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Published online: 10 Feb 2020.

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Policy and Political Marketing: Promoting Conflict as Policy

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This paper is an attempt to try and understand the processes and interactions that take place in society when a group attempts to lobby in favor of contentious forms of public policy, which may not necessarily be in national or public interest, through the political marketing lens. What are the necessary environmental conditions in society and political tactics employed that could be sufficient to try and influence and persuade a public to accept a form of security policy or military intervention? Two cases are used to try and investigate these questions – the NATO debate in Sweden and the 2015 Parliamentary debate in the United Kingdom on using military force in Syria. In spite of the differences in the two individual cases, a number of similarities in outcomes emerge. One of the requisite underlying environmental conditions is that the publics concerned need to perceive an immediate security threat to themselves. Political tactics used tend to revolve around intangible value and norm laden emotional argumentation. These are, to some extent, further influenced by the historical experience and memory of the public in historical accounts of armed conflict.

KEYWORDS political marketing, public policy, public opinion, political relationships, security and armed conflict

INTRODUCTION

The executive branch of government needs to build political support and public support simultaneously, which is dependent the timing of the campaign (symbolic dates or events, for example), level of resonance of the message, the historical memory of those target publics and the existence/absence of any counter-information and narrative (Western 2005). To try and achieve this end, political interests and governments tend to try and build emotionally based political relationships with publics.

One new line of investigation into new political marketing dimensions investigates the relationship with lobbying.[1] This concerns external groups influencing political parties and lobbying among political parties (Harris and McGrath 2012). It is the intention of this paper to explore the communication and campaigning done by governments and other political actors on their constituencies. Political marketing requires that a government use an emotionally attractive form of message in order to maintain an appearance of a reciprocal connection with their constituency. This brings together political influence and public service delivery. It has been noted "that public services are directed at electorally sensitive sectors, key constituencies and potential supporters" (Butler and Collins 2001, 1029). However, what happens if a government (or interest/lobby group) seeks to introduce policy that could be detrimental to public interest or demand, such as seeking to launch military operations within the context of foreign/security policy? In some regards, there may be some parallels between an election campaign and a campaign to promote war/intervention as policy. It requires the building political relationships and the triumph of perception over reality. In the context of this paper it is difficult to prove whether a government strategically and consciously uses political marketing to achieve its ends, rather the emphasis is placed upon the communication processes of the two cases to be presented.

The use of positive and negative emotions is intended to prime and cue an audience. It is not only a communication, but a call to action. One of the justifications for regime change, which may use war as a mechanism of that change, is that it promotes peace. The logic is that democracies do not fight each other. However, studies have shown that countries that have experienced regime change are much more likely to go to war than an authoritarian regime (Mansfield and Snyder 1995). War as a part of foreign policy is not so much about facts, but about perception and public opinion. It is not an intention to make value or ethical judgements concerning who is right, who is wrong, but rather to investigate and analyze the mechanisms involved in the political call for military intervention or potentially contentious security policy.

LITERATURE REVIEW: PUBLIC POLICY AND WAR

The field of public policy and marketing consists of two aspects. "First, it involves studying marketing actions or the use of marketing techniques that affect society [...] Second, it involves government policy or other societal change that has marketing dimensions" (Mazis 1997, 140). Traditionally there has been a focus upon legal and regulatory domains, however, more recently emerged aspects include ethics and social issues (Ibid.). Rather than focusing upon the legal and regulatory facets, this paper shall explore how ethical and social facets of policy are marketed and communicated to publics. This needs to be effectively communicated to the voting publics, in order for them to 'buy in' on the policy offering.

Chong and Druckman observe that "people's value priorities were a significant predictor of their policy preferences across framing conditions." However, "framing can cause people's opinions to deviate from their values, but contrary to previous theoretical claims, not any frame will move opinions simply by repeating the message" (Chong and Druckman 2007, 651). In the move to treating the voter as a consumer, political marketing involves anticipating the needs and demands of the public (Newman 1999). However, when it comes to the issue of stepping out from elections in to the realm of policy, especially when it involves promoting a course of action that may be detrimental to public interest, how does a Government or interest group create a demand? Objectively speaking there is usually little in the way of tangible benefit in the political exchange that occurs between the Government and the voter, where the voter is asked to support politically (or at the very least, not to oppose) the proposed policy of armed intervention or another contentious form of security policy. Therefore, other credible projected and perceived benefits need to be communicated by the executive branch of government to publics, which is often rooted in an emotional rather than reasoned logic.

Until the 1920s, war was an 'acceptable' means with which to resolve international disputes. From the 1920s the League of Nations and successive organizational equivalents have severely curtailed the 'right' to wage a war of aggression. However, a loophole was provided through the vague definition and approach to 'defensive' wars. This has left an opportunity for states to wage wars in the international framework, should they be 'defensive' in nature, which has profound consequences.

> By a very simple manipulation of the circumstances leading to a crisis all wars can be made defensive wars, and governments on both sides have not been backward in giving to their cause the moral support that has always attended self-defence (Fenwick 1928, 828).

An article by Condoleeza Rice confirmed these tendencies outlined by Fenwick some 72 years later. She said that US foreign policy should focus

on national interest and pursue key priorities. One of the tasks to achieve this was "to ensure that America's military can deter war, project power, and fight in the defence of its interests if deterrence fails" (Rice 2000, 46). War has a tendency to stimulate the 'herd' instinct in man. The herd is, for example, a country. "A threat directed toward the whole herd is the intensest stimulus to these potentialities, and the individual reacts toward it in the most vigorous way. The first response is the thrill of alarm which passes through the herd from one member to another with magic rapidity" (Trotter 2015, 142–143). There are other mechanisms that those that are vague in nature or induce intense emotional feelings and responses in target publics.

Another line of informational technology use is geared toward generating a sense of familiarity between the messenger and sender. This is evident in the use of branding, which has been borrowed from the commercial sector to the political/governmental sphere. It not only includes countries, cities and states, but also parties, politicians and governments. Branding has come to touch governmental products and services, and public policies (Marsh and Fawcett 2011, 516). The branding of public policy may also be an avenue for 'exporting' policy from one government to another and across countries. Once policy transfer has taken place there is a significant effort and focus attached to protecting the brand. This is for two primary reasons, 1) to ensure any failures do not reflect back adversely on the point of origin of the policy, and 2) to facilitate the exchange of best practice within a common framework (Marsh and Fawcett 2011, 522–23). Within the sphere of branded public policy transfer that facilitates the use of military force in foreign policy are 'humanitarian intervention' and R2P (the Responsibility to Protect). These are both vague concepts that project the idea of a defensive war as well as norms and values that are intended to resonate with target publics.

