



COMPASS PROJECT

Working Paper #5

Interest groups defined

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COMPASS: LOBBYING AND COMPASSION. INTEREST GROUPS, DISCOURSE AND NONHUMAN ANIMALS IN SPAIN

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Working paper for internal discussion only

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What are considered lobbies and think tanks in this study?

Interest groups are organized actors that seek to influence public policy or decision-making processes. Within this broad category, lobbies and think tanks can be understood as specific types of interest groups. The study of interest groups is situated within the field of public affairs. From a communication perspective, public affairs is often considered a branch of public relations, as it represents a specialized form of strategic communication focused on shaping government actions.

This document provides definitions for each of these concepts:

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1. What are PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mainstream handbook:

The Graduate School of Political Management, Georgetown University
(<https://gspm.online.gwu.edu/blog/public-affairs-vs-public-relations/>):

“What is public relations?”

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) defines public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” This formulation can make PR sound broad enough to encompass public affairs within its bounds, as a sub-discipline.

However, the “mutually beneficial” language in the PRSA definition points to how PR is concerned with reputation management to a much greater extent than public affairs. Whereas public affairs often involves practitioners attempting to influence government action, public relations is more about how organizations shape their perceptions.

Toward that end, PR professionals engage in tasks such as:

- Drafting press releases and other communications detailing a company’s official positions.
- Managing crises, via rapid response on channels such as social media and email.
- Preparing spokespeople for public appearances, e.g. by writing their speeches.
- Coordinating with advertising and marketing personnel on overall communications strategy.
- Reaching out to members of the media for placement and coverage.

Tracking public sentiment and determining the best ways to connect with audiences.”

Critical perspectives:

Rethinking Public Relations. PR Propaganda and Democracy (Kevin Moloney, 2006):

“Public relations intersects with politics, economics and the media” (in the blurb for the author)

p. x: “Public relations pours a Niagara of persuasive attitudes, words, visuals and events over liberal democracies ... The text sustains the view that PR is weak propaganda ... empirically, public relations is not the search for communicative symmetries, but instead the search for communicative advantages that strengthens the interests of those it services”

p. xi: “More wariness is needed from both individual journalists who have been too passive before the PR-isation of their copy; ... In politics, it is now harder to distinguish between the work and style of politics and PR, and thus easier to see the beginning of a ‘public relations state’.”

p. xii: “PR is such a pervasive form of promotional culture in modern liberal democracies with active markets, and has such a large impact on their media and politics, that it is important to keep it under close watch.”

What does Public Relations? Definitions are at hand, several of them, but I find most illustrating the practical, out of experience, summary produced by Kevin Moloney:

“press conferences; news leaks; special events; stunts; staged photos; consumer leaflets; corporate brands, brochures and apologia; competitions, exhibitions and incentives; road shows; conferences; policy briefings; lobbying campaigns; demonstrations; community support; sponsorships; managed issues; reassuring communications in crisis, and messages about their social responsibility.” (p.1)

p.2: “historically public relations in the UK and USA has been weak propaganda produced by government, business and other dominant interests to maintain their positions. Indeed we ourselves probably have felt and still feel the experience of being propa- gandised. It is these observations about others and our own experience that produce a culture of suspicion and mistrust about PR, and so generate its low reputation.”

2. What are PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Castillo Esparcia, Antonio y Smolak Lozano, Emilia (2017). *Lobbies y Think tanks. Comunicación política en la red*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

“Dentro de la corriente de las relaciones públicas, los estudios marcan las perspectivas de las relaciones institucionales, *public affairs* o relaciones públicas organizacionales o *issue management* (Xifra, 2003 y 2008^a), como las relaciones con los medios y su presencia mediática en los medios de comunicación sociales como televisión y prensa y, sobre todo, en términos de impacto sobre el discurso (Xifra, 2003, 2008^a; Castillo 2009b y 2009c; Castillo y Castellero, 2010; Lalueza y Girona, 2016)).”

The Graduate School of Political Management, Georgetown University (<https://gspm.online.gwu.edu/blog/public-affairs-vs-public-relations/>):

“What is public affairs?”

