




Lobbyism in Swedish school and education.

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Research project: Lobbyism in Swedish school and education.



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The Lobby project started in the Education Inc. project, (2018 – 2021)

Private actors stated in the Education Inc interviews:

”We had in our business plan that we would really lobby and drive this change processes. And we have done that ... by influencing a lot of people around us . . . It’s principals, school people, politicians, whatever that may be. ... There have been a bunch of politicians that we have really influenced. ... And lots of wine . . . We did what we could. But if we had unlimited resources, I would have hired two people who did just that [lobbying].”

Martin, founder and former CEO of company A

” . . especially via the IT companies, we did a lot of lobbying and attended Fridolin [former Ministry of Education] to get . . . And I would say that I think it is a result of the lobbying that we got two sentences [into the text] actually.

Oscar, Head of school affairs, Company B

(Jobér, 2023)



Governmental actors open the door to lobbying

Public actors in Sweden have cooperated with private actors outside the formal public governmental structure for a long time and in various forms.

Between 2011 - 2015: Swedish National Agency of Education and its activities were e.g. built on external and internal networks, the authority was formed with unclear boundaries and strongly influenced by external stakeholders (Magnusson, 2018).



The Agency states: "We have also met with researchers, interest groups, trade unions, industry representatives and other authorities. Through these collaborations and consultations, we have broadened and deepened our image of how the syllabuses work in practice, discussed proposals for guidelines for a future revision and obtained views on syllabuses drafts."

Governmental actors open the door to lobbying

A recent example of close collaboration between public and private companies or organised private companies:

#skolDigiplan

A year-long collaboration on digitalisation. Concerns one of the major changes in curricula and practices in the Swedish schooling system in recent years.



Driven by and established through an extensive collaboration between private and public actors.

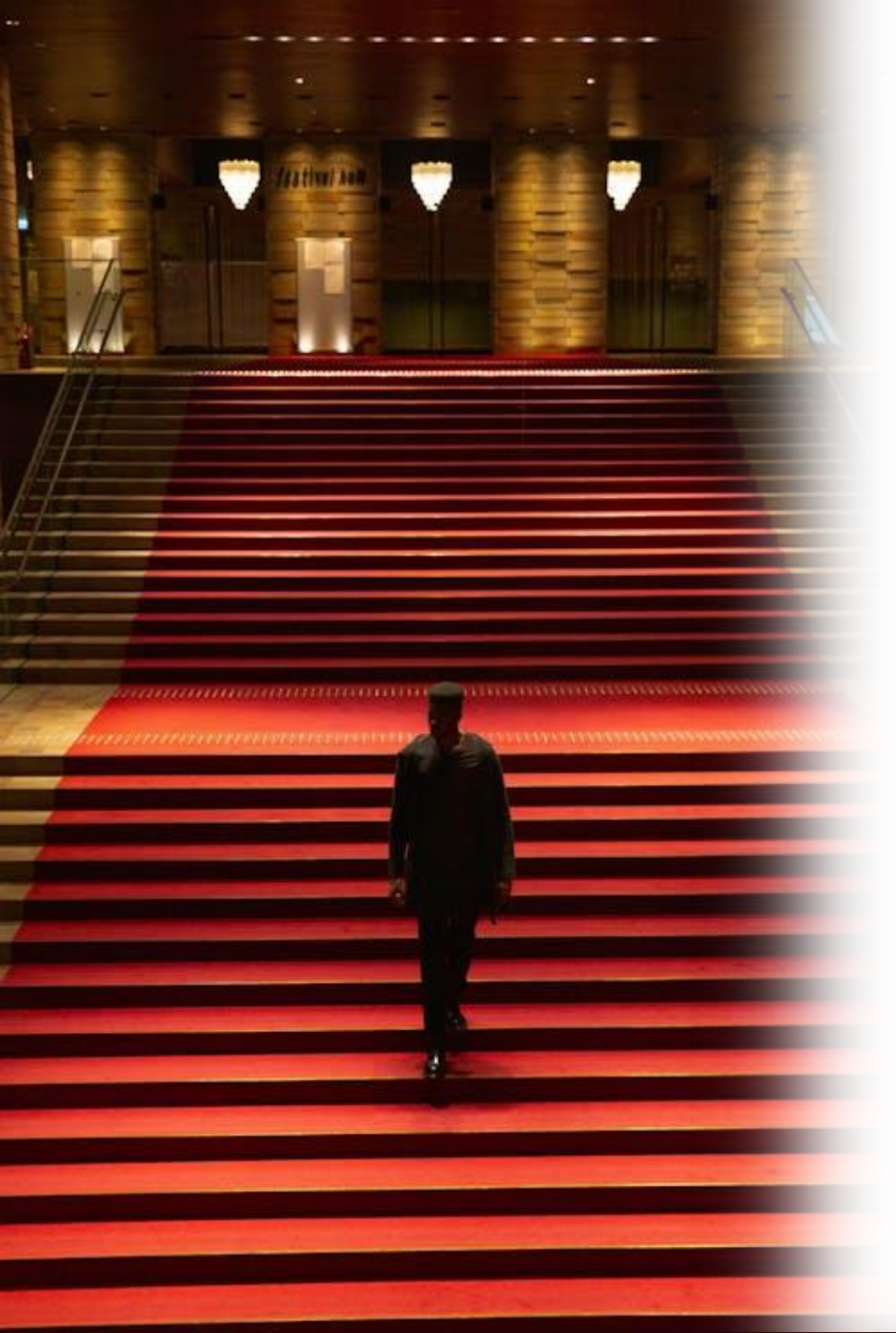
What is lobbying? - Stepping into the lobby

