

# The Influence of Resource Mobilization on the Success of Online Petitions

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## ABSTRACT,

*Since centuries petitions have been used to tell the government what they think about a certain object and demand change (Kilman & Costello, 2002). Nowadays, there are online petitions to achieve this goal. For this different resources can be used. This paper looks at the influence of resources on the likelihood of succeeding of online petitions. There are many resources, but this paper focuses on three resources; time, financial resources and social network. For this 16 petitioners have been interviewed, either by phone or by mail. Half of them were individuals, and the other half were from organisations. Therefore, this paper also looks at the differences between individuals and organisations and online petitions. In this research, no relation between the resources time, financial resources and social network and the likely outcome of a petition has been found. A difference has been found between organisations and individuals. It appears that most organisations have a better network established than individuals. Besides, most organisations have more money available. In most cases, this results in the fact that they spent more money on promotion of the petition compared to individuals. As there is no relation found in this research, this does not mean that organisations have a higher chance of reaching the goal of their petition. The sample of this paper exists out of petitioners from *petities.nl*. Therefore, the results might not be internationally applicable. It also has to be taken into account that the sample is relatively small.*

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## Keywords

Online petition, resources, influence of resources, likelihood of succeeding, organisations vs individuals, influence of financial resources, influence of social network, influence of time

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Petitions have been used for centuries by citizens to tell organisations what they think about a certain subject and demand change (Kilman & Costello, 2002). Back in the days, petitioners had to find people in real life, either ringing on doors or looking for people in public, and ask them to sign the petition. Nowadays it is much easier for people to sign a petition. They can go online to one of the many sites and sign a petition. This has led to a certain phenomenon called slacktivism. In contrast to activists, previous research suggests that so-called slacktivists tend to give publicly visible token support, such as wearing badges or posting slogans on their Facebook page, to make a good impression on their friends, rather than conscientiously supporting the underlying cause and providing a substantial contribution, such as monetary donations, or participating in street rallies (Kristofferson, White, & Peloza, 2014). Even though online petitions can be regarded as a form of slacktivism, this does not have to mean that they are useless; they can still achieve certain goals.

This research will look at petitions from the Dutch website *petities.nl*. This website is the biggest petition website in The Netherlands. It is not known how many petitions on *petities.nl* achieve their goals as no research has been done to discover this. The result of the petition is quite important, why even make the petition if you do not achieve your goal. Online petitioners are more often disappointed in the result of their petition than traditional petitioners (Lindner & Riehm, 2011). Regarding the fact that petitions on *petities.nl* have to be directed to the government of The Netherlands, the goal of a petition is defined as policy change decisions made in line with the petition.

People that sign a petition on *petities.nl* sign on average 1.1 petitions. There are certain groups that sign many petitions. They often do it for a certain cause, like environmental issues etc. Everybody can start a petition at *petities.nl* (Rustema, 2017). Only requirements (beside basic requirements like no cursing) are that the petition is about a political issue and targeted at a specific organisation. Result is a site with at the moment almost 7000 petitions. Some with only the signature of the founder, others with thousands of signatures.

However, there is more to online petitions than some would think at first. Most petition websites offer advice on how to gain support for your online petition. One important part of online petitions is gaining support, often called building a community. This can be done in various ways like emailing, posting the petition on social media, advertising, media coverage etc. (iPetitions, 2017). A bigger community can lead to a bigger impact of the petition (Mahon, 2016). To achieve all this, the petitioner needs resources. When movement activists do attempt to create collective action (fielding protests, creating social movement organizations, and the like) through historical time and across geographical locations their successes are consistently related to the greater presence of available resources in their broader environments (McCarthy, 2004)

There has been done research on the influence of resources on social movements, but not specifically on online petitions. This research will fill that gap partially by looking at the influence of three resources; time, financial resources and social network. The reason why these resources have been chosen can be found in the literature review. The literature

review looks more extensively at online petitions and then leads to the research question of this research. This research will help clarify the influence of three specific resources on the likelihood to succeed of online petitions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Petitioners in general have a broad definition of success, not always specifically focused on policy change (Wright, 2016). This research however will focus on a policy change decision made in line with the goal of the petition as the variable to define success. The reason for this is that all the petitions analyzed will be from *petities.nl*, a site on which the petitions are directed only at the government. Final goal of these petitions are a change in the government policy and therefore success can be defined in this case as policy change. Policy change consists of two separate words: policy and change. According to the online dictionary *vocabulary.com* policy means; a plan of action adopted by and individual or social group and change; an event that occurs when something passes from one state or phase to another. Putting these words together leads to policy change, which can be described as a plan of action that makes something pass from one state to another. To measure this, the research will look if there was a policy change decision made or executed in line with the goal of the petition.

The role of leaders in social movements is one that has been researched. However, not all researchers agree on the importance of the leaders. Collective behaviour theorists have argued that social structural conduciveness is necessary but not sufficient for movement mobilization; leaders create the impetus for movements by providing examples of action, directing action, and defining problems and proposing solutions (Lang & Lang, 1961). Leaders are critical to social movements: they inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes (Morris & Staggenborg, 2004).

Resource mobilization theorists have viewed leaders as political entrepreneurs who mobilize resources and found organizations in response to incentives, risks, and opportunities; supporters are seen as rational actors who follow effective leaders (Oberschall, 1973)

For both theories can be argued that they are to a certain extent applicable to petitioners from *petities.nl*. However, the resource mobilization theory has as an important aspect that supporters are seen as rational actors who follow effective leaders. Leaders from online petitions can initially be unknown for the supporters, meaning that it is not possible to accurately judge if they are effective or not. This because a petition can be started anonymously or with a pseudonym. Therefore, the supporters do not act per definition as rational actors who follow effective leaders. The collective behaviour theory fits the online petition and petitioner better. The online petition defines the problem, proposes a solution while the petitioners directs the action. This research will therefore follow this theory instead of the resource mobilization theory.

A factor that can influence the outcome of the petition can be the motivation. What are the incentives for people signing the petition? Individuals are partly motivated by social pressure. It has been found that social pressure in companies was an important determinate of performance (Baron, 2006). Social

pressure can play an important role in inducing effort even when economic incentives are limited (Mas & Moretti, 2006). Another theory about the motivation from protesters is the grievance theory. Feelings of relative deprivation result from comparison of one's situation with a standard – be it one's past, someone else's situation, or a cognitive standard such as equity or justice (Folger, 1986). At the heart of every protest are grievances, be it in different forms (Klandermans, 1997).

Another factor that can influence the outcome of the petition is resources. In social movements in general, resources of many kinds are unequally distributed among social groups (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). As mentioned before, one of the tasks of the leader of the social movement is to mobilize resources. Even though there is resource inequality, the leader still has the task to mobilize resources. The resource inequality might make a difference to what extent the leader is able to do so.

There are different types of resources that can be mobilized. First of all there are moral resources. These include legitimacy, solitary support, sympathetic support and celebrity (Snow, A dramaturgical Analysis of Movement Accomodation, 1979). Then there are cultural resources. These are artifacts and cultural products such as conceptual tools and specialized knowledge that have become widely known (Oliver & Marwell, 1992). There are also social-organizational Resources. This category includes intentional (created specifically to further social movement goals) and appropriable (created for non-movement purposes, but movement actors are able to gain access through it) social organization (Coleman, 1990). Another resource is human resources. Resources like labour, experience, skills and expertise. (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Lastly, there are material resources. Financial and physical capital, including monetary resources, property, office space, equipment and supplies page (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004)

It is not possible for this research to investigate all the different types of resources and their influence. Therefore, the choice has been made to research three specific resources; time, social network and financial resources. Time spent on the petition is a human resource, as it is essentially labour. Social network can be either human resource or a social-organizational resource, depending on the fact if the petitioner is an individual or belongs to an organization. Financial resources is a material resource.

The choice for the resource social network has been made because, according to Mahon, a bigger community can lead to a bigger impact. If this is also applicable for online petitions, it would mean that a bigger social network would lead to a bigger impact, most likely in the form of signatures.

The choice for financial resources was made because resource-poor actors can use the internet to substantially affect policymaking by intervening in the course of parliamentary law-making (Breindl, 2012). This raises the question if resource-poor petitioners can make as big an impact as resource-rich petitioners.