James Madison expressed to Thomas Jefferson in 1798 "the management of foreign relations appears to be the most susceptible to abuse of all the trusts committed to a government, because they can be concealed or disclosed, disclosed in such parts and at such times as will best suit particular views" (Western 2005, 234). "The constant temptation to manipulate and distort information, frequently leads the public to develop unrealistic expectations about the nature or likely cost or efficacy of military intervention." However, this can be a problem as a war may not go according to the projected script (Western 2005, 232–233). Western states that the factors that determine war policy are ultimately the ability to generate political and public support for their particular position. If the political leadership of a country is against a position, then lobbying can be done in the form of generating political and public opposition to those views. "I argue that public and political support is a function of two critical elements:

information flows and the public's predispositions" (Western 2005, 5). Therefore, information flows and knowledge production and availability are the key to an actor's ability to shape perception and persuade their audience.

The study by Baum and Potter (2008) on the relationship between foreign policy, mass media and public opinion noted some interesting aspects. Initially, a government possesses an advantage over the public in terms of the information it has in order to make and base their decisions. However, this does change with time.

> After all, the longer a conflict lasts, the greater the opportunity for the public to accumulate sufficient information to overcome – or at least reduce – its informational disadvantage (Baum and Potter 2008, 44–45).

There are a number of factors that influence public opinion on foreign policy, such as the rally around the flag phenomenon, elite discord and casualty aversion (Baum and Potter 2008, 45–48). In terms of the informational disparity between governments and publics, the rate with which it varies and closes is not constant. "Recent real-world cases indicate that the informational gap between the public and its leaders can narrow at very different rates depending (presumably) on the nature of the crisis and the rhetoric that surrounds it" (Baum and Potter 2008, 59). Western states "arguments either for or against war, if they are to be successful, must demonstrate that the threats or costs of war are specific and proximate. Ambiguous or distant threats – especially those without precedent – or vague claims of the costs of war are more difficult to sell" (2005, 22). Thus initially, the public has less information with which to make an informed choice and decision on foreign policy, and may need to rely on a government's explanation and media coverage of foreign policy (assuming the communication is credible and resonates with them).

Powlick and Katz note that normally public opinion on foreign policy is latent, the main concern of decision makers is if activation of popular interest occurs, otherwise they have a more or less free hand. This activation of interest comes when a foreign policy issue receives major media coverage, and the media coverage is couched within the frames of reference that resonate with the public. Usually the media coverage is influenced and constituted by elite debate, journalists present the position of government officials. However, matters can become problematic, in terms of generating public consensus, when high-credibility expert commentators diverge from the official viewpoint. This scenario spurs policy makers to attempt to enlist public support. The management of public opinion grows increasingly problematic though, if credible elites defect from the government camp (Powlick and Katz 1998). The activation of public opinion also results "when issues have a direct effect on large segments of the public" (Ibid, 36). Activation of public opinion may result from not only reality, but

a perception of reality, which have some implications for consideration that is found in the analysis of Fenwick (1928), Trotter (2015) and Western (2005).

An empirical illustration of the above observations can be found in the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003. In an article by Foyle (2004), it was noted that Bush was constrained by public opinion in 2001, to delay any military operations against Iraq until the US had dealt with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan first. Once the Afghan operations had been deemed as being complete, attention shifted to Iraq and to manage public opinion to support military operations there. In order to achieve this goal a perceived legitimate excuse needed to be created to present the case of a 'defensive' war. The specter of weapons of mass destruction and links to terrorism were used to try and prime public opinion. Although public attitudes were not radically changed, the public felt that the case had been sufficiently 'explained' to them (i.e. justified). The high level of public support gave Bush a greater freedom of action. "Though Bush was forced to comment on the large public protests against his policies, support in the polls allowed him to ignore the protests and mitigate their effects on other political actors" (Foyle 2004, 290). Foyle's analysis and observations tend to support and confirm the posture of Powlick and Katz (1998) review of the nexus between public opinion and foreign policy.

How does this theoretical situation play out in real-life examples? Two different cases shall be briefly examined in order to try and understand if the mentioned theoretical considerations hold. The first case, although not specifically a case of war or military intervention, does concern contentious security policy with the NATO debate in Sweden. The various mechanisms and tactics used shall be examined in order to understand the marketing of a military alliance to a neutral country. In the second case, the UK Parliamentary vote on air strikes in Syria, the marketing strategy for armed intervention in the conflict there shall be analyzed. The pros and cons of both cases from a political marketing perspective shall be considered.

POLITICAL MARKETING

The famous military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, once famously said that war is a continuation of politics by other means. However, an initial first step is to define and understand politics and forging political relationships in a competitive environment. This paper shall seek to explore political marketing perspectives and connections within the policy area, particularly within the contentious specific activity of enabling the use of military force within the foreign and security policy arena.

The scope of political marketing is in the process of broadening its scope. "Contemporary political marketing scholars attempt to understand the entire sphere of politics as a competitive 'marketplace'" (Johansen 2012, 6). Political marketing concerns an active and sustained effort to build and maintain political relationships with target publics. A relationship implies that there shall be some form of exchange (either in tangible or intangible form) between the communicator and the audience.

> Political marketing is the processes of exchanges and establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships among objects in the political market (politicians, political parties, voters, interest groups, institutions), whose goal is to identify and satisfy their needs and develop political leadership (Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman 2011, 17).

> Political marketing is a perspective from which to understand the phenomena in the political sphere, and an approach that seeks to facilitate political exchanges of value through interactions in the electoral, parliamentary and governmental markets to manage relationships with stakeholders (Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy 2013, 18).

These definitions are in-line with other academic definitions, such as Lees-Marshment (2009). Political marketing is a deliberate framework of political communication that is intended to attract the attention of, actively engage, persuade and influence a targeted public. Scammell characterizes political marketing as an application and a practice that is constantly caught between the realms of ideals and pragmatism (Scammell 2014, 4–8). Newman (2016, 168) has noted a trend in political marketing where "it will be impossible for organizations to be effective without an understanding of the latest marketing technology in their industry, or without a "cross-sectoral" approach to marketing that enables them to adapt ideas from one sector for use in another."

