EP both are receptive to its proposals before publishing them (Wonka, 2015). All of these elements link to the policy window that opened in 2019 and should be considered when analysing the aspects influencing agenda-setting and policy formulation.

5.3.3 The policy entrepreneurship of the S&D

Even though MEP Buzek was widely perceived to be the central actor advocating for the JTF among the interviewees, the S&D was also mentioned as a party strongly calling for its creation, albeit maybe not as visibly (Interview 2, 11, 14). The S&D showcased both entrepreneurial qualities and effective strategies by using their veto power over the new Commission as political leverage to get their issues considered by the new Commission president-elect. The S&D president Iratxe García Pérez wrote a letter on her party's behalf listing the issues they wanted the president-elect von der Leyen to address under *An Agenda for Change* (S&D, 2019a). The letter articulated that the S&D's backing of von der Leyen for Commission president rested on the level of commitment she would show concerning the priorities of the S&D. One of the key messages was the need for a Sustainable Europe Investment Plan and as a part of that a Just Transition Fund to address 'the effects of climate change and of digitalization on the workforce' (S&D, 2019a). Von der Leyen, coming from the EPP, could count on her own party's support but had to ensure that she would get votes from the S&D and Renew Europe to secure a single majority. This political context explains why it was in the interest of von der Leyen to take the S&D's demands seriously.

When considering timing and venue, the S&D had a great strategy. Utilising their influence in the process of electing the new Commission, the S&D and von der Leyen negotiated for months to reach a compromise. As Iratxe García Pérez stated in a press release in November 2019:

'Our group has managed to maximise our leverage and to shape an agenda for change in the next five years. We also secured crucial portfolios for the S&D Commissioners, and we will work closely with the Commission to make sure that together we accomplish the ecological transformation Europe needs without leaving anyone behind' (S&D, 2019b).

This rhetoric underscores the active policy entrepreneurship pursued by the S&D. It should be noted that the First Vice President Frans Timmermans (DG CLIMA) and Commissioner Eliza Ferreira (DG REGIO) come from socialist democratic parties. The former is responsible for the EGD and the latter for cohesion policy and reforms. Both DGs are closely involved in the policy formulation of the JTF, especially DG REGIO, which was in charge of the formulation of the proposal. As the second largest group in the EP, the S&D had resources and access to soften up policymakers for the idea. Their chosen venue – the political guidelines of the new Commission – was clever, since they could exert more influence than usually due to the political and procedural context. Looking at persistence, the S&D was active in 2016 and in 2019 but did not feature as visibly as MEP Buzek during the years in between. Even though MEP Buzek did not seem to be as active during the start of the new Commission, he had already pushed through the resolution on the JETF in late 2018, attracting more attention to the issue of just transition in the EU and inside the Commission. In a way, the softening up of the different streams done by MEP Buzek during earlier years most likely made it easier for the Commission to call for the establishment of the JTF. The policy entrepreneurship exercised by the S&D and Jerzy Buzek actively pushed for a JTF and therefore their efforts complimented one other by ensuring that the issue was getting attention. However, there were certain differences in problem framing between the PEs, which will be analysed later in this chapter with policy formulation.

5.3.4 Finland's Council presidency and the Member States

The focus of the analysis has rested thus far on the actions of the EP and the Commission. As a powerful force in the EU's policy process, the role of the Council should not be forgotten. From July 2019 onwards Finland held the Council's presidency, which rotates between the Member States every six months. Every country presents its main priorities for their presidency and can somewhat influence the agenda of the Council with these (Vaznonyte, 2020). One of the priorities of the Finnish Council presidency was climate leadership. Consequently, Finland played a role in the JTF agenda-setting process, since it hosted and organised a meeting for high level Council official to discuss the need for a JTF during late 2019. The objective of this meeting was to open up dialogue about just transition inside the Council (Interview 9). This helped to create more attention to the issue and lift it higher also on the Council's agenda.

Interestingly, the Member States were not mentioned as active PEs in the interviews as much as the researcher had expected. Especially Germany was thought to have played a big role, since it had national level just transition policies in place. However, Germany was seen as staying in the background of the agenda-setting of the JTF and focusing on the negotiations of a national coal phase-out. Germany's own coal phase-out budget was also much larger than the JTF, €40 billion. This difference in budgetary volume could explain why Germany was more focused on the national rather than EU-level (Interview 15). Poland on the other had was mentioned as an active actor pushing for the JTF in the Council already for sometime. Some interviewees mentioned that it was likely that MEP Buzek and Poland were cooperating to some extent during the agenda-setting period (Interview 8, 14 and 15). Furthermore, the fact that Poland did not agree on the climate neutrality pledge in late 2019 was seen as a bargaining tactic to ensure the establishment of a JTF (Interviews 11 and 15). Thus, it was suggested that a partial reason for the creation of the JTF was indeed to get Poland to agree on the EU climate neutrality 2050 pledge (Interviews 1, 3 and 8). However, after the JTF proposal came out Poland still did not formally endorse climate neutrality 2050. Negotiations were supposed to start in June 2020 but were postponed due to the global pandemic and are still ongoing (Simon, 2020). The Baltic States were also vocal in their support for a JTF, since they experienced cuts in the cohesion policy allocation and wanted to ensure funding from other channels (Interview

4). It was suggested that the JTF acted also to an extent as a concession to the Member States. that were going to see their cohesion funding cut in the MFF 21-27 and in this way the JTF would help the MFF and the EGD initiative along (Interviews 3, 4, 6 and 9).