- widespread practice across the globe (Althaus, 2007; Garsten & Sörbom, 2017)
- in US or EU, lobbying is a legally protected and regulated form of representation and dialogue between political actors and interest groups (Nothhaft, 2017).
- research often from a political science perspective (e.g. Boräng & Naurin, 2016; 2022; Strömbäck, 2011).

Researchers (e.g. Nothhaft, 2017) generally agree that it involves legal attempts to influence decision-makers to exploit, “(...) or change or prevent changes to legislation (...) or system of rules” (SOU 1998:146, p. 75).

But still unclear when it comes to education.





Starting up the Lobby project - Walking in the lobby

Pilot study: Questionnaire, March – May, 2023

A digital anonymous survey regarding lobbying in the education sector was distributed among 18 significant actors (governmental bodies, companies, trade unions, and organizations)

54 responses were received, exceeding expectations.

Note: Very hard to reach the largest actors (Google or Microsoft). There are no email addresses, no contacts, Only FAQ or community-pages. I.e. the largest actors can't be reached. All other actors we have contacted have answered in some way.



Results pilot study:

A lot of long answers in the open-ended questions. Frustration, anger, ambiguity.

50 % of lobbying happens on a national level (in contrast to international: local level)

Of those who used lobbying, it has foremost concerned steering document.

Conferences (fairs) common places for lobbying.

Lobbying often relates to commercialisation in some way.

Conducting a Scoping literature review - Opening more doors

Multiple ways of performing literature reviews, “the scoping study is one method amongst many” (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p. 20).

The aim is not - as in systematic research literature review - to confirm or refute, uncover evidence, confirm a practice or produce statements to guide decision-making (Munn et al., 2018).

“As scoping reviews do not aim to produce a critically appraised and synthesised result/answer to a particular question, and rather aim to provide an overview or map of the evidence.” (Munn et al, 2018, p.3).

The aim is “to determine the scope or coverage of a body of literature on a given topic and give clear indication of the volume of literature and studies available as well as an overview (broad or detailed) of its focus” (Munn et al, 2018, p.2).

With inspiration from above ref, the literature review will focus on:

- identifying the types of available research undertaken in the field in focus and key characteristic of this research, i.e. the extent, range and nature of research activity
- clarify key concepts/ definitions in earlier research
- summarise and disseminate research findings
- identify research/knowledge gaps.



The Scoping literature review process

Arksey & O'Malley (2005):

Rather than being guided by a highly focused research question that lends itself to searching for particular study designs (as might be the case in a systematic review), the scoping study method **is guided by a requirement to identify all relevant literature regardless of study design**. It is likely that as **familiarity with the literature** is increased, researchers will want to redefine search terms and undertake more sensitive searches of the literature. ... **The process is not linear but iterative**, requiring researchers to engage with each stage in a **reflexive way** and, where necessary, repeat steps to ensure that the literature is covered in a comprehensive way.