One of the critics of political marketing, Savigny, notes that it "fundamentally alters the idea and nature of politics, subjugating politics to marketing." She concludes that "the process of political marketing in its present form depoliticizes politics as it denies the content of politics in the process of politics, which in turn can lead to disconnection and disengagement" (Savigny 2008, 5). Savigny's criticism concerns the political focus on the marketing of a product, which attracts and mobilizes the support of key audience segments, but does not include all segments (2008, 61). Thus the primary criticisms seem to be that there is a focus on the façade and marketing of brands and ideas, which replaces the tangible quality and substance of debate, and therefore affects the very 'quality' of politics.

Political communication and relationships between the Government and the publics are likely to be based upon rhetoric, message packaging and the exploitation of perception and emotion. This is more likely so in

the case off controversial or risky policy being pursued by a government that runs contrary to prevailing public opinion. Therefore there is a tendency and a need to approach communications on such policy from a marketing perspective, which effectively sells the idea of the pragmatic need as well as a projected good outcome (idealism) for the target public in an effort to win their support. Links between marketing and public policy have been explored tentatively. Looking at this issue from a 'customer-oriented' government perspective revealed some interesting initial findings.

> Public policy marketing is based upon marketing exchanges between government and citizens that should meet both the prerequisites of marketing and those of public administration. The usual marketing tools are available, provided that they are adapted to the requirements of public administration. Although practical evidence is yet unavailable, it can be assumed hypothetically that this marketing concept will improve social effectiveness, because it brings the social behaviour of citizens required for this end much more clearly into the open. Therefore it is apt for implementing those types of policies where citizen conduct is critical to bring about social effectiveness (Buurma 2001, 1299).

As is seen above, ideally, the citizen should be involved and engaged in the political process of identifying and formulating policy in order for a better quality of outcome. There should be an exchange of dialogue between the Government and publics, before the exchange of political consent by the public to enable a sense of legitimacy for a Government's policy. In the case of Defense or security policy, the approach of the government or supporter is to create an emotional atmosphere where the political relationship is attempted, based upon subjective considerations, where supporting what is an objectively risky policy (i.e. likely to increase the likelihood of conflict and/or contain risk to human life) is potentially negated by communicating the subjective reduction of risk or threat through false logic. By asking the target audience to accept the policy, supporters are implied to take part in what is a seemingly altruistic outcome, the relationship being based on the mutual exchange of the public bestowing political legitimacy in return for being an active participant in a 'humanitarian' act.

There are differences in how different international publics receive and process government communications aimed at generating support for armed intervention with the use of values and norms. Those key words, norms and values do not necessary resonate across all national cultures. Thus messages that resonated with the US publics did not resonate with South Korean publics with regards to building the case for war against Iraq in 2003 (Samsup, Shim, and Jung 2008). It should therefore be noted that a particular communicational appeal that succeeded with one public, may not succeed with another, different public. An implication is that there

needs to be a varied and specific target public sensitive appeal in order to resonate and create an emotional bond and relationship between a Government and target public in order for the policy to be supported.

Emotionally based political relationships need to be formed between the lobbyist and the target audience, the exchange in their relationship can be often be found in notions of intangible values and norms – democracy, security, justice, liberty, solidarity and so forth. Therefore, the political consent for the act of military intervention by the audience is 'rewarded' by the 'owner' of the particular policy with these intangibles. The primary way of narrating these policies is within a defensive or preventive framework, which seems to be an effort to circumvent not only possible legal, but ethical and moral resistance to the proposal.

Cases for a particular Defense/security policy proposal, which may include military intervention, is based upon the perception of the credibility and reputation of the communicator versus the intended object of the policy, which also requires that a negative political relationship exists between them in order to be credible and justify the use of force and other measures. That same negative political relationship must exist between the target audience and the named enemy, in order for them to perceive an immediate and serious security threat to them and their interests. A positive political relationship needs to be formed and maintained between the communicator (legitimacy seeker) of the policy and the target audience (legitimacy giver), without this there shall no basis for dialogue and mutual exchange to take place. Without these political relationships, the objective of priming and mobilizing a target audience is very problematic.

INFLUENCE AND PERSUASION OF THE PUBLIC

Two key terms appear in the section title, *influence* and *persuasion*, which require some definition and clarification. Influence can be understood as being the ability of certain groups and/or individuals and/or organizations to induce others to do what they ask or want (Anagnostopoulos, Kumar, and Mahdian 2008). This state of being can be brought about through persuasion. It is defined as being "a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice" (Perloff 2010, 12). Therefore persuasion is a symbolic process, it involves an attempt to influence and it involves the communication of a message.

There is a balance and tradeoff with freedom versus security, openness and transparency versus secrecy. Within the framework of a liberal democracy, a necessary precondition for undertaking a decisive act of war

is social consensus (Sproule 2005, 168). This is where gauging public opinion enables vested political interests to evolve the political offering to the intended public through market intelligence to make informed changes to enable a sense of political legitimacy through creating the necessary 'demand' and political relationships. Democracy is threatened owing to the actual and perceived constraints of waging war. Seeming contradictions in politics and policy have been noted by some academic research (Weeks 2006; Brown 2006). Therefore, there must be a sufficient reason, real or perceived, for the public to accept war as being necessary. For a policy proposal to gain traction in public opinion, and therefore to create a demand for solutions, something must be a perceived and recognized as an immediate issue that poses risks in the here and now (Giddens 2015, 159).

One of the tools that assists and directs political marketing appeals to audiences is public opinion, both as a means of measure and a tool to exploit perceptions and emotions. This can be managed through the use of lobbying. Traditionally, interest groups have been seen to influence policy via two avenues: to donate campaign contributions and through the dissemination of specialist information (Austen-Smith 1993, 799). In defining "lobbying", it can be said to involve the practice of "a consistent and directed attempt to influence government policy." This can be achieved via one of four possible alternatives. 1) Political lobbying through using reputation management as a means to drive the desired policy. 2) Regulatory lobbying that involves interactions with law-making agencies. 3) The use of public relations techniques to influence the formulation and passage of policy. 4) Negotiation and dealing with contracts (Franklin et al. 2009, 126). This particular paper seeks to investigate the third alternative and in particular how political interests seek to gain political support for their policy proposal by subjectively shaping the information and political environment. In this regard, public opinion is an important indicator and predictor of the political environment.