5.3.5 The Multiannual Financial Framework and the institutional side

The delay in the MFF negotiations created an interesting situation of multiple institutionalised political policy windows being open at the same time. Since the JTF had a budgetary component, it needed to be included in the MFF negotiations or it would have been hard to finalise it (Interview 4). The MFF negotiations had reached an impasse and in late 2019 the Finnish presidency proposed a new negotiation box. This revitalised the negotiations, making it easier to try to propose new items. The European Council (EUCO) president Charles Michel announced that he wanted the MFF agreed on in the EUCO meeting in February 2020. Since the €7.5 billion proposed for the JTF needed to be included in the MFF to become reality, the best way to make it work was to get the proposal out before February (Interviews 4 and 11). This could partially explain the shared notion among the EU officials that the JTF proposal was created under sever time constraints (Interviews 4, 6, 7 and 13). Ackrill and Kay (2011) call this kind of a situation, where one policy window influences another, an 'exogenous spillover'. A decision taken in one sector might affect other policy windows or force the policymakers to make certain decision or act faster in other policy processes. In the case of the JTF, the institutional aspect of the MFF negotiations and the closing policy window forced the swift creation of the JTF, since otherwise getting 'fresh' money for the fund would have been very difficult.

In late 2019, favourable conditions were in place: the JTF had active PEs with feasible alternative solutions, it had gained attention in the problem stream and had receptiveness in the Commission. Then, a predictable policy window opened in the form of a new Commission administration and the S&D used their policy entrepreneurship to couple the streams and ensure that the creation of the JTF was included in Ursula von der Leyen's political guidelines. In addition, Poland's active push for the JTF in the Council and especially their bargaining with the refusal to agree on the climate neutrality pledge were seen to have furthered the development of the JTF. The institutional context, especially in the form of the MFF negotiations created certain constrains for the JTF agenda-setting, exerting pressure to publish the proposal with a very strict timeframe. The preparatory work done by Vice President Šefčovič, the EPSC and DG ENER under Juncker Commission helped von der Leyen's Commission to move rapidly forward with the creation of the proposal (Interview 14 and 15). The combination of all these aspects resulted in the elevation of the JTF to the decision agenda and culminated in the Commission's proposal in January 2020.

5.4. The influence of agenda-setting on the Commission's policy formulation

This section discusses how the agenda-setting aspects analysed above influenced the policy formulation of the JTF proposal. The two main elements analysed are the ways different actors and factors were able to influence the problem framing and how they impacted the policy design of the JTF proposal.

5.4.1 Problem framing

The main aim of the Commission's JTF is to leave no one behind in the transition to climate neutrality. A Commission official in a technical level webinar emphasised that the Commission's JTF proposal is not an energy transition fund but focuses on mitigating and preventing negative socioeconomic impacts deriving from the transition. Therefore, the

Commission's problem framing is more on the social justice side. The transition creates negative impacts to regions, communities and workers, which need to be countered fairly. This framing aligns well with the S&D framing, which focuses on *socially* just transition. As Constance Krehl, the S&D spokesperson for regional policy states: 'Its [JTF's] purpose is not to finance the climate or energy transition per se, but to give financial support to the socio-economic consequences of this transition.' (S&D, 2020). In their view, the problem is that the transition impacts workers and regions negatively and the justness of the transition comes from supporting the reskilling of workers and diversification of the economy. This framing is visible not only in the S&D letter of 2019 but also in the amendments to the ETS reform back in 2016.

The other main framing of the JTF emphasises the support needed to carry out the transition itself. This framing of just transition agrees on the need to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of the transition but underlines the importance of assisting industry and regions also *during* the energy transition. Especially the role of coal regions, renewable energy and support for energy companies are an important part of this just *energy* transition frame. This framing was advocated by MEP Buzek and also by DG ENER and Poland in the Council (Interviews 1, 2, 3, 7 and 12). The rhetoric focused more on assisting industry and regions, even though it included also workers. However, as a Commission official clearly articulated the Commission's objective was to mitigate the negative socioeconomic impacts, not to support the energy transition, since there were other funds available for that. (Interview 7). Therefore, the framing of the JTF proposal is similar to the S&D framing focusing mainly on social justice and labour issues.