The Scoping literatur review process

Therefore, this review has been conducted with for example this in mind, (following Arksey & O'Malley, 2005):

- Searching via **different sources**: e.g. electronic databases, reference lists hand-searching of key journals as well as existing networks, relevant organizations and conferences
- **Not exclude existing knowledge** that the researchers had through own research or networks, not excluding known knowledge,
- Adopting a process where increased familiarity with the literature made it possible to **exclude or include with more sharpness** as the process came along
- **Embracing a more narrative approach** when describing the process and also including analytic framework or thematic construction in order to present a narrative account of existing literature.

However, the never forget to describe, take notes, save, etc....



Example from our process:

Activity	Date	Description	Outcome
Screening phase 1	2023-12-08	Data base: Eric via Ebsco host Search terms: lobbying, education, school, policy.	43 relevant articles found. Author 1s previous knowledge indicates that all articles that should be found are not found. Additional screening phases are needed.
Screening phase 2	2023-12-11	Data base: Eric via Ebsco host. With reference to Nothaug (20XX) definition of lobbyism additional search terms are added. Search terms: lobbying, education, school, policy, "interest groups", "interest-based", "public relations", political, process, "policymakers", influence, "decision-making"	33 relevant articles found
Concluding phase 1		A comparison is made between phase 1 and 2. Several articles are found in both phases.	Author 1s previous knowledge indicates that all articles that should be found are not found. Additional screening phases are needed.
Screening phase 3	2023-12-12	Data base: Eric via Ebsco host A third screening process are conducted where search terms that can catch a Swedish context. Search terms: "interest group", Sweden, education, school, lobby.	5 relevant articles were found, several that had not been found in earlier screening processes.
Concluding phase 2	Jan – April, 2024	Double check of all the subject words and abstracts that have subject words and/or abstract that focus on lobbying all the selected articles.	42 articles are selected for the upcoming processes.
Screening phase 4	March, 2024	To secure that there are no peaks of articles in the field before and after the time span, additional screenings are conducted with the following time span: 2004-2024, 2010-2024, 2013-2024 and the following search terms: lobbying or lobbyist or lobby, school, education, policy, influence, "compulsory school".	There is a steady, however small, stream of articles, with no peaks outside the time span. Author 1 decide to stick to the initial time span, however I add 2024 to secure the newest articles.
Screening phase 5	2024-03-13	A final screening are made without the search terms "interest group", a term not used in the Swedish context. I add additional exclusions to make sure the earlier peer-review exclusion criteria. Journal or Document: Journal Article (EJ), Publication Type: Academic Journal, Database: Eric by Ebsco, Search terms: lobbying or lobbyist or lobby, school, education, policy, influence, "compulsory school"	42 relevant articles found.
Screening phase 6	March, 2024	Additional screening which is similar to screening phase no 5. However, additional exclusions are made and Lobby* education school have to be included in the abstract and search terms that have to be in the subject words are: lobbying or lobbyist or lobby, school, education.	21 relevant articles found
Concluding phase 6		In total, 6 screening phases have been conducted. When all the articles found are compared with each other doublets are found and taken away. In the end 47 relevant articles are chosen. These are inserted to a Excel file where all information about the article are inserted (author, title, year, country, journal, and when possible citations, key words, subject words, DOI-number, abstract).	47 relevant articles are chosen
Screening phase 7	2024-03-15	In discussions with colleagues and further readings on literature review methods I decide to do a screening at Web of Science. The reason is to secure that all articles are found. The reason is also that still, despite a number of screening I lack articles that I know have written about lobby and education. Timespan: 2013 – 2024. Search terms: school education (all fields), lobby* (abstract). These are, like earlier articles, inserted to a Excel file where all information about the article are inserted (author, title, year, country, journal, and when possible citations, key words, subject words, DOI-number, abstract).	27 relevant articles are found.
Concluding phase 3		47 Articles found via Eric via Ebsco host, 17 of them could also be found among the WoS. However, 10 completely new articles are found. All the articles are gathered, compared and doublets taken away. All the articles are checked regarding number of times lobb* are used and if there is any definition of the word lobbying, lobbyist or lobbying.	51 relevant articles are chosen, these are gathered in one file with all important statistics gathered.
Analys 1	April – May, 2024	Subject descriptors and key words are gathered and thematically sorted in order to find what the articles deals with.	Results from the analysis, see chapter 4.
Analys 2	2024-05-27	To double check the themes that emerged, author 2 and 3 reads abstracts. We see that 3 articles have wrong focus.	Results from the analysis, see chapter 4. 3 articles excluded, which means 48 articles are no included.
Concluding phase 4		The analyses shows that the word lobbying is not define in any article. This was one of the basic RQs for the literature review and makes the review complex. To understand the field, trying to understand why this could be the case or if any important information has been missed, we decide to to a third. In addition, we decide that we will check german and french texts to widen are review.	No definition of the word lobb* in any articles.
Analysis 3	2024-06-03	To understand the field, trying to understand why this could be the case or if any important information has been missed, a third analysis of the articles that uses the word lobby the most, (above average, that is using the tem lobb* 6 times or more) are conducted. We do this together with colleagues during a seminar at the institution at Malmö University. Vad är lobbying i denna artikel? Vilken roll spelar den?	Results from the analysis, see chapter 4.
Screening phase 8	May-juni 2024 To be done	German and French texts are checked (by German and French-speaking members of the project).	XX texts are added to the literature review but are described in a particular subchapter in the Result chapter.
Analysis 4	Autumn 2024	The final analysis of the important results in 18 articles are analysed.	

