Understanding the “Outsiders”:
An Investigation of Non-Response due to Incomplete Sampling Frames

Project Proposal

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Project Description

This project is aimed at investigating a fundamental question in survey research methods: Are the findings drawn from our surveys generalizable to the population at large? Or are those that respond different in important ways from those who are not interviewed for one reason or another? Researching this question is inherently difficult because it requires responses from non-respondents. This design is aimed at including a category of respondents that traditionally fall under the non-response category in standard surveys of interest groups: “outsiders” lobbyists. The project is part of a larger study investigating the effect of democratic institutional design on the nature of advocacy by comparing advocacy activity across the three primary institutions of the European Union. An institutional structures approach forms the theoretical foundation for the research. This research will considerably advance the nascent state of European advocacy scholarship, moving toward a generalizable theory of the determinants of the nature of advocacy. This is possible because of the project’s ambitious scope; analyzing advocate behavior - both “insiders” and “outsiders” - across institutions and policy areas in one of the most powerful political systems on the globe. The research will consist of approximately 150 in-depth face-to-face interviews with EU advocates and officials active on issues across policy areas.

The first section explains the non-response that results from poor sampling frames, its effects, and how it relates to the specific area of interest group studies. I suggest a not enough consideration is being paid to this type of non-response and that the concentration

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1 Advocates are defined as any actor working to influence the policy-making process, this may include: citizen groups, social movement organizations (SMOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), unions, professional associations, trade associations, business organizations, multinational corporations, regions, cities or other sub-national entities, EU institutions, their sub-units and officials, among others.
on the sample response rate may be blinding researchers from seeing the equally dangerous
non-response due poor sampling frames. The second section provides a brief background
on the context the study will take place in and the theoretical framework underpinning the
analysis. The third section, lays out some examples of the variables for which the effect of
non-response will be analyzed. The fourth section proposes a detailed research plan, which
combines the advantages of qualitative case studies with a breadth often identified with
large quantitative studies. The proposal concludes with a description of the measurement
and analysis and the substantive conclusions that will be possible with this research.

Non-response and Its Effects

Non-response often invokes images of uncooperative respondents refusing to be
interviewed – slamming the door or the phone after reproaching interviewers for doing
their jobs; however this is not the only cause of unit non-response. Tanur notes unit non-
response can result “because the respondents were missed in the field (for example they
were never at home), were missed in the frame (for example, for data being collected by
telephone surveys, they did not have telephones), or refused to participate” (1983, 21).
More research has been done of the causes and effects the first and last factors, but much
less on the causes and effects of missing respondents in the frame. While scholars are often
intrigued by the sample respondent characteristics that correlate with being difficult to
contact or refusing to participate, I suggest less consideration has been given to the
variables that correlate with non-response due to the sampling frame. The major exception
to this statement is of course the previously mentioned example that those without phones
are left out of the sample and those without phones are likely to be different that the
majority of the population especially in terms of wealth. However, little research has been
done on other factors that may result in exclusion from the sampling frame and the
implications this has for statistical analyses and substantive conclusions.

Some portions of the populations that interest us are often difficult to find. There
are numerous examples of such groups, for example homeless youths, drug traffickers,
migrant workers or individuals active in organized crime. Even when the research is
interested in a broader population, that population may include individuals such as these
who are also difficult to identify. When this is the case initially identifying these
individuals to include them in the sampling frame is problematic. So for example, if a
researcher is interested in studying workers that receive their wages under-the-counter;
some of the population such as waitresses may be relatively easy to include in the sampling
frame, while others such as migrant workers may be extremely difficult to identify for
inclusion. In the case of interest group research some groups are also hard to locate.
Specifically, interest groups that use “outside” tactics and are not part of the
institutionalized system of interest aggregation are often excluded from analyses. If the
researcher wants to make accurate conclusions about the entire population of interest,
whether it be under-the-counter laborers or interest groups, it is critical that the sampling
frame is complete.

