

Moments of lobbying

To my family

Örebro Studies in Media and Communication 22



CAMILLA NOTTHAFT

Moments of lobbying
An ethnographic study of meetings
between lobbyists and politicians

© Camilla Nothhaft, 2017

Title: Moments of lobbying: an ethnographic study of meetings between lobbyists
and politicians

Publisher: Örebro University 2017
www.oru.se/publikationer-avhandlingar

Print: Örebro University, Repro jan/2017

ISSN 1651-4785
ISBN 978-91-7529-175-8

Abstract

Camilla Nothhaft (2017): Moments of lobbying: an ethnographic study of meetings between lobbyists and politicians. *Örebro Studies in Media and Communication* 22.

The aim of this study is to define and further the understanding of the practice of lobbying as it manifests in the participants' interactions with each other and to identify its specific conditions (rules, standards, traits).

A research overview shows that lobbying as a political phenomenon is well researched, but that the action per se tends to be taken for granted as 'talking'. Communication between lobbyists and politicians has predominantly been reconstructed as transmission, information-exchange. The study addresses this deficiency by applying an ethnographic method, shadowing, and by focussing on the micro-level of lobbying as a socio-political phenomenon. Lobbying is researched in moments of interaction between interest representatives and representatives of the political system, i.e. MEPs and their assistants.

Seven lobbyists and politicians in Brussels have been shadowed for one week each; a further 34 interviews were conducted. The analytical strategy was to infer from the actors' impression management (Goffman). The study is informed by a neo-institutional perspective. It assumes that cognitive, normative, and regulative structures provide meaning to social behavior, and that these resources are identifiable.

Goffman's concept of team and the distinction between frontstage and backstage emerged as central categories. My results suggest that the small world of the EU's capital results in a sense of 'us in Brussels' shared by lobbyists, politicians and assistants alike. Lobbying-interaction in frontstage-mode is governed by strict conventions; ignorance or transgression are sanctioned as unprofessional. The key result, however, is that lobbyists actively work towards engagement on other terms. Lobbyists employ various strategies and build relations with politicians in order to create moments of backstage-interaction. In backstage-mode, lobbyists not only gain access to soft information, but can negotiate ways of working together with politicians in pursuit of different, but partly overlapping agendas.

Keywords: lobbying, Brussels, communication, interaction, shadowing, ethnography, strategies, organizing principles, impression management, relations.

Camilla Nothhaft, Lund University, Department of Strategic Communication, Box 882, 251 08 Helsingborg, Sweden. E-mail: camilla.nothhaft@isk.lu.se

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	11
1. INTRODUCTION.....	15
1.1 A working definition of lobbying: point of departure	17
1.2 Brussels: a political arena	18
1.2.1 The European Union institutions and decision procedures.....	19
1.3 The lobbyists.....	21
1.3.1 Wanted but unwanted - the lobbyists' dilemma	23
1.3.2 The ambivalence viewed from a structural level.....	25
1.4 Previous research on lobbying.....	27
1.4.1 Three main areas of lobbying research.....	28
1.4.2 Three key assumptions.....	29
1.4.3 Three insights from previous research.....	33
1.4.4 Discussion: moving from transmission to communication	37
1.5 Aim and research questions.....	39
2. LOBBYING AS A COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICE.....	41
2.1 Bringing lobbying into a neo-institutional framework.....	42
2.2 Connecting the macrostructures with the micro practice.....	44
2.3 Impression management.....	45
2.4 Interactional resources and aspects	48
2.4.1 Face, team, façade and task.....	49
2.4.2 Identity and role.....	51
2.4.3 Framing and footing	54
2.5 Summary.....	55
3. METHOD.....	57
3.1 The pre-study: getting into lobbying	57
3.2 The ethnographic research design	58
3.3 Entering the field: shadowing enacted	60
3.3.1 The people observed and interviewed	61
3.3.2 The fieldwork: observing and interviewing	65
3.3.3 Writing the notes	68
3.4 Ethical concerns	69
3.4.1 Ethical guidelines: informed consent	69
3.4.2 Ethical guidelines: transparency	70
3.4.3 Ethical guidelines: confidentiality.....	71
3.5 From field notes and recordings to text.....	72

3.6 Quality and critical remarks.....	74
4. THE BRUSSELS FACTOR: EVERYDAY LIFE AND WORK	79
4.1 Brussels.....	79
4.2 The European Parliament	81
4.3 Swedes in Brussels	82
4.4 The lobbyists.....	84
4.4.1 Background.....	84
4.4.2 The lobbyists' work and networks	85
4.5 The MEPs.....	85
4.5.1 The MEPs' working space.....	86
4.5.2 The MEPs' duties and work	87
4.5.3 Contacts and networks.....	89
4.6 The assistants	91
4.7 The lobbyists' and the politicians' shared loneliness.....	93
4.8 The joint work of improving positions	95
4.9 Summary	99
5. THE ENCOUNTERS – TRAITS, NORMS AND ORGANISATION ..	101
5.1 Office meetings.....	102
5.2 Hearings and seminars	107
5.3 Demonstration	110
5.4 Network meeting.....	111
5.5 Conference	112
5.6 Meetings in the corridor	113
5.7 Receptions and drinks	114
5.8 Summary	115
6. THE IMPORTANCE OF BACKSTAGE INTERACTION.....	119
6.1 Lobbying - a backstage activity	119
6.2 Finding the backstage encounter	120
6.3 Constructing and enhancing backstage in the encounter	121
6.4 Backstage as strategy to obtain office meetings	123
6.5 'Let's move on over a sandwich'	124
6.6 Summary and discussion	126
7. STRATEGIES TO DOWNPLAY THE ROLE OF THE STRAIGHTFORWARD LOBBYIST	127
7.1 The strategy of changing identities	127
7.1.1 A change of the situated identity as a lobbyist.....	128
7.1.2 A discursive change of the situated identity as a lobbyist	129

7.1.3 Adding transportable identities as a lobbyist.....	132
7.2 The image of charm in the shape of a service	135
7.3 Norms and rules for the lobbyists – a second view.....	136
7.3.1 The ambiguity enacted	137
7.3.2 The lobbyists’ perspective	138
7.3.3 The politicians’ perspective	140
7.4 Discussion	141
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	143
8.1 Brief summary of the empirical chapters	143
8.2 Understanding lobbying from a communication perspective	144
8.3 From timing to non-transparency.....	145
8.4 Revising lobbying research.....	148
8.5 Consequences for transparency	150
8.6 Reflections on future research	153
9. REFERENCES	155

List of tables and figures

Tables

Table 1: An overview of the persons that have been shadowed and interviewed 64

Table 2: Overview of the settings – and their characteristics – when lobbyists and politicians meet 115

Figures

Figure 1: Adding layers to the lobbyist 132

Acknowledgements

It is with gratitude that I think of the very many people who have helped me with this thesis. I feel fortunate.

Before this became a project, there were two special persons who believed in me: my candidate- and master-thesis supervisor Stig-Arne Nohrstedt who encouraged me to start the PhD-program; and my colleague at EPPA, Per Utterbäck, who has been my mentor and helped me concretely many many times.

The lobbyists, politicians and assistants that generously opened their doors and shared their time and thoughts: without you there would be no thesis. For some of you I know it was hard. But you patiently let me tag along with my pen, paper and questions. I hope you feel that I have done your work justice. It was a pleasure to follow your everyday work, but I admit the pace was taxing at times. The politicians have allowed me to mention them by name: Anders Wijkman, Carl Schlyter and Jens Holm. I am also grateful to the many persons I interviewed, 27 in the pre-study and 34 in the main study.

During the pre-study, I met Mats Jutterström and had a talk with Daniel Naurin. As you will see, my work is based on yours. My guides in the Brussels-labyrinth were Stefan Schepers and Tom Spencer and others at ECPA, especially Liz Spencer, Eric Vaes and Rinus Van Schendelen.

The study with its intense fieldwork would not have been possible without the financial contributions from Ericsson, Scania, TeliaSonera, PostNord and The Swedish Association of Communication Professionals. Per Utterbäck and Kaj Lindgren: you have been the initiators and without your trust in me, the other organisations would not have joined. The companies additionally supported me with an advisory board: Thank you Henry Sténson, Jenny Johansson, Cecilia Edström, Margaretha Sjöberg, Sylvia Nylin, Cecilia Schön Jansson, Per Mossberg, Gunnar J. Forsgren, Thomas Westlind and Patrik Hiselius for continuous advice and encouragement along the way. Thank you also to Peter Egardt, who generously supported the project with meeting rooms at the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce.

My colleagues at Media and Communication at Örebro University and the Department of Strategic Communication at Lund University: thank you for reading my drafts, giving feedback and providing an inspiring and creative environment. Jesper Falkheimer and Mats Heide have provided insightful critique both in seminars and at conferences. For feedbacks at seminars in Örebro I am especially grateful to Mats Eriksson: you are the

one who read drafts from the very beginning, even before you were on this project as my second supervisor. You always had something positive and constructive to say and I owe you. Larsåke Larsson and Birgitta Höijer, now retired, thank you for all your valuable feedback when the way forward was not clear at all. You had patience with my immature and wild ideas and you supported me when I decided to go to Brussels to see for myself what is going on.

Mats Ekström, you gave me strength to push the project further and showed me how to *analyse* a mountain of material. You were marvellously patient with a mother-to-be and your doctoral courses were the best.

Magda Pieczka, thank you for the great input and encouragement in my final seminar. Many thanks also to the second readers Michal Kryzanowski and Leonor Camauër.

A debt of gratitude is also owed to Inger Larsson. You are dearly missed. The wise lady of Swedish strategic communication: visiting professor, doctoral student and friend. Superb advice and superb afternoon tea.

My thoughts go back to the beginning of my time as a doctoral student at Örebro University and the tight group of doctoral students that were always up for a good old discussion, a session at the gym or just going out for a drink: Marinette Fogde, Joel Rasmussen, Johan Nilsson, Madeleine Lilja, Peter Berglez, Johanna Stenersen, Ernesto Abalo, Mikael Norén, Lars Thornberg. Lars: you were the one who put me on the right track with the theoretical approach. Mahitab Ezz El Din and Ahmed El Gody, my Egyptian sister and brother. Shokran gazilan.

When I moved to Lund University, I was warmly received by a new group of doctoral students: Maria Rosén, Jacob Stenberg and Susanna Magnusson. I miss our reading group. Soon to be started again.

In 2009, I received a DAAD-scholarship to teach and research at Leipzig University. I was kindly hosted by Günter Bentele and Ansgar Zerfaß, and formidable German professors they are. Jens Seiffert-Brockmann, Birte Fähnrich, Hagen Schölzel, Madlen Mammen, when will we meet for a coffee at J.J. again?

To the great people of EUPRERA, a scholarly association and a kind of family: you have given invaluable feedback during conferences and seminars. Dankzij Betteke van Ruler, kisses on both cheeks, many times, Anne-Marie Cotton and Els van Betsbrugge. Inger Jensen, Sue Wolstenholme and Alessandra Massei organized great PhD-seminars in Roskilde and Milan: no one who took part will ever forget them.

The final year has been the most intense writing-wise but also very satisfying. Charlotte Simonsson, prefekt at ISK: without your generous flexibility, it would have been very difficult to finish this work during this year.

Göran Eriksson, my supervisor, you have been magnificent. Your advice, help and support are far beyond what any doctoral student could ask for. You have left me speechless and forever grateful.

My family: the thesis is dedicated to you. My parents Mats and Anna-Lena Berggren who have given me the greatest gift a parent can give: the belief that I can succeed with anything I decide to do. My grandmother Birgitta Danielsson proudly supported me during the project. She passed away just a few months ago. I wish you were here, Granny.

My darling children Herman and Greta: you are life and love. I have tried my best for you not to be affected by Mummy's book, but in the last months I might have failed a little. You have showed such fantastic understanding.

My darling husband Howard: I met you at Roskilde PhD-seminar. Our discussions, curiosity and engagement have been constant ever since and so has the love. Thank you.

Helsingborg, January 2017

1. Introduction

Lobbying as a practice has, in all probability, existed for as long as governments have and has existed as a specific, paid occupation for at least one hundred years. In EU-Brussels, the last decades have seen a tenfold increase in lobbying practitioners: from 1990 to 2016, the number of lobbyists grew from 3000 to 30 000 (Mazey & Richardson, 1993; Corporate Europe Observatory, 2016). Some say lobbying is necessary for a healthy democracy; lobbyists can be whistle-blowers, provide expertise to improve the consequence analyses of policy proposals, and strengthen citizens' influence on politics. More critically inclined observers say that lobbying is too rarely transparent; it makes accountability practically impossible and risks nepotism and the mixing of private and public spheres (e.g. Moloney, 2009; Naurin, 2001).

Nevertheless, there is surprisingly little knowledge about what actually occurs in meetings between lobbyists and politicians, even with regard to where and how the parties meet. This is surprising because interaction is the core of the concept of lobbying, which arose from the habit of interest representatives waiting outside the plenum, in the lobby, to catch politicians walking by for a chat and possibly to deliver some documents. The interpersonal relations, short- or long-term, that inevitably grow from interactions are either ignored or pejoratively dismissed as nepotism or are considered from the perspective of an exchange system in which the lobbyist's main asset is information (e.g. Bouwen, 2002), and the interactions themselves are taken for granted. The main focus of scholars who research lobbying has been influence (Klüver, 2013). The task of lobbyists is seen as having an impact on policymaking to defend the organisation's *raison d'être* in society; accordingly, scholars have examined its level of impact and consequences for political systems. In other words, previous research has mainly approached lobbying at a macro- and meso-level.

I argue that lobbying cannot be understood from an organisational level alone; we must consider individual interactions and relations. Lobbying is understood here as similar to public relations. I refer to Ihlen and van Ruler (2007, 2009) who argue that public relations has been studied with managerial and instrumental perspectives but must also be studied as a social phenomenon. Ihlen and Verhoeven (2012) develop the view further:

We argue that the basis of empirical research on public relations is the communicative, linguistic or discursive turn that has dominated social theory and the philosophy of science for some decades. For public relations it

means a fundamental constructivist starting point ranging from micro studies of individual action to macro perspectives of system theory (p. 168).

Larsson (2002) also emphasizes the micro-level of public relations by arguing the importance of viewing organisations as interpersonal relations. He notes:

Relationships figure on several levels, not only on the organisational level and group level but also, and perhaps primarily, at the individual level. I would argue that there is a difference in seeing an organisation as an abstract object and as a set of individuals. [...] The organisation's relationships thus consist of the total individual relationships. (p. 85, my translation)

Heide (2011) contends that the relationships between an organisation and its stakeholders, including politicians, are ultimately personal. He argues that management groups need to consider the personal relational aspect (specifically, which contacts a certain person has) when a key person changes workplaces or positions; how can an organisation for example maintain an important relationship even though the contact person is no longer there?

Interpersonal relations themselves can be defined as the set of expectations two parties have for each other's behaviour based on their interaction patterns (Thomlison, 2000, p. 178). Interaction is the key here. From a cultural perspective, the relationship will be formed and (re-)negotiated in the interaction between the two parties that have the relationship. In Heide's (2011) words, there is an implicit contract that is in constant flux that determines the nature of the relationship and the parties' expectations of each other. From this, we can deduce that the interaction in itself is crucial for the relationships between the parties.

I apply an ethnographic method, shadowing, with a communicative perspective to produce new insights into the moments of lobbying, which I understand as the micro-level of the practice. The empirical base is Swedish lobbyists and politicians in EU-Brussels. The interactions between lobbyists and politicians are observed through a neo-institutional lens and with Goffman's impression management, thus acknowledging that there will be 'cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour' (W. R. Scott, 1995:33) and potentially identifiable resources upon which people draw in their interactions (Goffman, 1990/1959). With these tools at hand, I will analyse the concrete interactions between lobbyists and politicians, both

frontstage and backstage. I will describe how such interactions, which occur in different contexts and for different reasons, are organised and understood by the participants involved. I will discuss the practices, norms and resources the participants draw upon in their attempts to succeed in their communications with each other.

This work attempts to generate a deeper understanding of why lobbying in Brussels is enacted in a specific way.

1.1 A working definition of lobbying: point of departure

Many mainstream lobbying definitions depart from an instrumental view of lobbying. Lobbying is described as ‘the transfer of information between interest groups and policy-makers’ (De Figueiredo, 2002, p.126) or with an emphasis on influence in definitions such as the following:

Direct, interest-based and communicative influencing of political decision-making made by people who can and most often will be representatives of companies and other organisations that are not involved in these decisions (Althaus, 2007, p. 797).¹

Lobbying research within public relations naturally acknowledges the relations and defines lobbying as

... the specialist part of public relations that builds and maintains relations with government primarily for the purpose of influencing legislation and regulation (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000, p. 19).

White and Mazur (1998), alternatively, see ‘... a specialised practice that focuses on relations which will have a bearing on public policy...’ (p. 182) The stakeholder model by Grunig and Hunt (1984) discusses lobbying as the enabling link between an organisation and governing bodies. Bentele notes the communication process that lobbying entails:

Lobbying is primarily a political communication process, which takes place between actors from private society (companies, associations, clubs, unions, churches, non-profit organisations, etc.) and policy makers (MPs, civil servants, etc.). It is conducted with the primary aim of directly or indirectly influence on the political decision-making process. Lobbying works with specific communication tools and is in democratic systems governed by legal and moral standards, i.e., certain procedures (such as bribery) are nor-

¹ In German: ‘die direkte, interessengeleitete und kommunikative Beeinflussung von politischen Entscheidungsprozessen durch Personen (insbes. Unternehmen und anderen Organisationen), die nicht an diesen Entscheidungen beteiligt sind.’

matively excluded. The lobbying processes between two political actors are a special case (Bentele & Nothhaft, 2015, my translation).²

In this study, I view lobbying not only as a communication process but also as a communication practice. I argue further that the communication between actors always involves a relation, temporary or long term. The relations between policy makers and actors from private society are not only formal relations on paper; they also involve face-to-face interaction and are interpersonal.

Face-to-face interactions and interpersonal relations are therefore the empirical base of this study. This leads to a change of perspective; instead of understanding lobbying as a meeting that is explicitly organised to deliver information from a lobbyist to a politician, I study all the meetings between lobbyists and politicians.

1.2 Brussels: a political arena

After Washington D.C., Brussels is considered the place with the densest concentration of political power in the world. The decisions made by the EU political administration are binding for half a billion people³ and directly or indirectly impact the rest of the world. Between 60 and 80 per cent of new legislation in European national parliaments involves implementations of European directives⁴. Approximately 85 000 politicians, civil servants and lobbyists work daily to keep this machinery going. Most of these people's offices are concentrated within a few square kilometres of downtown Brussels.

² In German: , Lobbying ist der vor allem politische Kommunikationsprozess, der sich zwischen Akteuren nicht-politisscher Organisationen (Unternehmen, Verbänden, Vereinen, Gewerkschaften, Kirchen, Non-Profit-Organisationen etc.) und politischen Akteuren (abgeordneten, Referenten etc.) abspielt mit dem primären Ziel, mittelbaren oder unmittelbaren Einfluss auf den politischen Entscheidungsprozess zu nehmen. L. arbeitet mit spezifischen Kommunikationsinstrumenten und ist in demokratischen Systemen an rechtliche und moralische Normen gebunden, d.h., bestimmte Verfahren (wie z.B. Bestechung) werden normativ, in der Regel gesetzlich, ausgeschlossen. Einen Sonderfall stellen L. prozesse zwischen politischen Akteuren dar.

³ Statistics from the EU statistics agency 2012 showed that the EU had 503 679 730 citizens in the 27 member states.

⁴ Approximately 82 percent in Germany and 62 percent in Sweden according to a SIEPS report. http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/2012_2op.pdf

Scholars have described Brussels as a clique of lobbyists and politicians who are tightly interwoven in their daily work, with similar careers and competencies, highly interchangeable respective roles, and a core of established insiders (Althaus, 2009; Brosheid & Coen, 2007; Coen, 2007; Eising, 2007; Moloney, 2006; Pieczka, 2006). In an explanation of Brussels lobbying for Americans, Althaus (2009) notes that only the elite's lobbying counts; citizens are blissfully unaware of Brussels and their representatives, media debates are non-existent, and political money is mainly invested in gourmet cuisine expense accounts (p. 477).

1.2.1 The European Union institutions and decision procedures

The principal institutions of the EU are the European Commission (henceforth abbreviated as EC), The Council, the European Parliament (henceforth EP) and the European Court of Justice. The Council has two levels: the ministers who perform the day-to-day work and the European Council, which consists of the heads of state or government in the member states. They work with the large issues and overall directions of the EU. The EC hosts the main administrative resources and is led by commissioners, each with their own area of responsibility. The commissioners, who are appointed for four years, usually have their cabinet with their own selected people. The rest of the EC consists of civil servants working with the foundations laid out in the treaty. The EC is the only institution empowered to initiate legislation; it makes all drafts of legislation (directives, regulations and recommendations) and ensures that legislation is implemented. Since a few years ago, citizens can propose new legislation through the EP, but this applies only with the support of a certain number of citizens.

All proposals from the EC go to the EP and the Council of Ministers. The European Parliament has 751 members (as of 2016) chosen in elections in the different member states. They are organised according to political affiliation ('colour') and, to some degree, nationality. The MEPs have offices with assistants, and there are joint administrative resources in the EP. The Council consists of representatives (ministers) from the respective governments. Every country has a representative office in Brussels with employees at its disposal as an administrative resource. The Council can accept, amend or reject all proposals from the EC; the EP has the same power in almost all political areas (a so-called co-decision procedure). Most of the time, the EP has the right to give their opinion. The drafts are read and voted upon up to three times before they are settled. In practice,

the drafts move between the institutions far more times in the different phases for negotiations and discussions in patterns that are difficult to trace.

All proposals from the EC are also read and commented on by two committees: The European Economic and Social Committee (civil society organisations) and the Committee of the Regions (Europe's different regions). These committees have no formal legislative power. They receive all proposals from the EC and give their opinions on the proposals to the Council and the EP, who are obliged to take their comments into account in their decision-making.

The EP is the place where the voice of the citizens is most prevalent compared with other EU institutions. It is the only EU institution in which the representatives, the MEPs, are chosen directly by the citizens. It is also the only EU institution that is directly based on and displays different political ideologies. When legislative proposals reach the EP, the representatives of the citizens evaluate whether they make sense and are in line with the political will (see overviews in Coen & Richardson, 2009; Crombez, 2002; Greenwood, 2007; Michalowitz, 2007; Strid, 2009).

Lobbying increasingly targets the EP. The arena has gradually moved up the rank order of lobbying targets since it was formed in 1979, in step with the growth of its legislative impact (Althaus, 2009; Mazey & Richardson, 2006). The political power of the EP has been strengthened over the years through various treaties. The treaties have given the EP an influence on more political areas and a greater impact on the legislative process by way of the co-decision procedure. Despite the growing importance of the EP, research on parliamentary EU lobbying remains scarce.

There is far more knowledge about lobbying in the EC than in the EP (see e.g. Beyers, Braun, & Klüver, 2016; Bruycker, 2016; Mazey & Richardson, 2006; Nylander, 2000; Strid, 2009). This is a natural consequence because it seems that the Commission has been the preferred lobbying target. Strid (2009) even argues in her study on the European Women's Lobby that the EC is organised interests. Its representativeness rests on organised interests, which should be compared to the individual citizens in the EP and the member states in the Council.

The Commission prepares and writes the proposals that are voted on in the EP. The amount of lobbying can be traced in part to the logic of early influence in the processes. Mazey and Richardson write that there is a widespread idea that resources allocated early in the political process have

a greater impact with regard to ‘policy pay-offs’ (Mazey & Richardson, 2006, p. 249), but this idea has been questioned by Melin (2009) in the Swedish context.

Based on research results, the Commission has taken actions to enhance transparency. It has recently changed some of its procedures for consulting special interests. Currently, part of the consulting occurs online, and it has introduced a voluntary register for lobbyists in which the lobbyists state their budget for lobbying work and sign a code of conduct. The EP has also taken action within the transparency project. However, there is still much left to learn about how EU lobbying works, including in the EP.

In accordance with the commonly accepted logic of influencing decisions at the earliest stages of the political process (Jutterström, 2004, p. 9), the Commission is usually regarded as the ‘natural’ lobbying arena in Brussels. Nylander (2000) found that there is little room for information not already formulated in and adapted to the predominant neoliberal ideology of the Commission. This may be one reason why, according to my interviewees, NGOs and other interest groups not associated with industry prefer to lobby the European Parliament.

The European Parliament has gained stronger legislative power in the EU in recent decades, especially with the treaties of Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997). The Lisbon treaty was not yet ratified when my observations occurred, but it strengthened the decision-making power of the EP even further, both absolutely and relative to other institutions. For this reason and because of the severe changes in Commission proposals the EP can and does effect, the EP is regarded as increasingly important for lobbyists (a trend already seen by Haug & Koppang, 1997).

1.3 The lobbyists

The lobbyists navigate this labyrinth of decision-making in Brussels. The different types of organisations lobbyists work for may have different aims with their presence in Brussels, but their common goal is to propose ‘specific claims vis-à-vis other groups in the society’ (Nylander, 2000, p. 19). No matter how much they cooperate with other groups to achieve their goals or how many other things they do, they are in Brussels to influence the outcome of political and, ultimately, legislative procedures. By doing so, they compete with other lobbyists and interest representatives.

Zerfaß and Bentele et al. (2008) differentiate four types of lobbyists: business lobbyists, organisations’ lobbyists (trade associations), NGO lobbyists and consultants. The last group, the consultants, are popularly

called ‘gun[s] for hire’ (McGrath, Moss, & Harris, 2010). To these, I would add a fifth category: the numerous tax-funded interest groups of regions or organisations, such as the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (compare Greenwood, 2007; Michalowitz, 2007). They differ from the others in one important aspect: since they are representatives of democratically constituted political entities, they have direct channels into the political system. At the same time, they compete like everyone else for the attention of politicians. Other organisations that are part of the lobbying game in Brussels, some directly and some indirectly, are associations of professions, international organisations and organisations that provide training and material for other organisations’ lobbying, such as think tanks, training organisations and law firms (Greenwood, 2007).

The number of lobbyists in Brussels is constantly growing. Previous research crystallises three main reasons for and driving forces behind this growth: the Europeanization of politics, the nature of the administration and a professionalization process within strategic communication practices.

The ‘Europeanization’ of politics (Jutterström, 2004) is a concept that addresses the changing power balance between the EU and its member-states in which the EU is increasing its power. This is a result of different treaties investing the union with increasing legislative power in relation to the nation states. Related to this is the creation of the European internal market (SEA 1986, implemented from 1992 and onwards). The internal market, sometimes referred to as the EU single market, means that the regulatory frameworks for many everyday operations of companies, as well as for their products and services, are harmonised within the union. Thus, it is a matter of survival for companies to attempt to have a say in the way industry standards and regulations are formulated.

The second reason for the growth of lobbying is the EU administration itself. Lorentzon (2008) and others write that the EU administration welcomes outside help and that it is either designed or has developed to invite lobbyists into the process. There are several aspects to this phenomenon. As Balme and Chabanet (2008) have noted, party politics is in crisis at the European level, which makes it easier for lobbyists to have an influence beyond party politics. Moreover, the EU’s multilevel structure, with decisions at many levels, provides a multitude of convenient entry points for external influencers (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Liehr-Gobbers, 2006; Nylander, 2000). In the EC, there is a long tradition of joint working groups in the drafting of legislation, and the Commission has actively

encouraged organisations to maintain representations in Brussels to facilitate cooperation.

The third force that drives the number of lobbyists is the professionalization trend in strategic communication (Coen, 1997; Dalfelt & Falkheimer, 2001; Negrine, 2007). Parallel with this trend, there has been a de-corporatisation trend in the European countries that has made organisations used to a more pluralistic approach to influencing politics rather than the more traditional corporatist channels of participation.

1.3.1 Wanted but unwanted – the lobbyists' dilemma

Despite the fact that lobbyists are systematically co-opted into the political system, the status of lobbyists in the system is ambivalent and problematic (e.g. Davidson & Rowe, 2016). This ambivalence derives not from the fact that lobbying is viewed as problematic per se but that there is too much lobbying. Although it is rarely expressed this way, the suspicion seems to be that there are too many lobbyists in Brussels for all of them to be working for genuinely representative associations. Since there are so many lobbyists, a substantial proportion must be working for narrow yet financially potent special interests, and their work must be worthwhile or they would not be there.

Admittedly, some of the lobbyists in Brussels could be explained as isomorphic from a neo-institutional perspective (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Sandhu, 2009); that is, they copy other successful organisations' behaviour. Many firms and organisations have lobbyists in Brussels, and other firms and organisations may feel pressure to establish a presence as well. Jutterström (2004) confirms, at least indirectly, that there is some truth to this. Jutterström shows that organisations often initiate lobbying activities with the general intent of 'influencing' or 'taking part' in political decision-making, as opposed to making their impact felt on a critical issue that they knew they wanted to influence

While acknowledging isomorphic pressure, it is safe to say that lobbying activity without any discernible benefit or tangible result cannot be sustained, at least not in the long run, over the course of decades. If lobbying were conducted for reasons of prestige alone, we would see organisations and firms withdrawing from Brussels. Yet, even though this is sometimes the case, the number of lobbyists in Brussels has been constantly growing. Observers of the scene and the scholarly literature clearly confirm the influence of lobbyists' contributions in the legislative work of the EU (Marziali, 2007). The lobbyist's contribution is not only about factual

research, of course. Pieczka (2006), for example, observes that lobbyists also provide political expertise about concrete facts on the issue at hand:

... the key resource – political influence – consisting of knowledge of the political processes and personalities as well as an ability to read the prevailing political climate, policy initiatives, and the ebb and flow of power through political networks (p. 325).

The picture that emerges is that lobbyists are wanted and needed as contributors, but their contribution is under suspicion. There are researchers, and indeed organizations and institutions, which are dedicated to investigative work (e.g. CEO⁵) in a tradition of research like ‘The Anonymous Empire’ (Finer, 1958), ‘The semisovereign people: a realist's view of democracy in America’ (Schattschneider, 1960) and ‘The pressure boys: the inside story of lobbying in America’ (Crawford, 1974). Milbrath’s (1963) claim from the 1960s that ‘the public generally view lobbyists as few better than characters from the underworld’ (p. 25) seems to be valid still today. Lobbyists are associated with ominous deals, unfair play and even illegal activities, such as bribing and blackmailing, to achieve the desired outcome (i.e. legislation favourable to their special interests, e.g. Moloney, 2006). In the large Swedish SOM survey of 2008, 44 per cent of the respondents (only Swedes) answered that they had little or very little trust in lobbyists. Only 1 per cent stated they had very high trust, and 8 per cent said they had high trust in lobbyists (Larsson, 2008). Occasionally, corruption scandals, such as the Abramoff scandal in the US in 2005, lead to promises that lobbying, or at least its excesses, will be curbed by legislative action. Odolinski (2009) argues from the results in his study that lobbying needs enhanced regulation because the current system leads to waste from a socio-economic point of view.

Politicians and civil servants in Brussels have taken action with regard to the enforced regulation of lobbying. Since 2011 the EC and the EP has a joint register in which the lobbyists are supposed to list not only where they work and for whom but also how much money is spent on lobbying. By registering, the lobbyists are also signing a code of conduct. At the end of 2016, the register listed 10 037 lobbyists⁶.

The general intent of the EU register and the connected code of conduct are to enhance transparency with regard to who is influencing whom, but

⁵ <http://corporateurope.org>

⁶ ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do?redir=false&locale=en

its more mundane provisions provide some clues about apparently widespread practices. The code states, for example, that lobbyists shall ‘identify themselves by name, organisation and which interest(s) they represent’⁷. The information provided, it says in another passage, should be correct, complete and not misleading. The aim of the register is to ‘cast light on lobbying activities seeking to influence European policy-making’⁸. In 2016, there was a public consultation on whether the register should be made obligatory and whether to include a footprint.

1.3.2 The ambivalence viewed from a structural level

The key to understanding the ambivalent status of lobbying is to understand the EU. Strid (2009) writes that there is no point in dwelling on whether the EU is democratic – like for example Giddens (1999) who wrote ‘The EU doesn’t meet the democratic criteria it demands of its members’ (1999, p. 80) or Karr (2007) who writes the democratic deficit of the European Union has acquired such a tradition that oftentimes specialists on Europe turn away in boredom (p. 93; see also a discussion in Saurugger, 2010) – we must understand that the EU is a specific political institution with its own structures and logic. The logic, according to Althaus (2007) and the EU’s own pages about its history, is that the EU is primarily a business union. It was created after the Second World War to sustain peace by making the crucial states in Europe dependent on each other through industry and trade. The second large step after its creation was the completion of the inner market. The initiative for this was taken by the round table of industrialists instigated by PG Gyllenhammar in the 1980s and was implemented in the 1990s.

EU has attempted to enhance citizens’ power of EU legislation by enhancing the power of the European Parliament in relation to the other institutions. The centre of gravity remains the European Commission, which is not directly and democratically elected. For example, with very few exceptions, the Commission retains the power to initiate laws. In a few areas, the Commission can still act on its own or together with the Council. Whether it is a democratic deficit or not can be argued but even EU admits a legitimacy deficit.

The legitimacy deficit is met by business as usual, i.e. with ‘initiatives’. Very broadly speaking, the on-going initiatives fall into three categories: to

⁷ europa.eu/transparency-register/about-register/code-of-conduct/index_en.htm

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>

enhance communication, to encourage participation and to improve transparency. With regard to communication, Margot Wallström, Commissioner 2004-2010, led an ambitious communication project called 'Plan D for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy', which aimed to improve knowledge about the EU and to create a feeling of unity and cohesion in the Union and between the institutions. In 2013-2014, the EC organised a tour of citizens' dialogue in Europe called 'Debate on the future of Europe', which aimed to discuss with citizens the future they wanted for Europe⁹.

Participation, which Balme and Chabanet (2008) consider the key to genuine legitimacy is encouraged by, for example, improved, user-friendly institutional homepages, the funding of NGOs, and online consultation on legislative proposals. Again, there is a distinct corporate focus. Jutterström (2004) noted in his study that the EC encouraged corporations to establish offices in Brussels to ensure their proximity when their input is needed on legislation. The EC, as mentioned, maintains more or less permanent working groups that '...help it in relation to the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives (Commission's right of initiative), the preparation of delegated acts, the implementation of existing EU legislation, programmes and policies, including coordination and cooperation with member countries and stakeholders in that regard'¹⁰. When groups comprise CEOs or other organisational leaders, they are usually called 'high-level groups' (Andersen & Eliassen, 1995, p. 434). Similar groups are found in the Council. Part of the initiative to enhance participation involves moving more power from the EC to the European Parliament (Strid 2009).

Transparency initiatives are the third approach by which the EU attempts to gain legitimacy. Commissioner Siim Kallas from Finland headed a large-scale transparency project that targeted lobbying. As a result, the Council, the EC and the EP jointly launched the lobbying register with its accompanying code of conduct and made it mandatory to disclose lobbying-related budgets. In the years after my fieldwork phase, the institutions implemented a footprint procedure. Its aim was to document the legislators' contacts with lobbyists while drafting legislation. By doing so, the footprint of interest groups in a piece of legislation is made transparent.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/index_en.htm

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm>

1.4 Previous research on lobbying

Although lobbying research is sometimes denigrated for its lack of theoretical sophistication, unsatisfactory cumulative progress, insufficient cohesion and contradictory findings (Andersen & Eliassen, 1995; Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Beyers, Eising, & Maloney, 2010; Jutterström, 2004; Klüver, 2013; Thomas, 2004), there is a substantial amount of dedicated lobbying research. Especially during the last few years, several highly interesting and relevant books and articles have been published (in the last year e.g. Bernhagen, Dür, & Marschall, 2016; Boräng & Naurin, 2016; Bruycker, 2016; Klüver, Mahoney, & Opper, 2016). There exists an extensive body of literature from several scholarly disciplines and perspectives. Researchers can also find quite a number of handbooks, some purely practical and others more academically oriented, on lobbying in the EU (Ahlgren, 2004; Bern, 1994; Gardner, 1991; Harris & Fleisher, 2005; Höög, 1996; Lerbinger, 2006; Schendelen, 2005a).