Human time and effort along with money are the most widely appreciated kinds of resources that are more or less available to collective actors (McCarthy, 2004). Money is already researched under the broader financial resources part. That leaves time and effort as other most widely appreciated factors. The literature says this applies to collective actors like organisations. Petitions can be started by organisations and individuals. If it applies to organisations, it might as well be

valuable for individuals. Therefore, this resource will also be researched, as well if there is a difference between organisations and individuals.

Of course there are other factors that could have been researched. The chosen factors however have interesting theories to research in the context of online petitions. These resources are also applicable for every petitioner. Every petitioner has to spend time on the petition, has the choice to either use financial resources or not and has/can build a social network to use for the petition.

Based on the theories mentioned above the following propositions have been made:

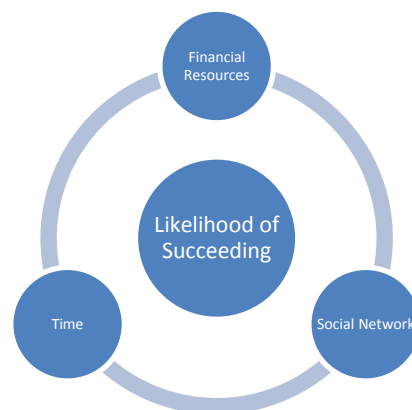
Proposition 1: The more time a petitioner spends on promoting the petition, the higher the chance of succeeding. Time and effort is a widely appreciated resource, which it probably would not be if it did not have any positive effect.

Proposition 2: The amount of financial resources spent will matter, but to a small extent. As literature says that the resource-poor can use the internet to have a substantial effect, it is expected that financial resources are not necessary. However, with paid advertisement a big group of people can be reached which might lead to a bigger impact.

Proposition 3: The bigger the social network of the petitioner, the higher the chance of succeeding. According to Mahon a bigger community can lead to a bigger impact. Therefore, it is logical to assume that petitioners with a bigger social network, sort of community, can have a bigger impact. In the case of petitions this could for example be in the form of more signatures.

To accurately research the influence of the three resources on the outcome of online petitions a theoretical framework has been made. The outcome variable is the likelihood of succeeding of a petition, so how likely it is estimated that the petition will succeed. The resources time, social network and financial resources are the variables that will be researched. It is assumed that the three resources have influence on the likelihood of succeeding, but also on each other. For example, investing more time might lead to a bigger social network and/or more financial resources.

**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework**



The research question made by this is: How much influence do the resources (time, network, money) of a petitioner have on the likelihood of a petition to succeed, meaning a policy change decision made in line with the petition?

### 3. METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Design

The choice was made to conduct qualitative research, in this case meaning interviews via phone, Skype or mail. The choice for qualitative research instead of quantitative research was made because this leaves room to obtain additional information or clarify certain concepts. For example, the amount of time spent on the petition may vary from week to week or co-relate with certain events. With qualitative research, this can be explained by the petitioner better than with quantitative research. Another reason why the choice for qualitative research was made, is the fact that the petitions are very diverse. Due to this diversity, it would be very hard to do quantitative research, as there would not be a one size fits all questionnaire for example. With qualitative research, it is easy to adapt to each petition. The appropriate questions can be asked directly based on the information received. If some information provided is not clear, it can be explained further.

Interviews via phone or Skype had the preference as this allows obtaining a lot of information more easily. Not all petitioners were open to conducting the interview via phone or Skype. Therefore, some interviews have been conducted via mail. Petitioners filled out a form with both open and multiple choice questions. Two forms were made; one for petitioners from an organisation and one for individuals who started the petition alone, so without the help of an organisation or others. Information gained from this is less extensive, but still sufficient for the research. In total eight individuals and eight people from organisations have been interviewed. Half of them by phone and half of them by mail.

The sample exists out of ongoing petitions; none of the petitions had been finished at the time of the interview. Although this was not ideal regarding the fact that the outcome of the petition is a variable of importance in this research, it was the best choice. On *petities.nl* there is an option to only view petitions that are finished. However, there are several reasons why these petitioners have not been interviewed. First of all, not all finished petitions are on that specific page on *petities.nl*, as some petitioners delete the petition after it is done or it does not end up on the page for another reason. This leaves only 230 petitions on that page opposed to 3563 active petitions and around 8000 petitions in total. Secondly, not all petitioners with a petition on this page have received an answer yet on their petition. Therefore the problem of not knowing the outcome would still be there. Third, many petitions on that page were relatively old (more than one year). Petitioners might forget about what they have done exactly, be busy with other things and so on. The active petitions provided a larger sample and petitioners were less likely to have already forgotten their actions. Both have the problem of not always having an answer yet and therefore the choice was made to analyse active petitions.

#### 3.2 Sample

As this research looks at the effect from resources on online petitions, the people of interest for this research were people or organisations that started an online petition. The characteristics of the petitioner do not matter, as this is not the subject of investigation. The subject of the petition also does not matter.

The sample chosen for this research exists of petitioners from *petities.nl*. There were several reasons why this choice was made. The choice for petitioners from *petities.nl*, and not

another online petitions website, was made because this is the largest petition website in The Netherlands, thus probably the most representative site in The Netherlands. Via this site, it was also relatively easy to contact the petitioner. Besides, the choice was made to focus on one country, because due to the constraints of this research it was not possible to look at multiple countries. The choice to focus on The Netherlands was made to limit possible barriers, for example, language, cultural barriers or other barriers which could lead to misunderstandings and thus inaccurate data. The main criterion for selection was the number of signatures of the petition. For petitions, with a goal on a regional level this had to be at least a hundred signatures and for petitions on a national level, this was at least a thousand signatures. The reason for this is that, according to the founder of *petities.nl*, petitions with this number of signatures have some meaning. There are thousands of petitions on *petities.nl* and not all of them are started with serious effort. Therefore, selecting petitions with these criteria filtered out the non-serious petitions. It also filtered out the petitions that had just started very recently and therefore had not done or accomplished much. This research only looks at people who still have an online petition or recently had one.

After taking a look at the petitions on *petities.nl* it can be said that there are two groups that start a petition; organisations, and individuals. The choice was made to interview both. It might be interesting to compare them in the results to see if there are any differences.

The conclusions drawn from this research cannot be generalised internationally because the sample size does not represent international petitioners. The research only looked at Dutch petitioners with a petition on a Dutch site. To a certain extent, the results are valid for The Netherlands, but it has to be taken into account that the sample size is small. It also has to be taken into account that there were certain constraints for this research in terms of available resources.

#### 3.3 Analysis

In the literature section, three main resources were identified: financial resources, time and social network. For the analysis of the data, every resource and its influence was analysed separately. With which measures this was done can be seen below in the measures part. After the three resources had been assigned a category according to the measure, it was analysed if there might exist a relation between the categories and the likelihood of the petition reaching its goal. This was done per category individually. It was per category because this shows the influence and the relationship of each resource clearly. Only looking at the three resources together and the outcome would not give the information wanted. It would be unknown which resource causes what and therefore not answer the research question.

##### 3.3.1 *Atlas.ti and Excel*

The data has been analysed with the use of *Atlas.ti* and *Excel*. *Atlas.ti* is a qualitative data analysing software. The transcripts of the interview were coded in *Atlas.ti*. A coding list with relevant factors had been made and distributed among code groups. An example of this is the code family 'Financial Resources' with codes like 'use of paid advertisement, financing of the organisation, the number of employees, etc. These code groups made the information orderly and therefore easier to analyse. To make an overview

of all the information, a table in Excel was made. This provides all the information in a clear and simple way.

