



What Matters in Environmental Politics?:

How the strategies of different sectors affect the outcome of environmental events

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, environmental issues have attracted an increasing amount of attention throughout academia, business, the media, the government and the public. Multinational corporations have taken initiatives to reduce their carbon emissions, and many environmental NGOs have undertaken activities to increase public awareness of environmental issues. Non-governmental actors have become increasingly involved in recent environmental issues.

Actors have expanded beyond conventional methods of protests and lobbying and are now utilizing education and art, as well as collaborating with other private and public actors under a shared goal. This study identifies the strategies that are widely employed in recent environmental events, and examines the effectiveness of each strategy.

DATA

Our sample consists of 150 environmental events from 2005 to 2009. Specifically, we consider events initiated by non-governmental actors irrespective of geographical location. To find the environmental events, we searched Factiva using the keywords “conservation”, “pollution”, and “energy”. We also included the terms “success” and “fail” to determine the effectiveness of the respective strategies used in each event. Because the majority of news articles did not provide a full description of environmental events, we additionally searched Google to gather further information on actors and their strategies.

The dependent variable is whether an environmental event was successful. The independent variables are shown below:

Duration	Short (less than one year), medium (between one and five years), long (more than five years)
Region	A categorical variable including ten different regions of the world
Governance	A country's freedom status published by Freedom House
Strategy dummy variables	Connections with government, Working in a local setting, Working for a business, Having connections with other NGOs (international and national), Art, Education, Grassroots Education, Policy Paper, Protest, Violence, Lobbying, Letter writing, Media campaign, Proactive
Actor dummy variables	Public, National/local NGOs, International NGOs, Government, Business, Multiple(if multiple actors are involved)

METHODS

- Four different statistical techniques were employed for this study.
- (1) Descriptive statistics were used to determine how extensively the strategies were used in recent environmental issues.
 - (2) Classification tree estimations were conducted to identify the combination of strategies and actors that are the most correlated with success or failure.
 - (3) Variable importance plots were used to examine which strategies and actors affected the outcome of events of varying issues.
 - (4) Logistic regression analyses were performed to evaluate and confirm the relationship between the outcome of environmental events and the independent variables.