Probability samples and statistical analysis allows us to draw conclusions about the
broader population from the data collected on a random sample of that population. If the
sampling frame is poorly constructed the conclusions from the study cannot be generalized
to the actual population but only to the subset of the population that was included in the
sampling frame. Earlier studies of interest groups (Walker 1991; Greenwood 1997; 2002;
Scholzman & Tierney 1986; Hojnacki 1997) have used official listings as the sampling frame. Baumgartner and Leech cite over two dozen other studies that follow this research design and note: “Most empirical projects rely on published directories, legislative registrations, financial disclosure forms, testimony before congressional committees or in the rule-making profession, or on some other published list” (1998, 29). However, all of these types of “official” lists are compiled by the established political institutions and thus include those interest groups that have some level of entrée into those arenas and that have achieved some level of informal but *de facto* legitimacy or access. Thus findings from past empirical research - whether they be about campaign contributions, the tactics used, the number of lobbyists employed, the level of direct access to government officials, the types of interests that are representative - may not be generalizable to the entire population of organizations pressing their interests on government because the “population” they are drawing from is not truly the entire population of active interest groups. That is, while “insiders” (lobbyists that have offices in the capital city and that have direct access to government officials) comprise the majority of the interest group community actively trying to influence public policies, there are also “outsiders” pressing their interests as well. “Outsiders” are often geographically removed from the capital city, use different sets of tactics and lobbying strategies such as protests, media events and mass public letter writing campaigns, and are also likely to be ideologically different than the “insiders” (Banazak 2000; Goldstein 1999; Kollman 1998). If researchers restricted their conclusions to the specific population that their sample is drawn from this issue of sampling non-response would not be as problematic. However, researchers are generalizing their substantive conclusions to all lobbyists, they are not restricting the interpretation to: “this
means X for only insider lobbyists.” This is not to suggest such scholars are engaging in questionable scholarship, they may truly believe their sampling frame captured the complete population of lobbyists, as I this discussion I hope makes clear however – they are not. Research seeking to answer questions about entire interest group communities are consistently failing to interview or survey outsider lobbyists. In doing so the have significant levels of non-response and those respondents are systematically different than the respondents.

Moreover, it is important to note this gapping omission is not even being acknowledged because this type of non-response is not included in the traditional calculation of the non-response rate which only considers the unsuccessful attempts at contacting members of the population that were in the sample. While mathematically calculating the non-response due to an inaccurate sampling frame in standard studies is not possible, this should not restrict us from considering the problem theoretically and designing studies that enable us to estimate the bias that results as that which is proposed here.

Brehm’s (1993) book-length treatment of non-response describes how non-response biases both univariate estimates and multivariate estimates. While his definition of non-response does not include loss of respondents due to a poor sampling frame2 his detailed discussion of how survey non-response damages scientific research can be applied to non-response that is due to a poorly designed sampling frame. If we imagine there exists a true population in reality, but the sampling frame fails to capture a portion of that true population then the “non-response rate” is a combination of the non-response of the

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2 “Survey nonresponse refers to respondents selected to the survey but, for various reasons, not interviewed. Some are those who refuse to be questioned, others are never contacted, and still others are unable to provide an interview.” (Brehm 1993, 16)
sample as well as the non-response due to failure to contact because they were not in the sampling frame. So conceptualizing the response rate as this combination, Brehm’s work can inform our understanding of how non-response biases univariate estimates; he demonstrates that we can calculate the *bias* due to non-response by the fact that “the difference between a sample mean (in a survey with non-response) and the true population mean is the non-response rate times the difference between the population mean for the respondents and the mean for the nonrespondents” (95). He also demonstrates how “non-response not only undermines the validity of a sample’s description of the population, it also distorts the relationships between attributes of the population” (the proofs of this demonstration require more space than allowed here, for a full discussion see Brehm 100-126). In short, the bias resulting from non-response has been painstakingly demonstrated – non-response can dramatically compromise the validity of our studies. However, non-response due to poor sampling frames does not receive much theoretical or empirical consideration. While there are some corrections for non-response bias with Achen (1986) and Heckman (1979) corrections, and Maximum likelihood techniques they require knowledge of the population, if the population has been mis-defined and an incorrect sampling frame has been constructed, such fixes are likely to provide little alleviation of the bias resulting from non-response due to poor sampling frames. We need a method of studying this aspect of non-response in addition to sample non-response.