The choice of the DG can also influence the framing of the issue. Here the influence of the S&D can also be seen. The S&D president Iratxe García Pérez articulated after negotiations with von der Leyen that the S&D had secured Commissioner positions to the files they saw as most important, the JTF being one of them (S&D, 2019b). The Commissioner in charge of DG REGIO is from the S&D, so it is possible that the DG was open for a more social justice and labour focused frame also due to this. Furthermore, DG REGIO is responsible for improving the cohesion between different EU regions, so a social justice approach seems logical. It would have been interesting to see how the JTF would have been framed if it was under DG ENER, which seemed to focus on supporting the energy transition and renewable energy and worked closely together with MEP Buzek.

Some of the NGO interviewees floated around another framing, which was cautious about the creation of the JTF. Their fear was that by designating only one fund for just transition under cohesion policy, the Member States would continue to use the other funds for unsustainable projects (Interviews 3, 8 and 11). Furthermore, some pointed out the dangers of framing the issue in mainly social justice terms (rather than more ecological terms), since it might undermine the effectiveness of emission reduction and climate action. If the social side of just transition is taken to the extreme, it might delay the transition to climate neutrality, which is also problematic (Interview 15). The difficulties associated with possible trade offs between social justice and climate action were also pointed out by Newell and Mulvaney (2013) in Chapter 2. However, this framing was not really visible in the JTF policy process.

5.4.2 Policy design
The policy design of a proposal depends on the guidelines given to the DG responsible for its creation and the experts assigned to the process. However, there are also some institutional conditions that guide policy designs. The Commission's own budget is quite limited, and it does not have a strong control over budgetary measures (Wonka, 2015). Most DGs can only

create instruments that are under direct management with small budgets. An example of this kind of an instrument is the Horizon Europe, which allows different projects EU wide to apply for grants directly from the Commission. DG REGIO and DG AGRI have considerably bigger budgets and can create shared management instruments. Therefore, the design of the proposal is partially determined by which DG is tasked with its creation.

The European Council's aim to reach an agreement on the MFF in February 2020 and von der Leyen's pledge to get her main policy proposals out in the first 100 days of office both rushed the creation of the JTF. When asked why DG REGIO got the JTF file, many interviewees pointed out that the JTF was most likely given to DG REGIO for practical and technical reasons (Interview 7, 9, 12 and 13). DG REGIO has extensive experience creating shared management instruments and had all the structural and organisational aspects in place to get the file out quickly (Interview 13). Furthermore, DG Budget, which has a say in all files including a budgetary element, was also in favour of the file going to DG REGIO (Interview 10). There were different views on just transition withing the Commission especially between DG REGIO and DG ENER, with the former championing a social justice frame and the latter energy transition one. However, the negotiations were not as formal as they normally would have been. This can be explained by the hierarchical nature in which von der Leyen's Cabinet made the decision to create the JTF and assign it to DG REGIO decreasing the need for interservice dialogue (Interviews 10, 12 and 13).

Usually the Commission is quite open for outside feedback and organises public consultations before publishing proposals (Wonka, 2015). However, this was not the case with the JTF. The JTF file was seen to have come 'from above' or 'from the top', meaning von der Leyen's Cabinet (Interviews 1, 3 and 12). No stakeholder consultation was organised before the publication of the JTF. Main reason for this was seen to be the time constraints of getting the proposal out (Interview 11). Therefore, external actors, such as the Europe Beyond Coal campaign, had only limited possibility to exercise influence during the policy formulation stage. Of course, they and other NGOs did secure meetings with Commission officials to exercise influence, but the absence of the public consultation still limited the capacity of external actors to influence the process and policy design (Interviews, 3 and 11).

Looking at the political side of the JTF policy formulation, some aspects of the policy design were seen as a result of political bargaining from the Commission's side. The JETF proposed in 2018 focused on coal regions and included support for the actual transition of the energy sector. CRIT was also territorially bound to the coal regions and only available to certain Member States. However, the Commission's JTF proposal is open for all Member States and includes coal, oil, peat and oil shale regions as well as regions with greenhouse gas intensive industries. Many interviewees pointed out that these were political decision from von der Leyen's Cabinet, since they would help to secure the support in the Council, which is sometimes hard to get on board if not all Member States see the benefit of a legislation (Interviews 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8). This is a relatively common practice in the Commission, since usually the Commission refrains from publishing a proposal it is not confident in having enough backing from the Member States (Wonka, 2015). Hence, like in many policy processes, there is some indication that certain choices during the JTF policy formulation were the result of political pressure and bargaining.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has presented an in-depth chronological description of the Just Transition Fund agenda-setting and policy formulation process between the years of 2015 and early 2020. The objective of this chapter has been to showcase the main actors and factors of the JTF agenda-setting process and highlight how their influence extended into the policy formulation stage. The conclusive chapter will reiterate the central findings of this research, offer interpretations of these results and discuss their impact on broader scholarship.

6. Conclusions and discussion

6.1 Conclusions

This research investigated the actors and factors involved in the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the Just Transition Fund. Agenda-setting, policy studies and EU integration literature were consulted in choosing the theoretical framework of the MSF as the lens through which the policy process was analysed. The rigorous operationalisation and adaptation of the MSF to the EU context was done to enhance its explanatory value. A case study methodology with process tracing was employed to understand the emergence of the JTF onto the EU decision agenda and the dynamics of its policy formulation. Qualitative methods used included 15 semi-structured interviews with participants closely involved in EU policymaking, extensive document analysis and some observations.