### 3.3.2 Measures

To judge the date several measures needed to be developed, as there were no current fitting measures found. Data was assigned to categories to make an analysis of the data possible. Categories were deducted from the data collected in the interviews and literature. The data showed a distinction between several petitioners and from this information the categories were established. The following measures were developed and used:

#### 3.3.2.1 Likelihood of succeeding

Since all petitions are still ongoing, it was unfortunately not possible to judge the outcome. Therefore, a scale has been used to judge the likelihood that the petition will reach its goal within 1 year. This timeframe has been chosen because the effect still has to come from the petition. If something changes over 10 years, it is difficult to determine if it was because of the petition, a change in culture or other factors. Of course, it remains difficult to state that the change is solely due to the petition as there can always be other factors that influence the process. Unfortunately, not everything can be taken into account and therefore the main factor this measure takes into account is time. Since the political process can be slow the time frame of 1 year was chosen. The scale goes from 1 to 10 with 1 being very unlikely and 10 being very likely. The likelihood of the petition succeeding was judged by the researcher. The researcher gained enough information through the interviews and was able to judge more objectively than the petitioner. Petitioners might be less objective because it is their petition and they will probably want it to succeed. This can lead them to be overoptimistic for example. To judge the likelihood, the following factors have been taken into account:

The number of signatures so far. This mainly to take into account if there is some support for the issue. The fact if the petition was regional or national makes a difference. For regional petitions more than a hundred signatures can be considered significant and for national petitions at least thousand signatures. There was no further difference made concerning the number of signatures, except when a petition had more than 40.000 signatures, and the petitioner wanted a burgerinitiatief. This because a burgerinitiatief obligates the national politic to talk about it, something they are not obligated to with other petitions.

The goal of the petition. The goal can have a lot of influence on the likelihood of succeeding. If the goal is impossible, it does not matter how many signatures the petition got; the goal will never be achieved. For example, a petition to change the clothing policy at a local high school is probably much more likely to succeed than a petition with the goal to make a Muslim holiday a national holiday in The Netherlands. For the first petition, only school regulations have to be changed, no official laws. For the second petition, official national laws have to be changed. Besides, in The Netherlands Muslims are a minority (5,75% of the population<sup>1</sup>), and it is traditionally a

Christian country. As one might see, this might make it a much more difficult goal to achieve. A score will be given judging the difficulty level of the petition 1 to 5 where 1 is the easiest and 5 is the hardest. All the scores and their difficulty:

1. The goal is realistic. It can be expected that the goal will be reached; involved parties are willing to cooperate, and there are no big reasons why this would not be possible.
2. The goal is reasonable. The goal can be reached, but there might be some involved parties that might not be very eager to cooperate or other factors making it harder to achieve the goal.
3. The goal is difficult. Some involved parties might be strongly against the goal and are making it difficult to achieve the goal. Several problems can be expected.
4. The goal is very difficult but not impossible. The involved parties are not willing to cooperate, or a process has to be started that is very complicated and will probably take a long time. However, in theory, it is possible to achieve the goal.
5. The goal is impossible. There are serious reasons why the goal cannot be achieved. It might be unlawful, part of a conspiracy theory or something alike.

The duration of the petition. How long has the petition been online and what has been achieved in that time? Petities.nl has the standard of a duration of three months for every petition. Therefore everything under three months will be considered short. Sometimes people let the petition online a little bit longer to get just the extra number of signatures needed or wait with offering it to the government, for example, because of holidays. Therefore, three till six months will be considered normal. Everything longer than six months will be considered long, as it is more than twice as long as the duration established by petities.nl.

Opportunities. Has the petitioner done everything that is possible yet or are there still opportunities to attract more attention and/or change something. This will be divided into three categories.

1. Insufficient, meaning the petitioner has not done a lot to promote the petition and achieve its goal. The petitioner has not actively shared the petition on social media, has not tried to contact any media and has not paid for any advertisement.
2. Sufficient. Meaning the petitioner has done several things to promote the petition and achieve its goal, but there are still some opportunities to do more. The petitioner has shared the petition on social media several times, contacted organisations for help, has tried to contact the media and/or has paid for the advertisement.
3. Maximal. Meaning that the petitioner has done almost everything that is possible and can be expected. The petitioner has actively shared the petition on as many accounts as possible, has tried to contact the media, has contacted other parties for help and/or has paid for the advertisement. In other words, the petitioner has invested a lot of time and/or money in the petition and used all the opportunities to promote it.

The problem with this measure is that some factors judged might change relatively fast. For example, a petition might gain rapidly many signatures after a cooperation with a large organisation. This cannot be taken into account in the measure. The number of signatures, however, is only relevant when it reaches 40.000. Other factors might also change. A goal that nowadays might seem to be very unrealistic might seem reasonable within a few years. For example, the current situation with Brexit leaving the European Union could have been regarded as absurd a few years ago. Had people started a petition a few years ago, with the measure used in this

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<sup>1</sup> According to <http://www.polderislam.nl/achtergronden/moslims-en-islamitische-instituten-in-nederland/hoeveel-moslims-wonen-er-in-nederland>. Estimates do differ as there is no official registration.

research, the petition would have been judged to be very unlikely to succeed. It did however happen. This example demonstrates a condition which the measure cannot take into account and hence an inaccuracy will always remain in the measure.

### 3.3.2.2 Financial Resources

For the financial resources there were the following categories:

Category 1: no money spent at all. The petitioner did not spend money on the petition in any way. All the work was completely voluntary.

Category 2: money was spent to cover expenses caused by some activities for the petition. For example, gas money to travel to an interview. All the work was completely voluntary.

Category 3: money spent to promote the petition, up to 500 Euros. There can also be several employees working for an organisation. As they are paid, this means that indirect money was spent on the petition.

Category 4: more than 500 Euros spent on promotion, advanced advertisement was used. Several or more employees are working on the petition.

For this resource, the choice was made to make four categories, while the other two resources only have three categories. The choice for this was made because from the data it can be concluded that there are petitioners which spent financial resources on the petition, but there was still a big difference between the amount. Paying for advertisement on social media is less expensive than TV commercials. Therefore, it was decided to make an extra category, so this difference was clear.

### 3.3.2.3 Time

For the resource time the following categories have been established:

Category 1: less than 2 hours a week or up to 50 hours in total was spent on the petition. The petition was easily done besides normal job/activities.

Category 2: 2-5 hours a week or 100 hours spent on the petition in total. The petition was still doable besides job/daily activities but significant (free) time was spent on the petition.

Category 3: more than 5 hours a week or more than 100 hours in total. The petition was part of a campaign, multiple people worked on it, or the petition has been going on for a longer time and therefore has consumed big amounts of time.

For assigning the category, there will be looked at both the hours per week and the total hours spent. Only looking at hours per week will not take into account how many weeks the petition has been going on and therefore the total time spent. Many petitioners found it easier to say how many hours they spent on the petition per week than in total. Therefore, both factors are taken into account.

### 3.3.2.4 Social Network

For the resource social network, the following categories were established.

Category 1: the petitioner has no important connections at all. The petitioner has done everything alone without the help from connections.

Category 2: the petitioner has one to three important connections. The petitioner has used the help of a few connections to accomplish more.

Category 3: the petitioner has more than three important connections. The petitioner has used the help of more than three others to accomplish more.

Important connection, in this measure, means a connection which has more power/knowledge/connections/followers than the average human being. This can be politicians, experts, famous people, other organisations with many members or followers and so on. The important connection can, for example, reach many people to promote the petition, contribute specialist knowledge, lobby in politics, etc. It does not matter in which field the important connection can achieve more, as long as it is relevant to the petition.

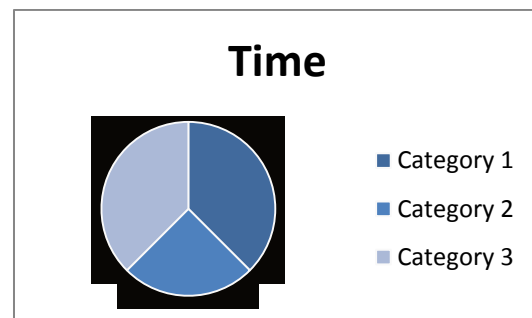
## 4. RESULTS

From the data analysis, certain results were conducted. In this section, the results and their possible meaning will be discussed.

### 4.1 Distribution of Categories

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the resource time per category. As one can see, category 1 and 3 are the same size. From the petitioners, 37.5% spent less than 2 hours a week or 50 in total. The same number of petitioners spent more than 5 hours a week or more than 100 in total. The percentage of petitioners that spent 2-5 hours a week or 50-100 hours in total on the petition was smaller, namely 25%. This suggests that the categories from the petitioners interviewed are more or less evenly distributed.