I have developed a research proposal to study the differences between organizations that are traditionally included in empirical studies as well as those that are often among the non-respondents due to poor sampling frames. In this way I am able to estimate the differences between respondents and non-respondents, calculate the *bias* that
results from the tradition of poor sampling frames and determine of the tendency to include only easily accessible groups skews our empirical results and consequently our substantive conclusions. I hypothesize the tendency for earlier works for sample from easy-to-find organizations may result in understating the health of the democratic nature of the EU interest group system – as only wealthy and primarily business oriented insiders are among respondents, leaving outside ideological and public membership groups out of the analysis. Before turning to the research design it is necessary to briefly introduce the context within which the EU interest group community operates and the theoretical framework that will structure the analysis.

**Context & Theoretical Framework**

The Constitutional Convention on the Future of Europe recently concluded in Athens during the Greek presidency. It was difficult to miss the irony: in the birthplace of democracy, the nations with the strongest traditions of democratic governance in the world were coming to terms with the largely undemocratic design of the supranational structure that increasingly governs the lives of their citizens. The ‘democratic deficit’ is substantial: two of the primary political institutions, the Commission and the Council, are not elected; the European Parliament (EP), though elected, remains distant from the European citizens; the transparency of institutional deliberations remains limited; and an underdeveloped EU media community results in a lack of coverage and public scrutiny of EU activity. These institutional elements combine to produce a system characterized by limited popular input in the policymaking process.
The degree of openness to citizen concerns of the institutions of any government has direct effects on the nature of advocacy. Advocacy is a critical element of all democratic systems – through organized interests the preferences of citizens are incorporated into political debates. One of the primary goals of the Constitutional Convention was to alleviate the democratic deficit through institutional reform. To successfully design more democratic institutions it is necessary to understand how institutional structure affects the nature of advocacy.

While scholars and observers continue to lament the democratic shortcomings of the Union, previous research on interest groups in the EU are likely painting a more pessimistic picture than is accurate. Inaccurate studies of EU interest groups muddy our view of reality. By including only well-financed and largely professional and business interest “insiders” and failing to include public interest “outsider” groups in analysis, the conclusions concerning the dismal state of EU politics is likely over-exaggerated.

**Previous Studies of Interest Groups**

While the EU continues to expand its policy scope and interest groups continue to flock to Brussels to establish a permanent presence in EU policymaking, terribly little is known about the EU advocacy process. Previous scholarly work on the European Union has been limited to case studies of specific sectors and general surveys of certain types of interests, resulting in a general lack of understanding about the nature of EU interest activity. In the United States on the other hand, group theorists have been prolific on the mobilization, activities and influence of organized interests. However concentration on a single system and the tendency to avoid comparative frameworks, has resulted in an inability to
investigate the effects of institutional design on advocacy since the structures remain constant. Each of these literatures will be discussed in turn followed by the call for a common theoretical framework to be applied to research across interests, issues and institutions that will allow us to assess the effect of differing structures, specifically different levels of democratic openness, on the nature of advocacy.

The expansion of the European Union and the interest group explosion in Brussels has attracted the interest of an increasing number of scholars. Researching individual EU institutions and specific policy areas, as well as surveying individual interests, authors have attempted to grasp the dynamics involved in the European advocacy process (Cawson 1992; Christiansen 2001; Greenwood 1997, 2002; Keeting & Hooge 2001; McCormick 1999; Schneider 1992). These studies give us an idea of the range of actors and institutions involved at the EU level, a sense of their activities, and the possible patterns of their interaction. However, it would be inappropriate to make more definitive claims than these concerning an overall understanding of the EU advocacy process.

The non-accumulative shortcoming identified by Baumgartner and Leech of case study approaches in the American interest group literature also holds for the EU. While case studies “spend much time describing the political contexts in which group behavior takes place, it is hard to put these particular instances of policymaking in any sort of larger framework. The one-case-study-at-a-time approach makes it nearly impossible to interpret the accumulated findings since it leaves many variables unmeasured, often because they are constant within any single case. (1998, 146). The case-study approach is necessarily limited; by focusing on only certain types of groups, a single policy area or institution important elements of the advocacy process are excluded – some concepts vary by
advocate (resources, institutionalized taskforce position) others by institution (openness/receptivity, institutional rules and procedures) and others by issue (framing, lobbying strategies, elite alignments, focusing events). A study based on a large sample of issues allows us to take variables at all of these levels into consideration in a way that any single case study would be unable to do.

