



# Advocacy best practices

Lessons from the US and the EU

Dr. Christine Mahoney, Assistant Professor of Politics & Public Policy  
University of Virginia, USA

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# Overview

- ▣ Lobbying targets
  - ▣ Messaging/Framing
  - ▣ Direct lobbying tactics
  - ▣ Coalitions/Networking
  - ▣ Indirect lobbying tactics/ Media outreach
  - ▣ Advocacy Effectiveness Metrics
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# Lobbying Targets

- ❑ **Critical to divide policymakers (legislative or regulatory) into three camps:**
    - ❑ **Allies**
      - ❑ They agree with you
      - ❑ Help them help you – activate them, support them
    - ❑ **Fence sitters**
      - ❑ They don't know about it – education
      - ❑ They could go either way – persuasion
    - ❑ **Opponents**
      - ❑ Not worth spending a great deal of time with them
      - ❑ Best you can do is try not to mobilize them
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# Lobbying Targets

- **Venue Shopping** is a dual strategy of the presentation of an (issue) image and the search for a more receptive political venue
  - Legislative vs. Regulatory vs. the Courts
  - Finance vs. Energy vs. Infrastructure committees
- As issue expanders attempt to attract the attention of a new group of policymakers, they must explain why the issue is appropriate for consideration within that venue

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# Messaging/Framing

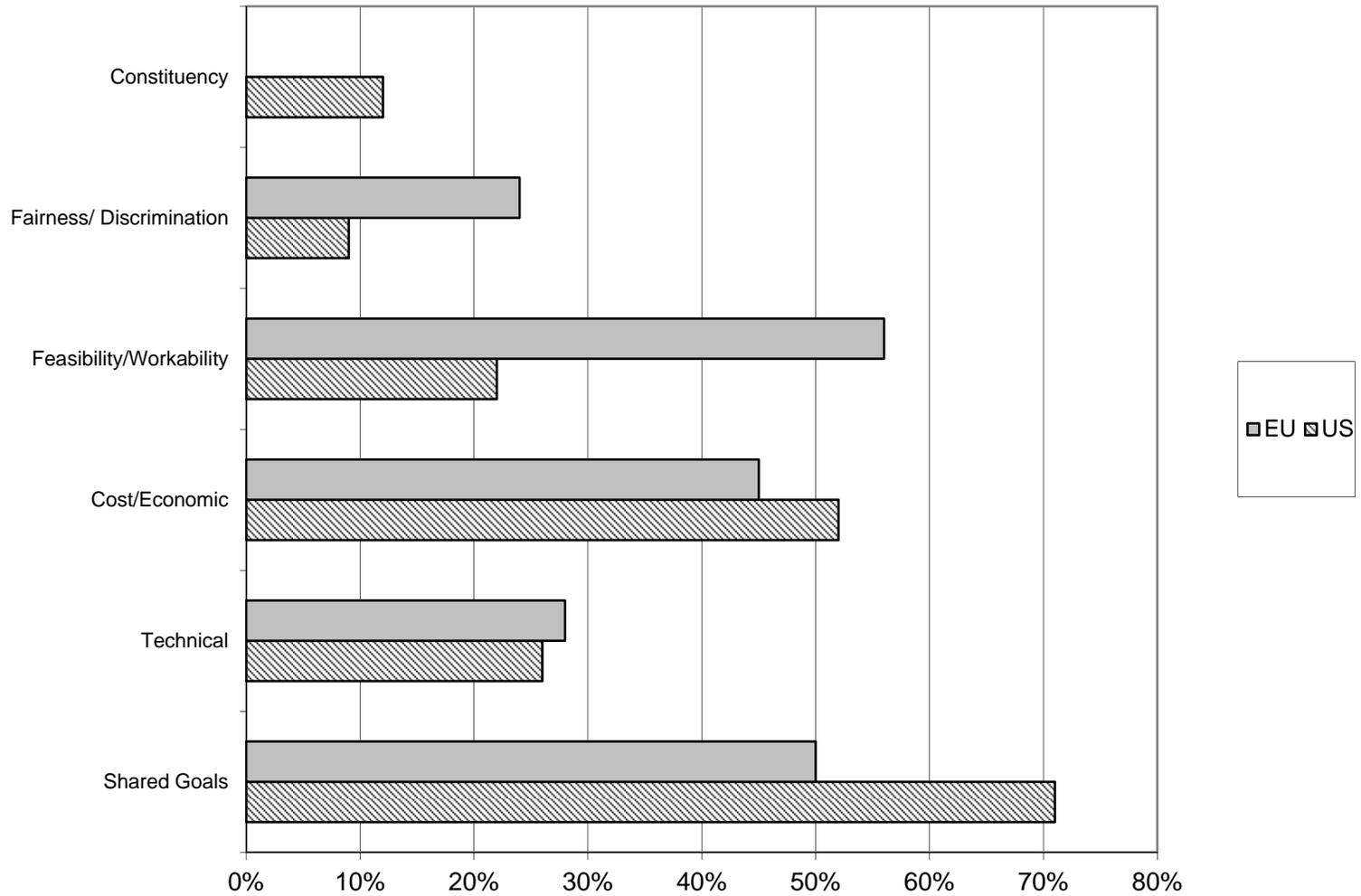
- Two components to a political argument:
    - A proposition, proposal or goal
    - Reason why target/audience should support proposition
  