Figure 2. Distribution of Time per Category



As this data is not statistically verified due to the small sample size, the real distribution observed by a bigger sample might differ. However, the distribution of the resource per category is not the only interesting thing. In this research, it was found that the petitioners do not agree about how much time a petition consumes. One petitioner said: 'It is very easy and also fun to do. I started it in 10 minutes and did not spend that much time on promoting it. I would definitely do it again if I deem it necessary'. Another petitioner said: 'especially in the beginning, it consumed way too much of my private time hence I decided to change my strategy and spend less time on the petition. Maybe I would start another one someday, but my wife also needs attention'. These are just two examples of petitioners, but they do show the sharp contrast between the experiences of the petitioners. It is interesting that some petitioners do not feel the need to spend a lot of time on the petition, while others have the feeling they are spending almost too much time on it.

Figure 3 shows that half of the petitioners did not spend any money at all on the petition. They only used free tools to promote their petition, like several social media sites, interviews in newspapers, etc. Several petitioners were contacted by a newspaper or other media which gave them the chance to promote their petition with no financial resources used. This might partly explain why they did not spend any



money. One petitioner said: ‘The website is a free service, you do not have to pay for anything if you do not want to. Therefore, I do also not want to spend money as it is not necessary’. More petitioners expressed this sentiment. Some petitioners simply did not have sufficient financial resources themselves and thus could not spend it on the petition, even if they wanted to. Organisations did not encounter this problem as much, as most of them reported to have more financial resources available. Several organisations also had more experience with petitions or other promoting. It might be that if organisations have done it before, they know how it works and that in combination with sufficient financial resources, causes them to make more use of paid advertisement.

**Figure 3. Distribution of Financial Resources per Category**

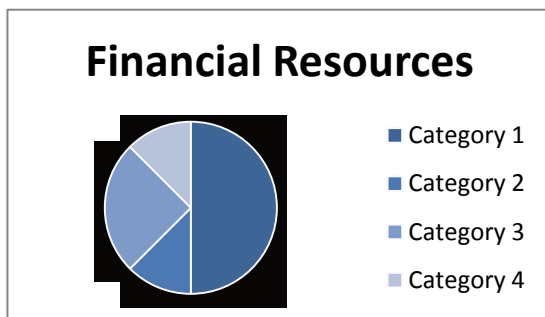
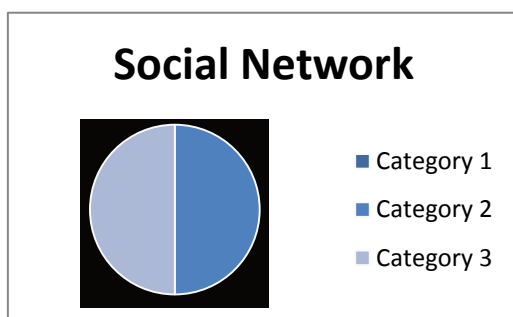


Figure 4 shows that half of the petitioners have 1 to 3 important connections and half of them have more than 3 important connections. No petitioner fell in category 1. The fact that no petitioners fell in category 1 during the research does not mean that every petitioner started with connections. One petitioner, who at the moment of the research had more than three important connections, said that she started out with no connections at all. She actively sought contact with local politicians, started a Facebook page and promoted the petition in several ways. Now she has several important connections. Many other petitioners have also stated that they just emailed many organisations, politicians, etc. Not all of them respond, but some do and are prepared to cooperate or support the petition. What is notable, is the distinction between organisations and individuals in this category. More will be said about this in section 4.3

**Figure 4. Distribution of Social Network per Category**



## 4.2 Likelihood of Succeeding

Every petition has been judged according to the measures discussed before on the likelihood of Succeeding. The results will be discussed and explained in the following sections.

### 4.2.1 Likelihood of Succeeding per interview

The calculation can be found in appendix 8.2.4. The results of this analysis are in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Interviews and Likelihood to Succeed**

Interview number	Likelihood to succeed
6	1
13	1
10	2
9	2
15	4
11	4
1	5
16	5
5	5
7	5
8	5
14	6
4	6,5
2	7
12	7,5
3	8,5

According to these scores, only 5 out of the 16 reviewed petitions are likely to succeed. This is only 31.25%. This, of course, applies to the situation as it was at the time of the interview. If certain influential aspects change unexpectedly the score might change. As said before, this measure was developed for this research and has not been proven to be fully accurate. It is, however, the current most accurate measure that can be used. The average of the likelihood to succeed is 4.66. The standard deviation was 2.25 with an average of 4.66. Meaning the standard deviation only fits into the average 2.07 times and therefore is very large. So it could be that the petitions researched were just unusually unlikely to succeed. The only way to discover a reliable average likelihood of online petitions would be to repeat the research with a bigger sample size. This way statistically significant conclusions can be made.

The petitioners sometimes stated themselves that they thought the goal of the petition would not be achieved. In one case, the petitioner had a similar petition a few years ago. Even though that petition had many signatures, the politician in charge was not willing at all to change the rules. The fact that the same politician is still in charge during the current petition was enough for the petitioner to think that the goal will most likely not be achieved. This, however, does not stop the petitioner. The petitioner thinks that through the petition the people will know about the problem and hopes that through public outrage something can be achieved. This example shows that even though the final goal of the petition might not be achieved, a petition can still bring change. This is interesting, as it raises the question as to what should be seen as the goal. Of course the final goal mentioned in the petition is a goal, but apparently, some petitioners would also be content if that goal would not be reached, as long as other goals are reached.

### 4.2.2 Likelihood of Succeeding per Resource

For every resource, it has been researched if there was a relationship between the resource category and the likelihood to succeed. This calculation can be seen in Appendix 8.2.5. For this, the average of every category was calculated as well as the standard deviation. There has not been done extensive statistical research to this relationship because the standard deviations were particularly high and the sample size too

small. Therefore it was considered redundant to conduct various statistical tests, as their outcome would not be statistically significant. The research therefore also looks at the qualitative data gathered and the information this provided. This does not mean that it is not interesting to look at the averages of the likelihood to succeed per category and analyse this. Although the results are not statistically significant, they still give an image about the reviewed petitions.

First, the resource Social Network was analyzed with the following results in table 2.

**Table 2. Likelihood of succeeding Social Network**

Social Network	Average
Category 1	-
Category 2	4.625
Category 3	4.69
Total	4.66

What is remarkable about this data is that no petitioner fell into category 1, as already explained in section 4.1. The average of category 2 and category 3 are very similar and do not deviate a lot from the average. This suggests that it does not matter how big your social network is, as long as you have one. It might be useful in the future to investigate if there is a group of connections that are more influential than another group. For example, having a politician as connection might result in a higher chance of succeeding than having an expert as a connection.

**Table 3. Likelihood of Succeeding Time**

Time	Average
Category 1	5.41
Category 2	6.25
Category 3	42.83
Total	4.66

In table 3 the results of the resource time are shown. By the resource time, category 1 and 2 are a little above the average, and category 3 is almost two points below the average. This suggests that spending more time on the petition does not automatically lead to a higher likelihood of succeeding. It is, however, premature to say that by spending more than 100 hours on the petition, the likelihood of succeeding will automatically decrease. There might be more going on. Most petitions with time spent in category 3 are part of either a longer campaign or have been going on for several years. It might be that the harder a goal is to achieve, the more time is spent on the petition. In that case, it would mean that the difficult goal is the reason of the low likelihood of succeeding, and the time spent on the petition is just a consequence of this, not a cause.

**Table 4. Likelihood of Succeeding Financial Resources**

Time	Average
Category 1	5.56
Category 2	3.5
Category 3	4.75
Category 4	2
Total	4.66

For this resource, the average differs quite a bit among categories. It does also not seem to follow a logical pattern. Category 1 lies above the average, category 1 below, category

3 again above and category 4 below. It seems that financial resources spent on the petition do not influence the likelihood of succeeding. What is notable about the averages is the fact that category 1, meaning no financial resources spent at all has a much higher average than category 4, meaning more than 500 Euros spent and use of advanced advertisement. Again, this does not have to mean that more financial resources spent mean a lower likelihood of succeeding. There might be another factor that causes the likelihood of succeeding to decrease, and the financial resources spent to be very high.

### 4.3 Organisations and Individuals

From all the petitioners eight petitioners were from organisations. One group was founded for a specific goal recently. This is not an official organisation. It is also likely this organisation will be ended when the goal of the petition has been achieved; it is of course unknown how long this will be. All organisations were NGO's if you count a political party as an NGO. The size of the organisations is very diverse. The smallest organisation exists out of two people, while another organisation had 75 active volunteers, as well as many other not active supporters.