Attempts have been made to clarify and explain how public opinion is formed, "public opinion results from the interaction between the public and political elites, with the later providing the initial stimuli – that is, the specific characterization of an issue – to which citizens react" (Jacoby 2000, 763). News is a source of public opinion as it enables the public to remotely access and indirectly experience events. Huckfeldt et al. (1995, 1050–51) defines public opinion as being "forged by extensive networks of relations within the boundaries of a political community that is defined in both space and time." An audience is more easily primed through emotional, rather than reasoned logic. This is achieved through a gradual process. A three stage process can be identified – affirmation, repetition and contagion (Le Bon 2013). Affirmation concerns the identification of a particular stance or viewpoint on

	Communicator (to initiate war)	Target/enemy (the target of war)	Publics
Actor Effectiveness	Reputation and image of Government	Reputation and image of Government	Level of priming and political mobilisation
Brand/Image Effectiveness	Brand and reputation of country/coalition	Projected brand and reputation of country/entity	Level of perceived credible and immediate threat
Persuasion Effectiveness	Resonance and credibility of message	Ability to counter communicator narrative	Contextual circumstances based upon past and present events
↑ Negative ↑ Positive ↑ Negative ↑ ↑			
Orientation of Political Relationship Building			

FIGURE 1. Factors of success or failure to persuade public opinion for armed intervention.

an issue, organization or person. The use of a specific narrative, framing and rhetoric helps to guide and influence the course and nature of the discussion. This is repeated over and over to the public. The desired end state is that the message and its repetition then influences and persuades the target public with the intention of the messenger's communication (Figure 1).

METHOD

Two key political events that involved a public political discussion and attempts to persuade different stakeholders were chosen for analysis. Other cases were considered, but excluded on the basis of such considerations as the author not possessing sufficient command of a language, accessibility of open source materials (the debates needed to be open and political in nature), and the clear use of marketing (including the use of lobbying and public opinion) needed to be observed. These two cases chosen represent one case that has already been concluded (UK) and the other case is still being debated (Sweden).

Different source material was searched for and analyzed, which includes media reports, books, and reports by think tanks and NGOs. The material was located through a number of subscribed news aggregates, newsletters from think tanks and NGOs, there was also the use of online search engines (namely Google) that used key words (in English and in

Swedish) that included key words – UK Parliament vote on Syria airstrikes + 2015 **and** submarine Stockholm + October 2014 **and** Sweden + opinion on NATO debate. The results were manually checked and all articles in the first 15 pages of results read and analyzed for their suitability for the paper.

The texts were then analyzed according to the following method. The approaches to textual analysis include content analysis (quantifications of different elements in text), argumentation analysis (the structure of argumentation used), and the qualitative analysis of ideas in the content (with a focus on links between communicated threat and marketed policy 'remedy') (Boréus and Bergström 2017, 7–9). The combination of these approaches is expected to yield results on the ontology (what exists) and epistemology (knowledge and how we 'know' things) of reactions to mediated textual depictions of the 'necessary' policy recommendations within the context of the stated security risk/threat. The objects of study include influence, institutions, policy, interests and threats, effects and predictions and so forth. The results of this study are exploratory and should be considered as being tentative indicative results, which require additional studies in order to test the reliability, representativeness and replicability.

CASE STUDIES: SWEDISH NATO DEBATE AND UK SYRIA DEBATE

The 'Submarine' Incidents and the Swedish NATO Debate

Sweden and Finland are both neutral countries, although for different reasons. Finland was neutral during the Cold War as a means of creating a political relationship with the Soviet Union in order to retain its independence. Sweden has officially been a neutral country for some 200 years, it was a reflection reaction of the disastrous period of war by Swedish kings, which ultimately resulted in the destruction of the Swedish Empire at the hands of the Russian Empire during the 18–19th Centuries. Since this time it has come to be one of the key values of the Swedish public. The following is a small sample and cross section of the debate in Sweden's mass media, for and against NATO membership. It is not just a question of tracking the substantive debates and arguments, but also those ones that are less clearly defined and where answers (solutions) are implied.

The policy calculus during periods of crisis may shift from a reasoned logic to an emotional logic. When information wars take place within this context of crisis, often there is only mention of one of the actors, the named 'aggressor' whereas the other belligerent (as wars require at least two parties in order to be a war) is not named. Often there is significant emphasis on shaping the information environment in order to create an environment of fear, which in turn is used by at least one of the parties in order to pursue their policy or interests. An example of this is the current

situation in the Baltic Sea region where both Finland and Sweden (the only non-NATO members in the region) are subjected to intense lobbying pressure to join NATO. Thus the 'threat' of Russian aggression is raised as a significant problem and a fear, the 'solution' of NATO is offered as a cure for this problem.

> Diplomatically, NATO should change the strategic calculus in Scandinavia by openly engaging Sweden and Finland to join NATO. Although these nations are active participants in many NATO events and activities, a formal entry into NATO would have far-reaching effects in deterring Russian aggression in the region. Should this prove too bold a step for Sweden and Finland, then some sort of formal "Bi-lateral" agreement between NATO and Finland/Sweden adopted to respond together with the Alliance in the face of any sort of Moscow inspired instability in the region. This should have all the language of Article V of the Washington Treaty (Mastriano 2015).

The fears have been stoked, often on less than solidly proven grounds, but through assertion propaganda techniques. This 'cure' is provided as being a simple strategic calculation on the part of Finland and Sweden against Russian aggression. However, the problems that are not explored are the costs involved in the unproven cases of any impending expansionist threat against these countries. In addition, the strategic calculus by Russia is likely to shift in the direction of making these countries military targets in any possible future conflict.[2] The event that was used to trigger the NATO debate in Sweden was the alleged sighting of a 'Russian' submarine in the Stockholm Archipelago in October 2014.[3] However, there has been not much beyond such words and phrases as "credible information," "highly likely," guess work such as "in principle it can only be Russia in the Baltic Sea Region," and hazy photos. There are assumptions and guess work, without any solid evidence to prove beyond all doubt. This was a somewhat reminiscent situation of the 'irrefutable proof' of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and links to terrorism, which formed the basis for going to war against Iraq in March 2003.