  - An art which involves:
    - logical consistency,
    - factual accuracy and
    - some degree of emotional appeal
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# Messaging/Framing

- **Simplicity**
    - No more than 2-3 points
    - Short causal chains
    - 12 word message
  - **WIIFM** – What's in it for me?
  - **Target framing** for specific audience
    - Know the policymaker's personal story
    - Geographic constituency (district, province)
    - Political party or ideology
    - Institution (legislatures vs. executives – simple vs. complex)
    - Policy area (ex: Ministry of Environment vs. Transportation)
    - Level of governance (local, district, federal)
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# Messaging/Framing



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# Psychological lessons in framing

□ “The psychological principles that govern the perception of decision problems and the evaluation of probabilities and outcomes, produce predictable shifts of preference when the **same problem is framed in different ways.**”

- *The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice*  
(Kahneman & Tversky 1981)

1. Choices involving gains are often risk averse and choices involving **loses** are often **risk taking**.
  2. Choices that appear to have a great deal of **momentum** get more support
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# I. Gain vs. Loss Frames

## Problem 1:

Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimate of the consequences of the program are as follows:

- If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be **saved**
- If Program B is adopted, there is a  $1/3$  probability that 600 people will be **saved**, and a  $2/3$  probability that no people will be **saved**

Which of the two programs would you favor?

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# I. Gain vs. Loss Frames

## Problem 2:

Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimate of the consequences of the program are as follows:

- If Program C is adopted 400 people will **die**
- If Program D is adopted there is a  $1/3$  probability that nobody will **die**, and a  $2/3$  probability that 600 people will **die**.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

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# I. Gain vs. Loss Frames

## Results:

### Problem 1

- 72% - If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved
- 28% - If Program B is adopted, there is a  $1/3$  probability that 600 people will be saved, and a  $2/3$  probability that no people will be saved

### Problem 2

- 22 % - If Program C is adopted 400 people will die
- 78% - If Program D is adopted there is a  $1/3$  probability that nobody will die, and a  $2/3$  probability that 600 people will die.

# I. Gain vs. Loss Frames

Results:

Problem 1

Majority choice:  
risk aversion

- 72% - If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved
- 28% - If Program B is adopted, there is a 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and a 2/3 probability that no people will be saved

Problem 2

Majority choice:  
risk taking

- 22 % - If Program C is adopted 400 people will die
- 78% - If Program D is adopted there is a 1/3 probability that nobody will die, and a 2/3 probability that 600 people will die.