From the organisations, four only had volunteers, and the other four organisations had a combination of volunteers and employees. Organisations are financed by either membership money, donations or a combination.

From the eight organisations, 62.5% spent money on promotion. Only two organisations did not spend any money at all; one organisation spent some money to cover expenses; three organisations spent some money on promotion, and two organisations spent a lot of money on advanced promotion like TV commercials. From the eight individuals, there was only one that paid for promotion, the other ones only used free promotion and covered only necessary expenses. It seems that organisations spent more money on the petition than individuals. Even though most individuals did not spend any money on the petition, all individuals got at least some form of free media attention. Either in the way of an interview in a newspaper, a message on the radio, an article about the problem/petition and one even got an appearance on a TV program. For organisations, it is the same. All organisations got some sort of free media attention for the subject of the petition. Some petitioners have said that the journalist had called them, not the other way around.

Out of the eight individuals, only one had more than three important/influential connections. The petitioners got those by emailing many organisations and political parties. From the organisations, 87.5% scored a 3 on the resource network. Only one organisation was assigned to category 2. This is a big difference. Apparently, organisations have a better established network than individuals. An explanation for this might be that organisations already exist for a long time and might work together with similar organisations to achieve their goals. This means they have already built a network, while individuals that have never started a petition might need to start from the beginning. Not everybody knows influential people.

Another difference can be found in the role the petition plays. Several organisations used the petition as a tool of their campaign, partly to generate attention to the issue and also to show the support for the issue. All individuals used the petition as their main tool; the petition was for them the way to achieve their goal. They did not have any plans in case the



petition did not work out as well as they had hoped. So it can be stated there is a big difference in how organisations and individuals use the petition. It also suggests that petitions can be used in several ways. Not just as the main tool to achieve a goal, but it can also be used as a mere tool to generate some media attention and get support for an issue.

#### 4.4 Other Factors

Although this was not the focus of the research, the results of the other measures will be described as well. These results are also described because they might contain relevant data that might be used for further research.

##### 4.4.1 Goals

Only 5 out of 16 interviews had a goal that was judged as realistic or reasonable. Of those, two were judged not likely to succeed, and three of them were judged likely to succeed. This might indicate a relation between the difficulty of the goal and the likelihood of succeeding. As out of the 5 petitions judged likely to succeed, 60% had a realistic or reasonable goal. The other two petitions that were likely to succeed had a goal in category 3, meaning difficult. No petition likely to succeed had a goal that was in category 4 or 5. There was only one petition in category 5 and one petition in category 4. Both petitions had been going on for a while and were judged not likely to succeed. The other interesting thing about the goal is the fact that there is one petition with a goal judged as impossible. The goal of this petition was considered a conspiracy theory. No other similar petitions were researched, but there might be more on [petities.nl](http://petities.nl). There is also one petition with a goal assigned to category 4. This might imply that most petitioners do have a goal that has at least a chance of succeeding.

##### 4.4.2 Duration

There were three petitions that had a duration judged as long, two petitions had a duration judged as normal, and 11 petitions had a duration judged as short. The three petitions with a long duration were still active, as were the other petitions. The promotion for the petition was not as intense as in the beginning, but it did not stop. Apparently, there are some petitioners that do not stop the petition, even if they do not achieve their goal and it does not seem likely that they will in the future. It seems that this is a relatively small group, as there were only three in this sample. It is unknown how long they will keep going on with the petition, but it is not unlikely to assume they will not give up in the near future. They have already been going on for more than a year; one petitioner has been going on for four years already. These petitioners might be so passionate about their goal that they will not give up until it is achieved. However, it is reasonable to assume there might be a boundary, even for them. Where this boundary lies, is unknown and might differ between petitioners. The fact that most petitions researched had been going on for a short period of time might be influenced by the way [petities.nl](http://petities.nl) shows you the petitions. It is not certain if they have a certain logarithm that determines which petitions are shown at the first few pages. If this is the case, the duration of the petitions researched might not be representative of most petitions on [petities.nl](http://petities.nl).

##### 4.4.3 Actions

All petitions have been assigned at least in category 2 for this measure. Of the 16 petitions, 13 have been assigned to category 2, and three of them have been assigned to category 3. The three petitions assigned to category 3 were all unlikely

to succeed. It might be that there is a relation between the amount of effort a petitioner has to put into the petition and the likelihood of succeeding. For example, if a petition is more likely to succeed, less effort is required as the chance of succeeding is naturally higher. It is logical that no petition was assigned to category 1. While choosing the sample, the choice had been made to filter out petitions that had been going on for only a few days, petitioners that did not take their petition serious or did not put enough effort into it. Therefore, all petitioners have taken at least sufficient amount of actions. It does show however that some petitioners are willing to do more than others.

##### 4.4.4 Signatures

The petition with the lowest number of signatures was 440, and there are two big petitions with around 40.000 signatures. Some petitions aim for the 40.000 signatures because this is the required number for a burgerinitiatief. For them, the number of signatures is very important. Other petitioners that do not have that goal collect signatures to show the support for the subject. The number of signatures is very diverse. It seems that the number of signatures does not have to mean anything. As some petitions with many signatures are still judged unlikely to succeed while others with fewer signatures are judged more likely to succeed. It does, however, matter if the petitioner wants to achieve a burgerinitiatief, but otherwise, it looks like the number of signatures might not be that important. It is unknown if petitions that have achieved a burgerinitiatief are more likely to succeed or not. More research has to be done about this to say something though.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In section 4 some results and their possible explanations were already discussed. The most notable results and possible explanations will be discussed here briefly.

For the resource Time, there is a deviation between two main groups. One group that does not spend a lot of time on the time and one group that spends a lot of time on the petition. An explanation for this might be in the difficulty of the petition; the easier a petition, the less time a petitioner needs to invest. Another explanation might be the skills of the petitioner. One petitioner might have better or more relevant skills, which causes that petitioner to spend less time on the petition.

Besides, there are some points notable about the results from the calculated likelihood to succeed. The average likelihood to succeed was calculated to be 4.66 which is a rather small number, and more important, a number below 5.5. It means that the average petition researched in this paper is not likely to succeed. Roughly, only one out of three petitions is likely to succeed. However, several petitions were assigned the number 5. As this is insufficient, the prediction is that they will not succeed. Nonetheless, there is a very small difference between a 5 and a 5.5. It might be that these petitions will succeed after all which would increase the number of petitions likely to succeed to 10 out of 16, or 62.5%. This would be much higher and would double the chance of a petition succeeding.

What is also interesting is the observed differences between organisations and individuals. It was discovered that organisations generally spend more money. This could be because they have more financial resources. It might be that individuals do not want to spend private money on a petition,

but would spend money if they got a subsidy or something alike. However, as said before, all petitioners got some form of free promotion. This could also be why individuals are less likely to spend money on the petition.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As said before, the sample is rather small which leads to a high standard deviation. This makes it impossible to say things about relations with certainty. This should always be taken into account when looking at the data.

### 6.1 Most Significant Results

The most important result is that, from this data, it cannot be concluded that the researched resources have a significant influence on the likelihood of a petition to succeed. More money spent on promoting the petition does not necessarily lead to a better outcome, more time spent on the petition does not necessarily lead to a better outcome, and a better network does not necessarily lead to a better outcome. It might even be that petitions that are less likely to succeed consume more financial resources and time. This is one of the possible ways the results can be interpreted. The point is that even if you spent a lot of money on promotion, have many connections and spent a lot of time on the petition; it does not have to mean the outcome of the petition will be a policy change in line with the petition. It suggests that there might be other factors that have a significant influence on the outcome of an online petition and thus raises new questions to be answered in the future.

Another significant result of this research is that all petitioners have at least some connections. Even if they start out with none, they have gotten them while doing the petition. 87.5% of the organisations scored a 3 on network, just one organisation that scored a 2. The reason for this might be that organisations encounter multiple problems through the years and make connections during the years. The organisations keep on existing and keep the connections which they can use for the petition. Individuals that have never needed these connections probably do not have them and have to make them along the way. If they stop the petition and do not start another one, they will also not need the connections again. This fact shows that petitioners are capable of building a network on their own.