Some observers have noted that the hysteria generated in the mass media serves a specific propaganda function in its own right. "The aversion against Russia and Russians is naturally first and foremost founded upon Russia as a geopolitical adversary of the United States and its allies. But the demonization of Russia that has spread to here has another purpose also, namely the picturing of "the Russians" as the new enemy, as 'the other.'"[4] This function the author talks about is protection from a supposedly aggressive and expansionist Russia with President Putin at its helm, and as such requires a 'natural solution' for the emotional public to gravitate toward and the consequences if they do not take this 'apparent' option. The former US ambassador to Sweden, Mark Brzezinski, made these points clear and sought to influence the political level of the NATO-membership debate. He likened

NATO to an 'insurance company' and made it clear that before disaster comes there is a need to already be fully committed before the disaster occurs. Therefore it was not enough for Sweden to be a partner of NATO (through the Partnership-for-Peace Programme), they needed to be a full member of the military alliance as there could be no guarantees of help short of this stage.[5] In terms of a political market, NATO is promoted as a Savior against the 'villain' Russia.

A counter-argument was raised by the Social Democrat Member of Parliament, Anders Österberg, who argued that membership in NATO in fact increased the risk of war. His solution was "to contribute to the détente in the region is our best protection." A premise of the argument was based on the perception that Sweden's tradition of being free from military alliances has served it well over the years and therefore there was no need to abandon it in haste. By abandoning it, Sweden runs the risk of losing its international credibility as an intermediary in armed conflicts.[6] This implies a tradeoff in political capital, either retain the core political values of the Sweden or forsake those for the projected scenario of a Russian military with the presumed protection offered by membership in a military alliance. Österberg argues that Sweden risks damaging its political brand and reputation through joining NATO, emphasizing the policy is a hasty reaction that may result in significant long-term losses.

When the author interviewed Russian foreign policy professionals (from the Diplomatic Academic, Russian International Affairs Council, Valdai Club and Sputnik News) in Moscow,[7] the Swedish fear and panic seemed to be out of place, yet still understandable. The agreement among those interviewed was that Sweden was a "marginal" country for Russia's foreign policy agenda, let alone any sort of military agenda. Relations between Russia and Sweden are characterized as being "asymmetrical" – Russians generally had a positive view of Sweden and Swedes, but Swedes viewed Russia as being an existential threat owing to historical relations between the two countries in the 18th and 19th Centuries. The situation has had the effect of igniting the NATO debate.

This is seen in op-eds, mass media articles and programs on the issue. The following is an example of logos, one argument for and the other against NATO membership. For example, the former Swedish ambassador to Russia, Sven Hirdman wrote a debate article in June 2015.[8] In his article Hirdman raises ten different myths to debunk, he states that it could prove to be counter-productive to national security for Sweden to seek NATO membership. Not to mention, arguing against the notion that the only 'realistic' security option for Sweden is to join NATO. Likewise he also argues that there is very little likelihood of Sweden being a victim of Russian military aggression. This article on debunking of security dilemma myths resulted in an article that sought to debunk Hirdman's myth busting piece.

Each one of the ten points raised by Hirdman is taken in turn and a counter-argument is formulated. It is a mirror argument to the previous article, which concludes that not only would Sweden be safer with NATO membership, but the whole Baltic Sea Region.[9] However, there is little to support this assertion other than the statement itself.

In addition to those debates that rely on logos and ethos to influence and persuade an audience on a particular policy path, there are also those arguments that use pathos and the power of emotions to achieve this goal. There are a number of narratives circulating in Sweden concerning Russia and its supposed actions and intent. One of these is the narrative on the power and danger of Russian propaganda. An Expressen article laid out the premise of their message. "We should not be afraid of Putin's Russia. We should be paranoid." Mention was also made of 'hybrid warfare' and Russia as a leading exponent of this type of conflict. Sweden's government and the Foreign Minister in particular is presented as being unfocused and not up to the task of resisting Russian aggression.[10] This article is focusing on aspects and projections of the Russian threat to Sweden, and to Europe in general. It does not specifically call for joining NATO, but it does call for the need to understand Russian intentions and tactics.

Swedish public opinion on NATO membership is in flux. In 2001, 49 per cent of those polled thought it was a bad idea. By 2012, the figure has decreased slightly to 45 per cent. At the same time, support for NATO membership increased from 19 per cent in 2011 to 29 per cent in 2013 (Bjereld 2014, 487; 488). After the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014, some 50 per cent of Swedish respondents still thought that Sweden's interests would be best served outside of NATO (an increase of 10 points from 2013), approximately 1/3 favored NATO membership.[11] With the alleged Russian submarine incursion in to the waters of the Stockholm Archipelago in October 2014, some 40 per cent of respondents favored NATO membership and 42 per cent opposed, the highest level of support achieved.[12] A possible explanation for the growth in support for NATO membership after the event of October 2014 in Sweden as opposed to events in Ukraine in March 2014 is the perception of direct threat to Sweden as opposed to somewhere distant, therefore fear could be more effectively exploited in the second example. It took one year for the Ministry of Defense to confirm that there was no foreign, let alone Russian submarine in Swedish waters.[13] But not before a great amount of alarmist 'analysis' based on presumptions.

All wars, including information wars require at least two opposing sides to enable an accurate designation of this term (war). This projected conflict scenario is based upon assumptions and counter-assumptions. Reasons for Sweden to join NATO are hedged in defensive terms, and there is limited mention made of possible costs of this membership. For

Sweden to join NATO, the argument is to trade the established centuries old policy and value of military neutrality for a perceived sense of greater security to the projected threat of Russia. NATO has been branded as a Savior and Russia has been branded as a threat within this policy scenario. Therefore, the appeal has a link to the ideas of Le Bon (2013) and to Trotter's (2015) 'instinct of the herd' to rally together in the face of an external threat, to be guided by suggestion and emotional rather than reasoned logic. In this debate ideals trump pragmatism, although the choices offered are seemingly pragmatic. As predicted by Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy (2013), there appears to be an increased level of sophistication and spin in the communication. In this case, the Swedish government and public are the targets of influence by interest and lobby groups, which requires the construction and maintenance of a political relationship that is built upon the notion of exchange – NATO membership for security versus maintaining the neutrality tradition and experience insecurity. Currently, the debate in Sweden seems to be ongoing, there is still no clear majority for the country wanting to join NATO. But the debate is far from over and opinion can change. Bergenäs and Ögren Wanger (2015) predicted that the NATO debate shall be a key issue for the Swedish elections scheduled for 2018. This was in fact not the case, however, the issue of mass immigration was dominating as the key issue.