RESULTS

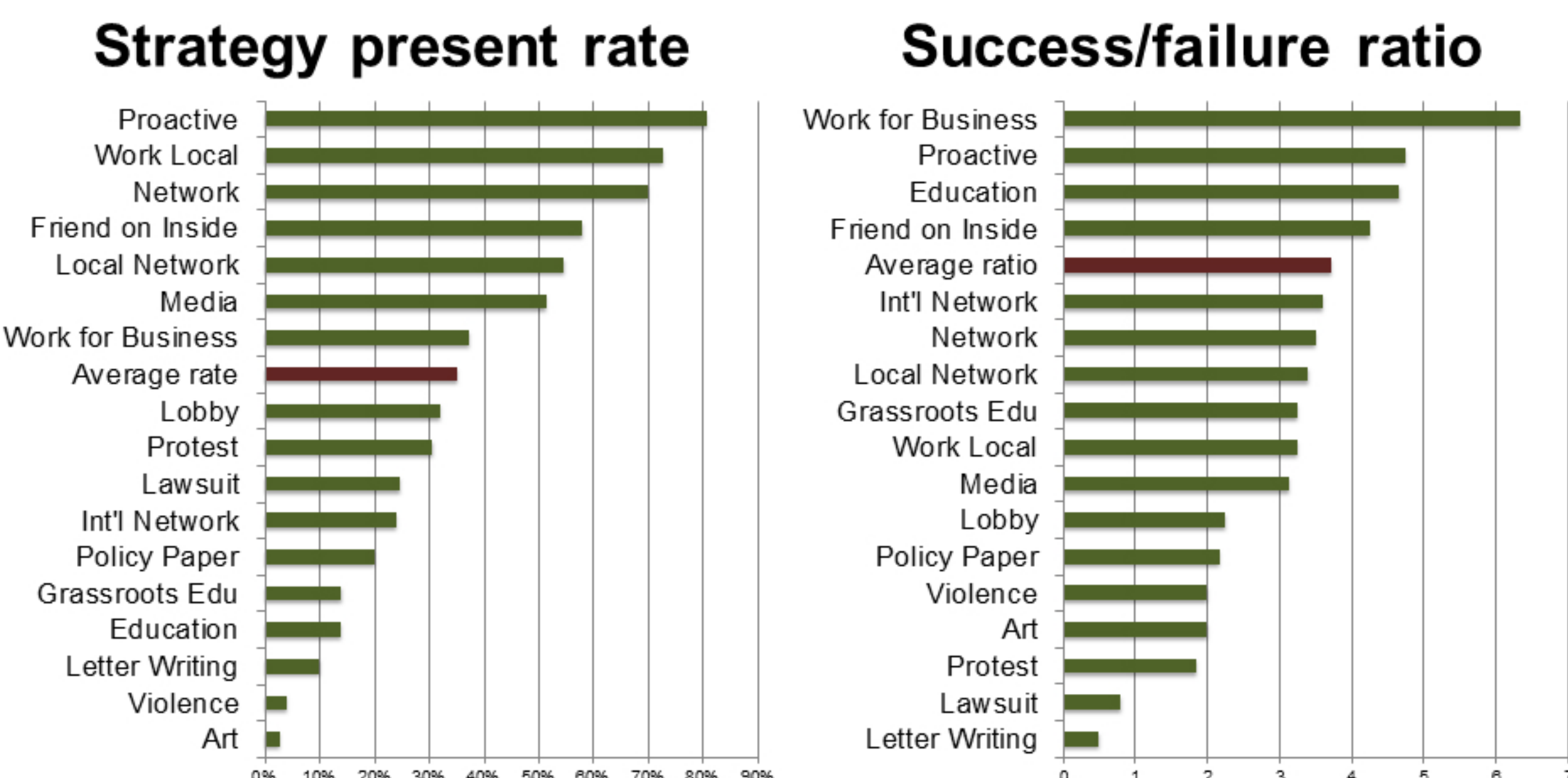


Figure 1 & 2. Descriptive statistics