One thing that can also be concluded is the fact that for individuals it is not necessary to spend (a lot of) money to get a lot of media attention. All individuals got at least some form of free media attention. The same goes for organisations. The petition got in all cases free media attention. It appears that some journalists look at *petities.nl* to find subjects to write about. The influence of the resource money might be reduced by this. Apparently, it was for everybody possible to generate free media attention, so money is not necessary for this. Promotion might be improved by spending more money, but appears not to be a requirement for promotion. However, organisations seem to spend more money than individuals. This might be explained by the fact that organisations simply have more money available than individuals.

The difference between the goal of organisations and individuals is interesting. The organisations use the petitions as a smaller part of a campaign. The petition is a way to generate more attention for the issue, not necessarily the main way to achieve the goal.

## 6.2 Scientific Implications

The previous results might suggest that the theoretical framework introduced in the beginning might not be complete. Although this research did not focus on the difference between organisations and individuals, from the previous section, it can be concluded that this difference might also have an influence on the resources and thus the outcome of a petition. Based on this research it can be suggested that the theoretical model could be like figure 5.

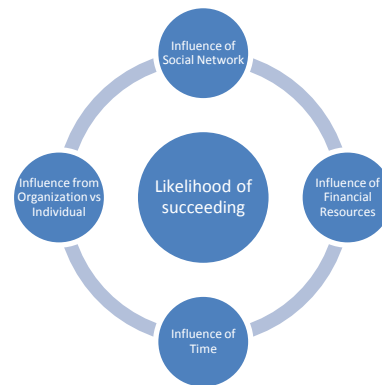


Figure 5. Possible Theoretical Framework

This theoretical model is already more complicated than the first one. As one can see, this model states that there are at least four factors that have an influence on the likelihood of a petition to succeed. Those four factors have also an influence on each other.

Furthermore, the most important contribution of this research is that it provides more inside into the different aspects concerning online petitions. It gives inside about possible relations and factors that might influence the likelihood of a petition to succeed. Although the research did not come to any clear, statistically significant relations, it did discover interesting data. This data can guide other researchers as to what relations they might find interesting to research. That is how this research can be seen, as an interesting data pool that shows a lot of potential possibilities for research.

## 6.3 Limitations

Parts of the limitations have already been mentioned previously. The most important limitation is the fact that the sample size is relatively small. There are thousands of petitions on *petities.nl* and for this research only 16 petitioners have been interviewed. The fact that eight of these petitioners have been interviewed by mail instead of phone or Skype does not pose a big limitation. Even though the information collected from interviews via mail was less elaborate, the information that was needed for the research was still collected. If the sample size were bigger, it would be possible to say something about the data from a statistical point.

The standard deviation has been calculated and is 2.25. This is a rather high standard deviation for an average of 4.66. All resources and their categories have this problem. With a standard deviation of 2.25, the averages are too low to conclude anything from it. It might be that there does not exist a relationship between the resources and the likelihood of succeeding. This cannot be said with certainty, partly due to the small sample size.

Another limitation that has already been mentioned is the fact that the sample existed out of petitioners from *petities.nl*, a Dutch petition website. Therefore, the results might not be applicable in other countries. It is unknown if there are big differences between online petitioners in different countries

and if there are, what the differences are and the consequences of this are. Therefore, this research and its results are only applicable to the Netherlands.

The measure to judge the likelihood of a petition to succeed might also not be totally correct to judge such a thing. There is no current measure available for this, so a measure had to be developed during the research. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to find out if this measure predicts the outcome of a petition accurately. If it turns out that this measure does not measure it accurately, the results of the research are not valid anymore. The research would need to be repeated with an accurate measure to have valid results with this data.

## 6.4 Future research

Some suggestions for further research can be made. The research has produced data that might be interesting for further research.

First of all, in the results can be seen that another theoretical framework than the one used for this research might be applicable. It would be useful to research which factors influence the outcome of an online petition. The influence of factors cannot be researched accurately if they are not known. Thus, it would be useful to do research as to which factors influence the outcome and therefore establish an accurate theoretical framework.

Secondly, more research to the difference between organisations and individuals can be done. The data suggests that there are big differences between the two, which might be interesting to research. It might, for example, be that there is a different likelihood of succeeding for organisations and individuals.

Third, the influence of governmental institutions could be done. For example, it might be that a petitioner starts a petition, collects many signatures, has support from several political parties, but still does not achieve its goal because the government institution receiving the petition is not open for it. It might be interesting to look at the effect of this. If some event can still change the attitude of the governmental institution or not etc. This might be very interesting to research because the receiver of a petition from [petities.nl](http://petities.nl) is always the government. If it would be discovered that certain governmental institutions are not open to petitions, actions

could be taken to make them more democratic, or petitioners could try to achieve their goals in another way.

Fourth, it was mentioned by one petitioner that they used both an online petition and an offline petition. It might be interesting to find out how many petitioners do this, what the added effect is, why petitioners do this and so on.

Finally, another interesting point raised by this research is the influence of the goal on the likelihood to succeed. This research suggests that with some goals the likelihood to succeed decreases drastically. More research could be done to discover for example if the goals can be grouped by subject and the likelihood to succeed. Or if adapting a goal slightly might increase the likelihood of succeeding.

Many more suggestions could be made. Online petitions can be considered a very interesting topic. When looking at the data from this research, many questions can and should be asked.

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## 9. APPENDIX

### 9.1 Interviews

#### Elaboration of interviews and assignment of categories

NOTE: the transcript of the interviews are not made public, because sometimes confidential information was given. The privacy of the petitioner is respected this way and there is still sufficient information available.

#### 9.1.1 Interview 1

Organization based on donations. Only volunteers, amount of volunteers depends on the number of projects and the type of project. For this petition there were 2 volunteers.

They have experience with petitions; previous petitions however were not successful.

Goal of the petition is that certain laws are used differently. The law they want already exists, but it not used consequently. They want to change this.

They work together with multiple organizations, 5 for this petition. They also work with famous people in The Netherlands. He has put it on his facebook page. The organisations they work together with have also done this and the petition has also been mentioned on a popular site in that field. They have also shared it on their own facebook page which has about 660 likes. Facebook pages of organizations they cooperate with have around 3000-4000 likes.

They have a jurist that helps them out sometimes.

Have around 1400 signatures at the moment; they expected they could reach around 10.000 easily.

Subject has been in the media a lot, but the petition started after the biggest hype was over.

They have data from people from an earlier petition with 11000 signatures. They are planning to send them mail.

They want to reach the 10000 signatures so they can give it to people involved and invite press.

They do not use paid advertisement.

Petition was started mid of May, so at the moment of writing has been online for almost 1 month.

They also have another petition going. Does not go well at the moment either. They think it is because of the timing as the subject is not contemporary at the moment.

They do not spend a lot of time on the petition, just a one to two hours a week. Starting the petition took a few hours. They sent mails to the state secretary and other politicians.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 1

**Network:** category 3

**Number of signatures:** 660

**Goal:** not very easy to achieve because it would mean laws would have to be used differently nationally. However, also not impossible because there is already a law that is applicable.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** they have promoted it, but more could be done so still some room here.

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 5

### *8.1.2 Interview 2*

Individual who started a petition for a company. Goal is to maintain the interior of the historical building the company is in.

Has been going on for 4.5 months. Online petition has around 11.000 signatures; paper list in the store has about 7000 signatures.

Did not spend a lot of time starting the petition, did it quite spontaneously. Is not really happy with the text because they did it too quickly.

Does everything alone. Just gets occasional updates from the store. In the beginning they spent quite a lot of time on it, but now not so much.

Have asked experts to look at the store and give their opinion.

Municipality is mediating between the store and the investment company. Investment company has asked for media silence, so the store does not do anything at the moment to promote the petition. Have done interviews before this.

Petitioner says it is a process that has been going on for a while and the petition is only a small part of that process.

Petitioner has a fulltime job, but has experience with social media. Also made a facebook page for the subject. Spent quite a lot of time in total. Is satisfied with the result so far, but has to wait what the outcome of the conversations will be. If these will not be positive, possibility to take further actions with the petition.

**Money:** Category 1

**Time:** Category 2

**Network:** Category 2

**Signatures:** 18.000

**Goal:** realistic. The municipality is mediating and they are actively talking about it. Investment company seems to be reluctant, so that might cause a problem. The investment company feels already pressured because of the petition, so it is not likely they will just ignore it.