Example from our process:

Analyser görs längs med vägen tillsammans med kollegor och av ensamförfattarerna och nya steg och sökningar görs.

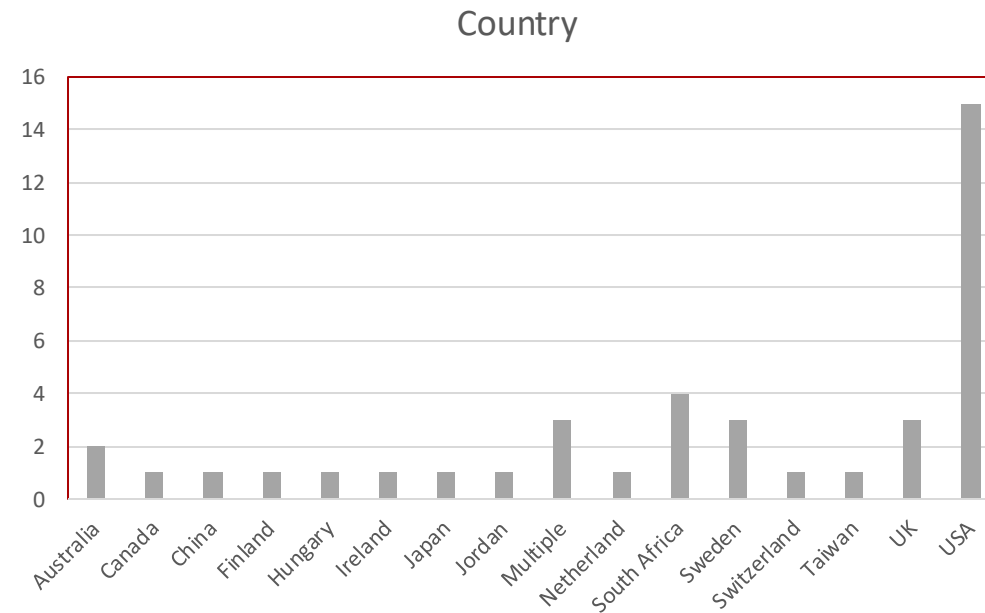
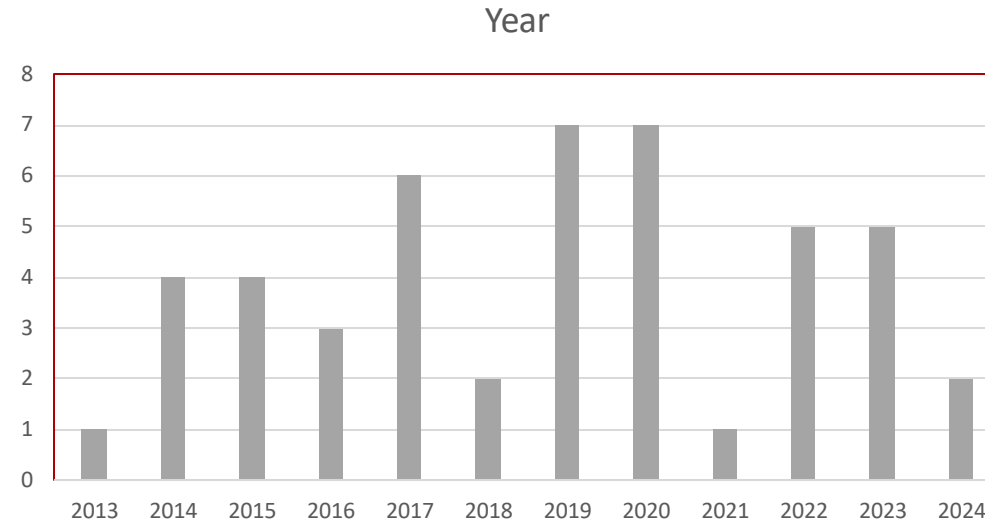
51 articles are finally chosen for further analysis.