The state of EU interest group study is further limited by a continued focus on only certain research topics such as community composition and internal organization and operation of advocate groups. While such research is of unquestionable value it is unable to address the entire advocacy process. Gabel, Hix and Schneider review the state of EU research in a number of areas of study, they conclude of EU interest group research: “In short, as far as we are aware, no one has as yet attempted to conduct a detailed survey of interest groups’ attitudes towards policy issues on the EU agenda” (2002, 487). The research proposed here will begin to fill this scholarly void.

In the US rigorous empirical and theoretical work on advocacy has been thriving for decades. Group theory has developed considerably since the early works by Bentley (1908), Truman (1951) and Milbrath (1963) set the stage; volumes have been written on mobilization (Dahl 1961; Olson 1965; Walker 1983), lobbying activity (Bauer, Pool and Dexter 1963, Schlozman & Tierney 1986; Berry 1989; Baumgartner & Leech 1997) and advocate influence (R. Smith 1995, Gerber 2000; M. Smith 200). What has been missing is any study of the effect on institutional structure on each of these critical aspects of lobbying – an unavoidable omission when the critical independent variable is constant across cases (for an exception see Gray & Lowery’s (1996) work on lobbying at the state level however the present focus is on national policymaking).
What is needed is a more extensive study advocates, both insiders and outsiders, active across a range of issue areas and institutional designs. Further the study needs to be consistently guided by an overarching theory. To assess differential interest access, advocacy activity and influence, this research will investigate the impact of institutional structure. Actors functioning in any political system are both constrained and facilitated by the institutional structures of the decision-making process (Skocpol 1979). The institutional system that structures their activity then is a component that must be considered when analyzing the attempts by advocates to gain access, advance their positions and ultimately influence policy.

Research Questions

The theoretical framework will guide the analysis of how institutional openness affects the process by which insider and outsider advocates gain access and engage in advocacy activities. The three primary institutions can be conceived of as a continuum from the open and elected European Parliament (EP), to the open but non-elected Commission and politically accountable to the EP, to the closed and non-elected Council. The more open institutions are hypothesized to be more sympathetic and accessible to outsiders than the more closed institutions. Within this broad investigation are a large number of aspects of lobbying that can be used to determine the differences between insider and outsider lobbyists and estimate the bias which would have resulted from, what I term “sampling frame non-response” had only the “insiders” been included in the analysis.

Interest group activity
Where institutions are open to citizen preferences through elections, we should expect higher levels of broad organized interest activity including both insiders and outsiders. Thus in the more open EP we are likely to see more active outsider advocacy, whereas in the more closed and non-elected European Commission and European Council we would be more likely to see dominance by insiders. Thus in assessing the degree of bias that resulted from previous studies limited to insiders – we are likely to see more inaccurate estimates of the range of participation in the EP than in the Commission and Council. And aggregating across the institutions we are likely to see a general pro-business bias due to sample frame non-response.

*Lobbying Tactics & Strategy*

The toolbox of tactics should be heavily influenced by the democratic nature of the institutions. Grassroots letter writing campaigns may be much less prominent in the Commission and the Council where officials are not beholden to their constituents to be re-elected. Thus we would be likely to see more of the outsider tactics in the EP. Previous estimates of frequency and type of tactics usage are likely to be more inaccurate for the EP than for the Council and the Commission. And generally, previous estimates likely underestimated the use of outsider tactics.

*Argumentation*

In the EP the focus may be on the negative effects of a policy on constituents, and how jobs will be lost in rural regions or in hometown cities. In the Commission and the Council the arguments may be formulated with the civil servant audience in mind, technically
detailing the potential disruptions of a proposed policy to the internal market. We would expect outsiders to be evoking the former and insider groups the latter. Again, previous research on argumentation will likely be more inaccurate in their EP estimates versus the Commission and the Council on the frequency with which the various types of argumentation were used.