Syria vote in the British parliament

The Syrian war has been characterized as being a humanitarian disaster, the narratives and frames are very oppositional – good versus evil, freedom versus slavery, authoritarianism versus democracy. Its intention is to create a perception of a 'democratic' opposition to Bashar al-Assad and a tyranny that 'needs' to be demolished in order for the Syrian people to lead a life and enjoy the freedoms of the people in the West (Simons 2012; Simons 2013). Efforts have been made to construct an emotional logic and relationship between those governments seeking to employ overt military intervention in Syria and international publics. The narration of the political spectacle follows aspects of the definition of political marketing by Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman (2011) and Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy (2013), creating a relationship with a target public and defining the nature of the exchanges, it also fits with figure one on the creation of the various political relationships between the parties ('good' side, 'bad' side and the public).

This is the ideal façade, which masks more pragmatic goals. A more accurate characterization of the Syrian war is that it is a proxy war that is fought around the conflicting goals of regime change versus regime stability (Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) 2012). Syria is an extremely

complex conflict with many different actors that have differing interests, even nominally allied sides in the conflict have divergent agenda. The US-led coalition alone has some 60 different countries.[14] The primary focus of this subsection is on the lobbying in the British Parliament on the use of overt military intervention in Syria, and the arguments used for and against in media.

The armed conflict in Syria provides an interesting example of how Governments try to make use of influence through managing the public's perception of the event to make a case for military intervention there. Many of the above mentioned observations are clearly observed – it is framed as being a defensive military action, the heavy use of value-laden rhetoric (protecting civilians, enabling democracy and freedoms … etc.) and preventing the crisis from spreading further. A good example of this logic and reasoning is provided in a report produced by the London-based think tank Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). The key points of this report include:

- Syria has tipped to the point, where Assad, whether he stays or goes, is no longer the problem for the country or the region.
- Intervention is coming toward us because of the wider effects of the crisis; in some respects, military intervention has already begun.
- The last few days has seen this move from a Syrian crisis to a Levant crisis and from there presages a wider instability across the Middle East.
- The tipping point of this crisis now presages an 'arc of proxy confrontation' across the whole of the region between Iran and Saudi Arabia in which it will be difficult for the West to stay uninvolved.
- There are many ways in which external military intervention in this crisis might occur, the problem for the Western powers is that their room for political maneuver is narrowing as the crisis worsens (Syria Brief 2012, 1).

There has been intense and highly emotional lobbying for military intervention by the West in the Syrian war. The term lobbying is used owing to the clear geopolitical agenda of the group communicating for military intervention within the conclusions and recommendations of the brief. The reason for the use of emotion is that this means of public mobilization is much quicker to achieve than the use of rational logic, where the outcome of intervention is being projected as being 'inevitable'. Initially this has been proposed as a limited action, which is designed to assuage the public's casualty aversion, but ignores the possibility of rapidly escalating those limited engagements to something far more wide reaching. One of these limited options is the idea of creating a no-fly zone, which is defined as being a defensive posture with humanitarian goals. As Libya proved, those limited actions soon are rapidly increased to the point that enabled regime change against Gaddafi.

The United Kingdom and the justification used by those favoring the use of air strikes in Syria, tend to be formatted in a frame of solidarity, defensive or preventative war rhetoric. This has been seen in David Cameron's appeals at the House of Commons. "Britain should not wait until an attack takes place here before acting. […] it was morally unacceptable to be content with outsourcing our security to our allies." He reinforced the message with solidarity. "If we won't act now when our friend and ally France has been struck in this way, then our friends and allies can be forgiven for asking: 'If not now, when?'"[15] Therefore, the issue not only becomes one of security and solidarity, but also concerning national reputation. Although the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan seem to exert an effect, at this stage there are promises of using airpower only and not to deploy the unpopular option of ground troops.

RUSI joined the debate on the yes side in November 2015 with a briefing paper that contained justifications for the airstrikes. A number of key points were noted and highlighted in the brief.

- The ISIS attacks on Paris will bring a renewed focus to the debate on the extension of UK counter-ISIS air strikes in Syria. A commitment by the House of Commons to take part in the coalition air strikes in Syria would be seen as an important demonstration of solidarity with France, which has contributed its own forces to air strikes in Syria since September.
- […] But coalition air strikes already contribute to protecting Kurdish-majority areas in Northern Syria and ensuring that ISIS has no safe haven from which to support its operations in Iraq. If MPs accept that coalition allies are right to use force for these purposes, it is hard to justify a refusal in principle to authorize UK participation in comparable operations.
- In the absence of a wider political settlement in Syria, the UK's military campaign may need to be sustained over a period of several years. In these circumstances, it is possible – perhaps even likely – that the operation could end without achieving a decisive strategic effect (Chalmers 2015, 1).

These key points are interesting for a number of reasons. The 'justification' for the air strikes is based upon the intangible notion of 'solidarity' with France and the intangible notion of 'righteousness/belief' with the logic of, if our allies do it then we should too in an effort of moral/ethical equivalence. There is the tangible aspect of the 'humanitarian' nature of the military operations, yet these operations are very poorly defined in terms of the exact objectives, the time needed to engage and the "likely" dismal results. The brief goes further to motivate the air strikes by invoking that the UK's international reputation is at stake – "If the government were to go to Parliament and lose the vote, the UK's international reputation would suffer further significant damage" (Ibid, 2).

Cameron's political reputation is also mentioned, with a reminder of the failed Parliamentary vote to attack Syria in August 2013 (by 285 votes to 272) (Ibid, 3). One of the arguments for air strikes in Syria against ISIS was to "contain Russia." "Insofar as such support also helps to contain the reach of Russian intervention, this could be an additional benefit" (Ibid, 6). Technically Russia is also fighting ISIS in Syria, this comment and goal seems to confirm the observation of many conflicting interests by numerous actors in Syria, and not all interventions are what they seem to be on the surface.