Men observera: vi håller på med tyska och franska artiklar.

I skrivande stund arbetar en master-student Emma Cimmerbäck i vårt projekt och finner nya artiklar och vinklingar och arbetar med definitionsfrågan.



Result 1:
When and where
in the 51 articles
involving lobbying
and education



Results 2: Few definitions, few explanations.

Få citeringar, få definition, oftast endast i abstract

Många artiklar har få citeringar, det är inget fält som drar till sig många citeringar.

Defintion av lobbying?

Det tycks saknas definitioner av det? Varför? Det tas för givet?

Ofta endast med i abstractet, ingen annanstans i texten.

Och ordet lobby är inte särskilt vanligt i artiklarna:



Result 3: The content in the articles

When analysing the subject descriptors word in the 51 articles these themes are more common:

- Disabilities, deafness, disadvantaged;
- Activism, social rights, civil rights, citizenship
- Public school, public
- Advocacy
- Legislation e.g. federal, state
- Minority groups (students and teachers)
- Equal education
- Libraries, reading skills
- Educational change



Result 3: The content in the articles

When analysing the key words (when found) in the 51 articles, these themes are more common:

- Reading, libraries
- Gender, sexuality
- Reform, change



Result 3: The content in the articles

Gemensamma analys i forskningsgruppen (jag, Jakob och Margareta) av bla abstract:

Det handlar om allt möjligt.

Lobbyism kan handla om ämnen, det kan handla också om riktning, mål.

Det saknas teorier, stabila forskarteam, fält.

Det saknas tydliga beskrivningar av ordet och när det kan användas.

Är det ett deskriptivt ord? Eller finns det nyanser i det som är viktigt?

Eller är det bara synonymt med policy-making? Advocacy?



Result 3: The content in the articles

Anna fortsätter scoping:

Endast vissa artiklar, som nämnts ovan som verkligen tar tag i frågor om lobby som sätter det i förgrunden av de 51. Andra studerar lobby från en annan tid. Andra artiklar är tveksamma och verkar vara rovdjurstidskrifter (nr 2) eller starkt normativa (nr 6). Ibland är det också mycket svårt att hitta ett konkluderande kapitel (nr. 6, 7)

När jag går igenom alla abstract och conclusions (jag läser igenom alla abstract och där det är relevant så läser jag även conclusion eller motsvarande.

Jag ser också igen att interest group, advocates, stakeholder är viktiga begrepp som ligger nära lobby.

Till slut väljs 17 artiklar ut som närstuderas.



Results when looking closer at 17 articles

Keywords (when found):

- Academic achievement;
- arts appreciation
- arts education
- assetization
- Charter schools,
- churches in Ireland
- commercialisation;
- communities;
- community;
- comparative policy analysis,
- Computer science education,
- Council (TRC);
- critical policy sociology;
- cultural education
- development education
- Edu-business;
- education for sustainable development,
- education marketisation;
- Educational activism;
- educational reform,
- enclave
- evangelical,
- experiencing the arts
- final examinations
- Gatekeepers,
- GCE national strategy,
- girls;
- global education,
- governance
- normative case study,
- Northern Ireland schools;
- policy processes;
- policy;
- Policy;
- politics of education,
- power of research;
- private-public partnership;
- privatisation;
- privatised education
- Protestant
- public school,
- readiness;
- released time,
- research use;
- school choice
- school reform
- school reform,
- secondary education
- sex education
- sexuality;
- Social Consciousness,
- Social Justice
- social media;
- social movement;
- South Carolina policy formation,
- teachers Credit,
- Think tanks;
- Transferors Representatives'
- Triple Helix;
- venture philanthropy consent



Analys av resultaten från de 17 artiklar som sätter lobby i förgrunden

görs mån kväll/tis fm.





General conclusions so far

Sweden expects and requires the participation of interest groups, companies, and actors in decision-making, political processes, etc. In addition, Sweden has a unique system with a well-developed welfare state, a system that also opens for profit on welfare means. This implies interest groups, companies, etc. can influence processes that create profits or benefits for themselves.