The concepts will be measured through in-depth interviews with advocates. Questions and probes will be designed to tap each individual variable. As Beamer notes “the initial step in an elite interview research design is to define the concepts one needs to measure to answer the research question. Once the researcher has a clear understanding of these concepts, he or she then…prepares a valid instrument, that is, a question or series of questions that tap into the concept” (2002, 87). The interview protocol is detailed below as well as the plans for measurement and coding of the data collected through interviews.

**Research Method and Plan**

The core of the project will be to conduct interviews with advocates working across EU institutions and across policy areas to better understand a range of advocacy related phenomena, including institutional targets, lobbying tactics, coalition formation, and argumentation.

**Sample**

The basis of my research is a random sample of issues. The random sample is necessary for rigorous empirical analysis and basing research on issues, rather than groups, has
numerous advantages. It is possible to study: the interaction between groups and coalition behavior; the impact of other actors on the debate; the place of opposition forces, and the influence of issue characteristics (i.e. salience, scope) on lobbying decisions. It also allows the researcher to consider issue specific opportunities such as disagreement among concerned political elites, the availability of government allies and the chance happening of a focusing event. Finally, it allows us to assess influence by comparing advocate objectives and activities with policy outcomes. Keck and Sikkink’s study of transnational-advocacy networks look at advocacy campaigns/ issues instead of groups or networks for these reasons. They point out that a “focus on campaigns provides a window on transnational relations as an arena of struggle in ways that focus on networks themselves or an institutions they try to affect does not.” (2000, 7-8). Without taking the issue context into account, no viable conclusions could be drawn about a given advocate’s effectiveness. “the greatest need in studies of interest groups…are data sets that extend beyond a single case and which include contextual variables about the activities of other actors and the nature of the issues at hand” (Baumgartner and Leech 1998, 145).

The most direct route would be to draw a random sample of cases from the universe of political issues, however identifying a population of issues from which to draw is highly problematic. Possibilities such as: proposals submitted to the European Council and European Parliament; legislative drafts drawn up by the Commission; cases brought before the ECJ – are all wrought with flaws. Interests can pursue different routes to advocate their position; selecting any single one of these sampling methods will necessarily bias the issues toward advocates targeting only a certain venue. In addition, the vast majority of advocacy efforts “die in committee” or task force or council, long before
they ever reach the level of formal legislative proposals. To capture issues being pushed through all institutions and their sub-units, as well as the issues that never fully materialize, the sample of issues will be identified through a random selection of advocates.

While the US project this projected is designed after, was able to benefit from the Senate database of lobby disclosure reports, its counterpart does not exist in the EU. There is no single source that can be said to fully account for the members of the European interest group community. The American Association for Public Opinion Research note that the two critical elements of an exemplary study are “a) to ensure that the right population is indeed being sampled and b) to locate all members of the population being studied so they have a chance to be sampled.” Moreover, the association notes the quality of the sampling frame “whether it is up-to-date and complete is probably the dominant feature for ensuring adequate coverage of the desire population to be surveyed” (2003). Therefore I have taken great care to construct a sampling frame that accounts for the broadest number and range of EU interest groups. I compiled a database from two sources: the Commission’s voluntary registry of civil society groups which includes nearly 700 interest groups and the registry of the European Parliament which includes over 4000 lobbyists both from 2003. This forms the universe from which I will randomly select the initial advocates to interview.

These advocates will be sent a letter describing my research, university affiliation, and requesting approximately an hour of their time. The norm in survey introductions is that the communication establishes the legitimacy of the interviewer, provides some information regarding the purpose of the study but not to the extent that it would bias interviewee responses and promises confidentiality or anonymity of the interview (Sobal
Studies in survey research methodology have shown that an initial formal contact by mail increases response rates (Groves 1990). These introduction letters will be followed by telephone requests to arrange a meeting time; I will attempt to contact interviewees with up to three follow-up calls. Such call backs are routine among survey researchers and have been shown to considerably increase response rates (Tanur 1983).

