Self-interest in New Wrapping:

“Appeal to the Public Interest” as a Topos in Lobbying

Abstract

This paper explores public affairs and lobbying strategies that make public appeals beyond organizational self-interest and instead forward appeals to the public interest. While research has highlighted such appeals as a staple for lobbying campaigns, there is scant research exploring the communicative construction of this notion. Thus, this paper uses the rhetorical concept of topos to explore the ways that lobbyists attempt to fuse their private interests with a broader appeal to what is best for society as such. In particular, we discuss how different types of organizations, businesses, unions and non-governmental organizations, have different rhetorical opportunities to ground their arguments. Finally, we discuss the democratic implications of appeals to the public interest as a standard lobbying strategy.

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Introduction

Lobbying could be called a vital sub discipline of public affairs that deals with attempts to influence the public policy process. Research on this sub discipline has produced a number of tomes that shed light on the importance of, for instance, lobbyists’ resources and their use of different tactics (e.g., Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Berry, 1977; Binderkrantz, Christiansen, & Pedersen, 2014; Chari, Hogan, & Murphy, 2010/2012; Drutman, 2015; Heinz, Laumann, Nelson, & Salisbury, 1993; Nownes, 2006). Some research (e.g., Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball, & Leech, 2009; Godwin, Ainsworth, & Godwin, 2013; Rommetvedt, 2011), has also discussed how lobbyists communicate. A crucial finding is that lobbyists often argue that their proposal will benefit the whole of society. Arguments build on what could be called appeals to shared social goals, collective goods, community, or, as here, appeals to the public interest.

There is, however, little in-depth knowledge about this type of rhetorical operation and the grounding of the lobbyists’ arguments. This, we maintain, is rather strange as the communicative fusing of private and public interests seems to be the main communicative challenge for lobbyists. The most important job of the lobbyist is to help the organization “get dressed for politics” and “develop their arguments with consideration of the perspective and preference of others” (Naurin, 2007, p. 117). Thus, in this paper we use rhetorical theory in order to explore how lobbyists invent and construct arguments that appeal to the public interest.

Scholars have recognized that lobbying communication is influenced both by type of organisation and institutional characteristics (Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008; Boräng & Naurin, 2015). Thus, it seems likely that the rhetorical possibilities differ among different types of organizations. A business has a profit motive, a union should work on its member’s behalf, while a non-governmental organization (NGO) is often organized around a public
interest like human rights or the environment. Indeed, NGOs might often cast themselves off as *public interest groups*. The research question in this paper then, is *what forms of appeal to the public interest are found in public lobbying campaigns, how do the actors explain such appeals and what difference does organizational type play?*

So, far most studies of the strategic communication of lobbying retrieve their empirical examples from the peculiar systems of the U.S. and the E.U. In this paper, we instead look at lobbying in a small, social democratic state in Europe–Norway. Norway is an example of a larger subset of consensus-oriented democracies and can help to shed light on whether appeals to the public interest is a staple strategy for lobbyists operating in Western democracies (Lijphart, 1984).

We picked three recent lobbying campaigns conducted by three Norwegian organizations—a business, a large union and an environmental NGO. All three campaigns made use of the mass media to further the cause of the organization. Before we present more details about our approach and the campaigns, however, we briefly discuss the literature on lobbying and communication. This is followed by a section discussing the rhetorical concept of topos. Finally, we summarize our findings and discuss the democratic implications of appeals to the public interest as a standard lobbying strategy.

**Lobbying and communication**

Lobbying can be defined as efforts to influence the policy process (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998). Organized interests like trade organizations, corporations, unions, non-governmental organizations, and so forth—typically engage in lobbying with the help of one or several individual lobbyists (Nownes, 2006). The lobbyist might be in-house or belong to a public relations agency or another type of consultancy firm. In many small countries, the direct lobbying is most often conducted by the organized interests themselves, while advisors work behind the curtains (Ihlen & Gullberg, 2015). For our purpose, however, this
distinction is not really important, as we are focusing on the rhetorical operation itself. We see lobbying as an organization’s planned use of communication to influence policy makers or the policy process to the organization’s own interest. The latter might or might not coincide with the public interest.

So far, the most extensive study of lobbying communication has been conducted by Baumgartner and colleagues (2009) who pointed to the existence of 14 argument types used by lobbyists in American politics. Most typically, lobbyists would point to problems (or lack of problems) concerning the implementation or feasibility of a policy.