As mentioned, one cannot fail to notice a systematic blind spot in the literature. Bernhagen, Dür and Marshall (2016) write that it is only recently that scholars have begun to systematically investigate the role of organised interests at the policy formulation stage of the EU policy process, such as in Bunea (2013) and Klüver (2013). Although a wealth of research from various disciplines and a multitude of perspectives approach lobbying on a macro- and meso-level, the concrete and specific micro-level (i.e., the question of what lobbyists actually do) tends to be neglected (Balosin, 2012). This is very likely not a coincidence but the result of inherent difficulty. McGrath (2005) pinpoints the core problem succinctly:

Writing authoritatively about lobbying is as difficult as writing authoritatively about the practice of espionage. Anyone who has any relevant current information is likely not to be writing about it but practising it, yet will not tell you how, or with what success (p. xi).

McGrath's comparison might seem inappropriate; lobbying is by no means so shrouded in mystery. However, it must be noted that the lobbyist as a person, so conspicuously present in the corridors of the European Parliament, is conspicuously absent in the literature. How lobbyists go about their business at the level of face-to-face communication and how their practice is negotiated in interactions with politicians, administrators and others is not researched. There is a prevalent assumption in previous research that as long as you have the correct strategy, the rest is a matter of implementation. Thus, lobbying at the micro-level seems to be just

‘talking’ and does not deserve further explanation. As I have said, it is my aim to show how the practice is enacted.

1.4.1 Three main areas of lobbying research

Very broadly speaking, the bulk of research on lobbying has been conducted in three disciplines: a) political science, b) sociology and c) the nexus of disciplines that are now bundled under the umbrella term ‘strategic communication’ (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Ruler, Verčič, & Sriramesh, 2007): public relations, organisational communication, strategic management and, as is the case with this study, media and communication studies. Windsor (2005), who writes about the related field of public affairs, identifies further roots in areas of study such as business in societies, business ethics and ecological systems (p. 403). Another discipline that must be mentioned is historical research. For example, the historian Blomkvist (2001) provides a fascinating analysis of infrastructure lobbying in Sweden. Another fascinating example is Sennefelt (2009), who writes about lobbying in 18th-century Stockholm.

The three main areas (political science, sociology and strategic communication) have distinct features, but research on lobbying has a tendency to be interdisciplinary. The interdisciplinary character of the research derives from the nature of lobbying as a practice. Lobbying is undertaken at the intersection of politics, business and media; in a way, at least in the system currently established in Brussels, it *is* the intersection.

The main feature of lobbying research in political science is that lobbying tends to be treated as another factor among many that influence policy outcomes. Although lobbying has attracted considerable attention in political science, it has seldom been the focal point of dedicated projects. Political scientists quite naturally tend to turn their attention to political processes and only then ask the question of how interest groups relate (e.g. Falkemark, 1999). Lobbying, in other words, is seen as one of many ways of influencing political decisions for interest groups (e.g. Beyers et al., 2010; Olson, 1965; Öberg, 1997); it is not studied in its own right. However, it seems it could be a topic on the rise. Some very interesting studies have been conducted in political science in recent years in which lobbying has played a central part (Bernhagen et al., 2016; Bernhagen, Dür, & Marshall, 2015; Beyers et al., 2016; Binderkrantz & Rasmussen, 2015; Boräng & Naurin, 2016; Bunea & Baumgartner, 2014; Klüver, 2013; Klüver, Braun, & Beyers, 2015; Klüver et al., 2016).

Sociology has not been of major importance as a contributor to lobbying research, but its importance has been growing slowly and steadily over the years. The most important trend may be that scholars who research lobbying are beginning to use more sociological theory and concepts. Lobbying researchers are increasingly abandoning abstract and strategic approaches based on system theory, game theory or contingency theory in favour of more ‘social’ perspectives, or perspectives that acknowledge lobbying as a human practice, such as the neo-institutional perspective. Nylander (2000) summarises this ‘turn’ in the following way:

Politics is about choices, voting procedures and rules, strategic action, resources, influence, and pressure. However, it is also a social sphere – a social field in which culture, traditions, cognitive frameworks, norms, and ideas play an important role (p. 183).

Strategic communication is the umbrella term that, as suggested by Hallahan, Holtzhausen, et al. (2007) combines the work of scholars in political communication, business administration, strategic management, public relations, and organisational communication. The core feature of the lobbying research conducted here is the distinct focus on goal attainment, purposiveness, and effectiveness. Within public relations research, lobbying is treated like any other PR practice, although it is undertaken in a specific context (Cutlip et al., 2000; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Harrison, 2000; Larsson, 2001, 2005). It must be noted that here, too, societal perspectives that address democratic implications have taken hold.

1.4.2 Three key assumptions

Although lobbying in popular culture is often portrayed as a dark art that very few initiated insiders can practice successfully, certain research traditions, especially business administration, begin with the opposite assumption. It is assumed that with the correct strategy, anyone can be successful. While it is acknowledged that the business of influencing political decisions is highly competitive, the practice, the subtle art of being able to do so, is taken for granted. Lobbying is construed as something purely rational and strategic; as long as you have the correct strategy, actual lobbying is not problematized or reflected upon (Jaatinen, 1999; Kollman, 1998; Mahoney, 2007a). Implied in this perspective is an unquestioned belief that lobbying is about securing and defending the organisation’s *raison d’être* in society. This is a managerial perspective in which the political arena is seen as only one of many arenas over which the organisation

needs to gain control (cf. Jutterström 2004). Scholars in this tradition are concerned with understanding the political system in order to understand how strategic lobbyists should use the system's weak spots for their own or their employer's benefit. For insiders who already know how to lobby, this research is the most helpful. It also provides a wealth of insight into the activities of lobbyists for the researcher, or what Mahoney calls 'tactical toolboxes' (Mahoney, 2008).

Along the same line of thought, there has been concern in political science about measuring the effects of lobbying (e.g. Binderkrantz & Rasmussen, 2015; Klüver, 2013; Liehr-Gobbers, 2006), although there seems to be consensus regarding the difficulty of reliably measuring success (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Dür, 2010; Moloney, 2006). Concepts that have been used in this niche include describing the EU as a multilevel system of governance and lobbying as a matter of venue shopping (Beyers & Kerremans, 2012; Mazey & Richardson, 2006). Another example of a study in the managerial area is the Zerfaß, Bentele, et al. (2008) study, in which the authors present a policy cycle model that shows what a lobbyist should do in different parts of an issue's life cycle as it progresses through the EU bureaucracy.

Mahoney (2008) presents a wide array of inside lobbying tactics in the institutional body in the EU and in the US, where face-to-face meeting is only one tactic in addition to letters, strategizing with an official or MEP, and drafting language or testimony at hearings¹¹. It is unclear what these tactics really mean; more importantly for my question, it is unclear how these tactics are performed.

Yet another strategy-determining model is presented by Jaatinen (1999) in her dissertation. She is concerned with lobbying effects and lobbying strategies. Jaatinen uses a conflict theory-approach developed on the basis of Grunig's two-way-symmetrical model, situational theory and contingency theory. Drawing on interviews she conducted with lobbyists, Jaatinen constructs 15 fictitious cases that are tested against her contingency model. Two lobbyists are consulted to verify whether the results make sense. In essence, the aspiring lobbying strategists tick boxes in three steps in the model and end up with one of twelve possible strategies. For example, if the politician does not like your suggestion but you know that

¹¹ While there is an inside, there is also an outside: the outside lobbying tactics involve social movements and grass-roots campaigning (Mahoney 2008).

public opinion is favourable, you can use this as an argument to influence a decision maker.

As intuitively plausible as Jaatinen's (1999) contingency approach may be as a management model, it must be noted that it works with hypothetical situations that have been stripped of softer social and contextual aspects. As mentioned above, contingency models strongly imply that as long as there is a correct strategy, success is just a matter of implementation. This rationality, and the absence of the actor as a human and cultural being, is questioned by Jutterström (2004).

What Jutterström (2004) shows instead is that organisations are not always as strategic in their lobbying practice as the literature suggests. He therefore asks what other rationalities and practices steer what lobbyists actually do and how they are enacted on a micro-level. Jutterström argues that the clear and straightforward structure of 1) encountering a problem, 2) finding a solution, 3) arguing for the solution, and 4) producing legislative results is rarely found. Jutterström arrives at his conclusions by researching two authentic cases and then reconstructing the lobbyist's activities. The case reconstructions suggest that preferences, rational insights and manoeuvring space were not given beforehand. At the beginning of the lobbying process, the organisations simply expressed the general intent to participate in political processes, but they were unclear about why and how. Their preferences, and the arguments supporting their preferences, were constructed in the course of the process.

Another common assumption is that lobbyists' legitimacy as valued contributors to the political system rests on information, or the facts, data or insights that the lobbyist is presumed to bring to the table. Externally, this is definitely so, one of the main arguments for a more pluralistic system (as opposed to corporatist hegemony) was that lobbyists provide necessary information to politicians and, as such, fulfil a necessary function in a heterogeneous society (eg. Göransson, 2000). In Brussels, in particular, lobbyists have been hailed as saviours of an understaffed administration. In line with the emphasis on information, previous research has portrayed lobbyists as merchants of information (L. Milbrath, 1960) providing expert help for political decision makers (Jaatinen, 1999). Lagerlöf wrote, 'The very plausible idea that one reason why lobbyists are able to influence public policy is that they either have or can acquire information that is relevant to the politician in his policy making' (1997, p. 616, quoted in Nylander, 2000, p. 20).

Lobbyists' function has further been described as a neutral interaction mechanism (Jaatinen, 1999). Sundström (1998) nuances and problematizes the role of the lobbyist at least somewhat by discussing the lobbyist as a translator between the organisation and the political arena. The word 'translator' implies that this is not only providing presumably neutral information but also ensuring that the two arenas (in my research, one joint arena where they meet) understand each other. Lobbying is thus primarily about information transmission. Pieczka (2006) offers another explanation for the relations between lobbyists and politicians, quoted above, and defines the key resource as political influence instead of information: knowledge of the political processes and personalities as well as an ability to read the prevailing political climate, policy initiatives, and the ebb and flow of power through political networks (p. 325). De Bruycker (2016) differentiates political information, which is what Pieczka refers to as the key resource, from technical, economic and legal information and argues for the importance of considering this type of information when studying political pressure by lobbyists. In his study, he observed that technical, economic and legal information was used by lobbyists in communication with civil servants, whereas communication with political officials was dominated by political information (Bruycker, 2016). The question remains how this work is undertaken concretely.

The third commonly held yet questionable assumption is that politicians are always aware of where, how and when lobbying takes place. There is a tendency in the literature, possibly understandably, to view lobbying as a distinct phenomenon that is easily identified and isolated. The question of how lobbying (as opposed to, for example, chatting or giving friendly advice) is concretely identified in the context of human interaction is rarely problematized. The EU's code of conduct prescribes that lobbyists should always tell the truth and be transparent about whom they are representing¹². Interestingly, however, the code does not specify what lobbying is. Is every situation in which representatives of private interests 'inform' politicians by definition lobbying? When, and for what reason, is a situation involving a politician and someone else not lobbying? Zeigler and Baer (1969) write that politicians, when asked, were clear that they did not want to feel persuaded by lobbyists but rather want to be impressed by reason and intelligence. The politicians also said they wanted information that was not overly one-sided. If politicians would rather have

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/docs/323_en.pdf

neutral information than lobbyist information biased by a special interest, is there a grey zone where it is unclear whether it is lobbying or something else? Moreover, when lobbyists are defined as ‘interest groups’ in the mainstream political science literature (eg. Beyers et al., 2010), should it be assumed that they always have a clearly defined interest?

1.4.3 Three insights from previous research

The discussion demonstrates that some research traditions, although valuable in many ways, tend to portray lobbying in a rather simple and decontextualized way. Other traditions paint a more dynamic and complex picture. In the following section, three insights that have been influential for my own work will be briefly outlined.

The first insight is that lobbyists do not only work with direct influencing. Although lobbyists attempt to influence political decision makers, their minds might be set on gathering business intelligence (Showalter & Fleischer, 2005) or securing access to political decision makers (Bouwen, 2002; Elvander, 1969; Milbrath, 1960).

The earliest scholarly reconstructions of the complexities of the practice were Milbrath’s studies in the 1960s. With his work ‘Lobbying as a Communication Process’ Milbrath (1960) opened the door for a communicative understanding of lobbying. Through interviews with lobbyists in Washington D.C., he mapped lobbyists’ practice and presented both qualitative and quantitative results. He realised that lobbying is by no means limited to providing information to politicians; lobbying work is also about making politicians receptive to information. He differentiated three lobbying techniques: 1) direct personal communication, 2) communication through an intermediary and 3) work to keep the communication channels open (1960, p.36). Elvander (1969) approached the same issue as Milbrath and highlighted the importance of social standing in lobbyism. He differentiated two elements: on one side, there is the issue at hand and the influence that derives from it; on the other side, there is the influence the interest group has due to its social standing alone. Both aspects, Elvander suggests, are important for the outcome of the influence campaign. Thomas (2004) gives a clear example of the difficulties a youth organisation faces in comparison to an association of dentists. The dentists do not have to put in much work, Thomas observes, whereas the youths have a more difficult time drawing attention to their issue. Thomas explains this discrepancy by pointing to differences in social standing and contacts.

These insights should certainly caution researchers against overly simplistic renderings of lobbying. However, it remains problematic that previous research has merely shown that the dimensions exist, not how they are enacted in practice at the micro-level. One conclusion is to pay special attention to the importance of relations. This has been noted frequently, and it leads to the second insight.

The second insight from previous research is that lobbying is a personal activity. Although Mills (1999/1956) raised awareness about transparent social networks and their importance for political outcomes as early as 1956, very little research explores what ‘contacts’ really are. Insightful research has noted the crucial importance of personal relations. In her dissertation, Liehr-Gobbers (2006) found (based on an ambitious questionnaire with 257 lobby organisations) neither a correlation to the amount of strategy planning and objectives and success in lobbying nor that the more communication channels a lobbyist uses, the more successful the lobbying (compare Bruycker, 2016; Pieczka, 2006). Instead, Liehr-Gobbers confirmed the straightforward hypothesis that the greater personal trust is, the greater the lobbying success of a lobbyist. Her results are supported by many other studies (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Chalmers, 2013b; Greenwood, 1997; Mazey & Richardson, 1993; Moloney, 2006). However, these results do not explain how ‘relations’ work, why they make things easy for one actor and difficult for another actor, or how the relations are created or used.

The work of Zeigler and Baer (1969) emphasises sympathy and credibility and is therefore rather close to Elvander (1969). These authors researched lobbying from a social-physiological interaction theory perspective. Concretely, they took their cue from Milbrath's (1960) study and conducted a large survey in which, in contrast to Milbrath, they included politicians rather than only lobbyists. They viewed the relation between lobbyists and politicians as a reciprocal one and wanted to include the expectations of each participant with respect to the other. From their research, we can conclude that even if the actors did not know each other personally, they knew the type of person to expect, which apparently contributes to credibility. Furthermore, the actors had the same social-economic background, and their career paths were, to a large degree, interchangeable. The importance of the identity of the lobbyist was considered so important that ‘an interest group can exercise influence in the legislative process regardless of the activities of its lobbyists’ (Zeigler & Baer, 1969, p. 203).

Chalmers (2013b) also showed the importance of personal relations in lobbying in a comparison of information sharing in loosely tied network and information sharing in tightly tied networks. Tighter networks in which people knew each other increased the quality of the information shared. The more loosely knit networks shared far more information, but this was considered a problem; the actors received an overload of information that made it difficult to determine the relevance of the information. One of his interviewees said, ‘Too much information is no information at all’ (p. 487). Closer friends helped each other sort and analyse information. Another conclusion from Chalmers’ analysis that supports the importance of personal relations was that information overload creates a need to pay increasing attention to the reliability of the information. Strong ties, Chalmers writes, help groups filter information and ensure the receipt of reliable information (p. 491).

Although lobbying is undoubtedly dependent on personal relations, previous research has shown that there are conditions and rules, on different levels, to which influencers must adhere, not only to be ultimately successful but also to be listened to at all. Thus, the third and last insight is that access to political decision makers is conditional; that is, lobbyists must know how to behave or they will not be heeded. Previous research has consistently shown that to be influential, lobbyists must ‘dress for politics’, to use a phrase from Naurin (2004, p. 173). Naurin (2004), Nylander (2000) and Jutterström (2004) agree that conforming to expectations is crucial to be heard by politicians (see also Boräng & Naurin, 2016; Klüver et al., 2015; Klüver et al., 2016). Drawing on the garbage can theory, Jutterström (2004) identified a range of obstacles in the process of influencing¹³. He concluded that even if a lobbyist physically reached the political decision maker with information, ‘their problems and suggestions for solutions were neglected if they behaved wrongly’ (p. 193, my translation).

Jutterström (2004) does not identify what correct behaviour is, but two different research projects have concluded that at least part of behaving correctly involves arguing correctly. Naurin (2004) shows that hidden lobbyists (hidden in the sense of being in a closed room without media reporting) argue sensibly from a democratic point of view. He observes

13 The idea that decisions can be made anywhere at any time when certain conditions are met. The conditions are a problem, a solution, a decision moment and a legitimate decision maker (see more in Jutterström 2004, p. 194).

that the natural behaviour of lobbyists, when they are not watched in the open but behind closed doors in meetings with politicians, is to adjust to political behaviour. He implies that this is a success factor that is only absent when lobbyists are forced to depart from it because of transparency. Traditionally, transparency is seen as something that undoubtedly 'will bring about a civilising effect on political behaviour' (p. 169), which is also the underlying principle in the transparency work of the EU. Naurin wanted to challenge this and conducted interviews with top consultants in which they were asked to give advice on fictitious cases. Naurin compared the outcomes from an analysis of lobbying documents made public. He contrasted these as backstage and frontstage and analysed whether the lobbyists tended to argue strongly in their own interest or for the general good. The results of Naurin's work demonstrate that when the argumentation is publicly accessible, lobbyists tend to argue more in favour of their own interests compared to when the argumentation is not open. Naurin suggests that the reason lies in the peculiar position of lobbyists: when they are in the open, they must show how they stand up for their clients or employers, whereas behind closed doors, lobbyists find it easier to accommodate politicians. If a lobbyist was not watched during a meeting, he or she could return to the members or the management of the organisation and give his or her account of how strongly he or she worked for their position. Naurin is not arguing against transparency per se; he merely demonstrates that transparency is 'not a sufficient condition for democratic accountability' (p. 178). The same main argument was the focus in a study by Nylander (2000), which sheds light on how institutions steer lobbyists' practice.

Nylander (2000) showed that inclusion or exclusion is dependent on cognitive frames. An interest group must conform to the preferences of the European Commission (explained as the neoliberal ideology) to be listened to, to get through, and to be included in the political process. He began by questioning why certain patterns of participation emerge and whether this is decided by the formal decision-making process and/or the interest groups' resources alone. Nylander was inspired by the Chicago School and used a descriptive and explorative design to obtain data on four different cases. He gathered documents and conducted interviews. Nylander calls his method ethnographic, although he did not conduct participatory observations but reconstructed the cases retrospectively. Similar studies have been conducted by Klüver et al. (2016) and Boräng and Naurin (2016). In sum, the studies from Jutterström (2004), Naurin (2004) and Nylander

(2000) all show that access to politicians is conditioned by lobbyists' capability to adjust to the political sphere. However, it remains unclear how the adjustment is performed on an interpersonal level.

My study begins an exploration of what the conditions are for interpersonal interaction and how lobbyists work with them.

1.4.4 Discussion: moving from transmission to communication

In the preceding paragraphs, I discussed three commonly held yet questionable assumptions: 1) successful lobbying primarily or exclusively depends on the correct strategy, and the social and contextual game is a negligible factor; 2) information is the key resource and the currency with which lobbyists 'pay', so to speak, whereas political influence resting in people is negligible in comparison; 3) politicians are always aware of when and how lobbying takes place; that is, lobbying, or being lobbied, is an easily discernible phenomenon in the flow of people's everyday lives.

Previous research has also provided powerful insights that have influenced my study and have been helpful in disentangling the complexity of my observations. Again, there were three insights. First, it should not be assumed that lobbyists only attempt to influence while lobbying. Other things may be occurring; for example, lobbyists might be seeking business intelligence, or politicians might attempt to build an alternative career. Second, lobbying is a highly personal game. Lobbying success is, at least to a degree, dependent on the social standing of the lobbyist and the organisation she represents. Again, however, it is unclear how this personal game works and what type of resources the lobbyists drawing upon. Third, access to political decision makers should not be taken for granted. Although the European political system actively co-opts representative associations into legislative procedures, there is neither space nor time for everyone who wants to interact with policy makers. The result is a selection, a highly competitive game, that is not entirely unfamiliar to PR researchers who have studied the game between PR practitioners and journalists. Previous research has shown that one feature of this game stands out: lobbying is conditional. Lobbying is a communicative and social practice that is characterised by certain conditions that determine the outcome of the encounters between lobbyists and politicians. Lobbyists must adjust to the political arena to gain entrance and reach the ears of politicians; once again, however, there is very little solid research on what these conditions are.

Methodologically, it should be noted that previous research is largely based on documents, interviews or surveys. This approach reflects the predominant research interest, which is to understand how politics in Brussels works at large (i.e., on a macro-level). On a meso-level, previous research has generally been highly dependent on cases. Lobbying is certainly a case-sensitive area; actions and practices are highly complex, and their success or failure is not easily generalizable but depends considerably on the issue at hand. Therefore, scholars have attempted to develop knowledge in context-sensitive ways using cases, reconstructive accounts of cases and personal insights into connected cases (e.g. 14 insightful cases in Pedler, 2002). Nevertheless, even within case research, there is a strong tendency to avoid problematizing the actual micro-level behaviours and actions of actors, lobbyists and politicians. Interactions between lobbyists and politicians, to put it bluntly, have been taken for granted as ‘talking’. Personal interaction is just one of several channels (in addition to, for example, e-mailing), and the way this interaction is enacted has not been researched. Likewise, inequalities in access to politicians have been blamed on inequalities in financial power, again avoiding problematizing how the ‘privileged access’ of one group is negotiated (in contrast to the US, direct campaign contributions, or more or less indirectly ‘buying’ politicians, is far more difficult).

In summary, the micro-perspective has thus far been neglected in lobbying research. Various reasons have been given, but in addition to practical reasons, there may also be a theoretical reason. I suggest that the view of communication in lobbying research has primarily been transmissional. In this study, I would like to shift this transmissional view towards a view of lobbying as a social and communicative practice (cf. Carey, 1992). This is a perspective in which interactions between politicians and lobbyists are seen as a communicative practice characterised by particular norms, rules and traits.

The transmissional perspective suggests, more implicitly than explicitly, that communication consists of moving information from one person to another. This view becomes very clear in the case of Jaatinen’s (1999) contingency model. Jaatinen even defines lobbying as an interaction mechanism, where ‘mechanism’ is understood in a static way. Jaatinen views the lobbyist as a static actor who simply hands over information to persons through channels; the choice of what and to whom is dependent on the chosen strategy.

There is no question that information is exchanged, but by shifting to a social and communicative perspective on the interaction, other aspects come into view. Communication is not only about imparting information; it also reproduces a practice and is the 'representation of shared beliefs' (Carey, 1992, p. 18). Communication is also about commonness and creating shared beliefs. It is 'a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed' (Carey, 1992, p. 23).

In essence, the shift is concretely a shift away from focusing on influence and the effects of lobbying to a perspective that stresses personal relationships and asks how these are established and maintained; it is a perspective that focuses on concrete interactions and aims to reveal the norms, values and the communicative resources used in these interactions.

A communication perspective means that lobbying is viewed as a joint activity and as an arena in its own right, with certain rules and norms for social behaviour. In the transmissional view, the lobbyist and the politician are neutral actors who move resources between one another. By changing to a communicative view, we see that the actors are producing and reproducing the activity in itself. By this reasoning, there seems to be a core of symbols and acceptable practice in Brussels that lobbyists and politicians have agreed on and act on in their everyday interactions. These can also be called organising principles.

If we bring in the concepts and perspectives of Goffman (1990/1959) and acknowledge that in these interactions the interactants enact dramas in which they fulfil certain roles towards each other we can focus on these procedures and behaviours and explore how they are performed. The only way to explore them is to observe them first hand in the scenes where they are performed. There must be a joint core of symbols and acceptable practices in Brussels upon which the lobbyists and politicians have agreed and on which they act in their everyday interactions. As such, lobbying is a social practice that is always performed in relation to someone else, framed in layers of preconceptions and expectations and bound to space and time.

1.5 Aim and research questions

In this study, I investigate lobbying as a social and communicative practice. I apply theories and understandings from neo-institutional theory (Johansson, 2006a; Sandhu, 2009) and ideas from Goffman (1961a, 1961b, 1967, 1981, 1990/1959, 1997/1961). I understand the interactions as dramaturgical enactments performed in an institutional setting where

there are rules and norms that steer and enable the practice (Giddens, 1984). Furthermore, there are certain potentially identifiable resources upon which the actors draw in their performances. By working methodically from the descriptive surface, I attempt to identify the underlying organising principles that steer this practice and without which lobbying as it is manifested in my observations would not be possible (Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). Therefore, the aim of this thesis is both descriptive and theory generating.

The aim is to define and further the understanding of the practice of lobbying as it manifests in the participants' interactions with each other and to identify the specific conditions (rules, standards, traits) that characterise this practice. This aim is operationalized with the following research questions.

In what different meetings or contexts do politicians and lobbyists meet? How are these meetings organised (by whom and for what purpose)? What is happening in the meetings? What are the explicit and implicit norms that characterise these meetings?

What strategies do lobbyists use in meetings with regard to their own identities? What types of resources do the lobbyists use in interactions with politicians? What are the politicians' expectations of the lobbyists with regard to the interactions?

This work's main contribution to research on lobbying is to generate an understanding of the type of practice lobbying is based on empirical observations of what lobbyists and politicians actually do in their interactions and how they understand these meetings.

I focus solely on the personal interaction between the participants; therefore, I do not explicitly include e-mails, letters or other forms of communication except to describe their general work or when the actors talk about the activities. I also do not intend to follow or to analyse the political issues with which the lobbyists are working or to present personal portraits of individuals and schematically trace and explain certain persons' work and their tasks. Again, my focus is the concrete, personal, face-to-face interactions (Goffman, 1967).

2. Lobbying as a communicative practice

The main idea of the perspective applied in this thesis is to acknowledge persons, rather than organisations or a strategic plan, perform lobbying. This chapter will develop this view. In previous research on lobbying (see chapter 1), the predominant research perspective was the macro- or meso-level; researchers focused on the political system or organisation (Beyers et al., 2010; Dür, 2010; Karr, 2007; Klüver et al., 2016; Mahoney, 2007b; Michalowitz, 2007; Saurugger, 2010). Research has been conducted on the micro- or actor-level, but previous studies often tend to view lobbyists as fully autonomous strategic actors (1999). It is my belief that lobbying should not be approached simply as the action of strategic actors; this is a simplistic and overly static view of lobbying.

This leads me to the second main idea: the persons who lobby do so as part of the social institution of lobbying. Seeing lobbying from this perspective means that one considers the underlying normative pattern in terms of which a group is organised rather than the group itself (J. Scott, 2016). The social institution is a cluster of specialised normative expectations and consists of all the structural components of a society through which the main concerns and activities are organised, and social needs (such as those for order, belief, and reproduction) are met (J. Scott, 2016). Therefore, there is a mutual social and cultural dependence between the organisation and the environment. I claim that this is also true for the relation between the agent and environment. Therefore, institutionalisation is also a social process by which individuals embrace a common definition of the social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). It is, therefore, a shared definition of what is 'real' that constitutes the rules, both formal and informal, for accepted practice.

The following theoretical framework aims to grasp how we can understand what goes on in these institutionalised meetings and the relations between the macrostructures and the concrete activities on the micro-level. The theoretical framework must be able to address interactions. For this task, I have found it fruitful to use a dramaturgical perspective by Goffman (1990/1959), in which he emphasises that we are all working with our impression management, or presentation of ourselves, in interactions. By viewing actions as presentations of the self, I believe it is possible, in line with Goffman and with the help of some concepts from Giddens (1984), to reconstruct the social conditions for the interaction: the cultural norms, values and beliefs the actors draw upon in their perfor-

mances. Goffman provides concrete tools to identify these norms, values and beliefs.

2.1 Bringing lobbying into a neo-institutional framework

As described above, seeing the practice of lobbying as an institutionalised practice presupposes that there is a social process in which individuals share a joint definition of the social reality. The interactions will be surrounded by explicit and implicit rules for what are considered proper and acceptable ways of acting (Johansson, 2006b). The focus within institutionalism is on the reciprocal social and cultural dependency between the organisation and other actors rather than mere technical efficiency (Johansson, 2006b). Other approaches used within lobbying research, such as the contingency-theoretic base (eg. Jaatinen, 1999), rational choice theory (eg. Falkemark, 1999) or game theory approaches (Grossman & Helpman, 2001), claim, implicitly or explicitly, that organisations are rational at their core and that their relations to the surrounding world consist of a mutual technical dependence. The neo-institutionalism approach claims that organisations are not fully free to act towards the environment through technical efficiency alone (Johansson, 2006b) and even explicitly problematizes rationality (Wehmeier, 2006). Institutional factors influence their freedom of action. Applications within lobbying research have primarily been seen in Nylander (2000), who uses neo-institutionalism theory to show how the European Commission sorts out certain actors by, in practice, demanding opinions and suggestions already framed in the Commission's own ideology. I also see connections to the work of Jutterström (2004), who problematizes the actor-view of lobbyists, although he does not explicitly connect to the neo-institutionalism approach.

I have added 'neo-' to the word institutionalism because 'neo' is a later theoretical development than institutionalism itself and adds a further twist that potentially helps in analysing lobbyists' actions that may not initially seem understandable. There is two core concepts that I will address here: isomorphism and decoupling. Isomorphism involves copying other organisations' behaviour. Meyer and Rowan (1977) write:

Organisations that incorporate societally legitimated rationalised elements in their formula structures maximise their legitimacy and increase their resources and survival capabilities (p. 352).

Isomorphism as applied to lobbying indicates that some lobbying might occur not because there is a pressing political issue that an organisation must influence but rather that organisations feel organisational pressure to engage in politics, as shown by Jutterström (2004).

By analysing processes of decoupling, neo-institutionalist theory points to the phenomenon in which adherence to rules to gain legitimacy may occur only as a façade. Wehmeier (2006) for example, notes how the use of balanced scorecards in communication management couple organisational structures and processes to the modern myths of rationality and its handmaidens: control and maintenance. The benefit for the organisations is social legitimacy. The real work is performed behind the façade; the core processes are untouched and protected, and the outer façade and inner business are decoupled. Johansson (2006b) writes that this decoupling can be practical when an organisation is ensuring to the outer world that the myths are working well while in practice, the organisation is working in a pragmatic way to ensure technical efficiency (in short, being practical). Meyer and Rowan (1977) write, 'Organisations that incorporate societally legitimated rationalised elements in their formal structures maximise their legitimacy and increase their resources and survival capabilities' (p. 352; cf. Sandhu, 2009). Goffman (1990/1959) noted similar phenomena to decoupling. He observed that when there is a discrepancy between performance and 'reality', the performance usually paints a more idealistic picture.

A neo-institutional approach also opens an understanding of different reasons for communication in lobbying to take place rather than merely pushing through a certain issue. Sandhu (2009) defines public relations from a neo-institutionalism perspective as a specified organisational function with the key task of observing and managing linkages and relationships between the organisation and its public with the goal of ensuring legitimacy and upholding a license to operate. The license to operate is explicitly present in interactions between lobbyists and politicians, whereas policymaking has the potential to directly affect the activities of the lobbying organisation.

Neo-institutionalism does not view the structures that organisations want to adhere to as fully governing. The perspective is more nuanced than traditional institutionalism: both the steering structures and the agents are seen as powerful factors. Much of what is occurring is institutional routine, but organisations are also granted manoeuvring space (Johansson, 2006a; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). The debate on the level of

autonomy has been a leitmotif of sociological, organisational and institutional theory in the last half of the preceding century. The debate started with the 'natural' assumption of the fully strategic actor, changed to a view construing actors as more or less slaves under the system, and finally arrived at a more balanced view. The concepts of later neo-institutional theory connect well with the work of Anthony Giddens, who emphasises the same relation by proposing, in structuration theory, a duality of structure (1984).

2.2 Connecting the macrostructures with the micro practice

The concept of the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984) combines the macro structures with practices on the micro-level. This means that the 'structural properties are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise' (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). For lobbyists, it means that they must fulfil certain norms and rules to be seen as lobbyists, understood as persuaders, by the politicians with whom they interact. That there are norms and rules for what constitutes the lobbying act means that the lobbyists can potentially orient themselves away from these norms and rules in certain contexts and behave like something other than the lobbyist as persuader.

I want to emphasise a plural in interactants here: the lobbyist, the agent, lobbies neither context free nor alone. The other interactant is as much an agent and part of the interaction as the lobbyist. Together they negotiate the meaning of the encounter. Previous activities are kept in 'memory traces' (Giddens, 1984, p. 25), which constitute social properties that bind and enable. The structures also mean that certain values will be granted higher value than others (for example, a certain educational background). Actors must draw on accepted values if they want to be granted status to act. The accepted values are constantly re-negotiated in the lobbyists' practice. Thus, lobbying in Brussels in the 1980s might look very different from lobbying in Brussels in the 21st century.

The agents do not perceive themselves as reproducing a practice, however. Although the structures influence what the interactant does, the individual perceives himself as an agent who employs specific means to pursue a specific purpose. The lobbyist also perceives himself as acting in competition with other lobbyists and other persons seeking attention from politicians. Accordingly, he will 'stretch the rules' in concrete interactions to gain advantage over competitors. This stretching of the rules, especially if he gets away with it, redefines the accepted and legitimate practice. Lob-

byists will therefore 'recursively create and re-create the social system within which the practice is undertaken' (Cozier & Witmer, 2001, p. 620). The need to adhere to institutional demands is also a matter of status. Status, according to Goffman (1990/1959) and Giddens (1984) is crucial for the agent in practice.

Switching between the agent perspective and the structure perspective, it becomes clear that encounters, particularly from a long-term perspective, also strengthen the relations between actors and between the actor and the 'system'. The integrative character of encounters is emphasised by Giddens (1984), who writes that trust and tact in the interaction are fundamental to 'social integration in time and space' (p. 86). The ethnologist Karl-Olov Arnstberg puts the point even more concretely: 'people that live under the same everyday conditions will tend to be like each other – they will have similar opinions and think in similar ways' (Angelöw & Jonsson, 1990, p. 118, my translation).

2.3 Impression management

In the previous part, I expounded my belief that social actors have purposes in mind, set goals and objectives for themselves, and pursue these goals by employing various means—or, in other words, draw on specific rules and resources to pursue their issue. Goffman (1990/1959) acknowledges that all agents are also engaged in ensuring that the interaction partner obtains a certain impression of the agent. He calls this the work of impression management. These are the efforts and activities to strengthen the person's own social position, standing and status, both short term and long term.