## II. 'Everybody's doing it' Frame

- ❑ Policymakers want to support winning propositions.
- ❑ Policymakers want to be “where the action is” since it gets them media coverage which is good for re-election
- ❑ Psychologists have done experiments asking people why they would conserve electricity in the US:
  - ❑ Good for the environment
  - ❑ Saves them money on their energy bills
  - ❑ Everyone else is conserving
- ❑ The power of **Herd Behavior Frames**
  - ❑ Frame your position in a way that suggests a great deal of people support it
  - ❑ Comparison to what “other countries are doing”

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# Direct lobbying tactics

- **Face-to-face meetings** with policymakers
  - Letter writing/ position papers
  - Testifying at hearings
  - Submit comments to consultations
  - Mobilizing elite members/ grass tops
  - Fly-ins/ Lobby Days & Fly-outs/ Site Visits
  - **Being a “service bureau”** (activating allies)
    - Strategizing with policymakers, vote counting
    - Drafting language
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# Direct lobbying in the US & the EU

Everyone is **directly lobbying...**

85% of US advocates are lobbying Congress

94% of EU advocates are sitting down with Commission officials...

	Freq.	Percent		Freq.	Percent
<b>Congress</b>			<b>Commission</b>		
Face-to-Face			Face-to-Face	77	94%
Party Leadership	9	14%	Letter, sent position	44	54%
Committee			Submit comments	51	62%
Leadership	50	77%	Strategize with official	36	32%
Committee Member	29	45%	Draft Language	14	17%
Rank & File	44	68%	Testimony at Hearing	25	31%
Letter, sent position	41	63%	<b>European Parliament</b>		
Strategize with MC	21	32%	Face-to-Face	51	62%
Draft Language	24	37%	Letter, sent position	25	31%
Testimony at Hearing	14	22%	Submit comments	20	24%
<b>Regulatory Agency</b>			Strategize with MEP	4	5%
Face-to-Face	18	28%	Draft Language	11	13%
Submit comments	7	11%	Testimony at Hearing	18	22%
Strategize with official	2	3%	<b>Council</b>		
Draft Language	4	6%	Face-to-Face	32	39%
Testimony at Hearing	1	2%	Letter, sent position	8	10%
<b>White House</b>			Submit comments	5	6%
Face-to-Face	12	19%	Strategize with official	0	0%
Letter, sent position	4	6%	Draft Language	0	0%
Strategize with official	2	4%	Testimony at Hearing	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Direct lobbying in the US & the EU

About a 3<sup>rd</sup> are **working closely** with policymakers

32% of US advocates are strategizing

32% of EU advocates are strategizing...

	Freq.	Percent		Freq.	Percent
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# Direct lobbying in the US & the EU