A second, frequently employed argument type was, nonetheless, that a certain policy would promote (or work against) a particular shared social goal. The latter point has also been made in totally different contexts, for instance that of a small social democratic state with a corporatist tradition—Norway. Rommetvedt (2011) has argued that in the Norwegian political context, the best arguments are those that seek their legitimacy by promoting a generalized interest or a common social goal. In the private sector, similar appeals are heard when corporations argue that they are not just maximizing profit at all costs, but pursue higher goals invoking the term corporate social responsibility (Ihlen, Bartlett, & May, 2011).

Several recent studies on lobbying uses framing theory to explore how lobbyists find their arguments (Boräng et al., 2014; Junk & Rasmussen, 2018; Klüver, Mahoney, & Opper, 2015; Mahoney, 2008). Some of the interesting findings here are that type of group and policy issue influences what frames are chosen. Furthermore, when several interest groups adopts the same frame the chance of policy success increases. Recent framing studies of lobbying draws heavily on quantitative methods and computer-assisted qualitative content analysis. While these studies yield some interesting results they tend to treat frames not as communicative constructions but stable entities you can choose from.

Some lobbying, but certainly not all, takes place in a competitive setting. This means
that an organized interest that make an appeal to certain social values, is likely to be countered by opponents that make use of conflicting social values (Baumgartner et al., 2009). Thus, there is a need to distinguish between different lobbying campaigns, those in the domain of “quiet politics” (Culpepper, 2011) and those that employ several channels, including social media and news media coverage. The “quiet lobby campaigns” typically concerns technical and/or judicial matters where lobbyists are able to influence by offering their expertise and so-called legislative subsidies (e.g., Hall & Deardorff, 2006; Toshkov, Lowery, Carroll, & Berkhout, 2012). Indeed, research has demonstrated how many lobbyists work the back channels of politics in their attempts to steer issues away from the public eye (Woll, 2013). In this paper, however, we focus on the type of lobbying campaign that uses the opposite strategy and achieves leverage through public attention. This type of lobbying campaign takes places in “the public eye”. Based on the research referenced above, it is to be expected that organizations conducting such public lobbying campaigns will argue that their proposals work for the public interest. To this end, organizations will rely on acceptable public arguments, or what can be called topoi.

**Rhetorical approach**

To answer our research question, we will employ the theory of *topos* that stems from ancient rhetoric (Greek plural *topoi*). In Latin rhetoric the term was *commonplaces* (Latin *locus*, plural *loci*). Both notions are devised as helpful when a rhetor wants to structure arguments (Clark & Delia, 1979; Miller, 2000; Söderberg, 2012; Wallace, 1972). If you want to persuade someone, you will need to know what arguments the other will accept and what values her or she hold dear.

Some see topics as a way of thinking creatively about different issues, whereas others have argued that they are a way of justifying claims, and others understand them as the basic elements of enthymemes. The most common understanding, and the one used in
this essay, is that topics are a more general method for finding arguments (Herrick, 2001).

Consequently, the search for arguments is an intentional and structured process and its success depends on the skills of the rhetor. Quintilian (2001) compared the search for arguments with regular hunting and argued that at skilled hunter who knows the terrain will probably have greater success. Thus, both Quintilian and Cicero argued that a liberal education was the most valuable education for an orator since a broad education would aid him in inventing arguments on a wide array of subjects (Corbett & Connors, 1999).

Aristotle dealt with *common topics* and *special topics*. The former are useful in all species of rhetoric, and include arguments from definition, comparison, relationship, circumstance, or testimony (Corbett & Connors, 1999). The latter are tied to the three, basic species of rhetoric: deliberative (political), epideictic (demonstrative or ceremonial), and judicial speech. For instance, when giving a deliberative speech, the rhetor may address war and peace. Several such specific topics were highlighted by Aristotle, and he also emphasized that they could help the rhetor to treat the subject systematically (Aristotle, trans. 1991).

**Topos** is a contested concept in rhetorical theory and there are few examples of topos analysis being used in academic articles. In this paper, we follow Gabrielsen (2008) who argues for an analytical approach that first focuses on the material function of topos, and, second, on the inferential aspect. **Gabrielsen’s approach is useful because it gives a method for how to conduct a topos analysis.** A rhetor chooses an angle (topos) and then search for a persuasive argument within that angle (frame/topos). Thus, topical manoeuvring is an intentional process which helps the rhetor to build his or her case towards a given audience. This analytical split is, however, first and foremost a heuristic tool and does not necessarily provide a linear description of how humans find their arguments. Still, the model provides a useful analytical tool to analyse topos. We could, for instance, say that the rhetor picks the
terrain of the battle, or more precisely, decides what the debate will be about. The rhetor can choose to focus on, for instance, economy, politics, or morals. The rhetor will also strategically deliberate if he or she will be arguing from definition, comparison, relationship, circumstance, or testimony (Corbett & Connors, 1999). Again, however, this is not necessarily done in a sequential manner, but the model holds promise for analytical purposes.