The main research question of this study is: *How did the factors and actors involved in the agenda-setting of the Just Transition Fund influence the policy formulation of the Commission's proposal?*. This chapter will reiterate the findings of this study by first answering the four subquestions and then the main research question articulated in Chapter 1. The latter part of this chapter interprets these finding further, discusses their implications for broader scholarship and analyses the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for future research.

1. What policy choices were made considering the Just Transition Fund proposal?
The JTF proposal was drafted in DG REGIO under cohesion policy rules. This means that the fund is a shared management instrument between the Commission and the Member States. The budget for the fund in the Commission's January proposal was €7.5 billion and its scope and objective are narrowly defined to mitigate unnecessary overlap with other cohesion funds. The fund is open for all Member States and is intended to support regions struggling with the transition away from coal, oil, peat and oil shale as well as regions with greenhouse gas intensive industrial processes. The objective of the JTF is to support projects 'enabling regions and people to address the social, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards a climate-neutral economy' (European Commission, 2020, p. 13). The framing of just transition in the Commission's proposal focuses on the negative socioeconomic impacts experienced by the workers, communities and regions of the transition. It does not include supporting the energy transition itself.

2. How did the Just Transition Fund rise onto the EU decision agenda?
The JTF rose onto the EU decision agenda in late 2019, enabled by the opening of a political policy window due to the changing of the Commission. The time period between 2015 and late 2019 was crucial in explaining the emergence of the JTF onto the agenda. The agenda-setting process of the JTF had multiple parallel initiatives and venues at play, which is not surprising in the multi-level context of the EU. A possible coupling could have taken place in 2016 when the S&D, with the help of the trade unions, tried to have the JTF included in the ETS reform 4 but without success. The policy entrepreneurship of the S&D was not enough to soften up the Council and the Commission to the idea, and the indicators that energy transition and climate change are a social justice issue were lacking in the problem stream. The next possibility in 2018 saw active policy entrepreneurship from EPP MEP Jerzy Buzek. He successfully created broad support in the EP to call for the creation of a Just Energy Transition Fund. At this point, the Commission's Coal Regions in Transition platform and JRC's coal regions research had

aided the recognition of just transition as a policy problem. However, there was no clear policy window open and yet again, JTF did not reach the decision agenda.

Finally in late 2019, the issue of the JTF was successfully elevated onto the decision agenda of the EU. Interestingly enough, it did not only get onto the decision agenda but became one of the main political priorities of the new Commission. The swift rise of the JTF to the top is a combination of multiple institutional and agency elements. As the process tracing of Chapter 5 illustrates, all three streams were ripe in 2019. There were multiple feasible solutions available on how to execute a just transition. The EP, the Commission and even the Council (thanks to Poland's active role and the Finnish presidency) were receptive to the idea and the problem had been recognised as a public policy issue mainly via feedback from the CRIT and citizens. The predictable political window opening from the changing of the Commission enabled the coupling of the streams and hence the JTF found its way onto the decision agenda. The policy entrepreneurship of the S&D party in the EP played a key role in this, since by leveraging the election process of the new Commission, they were able to push for the creation of the JTF. However, it should also be mentioned that the Commission as the formal agenda-setter of the EU also played a part and had been working on issues concerning the energy transition already during the previous Commission. Therefore, even though in this case actors outside the Commission played considerable roles, the part of the (old and new) Commission should not be forgotten.

3. How did policy entrepreneurship influence the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the Just Transition Fund?
Active policy entrepreneurship was exercised by MEP Buzek, the S&D party and Poland. MEP Buzek, the former Prime Minister of Poland and the EP, used his exceptional access and resources to get a broad cross-party support for just transition and the JETF in the EP. He worked persistently for years on the EU energy policy and just transition and was undoubtedly a crucial part of getting the JTF onto the EU decision agenda. He was cooperating not only with the Commission (especially DG ENER) but also civil society. Poland was the only Member State mentioned in interviews as an active player in the Council pushing for the JTF. Poland was also seen to use their refusal to agree to the EU's climate neutrality pledge as a bargaining tactic to ensure the creation of the JTF. Both MEP Buzek and Poland were influential especially in the agenda-setting stage of the JTF by softening up the streams for the idea and keeping the issue alive inside the EU. Their framing of the issue was also similar and interviewees mentioned some indication of cooperation between the two actors (Interviews 8, 14 and 15). However, the framing championed by MEP Buzek, Poland and also DG ENER focusing on coal regions and support for regions and companies *during* the energy transition was not very visible in the Commission's proposal, which emphasises the socioeconomic impacts of the just transition during the post-transition period. When considering policy design, the Commission's proposal was open to all Member States, included peat on oil shale as well as greenhouse gas intensive regions rather than just coal regions.