More  
language  
drafting in  
the US  
than the  
EU

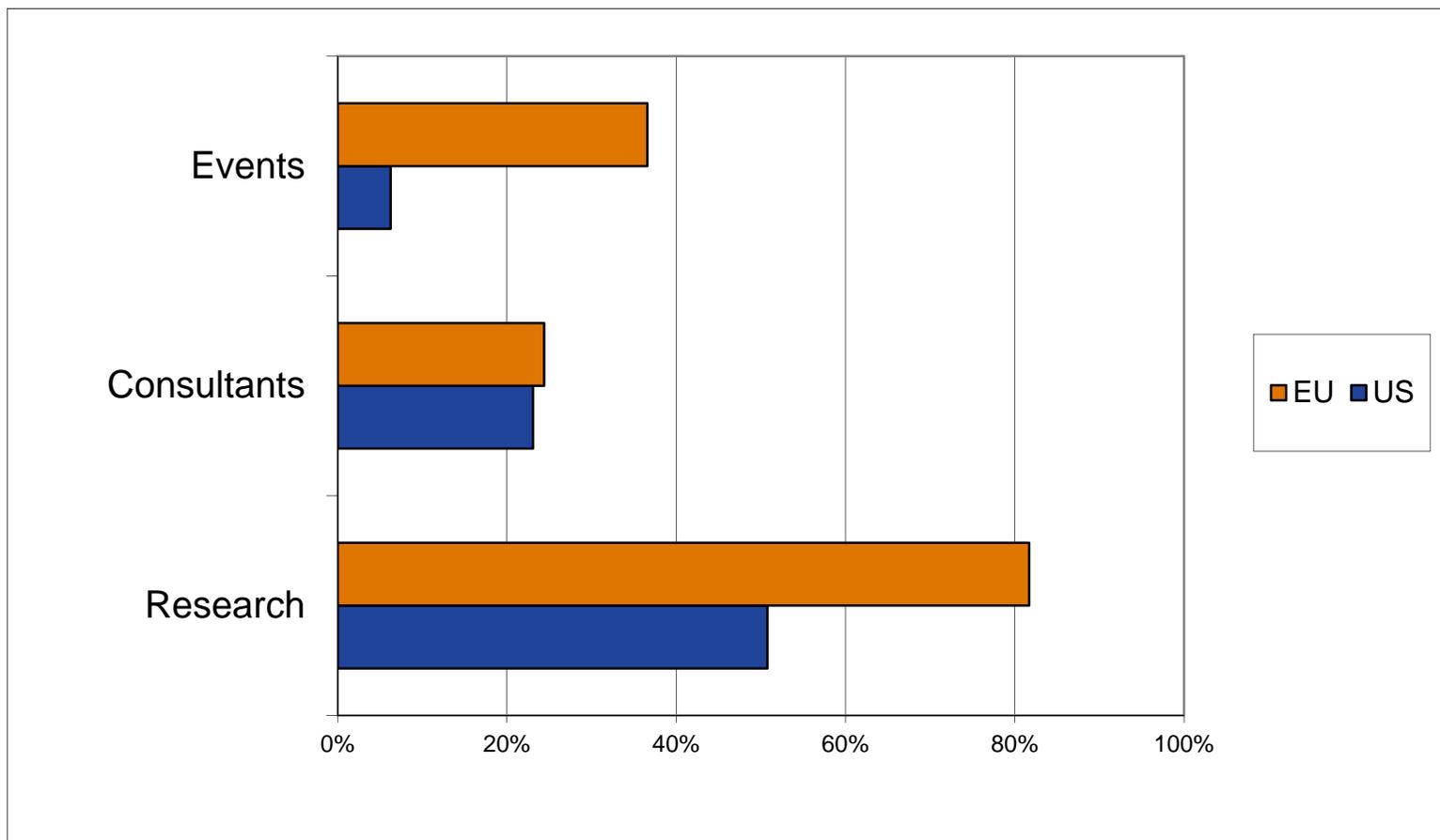
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	65	100%		82	100%

# Elite mobilization in the US & EU

	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>		<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b>Congress</b>			<b>Commission</b>		
Mobilizing Elite Members	10	15%	Mobilizing Elite Members	40	49%
Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	10	15%	Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	37	45%
Fly-out/ Site Visits	8	12%	Fly-out/ Site Visits	1	1%
<b>Regulatory Agency</b>			<b>European Parliament</b>		
Mobilizing Elite Members	0	0%	Mobilizing Elite Members	21	26%
Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	1	2%	Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	19	23%
Fly-out/ Site Visits	1	2%	Fly-out/ Site Visits	2	3%
<b>White House</b>			<b>Council</b>		
Mobilizing Elite Members	0	0%	Mobilizing Elite Members	9	11%
Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	0	0%	Fly-ins/ Lobby Day	7	9%
Fly-out/ Site Visits	0	0%	Fly-out/ Site Visits	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

EU advocates mobilizing & flying in elites at a higher rate

# Relative use of special inside tactics



# Coalitions vs. Networking?

- 1. Networking:
  - Informal information sharing,
  - Lacking structure,
  - Lacking leadership,
  - No official joint position taking
  - Conferences, meetings, hearings are all opportunities
  