A topos analysis helps in approaching the text in a systematic fashion, and in some sense the theory of topos is an outgrowth of the study of abstract thinking. In performing a topos analysis, an advice is that “critics should start the criticism where persuaders start their persuasion” (Hart, 1990, p. 102). Thus, topos analysis has a critical potential and can help us explore how rhetors choose and develop their arguments (Gabrielsen, 2008).

Importantly, we argue that merely showing which topoi rhetors use is of little interest. The analysis gains academic value by discussing how these topoi function in the broader context and why certain topoi are chosen at the expense of others. Topoi do have a cognitive facet as well (Gabrielsen, 2008), as it creates meaning. A topos analysis can help us to understand society’s doxa—the values and perspectives that are taken for granted. In this context—the values and perspectives relate to what can be considered as being in the public interest.

**Methodological approach**

The paper is based on three case studies. The generalizability of case studies can be increased by the strategic selection of cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2009). For this particular study we selected cases where we initially thought we could identify the public interest argument and then sought variation in the cases in the sense that they differed on one important variable: type of organisation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Thus, we picked public lobbying campaigns involving a business, a union and an NGO. Variation in the type of organisation could help us to analyse how different rhetors choose and develop their appeals to the public
interest and to what extent these claims are credible or not.

The business case involves a business that is the largest alcohol seller in the nation, next to the state owned Vinmonopolet. Travel Retail Norway (TRN) runs duty free shops at five of the largest Norwegian airports and is owned by the German corporation Gebr. Heineman. Estimates for the year 2014 was that TRN had a revenue of 5 billion NOK. Importantly, however, a revenue-based rent is based to the publicly owned company Avinor. The challenge for TRN was a proposal in 2014 that the duty free arrangement could be abolished or that the publicly owned Vinmonopolet could run the shops instead. These proposals were discussed in the Norwegian Parliamentary committee for Health and Care Services in the Summer of 2014. At the time of the writing, the issue is still not settled as the Ministry of Health and Care Services is working on a report.

For the union case, we chose the largest union, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), and their campaign against proposed changes to the Working Environment Act. The changes would make it easier to hire people on short contracts, would ease the regulations against work on Sundays, and so forth. In June 2014, these changes were proposed and LO started its campaign against them. A nationwide two-hour strike was organized in January 2015. Nonetheless, the changes were agreed to by the Parliament in March 2015.

As the NGO-case, we chose the largest Norwegian environmental NGO–FIVH–and their campaign to get the public Norwegian oil fund to divest in the coal industry. The campaign started in 2013 and succeeded in May 2015.

2 http://web.retriever-info.com/services/archive/displayDocument?documentId=05502420141220226277&service Id=2
The case studies were conducted using multiple methods for collecting data, building on the epistemological perspective of Stake (1995), that is, our approach draws on constructivism, and we approach the cases holistically, empirically and interpretive. Our data are analysed through categorical aggregation and validation is sought through triangulation of sources, investigators, theory, as well as methodology. To the extent that space allows us, we also seek to provide thick descriptions that might enhance the external validity.

More specifically, original and secondary data will be utilized to investigate the public appeal forms of the actors. The material consisted of semi structured qualitative interviews (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Kvale, 1996), with representatives that had been deeply involved in the campaigns; this included the communication manager of TRN Norway; the union’s head of public relations and strategy, as well as two communication advisors; and in the NGO we interviewed the head of the communication department, as well as the political advisor responsible for the campaign. The interviews were conducted by two of the authors, lasted approximately 1–1,5 hours, were taped and transcribed by a research assistant. The interviewees read an approved the transcripts and no changes were required. An abridged interview guide is included in the appendix. Quotes that are used throughout the paper were translated by the authors.

We also gained access to internal strategy documents from the union and the NGO. From TRN Norway, we got a PowerPoint presentation that was made to a class taught by one of the authors. The research assistant also pulled together the media coverage of the cases, which we read upon in preparation of the interviews.