The core idea of impression management lies in the belief that whatever we do, however short or long term the relation is, in interaction we are always also social beings who work with our own and our counterpart's appearance. We are keen on making a favourable impression (according to our standards) on the person with whom we interact directly. In a triadic setting, we are also keen on making a favourable impression on the people who observe us interacting. We use communication, deliberately and strategically, to create the desired impression of ourselves.

Everyone engages in impression management in the simple and straightforward way described so far. Impression management is also used to gain control of encounters. As Goffman (1990/1959) explains:

... it will be in his interests to control the conduct of others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which the others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan (p. 15).

Impression management means that humans, who are keen on controlling a situation, adapt their 'performance' in encounters to achieve favourable impressions with the persons with whom they interact and, if one exists, with the audience present. The performance is the sum of activity in a specific encounter. Adaptations are made in accordance with on-going experience in the situation but are also based on previous experience with the interaction partners. Goffman (1997/1961) refers to this as 'strategic interaction', in which moves 'will be made in the light of one's thoughts about the others' thoughts about oneself' (p. 143). If our interactant is a stranger, we use our previous experiences of roughly similar persons or apply stereotypes. If it is a familiar social setting, we sometimes assume that only individuals of a particular type are to be found there.

Often, we also support our interactant to keep up her performance. The keeping up of performance, both our own and our interaction partner's, is closely related to keeping of face or tact (Goffman, 1990/1959). Giddens (1984) defines tact as a

... mutually protective contract' and explains that it is 'a mechanism whereby agents are able to reproduce the conditions of 'trust' or ontological security (p. 64).

To show consideration is thus viewed as a powerful way of building a trusting relation. Goffman (1990/1959) was criticised for proposing that the protection of face can be accomplished by white lies and therefore for implying that it is only made with white lies. This is not how I understand Goffman, however; the protection of face can be accomplished without bending the truth. When the truth is bent and there is a moral resistance to lying, this shows how important the saving of face is.

Impression management implies a dramaturgical view of social life. Actors possess certain resources to draw upon, like the properties in a theatre, to enact the role they believe to be appropriate in the situation in coherence with earlier behaviour. However, I do not interpret Goffman's actors as being fully autonomous and perfectly strategic. Impression management means taking into account the structural properties in which

encounters are embedded, but the consideration does not necessarily imply conscious decisions to conform or not to conform (cf. Giddens, 1984). Sometimes actors in a situation cannot imagine that they could have acted otherwise. Giddens (1984) defines this action as occurring within the person's practical consciousness, which he distinguishes from the discursive consciousness, which involves things we can talk about and reflect upon and the unconsciousness. In the practical consciousness, we act only because we feel this is the natural way of performing this specific act (p. 29).

Goffman (1990/1959) has been criticised for implying that what we do in our roles is not real. The real/not-real dichotomy criticism hinges particularly on Goffman's concept of different regions: the frontstage where we perform and the backstage where we can put aside our roles, practice our performances and store properties for later use (p. 13). Goffman replied to his critics by emphasising that we act, more or less, the entire time. Acting is as natural and as real as any other part of life. In his early work, the 'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life', Goffman (1990/1959) agrees with Park, who writes: '... our apprehension of our role becomes an integrated part of ourselves' (p. 27). It is interesting to note that most of us are quite capable of differentiating our roles. We are aware when we are acting in our professional role, as a parent, as a wife or just as a tired traveller or dissatisfied restaurant guest. Few of us would consider some roles less real than others. Two years after 'Presentation of Self', Goffman (1961a) developed his view of the creation of the self, a complex process:

Each moral career, and behind this, each self, occurs within the confines of an institutional system, whether a social establishment such as a mental hospital or a complex of personal and professional relationships. The self, then, can be seen as something that resides in the arrangements prevailing in a social system for its members. The self in this sense is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self as constitute it (p. 168).

According to Goffman (1990/1959), the self is ultimately not an individual property but is social in its essence. Taking this into account, it becomes obvious why Goffman's distinction between frontstage and backstage cannot be clear-cut. A role we play on the frontstage can be so deeply rooted that it follows us backstage, and backstage behaviour can become a style to be brought forward.

The backstage region constitutes a sphere in which actors are more intimate with each other. The intimacy backstage is connected to the intimacy felt while belonging to the same team, a concept that will be developed below. The frontstage, in contrast, is more official and formal. In lobbying, for example, it is plausible that the interaction will be different if the lobbyist and politician meet in a planned meeting at the politician's office or if they meet coincidentally at a reception. There is a third region, however: the 'outside' or 'public'. Goffman emphasises that actors must not only maintain a coherent and verisimilitudinous¹⁴ impression of the interaction partner in a limited situation; they must also maintain a coherent impression over time and towards the public. This means, for example, that one must play the same, identifiable role for the same public to avoid confusion. Sometimes an actor deliberately departs from the established frontstage role to achieve a certain effect, which is part of impression management.

2.4 Interactional resources and aspects

Elvander (1969) writes that what the lobbyist does depends on two factors: the situation at hand and the resources the organisation has at its disposal (p. 163). With the EU-pluralistic system in mind, Nylander (2000) argues that the most important factor for influence is resources. Both Elvander and Nylander employ a wide understanding of resources. Organisations and lobbyists command many material resources, such as money, manpower, and information. In the Brussels context, information is traditionally seen as the resource that is traded and on which the lobbyist's entire legitimacy rests (see part 1.3.2 above).

As has been repeatedly emphasised, I am particularly interested in interactional resources. Unlike natural resources such as coal, steel or oil, interactional resources are not necessarily used up by employment. On the contrary, if used correctly, they grow. However, if used incorrectly, they might be damaged or lost completely. If a lobbyist repeatedly acts correctly and convincingly, a politician, as the interaction partner, becomes increasingly trustful. However, the politician might suddenly realise one day that the lobbyist has always been lying to him.

¹⁴ From 'verisimilitude', meaning the appearance of being true or real.

What I intend to do in this part is to develop a vocabulary that describes the interactional resources employed by professional agents—in my case, lobbyists. The concepts I wish to develop, relying heavily on Goffman (1990/1959) are face, team, façade, task, identity, role, framing and footing. Backstage and frontstage, which I have already discussed, are also considered resources; acting in a backstage way could be viewed as a signal of trust and openness. I will discuss this further in relation to teams.

Although 'resources' is the overarching term, with regard to some concepts, I touch upon ideas and notions that are not easily construed as resources. Agents 'employ' specific roles to achieve a goal in a social situation, but they do not 'employ' face or aligning. They do take face into consideration, however. What is important to me is that the concepts describe and explain the 'materials' lobbyists work with in encounters.

Before discussing the concepts, I want to emphasise that they all rest on the human need for social contact and comradeship (Goffman, 1961a, p. 168). As social beings, we need a public to act in front of and to deepen the feeling of our praised self. We also need team members with whom we can share secret understandings, intimacy and relaxed time backstage. The lobbyist has the potential to exploit these aspects of the social world. In the empirical section, I will discuss how this is done. It must be remembered that the lobbyist is also bound by the same types of needs as the politician is.

Finally, a note on my understanding and use of Goffman's concepts. Although I use Goffman as inspiration, I do not intend to engage in a discussion of whether my interpretation of his work is right or wrong or follows this or that school. As Wine writes in her overview of the main Goffmanian concepts, which she finds complex:

... finding workable definitions for constructs – which, by their very nature, can be elusive – is an important part of the game. And hitting upon a definition others embrace is tantamount to striking gold (Wine, 2008, p. 1).

2.4.1 Face, team, façade and task

In Goffman's terminology, face is the public self-image. It is constantly negotiated in interaction, and the interactants devote considerable attention to it (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Face can be threatened, but we can also perform face-saving acts to restore or defend face. Face-saving acts, according to Goffman (1990/1959), are strongly socially controlled; to make someone lose face is repulsive. If one actor's face is threatened, the normal case is that all interactants will cooperate, implicitly or explicitly,

in saving face. In some cases, face-saving acts can pressure interaction partners into doing something they would not have done normally, such as resorting to white lies.

The concept of the team is helpful and necessary to understand how and why relations in lobbying are established by playing on differentiations of 'we' and 'them'. A team, in Goffman's (1990/1959) terminology, consists of persons who are cooperating in the performance of a routine. I argue that lobbyists attempt to position themselves on the same team as politicians to create relations of trust and intimacy. Team members are mutually dependent with regard to a particular performance. While they are cooperating, they need to trust each other; misbehaviour by one team member will affect and discredit the others. Goffman thus describes team members, in legal terminology, as accomplices. To speak of accomplices means that team members are forced to define each other as initiated; it is no longer necessary to uphold up the façade with the initiated. Familiarity is built within the team:

Among members of the team we find that familiarity prevails, solidarity is likely to develop and that secrets that could give the show away are shared and kept (p. 238).

Although familiarity and intimacy do not necessarily mean cordiality or cosiness, the 'team feeling' does provide security and self-confidence to team members. Team members feel that they are backstage together, especially when the team, as a whole, regards itself as being on 'home ground' and controls the framing of the present situation.

It is important to note that the team is not necessarily a formalised, long-term undertaking. Although football teams or the crew of a ship can be congruent with Goffman's concept of teams, his concept must not be confused with groups. Goffman's teams are interactional in nature. They can be formed on the spot, in the exchange of arguments. They dissolve, for example, after a meeting breaks up. Furthermore, persons do not necessarily want to be on the same team, but they might be forced to cooperate and depend on each other to maintain a projected definition of the situation. This might especially be the case if there is a third party observing the interaction.

An example of a person who can be granted team member status even though the persons hardly know each other is a person perceived as a colleague. A typical colleague is a person who has been educated at the same institution. This person can be given temporarily ceremonial mem-

bership on a team and is often described in in-group terms by the other members. That means that the team members can relax in front of the colleague and feel collegial solidarity with him. Secrets that are kept from the public are often difficult to keep in front of this person.

The concept of façade points to clues observable from the outside. The clues tell who the interactant is and what the encounter involves. These clues can consist of clothes, age, gestures, manner, or the physical context in which the encounter takes place, such as posters from Greenpeace on the walls of an office of an MEP from the Green Party.

The façade can also be more abstract in the form of a myth. It can be decoupled from the activities that actually occur. In these cases, the façade is used for different routines and causes abstract, stereotyped expectations. It receives a certain meaning and stability independent of the activities. As Goffman (1990/1959) writes, the façade then becomes a ‘collective representation and a reality with its own powers’ (p. 144).

Tasks are the activities lobbyists are doing, need to be doing, or want to be doing, such as writing a position paper, organising an event, making a phone call to a politician, briefing colleagues at HQ at home, or gathering information. It is valuable to categorise tasks and to construct catalogues of the five, seven or ten tasks of the lobbyist. In line with Nothhaft (2010), I understand the management scholar Henry Mintzberg's roles as task categories. What Mintzberg labels the ten roles of the manager (e.g., negotiator, monitor or spokesperson) are, in Nothhaft's opinion, tasks because they describe what the person is doing. The concept of role is socially constructed and negotiated, in contrast; in negotiations with a person, the person's role might change from 'shady corporate lobbyist' to 'idealistic fighter for truth and justice' without changing the fact that negotiations are on-going (compare Nothhaft, 2010).

2.4.2 Identity and role

The concept of identity in my theoretical framework is rather straightforward and concrete. The three different identities presented by Zimmerman (1998) cover the need for tools to analyse the lobby meeting with regard to identities and how persons act in the meetings with regard to each other. Roles, as used and applied by Goffman (1990/1959), in contrast, are another concept that deepens the understanding of the meetings I have observed. The concepts partly overlap. The transportable identities come closest to the Goffmanian roles; they partly complement each other and make explicit further dimensions the adaptation of a certain role entails.

They also make it possible to explicitly talk about Goffman's concept of footing, which I explain below, and clarify what I do not include.

The three different identities presented by Zimmerman (1998) are first the situated identities, which are explicitly conferred by the context of communication, such as doctor/patient identities in the context of a health clinic or teacher/student identities in the context of a classroom. Second are the discourse identities, as participants orient themselves to particular discourse roles in the unfolding organisation of the interaction (e.g., initiator, listener and questioner). Third are the transportable identities, which are latent or implicit but can be invoked during an interaction, such as when a teacher alludes to her identity as a mother or as a keen gardener during a language lesson (examples from Ushioda, 2011).

In the case of lobbyists, the situated identity is 'the lobbyist' as opposed and in relation to 'the politician'. This type of identity might be the least important for the analysis. With the help of the concepts of discourse identities and transportable identities, I will be able to see whether, for example, lobbyists adopt different discourse identities in different types of meetings. Transportable identities can be seen as pure resources the lobbyist can potentially draw upon for impression management to gain advantages in communication. In the case of lobbyists, this might involve alluding to a previous work experience as an MEP assistant in a meeting with an MEP.

According to Goffman (1990/1959), a role is an 'in advance made action-pattern' (p. 27) that can be performed in one or several encounters. The role is also the 'realisation of rights and duties tied to a certain given status' (p. 23). Nothhaft (2010) describes roles as expectations and expectation-expectations, both from the interactant and from the social context. In comparison with identity, the concept of role denotes something subtler and fluctuating, something dramaturgical.

Roles are not fixed and pre-scripted as roles in the theatre are, of course (although there are fixed, institutionalised roles). In the actual encounter, the respective roles are negotiated among the interactants. As previously discussed, the actual performance, including the role we play and the roles we grant to others, depends on the concrete and specific situation embedded in general structures. More dynamically and communicatively, roles depend on how we understand or misunderstand our interaction partners. It is important to note that our understanding derives from previous experiences with similar situations or persons.

A role, Nothhaft (2010) argues with reference to Katz and Kahn (1966), is the result of a dynamic psychological process comprising epi-

sodes of role sending, role expectations, role reception and role taking. Role taking, in particular, makes us aware of the fact that roles are often initially developed by imitating others, such as ‘idols’ or ‘stereotypic figures’ (cf. Mead, 1934, p. 150). Actors ‘design’ roles in accordance with their beliefs about how a ‘real manager’, ‘real lobbyist’ or ‘real politician’ should behave and act. The enactment of the role depends on the actual interaction (Goffman, 1961b). Persson (2012) exemplifies the difference between the more functional part of the role and the more interactional parts of the role with the difference between a boss (more functional) and a leader (more interactional).

For the individual, it is problematic and difficult when diverging role expectations clash; role-theorists speak of role conflicts. The dramaturgical framework developed by Goffman (1990/1959) allows an understanding of the creative solutions people use in role conflicts. Actors sometimes enact different roles in the same encounter and alter or change roles. Sometimes actors even enact contradictory roles. This is risky because, according to Goffman (1990/1959) and, later, Giddens (1984), a coherent role furthers the development of ontological security and trust.

From the description so far, it should be clear that my sociological and dramaturgical understanding of roles differs considerably from the concepts common in PR and management theory (for example Cutlip et al., 2000; Mintzberg, 1990), in which role relates to tasks.

Social position is complementing identity and role in my analysis. I understand impression management as an attempt to cope with a situation while at the same time creating or recreating a social position. Giddens (1984), who is heavily influenced by Goffman (1990/1959), defines social positions as follows:

Social positions are constituted structurally as specific intersections of signification, domination and legitimation, which relates to the typification of agents. A social position involves the specification of a definite ‘identity’ within a network of social relations, that identity being a ‘category’ to which a particular range of normative sanctions is relevant (p. 83).

‘Identity’, in the way Giddens describes it, remains a very vague concept – too vague for empirical research. This is why I adopt the identity concepts used by Zimmerman (1998) and applied by Ushioda (2011). Thomas (2004) implicitly uses the concept of social position when he writes about a case in which dentists and students needed very different amounts of

work in their lobbying because the former could rely to a higher degree on the power of their social position.

2.4.3 Framing and footing

By analysing footing, framing and aligning, we gain an understanding of how actors constitute their roles and how they signal to others and provide cues.

Frames, according to Wine (2008), can be understood in at least three ways: as metaphorical containers, as structures of expectations (cf. Bateson, 2000; Tannen, 1993) and as opinion shapers or thought manipulators (Wine, 2008p. 1). My analysis primarily conceives of frames as structures of expectations. The reason actors try to shape the framing of a situation lies with the other understandings because expectation structures shape opinions and manipulate thoughts. Frames help us to understand what is going on and how to act accordingly. They establish a particular picture of what we experience. They enable individuals to 'locate, perceive, identify and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large' (Wine, 2008, p. 1). Furthermore, in Giddens' (1984) words:

... frames are clusters of rules which help to constitute and regulate activities, defining them as activities of a certain sort and as subject to a given range of sanctions (p. 87).

Frames are cognitive schemata of interpretation; however, it is important to emphasise that they are culturally embedded. A simple example of how framing works is provided by Sacks (1992). He wrote that the sentence 'the baby cried and her mommy picked her up' only forms a story when we have a pre-understanding of the situation that puts the information in a situational and cultural context. In this case, the pre-understanding involves cause and effect and family relations.

The framing of a situation, and thus the understanding of it, can be changed by shifting the agent's footing. The footing, according to Goffman (1981), is the participants' stance or posture in the interaction vis-à-vis one another. To demonstrate the concept, Goffman refers to a press conference by US President Nixon in which Nixon suddenly began to comment on a woman's clothing, talking to her on a personal level rather than addressing her as a professional journalist. The footing can affect the task, the tone or social roles. To change footing can also mean to 'change hats' in relation to what one says. As Goffman notes, there is a difference whether you are the animator, author or principal of what you

say. The animator is the person speaking, the author is the person who chooses the form and content of what is said, and the principal is the person who is behind the utterance and whose attitudes are brought forward. In this way, for example, a person can borrow social standing from those he claims are the principals of a message. A simple example is to present something 'as professor X argued in his latest report' instead of arguing the point oneself.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I present the view that interactions between politicians and lobbyists cannot be analysed as isolated conversations; rather, they need to be analysed as embedded within the practice of lobbying. As a practice, lobbying is a social and more or less institutionalised activity. It is not only 'done' by the participants but is also 'enabled' and 'restricted' by the structures within which the encounter takes place. The persons who interact are constantly producing and reproducing joint knowledge of what constitutes the practice according to the community and what is legitimate (cf. Giddens, 1984) and established. There are certain norms; some actors have higher status and more prestigious roles than others and are thus allowed to do things the other actors are not allowed to do.

Although my theoretical framework emphasises the structuration of interaction by institutional norms, it is important not to lose sight of the 'natural' dynamics of face-to-face interaction. Studies that do not consider 'natural' dynamics fail to grasp one important aspect of lobbying. Lobbying encounters are social situations in which participants draw upon interactional resources and take interactional aspects into consideration.

3. Method

The overarching research design of the study is shadowing with interviews. The idea is to get into the centre of activities to observe and obtain first-hand data and information. As Czarniawska (2007) notes, it is only in the field that we can study the actual production of accounts, not only the accounts in themselves. Wodak (2011), who has conducted observations of politics in Brussels, writes that the ethnographic experience and knowledge of the researcher are crucial in understanding the real business of politics. With only interviews, we would be left with ‘completely distorted and sanitised personal narratives of political life’ (p. 116).

This chapter will present an overview of the study and the choices that needed attention along the way, including ethical considerations and some critical remarks. The entire study, including its theoretical foundation and its methods, grew organically from the fieldwork itself, which will be explained below. The ethnomethodological starting point and shadowing as the concrete technique in the field grew from an ambitious pre-study, which follows in 3.1.

3.1 The pre-study: getting into lobbying

This study began in an exploratory way with a wide approach to lobbying. The intent was to search first in the field for possible questions and unsolved issues. To obtain knowledge and understanding of the field, I conducted a pre-study. The pre-study, which was conducted from 2006 to 2007, consisted of a series of informal interviews, study visits at lobby firms, and a lobbying course in Brussels.

The interviews, which lasted an average of 1.5 hours, were conducted with 27 experienced practitioners working for large organisations with direct and indirect experience of lobbying in Brussels. Among these was one former MEP. The study visits took place at three lobbying firms in Brussels, where the practitioners discussed their activities and their work. Two of the visits lasted half a day each; the third one was a shorter meeting for approximately an hour. The last part of the pre-study consisted of a two-day lobbying course in Brussels called Public Affairs in the new Europe. It included theoretical sessions about the constitution of the EU and its decision procedures in the different institutions. Other topics covered were the political groups, how to lobby and how to organise lobbying and walking tours of the parliament and the commission.

The main insight gained from the fieldwork was a confirmation of the impression arising from the on-going literature overview: namely that the depiction of lobbying in substantial parts of the scholarly literature simplifies the process so as to make it almost impossible to connect the information to observations. In a way, the situation reminded me of management scholar Mintzberg's (1990) famous observation, 'If you ask managers what they do, they will most likely tell you that they plan, organise, coordinate, and control. Then, watch what they do. Don't be surprised if you can't relate what you see to these words' (p. 163). Definitions and scholarly renderings of lobbying abound, but they do not capture how lobbying 'works'. The conclusion drawn from the pre-study was that there is a need to understand lobbying as socially constituted in interactions. The methodological consequence, therefore, was to get into the field in a shadowing study. In other words, it was deemed necessary to spend time with and observe the people actually involved in lobbying.

3.2 The ethnographic research design

I conducted my observations within an emerging tradition called shadowing. Shadowing has developed from management studies and was initially a way to teach novices their jobs more rapidly (Gobo, 2013). The core idea is to follow, like a shadow, one or a few chosen persons for a limited time in their everyday life (Czarniawska, 2007). The most famous shadowings are Mintzberg's (1990) management studies in the 1970s. Recently, Czarniawska (2007) has developed the method; and it is encouraged by others, such as Malik (1996). In addition to the advantages of an ethnographic approach and participatory observations in general, an advantage of shadowing and following a practitioner is that it limits the research material to manageable proportions "by allowing the practitioners to select material that they find relevant for their practice" (Czarniawska, 2007, p. 10). In this study, the term shadowing was also a pragmatic term to use because of its transparency; it seemed to clarify the process to the people I met in the field.

The core idea of the main study is to examine the practice of lobbying on its own premises and avoid applying preformed questions and sets of understandings. As was noted in the theory chapter, the practice in itself is guided by a set of pre-understandings consisting of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to lobby situations (cf. W. R. Scott, 1995). The task of the study is to identify these pre-understandings and rules.

Ethnography emphasises the importance of studying everyday phenomena (in this case, lobbying) and understanding the practice on its own premises (Hammersley, 1992). The main characteristics of ethnography are that research takes place in the field, participant observation is the main method, and it involves a relatively unstructured gathering of empirical data, in-depth studies and interpretations of meaning and functions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2008). It is also common, as in this study, to establish contact with a few key informants who then guide the researcher to crucial information (Alvesson & Deetz, 2007).

As an ethnographic study, the knowledge and the analytical object are growing and defined in the field in a mutual process between the knowledge gathered and the reading of theory. This is called the 'ethnographic cycle' (Spradley, 1980, p. 29), although the image of the spiral might be more accurate since the ethnographer's standpoint develops and does not return to where it began. Ethnography can be defined broadly as an exploratory method or natural observation of events, or, as Alvesson and Deetz (2007) prefer and as I have also done, to perform a

... longer period of field-work where the researcher tries to get close to the community [...] being studied and relies on their accounts as well as on observation of a rich variety of naturally occurring events [...] an interest in cultural issues (meanings, symbols, ideas, assumptions) (p. 75).

Whereas ethnography helps in designing the study and conducting the analysis, ethnomethodology helps in defining and narrowing the analytical object. Ten Have (2010) has written that there are quantitative research purposes, qualitative research purposes and ethnomethodology (which is also qualitative). He compares ethnomethodology with ordinary sociology. Whereas sociology wants to explain social facts, 'ethnomethodology works for an explication of their constitution' (p. 14). Ethnomethodology studies practices to gain understanding of procedures and order-producing methods. Therefore, the analytical object is not the lobbyist but the procedure in which the lobbyist is involved. Goffman (1967), in a similar vein, writes:

I assume that the proper study of interaction is not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another. None the less because it is individual actors who contribute the ultimate materials, it will always be reasonable to ask what general properties they must have if this sort of contri-

bution is to be expected of them. [...] Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men (p. 2).

The moments studied are made by the men and women involved. Lobbying can therefore not be studied without context and counterparts in interaction. The interactions should be studied in their particular contexts and seen as jointly accomplished by the involved participants. This includes the entire situation, what both persons are actually doing in the situation and how the interaction is negotiated. The procedures and the acting that is done are similar to what Giddens (1984) calls the practical consciousness.

3.3 Entering the field: shadowing enacted

The guidance for the shadowing was drawn from Gobo (2013), who defines the typical attributes of participatory observations as the researcher establishing a direct relationship with the social actors, staying in their natural environment, having the purpose of observing and describing their behaviour, interacting with them and participating in their everyday ceremonies and rituals, and learning their code (or at least parts of it) to understand the meaning of their actions.

Further, in the shadowing work, I worked with two main concepts: the professional stranger and rich points (Agar, 1996). The professional stranger is the role of the person between the practitioner and the full stranger. McGrath (2005) stresses that practitioners are reluctant to share their secrets. Even if they do, the researcher is confronted with the methodological problem that practitioners are so involved in their practice that they have difficulties adopting an outside perspective and verbally explaining. Luhmann (1998) writes that the world seen by actors is necessarily not the same as the world seen by observers. Observers are able to see alternatives and to distinguish among them. Spradley (1980), in a similar vein, notes that the position between the outsider and insider is necessary: 'the less familiar you are with a social situation, the more you are able to see the tacit cultural rules at work' (p. 62). However, if everything is new and unknown, it is easy to become overloaded and to focus on irrelevant aspects. The danger is that observations are prematurely framed in the researcher's terminology to ease the mental burden. Consequently, real understanding is missed (cf. Agar, 1996). Another danger of being a full novice in a field is that one might waste valuable field time on understanding the basics of the arena and the practice under study. The rich points

(Agar, 1996) are moments that give new understanding and insight. They can be words or acts. They signal a gap between the world of the researcher and the world of the respondent. By searching for the frames necessary for understanding, the researcher gains new insights. Rich points can also be a good starting point for an interview with the respondent.

Concretely, the observations were guided by a few code words in an observation guide that worked as a reminder to maintain focus and to determine what to write down. This was especially important in the beginning of the observations. The guide was based on Spradley's (1980) nine major dimensions of social situations: space (the physical places or places); actor (the people involved); activity (a set of related acts people do); object: the physical things present; act: (single actions that people do); event (a set of related activities that people carry out); time (the sequencing that takes place over time); goal (the things people are trying to accomplish); and feeling (the emotions felt and expressed) (p. 78). To these dimensions, I added even more concrete questions drawn from the interviews in the pre-study. These concerned aims, strategies, the relation to the decision makers, the relation to allies, the relation to competitors, the jargon, the function the lobbyist and politician seem to fulfil for each other and how the lobbyists are received in the EP.

As the study and the fieldwork proceeded, growing confidence in the importance of the interactional level made the observations increasingly focused on the interactions in themselves¹⁵ and their conditions.

3.3.1 The people observed and interviewed

I chose to shadow and interview lobbyists as well as politicians. The design gave me insights into the offstage as politicians and their assistants commented on meetings with lobbyists. This approach corresponds to the overarching theoretical perspective of viewing the interaction as constituted and created by both parties. Therefore, I studied preparations and behind-the-scenes work on both sides in addition to the interaction itself. Being in the parliament, where large parts of the shadowing took place, also provided the opportunity to observe a large number of lobbyist-politician encounters in a short time.

At the core of the study are seven persons, three MEPs and four lobbyists. In practice, I also followed the work of the MEPs' assistants rather

¹⁵ I remember with gratitude the patience of the person I first shadowed, all of whose actions were carefully written down during the first days.

closely, especially at the receptions and other events during the evenings. The lobbyists and MEPs were chosen from approximately 20 000 lobbyists and 766 MEPs. The selection process was facilitated by limiting the study to lobbyists from Swedish organisations with a representation office in Brussels and Swedish MEPs. The reason for the limitation was twofold. Although the aim of the thesis was to find characteristics rather than to count frequencies, a more targeted selection in which people have at least some background factors in common was deemed advantageous. Accordingly, only lobbyists from private organisations and companies were observed first-hand. In practice, public companies and other organisations, such as NGOs, were included in the observations when and if the politicians interacted with their lobbyists. I have noted as much as possible in the analysis when the politicians are communicating with NGOs. I have accounted above for the different types of lobbyists in Brussels: four main types of lobbyists: business lobbyists, organisations' and trade-association lobbyists, NGO lobbyists and consultants (Zerfaß et al., 2008) plus a fifth category: the numerous tax-funded interest groups such as regions or organisations. In all probability, the lobbying of these groups differs, but the scope of this study is far too small to be able to identify differences between the different organisations. Therefore, I have focused as much as possible on one specific type of organisation: the business lobbyist.

I chose only Swedish organisations and MEPs for pragmatic reasons and concern about reliability. The results of participatory observations are largely dependent on the researcher's continuous attention and understanding. Sharing the same mother tongue makes this easier (Czarniawska, 2007). With one exception, the mother tongue of the observed candidates was Swedish, although English was largely a working language for both lobbyists and MEPs. One of the observed lobbyists had English as a first language and spoke no Swedish despite working for a Swedish organisation.

After seven weeks of shadowing one person per week, including the assistants, I thoroughly read through the empirical material and made the judgement that no more shadowings were necessary.

The candidates were found using private contacts and by cold-calling each of the political parties represented in the EP and the Swedish organisations with offices in Brussels after ensuring that they had on-going lobbying activity. Because I was interested in norms and rules for lobbying in Brussels, the persons I shadowed had to have experience of lobbying in

Brussels. The study would be very different if I had included persons who went to Brussels to lobby for the first time.

Although attempts were made to include an equal number of men and women, ultimately, this study included five men and two women. If the MEP assistants and other colleagues are included, the balance is more even. The researcher did not know any of the shadowed persons personally before the study. One of the lobbyists was interviewed in the pre-study.

The lobbyists' most common excuse for not participating was the argument that their office was not very active at the moment. Two MEPs declined to participate because they were 'too busy'. Another MEP initially agreed to participate, but shortly before the shadowing was due, one of her assistants informed me that the MEP was too busy and had to cancel. That week, which would have been week eight of observations, was used to conduct complementary interviews in Brussels. Later, personal interaction with the MEP during an evening reception revealed that the cancellation seemed to have been made by the assistant on her own initiative. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to interview the assistant.

In addition to the shadowings and the interviews, I conducted further interviews. I interviewed a total of 41 persons in Brussels, excluding the interviews in the pre-study. Some were colleagues of the shadowed persons, and others were persons with whom the shadowed persons had met for a lobby meeting during the shadowing. Additional interviews were conducted whenever the opportunity arose, as it did with an experienced Brussels-based journalist or on recommendations from shadowed persons.

The saturation point, when additional material does not lead to additional insight, is a matter of personal judgement in qualitative studies. Other observation and shadowing studies have been undertaken for years, whereas others have lasted only a few hours before reaching the subjective point of saturation. Ultimately, it depends on what empirical material is analysed and the density or frequency of the phenomenon under study. In this case, as in many others, the duration of the observation period was also a practical matter. The observed persons must be comfortable with the situation. One week per person was chosen for a total of 7 weeks of observing. It seemed reasonable to conduct observations for entire workdays, although for some this seemed almost too long. This time was sufficient to become closer to the shadowed person in an attempt to understand his or her perspective, called 'the native's point of view' (Gobo, 2013), while maintaining a professional distance and outside perspective (Czarniawska, 2007). The table below includes all people shadowed and

interviewed. In the core were the first seven persons, but I also shadowed a total of eight assistants who worked with the shadowed MEPs. The total time interviewed excludes the spontaneous interviews.

Table 1: An overview of the persons that have been shadowed and interviewed

	Code	Gender	Interview (min)	Comment
1	MEP 1	M	30	Shadowed
2	MEP 2	M	150	Shadowed
3	MEP 3	M	220	Shadowed
4	L 1	M	510	Shadowed. Incl. comments working
5	L 2	W	110	Shadowed
6	L 3	W	120	Shadowed
7	L 4	W	60	Shadowed
8	Assistant 1	W	40	Shadowed
9	Assistant 2	M	110	Shadowed
10	Assistant 3	M	30	Shadowed
11	Assistant 4	M	50	Shadowed
12	Assistant 5	W	60	Shadowed
13	Assistant 6	M	50	Shadowed
14	Assistant 7	W	30	Shadowed
15	Assistant 8	W	60	Shadowed
16	L 5	M	60	
17	L 6	M	60	Not recorded
18	L 7	M	50	
19	L 8	M	90	
20	L 9	M	60	
21	L 10	M	270	
22	L 11	W	60	
23	L 12	W	30	
24	L 13	W	80	
25	L 14	W	80	
26	L 15	W	80	
27	L 16	M	40	
28	L 17	W	60	
29	L 18	W	60	
30	L 19	M	90	
31	L 20	M	60	
32	L 21	M	40	
33	L 22	M	100	
34	L 23	M	80	
35	L 24	M	80	
36	L 25	M	90	
37	Journalist	M	60	
38	EC	M	110	
39	EP Media	W	40	
40	Secretary	W	30	
41	L 26	M	120	Not recorded

3.3.2 The fieldwork: observing and interviewing

Every person was shadowed for one week each. This week included everything the person allowed to be shadowed, from breakfast meetings to late night receptions, whether dinner or a drink or two at the bars around the parliament. At these events, both politicians and lobbyists were usually present. The late-night drinks mostly included the MEP assistants and the younger lobbyists, but more senior people also attended. The ‘everything’ meant literally everything from morning to evening, and the shadowed persons made great efforts to allow the researcher in everywhere. This included top-level meetings, which are normally conducted behind closed doors, and other affairs, such as voting in the EP as well as drinks and receptions after work. I attended something on most evenings. A valuable side effect was that I witnessed a great number of coincidental encounters and was privy to a great deal of small talk.

The observations were guided by the rationale of ‘observation with pragmatic participation’. Full observation would have been possible through, for example, video-recording or full participation, in which the researcher fully blends in as one of those studied. Both filming and full participation involve ethical problems. The aim of studying interactions and activities during entire days made ‘observation with pragmatic participation’ the most suitable approach. Other researchers call this in-between position ‘moderate participation’ (Spradley, 1980, p. 58) or ‘participant as observer’ (Spradley, 1980, p. 62). Full observations would, for practical reasons, restrict the material to few occasions and include the limitations that can occur while being filmed (unless unethical methods such as hidden cameras were used, which of course was out of the question). Full participation risks being too demanding for the researcher to maintain an alert mind, integrity, the outsider’s perspective and the ability to take notes.

Pragmatic participation prescribes that the observer blends in naturally as much as possible without actively deceiving the interactants about the fact that research is occurring. While making every attempt to blend in, the researcher can and should clarify her role if an awkward situation arises. One common example of what I did, as Czarniawska (2007) also reported, was to make and serve coffee. A few times I was mistaken for an assistant to the MEP and asked to fetch papers or deliver messages. I never made a fuss but acted as if I was an assistant. In an intensely political environment, it is common for a researcher to be asked her opinions. The researcher should normally avoid all such questions, but in some cases, it

was considered opportune to provide a short but polite and honest answer (Lindlof, 1995). Taylor and Bogdan (1998) write that being integrated in the atmosphere causes people to feel less self-conscious with the researcher present and allows easier access to various situations (cf. Camauër, 2000).