There are varying definitions of public affairs, but most of the time the term refers to relationships between the public and specific institutions that are adjacent to current political, social and economic issues. In other words, public affairs has a distinctly political dimension, unlike the more commercial concerns of public relations.

Accordingly, a public affairs practitioner will usually work with stakeholders to influence the course of public policy. Specific activities may include:

- Advocating for or against the passage of legislation.
- Mobilizing supporters of a cause for the above purpose.
- Working formally as a lobbyist or consultant.
- Keeping tabs on public opinion on political and social issues.

Distributing information to relevant stakeholders.”

Lerbinger, Otto (2006). *Corporate public affairs. Interacting with interest groups, media, and government*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum:

p. 5: “The purpose of corporate public affairs is to attain sufficient power to enable an organization to achieve preferred outcomes in the political arena and to forge and maintain a sociopolitical environment favorable to it. To achieve this goal, public affairs professionals identify and analyze the environmental forces in the political arena and engage in political activities and various forms of communication to craft public policies. Political scientists, too, recognize the importance of the constant flow of messages among participants who initiate and influence what policies, laws, and regulations will govern society.¹ The process can aptly be called strategic communication, which seeks to manage the behavior of people and organizations to enhance the chances of achieving a desired outcome. As described by Jarol B. Manheim of George Washington University, it is “a term of art that refers to the use of sophisticated knowledge of such attributes of human behavior as attitude and preference structures, cultural tendencies, and media-use patterns, as well as knowledge of such relevant organizational behaviors as how news organizations make decisions regarding news content and how legislatures and government agencies form their agenda, to shape and target messages so as to maximize their desired impact while minimizing collateral damage.

The three most important participant groups—interest groups, news media, and government—comprise the major forces in a corporation’s sociopolitical environment. All three relate to the foundation of public opinion”.

p. 7: “Simply defined, public affairs is an organization’s concern for its sociopolitical environment. A fuller and more formal definition, used in a Foundation for Public Affairs survey, is “the management function responsible for interpreting the corporation’s non-commercial environment and managing the corporation’s responses to that environment.”⁸ Douglas G. Pinkham, president of the Public Affairs Council, further explains public affairs as “the management function that interprets and works to strengthen a corporation’s business

environment.”⁹ Public affairs refers to a company’s political strategy, which John F. Mahon, an academician, defines as “those activities taken by organizations to acquire, develop, and use power to obtain an advantage (a particular allocation of resources) in a situation of conflict.”

Although emphasizing the social and political factors, this environment indirectly includes economic factors, which, however, are already adequately represented by the duties and responsibilities of operating managers. Sometimes public affairs is called external relations because of its emphasis on the environment surrounding a corporation.”

p.8: “Mapping the Sociopolitical Environment

Public relations professionals have long found it practical to view the relationship of their company to society by listing the publics who are in some way connected with the corporation. A minimum list includes investors, employees, customers, community citizens and groups, and government, as shown in the “wheel” diagram in Fig. 1.1.

A useful way of visualizing the public affairs function is to map a company’s sociopolitical environment by recognizing the specific persons and stakeholders that relate to the company. Indirectly, this mapping recognizes the major “forces” that exert pressure on the corporation. This essential information enables a public affairs professional to analyze a situation, problem, or crisis faced by a corporation.”

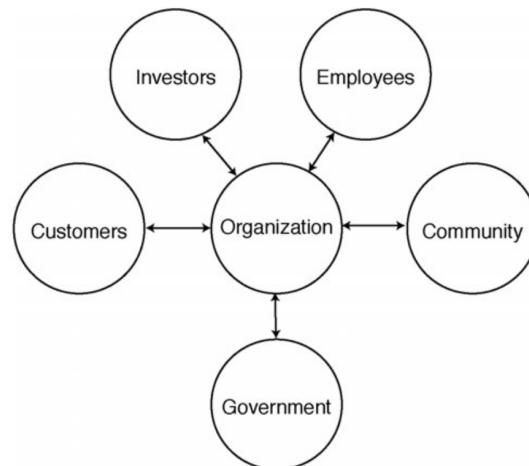


FIG. 1.1. The corporation and its publics.