**Duration:** normal

**Actions taken so far:** got a lot of attention. Was more attention possible but the owner paused it. However, if it does not succeed there are definitely more options.

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 7

### *8.1.3 Interview 3*

Individual who works fulltime. Petition has been going on for about 2 months. Has 1647 signatures.

Petitioner has her own blog, so experience with writing. They also shared the petition on this blog and facebook. Goal of the petition is for inhabitants of a certain place to have the possibility to participate in certain decisions. Did not have connections in politics, but has now. Mailed all local parties and some are supporting the petition now. Has made a facebook page for the subject on which updates are posted.

Time spent per week is minimal. Just some shares on Facebook and twitter. Writing the petition was also done very quickly, about 10 minutes. Also uses own workplace to promote the petition.

Did not use any paid methods.

Has about 1600 signatures. Petitioner did not know what to expect, is very satisfied. Is pretty sure that the goal will be reached.

Political parties are talking about it and so are involved people.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** Category 1

**Network:** Category 3

**Signatures:** 1600

**Goal:** very realistic. They had a voice in the process till 2 years ago, so it is likely that they will get it again. Local political parties agree with the petitioner and are trying to change it

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** more promotion could be done if necessary.

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 8.5

#### 8.1.4 Interview 4

Individual who works 27 hours a week, other days cares for 2 young children. Has own blog. 40.752 signatures.

Petition has been going on for about two months.

Goal is to try certain big stores to change their policy on a certain subject.

Has promoted the petition on own Facebook, instagram and own blog. Did an interview with the local newspaper. Started everything alone but when the number of signatures stagnated they found some organizations to cooperate with. This made the number of signatures rise from 26000 to 40000 in 2 weeks.

Starting the petition took about 4-5 hours. After that maximum of 2 hours promotion/networking a week.

Is not sure how to proceed. Did not expect to collect this many signatures. Initial goal was to have a discussion and try to get supermarkets to think about it. Is now considering offering it to the parliament as a burgerinitiatief.

First petition, had to learn many things while doing it. Did not pay for anything. Only used free channels.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 2

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 40.000

**Goal:** goal to get a societal discussion has already been achieved. The real main goal however, is more difficult but not impossible.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient.

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 6.5

#### 8.1.5 Interview 5

Fulltime student. First petition. Petition has been going on for about 1 month.

Wants to achieve that certain facilities in that area will stay open.

Has done everything alone so far.

Did not spend a lot of time on starting the petition. Spends about 3 hours a week on the petition.

Promotes the petition by making a facebook page, share the petition on social mail, mailing involved organizations, interview in the local newspaper, radio interview with the local radio station.

Has already a meeting with the local politic planned. Some politicians have already reacted to the news and totally agree with the petitioner. It is however not known how big their influence on this issue might be.

Is satisfied so far.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 1

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 3700

**Goal:** the reason for closing the facilities is complicated and the municipality, although they do agree, cannot do very much. However, it is not impossible because they are thinking about possible solutions.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 5

#### 8.1.6 Interview 6

Petitioner does have a job at the moment. Has already had 4 petitions before this one.

The petition has been going on for more than 11 years. Wants to gather the 40.000 signatures needed for a burgerinitiatief.

Has done everything alone so far. Through the years they have spent a lot of time on the petition. Had a while in which they did nothing to promote the petition. However, did not delete the petition and after a while decided to continue.

Has not spent a lot of time starting the petition. Has shared the petition on social media, mailed involved organizations, has done radio interviews, had articles in newspapers. Currently spends about 4 hours a week to promote the petition.

Petitioner has had aggressive reactions on the petition.

Is satisfied with the petition so far, continues until the 40.000 have been reached.

Would have liked to get finance if possible, petitioner however did not know how to achieve this.

NOTE:

Various online searches about the subject have confirmed the subject is a conspiracy theory.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 32000

**Goal:** goal is not realistic as the subject is a conspiracy theory

**Duration:** long

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 0



### 8.1.7 Interview 7

Individual that started the petition 1 month ago. Has a fulltime job.

Public services provided by one company will disappears as another company will take over. Petitioner tries to stop this or wants an acceptable alternative.

Has done everything alone so far. Spent about an hour starting the petition.

Spends about 1 hour a week promoting the petition. Has shared the petition on social media, asked friends to share the petition on their social media, handed out flyers in places concerning the service.

Has not encountered any problems so far, is satisfied with the result. Already has a meeting planned to hand over the signatures to the municipality. The company itself reacted and said that there will be enough alternatives so they do not see the problem.

**Money:** category 3

**Time:** category 1

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 638

**Goal:** difficult. The company that arranges the busses in that region will change. The new company thinks it offers sufficient alternatives. Depends on how the municipality will act.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 5

### 8.1.8 Interview 8

Organization, political party.

Have paid members and volunteers.

Petition has been going on for about one month. Is their first petition.

Want to prevent certain services from disappearing in their village or get an alternative.

Do not cooperate with other organizations but the village council supports them.

Have spent about 30 minutes making the petition, have not spent a lot of time promoting it so far.

Have promoted the petition via paid traditional media, on their own social media, have other organizations shared the petition, had an interview in a newspaper, let volunteer and employees share the petition. Have also made a press release.

Reaction from the company involved is not there yet. However, the reason for the decision of the company is understandable and cannot be changed by the organization. In fact, after the petition started another incident happened which might decrease the chance of the petition succeeding.

**Money:** category 3

**Time:** category 1

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 714 (50% of the village)

**Goal:** goal is very difficult. Is to keep a service provided. The reason that the company does not want to provide the service anymore is valid and cannot be changed. Incidents keep happening and are very expensive for the company.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 5

### 8.1.9 Interview 9

Organization with 30 employees and 160 volunteers. Are financed by membership fees.

Petition has been going on for 1 year and 5 months.

Want to achieve certain changes in the law concerned with medical things. Is their first petition.

Use the petition as a part of their campaign.

Want that more support for their change of law. Some political parties already support the issue, however not enough.

Have made a facebook page, let the petition be shared with other organizations, had an interview in the local newspaper, let employees and volunteers share the petition, have a sophisticated website about the subject, subject has been in national newspapers, paid for advertisement on social media, made informative short videos.

Their entire organization is based on this subject, however the organization also does other things and will not stop existing when the goal has been achieved. The petition just came in the process later in time, but the organization has existed

**Money:** category 4

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 29.500

**Goal:** very difficult. Political party is trying it but has not succeeded so far.

**Duration:** long

**Actions taken so far:** maximal

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 2

### 8.1.10 Interview 10

Organization for a disease. Exists out of volunteers. Have 75 active volunteers, many others who support them. Are financed by donations. Is their first petition.

Petition has been going on for more than 1 year. Want to have a specific measure for a disease.

Work together with another organization that make documentaries.

Have actively had a big campaign in The Netherlands and Belgium.

Want to achieve 40.000 signatures for a burgerinitiatief. Have an American professor who will speak in the tweede kamer for them.

Have spent a week to make the petition. Even had conversation with petites.nl on how to do it.

Spent 6 days in the week promoting the petition. Have made a facebook page about the subject, pay for advertisement on social media, share the petition on their private social media account, let other organizations share the petition on social media, had an interview in a newspaper, have famous people promoting the petition, advertised on the radio and TV.

Have already heard from several political parties that they support them.

**Money:** category 4

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 20843

**Goal:** difficult but not impossible. Several political parties agree with the petition so that helps. The burgerinitiatief might also happen, but it might take a while to get there. After an intense campaign they are only halfway there.

**Duration:** long

**Actions taken so far:** maximal

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 2. In the following year the chance they achieve it is very small, might achieve it in the long run.

### 8.1.11 Interview 11

Small organization (not official) started for one specific issue. Exists out of two volunteers. Have to pay for everything themselves.

Petition has been going on for 2.5 month. Is their first petition.

Have found several political parties who agree with them.

Did not spent a lot of time making the petition but spent a lot of time promoting the petition.

Have made a facebook page, paid for advertisement via social media, shared the petition on social media, had an interview in a newspaper, friends and family have also shared the petition.

Are very satisfied so far. 11% of the households has signed the petition.

Did not encounter any problems so far.