We set out to provide an interpretation of particular strategies used in three particular cases, and thus provide rich knowledge of lobbying strategies. The goal, however, is not to generalize, but to provide deeper insight which in turn can be used for further
research, qualitative or not.

The cases

The Duty free-campaign

As mentioned, in the summer of 2014, it was debated whether or not to liquidate the duty free arrangement or, alternatively, let the state owned Vinmonopolet take over the duty free shops TRN had been running. Several central news outlets had editorials pointing to health issues associated with alcohol consumption and argued for abolishing the duty free arrangement (Adresseavisa, 2014; Aftenposten, 2014; Bergens-Tidende, 2014; DN, 2014). Parliament members representing three different parties motioned the latter alternative and it was decided that the Government should produce a white paper on the duty free system (Stortinget, 2014). This then, necessitated a lobbying campaign from TRN.

Several strategic manoeuvres were undertaken by TRN, including the commissioning and subsequent release of a report from a consultancy company demonstrating the economic contribution made by TRN to society (Oslo-Economics, 2015). A crucial point was that TRN paid a revenue-based rent to the state-owned company Avinor that runs 46 Norwegian airports, including the ones were TRN operates. The report concluded that Avinor would lose 900 million NOK each year, which in turn, it was argued, was needed to keep smaller airports alive. Even before the reports was released, in December 2014, the Avinor CEO was quoted in the news saying that the income from duty free kept the smaller airports alive (Klassekampen, 2014). This then, was to be the most important argument for TRN as it could link to a crucial political value in the Norway, namely the importance of persevering the habitation patterns. Traditionally, the idea of persevering local communities has been very strong in Norway and it is part of the centre/periphery cleavage in Norwegian politics (Rokkan & Valen, 1964). In other words, the material topos used by TRN was to attempt to have the “battle” be fought in the area of politics and a widely shared political value that
would also make it possible to form alliances. Fusing the goal of the company with this goal, could help the company forge an alliance with local and regional politicians that would find it hard to face their constituencies and tell them that their airport would be closed down. The inferential topos then would be to argue from relationship: If Avinor lose money, this will hurt the company’s ability to subsidize smaller airports and hence hurt the infrastructure needed to keep up the settlement patterns. TRN made visits to “all” mayors in districts with small airports to make this argument known. At the same time, they faced the challenge of being questioned about their motives. The communication manager of TRN Norway explained their strategy he following way:

We are totally open [our profit motive]. … The debate we want to have is the one that affects the most people. The main criterion is whether it … is important and relevant [for them]. Our profit is not really relevant. But airports have relevance for a lot of people. Jobs have relevance for a lot of people. (TRN Norway, communication manager; personal communication, March 30, 2016)

Consequently, by using a material topos of persevering local jobs and an inferential topos of relationship, TRN was able to move the debate to a more favorable political terrain.

It was not given that the topos of persevering local jobs would be the dominant topos in the campaign. In their strategy memo TRN outlines several arguments such as tax-free is popular in the general public and tax free is smart because it increases trade in Norway. However, when the campaign landed on the topos of persevering local jobs it was based on that this topos was particularly suited for making an impact on decision makers:

We all know how hard it is to finance that bridge or ferry. We relate it to something they can recognize and then they realize how hard will be. (TRN Norway, communication manager; personal communication, March 30,
The campaign against changes to the Working Environment Act

When a Conservative/right wing coalition government took power in Norway in October 2013 it had already announced that it would propose changes to the Working Environment Act. The changes were proposed before summer in 2014 with calls to make the act more “modern” and “adapted to present working life.” Descriptions such as “minor changes” and “flexibility” were used.

An alliance was forged between three of the largest unions, among them LO, to combat this proposal from the government.

We were expecting these changes since they had been announced in the declaration issued from the incoming government. [The government] was going to use their majority to push these [changes] through. So, we thought the chances of stopping them was relatively small. But through a broad-based mobilization against the proposals we thought we could create huge political costs for the government so they would think twice about going through.

(Union-strategist; personal communication, April 27, 2016)

LO talked about how “The Government’s proposed amendments to the Working Environment Act will mean increased uncertainty and a less inclusive workplace.”

The unions also argued that the proposal from the government involved major changes, not minor ones. In February 2015, the unions called a strike and 1.5 million of Norway’s 2.6 million workers participated in a two-hour general strike.