p.11: “Converting Economic Resources Into Political Power. Because corporations, especially large ones, have more economic resources than other groups in society, a core public affairs function is to convert economic resources into political power, for example, using money to purchase media space and time, sponsor surveys, and hire well-connected and expert lobbyists.”

p. 13: “Public affairs managers face the formidable task of mobilizing corporate political resources for the purpose of influencing other participants in the public policy process”

p. 28: “The two prominent issues that gave rise to public affairs—consumerism and environmentalism—resulted from public dissatisfactions in the marketplace and with corporate environmental performance. Ralph Nader popularized the consumerism movement with his book *Unsafe at Any Speed*, and Rachel Carson inaugurated the environmental movement with her *Silent Spring*. Other social movements followed: women’s rights, gay and lesbian rights, animal rights groups, and a host of others ... These movements—and the not-to-be-forgotten civil rights movement—were preceded by the labor movement, which is represented by hundreds of labor unions, ...”

3. What are INTEREST GROUPS

Encyclopaedia Britannica:

“Also called **special interest group**, **advocacy group**, or **pressure group**, any association of individuals or organizations, usually formally organized, that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favour. All interest groups share a desire to affect government policy to benefit themselves or their causes. Their goal could be a policy that exclusively benefits group members or one segment of society (e.g., government subsidies for farmers) or a policy that advances a broader public purpose (e.g., improving air quality). They attempt to achieve their goals by lobbying—that is, by attempting to bring pressure to bear on policy makers to gain policy outcomes in their favour.”

Holyoke, Thomas T. (2014) *Interest Groups and Lobbying*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, pp. 27–30:

“It is easy to identify members of Congress because the process of becoming one is clearly laid out in the Constitution. Regulatory agencies are also pretty easy to distinguish from other organizations because they are created by acts of Congress. Even political parties can be identified without too much trouble. Interest groups, though, are harder. In fact, scholars cannot even agree on what to call them. Is an “interest group” the same as an “organized interest,” “social movement organization,” “special interest group,” “private interest,” “pressure group,” “lobby,” “nongovernmental organization,” or “political organization”? Perhaps it would be easier to start by thinking about why some entities are not interest groups. Presidents and executive branch officials often pressure Congress to pass (or to not pass) legislation, and members of Congress try to pressure them in return, and they all try to influence the decisions of Supreme Court justices. “These policy makers lobby in that they try to persuade each other to enact policies they desire, but they are not working for interest groups. They serve in institutions created by public law to formally make policies benefitting all citizens within their jurisdictions. They wield powers that flow directly or indirectly from the nation’s most fundamental law, the Constitution. So while government officials and lawmakers lobby each other, no government institution is an interest group. Apologies to the Metropolitan Water District.”

Political parties are not interest groups either. Apologies to Democrats, Republicans, and all of America’s small third parties. Parties gain political power by trying to get enough of their members elected to office to command a majority and thus directly control lawmaking institutions. To do that, they need the support of a majority of voting citizens, which means trying to represent many different groups of people at once, often bitterly realizing that trying to represent everyone usually results in failing to represent anyone well. When we talk about an interest group, we refer to a singular interest. Each group represents one need or desire, or at most a few very closely related needs or desires, held by only a small number of people. Consequently, most interest groups cannot gain formal political power by electing their members to public office. They represent too few people. Whatever influence interest groups have in government, it is informal rather than formal.