Some of Savigny's (2008) concerns seem to be realized in the motivations for the air strikes, politics is subordinated to marketing, and consequently there is a lack of 'real' political debate as many of the reasons given are based upon intangible and projected factors. In the lead to the Parliamentary vote in the United Kingdom, there have been some that have questioned the 'real' motive behind the vote, which at face value is directed at an anti-Islamic State campaign. Rob Sloan a British blogger has been particularly active in opposing Cameron's vote initiative. His opposition to it is based upon historical precedence, a lack of consistency in argumentation by the British Prime Minister and a suspicion of the true intentions of the vote's implications for the operational aspects of the military intervention.

> Any day now; David Cameron is likely to go to the House of Commons to seek approval for bombing Syria. Having helped to create a failed state in Libya in 2011, Mr Cameron has been itching to become more overtly involved in Syria, especially after being defeated in a Commons vote back in 2013. My view is that he must be stopped. It is not simply that our intervention there is a bad idea; it is that his stated objective for intervention is false.[16]

This complicates the issue of perception during a period of political mobilization and priming, which is the ability of the target audience to know what is false and what is real. To an extent, this is determined by the communicator that has the best access to information and is able to most effectively market that communication to the intended publics. Therefore, there is a possibility that the previous stated policy priority of regime change in Syria (i.e. removing Assad) may once more surface and be aided by a yes vote permitting strikes against IS. The question is what voting politicians and the public believe to be the primary reasons of this policy vote, which is influenced by past events (such as the 2003 Iraq War deception) and recent events (such as the acts of terrorism in Paris).

A number of the arguments used for overt military intervention by the West is to help alleviate a humanitarian catastrophe and to assist the 'moderate' forces in Syria before they become radicalized. Certain assumptions are needed for these assertions to be held as being true. That Assad is

the root of the problem and his forces are engaging in war crimes against civilians, which should be reacted upon with a sense of abhorrence by an international audience that may be primed and persuaded that military intervention would help the situation. However, this ignores precedents, such as Libya where the situation has grown much worse in the wake of their 'liberation.' The second point is that 'moderates' drive the insurgency in Syria and must be helped in order for the country to develop in a Western direction. Once more, evidence exists that in fact radicals have been the driving force in the Syrian insurgency since at least 2012 (DIA 2012). These arguments continue to be made currently. David Cameron made the claim that some 70, 000 'moderate fighters' are currently in Syria, it is implied they need the West's help in order to prevail and prevent Syria from plunging into a radical abyss. However, such unsupported figures have generated criticism from some quarters. Veteran journalist Robert Fisk has taken these figures to task, and referred to Cameron as 'PR Dave' in the process. As Fisk points out, there is the very selective presentation of material by politicians and journalists in the UK in the lobbying taking place for the parliamentary vote on air strikes in Syria. For example, relatively little is told about the exact nature of the exposes of the Turkish journalists jailed by the Turkish President Erdogan, which concerned direct Turkish assistance to radical forces in Syria.[17] The success or failure of lobbying for policy depends on more than just the strength or weakness of one's own argument.

In the run up to a vote on whether to support air strikes in Syria or not, the UK Prime Minister David Cameron used character assassination methods against the leader of the Labor Party, Jeremy Corbyn. Cameron told those present in a meeting of the backbench 1922 Committee "you should not be walking through the lobbies with Jeremy Corbyn and a bunch of terrorist sympathizers." In response Labor released the statement that "he clearly realizes that he has failed to make a convincing case for military action in Syria and opinion is shifting away from him." One of the criticisms of the proposal is that there is no clear strategy or goals, and importantly, no clear end game is envisaged. However, for British politicians, the Paris terror attacks shifted their opinion and threat perception, they have consequently become more predisposed to voting for the military action in Syria.[18] The above mentioned observations seem to point in the direction of the future trends of political marketing that were given by Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy (2013), especially in regard to news management, the increased sophistication of spin, product and image management.

Public opinion played an important role in the perception of political legitimacy. One poll revealed that 46 per cent of those questioned would support bombing Syria if the vote was passed in Parliament, but would drop

to 23 per cent support without the yes vote in Parliament.[19] During the gas attacks in Damascus in August 2013, military intervention was not popular, 74 per cent were against sending troops, nine per cent for, 50 per cent against missile strikes, 25 per cent for.[20] The change in opinion polls may have been a contributing factor, i.e. less perceived political risk in voting for, the outcomes of the Parliamentary vote in 2015 versus 2013. Public opinion therefore has a number of implications for policy viability options and political marketing. Air strikes are a specific policy option, which is based upon the premise and perception of low risk (to taking military casualties, which raises public aversion to military operations), and therefore the associated political risk is lower and the proposal is more likely to be accepted (or less opposition). The air strike option is also an example of policy transfer, which has been used by numerous countries, on the one hand it is politically symbolic (more intangible than having a meaningful and tangible effect), more acceptable public 'offer', but also creates the potential for escalation at a later stage if the requisite grounds for cultivating the political environment are met.

On Wednesday 2 December 2015, the House of Commons held a vote on whether to authorize air strikes in Syria or not. Cameron urged that "this is not 2003. We must not use past mistakes as an excuse for indifference or inaction." In contrast to the vote in August 2013, the Parliament voted 397 to 223 in favor of air strikes in Syria. Within hours of the vote, the bombing mission started.[21] This was in spite of many problems of clarity and duration of mission, which was weighed against political reputation, national reputation and solidarity, the vote still passed. What this seems to demonstrate is that political symbolism is far more important than effect in priming and mobilizing a target audience. Does the outcome of the Syria vote reflect the idea, in order to succeed in a crowded political marketplace, do ideas (regardless of their quality) only require excellent marketing?

FURTHER RESEARCH

This article represents a small first step in exploring the dynamics of policy lobbying beyond elections within the framework of a political marketing lens. What more needs to be done? One of the first steps is to challenge the underlying theoretical thesis of this paper by subjecting it to further confirmation testing with more empirical examples drawn from different countries, and even different times. This shall have the added purpose of confirming whether the idea that political marketing practice and application varies over political issue and geographical space. More work certainly needs to be done on whether political symbolism does in fact trump tangible facts and realities. Additional research also needs to be conducted on

the role of opinion polls in political decision making, do polls drive the decision making or are the polls driven to legitimise the decision making? The issue of influence and persuasion in contemporary democratic politics is a key issue, which requires further and deeper clarification and investigation. A number of concerns do emerge concerning the role that marketing plays in this regard. This requires the uncovering of the different aspects of this process with a series of questions. Who is the agent exerting influence? What is the method of exerting influence? At whom is the influence being exerted? The outcome of this potentially has significant implications for the functioning and state of contemporary democratic society.