Respondent will be ensured confidentiality and anonymity. This is standard practice in modern interview research and included among the AAPOR’s best practices (2003). Some studies have show anonymity guarantees to also increase response rates as well as improve the quality of responses given by the interviewee (Singer 1978). While the evidence on the effect of confidentiality and anonymity guarantees on response rates are mixed - some researchers have found no effect or a depressing effect on response rates (Reamer 1979) – it is generally held “that informing subjects that their responses will be kept anonymous and confidential will reduce their apprehension and, consequently, eliminate the need to omit responses or to provide biased responses” (Reamer 1979, 498).

This is especially critical in an elite interviewing situation where individuals may be conveying potentially sensitive political information (Dexter 1970; Berry 2002). Elite interviews differ in important ways from general population surveys; interviews with elites tend to be more difficult to attain since they are often under greater then average time constraints and access to individuals with high-status positions may be restricted.

However, elite interviews have been successfully used in the European context; Nordheim and Taylor conducted 101 elite interviews including “46 state politicians (ministers, party leaders, legislative caucus leaders, and other deputies, 27 public officials, 22 interest group leaders and six others” to investigate lobbyist-legislator interaction in German State
Parliaments (1976, 512). Evidence exists that elite interviewing can be just as successful in non-Western European countries; a necessary requirement considering the expansion of the EU to eight Central and Eastern European countries in May 2004 (Denitch 1972).

**Interviews**

Interviews will be conducted face-to-face. While in-person interviews are one of the more costly and time consuming methods of data collection the American Statistical Association notes that they are especially useful “when complete information is to be collected” (2003). Considering the lack of systematic data on lobbying in the European Union, interviewing provides the most direct method for obtaining the information of interests. Moreover in-person interviews have a number of advantages including the added information conveyed through nonverbal cues, the ability to develop a stronger sense of rapport and increased cooperation (Holbrook et al. 2002, 83). Interviews will be conducted according to a “flexible” format. Schober and Conrad (1997) distinguish between two general categories of interviewing: *standardized*, which follows an interview protocol strictly and *flexible*, in which interviewers “engage in something more like ordinary conversation, deviating from the standardized script to assure that respondents interpret questions consistently and correctly” (577). While standardized interviews simplify the coding process, these authors show flexible interviews produce higher levels of accuracy on more complicated topics. Aberback and Rockman note the receptivity of respondents is a major consideration when deciding between a structured or flexible framework: “elites especially – but other highly educated people as well – do not like being put in the straightjacket of close-ended
questions. They prefer to articulate their views, explaining why they think what they think” (2001, 3).

Interviewer experience is also a critical aspect of successful data collection, interviewers should be trained in both interviewing techniques and in the subject matter of the survey (ASA, 2003). Groves et al argue that “experienced interviewers tend to achieve higher levels of cooperation because they carry with them a larger number of combinations of behaviors proven to be effective” (1992, 479). I will be conducting all interviews personally and am highly experienced in in-depth interviewing. I attended a short course run by the American Political Science Association in 2001 on Elite Interviewing techniques. Further, I conducted 65 interviews with advocates, government officials and congressional staffers in Washington, D.C. in 2002 for the previously mentioned collaborative project on lobbying in the United States. While multiple interviewers would allow variation to test for any interviewer effects, studies have show that “matches between interviewer and respondent on such characteristics as gender or race tend to affect only those questions that relate directly to the matched variable” (Tanur 1984, 13). Thus, since the proposed research will be inquiring about the activities of the interviewee’s organization and not the interviewee personally, interviewer effects should be of little concern.

I have developed a schedule of interview questions modeled after that used in the US project but tailored for the specificities of the EU system. The original protocol was developed by a team of political scientists (Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball and Leech) and their deliberation on the interview schedule followed the model of an “expert panel” method of pre-testing. Presser and Blair (1994) note the consensus among survey
researchers that pre-testing is an indispensable stage in survey questionnaire development. While a range of pre-testing techniques exist, expert panels and traditional field pre-tests are the most common. In addition to the initial development of the protocol by the expert committee, the interview schedule has been used extensively and successfully in the U.S. case for over 350 interviews. Moreover, I personally pre-tested the revised interview protocol for the EU interviews with the European lobbying firm with which I interned in 2003 to assure that all questions are applicable and relevant in the European case. The full protocol can be found in Appendix A.