Integration (i.e., not appearing awkward and as an anti-body in the situation) is also important to avoid interfering with the situation that is being researched. Most of the time, the persons shadowed presented a relaxed impression of accepting the observations, but there were some self-ironic jokes now and then and questions that clearly sought compliments on their work. Later, in the final evaluation interview with each person that was conducted at the end of each week, many of the candidates admitted that it was difficult being shadowed. In reply to the direct question of whether the observations influenced their work, many of them said that they may have ‘stretched the back’ a bit more (cf. the Hawthorne studies). This means that the persons shadowed put in extra effort in their impression management (Goffman, 1990/1959; also commented upon in Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) to show to me and others who they wanted to be. In this research, this is viewed as an advantage because what they want to convey about their practice is interesting in itself. Overall, the shadowed persons had an intense workload. From a pragmatic perspective, it seems implausible that they would have been able to keep up a façade during the entire period.

Not everything can be observed, of course. Accordingly, so-called ‘ethnographic interviews’ (Lindlof, 1995, p. 170) were conducted regularly during the shadowings when there was time, such as during walks to meetings. It was typical of these interviews that they were spontaneous, often concerning what happened there and then. They seldom felt like interviews but had the character of informal conversations. Sometimes these interviews were initiated by a question, but often the observed person explained spontaneously what was happening. A few of these interviews were recorded.

There were also more formal recorded interviews with the shadowed persons, their co-workers and assistants, people they interacted with directly or people with whom the shadowed persons had some kind of contact. In one case, for example, the head of a think-tank that one of the shadowed persons often ordered research from was interviewed. An overview of the interviews can be found in the appendix. Three interviews were not recorded. Two of the three persons refused to be recorded; in the

third case, it was the second interview with a person who had previously reacted with nervousness about the recording.

All pre-booked interviews were designed as 'informant interviews' (Lindlof, 1995, p. 170) that included a rough guideline with themes that formed frames for the interviews. The guideline addressed their background; an introductory view on lobbying and politics; their relation to the counterpart in the lobbying situation and other actors; the information handled; influence, steering and power; contact forms; and general thoughts on EU politics and lobbying. There were also concrete questions that arose in the shadowings. The emphasis in the interviews was on four questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) that aimed to examine the person's own discourses through telling more than answering and to provide more descriptions than their own analysis of situations. This is not to say that analysis was not sought. It was important to ask for and be attentive to insights and analysis for its own sake and the information provided, but it was also seen as important for the interviewees' self-esteem and position as an expert, which, according to Lindlof, often makes the interviewee more cooperative (Lindlof, 1995). Concretely, the persons were asked to describe their last visit to the EP, certain meetings, previous working days, and coming workdays.

In practice, the interviews differed in both style and length (averaging approximately 1,5 hours). The greatest difference between interviews was the difference between interviewing people who had been shadowed and others. There was a remarkable effect in the quality of the interviews with the persons that had been shadowed. The reason was threefold. First, it was possible to ask other types of questions that arose from the observations. Sometimes the questions were clarifications on certain events, but there were also larger issues and perspectives that would have been impossible to ask about without the insights from the observations. Second, there is no point in twisting facts, consciously or unconsciously, while talking to a person who has been present and observing you in action and who will return for several more days. Third, the interviewer develops trust merely by being present. The observed people were generally more relaxed and open in the interviews, which creates a good environment for a rich interview (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

The interviews were also fruitful for the observations by providing new ideas that could be reflected upon during the rest of the week.

3.3.3 Writing the notes

Taking notes in a shadowing study involves both what and how. It is complicated to know exactly what to write down or when to open the notebook, as it may disturb someone in the middle of a conversation.

During the first week, very detailed notes were made. Everything the shadowed person did was written down, even when he went to get a cup of coffee. During the first couple of days, activities were even measured in time. A field evaluation quickly revealed that this was unnecessary and unproductive. The continuous evaluation of the field notes during the observations and insights into the practice, analyses of the outcomes together with further reading, and the ethnographic research spiral made the observations and the field notes more narrow and focused. Ten Have (2010) writes about this strategy as open and explorative and notes that the first ‘sensitising concepts’ become increasingly precise as the research progresses with the help of the material, especially the rich points.

Although the material narrows during the process, the data still must be as descriptive as possible. Strict adherence to descriptive accounts makes it possible to examine the material at home (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Analysis in the field, in contrast, carries the considerable risk of predetermining the interpretation of what happened. Therefore, verbatim accounts are distinguished from accounts that are paraphrased or based on general recall (Ekström, 2000). I have also distinguished cultural behaviour (what the observed persons were doing), cultural knowledge (what knowledge they used and that was taken for granted) and cultural artefacts (what they used and produce) (Lofland & Lofland, 1999). The first and last were easier to grasp because input and output are directly observable. Cultural knowledge, in contrast, can be either explicit or implicit and beneath the surface. Cultural knowledge was inferred, to a high degree, from the previously mentioned rich points. The main part of the notes contains running descriptions of acts, encounters, people, observed conversations and conversations. Every shadowing week generated between 14 000 and 18 000 words of text, excluding the interviews.

The literature on observation methods contains many accounts of researchers who hide their notebooks and attempt to write without anyone seeing them. Techniques are for example to frequently run to the wash-room to write down quotes and notes or try to memorise things for the moment when they go home and write it all down. In contrast, I wrote almost all the time. Although I did not actively obscure my role as researcher, I seldom felt awkward participating in meetings and other situa-

tions with my notebook. In this specific context, there was nothing strange about a secretary-type taking notes. After walks and other occasions when I had good conversations but could not take notes immediately, I took the next opportunity to write notes. During the days, there were often times when the shadowed person read something or answered e-mails. These moments were utilised to complete my notes. I strictly adhered to the policy of transcribing my notes at the earliest possible moment, no later than the weekend after the observations. Often, I transcribed (from scribbly notes to a Word document) in the evening after the shadowings.

3.4 Ethical concerns

A shadowing study demands continuous ethical attention and consideration (Czarniawska, 2007). As in any study, the researcher needs to reflect upon the research aim and its potential impact for individuals and society (Spradley, 1980). In shadowing, ethical awareness is required in every phase: the preparations, the fieldwork, the analysis and the reporting of the study.

The most important guiding principle for an ethical shadowing study is, of course, ordinary civility. Contrary to what Czarniawska reports (2007), the persons in my study were patient and always friendly. This may have been because there were natural breaks in the otherwise ‘dawn to dusk and often a little bit longer’ exercise that were taken together with the shadowed persons. In one case, the person I shadowed went away for a daylong meeting in London. At other times, I withdrew for a while to make more detailed notes and to give the shadowed persons a break from being at the centre of attention.

Although ordinary civility appeared easy to uphold, there were dilemmas in the field. In practice, close observation necessitates continuous adjustment. How close can one get to the person that is shadowed? What types of questions can be asked, and how many questions can be asked without disturbing the job that is the object of research? What type of questions should the researcher be prepared to answer about the research?

To maintain formal ethical standards, I followed a guideline that placed emphasis on informed consent, transparency and confidentiality (cf. Silverman, 2011).

3.4.1 Ethical guidelines: informed consent

Silverman (2011) suggests that informed consent is the ethically most critical element in an observation study. In his view, informed consent means

that the person studied is always aware that she is being studied, what the aim of the study is and how the results will be used.

I am confident that I ensured informed consent from the shadowed people for most of the time, but it was not always easy; there were sporadic episodes when clear and unequivocal informed consent could not be obtained. When I observed large meetings, hearings and receptions, I could not always contact the persons to ask for consent to use material or quotes. This problem was solved pragmatically by using the material with extra care and in such a way that no person could be identified. In one case, I forgot to obtain informed consent when it should have been both possible and necessary. The incident was a working meeting of approximately a dozen lobbyists. After approximately 15 minutes, another lobbyist joined the meeting. After another 15 minutes, he saw the recorder on the table, and I realised that I had neglected to ask him. I deleted the recording immediately. Even if he had subsequently given his consent, I did not feel comfortable with material that was recorded without everyone being fully informed. It is possible that the lobbyist would have felt pressured by his peers to consent even though he did not feel comfortable.

Silverman (2011) also recommends process consent, which is consent regarding publishing. This was not possible in this study because not everyone involved in the study can be expected to read the manuscript before publication. There were occasions, however, when someone I shadowed explicitly asked me not to include a certain aspect. Of course, these requests have been respected. I do not believe this approach has altered my results.

3.4.2 Ethical guidelines: transparency

Another ethical tension in the fieldwork involved transparency. Although the person I shadowed knew me as a researcher, it was often a difficult balancing act to determine how to disclose my role to other persons, especially persons I encountered only briefly together with the shadowed person.

The policy I adopted was to be as transparent as possible about who I was and what I was doing in Brussels. Explanations of my role were kept as brief and to the point as possible to avoid interfering with the research situation more than necessary. As explained above, there were episodes when I pushed into a role and decided, in the spirit of ‘pragmatic participation’, to go along with it. For example, in the EP, I was sometimes mistaken for an MEP assistant. People who had seen me earlier in the week

and encountered me without ‘my’ EP gave me messages and papers to hand to ‘my MEP’ (this occurred with MEP 1 and MEP 3). In one case, when I was walking with MEP 1 in the EP, the guards in the EP made sexist comments about the MEP’s ‘new assistant’. MEP 1 was embarrassed, but we tacitly agreed to ignore the issue. As Czarniawska (2007) advises, in many situations, it is better to be smooth and adjust to the situation, even if uncomfortable.

What information to disclose about the research project proved to be a less complicated issue than expected. The problem I anticipated was maintaining balance between transparency and integrity. Although I was conscious of the ethical imperative to inform the shadowed people and other informants about the scope of the research, I was also keen to safeguard the data from being spoiled by telling the shadowed people exactly what I was observing. In the end, the shadowed people were satisfied with far simpler and more superficial explanations than I expected.

3.4.3 Ethical guidelines: confidentiality

Confidentiality involves the importance of respecting the shadowed person’s integrity and the integrity of the organisation. I adopted several policies to ensure confidentiality.

As a rule, episodes and anecdotes from the field are used parsimoniously (i.e., only when and to the degree they are necessary to substantiate my argument). The aim of the study was not to paint a colourful picture of lobbying in Brussels that is rich with gossip and replete with personal details; the aim was to extract generalisations about how lobbying works.

As a second measure to guarantee confidentiality, I personally performed all transcriptions of the recorded material. The only persons who had access to parts of the original field notes were my academic supervisors, who agreed to confidentiality.

Confidentiality in the field was more difficult to achieve. Since Brussels is a surprisingly ‘small world’, the persons I shadowed often knew about each other, and their paths crossed several times during my shadowings. Naturally, I was asked several times whom else I had been shadowing. In the cases where the shadowed already knew about colleagues having been shadowed, I was interrogated about ‘how they work there’. I avoided answering these questions, referring to my ethical guidelines. In two cases, I signed declarations of confidentiality regarding company-confidential information. This did not constitute a problem since that type of detailed information was not intended to be part of the project. The MEPs asked

me kindly to communicate that they opened their offices for me as a researcher.

3.5 From field notes and recordings to text

The overall analytical approach in this study is abductive. This means that it is neither inductive, generating theory from empirical data, nor deductive, testing the theory with the empirical data (Bryman, 2008). The theories worked mainly to provide perspectives and tools to conduct both the observations and the analysis. However, the theories also interacted dynamically with the empirical material (cf. Eriksson, 2003). The final goal was to reach a deeper theoretical understanding of the empirical material. To achieve that, I followed four steps, which were present during the entire research process.

Wodak (2011) rightly notes that an ethnographic study, despite obviously focusing on unique cases,

... should be able to extrapolate from the results the patterns and norms of the object under investigation [...] transcend the anecdotal and lead from the particular to the general (p. 119).

Wodak (2011) understands the ‘general’ in line with the concept of critical realism, which refers to the power and underlying mechanisms that produce a certain phenomenon (Danermark et al., 2002). I will explain in detail how I extrapolated my results and transcended the observed particularities to achieve knowledge and further understanding of how lobbying works.

The observations and interviews resulted in approximately 500 pages of typewritten notes and interview transcriptions. In addition, I possess approximately 52 hours of recorded interviews, workshops and meetings. All recordings have been listened through at least once and most of it has also been transcribed.

How does one make sense out of such a large body of material? There is no easy solution, argue Alvesson and Deetz (2007), but the researcher must keep the reader in mind and avoid accounting for the different directions of the material; the material must be narrowed and condensed.

I handled the material, both notes and transcriptions of interviews (which were always kept separate and marked), in steps (adapted from Eriksson, 2003). The analysis moved from descriptiveness to abstractness and attempts at generating theory (Danermark et al., 2002) about the communicative practice of lobbying.

The first step took place in the field and involved transcription of the field-notes to Word text on the computer. This was usually done each evening after a day with observations. In this process, I added further information about situations and made some initial reflections about what I had actually observed. The observations were clearly differentiated in the text from the interviews and anything that was said by the persons. This distinction was maintained throughout the analysis and is present in the final text in the result chapters below. The analysis grew in line with the previously described ethnographic cycle or spiral and guided the subsequent shadowing. Concretely, I analysed the material in the field, scrutinised the literature for ideas about how to understand it theoretically, and listened and searched carefully for rich points (following Danermark et al., 2002). By doing so, I gradually narrowed the analytical object and came to focus on the interactions.

The second step was to define and divide the material analytically. First, I collated all the notes and transcriptions into one document and attempted a rather open coding (Agar, 1996), sorting the episodes and anecdotes into thematic categories. I began with a unrestrained brainstorm coding that resulted in dozens and dozens of categories in an attempt to classify what I read (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:195). I attempted to narrow and simplify these categories. I noted, for example, that the interaction situations could be defined by their external conditions (e.g., where they were or the topic of the meeting), the internal conditions (e.g., who met who and on what initiative) and the interaction itself in the meeting. I began to rewrite my material from these different perspectives and tried further themes, acknowledging the situations in which I had insights, the rich points (cf. Gobo, 2013:228). Chapter five is mainly a result of this analytical phase. My second activity in this phase was to take one single scene, a lunch meeting, and examine in detail every sentence in this material. In this part, I asked questions of the material that were both abductive and retroductive. For example, I could see that the lobbyists were trying to discursively create a backstage situation, even though everything involved in the meeting (e.g., the room, food, and invitation) and the fact that the meeting was announced as one in a series of similar meetings were signifiers for an onstage setting. I could also see a need to differentiate Brussels. I identified seven angles at different analytical levels. I called these 'Relationships are the capital you accumulate', 'Expertise is the official currency', 'The Dynamics of formality and informality', 'Re-legitimising the lobbyist', 'The Glocality paradox', 'Aligning with the politicians: it's us in

Brussels and them elsewhere' and finally 'The lobbyists as the intermediary between two 'realities''. Starting with these concepts, I re-examined the material to see what made sense. The concepts were re-written and re-worked. Throughout the entire analysis, the observation notes and the statements from the observed and interviewed persons were kept separate. They were also analysed separately insofar as I ensured that the statements in the interviews were treated as part of the impression management just like the acting was. In the finished text, I have attempted to mark as clearly as possible when a quote came from a field note or from an interview.

The third step was specifically an abductive operation. In it I applied theories to my material to gain new understanding and to raise the empirical data to more abstract levels. I could, for example, see how the lobbyists worked with different roles. Another abductive analytical turn was taken when a meeting that seemed to have a certain agenda in reality could be understood in a completely different way. I also approached the material by subjecting it to several analytical questions: what are the assumptions and cultural beliefs, what is happening, and what needs to happen if this is happening. This step bordered and intruded on the next step, the retroduction.

The final, theory-generating part was a thought operation called retroduction. The core idea of this process is to provide knowledge about trans-factual conditions. I asked, 'What are the necessary conditions and fundamentals that make the observed phenomena possible?' (Agar, 1996) or 'What cannot be removed without making the object cease to exist in its present form?' (Danermark et al., 2002). From this theoretical angle, I want to show that the interactions are acted as they are because the lobbyists and politicians are involved not only in the political issue but also in building social standing for both the lobbyist and the politician.

All four steps occurred, but in practice, as I have suggested above, these steps are partly integrated. Some parts of the results are also purely descriptive (chapter 4).

3.6 Quality and critical remarks

The previous pages have attempted to explain the big and small choices that were made to enhance the quality of the study. Some remarks on the classic criteria of quality in research (i.e., validity, reliability and generalizability) are warranted, although it has been questioned whether validity and reliability are applicable to qualitative research (see discussion in

Bryman, 2008). I devote a brief discussion to how they have guided my thoughts.

In a qualitative study, reliability means that the results are consistent and reliable. External reliability means that it should be possible to replicate the study (Bryman, 2008). This is strictly not possible if one means that the researcher who replicates the results should meet exactly the same people, who should say exactly the same things. As Bryman (2008) notes, an ethnographer who wishes to replicate a study can adopt a role similar to the original researcher. Replicability also means that the researcher has as little influence on the field as possible. Concretely, I attempted to act as normally and naturally as possible to make the shadowed persons relaxed and to encourage them to act, to the extent possible, as they would have without me there, although my presence could not be fully ignored. The persons I shadowed admitted to being affected by my presence from time to time, but it is impossible to keep up guard over the course of a week. This guard in itself, when noticeable, is a theme for analysis as it reveals what the persons want to communicate about themselves. Thus, it becomes part of the material analysed in the study.

A more concrete problem is that it might be that people scheduled certain meetings later than when I was there. This is a potential and unavoidable flaw in the research design. Another problem was the self-selection of the shadowed candidates. That certain people refused to be shadowed could suggest a bias towards people who are practicing in a more acceptable way, but this is uncertain. With regard to the interviews, the main approach was to attempt to ask as many four questions as possible (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to avoid guiding the answers. As has been mentioned, the observations had a positive side effect on the interviews. First, we could discuss things in which I had participated, which meant that the interviewee had no ability to twist or change what had happened. There is no need to say things that the researcher will see are not on par with reality during the rest of the shadowing.

Internal reliability involves whether what I have seen and heard would have been seen and heard by someone else (Bryman, 2008). Efforts were made to be as alert as possible during the shadowings, but I also chose to shadow Swedish lobbyists and politicians to enhance the opportunity to understand acoustically what was happening. Of course, they met people who spoke English, which I speak. It was a greater problem when they spoke French, which I do not speak fluently enough to grasp the subtleties of a situation. Luckily, this only happened once in a lunch meeting (in

which the participants spoke English for most of the meeting for my sake) and in official hearings in the parliament, where I could use earphones and receive simultaneous translations into English or, often, into Swedish. Another factor that may have enhanced the internal reliability is that I worked as a public affairs and lobbying consultant for a few years. I was based in Stockholm in the firm EPPA and worked with mostly Swedish clients, but the headquarters of the firm was in Brussels, and we included the Brussels dimension and political reality with our clients. I was not personally involved in lobbying in Brussels, but the experience from the firm and my membership in the European Centre for Public Affairs, attendance at their annual conferences and a two-day course in which the British former MP Tom Spencer and experienced consultant Liz Spencer kindly allowed me to participate gave me a basic understanding of the field. This previous knowledge has helped me to understand things more easily and to adopt the role Agar (1996) favours: the professional stranger. It is also possible that I am biased because of my previous understandings; the danger could be that I would interpret the lobbyists, who technically are my former colleagues, more favourably. A researcher can only remind herself and be attentive to keeping an open mind.

The second classic quality criterion is validity, or the question of whether I studied what I intended to study. Admittedly, it is a difficult question to answer with certainty. I focused my observation on what I understood and what the literature identifies as lobbying at its core: when a lobbyist meets a politician and information is exchanged. I observed all types of meetings and exchanges between the parties, always actively engaging with the question of what else, other than a direct face-to-face-meeting, could constitute lobbying. Of course, it is possible that there was a form of meeting that did not occur during the weeks I performed the shadowing. Additionally, the possibility that 'real lobbying' is taking place elsewhere, such as in e-mails or at a Sunday football match, cannot be discounted. Nevertheless, what I observed took place: people met, and information was exchanged. The best validity in qualitative research, writes Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), is dependent on the craftsmanship of the researcher and her ability to continuously control, question and theoretically analyse the results, and I have attempted to do so at all stages.

Third and last comes the question of generalizability. Can my findings be generalised to apply to lobbying in general, to lobbying in Brussels, or at least to the lobbying practices of a small clique in Brussels, the Swedish? From an empirical point of view, the answer is no. I make no strong

claims of generalising the empirical data I have gathered. I cannot know whether I would have generated other results if I had shadowed other or more people. Yet, it is highly implausible to assume that what I observed are only idiosyncratic rules and habits governing the practice of the lobbyists and politicians I happened to observe. The Swedish corporate lobbyist I observed met people from other countries, from other types of organisations, and from a variety of political parties. At very few points did I sense that the interactants were uncertain or disoriented about how to get along or how to conduct a lobbying meeting. This will be discussed further in the results.

I do make generalizable claims on another level, however. I have made theoretical generalisations of the conditions for lobbying. Bryman (2008) reminds us that the findings of qualitative research should generalise to theory rather than to populations. Similarly Danermark et al. (2002) place generalisation about 'constituent properties':

... generality is not just about – and not even in the first place – empirical regularities. The general must also be sought in the structures making up the constituent properties of social relations (p. 113).

Following the ideas of critical realism, I acknowledge that the conditions of lobbying can be identified and analysed on different analytical levels. In the fourth step of analysis described above, the retroduction, the idea is to identify these premises of the observed phenomena that are generalizable. In this step, I asked the questions about what qualities must exist for lobbying as I observed it to be possible (Danermark et al., 2002). The intention is to reveal organising principles in the meetings between lobbyists and politicians.

An important clarification is that although I claim that the conditions for lobbying that I have identified are generalizable, this does not mean that the conditions are determinations. The rules and the norms can be broken and can change over time. In fact, it is when the rules are broken that the observer can more easily identify their existence.

4. The Brussels factor – everyday life and work

The lobbyists' and politicians' everyday lives and interactions depend on the conditions of where they spend their day. In this first result chapter, I will portray the shadowed persons' everyday lives and outline the organising aspects that impact the interaction between the parties.

The concept of everyday life does not refer to their personal life, although that can be included, but to everyday life in their respective work positions. The arena and the actors are shown and discussed from a descriptive and general perspective with concrete examples from my shadowings and interviews. I will also show how the lobbyists and politicians work together to improve their respective positions. Furthermore, it will be relevant to show what the actors are striving to achieve with regard to their standing in the arena.

4.1 Brussels

Most of the lobbyists, politicians and civil servants have their office locations in a few concentrated city quarters in the EU part of Brussels¹⁶. The people I met and interviewed repeated that Brussels is rather small and that 'it's a fairly closed world here, so you run into each other now and then' (Assistant 2, my translation).

'Political Brussels' is a lively place; there are always things going on. The EP is often crowded with people and different events: exhibitions, hearings, seminars or actions such as petition signing or temporary information desks about some issue. There were several demonstrations outside the parliament building on the square popularly called 'Place Lux', Place du Luxemburg, during my shadowings. One day there was more traffic chaos than usual in the city. I was told that there were 500 farmers' tractors, 800 lorries and 500 taxis blocking the roads in protest. No one I talked to was surprised. It was considered a normal part of Brussels everyday life.

Every evening, it is possible to attend receptions and parties. Almost everyone I interviewed mentioned the receptions as a prominent and im-

¹⁶ Brussels used to have a railway track aboveground going through the city. Since half a century ago, the tracks have been underground, and the old tracks have been the building ground for large administration houses for the EU. Later, older houses near these old tracks were torn down to provide a place for the EU institutions. The modern buildings contrast with the older Brussels houses, creating a rupture in the city that is despised by many of its original inhabitants.

portant part of working in Brussels. They said that it was important to get to know people and that one spend considerable time on social activities, meeting many people. The information exchange that had gone on all day continued at the receptions, including rather formal information on political issues as well as gossip about persons (including private information) and decision procedures. However, most of the people I met said that they attended more events during their first years in Brussels. One of the senior lobbyists stated that he tried to avoid evening receptions and attended lunches or breakfasts instead:

It has shifted and can be seen as part of a health trend: breakfasts have replaced many of the dinners. It is understandable; it doesn't work to go out and drink wine every evening (Lobbyist 6, my translation).

Everyone I talked to attended at least one work-related evening event per week. The younger lobbyists and assistants often met in the evenings for a drink, preferably at Place Lux.

Despite the high level of activity, I occasionally heard that Brussels was apolitical (in a more technical than ideological sense) and therefore boring. For example, one of the MEPs' press secretaries told me she thought Brussels would be more about politics than it actually was. She said that the focus was on the MEPs rather than the political party (Assistant 8). Even in a presentation that an MEP held for people visiting from a Swedish community, the MEP said that EU is more about concrete issues than party politics. Another MEP complained about Brussels-politicians' tendency to prefer technical details to politics (MEP 2). MEPs reframe political issues as technical ones, the politician claimed. Another MEP told a younger MEP that he was 'an immature young man' who was too ideological to see the concrete issues (MEP 1, my translation). I once heard the moderator of a hearing comment pejoratively that the current talk was to be considered technical rather than political. The technocratic character of the EU has been mentioned in previous research. Olsen (2007), for example, writes that the EU has faced criticism for being an 'executive-technocratic project of the elite' (p. 7). Nylander (2000) shows that the European Commission appears completely technical on the surface; yet arguments, in order to be taken into consideration, must fit into the neoliberal ideology.

4.2 The European Parliament

The European administration has a separate building for the different functions. The largest are the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council. Because of the study's design, I visited the European Parliament most frequently.

The first thing that a visitor to the European Parliament notices is an explicit sign of the hierarchy that is prevalent in almost everything in EU administrative affairs. This explicit sign consists of blue carpets in the entrance that marks the entryway for the Parliamentarians, which they can go through alone or with a guest, such as their assistant. The rest of the people entering the parliament, both people working there and guests, must go through other entry points. The entries in the EP are reminiscent of airport security checks, with guards and screenings.

No one can enter the EP without a badge. Lobbyists get their own badges, after a formal administrative procedure that is conducted in advance, which entitle them to enter the building of the EP. Temporary visitors can obtain a visitor's one-day badge, which is only provided by a direct invitation from a MEP. In the latter case, the person must be fetched at the entrance and escorted by the MEP or an assistant¹⁷.

Inside the EP are large areas with open spaces, meeting rooms, cafés and restaurants where it is easy to make spontaneous contact with people. Several people I shadowed did so both with people they knew and people they did not know (whose badges showed who they represented). It is also a good place to be seen. One of my MEPs insisted that we conduct an interview in one of these open places where many people continuously passed by, and lobbyists talk about how important it is to spend time in the EP to be seen as active and interested. The frontstage, except the restaurant during rush hours, is open to everyone with a badge all day long.

Some areas in the EP have restricted access, such as the restaurant during rush hours. There are long corridors with the offices of the MEPs and others, which lobbyists need an invitation from a MEP to visit¹⁸. There are also special meeting rooms with catering service for lunches and dinners.

¹⁷ During my shadowing in the EP, I had a visitor's badge or a MEP assistant badge. The latter allowed me to come and go as I pleased in the EP and enhanced my study because I could explore in the EP before the shadowing day began and after it was over.

¹⁸ When the EP opened in 1979, the corridors were open to lobbyists. However, they were closed because there were too many people in the corridors.

In the plenum, where the voting takes place, the front seats are naturally reserved for the MEPs. Every seat is equipped with a voting panel on which the MEP can log in. There are many rooms for other meetings of different sizes. These usually have one large or small round table. Some of the rooms had cabins for the translators. The largest rooms are similar to the plenum, with a stage with desks for the chairman of the meeting and others. The rest of the seats are arranged in semi-circles. The MEPs sit at the front with their assistants behind them. Once I learned to know and recognise people from different MEP offices, different institutions and lobbyists, I could see that the rest of the administrative staff, personnel of other institutions and lobbyists spread out rather evenly in the other seats. The fact that an outside researcher began to recognise so many people so quickly further adds to the ‘small-Brussels perspective.’ Seats close to the MEPs are connected with prestige in the hierarchy that is always present. I saw the younger lobbyists communicate with each other and show signs of being impressed if someone proudly snatched a seat in the front part of the room.

4.3 Swedes in Brussels

Many, but not all, of the Swedes I encountered disliked Brussels as a city. They complained about the city itself, the culture and especially that people moved in and out at a rapid rate. Many people stay for only a couple of years. Many come for internships and stay only approximately 6 months. One of these internship Swedes stated that she longed for home; Brussels was grey, derelict and boring, she said. She seemed to voice a view shared by the other Swedes with whom she spent her spare time. Another assistant said:

There are many who come to Brussels with a very negative attitude. As a tourist, it is often that you only see the negative side of Brussels – that it is dirty, and it is not! It is simply tough. It's not as socially exciting as many Swedes think it is in Stockholm, for example (Assistant 2, my translation).

Other Swedish conversation partners mentioned the rigid bureaucracy, expensive schools and the ungenerous attitude towards being home with a sick child.

The number of Swedes in Brussels is decreasing. One of the MEPs commented cynically that the exodus is because the first generation of EU Swedes have earned enough money to buy houses back home. Another person mentioned homesickness, as described earlier. A third reason was

suggested by an MEP assistant who believed that Swedes are too narrow minded; they want to remain in tight social circles, which is not the culture in Brussels. However, according to ‘EU-upplysningen’ there are about 1 200 Swedes in Brussels¹⁹.

Many people I met spontaneously made denigrating comments about Swedes in Brussels. Only one person, not a Swede, stated that Swedes were easy to work with since they were unpretentious. My other conversation partners said that Swedes were naïve, unprepared, bad speakers and stubbornly convinced that the Swedish way is the best way and therefore uninterested in listening and learning from others. A lobbyist told me with great irony:

We joined the EU not because we wanted to learn something, but the contrary: the EU should join Sweden. And we went into the union with the back first and looked back to Sweden and said, ‘Oh God, how beautiful everything is, and how we know everything best (Lobbyist 2, my translation).

A woman that Lobbyist 2 and I met just before we sat down for a network meeting suddenly stated, ‘She is flexible as a Dane’. They laughed, and my lobbyist later explained to me that the joke referred to the belief that Swedes are inflexible. A Swedish civil servant I met in the EP lunchroom stated that Swedes are bad at lobbying and that they know little about the EU. She said that they did not understand what power civil servants have. MEP 2, who was at lunch with me, later told me that she was a typical bitter civil servant who thought she had power but was not seen. The Swedes were also considered mild in their lobbying and did not understand how Brussels functions.

These comments, it must be noted, occurred spontaneously without me specifically asking what my conversation partners thought about Swedes in Brussels. Although there may be a bias insofar as people who have strong opinions talk about them (whereas others talk about something else), the general disregard for Swedes should be kept in mind in later chapters.

There are meeting points for Swedes that I heard about but did not frequent myself. For those with children, the Swedish School constituted a natural meeting point, though not all Swedish parents I met had children there. The Swedish representation (part of the Swedish government admin-

¹⁹ <http://www.eu-upplysningen.se/Sverige-i-EU/Svenskar-i-EU/>

istration) organised regular receptions for all the young people who were in Brussels for internships. The assistants mentioned that there were many events for young people in Brussels who were on short, badly paid contracts and wanted to party cheaply. Another meeting point for Swedes that I heard about was a Swedish soccer team that played in a kind of amateur league. Swedish meeting points that I attended were mainly receptions at Swedish organisations.

4.4 The lobbyists

It is difficult to estimate how many Swedish lobbyists there are in Brussels. In July 2013, the transparency register of the European Commission listed 102 organisations with headquarters in Stockholm. Among these were 21 companies or conglomerates, such as 19 trade associations and 34 NGOs. It is interesting to note that the list contains several entries that were misleading; the organisations had registered as something they were not²⁰. Since the register falls outside the scope of this thesis, I refrained from investigating further. It is worthwhile to keep this discrepancy in mind, however, when I later discuss how lobbyists sometimes act under a different title.

4.4.1 Background

Regarding the personality of lobbyists, they were extraordinarily social, well-educated people with pronounced general and conversational knowledge. Other personality traits of the lobbyists, and their expectations and perceptions, will be discussed later; however, a few general remarks are in order here. Previous research has demonstrated that lobbyists tend to have similar backgrounds as politicians (Zeigler & Baer, 1969). Although I did not research the socio-economic background to determine whether this is still valid for Brussels today, I did notice recurrent patterns in the backgrounds of the lobbyists as well as the politicians and their assistants.

Many of the lobbyists I encountered had a political background as assistants to MEPs or had undergone a period of internships or another temporary position in the Commission or another institution. Several people told me this was a common career path: first assistant, then lobbyist. This was the case with two of the four lobbyists I shadowed and several others I met. It was also the case with several lobbyists I encountered in

²⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/info/homePage.do>

other settings and with whom I engaged in informal interviews or chats. The other lobbyists I shadowed looked back on careers as diplomats, as Commission civil servants and as a Corporate Communication manager with a background in civil engineering and as a technical specialist.

4.4.2 The lobbyists' work and networks

The lobbyists' work largely falls into two categories: office work, including writing reports, monitoring, and analysing, and a social part, including meetings, conferences, hearings, seminars, receptions and other events. As I observed earlier, the lobbyists seemed to be extraordinarily social people. From what I could see, the younger lobbyists in particular seemed to be stationed in the EP for a large part of their working day. In addition to the hearings, seminars, conferences and formal meetings, they were encouraged to participate in receptions, parties, and drinks. The drinks often took place at Place Lux, where lobbyists and MEP assistants met. The first lobbyist I shadowed, the youngest one, joked that his boss did not want to see him; he should be out meeting people, not in the office. Naturally, the younger lobbyists found it easier to make contact (and friends) with an MEP assistant since the assistants, in most cases, were also young.

Contacts with politicians were made in a discrete manner when I was present, if at all. Most of my notes about email and phone conversations between lobbyists and politicians were made while shadowing in the politicians' offices.

The meetings during and after work (technically not after work because they are work) in addition to seminars, hearings, conferences and other types of meetings were perfect occasions for exchanges of information. The lobbyists I shadowed exchanged information with other lobbyists and politicians.

4.5 The MEPs

There were 766 MEPs, members of the European Parliament, at the time of shadowing. In 2016, there are 751. They are still elected for a period of five years at a time in direct suffrage by the people in their respective home countries. The MEPs, with a few exceptions, belong to the community of commuters; every week they spend two or three days in Brussels or Strasbourg, unless the week was plenary free²¹ and they stayed in their home countries.

²¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/sv/home.html>

The MEPs I shadowed and the other MEPs I met during the shadowing were all professional politicians; most of their careers were in politics. I was told by lobbyists and politicians (MEPs and assistants) that MEPs are politicians at the end of their career. In contrast, two of the MEPs I shadowed were young. Althaus (2009) confirms that the EP is changing: European national parties used to send their past-their-glory-days political retirees to the EP, but now young career-minded politicians realise that the increasing power of the EP gives them great power.

The MEPs are treated like aristocrats. The blue carpets in the special entries and their right to the seats in the front at any session have been mentioned. In the political work, the MEPs as persons are at the centre rather than the political party. One assistant said explicitly what I had understood from my observations: 'It is the MEP that is in the centre rather than the political party' (Assistant 8, my translation). Van Schendelen (2005a) remarks that MEPs often feel sad and forgotten after their period in Parliament.

It is safe to say, thus, that the MEPs have moved up the ladder of importance in Brussels. In a pan-European trade union meeting that I visited with one of my lobbyists, the woman who gave the introductory speech said that the organisation needs to focus:

... relevant messages, timing/planning, frequency/opportunity and creativity/eye-catching. The time we produced papers is over. We have to do more publications, videos, etc. Earlier, we mostly did deep technical papers for the Commission. Now we have to shorten the papers for the MEPs and get visible. The MEPs read at most 1-2 pages (Woman at a pan-European trade organisation).