The S&D was active in the 2016 ETS 4 reform but after that was not as visible as MEP Buzek until the negotiations for the new Commission started in 2019. The S&D was in a great leverage position, since the president-elect Ursula von der Leyen from the EPP needed to ensure enough votes to secure a single majority for her presidency. The S&D used this opportunity to demand many policy priorities, one of them being the creation of the JTF. The JTF featured in von der Leyen's political guidelines and the proposal was drafted by DG REGIO, which was led by an S&D Commissioner. The framing of just transition in the Commission's proposal is very similar to the one championed by the S&D in 2016 and articulated in press releases later. The

focus is on the social dimension and social justice, taking into account workers and social partners in the regions. The policy design is also more holistic with a wider scope of regions than just coal. The fact that DG REGIO was under an S&D Commissioner also opened up possibilities to influence the policy design. Therefore, the strategy of the S&D to use the nomination of the new Commission as a venue to get the JTF to the top of the Commission's agenda seemed to be rather successful. They were able to exert influence at the agenda-setting stage but also during the Commission's policy formulation to some extent.

4. Did the nature of the policy window(s) affect the agenda-setting and policy formulation?
The institutionalised political policy window that opened because of the changing of the Commission was the window that enabled the coupling of the streams by the S&D and elevated the JTF to the top of the decision agenda. The S&D's power to influence the new Commission's agenda was further enhanced by the EP's role in electing the new Commission. Hence, the institutional and political context played an important role in the JTF agenda-setting. The prolonged MFF negotiations had kept the political window of budgetary reform also open, but the announcement from Charles Michel to get the MFF agreed on in the February 2020 EUCO meeting meant that it was going to close soon. The time constraints imposed by the closing of the MFF window forced the JTF to be drafted in a hurry. Many interviewees articulated that DG REGIO was tasked with the JTF file because it was the 'practical', 'feasible' and 'technical' choice and could get the job done quickly (Interviews 1, 7, 10, 12 and 13). The organisational structure of the DG REGIO and the choice of policy instruments assigned to it determined to a large part the policy design of the proposal (shared management instrument under cohesion policy). Had the file gone to DG ENER or DG CLIMA, it could not have been a shared management instrument, since they do not have the competence to create them. The proposal would have inevitably looked different if made by another DG. Therefore, this research argues that even though it was not the only reason why the file went to DG REGIO, the overlap of the MFF policy window with the new Commission forced decisions regarding the JTF, which had an impact on the policy design.

Main research question: How did the factors and actors involved in the agenda-setting of the Just Transition Fund influence the policy formulation of the Commission's proposal?
Drawing on the insights outlined in the previous paragraphs, the central research question of this research will now be answered. Both institutional factors and active actors involved in the agenda-setting of the JTF influenced the policy formulation. From the institutional side, the MFF negotiations had the biggest impact on the policy formulation by severely restricting the time available for creating the proposal. This meant that the DG that could turnover a feasible proposal fast was chosen and outside consultation was considerably limited. Due to organisational aspects inside the Commission, the choice of DG REGIO in turn predetermined the policy design to some extent. Therefore, institutional factors, (the fact that the MFF policy window overlapped with the new Commission and the JTF process) had a considerable influence on the policy formulation. Another important aspect was the enabling institutional and political context in which the S&D exercised its policy entrepreneurship. The fact that the EP elected the new Commission gave the S&D a strong negotiation position with the president-elect von der Leyen to get its policy priorities included in the new Commission's political guidelines. Therefore, even though much of the agenda-setting literature is actor-based, analysis of agenda-setting and policy formulation should not overlook the institutional structures and factors at play.

When discussing how different actors influenced the policy formulation, it should be noted that the Commission, both its political leadership and different DGs are involved in both agenda-

setting and policy formulation by default, since the Commission is the formal agenda-setter of the EU. Vice President Šefčovič, DG ENER and the EPSC did preparatory work concerning just transition already under the Juncker Commission, even though it was not yet on the decision agenda. The main interservice conflict inside the current Commission was between DG REGIO and DG ENER for their different views on what the JTF should fund. This was quickly extinguished since the Cabinet of von der Leyen gave the file to DG REGIO. However, DG ENER and DG CLIMA were consulted during the creation of the proposal. Even though there was some policy entrepreneurship inside the Commission, the main PEs were the S&D party and MEP Jerzy Buzek in the EP as well as Poland in the Council. As previously argued, Jerzy Buzek exercised remarkable policy entrepreneurship in getting the JTF on to the agenda and was named by some as the 'father of the JTF'. However, the analysis found little indication that his influence had greatly extended to the policy formulation stage. Similarly with Poland, the Member State was able to use political bargaining during the agenda-setting to push for the creation of the JTF but there was no clear indication of its influence during policy formulation. The idea of the JTF came more from the EP and trade unions and Poland ensured it was also being discussed in the Council. Some interviewees also indicated that Poland and MEP Buzek were pushing for a similar kind of framing of the JTF (support for regions, workers and companies during the energy transition) and implied that they could have been cooperating to some extent (Interview 8, 14 and 15). On the other hand, the S&D party was active about the JTF in the EP in 2016 but was not a very visible actor until late 2019. It leveraged its voting power considering the new Commission to push the JTF to the agenda and secure the file under DG REGIO with an S&D Commissioner. Its influence therefore extended to the policy formulation, which can be seen both in the framing as well as in the scope of the JTF.