The first wave of advocates interviewed will be asked the issue they have most recently been active on – this serves the purpose of identifying the random sample of issues. Respondents will only be asked about their activities on the issue within the last two years. This allows the data collected to be comparable to the US case, which studies the activity on an issue with a single “Congress” which has a duration of two years. Further, this has the added benefit of not requiring interviewees to recall activities far in the past which can lead to response error due to memory effects (Tanur 1983).

The interview schedule goes on to inquire about that particular issue’s history, the lobbyist’s current political allies, coalition activity, tactics, arguments, opponents and finally their opponents’ arguments. The questions and probes were designed so that they are not leading in anyway (i.e providing examples of tactics or arguments that could alter responses). I avoid the term “lobbying” opting instead for the use of “advocacy” since the term lobbying has a highly negative connotation in most western societies. As Salisbury notes: “The much-abused word is so fraught with ordinary language meaning, most of it
unsavory, as to defy rehabilitation anyway, [and] it is also true that none of its historic uses comfortably fits what many Washington representatives do” (1983, 71).

Those advocates identified as allies and opponents will be checked against the sampling frame constructed from the official list. If they are not on the list they will then be contacted with a interview request letter similar to that described above but to discuss the specific issue they are active on – constituting the second wave, “snowball” portion of the sample. Snowball samples are especially useful “when a listing of the entire target population is unavailable, as is often the case with informal policy networks” (Beamer 2002, 91). This snowball portion of the sample is critical to work toward full participation of all types of groups active in the European interest group community. This snowball portion of the sample is the portion of the design that allows for inclusion of interests that may be using “outside” lobbying tactics or that have been unable to gain access to European officials.

I will tape and transcribe all interviews. These transcripts will be formulated in a systematic fashion, comparable to the US project. In my previous interviewing experience I averaged one interview a day during the business week, including the completion of the interview transcripts (65 interviews and completed transcripts in three months). This provides the basis for my estimations for the project proposed here. At this rate I expect to complete 160 interviews during my eight months in the European capital; this includes completion of interview transcripts that will provide the basis for the empirical and qualitative analysis. I plan to conduct an average of five interviews per issue.
Analysis & Conclusions

In this manner I will construct a sample of insiders and outsiders. In doing so I can consider the similarities and differences of insiders and outsiders on group characteristics, their tactics, their method of argumentation. But more critically, this design allows me to test the effects of the non-coverage I would have encountered, had I not included the snowball portion of the sampling method into the project. As mentioned sampling only from official lists is often the approach followed by scholars but we may be missing large amounts of data on a large portion of EU advocates. And as the theoretical discussion has shown, those that would normally be ignored in standard sampling methods are systematically and significantly different from the “insiders” so often studied.

To statistically analyze the differences between insiders and outsiders, and to estimate the effect of non-response due to poor sampling frames that would have resulted if the tradition “official list” sampling frame had been used; the large amount of qualitative data collected from the proposed interview schedule must be systematically coded. The degree of bias due to sampling frame non-response can be estimated by calculating estimates for the variables of interest first for just the insiders (the portion of the sample drawn from the official lists) and then for the entire sample both insiders and outsiders. To illustrate, the mean level of the use of mass letter writing campaigns will be estimated for the insiders and for the full sample and in this manner I can determine the degree of bias that would have resulted had the sample been restricted to insiders.