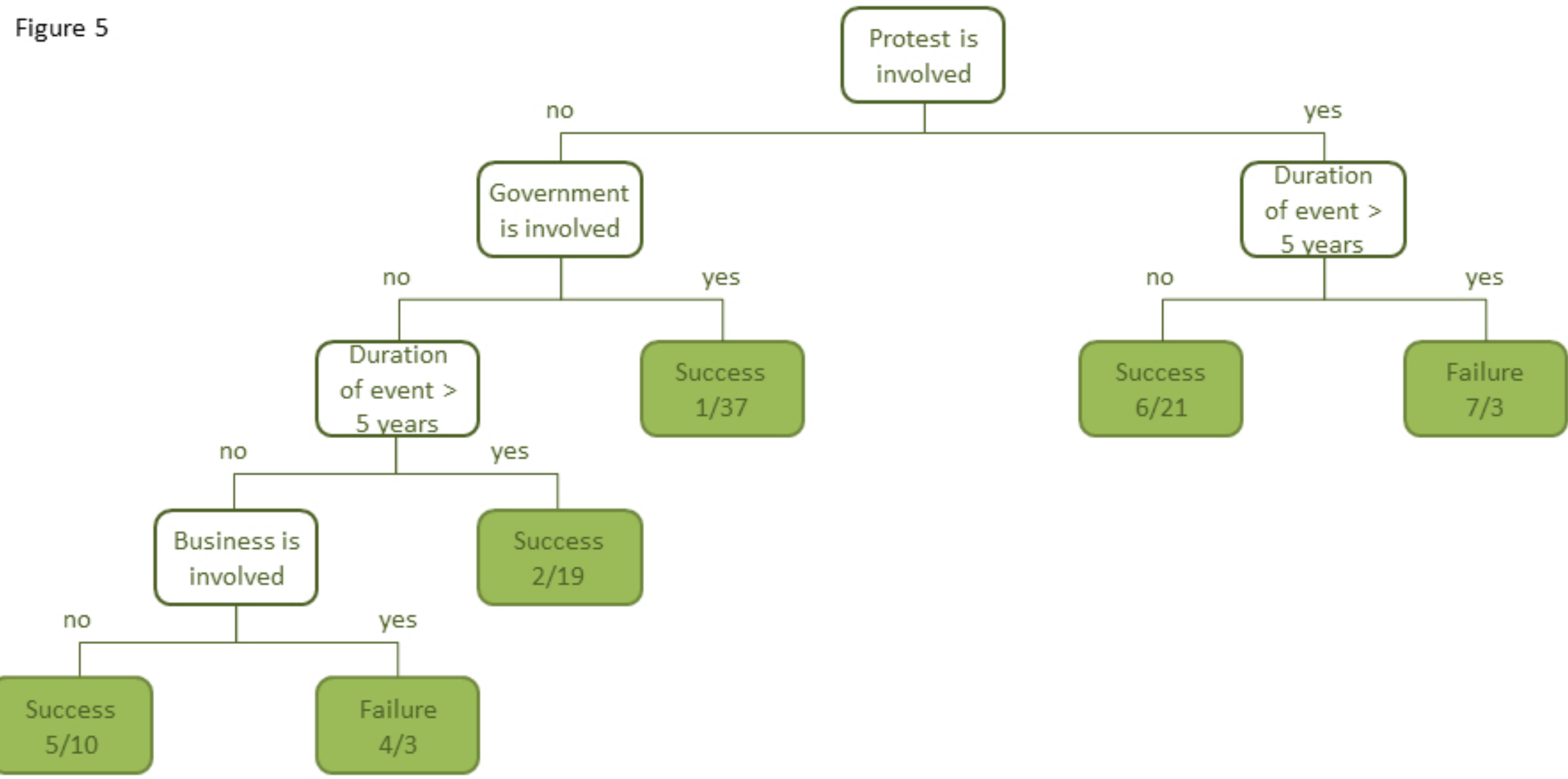
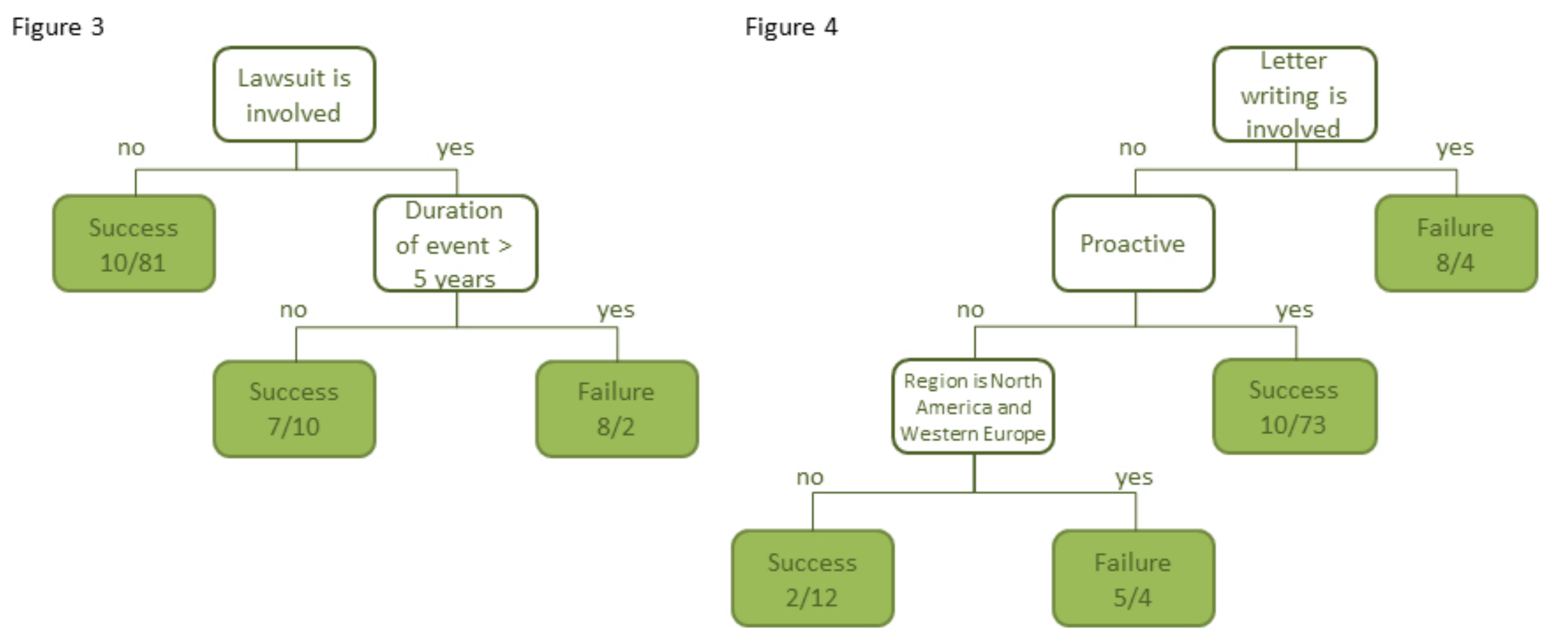