Corporations are not interest groups either. They exist first and foremost to make a profit in the marketplace and return that profit to their shareholders, not lobby for government largesse and favorable policy. Nor do they represent any definable group of people with a common interest. Their shareholders might be considered constituents, but most of them are involved with the company to make money, not influence policy. Corporations often do wade into the political arena, usually because a change in policy (or lack of policy change) will have a direct impact on their financial bottom lines. “Moreover, some corporate executives have tried to claim they actually represent the interests of their employees and customers, sometimes even persuading them to contact lawmakers on the company’s behalf, as Allstate Insurance did with its forty-five thousand employees in the 2011 fight over whether to raise the nation’s debt ceiling (Dash and Schwartz 2011) and as Caterpillar did when the fight happened again in 2013 (Yang and Hamburger 2013). CEOs, however, are not accountable to their employees and customers and thus cannot be said to represent them in the political process. The same is true

of universities, hospitals, and similar nonprofit organizations. They are not interest groups. Apologies to Citibank and the United Way. Corporations and nonprofits do collectively employ more lobbyists in Washington, DC, than true interest groups (Salisbury 1984), but they tend to only lobby sporadically (Brasher and Lowery 2006). Real interest groups represent some portion of the public, not just their own leaders and CEOs.

Interest groups, then, are private organizations, not formal parts of the government. This is why they are sometimes called nongovernmental organizations. They primarily exist to provide informal political representation to citizens, usually by persuading lawmakers that it would be valuable to enact policies that help these citizens pursue strongly felt interests. A person's interest is fundamental to their character and is often grounded in economic need, aspects of personal identity (e.g., profession, ethnicity, sexual orientation), perceptions of fairness and justice, desires to acquire or achieve, and even metaphysical beliefs and values including religion. More broadly, interests define a person's perception of who they are and what they believe so strongly, so intensely, that its absence would change that person's identity. They would be a different person without that interest. Interest groups are thus formal aggregations of people sharing the same interest.

A Culture of Self-Interest

Interest groups only exist to represent their members' self-interests. People join or otherwise support an interest group because they want it to advocate for policies that make it easier for them to pursue their personal interests, even though public policy is supposed to treat everyone equally. While some interest groups do claim to advocate for the public interest or common good rather than just the good of their members, that is still simply their point of view. Ask coal miners and users of energy from coal-fired plants in West Virginia whether the common interest is served when environmental laws force their mines to shut down, putting them out of work. Ask Louisiana's shrimping industry if it is well served by offshore oil drilling that is supposed to make the United States energy independent even though oil spills kill marine life. Coal miners and shrimpers benefit from cleaner air and cheaper oil but are hurt by lack of income. Policy that serves one person's idea of what ought to be true for everyone benefits only that person's self-interest, often at the expense of somebody else's self-interest.

Simply put, we create interest groups to help us further our personal interests through the nation's lawmaking process. This should not be surprising. Our political and economic systems are based on the fundamental belief that everyone has a right to pursue his or her own self-interest, and that no one's interest is more or less legitimate than anybody else's. We expect our government to protect this right to pursue our self-interest, and we often look to public officials to help us out by enacting policy prioritizing our self-interest, even when it is harmful to a majority of other citizens. We may talk about the virtues of compromise and the public interest, but then we denounce our leaders as incompetent or corrupt when new policy in any way threatens our self-interest. Compromises are only "obvious" and "sensible" when they give us what we want. In other words, we recognize no public interest in our political system, only many individual interests that sometimes aggregate into interest groups. Could it be any other way?"

Thomas, Clive s. (ed.) (2004). *Research Guide to U.S. and International Interest Groups*. London: Praeger:

p.3-5: "There is no single agreed-upon definition of an interest group among scholars. The broad diversity of definitions is well encapsulated by Baumgartner and Leech (1998, 25–30). Definitions range from the very narrow to the very broad. Many scholars studying interest groups at the national and state level in the United States use a narrow, legal definition confining their focus of study to those groups required to register under national or state lobby laws and exclude those not required to do so. Yet, many groups and organizations engage in lobbying but are not required to register. This is not only the case in the United States, where registration of interest groups and their lobbyists is extensive, but more so in many other countries where registration laws are much less comprehensive and in many places do not exist.

The most important of these nonregistered interest groups are those representing government itself—particularly government agencies (including the federal and state governments in the United States). Where registration laws exist, most do not require public officials at any level of government to register as lobbyists. Thus, to confine the definition of an interest group to a narrow, legal definition would exclude many interests. So a broader definition is more appropriate in many instances and certainly for use in this book, which covers interest group activity in its many forms and across many different types of political systems. A useful definition in this regard is as follows:

An interest group is an association of individuals or organizations or a public or private institution that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favor.