4.5.1 The MEPs' working space

The MEPs' everyday life in Brussels was mostly spent in the Leopold, the building of the European Parliament. This is a huge modern building located on the site of a former railway station in central Brussels. It has a central axis with a café where many people pass by to go to the different corridors and meeting rooms. It has one large assembly hall for all the MEPs and several smaller assembly halls and meeting rooms of different sizes with round tables and translation cabins, some with more languages and some with only English, French and German. It has three more cafés, several banks, a bookshop, a supermarket, and a hairdresser.

The MEPs' offices in the parliament building are located in accordance with their political group and nationality. Their corridors are often deco-

rated with posters from events they co-organised with an organisation. The offices are of different sizes depending on the status in the EP. It was not entirely clear how this status was achieved, but one important factor was to be the rapporteur for Commission proposals – and, of course, to be the leader of committees and groups. The normal office, which ‘my’ MEPs enjoyed, had two same-sized rooms with standard furniture, one for the MEP and one for two to five assistants (in 2013, the average was 4.2 assistants per MEP²²). The MEP room had a sofa that could be turned into a bed and a separate bathroom, so they did not have to leave the Leopold even to sleep.

The assistant room was crammed with desks. The more sophisticated offices, which I visited a few times (and which some of the assistants talked about with envy), were larger and had nicer views. The offices were allotted in such a way that the MEPs from the larger parties were closer to the core of the EP. I was told that the MEPs from the new member-states were located in the newest building of the EP, quite far from the centre.

4.5.2 The MEPs’ duties and work

The practical work of the EP is done in the 20 specialised standing committees, each with 25 to 71 full members and an equivalent number of substitutes.²³ The task of the committees is to prepare proposals from the European Commission and present the proposals to the plenary. Each proposal has a rapporteur who acts as a chairman. The rapporteur usually has an assistant, the so-called shadow-rapporteur. Being a rapporteur or shadow-rapporteur was considered prestigious and highly desirable by the people I shadowed.

The level of ambition seemed to vary greatly between the MEPs. Many of the assistants told me that there are MEPs who work very hard and others who do not. They also told me that MEPs who do not seem overly active on the surface (because they spent most of their time chatting with people) could often be those who were most efficient in getting decisions through.

Work in the EP was quite intense during the days the MEP was present. Sometimes, the MEPs I shadowed were triple-booked for voting sessions, meetings, hearings or other events. I did not observe a politician leaving a scheduled lobby meeting of the type that were pre-arranged at the MEP’s

²² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/assistants.html>

²³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/about-committees.html>

office, but this frequently happened during other types of meetings, when the MEP suddenly left to go to the next meeting.

In some cases, I observed that the MEP rushed into a meeting, signed the list stating that he or she was present, and rushed off again. On one occasion, the assistant was standing in a corridor waiting because she knew that the MEP had to pass by between two meetings. She wanted to inform him about his travel home to Sweden that had to be booked earlier than planned. Despite the tight planning, surprisingly few politicians seemed to be ‘multitasking’ when they were in the meetings. The attendants were concentrated and focused when they were there. I rarely saw a computer brought out in meetings.

From what I was told, saw and heard, I concluded that the planning of a politician’s engagement is meticulous but short term. The representatives of the people devote their attention to the issues that are at the top of the agenda. Occasionally when I shadowed in the MEP offices, politicians explained with a sigh that people must understand that they only have time for current issues. The people they want to meet needed to limit themselves to input on issues at the top of the agenda.

The most important function of the MEPs was the previously mentioned role of rapporteur or shadow-rapporteur. The MEPs and assistants talked extensively about the importance of these jobs. The position is awarded by means of a point system and by negotiations in the committee. The role is also used as a tool to discipline the MEPs. One of the assistants told me about a case in which an MEP, a member of one of the large parties, was denied rapporteur status although he should have been awarded the job. The reason, according to the assistant, was that the MEP did not always follow the party line and therefore was punished. The report from the rapporteur contains amendments and suggestions that the MEPs vote on. Before the voting, considerable effort is spent on drawing up voting lists. Each party-group decides internally how it wants to vote. The list helps the individual MEPs; since there are so many issues to vote on, it is impossible to have an informed opinion on every issue and every amendment.

The political game, which might be termed ‘negotiation’ or ‘intrigue’, is everyday practice of course. Research suggests that this is no different in private organisations. For an outsider to the political game with an understanding of politics rooted in democracy theory, however, the amount of politicking or micro-politics made a strong impression. During the field phase, there was a letter from an MEP to all other MEPs in which the

author urged his/her colleagues to be united on a certain question because the EP wanted to strengthen its position towards the other institutions. The insight for me, which is also important for the observation of lobbyist-politician interactions, was that there is an inside game; things are done to strengthen the Parliament's own position in relation to other institutions. This part of the political work is not concerned with the issues *per se* but with the power relations between the institutions.

The MEPs have an office budget that they can spend as they deem fit for support of different kinds or to employ assistants. One MEP financed research projects at home in Sweden, for example. All the MEPs I met relied on a couple of assistants. Most assistants appeared to be generalists within the areas that were of special interest to the MEP, whereas others were focused on media relations. The MEP, especially in the role of a rapporteur, also enjoys the support of the civil servants in the EP. Regarding the budget, it should be noted that the MEPs spent considerable time with their personal economics. They had to queue in person to have their travel expenses and other expenses reimbursed; this event was popularly called the 'gold rush'.

The MEPs also received a rather generous budget to entertain party members and other visitors on study visits in Brussels. These visits were considered quite important, and it seemed that MEPs prioritised talks with visitors despite their tight schedules.

The work of the MEP follows a yearly rhythm with plenary sessions (usually held in Strasbourg), committee work, political groups and external work, which means meeting voters in the home countries. Some days are reserved for Conciliation committees (to dissolve disagreements between the Council and the EP after the second reading of a proposal) and, less frequently, elections.

4.5.3 Contacts and networks

The political work included a great deal of services, favours and favours in return. Private and official roles were somewhat combined. For reasons of integrity, I will not dwell on details here, although nothing I observed was illegal. What remains is the marked feeling that obligations play a vital role. I sensed that my MEPs felt obligations towards other MEPs who had done them favours and, conversely, that others felt obligations towards them.

A great deal of the contact occurred through emails. The MEP and the assistants had a joint address, or the MEP and the assistants had individu-

al addresses but the assistants partly took care of the MEP's address as well. There were hundreds of emails every week. While we were in the office, both MEPs and assistants complained about the large amount of emails. At 13:35 on a Monday, an assistant informed me that they had received approximately 70 emails so far that day. Another assistant told me on a Wednesday at 11:15 that they had already received 100 emails that day. He admitted that he deleted 80 on the spot. The other MEPs and assistants also told me that they deleted many emails, often without opening them; it is impossible to read them all.

The principle for determining which emails to keep and which to delete was unfortunately difficult to observe, but I gathered some clues. One day a newly arrived intern, who came in after me, was put in front of the computer. He had no previous experience with political work. His instructions were to look through the inbox of the joint email account, go through the emails and only save the correspondence that 'seemed interesting'. He received no further instructions. After a while, he found an email from another politician and asked if he should save it. The answer was that he should save all emails from other politicians. One of the MEPs stated that he had 'some experience' now to determine what was worthwhile to read. His assistant stated that he sorted the email according to sender and topic. He accepted invitations from 'good' MEPs because that provided a good debate; his acceptance meant that he or one of the three assistants would be there. Another assistant said that he kept emails from Swedish organisations they sympathised with and other things that seemed interesting, such as universities and environmental institutes.

The content of the emails were often internal documents for the EP, such as voting lists, reminders about meetings and events and other internal affairs in the EP. The MEPs and their assistants also expressed, rather generally, that they received many lobbying e-mails, also referred to as 'lobby invitations.'

Another specific genre of contacts and networking was the general visibility work. The MEPs I shadowed invested considerable time, according to their own accounts, in being visible at home in Sweden. They all talked about how they visited schools and spoke at events and meetings. Coincidentally, one of my observed MEPs participated as a guest speaker in a EU-focused event I visited in Sweden a few months after my observations.

The MEPs also received resources for study visits. Each MEP receives funding for 100 visitors each year (300 euro per person). The visitors I met came from the political party of the MEP, from community groups

and school classes. From what I saw, it seemed that the MEPs placed high importance on the visitors. Although they were fully booked, they took the time to talk to the visitors.

The MEPs also attended meetings and events of different types, such as hearings, seminars and dinners, often with lobbyists present. Chapter 5 will be devoted to the different forms of meetings with lobbyists.

Events in general were an important contact and networking platform. It seemed to be high status to chair an event together with a prestigious lobbyist. The MEPs and their assistants told me that they gladly held events with what they perceived as good organisations. Sometimes the MEP added some of his or her budget to the event, but mostly they were financed by the lobbyists. The MEP chairing an event is also used as a quality seal or the reason to attend. MEP 1, who was very sceptical about a dinner he was invited to, attended because he felt obliged to the MEP chairing the event – a nice and smart woman, according to the MEP. Some hours before the dinner, the hosting MEP e-mailed MEP 1 a reminder about the dinner. When the assistants subsequently talk about the events, an important measure of quality is how many MEPs were present.

4.6 The assistants

The working conditions for the assistants, their backgrounds and tasks differed considerably. There are assistants who are fresh out of university, such as the intern who was tasked with screening e-mails. At the other end of the qualification scale, there are senior people who seem to run a major part of the MEP's work rather independently. One example of a senior assistant was shown in a lobby meeting that I attended with a lobbyist. When we arrived together with a colleague who had flown in from Stockholm for the occasion, it became clear that the MEP would not be present, only the assistant. When my lobbyist subtly expressed disappointment, there was no explanation or apology; the assistant took for granted, it seemed, that he was as good as his MEP for the purpose of the meeting.

As a rule, the assistants talked about their job as a springboard to other jobs. One of the assistants I met had been an assistant for a few years, but he told me that he was rare in that way: most people only stayed 1.5 to 2 years. Some say that the work is just too intense to stay longer.

As mentioned, the MEP receives a budget from which to cover the salary for assistants. The political parties sometimes paid for the assistants, and sometimes they were not paid at all but were attached as unpaid interns. In one case (told in interview, not shadowed) there was an embed-

ded lobbyist, an assistant paid for by a lobbyist. The assistant worked at the MEP for a limited time devoted to a certain issue. I heard that this practice was not uncommon, and I was given several examples.

The life and work of the assistant seemed quite intense. All of them told me that they took part in many more parties and receptions at the beginning of their stay in Brussels. Many parties with free or cheap food and drinks are arranged for assistants, especially interns, who are often in Brussels on a low salary. Although the intensity drops once they have been in Brussels for a while, most of the assistants seem to participate in at least some evening event every week—at least a drink at Place Lux. When the assistants talked about their friends and spare time activities, it was clear that they spent considerable time with other assistants and with people working in different organisations as well as lobbyists. Assistant 5 reflected on her relation with lobbyists but did not perceive it as a problem. She felt she was working together with the lobbyists against other parts of political Brussels. Sometimes though, she added, it could be difficult when one was invited to coffee with someone who was both a friend and a lobbyist. At these times she felt a bit suspicious sometimes, she added, and wonders what the person really wants.

Place Lux was the place to meet, especially for the younger lobbyists and assistants. One of the assistants told me that it is a place where people go to make contacts and to search for a job in Brussels. One evening, when I accompanied one of the lobbyists I shadowed to Place Lux, we met a young man who appeared to be an acquaintance of ‘my’ lobbyist. He was currently unemployed and seeking a position. One assistant, who emphasised the importance of maintaining a private life and spending time at home, noted,

Assist. 5: It can be fun to go down to Place Lux and talk a bit on a Friday evening or early Friday evening and of course, then you can talk work and hang out with colleagues.

C: Whom do you meet there?

Assist. 5: Maybe you call someone in the house that you haven’t seen for a while and then you go down together, but you always bump into maybe 20 persons that you know just by walking around down there. You know that on Friday evening everyone is down there and I think many lobbyists, many organisations. They make sure to be there because it is a good gathering place.

I will return to this interview later because the assistant shared some interesting facts and insights with me on interactions with lobbyists during these events.

An important part of the assistant's job is to handle the system in the EP that is perceived as nontransparent and difficult. Most of the assistants' work consisted of reading reports and other material, writing reports and maintaining contact with internal (EP) and external actors (lobbyists and others). They also needed to perform administrative tasks of different types, which were often tricky. It seemed necessary to develop some 'street-smartness'. The assistants told me that it was difficult to handle the system but that there was always someone to call who could give advice on how to do things and how to pass through the system more quickly in the EP administration. One of the assistants had a thick binder with information on several practical aspects of her job, such as how to understand the legislative process, how to book a room for a dinner or how to organise an event. Knowledge about how to get around in the EP was highly desired in the private arena. The assistants were continuously courted by private companies that were in need of their expertise.

4.7 The lobbyists' and the politicians' shared loneliness

Many politicians and lobbyists feel lonely and frustrated with and in Brussels. In my opinion, this is highly important. Shared conditions tend to create bonds between parties and, as Goffman argues, can lead to a team feeling (Danermark et al., 2002:113).

Brussels, as a workplace and as an organisation, frustrated them, and many aired their concerns with the dirty work they witnessed. People talked about Brussels as if it were a creature of its own with natural laws people do not like but cannot change. One assistant I met quite frequently during one of the shadowing weeks announced one day that he was returning to his home country immediately. The recent head of state that I met at a reception one evening expressed the strongest opinion, saying, 'Brussels is a bad, bad place. I know'. He said it with a low and dark voice and sad eyes. I asked if we could meet one day for an interview so he could explain further what he meant, but he implied that this was as much as he could say officially and that he had no time for interviews. However, he made it clear to me that there are dirty and shady practices in the political life in Brussels, that they repulsed him, and that he was relieved not to be on centre stage anymore. Lobbyists told me how difficult it was to re-

cruit people to work in Brussels as people are sceptical. Friends ask how Brussels is, he said, and people make pejorative comments (Lobbyist 24).

The lobbyists' frustration also came from the relations with their respective home organisations (i.e., the company or the party). They felt that the home office neither comprehended nor appreciated the importance of their work in Brussels. Some expressed their frustration in diplomatic language, but most stated it in a direct and undiplomatic fashion. The lobbyists felt 'squeezed', pressured and lonely. They are not let in to the political rooms where the decisions are made, but they are also the odd ones out regarding the home organisation. The people at home, one lobbyist explained, would sigh when they heard who it was (Lobbyist 1). He said that he understood why: when he called, it always meant work. For some of the lobbyists, the telephone call to the headquarters was a daily duty.

Like the lobbyists, the MEPs complained about contacts back home in Sweden. A common complaint was that people did not really understand what they were doing in Brussels. Without saying it explicitly, the MEPs hinted that people at home did not understand how important the work in Brussels was and the impact it had. The difference for the lobbyists, however, was that the MEPs were not targeting the complaints directly to their own organisation or party. 'People' referred to the political arena as well as news media and the population in general. There seemed to be a general discomfort about the ignorance at home with regard to the work of MEPs and European institutions.

The most important point is that both lobbyists and politicians feel loneliness and frustration. Both groups feel, to state it metaphorically, as if they are dropped into a jungle of affairs that are ill comprehended and underappreciated by their home organisations. It is plausible, therefore, that something resembling a team feeling uniting politicians and lobbyists (and especially assistants) develops (Goffman, 1990/1959). It is an important characteristic of Brussels that the human dividing line, 'we in Brussels' vs. 'they at home', cuts across the systemic dividing line of lobbyist vs. politician. Interestingly, there seems to be another dividing line that unites some politicians and some lobbyists even further: the division between 'us' vs. 'the system', as a quote from an interview with an MEP assistant illustrates:

It is difficult, (sniffs and squirms) – hmmm, because I have many friends also working for [organisations in Brussels] and so here in town... I of course got to know them pretty well, and I think, I mean, they are some of my best friends too. And it is precisely because we have the same interests and are

working with the same questions...I do not feel that we are so different. It does not feel as if we are in different directions, but it feels rather as if they are our allies in the fight against other parts of this Parliament (Assistant 5, my translation).

Teams of friends united by issues, in other words, run political affairs and make things happen – at least sometimes against the system. Team members help each other, and all of this is very natural. Tracing Goffman's (1990/1959) concept of the team further sheds light onto other, less innocent and rather undesirable consequences. Goffman writes, for example, that team members who cooperate in the performance of a routine will become dependent on each other; they will become 'accomplices', to use Goffman's term. The jointly undertaken work forces the team members to define each other as initiated, and it is no longer necessary to uphold the façade towards the initiated. A familiarity is built within the team:

Among members of the team we find that familiarity prevails, solidarity is likely to develop, and that secrets that could give the show away are shared and kept (Goffman, 1990/1959, p. 238).

4.8 The joint work of improving positions

Lobbyists and politicians functioned as a team and worked together to improve their respective position. It was necessary for lobbyists and politicians to legitimise their work in Brussels to their colleagues as well as to the so-called other side. The lobbyists wanted to show the politicians that they could be counted on, whereas the politicians wanted to show the lobbyists that they had power. Furthermore, both lobbyists and politicians had a need to legitimise their work to their home organisations, as described in 4.7. In general, in lobbying and political work, the higher the social standing, the easier the next issue is to work with. Thomas (2004) has provided examples of dentists and students and the difference in the amount of work they need to put into their campaigns. Compared to the students, the dentists do not have to do much work with their campaigns because their status is already established. Zeigler and Baer (1969) wrote:

... the overriding importance of the source of the communication means that an interest group can exercise influence in the legislative process regardless of the activities of its lobbyists. The greater the extra legislative resources of the interest group, the less important the job of the lobbyist.

The influence of a particular, thus, reflects the structure of the power in a particular political system (p. 203).

In the same way, I argue that much of the work the lobbyists, and the politicians, do in Brussels is to keep the channels open and to improve their social positions.

What do the actors consider a high position or high standing? For the politicians, a tangible achievement was to become rapporteur. The rapporteur was the MEP in charge of preparing legislative proposals arriving from the European Commission. The MEP was in charge of writing the report and, in simple language, to address the other politicians on the concrete parts of the legislation so that the proposal would be voted for in the Parliament. The negotiations between the institutions are on-going during the process of drafting legislation, from the first green book to the finished and implemented legislation. The rapporteur is, in other words, working with the finalisation of a work that often has been ongoing for many years, maybe even before the MEP was in office. As a side remark that will be discussed in the conclusion of the thesis, one should keep in mind that although the MEP might encounter the issue at hand for the first time, there might be lobbyists who have followed the process from the first drafts of the green book to the report the MEP is about to write. Such a person is, of course, important for the MEP to obtain personal insights into the process of what has happened along the way, which obstacles appeared, and which difficulties were solved so previous mistakes are not made again and so an agreement can be made for which as many parties as possible are content with the new legislation.

Good contacts were important for both actors. Both lobbyists and MEPs stated in interviews that it was important to be seen with the right people. It was important for the lobbyists to tell people in Brussels that they had contacts directly with the CEO at home, and it was important to tell their CEO that they had contacts high up in Brussels. The superior of Lobbyist 1, for example, told me that she sometimes invited MEPs for lunches where the only purpose was to show the colleagues at the headquarters (in Stockholm) that she had good contacts in Brussels. It was also important for the MEP to show good contacts with lobbyists, both NGOs and different-sized firms. The large companies could provide resources for events, and the NGOs had social capital many actors wanted to share. One day, MEP 2 saw that the two people we shared an elevator with in the EP were from a well-known NGO. He asked for their cards and if they

could possibly meet one day. The NGO people gave him their cards and responded in a friendly but a slightly hesitant way. I was later told in interviews that NGOs are in high demand by the MEPs for cooperation, but it is difficult to get access to them because everyone wants to work with them.

The younger lobbyists and assistants felt frustrated in many ways. Young assistants talked to me about the dirty game in which they did not want to participate. Some of them communicated to me that they felt that they were the ones doing the real affairs of actually conducting politics and concretely writing suggestions for new laws and regulations. Of course, they were often the ones with the hard work of analysing texts and finding information. Many told me that they felt like the MEPs were only in Brussels for the show. The word 'show' was used by many of the younger lobbyists and assistants. The assistants in an MEP office I visited on a Monday said that the MEP would come the next day, and then it was show time. A lobbyist told me that when he needed to meet MEP assistants, he usually booked a meeting with the MEP first as a polite gesture, discussed with him, and then discretely asked the assistant for a meeting where they could do the real work.

I have no reason to believe that the MEPs' work was just a show, nor do I believe that it was as easy as Lobbyist 1 suggested for him to have a meeting with an MEP as a façade. What remains as fact is the despair and need for the young lobbyists and assistants to mock and belittle the work of the MEPs. This is probably typical of any workplace where the power distribution, at least on paper, is skewed and there is a need for teamwork across the borders between private and public, all meeting at Place de Lux in the evening to talk about the day's affairs. They also needed to demonstrate their good contacts to me as a researcher, I presume, because these contacts were the central system of their work.

Only a person who is well connected can obtain the most important assets: information and insights into the political processes. A person who is well connected can also make things happen because there are budgets (from the NGOs and especially the larger forms and trade associations) for seminars and to invite good speakers. In the best of worlds, according to the MEP assistant referred to in Chapter 7, the lobbyists prepare everything for a seminar, and the MEP only has to sign some lists (Assistant 7). The status of contacts was apparent in conversations in which people gladly talked about their contacts. Status from having the right contacts and showing yourself active could also be seen in the posters in the corri-

dors, in which the MEPs posed together with different types of organisations, mementos of previous seminars and events in the EP.

Among the lobbyists, showing off good contacts was used as a door opener for the lobbyist to perform what he considered the actual job. Lobbyist 6 told me in an interview that when he encountered problems meeting certain people, he attempted to invite the CEO to Brussels as a door opener. He would invite the CEO as a speaker to some larger event and book 3-4 meetings. The lobbyist would brief the CEO, who would introduce the meeting before the lobbyist took over.

As efficient a technique as this might be, some seemed to see through the ritual and viewed it as counter-productive. Lobbyist 2 said that he had stopped using CEOs as door openers because he wanted to save the CEOs' time and because he felt he had to be careful with his contacts in Brussels. He said that you had to have a case when you were there. The comment from Lobbyist 2 makes sense based on what I have noted above about how lobbyists invite people to different types of meetings and use an issue to ensure that the meetings are framed as 'efficient political work' and not just a nice lunch or a social chat. We can see how Lobbyist 6 did just this with his CEO: he framed the CEO's Brussels visit in terms of having him speak at a large event.

I have not yet touched upon the most obvious resource of all: information. Information is what is normally considered the lobbyists' resource in the lobbying literature. Stories were traded around in Brussels. An important aspect of the traded information was the stories. Some politicians talked about how important stories were for them and lobbyists also talked about how good stories from them were used by politicians. In my observations, I heard many stories told by lobbyists, then retold by politicians. Once I was in a lobby meeting in the morning where the lobbyists related a certain story. A couple of hours later, I visited an internal working group committee with my MEP, and he retold the story. On other occasions, lobbyists told me in interviews about the success of their stories. For example, one lobbyist was pushing a security issue that she wanted to have voted through. There was resistance, but she managed to have a video made showing the consequences if this special security issue was not voted for. The video was shown to a member of the Council, who immediately asked her to join and show the video to her colleagues in the Council. She did so, and shortly after, the new law was voted for.

4.9 Summary

I have shown that everyday life and work in Brussels involves continuous information exchange from morning to evening in formal meetings, informal receptions and even more informal drinks. Lobbyists, MEPs and assistants live and work in Brussels in rather similar conditions except for the aristocratic treatment of the MEPs. Naturally, lobbyists and politicians, especially the MEP assistants and the younger lobbyists, are not only colleagues in the wider Brussels work but also private friends.

Many actors spent a short time in Brussels. There was a core of joint knowledge about how to get around and how to understand the system that was generally discussed, gossiped about and shared. The decision procedures in the EU are complex, both on paper and in real life, with documents moving between institutions and different procedures. The actors spend considerable amounts of time to understand the politics of the different issues, including the political content itself as well as who thought what and who did what. The need for up-to-date information for all parties should be kept in mind during the forthcoming chapters.

I also remind the reader of the loneliness among lobbyists and politicians. This is a unique work situation, and I have attempted to capture the essence of their situation. Both groups felt misunderstood and not fully respected in their respective home organisations.

Finally, the lobbyists do not only share a working situation; they also work together to improve their working situation. My observations showed that the lobbyists and the politicians worked together to enhance their standing in Brussels and in relation to their home organisations.

5. The encounters: traits, norms and organisation

In this chapter, I begin to examine the organising principles involved in the encounters between politicians and lobbyists in detail. I consider when they meet and talk, what types of meetings take place and how these meetings are organised. Based on the aim of my thesis, I include all the observed interactions between lobbyists and politicians. The analysis is organised around seven characterising elements of these meetings: the setting of the meeting (i.e., the physical space); who takes the initiative and organises the meeting; whether the meeting is scheduled; who takes part in the meeting; how the interaction is organised in the meeting (e.g., who is speaking, who is asking questions); how long the meeting is; and whether there is a specific issue that is discussed in the meeting.

I use three different concepts to capture the situations when lobbyists meet: setting, encounter and meeting. The setting is the physical space, the scenery, in which the actors meet. Different settings can have different influences on an interaction and can be identified as socially and culturally embedded situations in both time and space. Settings both provide and restrict the opportunities and circumstances for lobbyists and politicians to meet (cf. Goffman, 1990/1959). When a politician and a lobbyist chat during a coffee break in the course of a public hearing, the public hearing/coffee-break-room is the setting and the actual talk is the encounter. The encounter between a lobbyist and a politician is defined as demanding both persons' attention to each other or, in Goffman's (1961b) words, 'when people effectively agree to sustain for a time a single focus of cognitive and visual attention' (p. 7). The people must actually talk or communicate in another way that is clearly directed at each other, such as if one party hands a stack of paper to the other party and they nod in agreement. The encounters can have an audience, either invited or uninvited, that listens unintentionally or intentionally to the conversation. The term 'meeting' is used more generically in this text to describe a situation in which two people meet.

I have identified seven different types of meetings that share characteristics: office meetings, hearings and seminars, demonstrations, network meetings, conferences, meetings in the corridor and receptions and drinks. Each of these will be discussed in a subchapter below.

5.1 Office meetings

Typically, this type of meeting takes place in the MEP's office. This is the type of meeting lobbyists and politicians mentioned to me when I asked about the typical lobby meeting. It is also the type of meeting that seems to be strictest with regard to the seven different aspects I address. The setting of office meetings was the MEP office, a small room nearby or, as in one observed situation, in a special lobby room in the EP.

The meetings were all booked beforehand. The lobbyists took the initiative in all these meetings. From what I could see and hear from the lobbyists and politicians, the normal procedure was to send an e-mail with a request for a meeting regarding a certain issue, make a phone call and then send a reminder close to the actual meeting time. The previous chapter discussed the assistant who was asked to sort incoming e-mails according to vague criteria of importance to Sweden. If the issue was not of immediate and clear relevance to the MEP, a common way that the lobbyists attempted to have the email read by the MEP's office was to send the e-mail in the native language of the MEP. This means that the consultancies employed persons with the various native languages with which they needed to interact. The sending of a confirmation message prior to the meeting was something I was personally made aware of in the study. I booked one of the MEP shadowings with the MEP himself a couple of months before the shadowing was to take place. On the Friday before the shadowing was to take place, I bumped into the MEP by coincidence while I was doing other shadowing work for this thesis. Although we had not met previously, I introduced myself. However, when I remarked that we would meet soon, he told me that he thought our meeting was cancelled because I had not confirmed the shadowing between the agreement and this day. He was not keen to take me in, but ultimately I was allowed to conduct the shadowing. There was only one office meeting in which the initiative came from the lobbyist but the lobbyist used someone else (here, an MEP) to organise the meeting.

The office meeting was organised as an exchange between one or two lobbyists and the MEP. Sometimes the MEP had one of his assistants in the meeting, but only if it was clear that the assistant was an expert on the issue that was to be discussed. The lobbyists, too, sometimes brought a consultant or adviser. On one occasion, a civil servant from the EP was present who worked on the issue that was discussed. Only people who were invited by the participants took part. No formal notes or records for

filing in the EP or elsewhere in the European institutions were made from the meetings.

With a few exceptions that I will discuss, the office meetings took place at the desk of the MEP with the MEP and assistant on one side and the lobbyists on the other. If the lobbyists had an accompanying consultant with them or, as in one case, an accompanying civil servant of the parliament, that person sat on a sofa close to the desk so the lobbyist would see him or her if the lobbyist turned slightly to the left. The three MEPs I shadowed all had the same furnishing and layout of their offices. Two meetings took place outside the office setting, but they shared all other characteristics except for the numbers of people present.

One was a lunch meeting, and the other was a dinner. The lunch meeting was the only meeting that took place outside the EP. The rationale for meeting there was that the organisation, which was a public organisation, had a new office, and they invited all Swedish MEPS and their assistants, one party at a time. MEP 2 and his fellow party MEP said that they had to go because the other parties were going. To make the meeting more formal, there was an agenda and a topic for the meeting. In this case, the topic was decided by the MEPs based on a request from the lobbyists for their 'wish topic.' Thirteen people were present at this meeting. The second meeting, which differed in size, was notable because it featured participants from a large number of organisations. At the dinner were one MEP (two, at the beginning), civil servants and people from NGOs, for a total of approximately 30 people. The only people who spoke during the dinner were the lobbyist who presented his case and MEP 1, who listened most of the time. MEP 1 was the rapporteur on the issue that the lobbyist wanted to influence. This meeting differed greatly in length from the other meetings. It began with a reception that was prolonged while we all waited for the MEP who was hosting the dinner. The presentation was approximately one hour long.

All meetings, except the two meetings that took place outside the office settings, lasted exactly 30 minutes. The rule of 30 minutes is taken for granted by all actors and was observed in the meetings in the MEP office as well as in the one meeting that took place in one of the café's in the EP building. There seems to be no need to remind others of the time limit. In one meeting, the assistant began the meeting on time and excused the absence of the MEP, saying that he would be there in 10 minutes; they completed the meeting together during the last 20 minutes. There were only two occasions on which the 30-minute rule was mentioned. One was a

meeting at which the MEP apologised at the beginning for having to leave after 20 minutes while ensuring the lobbyist that the assistant would be on hand to conduct the meeting until the end.

Office meetings were further characterised by the fact that there was an issue, a topic and agenda that were agreed upon beforehand. As mentioned, the topic had to be exactly within the interests of the politician and presented during the window when the MEP was working with the issue. Lobbyist 3 told me about a specific MEP who:

... is not interested in environmental issues that will be on the agenda in some months. The closer in time, the more interested he will be. You have to make sure not to talk about other things than what is here and now. They have a high tempo (Lobbyist 3, my translation).

In most meetings, the lobbyists also argued their cases in a straightforward way. Two meetings were notable. In both cases, the MEP and the MEP assistant were unsure about the lobbyist's specific issue for the meeting before the meeting took place, which created clear distress among them. Neither was keen to go to the meeting, although they felt obliged to. In the first case, MEP 2 met three lobbyists from an NGO. MEP 2 told me about their topic, but the ultimate rationale for the meeting, he said, was that they 'work with the same consultancy at home, [and] I usually meet them when they have representatives visiting Brussels' (MEP 2, my translation). The lobbyists in question were not very familiar with the EU. It seemed that they had neither been in the EP nor met MEP 2 previously. A marker of their novice status was that the MEP explained to them what everyone else knew: the time was limited to 30 minutes. Although they were a specific NGO and the topic was given, there was neither a specific issue nor specific timing. The lobbyists even asked in the meeting whether the MEP knew whether something was coming up on the topic soon in the EP. There was not, so the MEP took the opportunity to pledge their help to lobby in Stockholm and gave concrete advice on how to do so. In the middle of the meeting, the lobbyist, slightly nervously, mentioned what seemed to be the main reason they were there: they wanted to organise an event together. The structure of this meeting, with the MEP giving lobby advice and the idea of organising 'something together', will be discussed later. The important point here is that this meeting differed from the other meetings because no direct issue of immediate concern was discussed.

The other meeting without a clear issue was a meeting between a lobbyist and a MEP assistant. It had all the characteristics of an office meeting

except for the issue and the setting. The lobbyist addressed her issue of concern in the meeting request, and the assistant decided to hold the meeting outside the office. The issue was not one of immediate concern but was a long-term issue. They met in one of the cafés in the EP, ‘The Mickey Mouse’ café, named for its colourful chairs. There was small talk while queuing for coffee, which was a marked difference from a formal office meeting. The meeting still lasted exactly 30 minutes. During the meeting (and based on an interview with the lobbyist at a later point), I understood that the lobbyist’s main aim was to obtain a co-operative partner to perform events in the EP. The lobbyist asked the assistant about how this worked, and at the end of the meeting, she asked whether they could do something (meaning an event in the EP) together. They decided to keep in touch. The assistant told me that people often contacted her just to have a coffee and chat:

I mean, it does not hurt to drink a cup of coffee with someone and talk, and it can be that you get something out of the conversation for yourself too, or you just had a nice half-hour meeting with a nice person and so be it (Assistant 5, my translation).

A dinner meeting had a current issue and a topic perfectly timed for MEP 1, who was the rapporteur on the issue. Nevertheless, MEP 1 felt reluctant to go. He told me that the reason was that he disliked the lobbyist’s preferred solution: ‘I don’t believe in the solution the lobbyist proposes,’ he said to me the day before the meeting. The reason he went was because another MEP was hosting the meeting, and he felt that he owed this MEP to do what she suggested. He said that he greatly respected the MEP and talked about her only using her given name, implying that they knew each other quite well.

The interaction was organised for the MEP to become informed and for the lobbyist to inform. The majority of these meetings took place in the MEP’s office, where he or she was in charge of the situation. The MEP had the right to ask questions. When a lobbyist asked questions in office meetings, it was always briefly and with a nervous tone and seemed to be out of politeness rather than real interest in the question. This is quite contradictory because it seemed that the lobbyists would have pleased the MEPs most if they had not asked questions at all. It is possible that the courtesy familiar in more equal relations (where it is polite to show interest by asking questions) weighs more strongly and is an attempt to break through the EP norm. In one situation where one lobbyist asked a rather

challenging question, the MEP was clearly annoyed and began to argue against the lobbyist, something that did not often happen (MEP 3).

The organisation of the interactional roles was clarified in the two meetings in which the order was disturbed and the MEP (or MEPs, as in the second case), signalled annoyance. The first meeting was the one at which the civil servant was present. The civil servant was working together with MEP 1 on a case for which the MEP was the rapporteur. In this office meeting, the civil servant came to the meeting with the lobbyists, sat on the same side of the table as the lobbyists, and communicated (with nods of approval) that he was on the side of the lobbyists. The lobbyists took greater liberties in this meeting. The atmosphere was tough and even aggressive. On one occasion, one of the two lobbyists was provoked by the MEP and put a hand on the table to lean even further over the table and stared aggressively on the MEP while talking. The MEP answer back with the same threatening behaviour of leaning forward and then the lobbyists sat back again in his chair and became more calm.

The second meeting in which the discursive order was disturbed was a lunch meeting. The MEPs and the assistants were already annoyed before they went to the meeting. I understood that one reason was that they all felt obliged to go, which took considerable time. As mentioned, this was part of a series in which all MEPs and their colleagues were invited, which created pressure to attend. They also went outside the building and were received in the offices of the lobbyists. A meeting with so many attendees held at a location other than the EP was a step outside the norms of politician-lobbyist meetings. Goffman (1990/1959) draws attention to the fact that the stationary part of the façade is an important part of the performance and makes the home team (in their own office or a place they have chosen) stronger and more self-assured. This effect also applies to the lobby dinners. It also had another MEP as a host, which made the lobbied MEP a guest both to the lobbyist and to the other MEP, who he talked about as an esteemed colleague and equal. One might ask whether the outcome of this dinner would have been different if they had met alone in the office of the MEP, if the lobbyist could have arranged such a meeting.