Figure 3 & 4 & 5. Classification trees identifying how different strategies and actors influence the outcome of environmental events

The tree represents 118 environmental events spanning the years from 2005 to 2009. It excludes 32 cases whose outcome could not be determined. The numbers display terminal node purity, where the number on the left side the ratio indicates the number of failed events and the number on the right shows the number of successful events. All of the independent variables were included in Figure 3, while the “Lawsuit” variable was dropped in Figure 4 and the “Letter Writing” variable was additionally dropped in Figure 5.

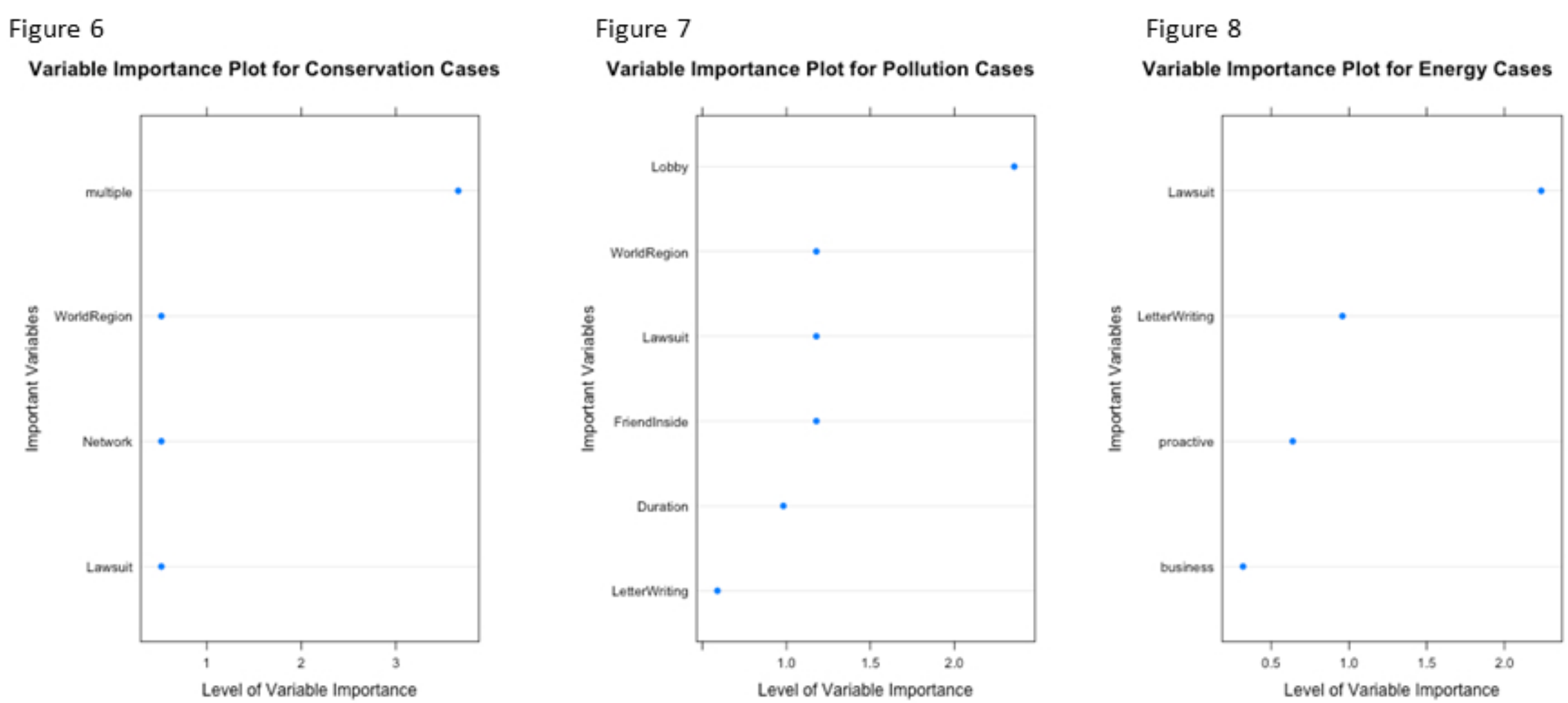


Figure 6 & 7 & 8. Variable importance plots for conservation, pollution and energy

The plots display the variables that influence the outcome of an environmental event. The higher the value of a variable is, the more the variable affects the outcome of environmental happenings.

RESULTS (cont.)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Friend on Inside	3.71(1.50)**	2.46(1.28)*	1.44(0.94)
Work in local	-2.11(1.23)*	-0.48(0.88)	-0.10(0.74)
Local network	3.85(1.48)***	2.92(1.29)**	2.54(1.12)**
Int'l network	-0.57(0.86)	-0.28(0.75)	-0.09(0.67)
Policy paper	-1.93(0.90)**	-1.33(0.76)*	-1.19(0.73)
Protest	1.38(1.05)	0.65(0.96)	0.38(0.90)
Lawsuit	-3.22(1.01)***	-3.19(0.97)***	-3.00(0.90)***
Letter writing	-1.91(1.09)*	-1.30(0.88)	-1.22(0.84)
Lobbying	-4.73(1.77)***	-3.29(1.51)**	-2.12(1.19)
Public	-1.62(0.90)*	-1.25(0.81)	-0.95(0.73)
Issue type – Climate	-3.26(1.85)*		
Issue type – Energy	-2.22(1.10)**		
Issue type – Pollution	-2.39(1.05)**		
Issue type – Others	-4.74(2.64)*		
Governance – Free	0.09(0.99)	0.01(0.84)	
Intercept	5.11(1.78)***	2.25(1.10)**	1.89(0.64)***
Pseudo R-Squared	0.43	0.36	0.31
N	116	116	118

Table 1. Logistic regression models