This definition embraces the three broad categories of interest groups operating in political systems around the world, past and present.

The first category, often referred to as the traditional membership group, is made up of individuals such as doctors, gun owners, farmers, students, and so on ... The second category of interest groups, usually called organizational interests, is composed not of individuals but of organizations—they are actually organizations of organizations. These can be public or private organizations that represent for-profit or nonprofit entities ... The third category is that of institutional interests, which are not really groups at all. As Walker (1983), Salisbury (1984), Gray and Lowery (1995, 2001), and Thomas and Hrebenar (2003) have pointed out, many organizations that lobby are, in fact, institutions, both public and private: such as individual business corporations, think tanks, and the multitude of government agencies and levels of government (including departments of national governments), cities and towns, public universities, public corporations (like nationally owned airlines), and, in some countries, special districts for services like education and water supply. Moreover, in many countries the armed forces are important in lobbying for their budget and shaping public policy. Overall, probably the most important lobbying forces in any society are the various elements of government. Most of these institutional interests, while having employees, staff, or governing boards, are not membership organizations (composed of individuals or other organizations) in the traditional sense of an interest group.”

Lerbinger, Otto (2006). *Corporate public affairs. Interacting with interest groups, media, and government*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum:

p. 27: “Interest groups constitute one of the three major forces in a corporation’s sociopolitical environment, and they are the starting point for public affairs communication.”

p. 29:

Box II.1 Categories of Public Interest Groups (With Examples)

Business/economic: The Business Roundtable, Citizens for a Sound Economy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Civil/constitutional rights: American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International USA

Community/grassroots: Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Nuclear Free America, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Consumer/health: American Medical Association, Consumer Federation of America, National Consumers League

Corporate accountability/responsibility: Center for Business Ethics, Committee for Economic Development, INFACT

Environmental: Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club

International affairs: Foreign Policy Association, Union of Concerned Scientists

Media: Accuracy in Media, Action for Children’s Television

Political/governmental process: Center for Responsive Politics, Common Cause, The Conservative Caucus.

Public interest law: Center for Law in the Public Interest

Religious: Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Think tanks: The Heritage Foundation, Investor Responsibility Research Center, The Urban Institute, Worldwatch Institute

4. What are LOBBIES

Encyclopaedia Britannica:

LOBBYING: "Any attempt by individuals or private interest groups to influence the decisions of government; in its original meaning it referred to efforts to influence the votes of legislators, generally in the lobby outside the legislative chamber. Lobbying in some form is inevitable in any political system."

The Free Dictionary:

"A group of persons engaged in trying to influence legislators or other public officials in favor of a specific cause."

Cambridge Dictionary:

"A group of people who try to persuade the government or an official group to do something."

Castillo Esparcia, Antonio y Smolak Lozano, Emilia (2017). *Lobbies y Think tanks. Comunicación política en la red*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

p.14-15: "En nuestro país se viene utilizando indistintamente grupo de presión, grupo de interés y lobby. Lo que les diferencia son el tipo de estructura organizativa y sus actividades; así, el grupo de interés es cualquier asociación que reúne a un conjunto de individuos u organizaciones que comparten intereses comunes. Si esa organización desarrolla actividades hacia los decisores públicos (legislativo, ejecutivo, judicial) para que sus intereses sean tomados en consideración en sus decisiones, se convierte en grupo de presión o en lobby. Asimismo, el término "lobby" se puede referir a una organización que defiende sus intereses, pero también se utiliza para referirse a organizaciones que son contratadas para defender intereses ajenos, como pueden ser empresas de comunicación o bufetes de abogados, entre otros."

p. 16: Así, tenemos que los grupos de presión presentan unas variables que los diferencian de otras asociaciones, y que los autores que se dedican al estudio de estas agrupaciones afirman que son de aparición obligatoria tres especificaciones:

a) Existencia de una organización que permita articular los intereses de los miembros del grupo y sea capaz de mantener una relación estable y continua. La agrupación generada se caracteriza por una combinación de personas físicas y bienes materiales, coordinados para la realización y consecución de los fines preestablecidos mediante la unión de los miembros en la búsqueda del interés común. Esta organización interna está encargada de dirigir y controlar la actividad de la asociación (...)