6.2 Interpretations of the findings

In essence, the combination of institutional factors and actors' actions influenced the policy formulation. An intriguing and somewhat surprising conclusion of this research is that a separate budgetary policy window linked to the MFF negotiations had a considerable impact on the JTF policy process, since it overlapped with the political policy window opened by the changing of the Commission. In order to have the JTF included in the new long-term budget, the Commission needed to get the proposal out very quickly, which decrease the choice of the DG within the Commission. This is an exciting case of an exogenous policy window spillover. Usually, a policy window in one policy arena can keep another policy window open for longer (Kingdon, 2014). However, in this case the MFF policy window overlapped and constrained the JTF process, pushing the file to DG REGIO on practical grounds. This is not to say that the time constrains were the only reason why the file went to DG REGIO but it played a part in it. This study further strengthens the point made by Mucciaroni (1992) that taking into account political and institutional context when analysing the agenda-setting process through the lens of the MSF is of utmost importance. The JTF process could not have been comprehensively explained without investigating the overlapping policy windows and their interactions. Furthermore, certain procedural rules also affected the JTF, for example the fact that only a few DGs can create share management instruments. These nuances would have been lost in a purely actor-based and situational research.

Another interesting find is that the Member States and the Council seemed to have played a more limited role in the agenda-setting and policy formulation of the JTF than the researcher initially thought. Poland was the main active Member State in the Council, actively arguing for the necessity of a JTF and even used its resistance to join the climate neutrality 2050 pledge to bargain for it. The creation of the JTF was indeed seen by some as a political appeasement toward Poland. Poland was clearly active during agenda-setting but there was no clear

indication of its influence during the policy formulation. The Finnish presidency also helped to raise the salience of the JTF in the Council during the latter part of 2019. Germany's small role at the EU-level was surprising, taking into account its active engagement with just transition and coal phase-out at the national level. When it comes to the international policies and events, the Paris Agreement in 2015 was initially thought by the researcher to have a strong impact on the agenda-setting process. However, the COP24 in Katowice Poland and *the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration* seemed to have a stronger impact in keeping the issue of just transition in the EU policy dialogue than the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, no external event was seen as having a central role in pushing the JTF onto the agenda.

The findings of this research illuminate that in the case of the JTF, especially actros in the European Parliament exercised leverage and influence in the policy process, which was somewhat unexpected. The EP used to be the greenest of the EU institutions in its early years, but the increase in the number of Member States, the rise of Euroscepticism and the fragmentation of the ideological composition of the EP have all contributed as constraining factors on the EP's leading role in climate policy (Burns, 2017). However, the cross-party support for the JETF and the work of the S&D highlight that in certain situations the EP can punch above its perceived weight to influence agenda-setting and policy formulation. Therefore, contrary to Burns' (2017) observation that the EP's leadership in climate issues is largely symbolic, this study indicates that the EP is still capable of concrete climate policy leadership in agenda-setting, especially if the institutional context is favourable. The increased seats of the Greens in the EP will mostly likely also contribute positively towards more ambitious climate leadership and initiatives.

The central role of the EP brings interesting deliberations also to the EU integration debate. The new intergovernmentalist approach argues that in the post-Maastricht period integration has continued in more intergovernmental terms, meaning that the EU institutions have not seen their power increase notably (Bickerton et al., 2015). However, in the case of the JTF, the more supranational actors (the EP and the Commission) were both influential in pushing the issue onto the agenda. At the same time, the Member States seemed to be more at the sidelines or at least not exercising active policy entrepreneurship except for Poland. This research indicates that in certain contexts supranationalist institutions can considerably advance the agenda-setting and policy formulation of climate policy. However, the Commission did make some political choices considering the policy design of the JTF, by for instance opening it up to all Member States and including greenhouse gas intensive industries to ensure the Council's receptiveness for it. Therefore, the intergovernmental elements and considerations have not faded from EU policymaking. However, the argument put forward by Bickerton et al. (2015) that the supranational institutions are currently not even seeking a stronger position in EU policymaking is not supported by the findings of this research. On the contrary, the EP and the Commission showed strong initiative in pushing the JTF to the agenda, even when the Council and most Member States were not that enthusiastic at the start.