**Money:** category 3

**Time:** category 2

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 3828

**Goal:** difficult. The municipality said very recently that they are not prepared to change anything. However, a big part of the city has signed the petition and the plan has not been carried out yet.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 4

### 8.1.12 Interview 12

Organisation that exists out of volunteers and employees. 14 people in total. Financed by subsidy and membership fees.

Petition has been going on for 5 weeks. Is their first petition.

They have to find a new building for their organization. Have been looking for 5 years in cooperation with the municipality but have not found anything suitable yet.

Spent 8 hours on making the petition and about 3 hours a week promoting it.

Have made a facebook page, shared the petition on social media, had an interview in a newspaper and have friends and family who share the petition on their social media.

They want to collect more signatures but are satisfied so far. They get a lot of media attention.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 2

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 440

**Goal:** difficult. They have been trying to find a suitable building for the last 5 years and have not found it yet. Current options offered are either not suitable or too expensive. However, the municipality is trying to help. The goal of finding a new location within weeks is very difficult, since there is not much time left. However, because the municipality is actively trying to help, the chance of finding a building this year is bigger.

**Duration:** short

**Actions taken so far:** sufficient

**Likelihood of succeeding:** 7.5

### 8.1.13 Interview 13

Petition has been going on for about 4 years. More than 40.000 signatures but not all of them are valid.

Wants a so called burgerinitiatief and besides wants the discussion to live in The Netherlands. Has had reactions from political parties. Most say that it is a local problem and that they don't have an opinion about it.

Has done promotion via social media, made its own website, did a lot of news items, both on tv and on the radio.

Has put a lot of time and effort in it. Sees the problem as a symptom of a wrong system. Would like to change the whole system, but realizes this is too difficult. Therefore choose to have this subject, to solve at least one annoying and in his eyes particularly unfair part.

Has a jurist who helps sometimes. Have been court cases. Some have been won, so there was some success at local level. Some municipalities also discarded the tax, partly due to the petition.

There are 2-3 people who locally promote the goal. Is also a facebook page for one specific municipality.

The subject has been on tv multiple times in different programmes.

Has been in contact with many local politicians. Some are supporting. Talked to them about it and they stopped with the tax.

Does not use money to promote the petition, but has had some expenses to travel etc.

**Money:** category 2

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 40.000

**Goal:** difficult. Wants to change something on national level which requires a removal of an existing law. Political parties have showed that they think it is not a national issue. Have been some regional successes, but this is not the goal of the petitioner.

**Duration:** long

**Actions taken so far:** maximal

**Likelihood:** 1

### 8.1.14 Interview 14

Organisation with 5 volunteers, financed by donations. Goal is a different policy for certain refugees.

One volunteer works more than fulltime for the organisation, other volunteers just a few hours.

Work together with many national organisations. Also have a lot of connections with politicians, they even get insider informative sometimes. Have had one previous petition which reached its goal. Petitioner also has a lot of experience with activism.

Use mostly social media to promote the petition. Have been in the media, but have never paid for this. Petition is a way to get more attention for the issue. They also do other stuff.

Petition has been going on for 2 months.

**Money:** category 2

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 3000

**Goal:** reasonable. They partly wanted to get more attention for the issue which they did to some extent. They also want to cooperate with the IND or something similar. Something similar has been achieved. The organisation also has many important connections, which might help

**Duration:** short

**Actions:** sufficient

**Likelihood:** 5

### 8.1.15 Interview 15

Started because certain people got less salary. Third petition. Had documented everything relevant that happened in that field considering this subject in the past 5 years. Has worked there but stopped, partner still works there. Other petitions were a little successful. Government did not react the way they wanted but other people did.

Cooperates with other women of men in that field to promote the petition. Union is behind them and might help to promote the petition.

Thinks the responsible minister will not listen, because she did not do that in the past as well.

Promotes the petition on all kinds of social media. Asks friends etc. to also share the petition.

Does not use money to promote the petition.

Does not spend a lot of time on the petition. Some weeks 2-3 hours but that is exceptional. Most of the time only some shares on social media.

Petition has been going on for almost 3 months.

Has observed the petition gets significant more signatures when the subject has been in the media.

**Money:** category 1

**Time:** category 1

**Network:** category 2

**Signatures:** 16500

**Goal:** difficult. They have tried to change something about a previous, similar problem with a petition with no success. As long as the minister is not open for it, it is not likely to happen. However, with the formation of a new cabinet things might change.

**Duration:** short

**Actions:** sufficient  
**Likelihood:** 4

### 8.1.16 Interview 16

Have been very actively promoting the petition. Have done paid advertisement on social media with a specific target group in mind. Around 10 Euros a day. Are financed by donations. Changed this target group as they concluded the advertisement did not have the desired effect. Does however still not have the desired effect.

Organisation with volunteers. Petitioner has a flexible job which gives the possibility to spent a lot of time on the organization.

Have connections with many other nature organisations, they have shared their petition as well on different social media.

Are definitely not satisfied with the number of signatures so far. Have had previous petitions with thousands of signatures.

Use petitions as a tool in the process. First they try to achieve it with a petition. If this does not succeed, they go to court. Have done this several times. Just won a case that took 8 years. Going to court is very expensive.

Have had positive and negative experience with the influence of petitions. One time the people received the petition and did not pay any attention to it, they just threw it away and proceeded with their plans. Then the organization went to court and won the case after many years.

**Money:** category 3

**Time:** category 3

**Network:** category 3

**Signatures:** 500

**Goal:** reasonable. They have achieved a similar goal before. However, the support for this action is minimal and according to the petitioner reduces the chance to reach the goal in the near future significantly.

**Duration:** short

**Actions:** maximal

**Likelihood:** 5

## 8.2 Calculations

### 8.2.1 Signatures and Likelihood to Succeed

Signatures	Likelihood
32.000	1
40.000	1
20.843	2
29500	2
16.500	4
3.828	4
660	5
500	5
3700	5
638	5
714	5
3.000	6
40.000	6,5
18.000	7
440	7,5
1600	8,5

8.2.2 Likelihood of Succeeding Social Network

Social Network	Likelihood of succeeding			Total
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	
		1	2	1
		1	2	1
		4	4	4
		5	5	5
		5	5	5
		6,5	5	6,5
		7	6	7
		7,5	8,5	7,5
				2
				2
				4
				5
				5
				5
				6
				8,5
<b>Average</b>	0	4.625	4,6875	4,65625
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	0	2.51779	2,12026784	2,2488

8.2.3 Likelihood of Succeeding Financial Resources

Financial Resources	Likelihood of succeeding				Total
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	
	1	1	4	2	1
	4	6	5	2	4
	5		5		5
	5		5		5
	6.5				6.5
	7				7
	7.5				7.5
	8.5				8.5
					1
					6
					4
					5
					5
					5
					2
					2
<b>Average</b>	5.5625	3.5	4.75	2	4.65625
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	2.366997797	3.535533906	0.5	0	2.2488

### 8.2.4 Likelihood of Succeeding Time

Time	Likelihood of succeeding			Total
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	
	4	4	1	4
	5	6.5	1	5
	5	7	2	5
	5	7.5	2	5
	5		5	5
	8.5		6	8.5
				4
				6.5
				7
				7.5
				1
				1
				2
				2
				5
				6
<b>Average</b>	5.41666667	6.25	2.833333333	4.65625
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	1.562583331	1.554563176	2.136976057	2.2488

### 8.2.5 Overview scores per measure

Interview	Time	Money	Network	Signatures	Goal	Duration	Actions	Likelihood	O or I
6	3	1	2	32.000	5	3	2	1	I
13	3	2	2	40.000	3	3	3	1	I
10	3	4	3	20.843	3	3	3	2	O
9	3	4	3	29500	2	2	2	2	O
15	1	1	2	16.500	3	1	2	4	I
11	2	3	3	3.828	3	1	2	4	O
1	1	1	3	660	3	1	2	5	O
16	3	3	3	500	2	1	3	5	O
5	1	1	2	3700	3	1	2	5	I
7	1	3	2	638	3	1	2	5	I
8	1	3	3	714	4	1	2	5	O
14	3	2	3	3.000	2	1	2	6	O
4	2	1	2	40.000	3	1	2	6.5	I
2	2	1	2	18.000	1	2	2	7	I
12	2	1	2	440	3	1	2	7.5	O
3	1	1	3	1600	1	1	2	8.5	I