b) Unión de los miembros del grupo por unos determinados valores, inquietudes, pensamientos, posiciones..., que crean la presencia de unos intereses comunes que los une y, al mismo tiempo, los diferencia de otros grupos sociales en ese aspecto determinado. (...)

c) Ejercicio de una acción externa al grupo que es definida por la generalidad de autores como *presión* y que intenta influir sobre las instituciones públicas y las personas que personalizan los poderes públicos con la intención de que sus demandas sean tomadas en consideración en el momento de adoptar decisiones imperativas. Un aspecto fundamental en las actividades del grupo es la intención teleológica de ejercer influencia, ya que ésta aparece como la premisa básica para la adopción de las peticiones. (...). Así pues, la influencia que intentan ejercer los grupos de presión se presenta como una unilateralidad comunicativa."

p.21-22: "Así pues, todos los grupos de presión intentan alcanzar sus objetivos a través de la influencia que puedan tener sobre los decisores públicos y sobre las instituciones legitimadas para ejercer el poder. Con esta intención se realizan una serie de actividades que pretenden hacer llegar las proposiciones del grupo a los órganos y personas adecuadas, en un primer nivel, de forma pacífica.

Históricamente, el término *lobista* ha tenido un sentido negativo por la imagen, ciertamente simplista, de una persona que intriga y actúa desde la sombra intentando conseguir sus

objetivos a través del chantaje, el soborno o la corrupción. Sin embargo, en los últimos años parece que esas connotaciones peyorativas se han ido perdiendo hasta aparecer la profesión con un manto de mayor dignidad y reconocimiento. De ahí que, de forma creciente, se pretendan elaborar diversas normativas y reglamentaciones que permitan un cierto poder de control sobre el acceso y los instrumentos que desarrollan estos grupos privados.”

5. What are THINK TANKS

McGann, James G. 2007. *Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the United States: Academics, Advisors, and Advocates*. London: Routledge:

“Think tanks or public policy research, analysis, and engagement institutions are organizations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues in an effort to enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues. Think tanks may be affiliated with political parties, governments, interest groups, or private corporations or constituted as independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).”

Encyclopaedia Britannica:

think tank, institute, corporation, or group organized for interdisciplinary research with the objective of providing advice on a [diverse](#) range of policy issues and products through the use of specialized knowledge and the activation of networks. Think tanks are distinct from government, and many are [nonprofit organizations](#), but their work may be conducted for governmental as well as commercial clients. Projects for government clients often involve planning social policy and national defense. Commercial projects include developing and testing new technologies and new products. Funding sources include endowments, contracts, private donations, and sales of reports.

6. Interest Groups COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Koehler, Sebastian (2019). *Lobbying, Political Uncertainty and Policy Outcome*. Cham, Switzerland: The Palgrave MacMillan:

p. 113-114: “Many studies deal with the question of interest group influence. This is an inherently problematic endeavor (Dür 2008; Dür and de Bièvre 2007). Influence implies a change in behavior (Simon 1953). The fundamental problem is that assessing influence would require us to evaluate the counterfactual. We would need to analyze what policy would have been enacted, had the interest group not lobbied the decision-makers.

One example is the influence induced by strategic transmission of information in a separating equilibrium of the signaling/cheap talk games. Observable behavior following the exercise of influence is an equilibrium in a game-theoretic sense. Influence itself, however, is a process, not an equilibrium. The empirical problem is to draw inferences on influence by observing equilibrium behavior of the influenced. In this work, I therefore refrain from analyzing influence and try to assess whether the behavior of the interest groups who seek to exert influence can be explained as equilibrium behavior of an underlying strategic game.