CONCLUSION

Butler and Collins (2001) speak of the bringing together of constituencies by political actors by offering public service delivery in exchange for political influence. These cases, both Sweden and the United Kingdom, demonstrate an element of this political exchange. In the cases, the target audiences are 'offered' a greater sense of security and pride in exchange for giving their support to the policy of NATO membership (Sweden) and the ability to bomb Syria (United Kingdom). However, the first step is to build, and then maintain an interactive, emotionally-based political relationship with the target audience.

That relationship needs to be based upon communication and interaction in order to stand a chance to influence and persuade the audience to accept the proposed policy path. In keeping with Johansen's (2012) notion of a competitive political marketplace, the communicator needs to embark on an active and sustained effort to build and maintain political relationships as a means to stand out from competing and counter-measures to their policy. These observations fit with the understanding and definitions of political marketing by scholars (Lees-Marshment 2009; Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman 2011; Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy 2013), even though these political relationships are being initiated beyond the scope of competitive democratic elections. There is the realization of the need to not only have good ideas, but the need for an excellent marketing plan to be involved in order for there to be a chance of success in gaining a sense of political legitimacy for the policy proposal.

The two cases observed in this paper seem to confirm the prediction by Ormrod, Henneberg, and O'Shaughnessy (2013) of the future direction of political marketing. That is, the increased sophistication of communication and spin, emphasis on product and image management, increased sophistication of news management, and an intensified and integrated use of political marketing research. This brings the issue back to the need for

political legitimacy, which is reflected (whether or not it is accurate is another issue) in public opinion. As stated by Lippmann (1922/1997), public opinion is a moralized and codified version of the facts.

In order to 'buy in' to a particular policy proposal a certain number of pre-requisite conditions need to be satisfied. A clear and immediate danger to the security or the interests of the target audience needs to be understood and perceived. When this occurs, a 'herd instinct' as described by Trotter (2015) can take effect, which then forms the basis of the exchange in the political relationship – political consent and legitimacy in exchange for a greater sense of security. To 'aid' in shaping audience perception and consequently influence, there is a great deal of simplification of 'facts' and 'consequences' by the communicator. Brands are introduced, such as ISIS or Russia, which should evoke a sense of fear in the audience, something to avoid and in need of a political and even military solution according to the reasoning. It also concerns the brand and reputation of a country, which was extensively used in the UK case, the imperative to act in order for Britain's 'Honor' and 'credibility' to be salvaged on the international stage.

Lobbying tends to move more from the level of tangible arguments, which are often very hazy and poorly defined (what are the exact costs, what shall be done and for how long) in favor of intangible offerings that are norm and value-based (democracy, security, justice … etc.). Often the outcomes of the policy are termed as a cost of exchange of key values, such as tradition of neutrality versus an increased sense of security in Sweden. In the UK case it was based upon 'doing the right thing' and the resulting effect upon the national Honor and reputation. This does not mean that tangible elements can be ignored, such as the role of historical experience and lessons. It is evident in both cases that the element of history is important in reinforcing the perception of brands, threats and so forth. Sweden has a historical record with Russia that caused Swedes to potentially view Russia as an existential threat. ISIS acts of brutality have been highly publicized and are widely known. However, there may be counters, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which serve as a counter.

Using highly politically symbolic notions are an effective tool in swaying a target public toward or away from a proposal. There is seemingly the prevalence of the rule of emotional logic over reasoned logic, when an audience has been primed and mobilized. This can be seen in the UK vote, the 'need' for solidarity with France. However, if an audience is not primed or mobilized a more reasoned level of debate logic and counter-logic continues, such as the case with the NATO membership in Sweden. In both cases, the arguments for the policy have been based upon the idea that these proposals are both necessary and defensive in nature.

The influence and persuasion that was used during these two cases in the present study, follows the logic outlined by Perloff. This persuasion proved to be a politically symbolic process, there have been clear attempts by the opposing sides to influence, there is a strong element of marketing communication to support the influence and persuasion, and this was done in an environment of politically competition. Who is the agent exerting influence? What is the method of exerting influence? At whom is the influence being exerted?

In the Swedish case, the outcome of this process remains incomplete and ongoing, one side are those opposed to NATO membership for the outlined reasons, and on the pro-NATO side are using an opposing set of reasons and logic. There are different domestic and international agents attempting to exert influence in the NATO debate, both for and against membership at different levels of individual, groups and organizations. This attempted influence can be observed in the media and in public space. This is especially evident in the opposing logics: to join NATO in order to avert Russian aggression and to retain the tradition of neutrality and not to antagonize Russia. The influence is being directed at all levels of society in order to shift public opinion through lobbying, in order to generate a social consensus on the issue.

The case study of the UK parliamentary vote on permitting airstrikes in Syria in late 2015 possessed a number of differences from the first study. This proved to be a shorter-term campaign, a narrower selection of targeted audiences and a decisive outcome. This was an example of successful influence and persuasion, which saw those favoring military action in Syria emerge triumphant from the parliamentary vote. Therefore, the influence and persuasion was primarily directed at Members of Parliament in order to cast their vote in a desired direction (for or against the vote). The influencers came from different interest and lobby individuals, groups and organizations (such as Prime Minister David Cameron for and journalist Robert Fisk against). The politically symbolic arguments for and against were communicated in the public space – one of the primary arguments for was Britain's international reputation and to show 'solidarity' with the French and against was not to get entangled in another war that has no clear end game. Public opinion was used to lobby and pressure parliamentarians as a form of political market intelligence.

NOTES

1. In the context of this paper, lobbying is understood as "the act of attempting to influence business and government leaders to create legislation or conduct an activity that will help a particular organization." Please refer to http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/lobbying.html.

2. This particular point has been born out in a number of interviews undertaken by the author in Moscow in November 2015 with members of the Russian foreign policy community, including the Russian International Affairs Council, Sputnik and the Valdai Club.

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