6.3 Implications for broader scholarship

This research has utilised the MSF framework to understand the agenda-setting process of the JTF but also ventured out of the classic frame, including the analysis of the policy formulation stage. The interlinkages between these two stages (i.e. how the actors and factors present in agenda-setting influence policy formulation) have not yet been properly researched, especially in the EU context. The agenda-setting stage usually includes a myriad of actors in the EU, but the policy formulation is concentrated inside the Commission. If the actors active in agenda-setting want to ensure that their pet solution or framing is considered in the proposal, they must

find ways to extend their influence to the policy formulation. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse the conditions under which actors or institutional factors mainly outside the Commission can shape the policy formulation stage. Consequently, the EU agenda-setting research should aim to better integrate policy formulation into the analysis in order to ensure a more comprehensive understanding.

A considerable amount of research using the MSF framework does not apply the complete framework in the analysis but concentrates on certain aspects, usually the policy entrepreneurship. However, in order to have a chance to comprehensively analyse the conditions under which agenda-setting actors and factors can influence the policy formulation, the whole framework should be included (Herweg, 2016). Especially the characteristics and nature of policy windows should receive more attention in MSF scholarship. Ackrill and Kay (2011) have done inspiring research about the exogenous and endogenous policy window spillovers in the EU and these concepts were also utilised in this research. Looking at the predictability or unpredictability of policy windows as well as identifying overlaps between different windows and how they influence policy processes will further enrich the institutional side of agenda-setting and policy formulation literature (see Howlett, 1998; Ackrill and Kay, 2011). Another important and often overlooked part of the MSF analysis is also to investigate occasions during which agenda change did not occur (Bache, 2013). These failed accounts of agenda change are important, since only by also looking at the conditions under which change did not occur it is possible to more plausibly identify the explanatory elements responsible for agenda change. This was not the focus of this research, but the findings contemplated possible reasons for the failures of the JTF agenda change in 2016 and 2018.

The findings of this study further highlight the need for the MSF framework to focus equal attention to actor-based actions and institutional factors. Without analysing the institutional context in detail, it is not possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of an agenda-setting process. This research has aimed to intertwine an actor-based research framework with institutionalist aspects. The policy windows and political and institutional contexts link with the political science approaches under institutionalism. On the other hand, framing and the broad definitions of influence and power bring also parts of constructivism to the approach. Therefore, this research sits at the crossroads of multiple political science theories introduced in Chapter 2. Attempting to combine many different theoretical approaches into a single research is always challenging and can create a certain messiness to the process. However, real life policymaking is also messy and nonlinear. A multidisciplinary and holistic approach can help explain the nuances and surprising elements present better than a one-dimensional focus on either structure or agency.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The MSF is considered a flexible, universal framework to analyse agenda-setting and decision-making processes. However, scholars have criticised the fact that the MSF has been used in many different institutional and political contexts without proper adaptation. Since the MSF was created to explain US federal policymaking, its concepts need to be adapted when used in other political environments to ensure their explanatory value. Therefore, scholars should aim to clearly define the elements of the MSF and how they are operationalised in the EU context (Herweg, 2016). This research has aimed to operationalise the MSF to the EU context rigorously but understands that when working with relatively abstract concepts such as 'policy windows', 'streams' and 'influence' there will always be certain level of ambiguity involved. Another limitation of the MSF is the post-ante evaluation of the policy windows. Meaning that the researcher decides what counts as a policy window after it has already happened. This

decreases the prescriptive value of the framework, since it is hard to pinpoint in advance, when a policy window will open. However, in this research the policy windows considered are predictable and institutionalised and their existence does not rely on the researcher's interpretation, mitigating this problem.

The trade off from focusing on a single case study is that the possibility for generalisation of the study is relatively limited (van Thiel, 2014). However, due to the largely deductive starting point of this research and the detailed adaptation of the conceptual framework, some general theoretical patterns can be offered to contribute to the refining the MSF in the EU context. Nevertheless, findings from other case studies of agenda-setting and policy formulation processes in the EU will be helpful to reach more compelling conclusions and aid further theoretical developments. Considering research methods and data collection, the research would have benefitted from more interviews with policymakers. Especially more interviews with Council officials as well as industry representatives would have enriched the research further. The Council is not the most transparent of the EU institutions and therefore the analysis would have been more well rounded with more insights from Council officials. The researcher faced difficulties in finding the right contacts in the Council even though she did research organisational charts and asked recommendations from some of the interviewees. However, the interviews with a COREPER special advisor as well as a Finnish government official helped the researcher to uncover some elements of the JTF process in the Council. The researcher also had difficulty getting interviews from the key MEPs but this was not as much of an issue, since MEPs regularly publish interviews and press releases, which were analysed. The researcher's opportunities for observation during her internship at the European Parliament were severely limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Informal discussions in the corridors of the EP could have enriched the researcher's insights and possibly enabled her to establish more contacts and secure more interviews.

6.5 Recommendations for further research

Agenda-setting scholarship is still relatively small in contrast to the other stages of the policy process. In the EU context, agenda-setting research started first in the 1990s and is therefore still relatively young. It would benefit from more case study research as well as more theoretical contributions. So far, the theoretical advancements of the MSF literature in the EU context are done by a handful of talented scholars, such as Zahariadis (2008), Ackrill and Kay (2011), Ackrill et al. (2013), Bache (2013) and Herweg (2016). More theoretical contributions are needed in order to create a more robust MSF for EU analysis. This research has attempted that, taking a turn into a more uncharted territory, combining the analysis of agenda-setting and policy formulation to test the concepts of the MSF further. More research combining these two stages in the policy process would be beneficial to better understand their dynamics.