Notes: Model 2 controls for issue types and model 3 controls for issue types and a country's governance status. Standard errors are in parentheses. Significance level at 1%, 5% and 10% are indicated by ***, ** and *, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Widely used strategies in recent environmental events include taking proactive measures, working in local settings, forming networks with other groups, having connections inside the government and working for business. The success-to-failure ratio shows that extensively employed strategies are more successful than infrequently used strategies. Confrontational strategies (e.g. protests and lawsuits) are less likely to result in success.

Tree estimations illustrate that long-lasting lawsuits tend to fail. Protests lasting longer than five years also produced more failures than successes. The events that persist are usually very high-profile cases in which the opposing party cannot easily give in to the demands of environmentalists and eventually fail. Events that did not involve protests but had government as one of their actors were mostly successful. Each issue category had different factors that determined the outcome of events. Working with multiple actors was the most significant factor that affected the result of an event related to conservation. For pollution and energy issues, lobbying and lawsuits were the most significant factors that influenced their outcomes.

The logistic regression models validate the findings that were obtained from summary statistics and tree estimation models. Two positive influences on an event's outcome came from connections with the government and networks with local NGOs. In contrast, most of the strategy variables such as lawsuits, petition letters, and policy papers negatively influenced the result of an event.

In conclusion, initiating parties are encouraged to develop networks with other actors and avoid confrontational strategies.

REFERENCES

Haddad, Mary Alice and Hager Carol. “NIMBY is Beautiful: Local Activism and Environmental Innovation in Germany and Beyond”

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