I have argued that interest group communication strategies are comprised of two interrelated choices. The first choice is whether the interest group becomes active or not, i.e. mobilizes. The second choice is what course of action to take, given the decision to mobilize.”

p. 123: “The theoretical argument links institutional aspects (identity of veto players), the bill-specific context (majority/opposition bill) and individual choice behavior. Following the decision to mobilize, interest groups need to choose a lobbying strategy. According to the argument, the choice of strategy depends on the type of legislative procedure ... Interest groups’ communication strategies can be comprised of public or private messages.”

p. 143-144: “One of the main aspects of lobbying is the provision of information to policymakers. Interest groups are better informed than politicians on specific effects and aspects of public policies. It seems natural that politicians would rely on this expertise to draft better legislation (Esterling 2004; Truman 1971). However, one problem arises: By definition, interest groups are self-interested political actors, pushing their own agenda. This leads to the important question when will interest groups share their information truthfully with policymakers and when will they try to misrepresent the information? The answer to this question depends crucially on the communication strategy of interest groups ... This book set out to improve our understanding of interest groups’ choice of lobbying strategies, which are understood as the way in which an interest group communicates with politicians. It is crucial to take the political context of lobbying into account. Any attempt to try and understand lobbying strategies without reference to the political process in which lobbying is embedded will at best provide a partial understanding of interest group strategy choice.”

p. 145: “The choice of lobbying strategy encompasses two interrelated decisions: The first is to become active or not, i.e. when do interest groups mobilize? The second is—conditional on mobilization—which type of communication does an interest group choose? Choosing a strategy implies to opt for a target and a mode of communication. The mode concerns private vs. public communication activities. Potential targets of the communication acts are the relevant decision-makers, which can be either the chambers in a bicameral legislature or the coalition partners in government in the unicameral case.”

p. 146: “My model implies that interest group is less powerful than is widely believed. Interest groups which are against a change of the Status Quo will lobby not to prevent a change, which is impossible, but to reduce the variation of outcomes. They are more likely to use a public communication strategy compared to groups who are in favor of a change of policy. The latter are more likely to use a strategy which involves private messages.

Interest groups mainly affect the variation of outcomes by changing the information structure in the political system. However, they can only modestly affect expected policy outcomes. This potentially opens a new direction for empirical research as it shows that many scholars may have been looking for effects in the wrong places.”

Castillo Esparcia, Antonio y Smolak Lozano, Emilia (2017). *Lobbies y Think tanks. Comunicación política en la red*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

p. 198-199: “(...) Xifra avala que los think tanks son “las organizaciones que promueven (...) mahyoritariamente estrategias de relaciones públicas” (Xifra, 2003: 191), calificándolos también como los emisores de flujos comunicativos y mensajes.

De este modo, cabe analizar la comunicación de los think tanks desde el punto de vista de los paradigmas difusionista y a su vez participativo (Herrero, 2009: 108-109) y como propone Xifra (2003: 195), desde el punto de vista de los efectos de la comunicación y modelo de dos grados de flujo comunicativo (*two-step flow of communication*), aunque en la época de la burbuja de los medios sociales, debemos considerar también otros modelos comunicativos como comunicación interpersonal o de flujos comunicativos y redes, entre otras.”

McGann (2007) acredita en su estudio que desde hace 20 años los think tanks, sobre todo en el entorno americano, aunque podemos ampliarlo al mundo de los think tanks global, pone creciente énfasis en la divulgación de la investigación, aparición en los medios y realización de otros tipos de programas, cuyo objetivo es alcanzar distintos públicos. Mendizábal (2014) lo evidencia en el crecimiento de la financiación (entre los años 2000 y 2013) dedicada al objetivo de ayudar a estas organizaciones y sus investigadores a comunicar sus estudios.”

p. 199: “Para ello, los think tanks empiezan a emplear a los profesionales de comunicación para facilitar la difusión de información eficaz, sobre todo los think tanks globales. Esta dimensión comunicativa que sustenta a los think tanks como la organización —“*homo comunicus*”— que se desarrolla a través de relaciones públicas se considera igual de importante que su actividad investigadora: “(...) la faceta comunicativa de los think tanks es tan destacable como la investigadora y, en este contexto, las relaciones públicas constituyen la forma comunicativa esencial” (Xifra, 2003: 195).