One of the exciting findings of this research was the considerable power of the actors in the EP to influence agenda-setting and policy formulation. More research aiming to uncover under which conditions the European Parliament can maximise its influence could bring interesting insights into the EU institution, which is sometimes still perceived as less influential in the policy process. After the JTF is adopted and implemented, it would be interesting to research how the different Member States have faired with their just transitions and how the fund has worked. Furthermore, the EU is currently pursuing both green and digital transition but the 'justness' and 'leaving no one behind' rhetoric has been mostly used only in relation to the green transition. Why is the mainstream view that the justness of the green transition must be ensured but the same does not apply for the digital transition, which will also reduce jobs and impact communities? During the analysis, the researcher also started to notice indications of a

shift in discourse and rhetoric in EU climate policy documents from 'sustainable economy' and 'green economy' to 'climate justice' and 'socially fair transition'. It could be interesting to research how the climate policy discourse has changed in the last 10 years and what impacts it has had on policymaking. All in all, the EU provides an exciting, exhilarating and sometimes surprising arena for policy research, where novel aspects, different actors and complex interactions keep emerging from all sides. As the EU is strengthening its role as a climate policy leader and is (hopefully) heading toward climate neutrality in 2050, its climate policymaking will certainly offer numerous interesting topics for those curious to discover its dynamics.

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Appendix 1: List of interviews

	Interviewee	Date
Interview 1	Special advisor, Permanent representation to the EU	11th of May 2020
Interview 2	Advisor, Renew Europe	18th of May 2020
Interview 3	NGO EU policy officer	4th of June 2020
Interview 4	Commission official	5th of June 2020
Interview 5	Administrator – CoR ECON Committee	8th of June 2020
Interview 6	Administrator – COTER Secretariat	8th of June 2020
Interview 7	Commission official	11th of June 2020
Interview 8	Think thank energy policy expert	12th of June 2020
Interview 9	Finnish government official	22nd of June 2020
Interview 10	EU official	23rd of June 2020
Interview 11	NGO energy policy officer	25th of June 2020
Interview 12	EU official	2nd of July 2020
Interview 13	Commission official	23rd of July 2020
Interview 14	Trade union senior policy advisor	30th of October 2020
Interview 15	Think tank senior policy advisor	5th of November 2020

Appendix 2: Interview consent form

Consent for participation in a research interview

I agree to participate in a Master's thesis research project of Ms. Taru Leppänen from Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the project through being interviewed.

    1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.

    2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.

    3. I allow the researcher to take written notes during the interview. I also may allow the recording (by audio/video tape) of the interview. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview to be taped I am at any point of time fully entitled to ask for the recording to be stopped. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes.

    4. I have the right not to answer any of the questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview.

    5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that, if I wish so, the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

    6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

For more information please contact:
Ms. Taru Leppänen, taru.johanna.leppanen@gmail.com

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date

Appendix 3: Interview guide

<u>Interview guide</u>

- Why did the Just Transition Fund come out now?
- Why did it not come out sooner?
- How did just transition become a priority in EU policy?
- Did international or national events have influence on the process?
- Did previous policies affect the emergence of the JTF onto the agenda?
- Were there other policies which influenced/hindered the formulation of the JTF?
- Were there changes within the EU institutions during the development of the JTF that impacted the process?
- Were there any key personnel changes during the JTF process?
- Did the European elections influence the development of the Just Transition Fund?
- Did the change of the Commission have an impact on the importance of just transition?
- Were media and citizens interested in this topic?
- Who was heavily involved in the process in and outside of the EU institutions?
- Was any Member State particularly active?
- How were outside stakeholders involved?
- Were any actors left out of the process?
- Did other policy processes or decisions affect the JTF process?
- What ideas were there to address the issue of just transition? Were they supported?
- What problem was the Just Transition Fund addressing?
- Which choices were made in the Just Transition Fund proposal and why?

Appendix 4: Coding scheme

Conceptual framework

Concepts	Indicators	Subcategories
Problem stream	indicators, focusing events, feedback	
Political stream	political changes, administrative changes, interest group campaigns	key personnel change, new administration, EU elections, lobbying,
Policy stream	technical feasibility	
Policy window	problem window, political window	predictability, spillover, overlap
Policy entrepreneurship	entrepreneurial qualities	access, resources, persistence
	strategies	framing, venue-shopping
	Member States, EU institutions, groups, individuals, civil society	
Policy formulation	problem framing	
	policy design	practical, political

Institutional context

Concepts	Indicators
Origins	previous policies, historical aspects
External elements	events, policies, meetings
Scale	Community level, Member State level
Procedural	processes, juridical aspects