Office meetings have strict rules for how they are conducted. A final example emphasises the consequences when the rules are not followed. At a lunch meeting, the lobbyists clearly failed to uphold and follow the expectations with regard to how to behave. There was annoyance at the meeting that seemed to have both with the actual content or issue and with the organisation of the meeting and behaviour in the meeting. In the

lunch meeting, the politicians were allowed to choose an issue in advance. The politicians wanted to discuss a certain issue that they knew the organisation was quite familiar with, and one of the assistants was in charge of preparing questions. The lobbying organisation brought two experts from Stockholm for the meeting. Soon, it was clear that the invited representatives were not genuine experts and could not answer all of the assistant's questions. This provoked the assistant, who, in turn, provoked one of the experts. As a result, the expert began to question the politician's views and to argue against them. The people in the room grew increasingly tense, and the situation became awkward. The lobbyist who was chairing the meeting attempted to ease the situation by being cheerful but failed to end the meeting on a positive note.

After the meeting, MEP 2 said:

Unfortunately, that's the way it is. I think it is remarkable; here you meet Swedes, [and] they know exactly who we are. We are normal, mortal people like they are. If such a meeting had been held home in Sweden with some parliamentarians or community politicians, it would have been something completely different. However, now we are in Brussels, and I and X (his Swedish party MEP colleague) are EU parliamentarians. It immediately becomes stilted ('stylta till det' in Swedish) and as formal and stiff and inefficient, I think, as they do down here according to the French model (MEP 2, my translation).

I asked him why he thought they acted like this. He answered:

I think it is a bit of showing respect from their side or civility or whatever you call it. And maybe they think that we are expecting that's how it works in the EU parliament and that we would sulk if we didn't get such treatment. I just think that you lose 20-25 per cent of the meeting... in formalities. And when you have one hour and 20 minutes, then I don't think you have the time to spend a quarter, twenty minutes on something like that (MEP 2, my translation).

A final observation on office meetings is that the actors apparently did not know each other previously. They may have known about each other, or at least the organisation, but they behaved as if they had not met personally before.

5.2 Hearings and seminars

There are hearings and seminars on different topics and issues almost every day in the European Parliament. Hearings and seminars share many

characteristics; for example, they take place in the same types of rooms in the EP but are two different forms of events. Whereas a hearing is an event conducted and organised by the EP, usually by one of the committees, a seminar is organised by an MEP or, more often, with an MEP and another special interest organisation as a financier. The length ranged from a couple hours to entire afternoons. A smaller hearing-like event was sometimes called a workshop. I attended one of these workshops at which representatives of a special interest were pledging the parliamentarians present to push their interests in the EU legislation. The similarities in the events include not only the room itself but also the organisation of the event. Even the co-organised seminars had translation services at least to and from English, French and German. Coffee and snacks were served by the EP staff on EP porcelain, framing the event as an EP event rather than an event organised by a private actor.

These meetings are scheduled beforehand, like office meetings, but the meeting is not personally arranged. There are experts on the panel, MEPs, assistants, lobbyists, civil servants and many other people present in the hearings and seminars. At the hearings and seminars I attended, between 40 and approximately 300 persons were present. One hearing was overcrowded, so the hearing was filmed and broadcast live in other rooms. The events were open only to persons with their own badge to enter the EP, which lobbyists can obtain if they register, or to persons with a personal invitation from an MEP.

The panel of experts sits on a podium with rows of listeners in front of it. Proximity to the stage is a direct measure of importance: the MEPs usually sitting close, with their assistants behind them. One day my lobbyist (Lobbyist 1) sat near the front of the room. When he made eye contact with other lobbyists, they nodded and communicated that they were equally surprised and impressed that he took a seat so far forward in the room.

The meetings also resembled the office meetings in the discursive structure; the experts, who were sometimes lobbyists, presented, and MEPs asked questions. In the hearings, the rapporteur usually gave an initial speech about his or her report. The MEPs present were also a measure of success among the people involved. I heard both assistants and lobbyists assess how good an event was depending on how many MEPs attended it or the disappointment of having too few MEPs at the event, as in a seminar co-organised with MEP 3. If there was time left at the end, people other than MEPs were allowed to ask questions, but by then most of the

MEPs had usually left the room and did not hear these questions and answers. However, these meetings were also for lobbyists to become familiar with what the MEPs were thinking and planning, and they could listen carefully to the questions they asked. Lobbyist 1 emphasised the importance of listening to the questions from the MEPs to know ‘what they think and what they are curious about’ (Lobbyist 1).

It was considered high status among both lobbyists and MEPs to co-organise events. In the MEP corridors with the offices and in the offices, I saw many posters from previous events of MEPs together with different organisations. I also heard how the MEPs talked to colleagues within the institutions and to lobbyists about events that were planned and completed. Lobbyists, MEPs and assistants alike confirmed in the interviews that the MEPs were eager to hold events together with external actors. It is considered positive for the MEP to show that he or she is active, and it is important to be connected and to be seen with certain companies, trade-organisations or NGOs. At the same time, it is attractive for lobbyists to hold events together with MEPs. The co-organising firm not only provides financial support for the event but also provides the main part of the administration and organisation, which includes internal affairs, such as contacting the special department in the EP that takes care of visitor lists. One day, one of the assistants talked on the phone with someone, hung up the phone, turned to me and said with a sigh of delight, ‘It’s so nice when the lobbyists are professional!’ (Assistant 7, my translation). She told me that she had been talking to a lobbyist about the organisation of an event in the European Parliament, where her employer, MEP 1, would be the host. I asked her how it works when co-organising events, and she told me that the best lobbyists know all the administrative routines in the EP and take care of everything, and the politicians just sign the formal papers.

The interaction between the lobbyist and MEP takes place when there is a lobbyist in the panel and an MEP listening and asking questions. MEPs and lobbyists confirmed that lobbyists are eager to obtain access to hearings as experts or to introduce the expert of their choice in hearings. I observed difficult discussions in a committee working-group on which persons to invite as experts for a hearing. The experts ranged from senior researchers or, in one case, a high official from a small country to persons who were clearly lobbyists from organisations ranging from NGOs to multinationals. For obvious reasons, I could not check the real identity of all the presented experts.

The hearings and seminars offered more opportunities for interaction than the public interactions between panels and questioners. Lobbyist 1, who visited most events of the people I shadowed, met many people, most often people he had known previously. He told them stories and facts about the on-going political issues, handed out papers, promised information by e-mail, asked for information and reports and booked appointments for later meetings with people he did not know previously but wanted to work with on some issue. The same was true when shadowing MEPs; they were approached in these settings by a lobbyist who talked for a few minutes and gave the MEP a position paper.

The hearings and seminars were also an opportunity for the MEPs to take the initiative and support a lobbyist. One MEP (MEP 1) rushed into a hearing just as a lobbyist was talking. After the speech, the MEP asked a question and complimented his friend, who complimented him back. Another example was MEP 3, who approached a lobbyist from the panel during the pause. He wanted to help the lobbyist and offered his own brochures, which I went to fetch at his office.

5.3 Demonstration

The following three settings, demonstration, network meeting and conference, only occurred once each during my shadowing. I understood that they all occur regularly and all include interactions between lobbyists and politicians.

The demonstration took place outside the EP at Place Luxemburg. The lobbyist and the MEP took the initiative together. It was issue driven, scheduled beforehand and lasted approximately an hour. The demonstration was connected to a seminar co-organised with MEP 3. There was also an information table connected to both the seminar and the demonstration. MEP 3 took part in the demonstration. The entire event, including the seminar and demonstration, was a quick response to another exhibition in favour of a certain issue that also took place in the parliament during the week. The organisers heard that the exhibition would take place and organised a counter-reaction with just a few weeks of planning time.

The demonstrators were approximately two dozen people from NGOs and five MEPs. Approximately the same number of people watched the demonstration. I recognised many of the people among the demonstrators and the audience from the NGOs that co-organised the connected seminar. The demonstrators had dressed up, with remarkable overalls and masks with strong visual appeal. The entire event clearly targeted the me-

dia. The people organised themselves in a group portrait just outside the EP at Place Lux, and when all the photographers seemed pleased, the group resolved again.

I did not overhear any specific questions and answers or information in the demonstration. There was only one clear message that all demonstrators jointly communicated to anyone who watched the demonstration.

5.4 Network meeting

‘The Brussels Network of X’ (a policy field) was a gathering for MEPs, their assistants and lobbyists from different organisations (firms and think tanks). It was not clear whether one of the visiting lobbyists actually paid for the network meeting or whether the hosting MEP paid for the light lunch that was offered during the initial reception. One of the MEP assistants told me that the role model for the meeting was a similar event in Washington, but whereas the Americans met once per week, this circle only met once a month, and the entire event lasted approximately two hours each time.

The meeting took place in one of the more elegant rooms in the EP, with a large round table that sat everyone. The initiator was an MEP with a background as a practitioner within the policy field. There were a total of 23 people: two MEPs, two assistants and 19 lobbyists. The participants did not seem to know everyone there.

Everyone was working in the same field and the meeting was issue-driven but around several issues. The core of the meeting was a presentation round where everyone present talked about what was presently occupying them and made inquiries. We went around the table, and everyone gave a short presentation including their name and their occupation, with an emphasis on the issues they worked with, what they were concerned with at the moment, and openings for co-operation. During the presentations, several people asked the hosting MEP for individual meetings to discuss their issue further. In all cases, the MEP answered positively. Most of the people clearly directed their talks to the inviting MEP. ‘My’ lobbyist connected his talk to the on-going work of the MEP and explained what he and his company were doing with regard to the issue. He offered more information by e-mail. Another lobbyist began his presentation by presenting himself as an upcoming MEP; he was the first candidate on one of his country’s party lists for the upcoming EP elections. The second MEP who took part in the meeting was an older man who said that he was not interested in the issue directly; he was more interested in the political game per

se and gave an inside analysis of on-going politics in EU. He made fun of the European Commission in a spontaneous way that communicated the feeling that those in the room were his insiders. He even directly invited us to the inside world of the European Community, of which the EP was the heart. This talk emphasised the team feeling in the room (Goffman, 1990/1959).

The initial lunch reception was also used for contacts, which were more personal and face-to-face. The lobbyist I shadowed in this meeting, Lobbyist 1, was quite active during this face-to-face led to contact a lobbyist he wished to cooperate with later, and he had a rather long talk with the inviting MEP, whom he knew previously when his assistant and Lobbyist 1 ‘worked on several projects together.’ (Lobbyist 1) He gave the MEP oral information on an on-going issue and offered more information by e-mail. He also asked the MEP for ‘insights’ into what is most important in an on-going issue. He asked the MEP explicitly if he could list the most important points on a certain issue (Lobbyist 1). He offered information via e-mail to the MEP assistants, moreover.

5.5 Conference

The conference took place during one afternoon in a conference centre next to the European Parliament. There was only one MEP there, and he was the one who gave the keynote speech and opened the conference. The initiative for the conference came from an interest organisation, a Swedish NGO, and the approximately 200 persons there came from NGOs, companies and trade organisations. There were five persons in addition to the MEP who came from the EU administration: the European commission, a EU authority and a policy adviser from one of the political groups.

In this setting, it was the MEP who gave a speech and the lobbyists who had the opportunity to ask questions, in contrast to hearings and seminars. His presence gave the conference an air of formality, as if it was an event in the EP. Another step the organisers took to make the conference resemble an official political event inside the parliament building was to have a speaker from Washington, who announced that there was a hearing on a related topic on the same day in Washington.

Lobbyists also talked to the MEP during the coffee time that preceded the conference opening. However, the lobbyist I shadowed there, Lobbyist 3, did not talk to him.

5.6 Meetings in the corridor

Frequent interactions occurred in the many long corridors of the EP. Lobbyists told me how important it was to be seen in the corridors, and MEPs and their assistants spent considerable amounts of time rushing through the corridors to and from meetings and events. One MEP, MEP 2, asked whether we could conduct our interview in a café located in the middle of the house where many people walked by, presumably because he wanted to be seen. Lobbyist 1 told me that it is good to be seen around because then others realise that you are active and interested in on-going issues. The lobbyists said that the more important aspect, however, was that they ran into people they knew who could provide spontaneous information. In particular, the junior lobbyists I met were asked by their senior colleagues to ‘hang out and meet people’, as one of the lobbyists put it, to listen to gossip, to obtain other information and to make contacts.

The meetings in the corridors were between people who knew each other previously. There was one exception: an MEP I shadowed (MEP 2) approached two lobbyists in the elevator, complimented them on a recent debate article, asked for their business cards and asked if they could meet one day. Both lobbyists and MEPs took the initiative for interactions, and these interactions were quite equal. Both groups asked questions and shared information in these encounters. However, most of the conversations were short and consisted of exchanging polite phrases.

I had the opportunity to observe six longer corridor-interactions where the persons stopped and engaged in an interaction with more than one or two phrases. Still the ones I observed were not more than a few minutes each. I exclude the encounters that took place in relation to other settings like hearings or other events and only focus spontaneous interactions. The encounters were all spontaneous in so far that they had no booked appointment. Even though they were not booked, some were clearly planned beforehand by at least the lobbyist, for example the interactions outside plenum before a certain legislative suggestion was about to be voted for.

The corridor encounters showed that lobbyists and MEPs sought contact with each other and wanted to influence each other. One example was from an MEP (MEP 1) who talked to a lobbyist outside the plenum one day. Later, in an interview, the MEP told me that the lobbyist he had spoken to was an old friend that he (the MEP) had used as a sounding board to understand how large multinationals think and to attempt to influence them. He legitimised the encounter by saying that it was he who influenced them, not the other way around.

5.7 Receptions and drinks

The receptions and drinks were similar to the meetings in the corridor except that they had another setting, and some were planned and booked beforehand. The settings were sometimes the EP, but the ones I participated in were more often at different consultancies, think tanks or restaurants or bars. Most interactions I observed seemed spontaneous. There was, for example, an MEP who suddenly, at a reception, grabbed a passing lobbyist by the arm and asked if they could have dinner because they had matters to discuss. At another occasion, lobbyists and assistants jointly invited a senior lobbyist to have a drink because they wanted to ask for his advice on a certain matter. Another example of a planned interaction was the lobbyist who invited a civil servant from the European Commission and, at another time, an MEP assistant for lunch at a restaurant outside the EP.

Reception and drinks are an established part of the culture in Brussels, and the people who meet talk about politics and on-going issues, even in spontaneous interactions. Everyone I interviewed talked about the importance of Brussels social life with hospitality and alcohol. A trade association lobbyist I interviewed said he had lunch and dinner booked every day (Lobbyist 40). The importance of these interactions was that they provided time to discuss things and to meet people who could be useful, both as lobbyists and as MEPs or assistants. Interest in these events decreased the longer the person had been in Brussels. An assistant told me:

In the beginning, you did that [attended social events] because it was a bit fun, but now I only think it is hard. I get enough of that here [in the EP] (Assistant 1, my translation).

Regarding drinks with younger people (both lobbyists and assistants) at Place Lux, she told me:

In the beginning, you do that [evenings at Place Lux], but then you get tired of seeing the same people all the time. You don't have to meet the same lobbyists in the evening as you have met in the day (Assistant 1, my translation).

With this statement, the assistant confirmed what I had heard before: Brussels is a small place where it is easy to get to know other people. Although most people I met, like Assistant 1, emphasised that they attended more social events at the beginning of their stay in Brussels, most of them were active at least one evening per week.

A typical type of reception was one I attended one evening at a lobbying consultancy. There were lobbyists, MEPs, MEP assistants, civil servants and others I could not identify. The event started with a one-hour seminar, where we all sat in long rows listening to a senior consultant, also known by the audience for his role as a former head of a state, and a commissioner discussing a specific topic. Afterwards, there was a reception that lasted the entire evening. The seminar served to formalise the event and to give the attendants some useful information and insights.

5.8 Summary

The following table presents an overview of the different settings I have discussed. Overview of the settings – and their characteristics – when lobbyists and politicians meet

Table 2: Overview of the settings – and their characteristics – when lobbyists and politicians meet

	Setting	Organizer	Scheduled	Participants	Interaction	Length	Issue
Office meetings	MEP's office	The lobbyist	Yes	Lobbyist, politician, assistants, helpers	L. informs, MEP questions	Exactly 30 minutes	Yes
Hearings and seminars	The official rooms of the EP	Together or only MEP	Yes	Experts, lobbyists, MEPs, audience	L. informs, MEP-questions	Could last for hours	Yes
Demonstrations	Outside the EP	Together	Yes	Lobbyists, MEPs, audience	Even	About an hour	Yes
Network meeting	The official rooms of the EP	MEP	Yes	Lobbyists, MEPs	Even	Two hours	Yes
Conference	Conference facility	Lobbyist	Yes	Lobbyists, MEP, others	MEP informs, L questions	Half day	Yes
Encounters in the corridor	The corridors of the EP	Lobbyist or MEP	No	Lobbyist and MEP; third party	Even	Few minutes	No
Receptions, drinks	Anywhere	Lobbyist or MEP	Some	Lobbyist, MEP, others	Even	Differs	No

The office meeting was the prototypical lobby meeting mentioned by lobbyists and politicians when I asked them about lobbying. This was also the type of meeting that the authors of the lobbyist code of conduct in the EU seemed to have in mind. The code of conduct emphasises the importance of giving accurate and balanced information and always being open about who you are and what you represent. The office meeting was booked beforehand, and there was an issue presented during the booking of the meeting, so it was very clear what interest the lobbyist represented. The office meeting made it possible for the MEP to prepare for the interaction, which they generally did. The lobbyist also had the opportunity to prepare. Being prepared for the meeting with regard to content and who to meet was also a matter of cognitive sharpness and alertness compared to more stressful spontaneous settings. Booking the meeting in advance between two identified actors could also facilitate traceability and accountability if notes were taken and filed, which they were not, at least not officially.

However, my observations indicate that office meetings were not the first choice among people who already knew each other. In fact, no office meeting I observed took place between people who previously knew each other. The exception, a single case, was the civil servant who accompanied a lobbyist with whom he was acquainted to the MEP they had met previously. My understanding was that his attendance served to open the door for the lobbyist to obtain the meeting with the MEP and to act as support for the lobbyist on the issue.

Two main factors contribute to this phenomenon. First, it is a matter of time restraint. The MEPs have many appointments that they want to squeeze into their schedules, and a spontaneous meeting is far shorter and more efficient than a meeting booked in advance. It is also more difficult for the MEP to deny a short spontaneous talk than to refuse a formal meeting proposal.

Second, the office meeting only had room for one type of discursive organisation, in which the lobbyist informed and the MEP asked questions. At the points when the lobbyists asked or attempted to ask a question in the office meetings, the tone from the political side was annoyed. The only exception was the meeting with the NGO who did not have a political case to lobby but wanted to arrange to work together in the EP. All other settings made room for more equal distribution of talking and asking questions. Previous research has shown that lobbyists might have other needs in their interactions with politicians than to influence them; they

need these other forms of interaction to obtain the information they need to perform their jobs in line with their own expectations.

Another factor that could be relevant is that the other interactions had an audience (cf. Goffman, 1990/1959). This was either a large audience, as in the hearings, or an audience that could potentially be eavesdropping on the conversation. Given the importance both lobbyists and MEPs put on visibility and appearing with important people, it is understandable that they fulfilled these needs while talking to the politicians in public rather than in an office meeting.

I will now discuss what occurs in these other meetings and how the lobbyists work to move the meetings towards the backstage form of interaction.

6. The importance of backstage interaction

In this chapter, by applying Goffman's (1990/1959) concepts of frontstage and backstage, I deepen the analysis of what occurs in the meetings between lobbyists and politicians. When considering the meetings from this perspective, the office meetings are notable in comparison with the other meetings. Although this meeting has no audience, it has strict rules and appears frontstage like it could be observed by anyone from the outside. The politician acts as a representative in his office receiving input from special interests, which he is supposed to value and take into account when making decisions.

As I will show here and as indicated by the many other forms of meetings (except for the office meeting) involving politicians and lobbyists, there is a shift towards backstage interactions. Before I continue, it must be clarified that Goffman's concepts do not refer to physical conditions (the setting/room) but to behaviour in particular situations. Thus, this shift indicates a move from more formal acts, as in the office meetings, to more informal and less constrained interactions. This shift towards backstage behaviour is, I claim, a norm rather than an exception and therefore it might rather be considered a drift than a shift.

In this chapter, I will show how lobbyists work strategically to achieve spontaneous backstage encounters, how they work strategically to construct and enhance a backstage mood in the encounters, and how the backstage is used as a strategy to set up office meetings.

6.1 Lobbying: a backstage activity

Lobbying is traditionally seen as a backstage form of influencing politics. Öberg (1997) defines lobbying an informal way of influencing politics compared to formal ways, which include being an elected politician or civil servant or part of a corporatist structure. The word 'lobby' itself refers to the lobby, a room outside the plenum where politicians would gather and where the lobbyists would attempt to have a final discussion before the voting. Historical accounts talk about lobbyists waiting outside the representatives' plenum in the US Congress (Schriftgiesser, 1951). Wining and dining is also seen as traditional way for lobbyists to approach politicians. An early example from the literature is Samuel Ward, called the King of the Lobby, who is said to have invited American politicians to breakfasts with ham in champagne (Schriftgiesser, 1951). The practice of ambushing politicians on their way into the plenum is far from

a cliché. I could observe considerable activity outside the plenum before voting took place, with people standing around in small groups and in deep conversations. I recognised some lobbyists, and an assistant helped me to identify other lobbyists, such as those from the most well known multinational organisations. As discussed in chapter 5, the wining and dining also proved to be far from a cliché. It is still a popular and common way for lobbyist to contact politicians.

The desire to create a backstage atmosphere between lobbyists and politicians is well known and criticised. The critique is based on the lack of accountability as well as the risk of bribery and undue influence. Attempts to legislate and regulate lobbying to be more open and transparent have been going on since at least 1875 in the US²⁴ and the mid-1990s in the EU. The updating of the regulations has attempted to push lobbying increasingly into the open that is to the frontstage.

Although the backstage forms of lobbying are criticised, it continues to be a crucial aspect of lobbying even though lobbying could be made more transparent through, for example, office meetings. During my fieldwork, I observed that backstage interactions were desired, but people attempted to make this work appear to be frontstage. The duality of frontstage and backstage is very often present. For example, meetings that were mainly for people to get to know each other to ease future contacts often officially involved issues to be discussed in the meeting.

6.2 Finding the backstage encounter

Unsurprisingly, lobbyists strive to obtain backstage encounters with MEPs, and they work strategically to do so. Encounters with politicians often seemed spontaneous, but the lobbyists told me that they were carefully planned. I identified two main types of encounter-generating strategies: the coffee strategy and encounters that involved lobbyists signing up for work in constellations where encounters with politicians were a side effect. I call the latter the bi-effect strategy.

The coffee-strategy has primarily been linked to what I called in Chapter 5 corridor encounters and reception and drinks meetings. Lobbyists sign up for conferences and seminars to stay in the corridors to meet people and attend meetings for the important coffee breaks. These encounters are seen as valuable even if there is no speaking involved. I was told that it is 'good to be seen around because then others [especially the politicians]

²⁴ The first lobbying resolution was in force the US in 1875 (Schrieftgiesser 1951).

realise that you are active and interested in the on-going issues' (Lobbyist 1). The lobbyists also use this approach to search for 'what information there is about a certain issue, the tones, who is for and who is against (to find partners), what are different actors voting, etc.' (Lobbyist 25) The lobby outside the plenum before MEPs were about to vote was also a gathering spot for lobbyists. The coffee-encounters had a close relative in the drink-encounters in the evenings. These were especially common among the assistants and younger lobbyists to make contacts and build a base for further encounters.

The second type of strategy was when lobbyists worked in different types of organisations together with politicians with whom they wished to have backstage interaction. For example, Lobbyist 4 arranged a lunch seminar with an organisation in which she was the chairman. The topic of the seminar was far from the issues with which she normally worked. I asked her why she put such great effort and time into this organisation, and she told me that the sole reason was another woman on the board. This woman was a high-ranked politician in Brussels, and this was an efficient way to obtain backstage encounters with her.

6.3 Constructing and enhancing backstage in the encounter

In more formal meetings, the lobbyists attempted to establish a backstage feel. This approach follows the logic that if lobbyists made the encounters feel more backstage, the politicians would feel that they were on the same team (Goffman, 1990/1959) as the lobbyists and thus would build personal relations with the lobbyist. Personal relations are crucial to be able to meet the politician later in backstage encounters. An example of how the lobbyists worked to achieve this comes from one of the office meetings. The example – in chapter 5 called 'the lunch-meeting' – that will be presented is an exception to the ordinary office meeting, the setting is the lobbyist's own office nearby the EP. I will present a detailed account of the encounter.

The meeting was an encounter in which MEP 2 was invited together with the other MEP and assistants in his party group. There were the same number of lobbyists and politicians; 12 persons participated in the meeting. The reason for the meeting was originally for the actors to get to know each other because these specific lobbyists were rather new to Brussels. The lobbyists knew a little about Brussels lobbying; they made sure to keep up the façade of proper political work by inviting the politicians to request an issue within the lobbyists' area of expertise, for which they

provided experts in the meetings. The issue provided the frontstage feeling, with open political work that was supposed to be accomplished in the encounter.

The lobbyist who chaired the meeting wanted to establish a more backstage atmosphere in the meeting and gave several clues about this, as mentioned earlier. He began by thanking the politicians for being able to ‘pop by for this simple lunch’ (my translation). To ‘pop by’ implies that this is an act between friends. The phrase ‘simple lunch’ prevented the politicians from feeling bribed and indicated friendship; only friends eat ‘a simple lunch’ together. The lobbyist further said that the food was fully in line with one of the MEPs’ diets. In this way, he further emphasised a friendly and caring atmosphere. During the Q & A session, the meeting got a bit out of hand because the experts could not really answer the questions from the politicians. However, the lobbyist attempted to mend these relations by asking questions about how the EP worked. The time had run far over when the lobbyist asked his large question about how the EP worked, but one of the MEPs saved face for the lobbyist and invited him to the EP for a study visit.

Although the lobbyists worked hard to achieve a backstage atmosphere, MEP 2 was annoyed afterwards that the meeting was not informal enough. He said it was far too stiff and inefficient, but he believed that the lobbyists attempted to meet expectations.

Another office meeting showed the importance of maintaining balance between the backstage and frontstage. The lobbyist started the meeting immediately when they sat down and argued her issue. The assistant who chaired the meeting signalled that she was annoyed. Afterwards when I asked her why, she told me that the lobbyist was too pushy; she should have been smoother and raised her issue of concern in a calmer way.

I have noted that the most important reason for lobbyists to meet backstage is to make contact with the politician and to obtain the information they need. This information is needed both for the work of their own organisation and for trading for other information. The meetings backstage also maintain relations with politicians. The reason for making encounters more backstage is to build personal relationships that make backstage encounters possible. I will now show how lobbyists use backstage strategies to obtain office meetings.

6.4 Backstage as strategy to obtain office meetings

If a lobbyist has no personal relation to a politician and therefore cannot meet backstage, they may attempt to set up an office meeting. To enhance the chance of success in setting up an office meeting, lobbyists attempt to find a backstage contact surface between the politician and the lobbyist. In other words, lobbyists who want an office meeting with a politician use backstage strategies to cut through the large number of contact attempts the politicians face every day. Backstage is the normative organising principle by which lobbyists get close to politicians to book these meetings.

I observed three main strategies: the coffee strategy, the joint friend strategy, and the nationality strategy. The coffee strategy was used to make contacts for later meetings. One of the assistants told me that a meeting could typically be the result of encountering a lobbyist while being out for a drink at Place Lux:

Most often... what is a bit interesting, it is not that they say, 'Hi, hi, I am working for so and so and I want to talk about this', but it is more so that you know someone who knows someone, and, 'Aha, you work with that, how fun' and so it is most often on a rather social and informal level. Even if you only talked social things with someone from an organisation and didn't mention work at all, I think it is contributing that it is easier for them when they call you two weeks later and say, 'Hey, we met there and there... [is quiet and drifts off in thought] (Assistant 5, my translation).

In this quote, we can see how careful the lobbyist is to build a platform first before asking for a meeting. In my shadowings, I could see how easily politicians dismissed a contact attempt because the lobbyist annoyed them in one way or another. The lobbyists that Assistant 5 referred to understood the importance of not pushing frontstage work matters but rather waiting until they had established good relations, meaning that the lobbyist made the decision that they knew each other well enough to ask for an office meeting.

The joint friend strategy was used to set up office meetings. I will give two examples. In the first example, mentioned above and repeated here, MEP 2 told me that he had a specific office meeting with people from an NGO because they:

... work with the same consultancy at home work with the same consultancy at home, [and] I usually meet them when they have representatives visiting Brussels (MEP 2, my translation).

In the second case, MEP 1 attended a lobby dinner even though, according to his statement, he was against the issue that would be advocated. The reason he attended was that it was chaired by another MEP, ‘Viola’, who he knew well and felt obliged to. Viola was of the same nationality as the lobbyist. In the meeting, it was apparent that Viola was only hosting the meeting because she had power over MEP 1 and could make him attend the meeting. She rushed into the dinner far later than everyone else (we all waited about half an hour for her, although we were well entertained with drinks and snacks). We sat down, and Viola gave a welcoming speech. After the speech and before the lobbyist started his presentation, Viola excused herself, said that she unfortunately had to leave us for other obligations, and left. In other words, Viola was only used to make MEP 1 attend the meeting.

The nationality strategy is an attempt to skip the part about getting to know each other and to rely on the idea that sharing a nationality will make the politician feel backstage with the lobbyist. When I visited consultancies in my pre-study, I learned that they hired people with different nationalities so they could contact every MEP directly in their respective language. It was the task of the employee to build relations with the MEPs and assistants of this specific nationality. If there were no positive relations (yet), it would at least be easier to obtain a positive reply by e-mail if the e-mail was written in the same language from a native sender.

These three strategies were applied during my observations. Of course, there may be more strategies, and there are cases in which the roles blur and meetings and interactions happen by coincidence.

6.5 ‘Let’s move on over a sandwich’

I have shown how lobbyists work with backstage as a strategy and that the backstage is a norm rather than an exception used in special cases. I will now show that politicians also prefer the backstage mode for their work. Of course, it would not be possible for lobbyists to apply these strategies if the politicians disapproved, but I can also show the backstage shift in the politicians’ own internal work. I will present some of the clues that make it apparent that it is not only the lobbyists who prefer the backstage.

The people I shadowed used the word ‘informal’ for what I analytically define as backstage. This word was used for every meeting that neither had formal power to make political decisions nor seemed to be taken into the official records. It was also used colloquially to mean less fussy and

more direct. The first definition was used by MEP 3 when we discussed informality. He told me, ‘Well, you saw it in the meeting down there. For example, this about X (a certain issue). It was fully informal that he told me that they worked on a legislative proposal but that the industry had stopped it. That is fully informal. There are no papers on such things’ (MEP 3, my translation). The MEP told me about this encounter in an appreciative way; there was no feeling of shame or hints that this was incorrect in any way. MEP 2 complained in an interview after a lobby meeting that the meeting was not informal enough.

The attractiveness of informality or backstage was further indicated in an internal meeting in the EP with MEPs, civil servants from the EC and persons from the Council. At this meeting, backstage was desired to make a discussion easier, more direct and more easily resolved. The participants, including MEP 1, explicitly wanted to break up the meeting and meet again in another setting, which they referred to as ‘over a sandwich’. They attempted to resolve their issue by discussion, but after some quiet moments with despair in the air, one of the MEPs sighed and said that the only way forward was to do this ‘informal informal’. Another MEP suggested to ‘...move on with this meeting over a sandwich. Those who think it is too informal can go to the next room.’ In later interviews, I confirmed that ‘over a sandwich’ is the expression within the whole EU-administration for doing something more informal. The fact that such an expression exists and that the real meaning is taken for granted by the person who says it shows how common it is to ask for more informal, or backstage, procedures.

Gravitation towards backstage interaction, by both sides, was also evident in minor comments in other meetings. For example, a lobbyist and a MEP assistant who met over coffee in the EP ended the meeting with small talk about a seminar the firm of the lobbyist would hold the following day. The lobbyist talked about the seminar and emphasised their efforts to keep the meeting informal: ‘we will be 20-30 people. That is few enough for the meeting to still be informal’ (Lobbyist 17, my translation). The word ‘informal’ was uttered in a way that made it clear that the word was important and was considered a key to the politician’s understanding that the seminar was arranged in a professional way that appealed to politicians and their working conditions.

6.6 Summary and discussion

I have shown that despite a push for enhanced transparency and openness in lobbying, there is a will and shift towards working in a backstage mode among both lobbyists and politicians. Lobbyists attempt to achieve backstage encounters; when they are in encounters, they attempt to bring in elements of backstage. It is even the case that the backstage seems to be the norm rather than the exception, as if the backstage is a necessary organising principle for lobbying to function.

The main reason for backstage encounters was to contact politicians and to obtain information the lobbyists perceived that they needed to do their jobs. Backstage contacts and networking were also used to obtain office meetings where the lobbyists could begin to work towards more backstage relations with the politicians.

Backstage needs to be carefully balanced, however. In chapter 5 when discussing the meetings and in this chapter, I have shown that lobbyists are keen to balance backstage encounters with frontstage behaviour, such as discussing a specific issue or holding the encounter in a formal room in the EP. In the next chapter, I will further this argumentation and show how lobbyists attempt to downplay their role as straightforward interest representatives with the aim of influencing politics.

The argumentation is contradictory and this is part of the result. Lobbying is, by tradition, a backstage activity that has been pushed to the frontstage and made more transparent with the code of conduct. The European institutions encourage office meetings as an accepted form of lobbying. My analysis shows that this is a relatively open and transparent form of interaction between lobbyists and politicians compared to the alternatives. Although this form of lobbying exists, lobbyists and politicians prefer to work in other forms, which I will show in the next chapter.

While pushing for backstage, lobbyists attempt to balance the backstage and to find ways to legitimise their presence as legitimate actors in the political process, presumably by doing things more frontstage. Some drift further backstage, whereas others drift further frontstage. The important point in the next chapter is not what the activity is but that it is something different. The main strategy the lobbyists employ is to drift away from the prototypical lobbyist. I view the lobbyists' strategy as a response to the lobbyists' dilemma of being wanted and unwanted at the same time (see chapter 1.3). My results have implications for transparency, which will be discussed in chapter 8. In the next chapter, the focus will be on the shift in itself and how this shift is set in motion.

7. Strategies to downplay the role of the straightforward lobbyist

In this chapter, I will explore further strategies that made the lobbyists drift away from the role of a lobbyist who is easy identifiable and clear-cut in his or her role. The strategies aim blurring the role of the lobbyist and the overall strategy is called downplaying.

The previous chapter identified the drift and discussed how lobbyists work strategically to obtain backstage encounters and how they use the backstage to obtain office meetings in which they can employ backstage strategies to achieve different footing (Goffman, 1990/1959).

This chapter will also discuss what the persons themselves think about what a lobbyist should be. There are norms and rules for interactions, and it is important for politicians that lobbyist stick to these norms and rules. Sometimes lobbyists may attempt to push the limits and bend the rules, such as to obtain extra information. These situations cause irritation to the politicians. I observed that lobbyists' requests for meetings were ignored when they had not adapted to the expected routines. I will examine whether their answers to explicit questions about how lobbyists should be provide further clues to understand the prevailing norms.