In the strategy material we have been given access to, the union representatives

\footnote{http://www.lo.no/language/English/News-articles/Protect-the-Working-Environment-Act/, accessed Dec. 4, 2015.}
pointed out that “this issue can be framed in a number of different ways” (internal document). The strategist behind the union campaign also acknowledged the conflict between fighting for the interests of their members and what could be considered as the public interest. To forge a connection here, they relied on moving the debate to a more general level.

The challenge is to reconcile self-interest and common interest ... You must communicate about a larger concern: the development of working life ...

How the situation can be for your school-tired nephew (LO, communication advisor 1; personal communication, April 27, 2016)

At the same time, the LO’s head of public relations and strategy, was adamant that the union’s large membership base made it possible for them to argue that they did largely represent the public interest. The major rhetorical strategy then would be to choose the material topic of work security as a shared political value and locate this on a national level, in other words, to make it relevant for all workers. Again, an inferential topos of relationship was used arguing that the proposed changes would create insecurity.

The Divest in Coal-campaign

Our third case concerns the campaign ran by the environmental NGO the Future in Our Hands (FIVH). The NGO started its lobbying campaign in the autumn of 2013 aimed at the Finance committee in the Norwegian parliament to change the criteria for the Norwegian oil fund. In January 2014, the NGO succeed in getting the main television station NRK to broadcast a news story about the Norwegian investment in the coal industry in Indonesia and the environmental damage from its activity. The NGO also ran a number of seminars for the members of the Finance committee. These politicians were also exposed to newspapers ads, campaigns in social media and even billboard ads around the subway station close to the
parliament. Most of the ads were financed by funds from the Rockefeller Foundation. This contribution also made it possible for the NGO to fly in victims of environmental damage from the coal industry to give eyewitness testimonies to the committee. With the help of the German NGO Urgewald, FIVH also produced a report that was used to illustrate how divestment form the coal industry indeed would be possible. In May 2015, the campaign succeeded as the Finance committee unanimously voted that the oil fund should divest in the coal industry.\(^5\)

FIVH picked the material topos of environmental harm caused by the coal industry, and the inferential topos of relationship pointing to how the Norwegian oil fund through its investments was an accomplice to environmental destruction and human suffering. Thus, a link to the public interest was created by pointing to the common value of environmental protection and evoking the moral principle of not causing harm to humans or the environment. Asked about the relationship between the goals of FIVH and the public interest, the NGOs head of communication commented:

> We … work on behalf of someone else who is affected by a problem, environmental or development related… I feel that we are listened to … and have significant goodwill in the political environment (FIVH, head of communication; personal communication, April 8, 2016)

Thus, for FIVH the creation of an appeal to the public interest was much less complicated than for LO and FIVH, since they felt that they were working in the public interest by default.

**Conclusion**

This short study corroborates the literature’s suggestion that lobbyists use appeals to the public interest and common values (Baumgartner et al., 2009; Rommetvedt, 2011). It seems that political actors today *have* to make some kind of reference to what is considered the public interest. A likely hypothesis is that lobbying campaigns that make use of the mass media, what we call “public lobbying campaigns,” requires that political actors put even stronger emphasis on how it is in the public interest that their proposal is accepted. Without such appeals it would be harder to survive public scrutiny, build alliances and, in general, have politicians support the lobbyist’s cause. Still, we would draw attention to how, for instance, the union could point to class struggle and argue against the “fat cats of business.” Equally, the NGO could attack the mine owners for “exploitation of workers and local communities.” Instead, they chose to rely on the public interest topos, much like the literature suggest.

What the study has added to the literature is first, the demonstration of *how* three particular organizations used the public interest topos to further their cause. In other words, how the lobbying organizations were picking the “terrain for their battles”. A topos analysis allows for a study of the grounding, the foundations, of the argument put forward. In that sense a study of topoi (argumentation) is a study of the values and beliefs a rhetor builds on and assumes his or her audience will share. The topos of the public interest is ultimately constructed by the use of a material and a inferential topos, the first concerns the identification of a political or social value that relates to “everyone”. For TRN it was the need to preserve the national settlement patterns. For LO it was the need for job security for all Norwegian employees. For FIVH it was the moral value of not causing harm to people or the environment.

As for the inferential topos, all the actors argued from relationship. TRN pointed to the necessity of having infrastructure like airports and how the company Avinor could not
run the smaller airports without the rent paid by TRN. LO argued that the proposed changes to the Working Environment Act would hurt all Norwegian employees, of which most of them belonged to LO or one of its allies. FIVH for its part, made the argument that an investor in the coal industry also was an accomplice to the destruction and negative effects of this industry.

They all chose causation.