- 2. Allying/ Coalition activity:
  - Formal structure
  - Name focusing on narrower purpose of ad hoc group
  - Leadership
  - Regular meetings
  - Joint position taking
  - Secretariats
  - Short-medium term
  - Autonomy of members

# Coalition leaders & followers

- **“Core”** – the leadership
  - Organizing coalition, serving as leadership and secretariat
  - Urging other organizations to participate as either core or periphery groups
  - Spending more resources
  
- **“Periphery”** – lending their name
  - Coalition focus may be only tangentially related to their core mission
  - Issue prioritization may have simply led this issue to be further down on their agenda
  - Spending less resources

# Coalition Costs & Benefits

## ■ Costs

- Time
- Money
- Resources
- Watered down/ lowest common denominator positions

## ■ Benefits

- 1) The coalition can **signal** to policymakers that a policy position has the support of a large and varied group of interests; and
- 2) The coalition can provide a framework for more **efficient use of resources**.
- 3) Joining a coalition can be a **relatively low-cost** tactic and a rational lobbyist may incorporate this one tool along with many others in their advocacy strategy

# Coalitions in the US & EU

- US: 22 coalitions formed across 21 issues
  - ▣ 57% of US issues exhibit some coalition activity
  
- EU: 5 coalitions formed across 26 issues
  - ▣ 15% of EU issues exhibit some coalition activity
  
- The **larger** and the **broader** the better
  
- “That’s good when you can get disparate parties signing on to a letter, a Member of Congress sees a letter and it’s signed by the Chamber of Congress and the Sierra Club, how often do you see that?”
  - ▣ Wind Energy lobbyist

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# Signaling to policymakers

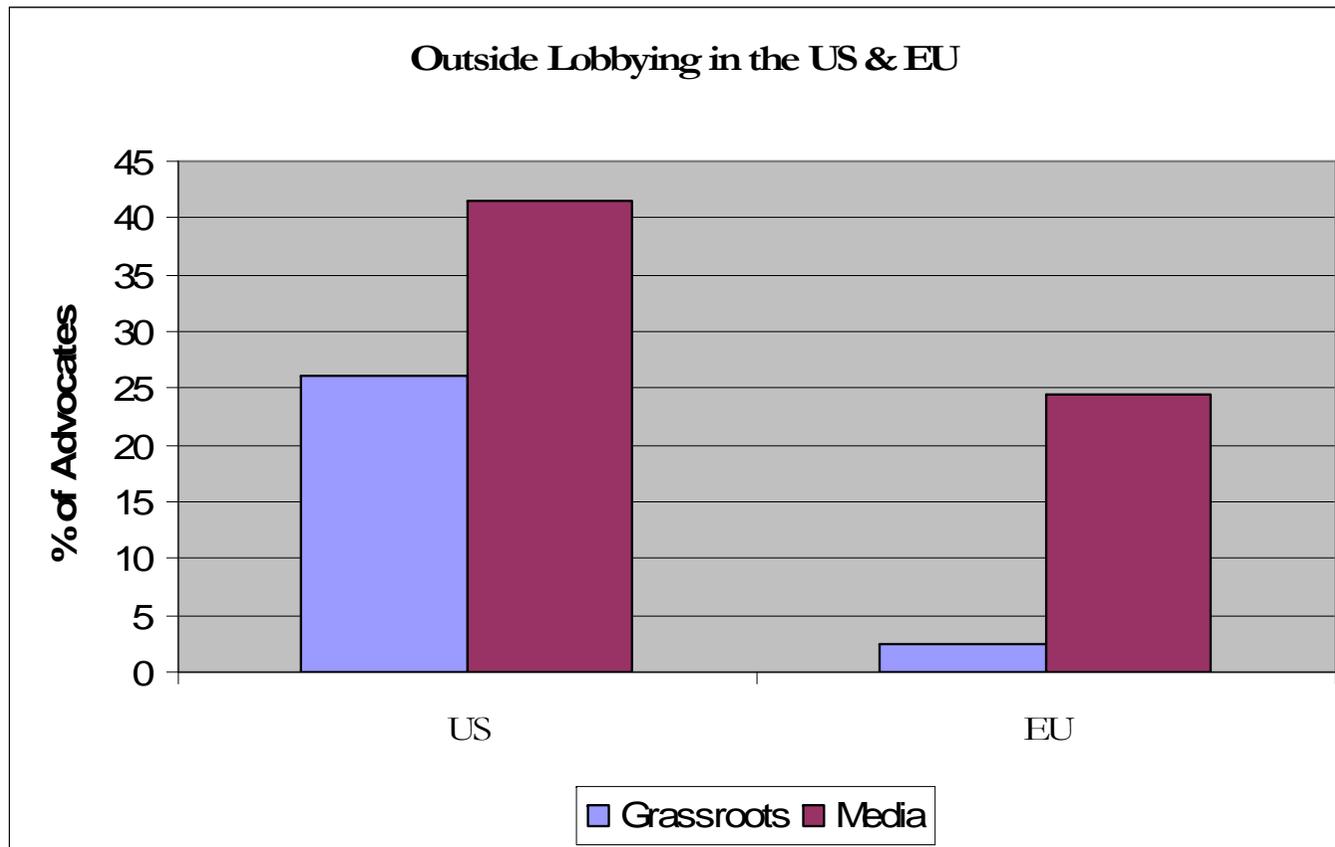
- “We were one of the charter members of the WIN coalition, the Water Infrastructure Network, ...First thing, we tried to organize everybody who had a stake, that meant the state regulatory bodies, the organizations of actual utility companies, public and private, all the people involved in the design and construction of utilities...In addition, we have people who are designers, people in construction, the people who actually build the facilities. So we represent a broad cross-section of the engineering community. We also have all the suppliers, the vendors -- the pipe manufacturers, the people who make the equipment. So it's a very broad coalition.”
  - Water Infrastructure lobbyist