7.1 The strategy of changing identities

The lobbyists used a strategic change of identity as a resource in their interactions with politicians. I will discuss what they did concretely in interactions during the meetings. The changes of identity in all cases obscured the clear-cut role of the lobbyist that makes it easy to identify the person as a lobbyist, who the lobbyist represents and why the person is approaching the politician. They do so in a wide variety of ways, but I have identified three main strategies on a decreasing scale of directness: 1) changing the situated identity and appearing as something else; 2) a discursive change in which the lobbyist, despite openly identifying as an interest representative, attempts to change the situated identity by claiming to be something other than a lobbyist; and 3) the transportable identity, in which the lobbyist attempts to add layers to the lobbyist role (i.e., attempts to be a lobbyist 'and more') (cf. Zimmerman, 1998).

7.1.1 A change of the situated identity as a lobbyist

The most straightforward strategy by which lobbyists attempted to downplay their role as paid representatives of interests was to obscure their status. Some lobbyists attempted to appear as something other than a lobbyist. The young lobbyists I observed in the EP would often hide the brown badges that identified them as interest representatives.²⁵ They still carried the badge in the prescribed band around their necks, but I noticed that they employed creative techniques to avoid carrying it in plain sight. Many tucked the card into the placket of their shirt or the front pocket of their shirt or buried it under a shawl. After observing this practice repeatedly, I queried my shadowees about it. They confirmed my suspicion: the ‘brown badges’ typically did not like to reveal that they were lobbyists visiting the EP. This is a paradoxical observation because the lobbyists themselves told me that it was good to be seen around to indicate that they were interested. This approach fits with the overall observation, however: the lobbyists are keen to avoid being seen as straightforward interest representatives and want to be seen as something else.

Another technique that featured the visitor’s badge was to switch badges, and thus identities, for different meetings. This was possible because some lobbyists were involved in various organisations. Some of the lobbyists I encountered were employed by a Swedish company as well as working for a trade association, for example. Thus, when it appeared opportune to downplay the identity of their employer, they participated in conferences, seminars or other activities as representatives of the trade association – even on occasions, to be clear, when they were not actively representing the association in question. For example, Lobbyist 3 wore the badge of a trade association at a conference. Lobbyist 25, whom I interviewed, was very open about the practice. He primarily worked for a Swedish company, but while he was cooperating with at least two Swedish authorities on projects, he received an official badge from one. This badge not only gave him the mandate to act on the organisation’s behalf but also conveyed the impression that he was actually employed by the state. ‘Often you act like you were the person (from the authority) yourself’ (Lobbyist 25, my translation). He admitted that he occasionally used the badge in meetings, when attending seminars or when ‘hanging around’ (i.e., waiting in corridors outside) during important meetings or seminars. He also ad-

²⁵ The badges in the EP have different colours depending on the status by which one is visiting the EP.

mitted that he used the authority's badge to open certain doors. Despite reflecting that this might not be fully ethical – 'a bit wrong' – he also insisted that this particular Swedish company possessed the full confidence of the national authority. Indeed, he said, sometimes the authority actually did represent the interests of the company, such as in work group meetings.

These unclear and shifting identities also have bearing on the hearings and seminars in the EP. Hearings are the official interface by means of which MEPs are exposed to the viewpoints of private organisations, often about the presumed impact of legislation. Since the numbers of experts are limited, the constitution of panels (i.e., the invitation of experts) results in a difficult political game. When observing the meeting of a committee tasked with selecting the experts on a panel, I realised that political bargaining predominantly drives the procedure. The MEP I accompanied explained, for example, that there was no point in having comments on some of the appointments. Although he would have liked to influence the choice, there were certain agreements and procedures; for example, one MEP was appointed rapporteur in return for another having a say in some other matter. In the end, the panels consisted of lobbyists, researchers, and other experts. Possibly due to a lack of time, very little attention was paid to establishing or interrogating the credentials of the experts. On one occasion, one of the experts in a seminar revealed to me in a private conversation at a dinner during the event that she was not a researcher at all. She was employed as a lobbyist. She spoke in a low voice and was clearly embarrassed to admit that her expert status as a researcher and the presentation she had given were based on the fact that she had written her master's thesis on the subject. One could ask why it was not possible to present her openly as a postgraduate researcher as well as a lobbyist.

7.1.2 A discursive change of the situated identity as a lobbyist

Lobbyists not only downplay their identities by obscuring their employers but also discursively do so by insisting that they are not acting as lobbyists here and now. One of the clearest examples occurred in the lunch meeting previously discussed in chapter 5.1, in which the lobbyist denied that he was a lobbyist and went to great lengths to prove it.

As I have argued earlier, attempts to negotiate away lobbyist status are theoretically dubious. It simply does not make sense to enter into a debate about whether the lobbyist is a lobbyist in this situational context. The person is a lobbyist. He is not only a lobbyist according to the definition

underpinning this thesis but also according to his own organisation's homepage. On the organisation's homepage, it clearly and unequivocally says, 'The main duty at the Brussels office is to transmit information that makes it possible to influence the EU political decision process as early as possible' (my translation). In light of this clearly assigned role and task, it is interesting to trace the discursive manoeuvres by which the lobbyist in the lunch meeting attempts to negotiate away his status. Several manoeuvres were employed.

One manoeuvre was a curious argumentative triple jump. When the lobbyist in the lunch meeting introduced himself, he insisted that he and his colleagues in Brussels were not to be viewed as lobbyists. He admitted that his organisation did employ lobbyists, but they were not to be found in Brussels: 'if we are going to talk in those terms [the lobbyists are] home in Stockholm' (Lobbyist, my translation). His task in Brussels, the lobbyist explained, was merely to gather information and to understand what was going on. Later, the lobbyist's talk returned to the people he portrayed as lobbyists earlier (i.e., the ones at home). However, interestingly, he did not relate to them as lobbyists either. Instead, he characterised them as experts with 'specific knowledge' on whose expertise 'the generalists in Brussels' would draw when required. This stance, with an emphasis on expert knowledge, was enforced by the entire setup of the meeting: the MEPs were asked beforehand which issue they would like to discuss with experts flown in from Sweden.

Thus, the lobbyist portrayed himself, his team in Brussels and the team in Stockholm as 'not really lobbyists' and as concerned with information, understanding, and expert knowledge, ostensibly without an issue or agenda of their own. Similar attempts to downplay the intent to influence can be seen in many other conversational devices on a micro-level. From the beginning, the lobbyist effectively withdraws any agency by reducing his role to that of the animator of the member's opinions (Goffman, 1981). At one point, he asks a noteworthy rhetorical question: 'Do you want to know what our members think?' (Lobbyist, my translation). What is noteworthy is that the lobbyist not only takes himself out of the equation by referring to the members; by using the word 'think', he avoids any implication of the intent to influence. He could have chosen the words 'propose', 'wish' or even 'want', but by choosing the unassuming verb 'think', the lobbyist frames his organisation as non-strategic, authentic and legitimate. The lobbyist is providing scraps of evidence from real life. Yet again, the fact that the members' 'thoughts' are brought to Brussels by two

jurists, experts, couches the situation in a setting of factuality and therefore also legitimacy. It is not only about the wishes of the members; it is also about what is legal and what is their legal right.

A similar situation (i.e., a lobbyist declaring that he is not a lobbyist) occurred during the event referred to earlier as the lobby dinner (chapter 5.1). The dinner, it may be recalled, was hosted by a member of parliament whom 'my' MEP, MEP 1, described as a 'good old friend'. It was due to this obligation of friendship that MEP 1 accepted the invitation despite the fact that he did not personally believe in the technical solution to be presented. The reason for inviting MEP 1 was his position as rapporteur for a report the lobbyist wanted to influence. Nevertheless, approximately 30 people attended the event, with a few from the European Commission and many from different NGOs. During part of the dinner, there was one more MEP in addition to the hostess and MEP 1, who was the main guest. Except for the MEPs and the lobbyist, no one said anything during the dinner. The others were there to frame the event as legitimate, accepted and supported.

The event began with a long reception while the guests were waiting for the host to arrive and begin the dinner. As soon as she arrived, she introduced the lobbyist and thereafter quickly excused herself because she had to leave to attend another meeting. The lobbyist, in turn, started his presentation. Among the first things he said was:

I am not a lobbyist; I am a researcher and an [...] idealist. That is true. I ask you kindly to differentiate between the good and the bad (Lobbyist).

Then, the lobbyist flashed a big smile and watched the MEP to see the message settle. He continued, but after a short while he was interrupted by another MEP from the same country as the host (and the lobbyist). This MEP appeared suddenly, interrupted the lobbyist's speech, apologised that he could not take part in the dinner, then gave a brief speech about what he thought was most important regarding the issue at hand. The speech was very much in favour of the lobbyist's proposal.

Thus, what I saw was a coordinated performance by the lobbyist and two MEPs. The performance downplayed the lobbyist's role and portrayed him as a man to the taste of the rapporteur. All three actors – the lobbyist, the host and the speaking MEP – were almost certainly aware that MEP 1 was a man of reason with a strong belief in science for a better world. The audience played no active part in the presentation, but the

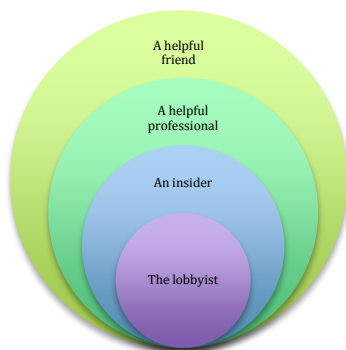
representatives of NGOs, in particular, helped to create the atmosphere of idealism the lobbyist activated with his introductory remarks.

The two events portrayed go far beyond tactical manoeuvres, but they demonstrate the lengths to which interest representatives go to downplay the apparently disadvantageous status of being a straightforward lobbyist. Most attempts to achieve this play out on a far simpler, more conversational level. What I observed frequently, for example, was that lobbyist attempted to show that they had been on the inside of the system—for example, as politicians or civil servants. Several times, I heard lobbyists mention to politicians that they used to work as an MEP assistant or in another part of the EU administration. Another variant was to mention studies in European Politics at a prestigious university.

7.1.3 Adding transportable identities as a lobbyist

The third strategy lobbyists employed to go beyond being ‘just another lobbyist’ was subtler than the two presented so far. It consisted of adding more and different layers to the role of the paid interest representative: the insider, the helpful friend or the helpful professional. Those who must remain in their identity as lobbyists but want to shift their footing to emphasise other aspects of their persons to downplay their identity as a persuader employ this strategy. This way of changing identity is called transportable identity by Zimmerman (1998). I observed three different manoeuvres, or strategies, by which interest representatives do so. Figure 7.1 identifies these three ways.

Figure 1: Adding layers to the lobbyist



The first type of layer added, towards ‘the insider’, is enacted when a lobbyist in a conversation with a politician mentions previous work inside the European administration. One of the lobbyists I shadowed used to work as an MEP assistant, for example, and I heard her mention this multiple times. She consistently (sooner rather than later in the conversation) found a reason to present herself with emphasis on her background as an assistant. An extreme case was the previously mentioned lobbyist who announced himself as an MEP-to-be. Lobbyists as well as politicians confirmed that being considered an insider is immensely helpful for a lobbyist. The lobbyist in question presented himself and identified the firm he was representing. He then told everyone that he was a ‘soon-to-be MEP’. Beaming with pride, he explained that he was number one on his national party’s list, so he was quite certain to enter the EP in the following legislative period. The lobbyist was, in other words, attempting to achieve enhanced status by what he could potentially be.

The next dimension can be called ‘the helpful professional’. The helpful professional has established herself as a valuable source a politician can rely on, especially with regard to reports. Some helpful professionals are helpful because they have access to think tanks. Several of the lobbyists I encountered were associated with or worked with think tanks, and politicians I interviewed admitted that they sometimes ordered reports from think tanks. One day, one of the assistants (Assistant 4) told me about a report they recently ordered from a woman at a think tank. At first, he seemed grateful that the report was made available. Then, suddenly, he went quiet. While relating the anecdote, he seemed to have been struck by an insight. After a moment of reflection, he said, ‘... she is also a lobbyist’ (Assistant 4). The woman he ordered the report from also worked as a lobbyist for different organisations. Apparently, the assistant did not think about that beforehand. On another occasion, a lobbyist typically ended an office meeting by offering to send a brief summary of her position on the topic discussed in the meeting. This was framed as if the lobbyist was offering the MEP a friendly service. Her colleague listed topics on which they could provide brief summaries and acted like he was eager to be of help. In another example from an office meeting, the lobbyist offered MEP 1 a study visit at one of the organisation’s facilities. I heard this way of phrasing the sharing of information and the question of whether they could help many times during my shadowing. They did not act like friends but attempted to frame their influence by being friendly and offering what

they could to the politicians so they could perform their job as well as possible.

The next dimension is similar to the one just presented, but the emphasis lies on personal assistance, such as good advice, as opposed to professional service. This is the helpful friend. One day, while I was shadowing MEP 1, a man dropped by the MEP's office. He had heard that the MEP was appointed rapporteur on a specific issue, and he said he wanted to be a helpful friend. The man had been an MEP previously but was now working as a consultant. MEP 1 seemed reluctant to accept the offer. He made no promises, and it was apparent that he tried to cut the visit short. The former MEP attempted to act like 'a helpful friend', but it seemed his gamble did not pay off. Maybe because of the presence of the researcher or for other reasons, MEP 1 did not approve of being approached in an overly personal way by a former MEP. There were many other positive encounters between lobbyists and MEPs/assistants based on friendship and personal relations. It happened frequently, for example, that MEPs or assistants would call people or be called and discuss issues of concern. When they hung up, they would tell me about the conversation. Often it was a lobbyist they had spoken to, but the politicians were eager to emphasise that the person in question had been a long-time friend. On one occasion, I observed MEP 1 in a deep conversation with a lobbyist just outside the plenum before a vote. The lobbyist came from a multinational organisation. An assistant to MEP 1 told me who the lobbyist was, and my facial expression apparently betrayed my surprise. The assistant then quickly told me that the lobbyist was an old friend of the MEP: '... they have known each other forever', she said, which explained why they had the conversation there at that time.

A final example of this strategy is the subtlest performed. Lobbyist 1 attended the network meeting described in 5.4. After the part of the meeting when everyone sat around the table, Lobbyist 1 approached the MEP who was hosting the meeting. With a slight tenseness in his voice, Lobbyist 1 addressed the MEP by his nickname. The tenseness and nervousness when Lobbyist 1 uttered the nickname suggested that it was a gamble to establish that they were on personal and close terms with each other. I noticed a quick facial movement by the MEP. He acted like he had noticed the attempt and accepted it. The lobbyist offered some information and he asked for some information in return, which he received the next day in an e-mail from the MEP assistant. Lobbyist 1 pushed the limits of politeness, but it worked well, and the person he interacted with accepted it.

7.2 The image of charm in the shape of a service

In my observations, I identified certain services the lobbyists offered and gave to the politicians. I consider these services an application of the image of charm. I identified four different gifts: wining and dining; information; event; a connection to high-level contacts.

Wining and dining, the first service, is an old cliché of lobbying but, as mentioned, is anything but a cliché. It is seen as natural that everyone wants a nice meal and something nice to drink. At one lunch, the politician stated explicitly that he loved being entertained with posh lunches and good wines. During the lunch, he ordered one of the most expensive wines and looked at Lobbyist 1 for approval. The lobbyist nodded approval but acted as if he was a bit annoyed. The politician, as if to excuse his expensive taste, praised the custom of discussing affairs over a nice meal. He added that that he had these treats far too seldom because his office was so far from downtown Brussels.

The second gift, information, involves not only copies of internal documents but also gossip and hearsay. The hunt for documents and the acquisition of other, softer intelligence (such as who thinks what and who will do what) took up a great part of the lobbyists' days. Lobbyists obtained internal documents from the EU administration and shared them with politicians and other lobbyists. One of the MEPs I shadowed revealed that it was easier for him to get a European Commission document through his lobbyist friends than through the official channels. This seems to be a 'market' in its own right, but I caught only glimpses of it. For example, one day I observed Lobbyist 1 in despair about being unable to secure a certain document. He had called another lobbyist about it, but she denied having the document. We were in the EP at the time. When we returned to the lobbyist's office, the lobbyist's superior wanted to talk to him immediately. The superior told him that the document, which seemed to have been long sought after, was being shared among certain other lobbyists, and he had obtained it. The original source was the superior of the lobbyist who Lobbyist 1 had asked during the day. Lobbyist 1 was distressed and seemed like he felt quite foolish.

The third service provided by lobbyists to politicians was to organise – or, to be precise, co-organise – events, such as seminars, conferences or meetings. It is important to note that lobbyists cannot organise events in the EP on their own initiative. The only way to hold an event in the parliament building and to expose an issue on a broader scale is to win over

an MEP as host. Fortunately for lobbyists, the elected representatives have every interest in hosting events because they mean prestige and status.

That co-organised events indicate high status becomes clear with one glance at the walls. Inside and outside offices, the walls of the EP are plastered with posters. Many of the posters were left hanging from previous events organised by MEPs and external organisations, sometimes including a political group. When I asked MEPs and lobbyists about the importance of these events, they confirmed my observation: co-organised events are an important indicator; as has been related, a lobbyist who knows to organise them is very much appreciated. Assistant 7 was immensely pleased when a lobbyist knew how to take care of an administrative hassle.

Finally, the fourth service was to use high-level personalities from one's own company. Lobbyist 6 told me, for example, that he used his CEO as a door opener in difficult cases when he could not access the politician in any other way. He gave an example of an upcoming event to which he had invited their CEO to give a speech. On the same day, Lobbyist 6 had booked the CEO for another 3-4 meetings. Among the meetings was a meeting with the General Director for the inner market in the European Commission. The lobbyist told me that he normally briefed the CEO so that he could say some introductory words and then the lobbyist could take over the meeting. Many lobbyists noted the importance of showing the home office that they had high-level contacts in Brussels and showing the top contacts in Brussels that they had top contacts in the home organisation.

These four services are ways by which lobbyists can make themselves useful to and appreciated by politicians. Conversely, one could argue that the fact that politicians are competing with each other for status and prestige creates a dependency on lobbyists as helping hands and extra staffers.

7.3 Norms and rules for the lobbyists – a second view

Lobbyists act in different ways to escape the role of the straightforward lobbyist. I will now more closely consider their own experiences about themselves and politicians' view of lobbyists to determine whether their own accounts provide further clues to the guiding norms and rules. I will first discuss findings from the fieldwork regarding their ambivalent status.

7.3.1 The ambiguity enacted

The role of the lobbyist that emerges from the analysis is far from straightforward and simple with regard to what a lobbyist really does or how the practice is actually enacted. Lobbyists are constantly working with their status and correct (i.e., professional) behaviour. The lobbyists I shadowed and interviewed occasionally ‘opened their hearts’ about the ‘bad lobbyists’ operating in Brussels, as reported in the previous chapter. The degree to which professional lobbyists fully and unreservedly ‘open their hearts’ to a researcher remains debatable, of course. However, the fact remains that there was a change in conversational tone, apparently acknowledging that there is an official version to the lobbying game that, in some respects, differs from the unofficial or real version. I cannot judge whether the interviewees told me the truth, of course.

Many of my interview partners mentioned that stricter lobbying regulation was needed, but the question of what an efficient regulation would look like remained largely unanswered. Lobbyists felt that misbehaving lobbyists (by no means isolated cases) undermined the reputation of their profession. Others told me about the influence of big business.

Given the ambiguity of lobbying’s status in Brussels, a matter discussed in chapter 1, it is not surprising that a group of young lobbyists I joined one evening expressed their frustration about the way they were treated in their line of work: often less than welcome, they were looked down upon. One young man daydreamed out loud about a badge with the inscription, ‘I’m a lobbyist and I’m proud’ (e.g. the campaign a few years ago in Helsinki where lobbyists wore t-shirts with the text, ‘I’m a lobbyist. Hug me’). Interestingly, the frustration young lobbyists experience has two roots: they are lobbyists, but they are also young. In the worldview of the people I talked to that evening, being young and a lobbyist reflected two disadvantages in Brussels. When they learned, by coincidence, that I used to attend a yearly event organised for senior lobbyists, they envied me for having spent time with top personalities. Their reactions upon learning that I had been part of a rather exclusive circle closed to young lobbyists gave me further insight into the importance of the status game. Their frustration with subaltern status also suggests that lobbying on a more senior level seems to be a very different game.

The reality of lobbying differs from the official version in many ways. When lobbyists or politicians spontaneously talked about lobbyists, they mentioned the textbook lobbyist, the strategic persuasive influencer (eg. Schendelen, 2005a, 2005b). In practice, however, my observations and

interviews showed that the average lobbyist in Brussels – no matter whether her business card says ‘lobbyist’ or something about public affairs – does not spend all her time influencing political decisions. The majority of lobbyists’ work, according to their own accounts and according to some authors (Showalter & Fleischer, 2005), mainly involves gathering intelligence. Some lobbyists specified what ‘early warning’ really means. Apparently, the intelligence lobbyists gather is primarily knowledge about upcoming legislation and how it will impact their business. This type of knowledge is also the main task of the area of public affairs (Showalter & Fleischer, 2005). Others talked about doing business, such as direct selling, in Brussels. Still others said that the most important part of working as a lobbyist in Brussels was to maintain the possibility to influence. This comment corresponds to Milbrath (1960), who said that the third task of the lobbyist is to keep channels open.

7.3.2 The lobbyists’ perspective

The lobbyists’ views of the qualities of a good lobbyist are not overly surprising and are in accordance with the literature, such as in Michalowitz study (2007). She asked for practitioners’ advice on lobbying and developed a list of 12 factors: Europeanised argumentation, representativeness, constructive arguments, building reputation, flexibility, multilingualism and intercultural understanding, competence to identify key persons, network skills, good timing, modesty in appearance and, finally, the ability to make oneself indispensable.

The lobbyists I interviewed were keen to share their advice for good lobbying and how a lobbyist should act. First, the in-house lobbyists (who are directly employed by an organisation that they represent) often spoke poorly of consultant lobbyists, also called hired guns. Lobbyist 24 told me that no one listens attentively to a consultant lobbyist. The interviewed lobbyists were keen to show off their insights and often gave detailed advice, such as, ‘the MEPs are constantly short of time’, ‘always call before sending a text’ or the need ‘to understand and respect the MEPS work’. Lobbyist 11, for example, told me:

The MEPs get a pile. Everyday. Faxes. They don’t read that shit. Either you have personal contact or you can ask to send a fax. My [idea] is not to give anything to an MEP if it doesn’t benefit them, that person. I can’t change a political conviction, but I can try to see if this particular thing fits that particular person. And what other lobbyists would try to do is to (waves with her hands to picture something large) to make them change their minds,

but it is not very credible if you talk about something you didn't know before, but at least you are alert and know this is the way it goes (Lobbyist 11).

In this quote, we can see the confidence with which this lobbyist talks about what is correct and what is not correct. There is no hesitation; she knows what the MEP wants that others seem not to know. These comments connect to the general comments lobbyists made in 7.3.1 that they themselves were good lobbyists, whereas others are bad, including consultant lobbyists. Furthermore, these comments support the importance MEPs place on behaving correctly with regard to every detail.

Other detailed advice and small-scale tactics involved things such as contacting MEP assistants on Fridays when their MEP was usually out of the office or that lobby dinners (which are apparently easier to obtain with MEPs than lunches) commonly start at 18.00 or 19.00 at the latest. The importance of all details being correct was further emphasised by Lobbyist 3, who mentioned an incident that was utterly embarrassing for the lobbyist. It was a lobbyist for a trade union who gave a presentation for MEPs. During the presentation, one of the MEPs interrupted and said that the trade organisation had another opinion on the present question and stated what it was. The situation was described as terrible. One of the greatest sins a lobbyist can commit, it seems, is to not be well prepared or sharp.

I spontaneously asked two lobbyists what animal they would describe themselves as, and their answers were quite telling: one was an octopus with many arms and eyes both front and back (Lobbyist 1), and the other described himself as the bear Baloo from Kipling's *Jungle Book* (Lobbyist 10), a jolly creature that helps where it can. Admittedly, Baloo is not portrayed as the sharpest of animals in the Disney movie; it remains a matter of speculation whether this lobbyist insinuated that there was a dimension of being perceived as friendly but slightly foolish. The interviews established that many lobbyists felt that they were not fully respected by their own organisations and that the importance of their work was not appreciated 'at home'.

The synthesis of my interviews with lobbyists suggests that the source of the lobbyists' professional standing, understandably, is familiarity with Brussels. Most of the lobbyists, when asked about the qualities of a good lobbyist, mentioned general characteristics and behaviour towards MEPs or politicians. A few of the lobbyists also mentioned responsibilities towards clients or employers. The interviews suggest that lobbyists demonstrate their expertise by obtaining information and by obtaining it early,

which depends on good contacts and an extensive network. The aspect of functioning as an early-warning system was strongly emphasised, a result that is in line with Michalowitz's work. In Michalowitz's (2007) account, the lobbyist has four main functions: to provide a very early warning, to provide an early warning, to monitor and to perform active lobbying (by actively influencing).

7.3.3 The politicians' perspective

The politicians' view of a good lobbyist involved the lobbyists' character more than their skills, although they agreed on the need for the lobbyists to have detailed knowledge.

Regarding character, they mentioned social graces and thought that a lobbyist should be polite and friendly. Assistant 1 even went so far as to say that they thought that a lobbyist should smile. Almost all politicians stated that a lobbyist should not be pushy. The observations above have shown, especially in the office meetings, when the lobbyists were too pushy. The politicians said that a good lobbyist argues his case without irritating the elected representatives. Assistant 1 told me, with unmistakable irritation in her voice, about the mistake a lobbyist made when she 'started immediately with her issue'. She was talking too loud, the assistant said, and began selling her idea from the second they met. She insisted that lobbyists should be calm and even laid back. Avoiding pushiness also involved attempts to obtain a meeting. Assistant 4 told me that he would ignore a lobbyist who had 'called two times too many', and assistant 7, who was rather rude and short to a lobbyist on the phone one day, explained to me after the call that the lobbyist had asked to meet the MEP on a Monday, although the lobbyist should have known that MEPs are rarely present in Brussels on Mondays. Again, the lobbyist was denied access because he did not demonstrate awareness, in detail, of the customs.

The skills they mentioned were on par with what the lobbyists said and, often, on a detailed level. They even agreed in their view of the value of the in-house lobbyist compared to the gun for hire; the politicians preferred in-house lobbyists. The politicians did not only think the lobbyist should know everything; a really skilled lobbyist, according to the politicians, should also do everything, i.e. do the job (of organizing) for the politicians. The best example is told already but worth mentioning again: Assistant 7 who said, with regard to co-organised events, that 'the best lobbyists know all the administrative routines in the EP and take care of

everything, and then we (the politicians) just have to sign some lists.’ (Assistant 7, my translation) Other politicians talked about how the information they obtained from the lobbyists had to be directly useable, both in time (meaning to be used here and now) and with regard to the packaging. I heard several times (one day just a couple of hours apart) how politicians would retell stories they heard from lobbyists.

7.4 Discussion

This chapter shows how lobbyists, somewhat paradoxically, consistently attempt to avoid the perception of being engaged in what the previous literature has defined as the core of lobbying: influence (Althaus, 2007). Although the EU political system explicitly acknowledges the functionality of interest representatives, there were only a few occasions when I observed lobbyists acting as straightforward lobbyists.

One could argue, of course, that we all adjust to the person with whom we are interacting and that there is nothing sinister about the manoeuvres I observed. Interestingly, this argument only shifts the blame from the lobbyists to the politicians; lobbyists, adapting to their counterparts’ expectations, downplay and obscure their influence because politicians do not want to be openly confronted with the fact that they are extensively exposed to influence. In any case, my examples from the field clarify that professional interest representatives are prepared to go quite far with their adjustments and, in some cases, to more or less obscure their identity, clearly to the detriment of transparency and democracy.

It is interesting that previous research on lobbying pays very little attention to the concrete conversational and interactional behaviour of lobbyists, especially since the actors themselves, both lobbyists and politicians, assign such great importance to the details of behaviour. The only reference to concrete behaviour that I identified comes as advice in a lobbying handbook. In ‘Machiavelli in Brussels’, Van Schendelen (2005a) writes under the headline ‘How to Style One’s Lobbying’ that a professional group or a lobbying group:

... invests consciously in its image of charm. It likes to be seen as interesting, pleasant and friendly, and ultimately trustworthy. It distributes such small symbols of charms as social small talk, a nice dinner or a golf party, and it hopes to be rewarded with a more informal relationship (p. 248).

There certainly are scholars who, working from a meso- or macroperspective, dismiss Van Schendelen’s advice as a peripheral human factor.

My own observations and numerous interviews have led me to believe that the human factor captured in the phrase 'image of charm' is not peripheral to the EU machinery in Brussels; it is central. The strategies and manoeuvres I observed in the field, to put it simply, ultimately serve the same purpose that Van Schendelen describes. A charming person, it will be noted, is helpful rather than demanding; a charming person does not insist on formality but rather cuts through the red tape; and a charming person, above all, does not threaten the cherished self-perception of the elected representatives.

8. Summary and conclusions

Throughout this study, I have struggled with the issue of understanding lobbying and the role of lobbyists from a communicative perspective. There seems to be a clear-cut picture in the minds of many people, including academic scholars, of what a lobbyist is and what a lobbyist does. It has sometimes been challenging for me to avoid including my preconceptions of lobbyists in this research. This thesis challenges many of these ideas and aims to provide a new understanding of lobbying by revealing the organising principles involved in meetings between lobbyists and MEPs. In what follows in this chapter, I will provide an overview of the main findings, present the conclusions in two subchapters, discuss my findings in relation to the previous research that I presented in the introduction to this thesis, discuss my results in relation to transparency, and finally present suggestions for future research on the moments of lobbying.

8.1 Brief summary of the empirical chapters

Chapter 4 draws on the everyday life and work of lobbyists and politicians in Brussels. I argue that there is a potential team feeling in the shared frustrations with their home organisations and their working conditions. This feeling provides a basis for the work I observed in which they helped each other to improve their positions in the Brussels arena. This means that politicians are dependent on lobbyists not only for the information the lobbyists provide but also because lobbyists can give politicians the status they need to do a good job, measured in rapport and influence in other forms.

Chapter 5 maps the different forms of meetings. The office meeting stands out as the meeting at which it is easiest for both parties to be prepared and to know in advance what will happen, even though lobbyists who have an established relationship with a politician prefer other types of meetings. This is not only due to convenience and saved time; other meetings also allow other communication patterns. Specifically, in other forms of interactions, the lobbyists also obtain information instead of only giving information.

Drawing upon the difference between office meetings and other types of meetings, I introduce the concepts of backstage and frontstage (Goffman, 1990/1959) in chapter 6. With the distinction of backstage and frontstage as an analytical tool, I show how backstage is appreciated as a working mode among both lobbyists and politicians and that there is a shift in

which lobbyists actively work to meet backstage. It even seems that part of the lobbyist's work is to make backstage happen. When lobbyists were in encounters that were more frontstage than they wished, they applied different strategies to push the encounter backstage. If a lobbyist had no relationship with the politician, the lobbyist would use a bit of backstage, such as joint contacts or a brief encounter in a reception, as a means to book an office meeting.

In the next and final empirical chapter, I demonstrate that the shift is not only from more open meeting forms (such as the office meeting) but also from the clear-cut role of the lobbyist as traditionally seen. I show how lobbyists work by changing their identities. This identity change ranges from a full change that involves working for another organisation to subtler changes in which the lobbyists apply transportable identities in the shape of the insider, the helpful friend or the helpful professional. I also show how lobbyists use services such as information, events, wining and dining or connections to high-level contacts as an application of the image of charm. The importance of the lobbyists' work with their identities is enhanced by the fact that politicians emphasise the importance of lobbyists being friendly, polite and smiling in their interactions. It seems important for politicians to feel that lobbyists fully respect and understand their working conditions.

8.2 Understanding lobbying from a communication perspective

The logic and rules for the practice of lobbying are well known and seem quite stable. Most lobbyists and politicians know about them and talk explicitly about appreciating other actors who know these unwritten norms. The only people who do not know these rules and norms are those who were new to Brussels; they make attempts to fit in but do not succeed perfectly, which creates some annoyance among more experienced individuals. The lobbyist in the office meeting called the lobbying lunch (see chapter 5.1) acted as the perfect lobbyist in a self-conscious way that reminded me of Goffman's (1990/1959) account of the waiter (who is so much a waiter that the observer sees that he is acting as a waiter but is not a waiter). In the same way, the lobbyist in the lobby lunch acted as a lobbyist and, superficially, most things went according to other office meetings. However, the lobbyist did not get all the details right, which made it easier to see the staged acting. The need to adhere to the rules makes sense; there are politicians, assistants and lobbyists who spend many years in Brussels, although many people stay for a shorter time. For the system

to work, it cannot depend on individuals, and it cannot be completely changed each time a new individual enters.

Seeing it from a communicative perspective also makes it apparent that the lobbyist and the politician are working together. Earlier studies tend to present the lobbyist and the politician as antagonists. Even my study demonstrates this tendency when I show what the lobbyists did to fulfil what they understood as the politicians' norms and expectations. This study is an analysis of negotiation of power, but it is also a study of a joint work with mutual interests in mind. The lobbyists and politicians work together as a team (cf. Goffman, 1990/1959) to uphold a specific façade. There is a frontstage that all involved actors work together to uphold to the audience and to themselves. This frontstage is partly decoupled (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) while parts of the frontstage is brought in backstage to make backstage look frontstage from the outside. In other words, lobbyists and politicians have a preferred working mode in the backstage, but they make efforts to make encounters appear frontstage. "Frontstage" involves all aspects that contribute to the understanding that official high politics is conducted in a transparent and therefore democratic way.

Few of the politicians suggested that their work together with lobbyists and the relations with lobbyists troubled their conscience. One of the MEP assistants said:

... it is difficult (suddenly shows signs of discomfort, my remark)...
hmmmm, I have many friends here too who are working for... here in the city and, I mean, I have got to know them quite well, and I think they are my best friends too. And it is because we have the same interests, we work with the same questions, and often I feel that we don't have so different, that we don't want to get in different directions, but it feels rather that we are allied in the fight against other parts in this parliament (Assistant 5, my translation. It is implicitly understood in the second line that the assistant refers to the fact that her friends are working for different organisations).

Through the discomfort shown in her body language when she told me this information, it was clear that she thought that it might not be optimal to be as close as she was to persons who were lobbyists working for special interests.

8.3 From timing to non-transparency

The logic and rules have been presented as stable and important. The importance of following norms and rules has consequences that shed light on

why certain acts by lobbyists are undertaken as they are. I will present two conclusions.

First, it was very important for lobbyists to walk the walk and talk the talk. I observed reactions when the lobbyists did not live up to expectations, and I observed what the lobbyists did to fulfil expectations. For example, the politicians and assistants would sigh and sometimes ignore requests if lobbyists made mistakes such as calling too many times, asking a question in a lobby office meeting, becoming agitated and even upset in a lobby meeting or showing a lack of understanding about the crucial importance of timing (cf. Kingdon, 2003). Timing implies that most issues could be lobbied within a certain time frame that may be only weeks or even days long. Outside of this time frame, lobbying would not be welcomed on this issue because the politician had other issues of concern at that moment.

The extreme need for timing as well as the need for inside information on legislative issues to give to their home organisations and to use in information trading were reasons the lobbyists needed soft information from the politicians about who thought what or when a certain issue would be discussed in the parliament. This information was not available online; the lobbyists requested it from the politicians. The normal lobby meetings, which for reasons of transparency should be the preferred meetings, as I have shown in this study, had a discursive structure that did not allow the lobbyists to obtain the information they needed. These meetings were only for the politicians to be informed and to ask questions. The MEPs were also constantly under time pressure, so it was also difficult to find 30 minutes for an office meeting.