In addition to going in depth on how the public interest topos is constructed, the study has also served to illustrate some of the different challenges faced by different organizations when they try to forge a connection between their private interests and the public interest. Interesting differences in choice of topoi appear related to the different positions and character of the three organizations. In the interview material there are quotes from all the informants discussing the different grounds on which the arguments were constructed. As for the business, the profit motive tempers the ability to lay claim to be working for the public interest. The suggested solution by the business actor in this case is transparency. The business person pointed to arguments that they did not bother to use in the public sphere and that nobody “cared” about their business. Instead, they had to look elsewhere to find their arguments and, hence, they arrived at the public interest argument by focusing on regional infrastructure. Furthermore, they seemed to arrive at this rhetoric by way of a topos of necessary antithesis: the company started to think about the kind of positive, good world bragging that many campaigns want to use. Realizing, that this was not possible (because that argument/topos would not be accepted in public coming from TRN), they instead used a topos of “the best choice in the circumstances”: People are buying these goods anyway, so the best thing would be to buy them in Norway.

The union in the study conflated its own interest with the public interest, largely through its sheer size. The strategists stated that they had to counter the argument that the
union made life difficult for non-members and that they were “pulling up the ladder” making it difficult for others to enter the work market because of an “inflexible” Working Environment Act, preventing creation of temporary positions. Thus, the union attempted to raise the issue to a more general level, namely that of the general conditions of working life and the assumed common wish of having a steady job.

The NGO, was, on the other hand, much better positioned than the two other organizations since working for the public interest is the very rationale for its existence. The interviewees claimed that people very seldom questioned their motives and that they were welcomed by politicians as a highly legitimate non-elected political actor. While TRN had to leave or transform their main reason for being into arguments valid for the public, FIVH used the similar kind of arguments (topoi) working behind the scenes and in public.

The fact that interest groups draw attention to the public interest even when they are pursuing private goods raises several questions with regard how lobbying impact the democratic process. In a world where all interest groups claim to work in the public interest how should decision makers and voters evaluate these claims? Even though TRN are clearly pursuing a private good, the topos of “preserving settlement patterns” was not really challenged by other actors. This is in line with Godwin et al. (2013) who argue that interest organizations lobbying for private benefits are “less likely to face countervailing powers” (p. 208). Thus, appealing to the public interest is a form of strategic communication that easily can avoid public deliberation and is not given that capture or corruption of the public interest is exposed.

A limitation of our study is that we have not analysed the counter topoi by the opponents of the mentioned actors. Nor have we analysed the reception of the arguments and how they were evaluated in, for instance, the media. These are obvious ways to follow up the present study. Furthermore, while we do not have historical data for this, future
research could also investigate if the incorporation of the public interest argument has been a staple of public lobbying campaigns or whether it is a result of an on-going professionalization process whereby non-elected political actors get more adept at communicating.

Importantly, we have not made any claims about linkage between the use of the public interest-argument and the success or lack of success of the campaigns. We are primarily interested in how the organizations tried to make the connection between their goal and what they define to be in the public interest. Further down the line, however, it would of course be interesting to discuss the possible effect of the argument and its success/lack of success. Our cases are mixed: The TRN case is on-going, LO lost, while FIVH won. We can point to several other contributing factors to the result of the two latter cases (the political platform of the government; lack of economic interest & opposition, and so forth). An important conclusion from the Baumgartner-study (2009) is also that lobbyists in general do not have the power to determine the structure or the focus of the debate single-handedly. The public interest-argument might be a necessity, but it is certainly not a panacea for lobbying campaigns.
References


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Appendix

Abridged interview guide

Name: ................ Background: ..........

Lobbyism in general

- What do you understand by the term lobbying?
- What role do you believe lobbyists play in society? Strategy and tactics in lobbying

Strategy and tactics in lobbying

- In this specific case, which scenarios did you envision?
- What did you wish to achieve? What specific goals have you had?
- What challenges did you face?
- Who were the most important actors/competitors? Why?
- How did you work in relation to these actors?
- How important was media coverage? What was your goal here?

Communication

- In this specific campaign, what was the most important argument to win support for your cause?
- Did you use different arguments towards different actors?
- Why do you mean X is a good argument? In what way?
- Your proposal is based on self-interest, how do you handle this when you communicate?
- What are the counter arguments to yours? What are their strengths/weaknesses?
- How have you tried to meet these?
- In general: what are good arguments in a lobby context?
- Have you been inspired by other campaigns?