This opens up for interest groups, lobby groups etc to step in (in Sweden as well as elsewhere). What happens in this process?

The pilot study shows frustration and that the concept of lobbying easily becomes connected to values about good or bad.

Our scoping literature review shows that there are no clear definitions or clarifications when it comes to lobbying. There are no research groups or research fields that build knowledge. When the concept lobby is used it is often connected to values on good, bad, or freedom (of choice).

Overall, a significant lack of systematic and fundamental research on lobbying within education.

The project continues



Sub study: Bridging disciplines.
Integrating Lobbying into Educational Sciences.

Tr	Definition	Fält	Tr	Titel	Tr	Författare	Status	publicerin gsdatum	Länk	Tr	Anteckni ngar	Tr	Word they define
2	"We present a synthetic defin	Sociology		Advocacy Organizations in th		Kenneth T. Andrews & Bob Ed	Färdig	2004	Arkiv		Anteckningar		Advocacy organization
3	"Lobbying involves certain ele	Sociology		Lobbying and Society: a politi		John C. Scott	Färdig	2018	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
4	"Lobbying describe the effort	Statsvetenskap		LOBBYING ("Lobbying", in Inte		Jeffrey M. Berry	Färdig	2001	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
5	"Advocacy is general support	Leadership & Ma...		Advocacy, Lobbying and Soci		Marica Avner	Färdig	2010	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
6	Nowmes (2006: 5), Lobbying i	Political Science		TOTAL LOBBYING		Anthony J. Nowmes	Pågår	2006	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
7	"the organized attempts to in	Medie, kommuni...		The construction of an elusiv		Elin Helgesson & Kajsa Falas	Färdig	2017	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
8	The most general way to stat	Political Science		The Washington lobbyists		Lester W. Milbrath	Färdig	1963	Arkiv		Anteckningar		Old source but very
9	They define interest group as	Educational Rese...		Professor Smith Goes to Was		Christopher R. Marsicano anc	Färdig	2020	Arkiv		Anteckningar		education industry Adding lobbying "o
10	Allens och Pollack (2021:594 "... att det handlar om kont	Medie, kommuni...		Svängdörrens förlovade lan		Allens och Pollack	Färdig	2021	Arkiv		Anteckningar		Kommentar: Ordet "bearbetning
11	European commission definit	European Union S...		European commission		European commission	Färdig	2005	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
12	"an effort to influence the pol	IDK		? cited in andrews and edwar		Baumgartner et al.	Pågår	2001	Arkiv		Anteckningar		
13	"when some group or individu	IDK		? cited in Scott pg.10		Pasley	Färdig	2002	Arkiv		Anteckningar		Scott, arguing for tl
14	"Lobbying" – the practice to	Leadership & Ma...		Quest for Exceptional Leader		Chaudhry, Ravi	Pågår	2011	Arkiv		Anteckningar		(Chaudhry, Ravi (20
15	"direkt, intressesyrd och korr made by people who can and	Företagskommuni...		Public affairs und Lobbying		Althaus	Pågår	2007	Arkiv		Anteckningar		" (Althaus, 2007: 75
16	Lobbying is described as "the interest groups and policy-mi	IDK		Titel		De Figueiredo	Pågår	2002	Arkiv		Anteckningar		(De Figueiredo, 200
17	the specialist part of public with government primarily fo	Medie, kommuni...		Effective public relations		Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 200	Pågår	2000	Arkiv		Anteckningar		Cutlip, S., Center, A relations. Utöver Sa

A careful reading of
descriptions and definitions of
lobbying (and the similar) in
other disciplines.

Performed by master student
Emma Cimmerbeck, Uppsala
University, Oct, 24 - ongoing



The project continues

A larger project is about to be launched to explore the defining characteristics of lobbying within the Swedish compulsory school system.

Main questions:

- How do key actors in the Swedish school system define and describe lobbying?
- Who is involved in activities that key actors define and describe as lobbying?
- Where, when, and how does lobbying occur and with what content and purpose?

But we are also interested in the influencing process!

A process where we try to understand how communication works in, with, for lobbying

From a **pedagogical perspective - how does lobbying communicate?**

An **educational question about communication.**



Two articles will be submitted from the work presented here, probably to Journal of Education Policy and Critical Studies in Education.

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Thank you for listening!

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