The consequence is that lobbyists need to develop relations with politicians because the only way to approach politicians comfortably in settings other than the office meeting is if the two parties know and trust each other. To build relations - or social integration, in Giddens' (1984) words - and to be an attractive speaking partner to politicians, lobbyists do different things to downplay themselves as persuaders and interest representatives. It was considered good trust and tact (cf. Giddens, 1984) to be not only a lobbyist but also something else (which of course, analytically, is then what a lobbyist really is). The tendency among lobbyists to avoid being seen as straightforward lobbyists has been identified. Althaus (2006) analysed business cards and door signs among lobbyists in Berlin and found creative alternatives to the title "lobbyist," such as "Authorised representative of the group's supervisory board for policy and regulatory

principles” or “Referee for politics and communication” (p. 317). This habit was pithily noted by the German PR consultant Klaus Kocks, who said that the lobbyist who calls himself a lobbyist is an amateur.²⁶ My research shows in detail how lobbyists manage this in practice. In the shadowings, I observed that some lobbyists changed identity completely and acted with another badge, such as a trade union. Others said that they were something else, such as an idealist or an information gatherer, whereas others added identities. The most important identities I observed were the insider, the helpful professional and the helpful friend.

The second conclusion that can be drawn from the result is that the lobbyists and the politicians are working in a system in which they are interdependent and cooperative. This is far from a new insight: previous research has noted that politicians might be dependent on the information and insights lobbyists provide to the politicians (Nylander, 2000) or the ability to read the power structures (Pieczka, 2006). I have shown that politicians are also dependent on lobbyists to build their positions in the EP and the ways that this cooperative work functions.

I observed mutual understanding for each other’s work and saw that the lobbyists and the politicians supported each other in issue-related work as well as in the building of their respective positions, both in Brussels and in relation to their home organisations. Often, the work aimed to demonstrate the power of their networks and their capability to “get things going”, such as setting up events, hosting a seminar or providing a CEO as a main speaker at an event. The cooperation that aimed to allow both parties to be as successful as possible was also visible in the teamwork between the lobbyists and politicians to uphold the façade of democratic political work. Even if the aim of a meeting was to get to know each other, which seemed to be understood by all actors as a necessary task, there was an issue that should be discussed to have the meeting appear to be a normal meeting to advance political work. This can be understood as a form of decoupling in which there are certain rules and behaviours for normal political work – like to discuss a certain political issue – that are taken out and added to a meeting that has other aims – for example to learn to know each other – to make the meeting appear to be something else.

²⁶ In German: Wenn sich jemand als Lobbyist bezeichnet, weist er sich als dilettant aus. Originally from an interview in *The Berlin Tageszeitung*. Thomas Leif: ‘Zugeben würde ich das nie’, in *die Tageszeitung*, dec 22 2004, p. 3.

8.4 Revising lobbying research

In the introduction, I presented and problematized three assumptions in previous research and presented three insights from previous research that guided me to a research design that focused on lobbying as communicative practice. In summary, previous research has assumed that successful lobbying primarily or exclusively depends on the correct strategy and that the social and contextual game is a negligible factor. Information is the key resource and the currency with which lobbyists “pay,” so to speak, whereas political influence that rests in people is negligible in comparison. Politicians are always aware of when and how lobbying takes place; that is, lobbying or being lobbied is an easily discernible phenomenon in the flow of people’s everyday lives. Previous research also provided insights that guided the study: it should not be assumed that lobbyists only attempt to influence while lobbying, and lobbying is a highly personal game in which access to political decision makers should not be taken for granted. These insights led to the study of lobbying as a communicative practice. The main contribution of my results in relation to previous research is that I show, on a micro-level, what strategies the lobbyists use, how they use them, and what the organising principles for the practice are. The most important principle of the lobbying practice was to avoid straightforward lobbying interactions and lobby meetings and to avoid being seen as a straightforward lobbyist.

The social and contextual game that has largely been taken for granted in favour of a focus purely on strategies at the meso- and macro-levels (Jaatinen, 1999; Kollman, 1998; Mahoney, 2007a), in fact, at the core of lobbyists’ activities. It is part and parcel of the lobbyist’s work to be able to understand and demonstrate the norms and codes that rule interactions. Previous research has identified this as important (Boräng & Naurin, 2016; Jutterström, 2004; Klüver et al., 2015; Klüver et al., 2016; Naurin, 2004; Nylander, 2000), but I show that it is essential as well as what the norms and rules are and how they work. If lobbyists do not meet expectations or reach politicians through different backstage strategies, they will have considerable difficulties reaching politicians at all.

This study also shows that information is only one of the key resources lobbyists use in their work. Information as the only resource is partly problematized by Sundström (1998), who argues the lobbyist is a translator between politics and private organisations, Pieczka (2006) who emphasises lobbyists’ ability to read power structures, and Chalmers (Chalmers, 2013a, 2013b), who writes that lobbyists help politicians filter

information. My study adds information about what lobbyists use as resources in their interactions with politicians. I show that lobbyists provide soft information to politicians and that they help politicians with their social standing, such as by providing co-organised events.

My findings show that lobbyists do not always know when and how lobbying takes place. First, lobbyists actively attempt to disguise their identities. In this study, I call this disguise a shift away from the most transparent setting, the office meeting, and from the clear-cut lobbyist identity. My study shows that lobbyists work to build relationships with politicians so that they can meet backstage. Furthermore, lobbyists shift their identities or add layers to their lobbyist identity to make themselves not only lobbyists but also helpful friends.

Second, all the interactions between lobbyists and politicians can be considered lobbying when they help the lobbyist build relations with the politicians so that they can subsequently meet backstage. Liehr-Gobbers (2006) showed that the greater personal trust is, the greater the lobbying success of a lobbyist will be (see similar results in Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Chalmers, 2013b; Greenwood, 1997; Mazey & Richardson, 1993; Moloney, 2006; Schendelen, 2005b). My study shows how lobbyists work with different strategies to build trust and relationships with politicians.

My findings also contribute to deepening understanding of the three insights I presented. First, lobbyists do not only work with influence in either the short or the long term with politicians. Showalter and Fleischer (2005) argued that lobbyists gather business intelligence, and Bouwen (2002) suggested that lobbyists work to secure access to political decision makers. My study shows that lobbyists gather business intelligence. This is a reason that lobbyists need to meet backstage because this work mode makes it possible for the lobbyist to obtain information from the politician. The frontstage mood was only for the politician to be informed by the lobbyist. The lobbyists also work to secure access to politicians by building personal relations with them.

The lobbyists work constantly on their personal relations with politicians; therefore, lobbying can be defined as a highly personal game. The lobbyists actively worked to achieve backstage encounters, which were far easier with people who already knew each other. It was therefore necessary for lobbyists and politicians to have pre-existing relationships to achieve backstage interaction.

Finally, the last insight, that access to political decision makers should not be taken for granted, is developed through showing how the lobbyists

are working to secure the access. Lobbyists are building relations with the politicians so they can get hold of them in other settings than the pre-booked office meeting. For example, the lobbyists are pushing the conversation in the meetings so their relation become closer, like positioning themselves as insiders together with the politicians. By doing so they can, for example, grab the politician when they are passing each other in the corridor and exchange some information.

8.5 Consequences for transparency

The European Union has enhanced its work with transparency in recent years, and lobbying has been one strategic focus in this work. Commissioner Siim Kallas initiated a large initiative to enhance transparency. Among the outcomes are lobbyist-registers, financial accounts of lobbying work and codes of conduct. Registration was voluntary for lobbyists, but there was informal pressure to register. This has proven to be insufficient²⁷, so the European Union is now, at the end of 2016, proposing to tighten the regulations by making registration mandatory in 2017. The OECD has also requested tighter regulations. A lobbying report from the OECD in 2012 suggests a combination of self-regulation and further regulation of lobbying and recommends that steps must be taken on both sides, for lobbyists and for the public officials who receive the lobbyists (especially with regard to the ‘revolving door’). The report suggests a lobby-independent governmental agency to address registration and disclosure and states that it should be clearly defined ‘who must register as a lobbyist and what activity must be disclosed to the public’ (OECD, 2012, p. 105).

The intention of the registers and code of conduct is to push lobbying to the frontstage. The EU code of conduct clarifies what is viewed and accepted as decent behaviour by lobbyists, such as openness about who they are and providing information that is unbiased, complete, up to date and not misleading. This may be a solution to the democratic problems of undue influence.

Although it may seem to be a solution, it is actually a problem that the regulation to enhance transparency takes for granted that the roles of the

²⁷

See: http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=INTER_INST_AGREEMENT

lobbyist as an influencer and the politician as a receiver are clear. The exception that the codes of conduct address is when the lobbyist attempts to deceive the politician. However, my observations showed that the roles are confused, and they work together to achieve their respective goals. It could be that an MEP asked a lobbyist to dinner to talk things over or turned to the lobbyist to obtain documents from other parts of the European institutions' administration. My results show that it is part of lobbyists' work to go beyond the clear-cut role of a lobbyist and to be something more, something different. In other words, the logic and organising principles for lobbying make transparency a contradiction. My observations suggest that the consequence for the practice is in-transparency.

I have shown how lobbyists work to achieve a more personal footing with politicians. The lobbyists themselves never spontaneously reflected upon whether it could be problematic for them to have close relations with certain politicians and civil servants. When I asked in interviews whether this could be a problem, they talked on a meta-level about how lobbying in Brussels had problematic sides and that dirty things were occurring. One lobbyist (interviewed in the pre-study, not shadowed) talked about the revolving door. As a lobbyist for one of the world's largest multinational companies and therefore someone with good contacts, he said that he could name six ex-commissioners who had performed services that were directly paid in top positions after their careers in the European institutions were over. The lobbyists own relationships and behaviours were never considered problematic; they did not reflect on their own role and contribution.

The politicians reflected more about the problems that could accompany personal relations with lobbyists. Of course, there is a bias in that the MEPs and their assistants who let me in as an observer were probably more likely to reflect upon these issues than those who denied me access. Nevertheless, a conversation like the following took place one day. MEP 3 had just returned from a committee meeting (at which I was not allowed), and the following conversation occurred (C is me):

C: Did you meet any lobbyists so far today?

MEP 3: No.

C: No? Not even when you were running to and from the committee meeting?

MEP 3: No... no... well, I did meet this man from X (a multinational company). But he didn't lobby me.

C: What did you talk about then?

MEP 3: Nothing special...he asked about my health and so on (the politician had a quite visible injury at the time).

The MEP was quiet for a short while, and then he started to think aloud and reflect: what is lobbying, and when does lobbying really take place? He had no answer, but it looked like he continued thinking. When the MEP said, "he didn't lobby me", he revealed that he thought he could differentiate when a lobbyist is lobbying and when a lobbyist is engaging in a friendly conversation between two acquaintances or even between two friends. This is exactly what the lobbyists are working to achieve, as I have shown in the chapters above. The personal relations and the appearance that they are more than "only lobbyists" are necessary for the lobbyists to be able to do their work. This phenomenon blurs the identities and the power relations between the politician and the lobbyist, and only this factor is a democratic problem. How is a person supposed to be fully objective when dealing with friends? Is this possible?

As a final reflection of transparency I want to make a reference to the subtitle in Naurin's (2004) thesis. His subtitle reads: 'why increasing transparency in the European Union will not make lobbyists behave any better than they already do.' My results indicate that Naurin is right: enhancing regulation will not make lobbyists behave better. Naurin found that lobbyists, counter-intuitively, take a more conciliatory and democratic stance when operating behind closed doors. My findings indicate that lobbyists do not necessarily seek to get at politicians behind closed doors, but backstage: in many cases, it is not about secrecy, but about avoiding official and bureaucratic snags.

Backstage-operations are necessary for the EU-machinery to run properly, it seems. For that reason, it appears naïve to advocate 'full transparency' to a degree that backstage becomes frontstage. With all probability, the result will not be greater transparency but less, as new and different backstage modes of operation are established elsewhere. It is of course necessary to curb the excesses of lobbying and to carefully monitor the influence of special interest representatives on public policy-making. Accountability is an important principle of good governance. But it is highly doubtful whether adding another layer of bureaucracy will solve a problem created by too much bureaucracy. 'Smarter' solutions are needed.

Ultimately, the smartest solution might lie in strengthening democracy. Europe needs to come to a point where European citizens take a real interest in European affairs.

8.6 Reflections on future research

While finalising this study, it was striking to find that the way lobbyists act in Brussels in the 21st century is not much different from what Sennefelt (2009) describes about lobbying and political influence in 18th-century Stockholm. Who you talked to and created alliances with was important, but a crucial part of success was to know the rules and how to behave, how to talk and interact, and even how to walk. This knowledge shed new light and offered a larger perspective on my thoughts about how applicable the observations from Brussels in 2008 are for Brussels in 2016.

I see three main differences from 2008 to 2016 that affect the way lobbying is undertaken: social media, enhanced EU information online and Brexit. Brexit has shaken the EU at its core, and it is still unknown how it will affect the entire European project. In any case, it opens up the possibility for legislation to be re-negotiated. Social media and online activities have changed the way both lobbyists and politicians communicate and how they present themselves. Research should consider how their relationships and work change with social media. More material from the European institutions has been made available online. However, what the lobbyists in my observations were searching for was not official, finished documents but drafts and papers in progress as well as the soft information on who thinks what, who owes whom a favour, and what different parties think of certain proposals.

I believe the lobbyists of 2016 in Brussels will have a high recognition factor. Whether this is true and how are questions for further research.

9. References

- Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: an informal introduction to ethnography*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Ahlgren, P. (2004). *Att påverka en koloss: handbok för unga EU-lobbyister*. Göteborg: Tromb, cop.
- Althaus, M. (2006). Lobbying als beruf: karrierewege und professionalisierung in der interessenrepräsentation. In T. Leif & R. Speth (Eds.), *Die fünfte gewalt: lobbyismus in Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Althaus, M. (2007). Public affairs und lobbying. In M. Piwinger & A. Zerfaß (Eds.), *Handbuch unternehmenskommunikation* (pp. 19 (p 797-816)). Wiesbaden: Gabler.
- Althaus, M. (2009). Discovering our (corporate) grassroots. In D. W. Johnson (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of political management*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Alvesson, M., & Deetz, S. (2007). *Doing critical management research* (3 ed.). London: Sage.
- Andersen, S. S., & Eliassen, K. A. (1995). EU lobbying: the new research agenda. *European Journal of Political Research*, 27, 18.
- Angelöw, B., & Jonsson, T. (1990). *Introduktion till socialpsykologi*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Balme, R., & Chabanet, D. (2008). *European governance and democracy: power and protest in the EU*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Balotin, M. A. (2012). *The evolution of lobbying in the European Union*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Bateson, G. (2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baumgartner, F. R., & Leech, B. L. (1998). *Basic interests: the importance of groups in politics and in political science*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Bentele, G., & Nothhaft, H. (2015). Lobbying. In R. Fröhlich, P. Szyszka, & G. Bentele (Eds.), *Handbuch der public relations* (pp. 1126-1127). Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. London: Allen Lane Penguin.
- Bern, T. (1994). *Lobbying i EU*. Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus.
- Bernhagen, P., Dür, A., & Marschall, D. (2016). Information or context: what accounts for positional proximity between the European Commission and lobbyists? In J. Beyers, C. Braun, & H. Klüver (Eds.), *Legislative lobbying in context. The policy and polity*

- determinants of interest group politics in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Bernhagen, P., Dür, A., & Marshall, D. (2015). Information or context: what accounts for positional proximity between the European Commission and lobbyists? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4), 17.
- Beyers, J., Braun, C., & Klüver, H. (Eds.). (2016). *Legislative lobbying in context: the policy and polity determinants of interest group politics in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Beyers, J., Eising, R., & Maloney, W. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Interest group politics in Europe: lessons from EU studies and comparative politics*. London: Routledge.
- Beyers, J., & Kerreman, B. (2012). Domestic embeddedness and the dynamics of multilevel venue shopping in four EU member states. *Governance*, 25(2), 28.
- Binderkrantz, A. S., & Rasmussen, A. (2015). Comparing the domestic and the EU lobbying context: perceived agenda-setting influence in the multi-level system of the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(4).
- Blomkvist, P. (2001). *Den goda vägens vänner*. Eslöv: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion.
- Boräng, F., & Naurin, D. (2016). Try to see it my way! Frame congruence between lobbyists and European Commission officials. In J. Beyers, C. Braun, & H. Klüver (Eds.), *Legislative lobbying in context: the policy and polity determinants of interest group politics in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Bouwen, P. (2002). Corporate lobbying in the European Union: the logic of access. *Journal of European Policy*, 9(3), 25.
- Brosheid, A., & Coen, D. (2007). Lobbying activity and fora creation in the EU: empirically exploring the nature of the policy good. In D. Coen (Ed.), *EU lobbying: empirical and theoretical studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Bruycker, I. D. (2016). Pressure and expertise: explaining the information supply of interest groups in EU legislative lobbying. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54(3), 17.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (3 ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bunea, A. (2013). Issues, preferences and ties: determinants of interest groups' preference attainment in the EU environmental policy. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(4), 19.

- Bunea, A., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2014). The state of the discipline: authorship, research designs, and citation patterns in studies of EU interest groups and lobbying. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(10), 22.
- Camauër, L. (2000). *Feminism, citizenship and the media: an ethnographic study of identity processes within four women's associations*. Stockholm: Dept. of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University.
- Carey, J. W. (1992). *Communication as culture: essays on media and society*. New York: Routledge.
- Chalmers, A. W. (2013a). Trading information for access: informational lobbying strategies and interest group access to the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(1), 13.
- Chalmers, A. W. (2013b). With a lot of help from their friends: explaining the social logic of informational lobbying in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, 14(4), 19.
- Coen, D. (1997). The evolution of the large firm as a political actor in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 4(1), 17.
- Coen, D. (2007). Empirical and theoretical studies in EU lobbying. In D. Coen (Ed.), *EU Lobbying: empirical and theoretical studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Coen, D., & Richardson, J. (Eds.). (2009). *Lobbying the European Union: institutions, actors, and issues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Cozier, Z. R., & Witmer, D. F. (2001). The development of a structuration analysis of new publics in an electronic environment. In R. L. Heath & G. Vasquez (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Relations*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Crawford, K. G. (1974). *The pressure boys: the inside story of lobbying in America*. New York: Arno Press.
- Crombez, C. (2002). Information, lobbying and the legislative process in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, 3(1), 25.
- Cutlip, S., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2000). *Effective public relations*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, cop.
- Czarniawska, B. (2007). *Shadowing and other techniques for doing fieldwork in modern societies* (1 ed.). Malmö: Liber.
- Dalfelt, S., & Falkheimer, J. (2001). PR-industrin, lobbyisterna och demokratin. *Nordicom Information*, 3-4.
- Danermark, B., Ekström, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.

- Davidson, S., & Rowe, O. (2016). Emerging from the shadows? Perceptions, problems and potential consensus on the functional and civic roles of public affairs practice. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 5(1), 27.
- Dür, A. (2010). Interest groups in the European Union: how powerful are they? In J. Beyers, R. Eising, & W. A. Maloney (Eds.), *Interest group politics in Europe: lessons from EU studies and comparative politics*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Eising, R. (2007). The access of business interests to EU institutions: towards élite pluralism. In D. Coen (Ed.), *EU lobbying: empirical and theoretical studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Ekström, M. (2000). Etnografiska observationer. In M. Ekström & L. Larsson (Eds.), *Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Elvander, N. (1969). *Intresseorganisationerna i dagens Sverige*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Eriksson, M. (2003). *Från ingenjörskonst till informatörskonst: studier av PR och riskkommunikation*. Örebro: Universitetsbiblioteket.
- Falkemark, G. (1999). *Politik, lobbyism och manipulation: svensk trafikpolitik i verkligheten*. Nora: Nya Doxa.
- Figueiredo, J. M. D. (2002). Lobbying and information in politics. *Business and Politics*, 4(2), 5.
- Finer, S. E. (1958). *Anonymous empire: a study of the Lobby in Great Britain*. London: The Pall Mall Press.
- Gardner, J. N. (1991). *Effective lobbying in the European community*. Deventer: Kluwer Law and Taxation, cop.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1999). *Runaway world*. London: Profile Books.
- Gobo, G. (2013). *Doing ethnography*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington D.C.: Sage.
- Goffman, E. (1961a). *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. New York: Penguin books.
- Goffman, E. (1961b). *Encounters: two studies in the sociology of interaction*. Indianapolis: LiteraryLicensing.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: essays on face-to-face behavior*. New York: Pantheon books.
- Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Goffman, E. (1990/1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1997/1961). Social life as game. In C. Lemert & A. Branaman (Eds.), *The Goffman Reader*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

- Greenwood, J. (1997). *Representing interests in the European Union*. Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press.
- Greenwood, J. (2007). *Interest representation in the European Union* (Second ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Grossman, G., & Helpman, E. (2001). *Special interest politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Grunig, J., & Hunt, T. (1984). Public affairs and government relations In J. Grunig & T. Hunt (Eds.), *Managing public relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, cop.
- Göransson, B. (2000). *En uthållig demokrati! Politik för folkstyret på 2000-talet. Demokratiutredningens slutrapport*. Stockholm: Fritzes Offentliga Publikationer.
- Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Ruler, B. v., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining Strategic Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 1(1), 3-35.
doi:10.1080/15531180701285244
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong in ethnography?* London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2008). *Ethnography - principles in practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Harris, P., & Fleisher, C. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The handbook of public affairs*. London: Sage Publications.
- Harrison, S. (2000). *Public relations: an introduction*. London: Thomson Learning.
- Haug, M., & Koppang, H. (1997). Lobbying and public relations in a European context. *Public Relations Review*, 23(3), 14.
- Have, P. t. (2010). *Understanding qualitative research and ethnomethodology*. London: Sage.
- Heide, M. (2011). En fråga om goda relationer. In J. Falkheimer & M. Heide (Eds.), *Strategisk kommunikation: forskning och praktik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Höög, M. (1996). *Vägen till Bryssel: handledning i EU-lobbying*. Stockholm: Norstedts juridik.
- Ihlen, Ø., & Ruler, B. v. (2007). How public relations works: Theoretical roots and public relations perspectives. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 5.
- Ihlen, Ø., & Ruler, B. v. (2009). Introduction: applying social theory to public relations. In Ø. Ihlen, B. v. Ruler, & M. Fredriksson (Eds.), *Public relations and social theory: key figures and concepts*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Ihlen, Ø., & Verhoeven, P. (2012). A public relations identity for the 2010s. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 1(2), 17.

- Jaatinen, M. (1999). *Lobbying political issues: a contingency model of effective lobbying strategies*. University of Helsinki, Helsinki.
- Johansson, R. (2006a). Nyinstitutionell organisationsteori. In O. Grape, B. Blom, & R. Johansson (Eds.), *Organisation och omvärld: nyinstitutionell analys av människobehandlande organisationer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Johansson, R. (2006b). Nyinstitutionell organisationsteori: från sociologi i USA till socialt arbete i Sverige. In O. Grape, B. Blom, & R. Johansson (Eds.), *Organisation och omvärld: nyinstitutionell analys av människobehandlande organisationer*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Jutterström, M. (2004). *Att påverka beslut: företag i EUs regelsättande*. Stockholm: Ekonomiska forskningsinstitutet vid Handelshögsk.
- Karr, K. (2007). *Democracy and lobbying in the European Union*. Frankfurt: Campus.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Kingdon, J. W. (2003). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies* (2 ed.). New York: Longman.
- Klüver, H. (2013). *Lobbying in the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klüver, H., Braun, C., & Beyers, J. (2015). Legislative lobbying in context: towards a conceptual framework of interest group lobbying in the European union. *Journal of European Policy*, 22(4), 15.
- Klüver, H., Mahoney, C., & Opper, M. (2016). Framing in context: how interest groups employ framing to lobby the European Commission. In J. Beyers, C. Braun, & H. Klüver (Eds.), *Legislative lobbying in context: the policy and polity determinants of interest group politics in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Kollman, K. (1998). *Outside lobbying: public opinion and interest group strategies*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3 ed.). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun* (2 ed.). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Larsson, L. (2001). *Tillämpad kommunikationsvetenskap*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Larsson, L. (2002). En publik relation - vad innebär det? . In L. Larsson (Ed.), *PR på svenska*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Larsson, L. (2005). *Upplysning och propaganda*. Lund Studentlitteratur.

- Larsson, L. (2008). *Stadig misstro mot lobbyismen Svensk höst: trettiofyra kapitel om politik, medier och samhälle* (Vol. SOM-rapport 46, pp. 155-164). Göteborg: SOM.
- Lerbinger, O. (2006). *Corporate public affairs: interacting with interest groups, media, and governments*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Liehr-Gobbers, K. (2006). *Erfolgsfaktoren des legislativen lobbying in Brüssel*. Aachen: Shaker Verlag.
- Lindlof, T. R. (1995). *Qualitative communication research methods*. London: Sage.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1999). Data logging in observations: fieldnotes. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Lorentzon, S. (2008). *EU-paradoxens hemlighet*. Göteborg: Cordovan Marketing.
- Luhmann, N. (1998). *Observations on modernity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Mahoney, C. (2007a). Lobbying success in the United States and the European Union. *Journal of Public Policy*, 27(1), 21.
- Mahoney, C. (2007b). Networking vs. allying : the decision of interest groups to join coalitions in the US and the EU. In D. Coen (Ed.), *EU lobbying: empirical and theoretical studies* (pp. 34-51). London: Routledge.
- Mahoney, C. (2008). *Brussels versus the Beltway: advocacy in the United States and in the European Union*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Marziali, V. (2007). Lobbying the EU: between strengthening legitimacy and increasing transparency. In C. McGrath (Ed.), *Interest groups and lobbying in Europe*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Mazey, S., & Richardson, J. J. (1993). Introduction: transference of power, decision rules, and rules of the game. In S. Mazey & J. J. Richardson (Eds.), *Lobbying in the European community*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mazey, S., & Richardson, J. J. (2006). Interest groups and EU policy-making: organisational logic and venue shopping. In J. J. Richardson (Ed.), *European union: power and policy-making* (3 ed.). London: Routledge.
- McGrath, C. (2005). *Lobbying in Washington, London and Brussels: the persuasive communication of political issues*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press.
- McGrath, C., Moss, D., & Harris, P. (2010). The evolving discipline of Public Affairs *Journal of Public Affairs*, 10(4), 18.

- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society: from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), 23.
- Michalowitz, I. (2007). *Lobbying in der EU*. Wien: Facultas.
- Milbrath, L. (1960). Lobbying as a communication process. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 24(1), 21.
- Milbrath, L. W. (1963). *The Washington lobbyists*. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.
- Mills, C. W. (1999/1956). *The power elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mintzberg, H. (1990). The manager's job: folklore and fact: the classical view says that the manager organizes, coordinates, plans, and controls; the facts suggests otherwise. *Harvard Business Review*, 13.
- Moloney, K. (2006). *Rethinking public relations*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Moloney, K. (2009). Foreword. In C. McGrath (Ed.), *Interest groups and lobbying in Europe*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen.
- Naurin, D. (2001). *Den demokratiske lobbyisten*. Umeå: Boréa Bokförlag.
- Naurin, D. (2004). *Dressed for politics: why increasing transparency in the European Union will not make lobbyists behave any better than they already do*. Göteborg: Department of Political Science, Göteborg University.
- Negrine, R. (2007). *The professionalisation of political communication*. Chicago: Intellect Books.
- Nothhaft, H. (2010). *Kommunikationsmanagement als professionelle organisationspraxis: theoretische annäherung auf grundlage einer teilnehmenden beobachtungsstudie* Germany: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Nylander, J. (2000). *The power of framing: a new-institutional approach to interest group participation in the European Union*. Uppsala: Uppsala university.
- Observatory, C. E. (2016). Welcome to the virtual lobby tour.
- Odolinski, K. (2009). *Är en ökad reglering av lobbyverksamheten önskvärd? En samhällsekonomisk bedömning av lobbyverksamheten i EU*. Linköping: Linköpings universitet, Nationalekonomi.
- OECD. (2012). *Lobbyists, governments and public trust: promoting integrity through self-regulation*. Retrieved from Paris:
- Olsen, J. P. (2007). *Europe in search of political order: an institutional perspective on unity/diversity, citizens/their helpers, democratic*

- design/historical drift and the co-existence of orders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Olson, M. (1965). *The logic of collective action: public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Pedler, R. (Ed.) (2002). *European Union lobbying: changes in the arena*. Basingstoke: Palgrave in association with the European Centre for Public Affairs.
- Persson, A. (2012). *Ritualisering och sårbarhet: ansikte mot ansikte med Goffmans perspektiv på social interaktion*. Malmö: Liber.
- Pieczka, M. (2006). "Chemistry" and the public relations industry: an explication of the concept of jurisdiction and issues arising. In J. L'Etang & M. Pieczka (Eds.), *Public relations critical debates and contemporary practice*. Mahwah, NJ. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Powell, W. W., & DiMaggio, P. J. (1991). The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organization fields. . In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing. The art of hearing data*. London: Sage.
- Sacks, H. (1992). *Lectures on conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Sandhu, S. (2009). Strategic communication: an institutional perspective. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 3(2), 21.
- Sauruger, S. (2010). Interest groups and democracy in the European Union. In J. Beyers, R. Eising, & W. A. Maloney (Eds.), *Interest group politics in Europe: lessons from EU studies and comparative politics*. London: Routledge.
- Schattschneider, E. E. (1960). *The semisovereign people: a realist's view of democracy in America*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, cop.
- Schendelen, R. v. (2005a). *Machiavelli in Brussels: the art of lobbying the EU*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Schendelen, R. V. (2005b). Managing governmental relations in the European Union. In P. Harris & C. S. Fleischer (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Affairs*. London: Sage.
- Schriftgiesser, K. (1951). *The lobbyists: the art and business of influencing lawmakers*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company.
- Scott, J. (2016). Institution. In J. Scott (Ed.), *A dictionary of sociology*: Oxford University Press.
- Scott, W. R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

- Sennefelt, K. (2009). The politics of hanging around and tagging along: everyday practices of politics in eighteenth-century Stockholm. *Past & Present*, 19.
- Showalter, A., & Fleischer, C. S. (2005). The tools and techniques of public affairs. In P. Harris & C. S. Fleischer (Eds.), *Handbook of public affairs*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data: a guide to the principles of qualitative research* (4 ed.). London: Sage.
- Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant observatory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Strid, S. (2009). *Gendered interests in the European Union: the European women's lobby and the organisation and representation of women's interests*. Örebro: Örebro Universitet.
- Sundström, A. (1998). Lobbying: en svensk tradition. In G. Ahlsson, J. H. Bergström, A. Sundström, & D. Pamlin (Eds.), *Lobbning* (Vol. SOU 1998:146). Stockholm: Fritzes offentliga publikationer.
- Tannen, D. (1993). *Framing in discourse*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: a guidebook and resource* (3 ed ed.). New York: N.Y.: Wiley.
- Thomas, C. S. (2004). *Research guide to U.S. and international interest groups*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Thomlison, T. D. (2000). An interpersonal primer with implications for public relations. In J. A. Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. .
- Ushioda, E. (2011). Language learning motivation, self and identity: current theoretical perspectives. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(3), 11.
- Wehmeier, S. (2006). Dancers in the dark: the myth of rationality in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, Volume 32(3), 7.
- White, J., & Mazur, L. (1998). *Strategic communications management: making public relations work*. Wokingham Addison-Wesley Publ.
- Windsor, D. (2005). "Theories" and theoretical roots of public affairs. In P. Harris & C. S. Fleischer (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Affairs* (pp. 18). London: Sage Publicaitons.
- Wine, L. (2008). *Towards a deeper understanding of framing, footing, and alignment*. Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics. Teachers College. Columbia University.
- Wodak, R. (2011). *The discourse of politics in action: politics as usual*. Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zeigler, H., & Baer, M. A. (1969). *Lobbying: interaction and influence in American state legislatures*. Belmont, Calif: Wadsworth.

- Zerfaß, A., Bentele, G., & Oehsen, H. O. v. (2008). Akteure, strukturen und herausforderungen eines wachsenden berufsfelds. In G. Bentele, M. Piwinger, & G. Schönborn (Eds.), *Kommunikationsmanagement (Loseblattwerk)* (Vol. 3.53, pp. 1-29). München: Wolters Kluwer.
- Zimmerman, D. H. (1998). Identity, context and interaction. In C. Antaki & S. Widdicombe (Eds.), *Identities in talk*. London: Sage. (Reprinted from: 2006, 2008).
- Öberg, P.-O. (1997). *Medborgarnas inflytande och särintressenas makt: korporatism och lobbying i statsförvaltningen*. Uppsala: Förvaltningspolitiska kommissionen.

PUBLICATIONS *in the series*
ÖREBRO STUDIES IN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

1. ERIKSSON, GÖRAN. *Den televiserade politiken – Studier av debatt- och nyhetsjournalistik*. 2002
2. ERIKSSON, MATS. *Från ingenjörskonst till informatörskonst. Studier av PR och riskkommunikation*. 2003
3. OLAUSSON, ULRIKA. *Medborgarskap och globalisering. Den diskursiva konstruktionen av politisk identitet*. 2005
4. BERGLEZ, PETER. *The Materiality of Media Discourse. On Capitalism and Journalistic Modes of Writing*. 2006
5. PLATEN VON, SARA. *Intern kommunikation och meningsskapande vid strategisk organisationsförändring. En studie av Sveriges Television*. 2006
6. BUSKQVIST, ULF. *Medborgarnas röster. Studier av Internet som politisk offentlighet*. 2008
7. NORÉN, MIKAEL. *Designing for Democracy. End-user Participation in the Construction of Political ICTs*. 2008
8. ÖSTMAN, JOHAN. *Journalism at the Borders. The Constitution of Nationalist Closure in News Decoding*. 2009
9. FOGDE, MARINETTE. *The Work of Job Seeking. Studies on career advice for white-collar workers*. 2009
10. RASMUSSEN, JOEL. *Safety in the Making. Studies on the Discursive Construction of Risk and Safety in the Chemical Industry*. 2010
11. NILSSON, JOHAN. *Hollywood Subversion. American Film Satire in the 1990s*. 2011
12. EL GODY, AHMED. *Journalism in a Network. The Role of ICTs in Egyptian Newsrooms*. 2012
13. JAKOBSSON, PETER. *Öppenhetsindustrin*. 2012
14. KAUN, ANNE. *Civic Experiences and Public Connection. Media and Young People in Estonia*. 2012
15. ANDERSSON, LINUS. *Alternativ television. Former av kritik i konstnärlig TV-produktion*. 2012

16. STIERNSTEDT, FREDRIK. *Från radiofabrik till mediehus. Medieproduktion och medieförändring på MTG-radio.* 2013
17. AL-SAQAF, WALID. *Breaking Digital Firewalls. Analyzing Internet Censorship and Circumvention in the Arab World.* 2014
18. VORONOVA, LIUDMILA. *Gendering in Political Journalism. A Comparative Study of Russia and Sweden.* 2014
19. STENERSEN, JOHANNA. *Citizens in the Making. Critical Perspectives on Civic Identity and Culture.* 2014
20. ABALO, ERNESTO. *Through a post-political gaze: On the ideological loading of democracy in the coverage of Chávez's Venezuela.* 2015
21. EZZ EL DIN, MAHITAB. *Beyond Orientalism and Occidentalism. Identity constructions in Arab and Western media.* 2016
22. NOTHHAFT, CAMILLA. *Moments of lobbying: an ethnographic study of meetings between lobbyists and politicians.* 2017