# Indirect lobbying/ Media outreach

- GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION
  - Protests, demonstrations, rallies
  - Town meetings
  - Movie gatherings, house parties
  - Virtual House Parties
  - Letter writing, emailing, Parliamentary visits
  
- NEWS MEDIA OUTREACH
  - Contacts with reporters
  - Press releases / Research report releases
  - Press conferences
  - Op-ed writing
  - News interviews
  - Blogging

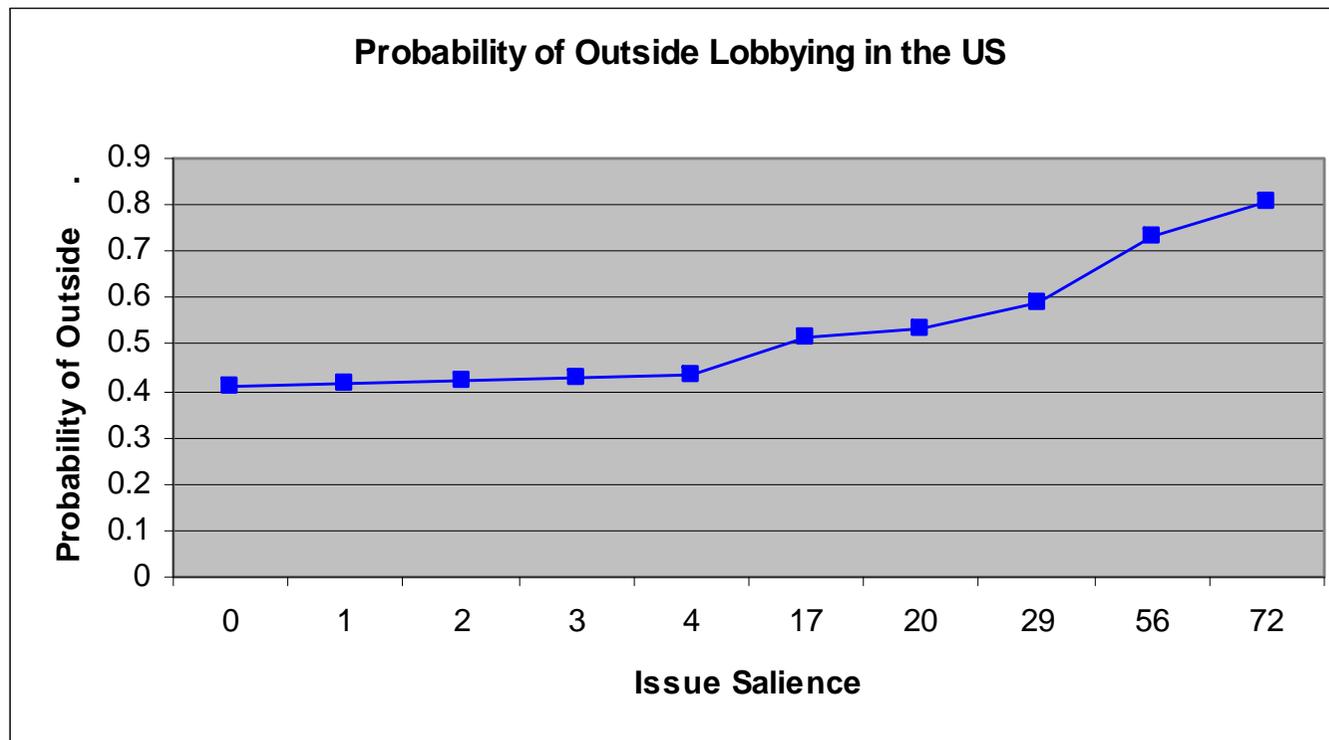
# Indirect lobbying/ Media outreach

- ▣ Limited effectiveness for policymakers that are only weakly electorally accountable



# Indirect lobbying/ Media outreach

- ▣ Indirect lobbying and media outreach more likely as issue is of more interest to the public



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# Indirect lobbying/ Media outreach

- Political context + individual advocate factors
  - Indirect lobbying is more likely if an advocate:
    - Has field offices
    - Is working on a highly salient issue
    - Is lobbying democratically accountable policymakers
    - Has a broad-reaching media system available
  - The most effective indirect lobbying/public education campaigns are those that **target the districts of undecided** policymakers
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# Common Advocacy Evaluation Methods

- **Stakeholder Surveys or Interviews** - Print, telephone, or online questioning that gathers advocacy stakeholder perspectives or feedback.
- **Case Studies** - Detailed descriptions and analyses (often qualitative) of individual advocacy strategies and results.
- **Focus Groups** - Facilitated discussions with advocacy stakeholders to obtain their reactions, opinions, or ideas.
- **Media Tracking** - Counts of an issue's coverage in the print, broadcast, or electronic media.
- **Media Content or Framing Analysis** - Qualitative analysis of how the media write about and frame issues of interest.
- **Participant Observation** - Evaluator participation in advocacy meetings or events to gain firsthand experience and data.
- **Policy Tracking** - Monitoring of an issue or bill's progress in the policy process.
- **Public Polling** - Interviews (usually by telephone) with a random sample of advocacy stakeholders to gather data on their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors.

# Cutting-Edge Advocacy Evaluation Methods

- **Bellwether Methodology** - Evaluators conduct structured interviews with “bellwethers” or influential people in the public and private sectors whose positions require that they track a broad range of policy issues.
- **Policymaker Ratings** - Advocates (or other informed stakeholders) rate policymakers of interest on scales that assess policymakers’ support for, and influence on, the issue
- **Intense Period Debriefs** - Evaluators engage advocates in evaluative inquiry shortly after a policy window or intense period of action occurs
- **System Mapping** - Evaluators or advocates visually map a system, identifying the parts and relationships in that system that are expected to change and how they will change, and then identifying ways of measuring or capturing whether those changes have occurred.