While, coding will be done for each aspect discussed in the “research questions” section, for the sake of space I will detail the coding of just one aspect of the study: tactics. Each advocate will be coded as to whether they engaged in direct lobbying, grass-roots
lobbying, grass-tops lobbying, if they initiated letters to be sent by allied officials, drafted policy proposals, participated in protest activities, organized coalitions, among others. These tactics fall under the categories of insider and outsider tactics and thus allows us to explore “inside” versus “outside” lobbying strategies (Kollman 1998). By inquiring into they types of strategies actors used at all governmental levels we can assess if certain types of groups tend to concentrate their efforts on officials in Brussels while others expend their resources in mobilizing individual members across the Union and how biased previous estimates were, with their related sampling frame non-response. Analyzing participant interaction and coordination will offer information about coalition tactics. This data will show if coalitions are mixed by interest type and political level. Do insider Euro-groups work along side of outsider sub-regional interests? Or are coalitions more homogeneous? And again: how biased were previous studies on this count? The question concerning what officials the advocate targeted in their direct lobbying tactics allows us to assess the interaction patterns between interests and EU officials. Do outsider interests target MEPs more than Commission officials? Are insider and outsider advocates similar or different in their targeting strategies: that is who is approaching only officials sympathetic to their cause? And who is extending beyond friends and targeting fence sitter and foes as well? The literature on this topic in the American context is quite contentious, with scholars arguing for each expectation (see Bauer Pool & Dexter 1963; Austin-Smith & Wright 1994; Hojnaki & Kimball 1998). In short, this research will be able to answer a wide range of substantive questions about all lobbyists and the differences between insiders and outsiders.
More critically however, this research allows us to get an empirical handle on the issues related to “non-coverage.” While it is nearly impossible to estimate the bias due to sampling frame non-response in standard studies this project provides an opportunity to actually calculate that bias. Substantively this study will allow us to determine some important findings about the health of democracy in the European Union. If the traditional “outsider” non-coverage has had the effect of systematically ignoring poorer, citizen and membership groups, conclusions previous studies have made about the business and wealth bias in the EU interest group system, may be overstated.
References


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Appendix A

Interview Schedule

(1) Could you take the most recent issue you've been spending time on and describe what you're trying to accomplish on this issue and what type of action are you taking to make that happen?

The issue we talk about doesn't have to be associated with a particular proposal or regulation, and it doesn’t have to be an issue that's been receiving coverage by the media.

[If the interviewee seems uncomfortable picking an issue or expresses concern about boredom, etc.] How about if we talk about whatever issue most recently came across your desk?

• probe about advocacy activities and tactics
• probe about advocacy targets
• probe about participation in task forces and permanent positions on relevant consultative bodies

(2) Recap what they're doing and what they're trying to accomplish. So who else is involved in this issue both inside and outside of government?

• probe about coalition partners (formal or informal)
• probe about who they are speaking with about this issue
• probe about governmental and non-governmental allies
• probe about allies at different governmental levels

(3) Did you or any of your allies pursue other routes of influence in addition to [the institution or sub-institution mentioned]?

• probe about activity at other governmental levels (national or sub-national)

(4) So you're talking to these various people [be specific if it's relevant] about why it's necessary to move forward on this issue [or, if relevant, why it's necessary to prevent something from happening, etc.]. What's the fundamental argument you use to try to convince people to do this?

• probe about different arguments for different targets
• probe for secondary arguments
• probe for partisan differences in terms of how people respond to this issue

3 Adapted from Advocacy and Public Policy Making Project interview protocol.
What impediments do you face in achieving your objectives on this issue -- in other words, who or what is standing in your way? What arguments do they make?

- probe for the arguments of opponents and others
- probe for the institutions approached by the opposition

I was wondering if you could tell me a bit about whether and how your organization uses research when you communicate with other organizations and people in government. From talking to people in organizations like yours I've noticed that some emphasize research and try to supply officials with a steady stream of original research and data to be used in presentations with government officials, their aides, and others. Others say that if research or data are needed they can be gotten from think tanks, universities, research organizations or consultants. And then there are others who don't spend a lot of time gathering issue-related research at all.

Where along this continuum would you place this organization? Do you rely a lot on research when you talk to officials /other groups? If so, do you do much research in-house?

- probe for examples about the type of research they do in-house, whether and how often they gather it from outside sources, and what types of outside sources they rely on

Now I'd like to ask you a couple of general questions about your organization. How are you organized here in terms of people and units that are involved in public affairs and advocacy?

- probe for the different units within the organization that play a role
- probe for the number of people in these units
- probe for number of staff, number of lobbyists
- probe for hired outside council

That is all the questions I have for you, thank you very much for speaking with me. Would it be possible to get a copy of whatever they mention that I want a copy of?