

Interest Groups and Lobbying Money and Politics

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WHAT ARE INTEREST GROUPS?

- **Organized interests:** formal and informal, key characteristic: collective action
- **Interest groups:** usually NGOs, informal groups and business groups
- Dilemma of collective action (common or public goods) – the **free rider problem** (Mancur Olson)

Logic of Collective Action in Four Minutes
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rchT42duN8>



2. How does money influence collective action?

Likelihood

- costs of collective action, organizational costs

What can be the costs of collective action?

Effectivity

What does the effectivity of collective action depend on?

- Resources, circumstances and luck



Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Associations
- NGOs: two main approaches:
 - a) An organization not controlled by the government (independent, voluntary, not-for-profit)
 - b) An organization not controlled by the government and not self-serving (or working for social good)
- Non-profits (NPOs, not always NGOs)

*How do we determine
which organization is
self-serving?*

WHAT DO INTEREST GROUPS DO IN POLITICS?

- advocacy (interest aggregation and articulation, sometimes selection)
- agenda-setting
- services
- mobilization
- socialization

HOW INTEREST GROUPS PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE?

- checking the power of majorities (watchdog role)
- better representation of interests
- avenue for political involvement (political participation)
- dispersal of costs (expert information, know-how, information on positions of stakeholders, implementation, control etc.)

NGOs AS WATCHDOGS

- As the main goal or as a byproduct of promoting other interests
- Often in cooperation with the media (NGOs as experts)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE POLICE — BETWEEN WATCHDOG AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE



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Keywords: Amnesty International, human rights compliance of police, constructive dialogue

Abstract: The article provides an overview over the evolution of the relationship and dialogue between Amnesty International and police agencies. Amnesty International — being an international human rights organisation whose endeavour is primarily to end violations of human rights — finds itself easily and almost naturally at an opposing side to law enforcement officials. However, departing from a rather antagonistic relationship at the very beginning there is now much more constructive dialogue taking place in many countries of the world.

TYPES OF GROUPS

- insider x outsider
- primarily oriented inside x outside
- private interest groups x citizen / public interest groups
- **Protective** – represent sectional interests of certain groups in society
- **Promotional / advocacy** – act on behalf of particular causes or ideas, arising out of attitudes and beliefs (*rather than the self-interests ?*) of their members
- **Service groups**

NIMBY GROUPS

- *Not In My Back Yard*
- NIMBYism
- usually promoting the status quo (ambience, architectural style, landscape, character of the community)
- against new developments
- mostly relatively short term, ad hoc organization, formal or informal
- great mobilization potential x difficult to keep up long-term interest of members

E.g.

- *2007: opposition of some Czech villages and groups against a proposed U.S. radar base*

NIMN (Not in my neighborhood)

NAMBI (Not against my business or industry)

SOBBY (Some other ***'s back yard)

x

NIABY (Not in anyone's backyard)

BANANA (Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone)

CAVE (Citizens against virtually everything)

WHAT DOES AN INTEREST GROUP NEED TO EXERT INFLUENCE?

- ACCESS
- RESOURCES
- LEGITIMACY
- ABILITY TO SANCTION

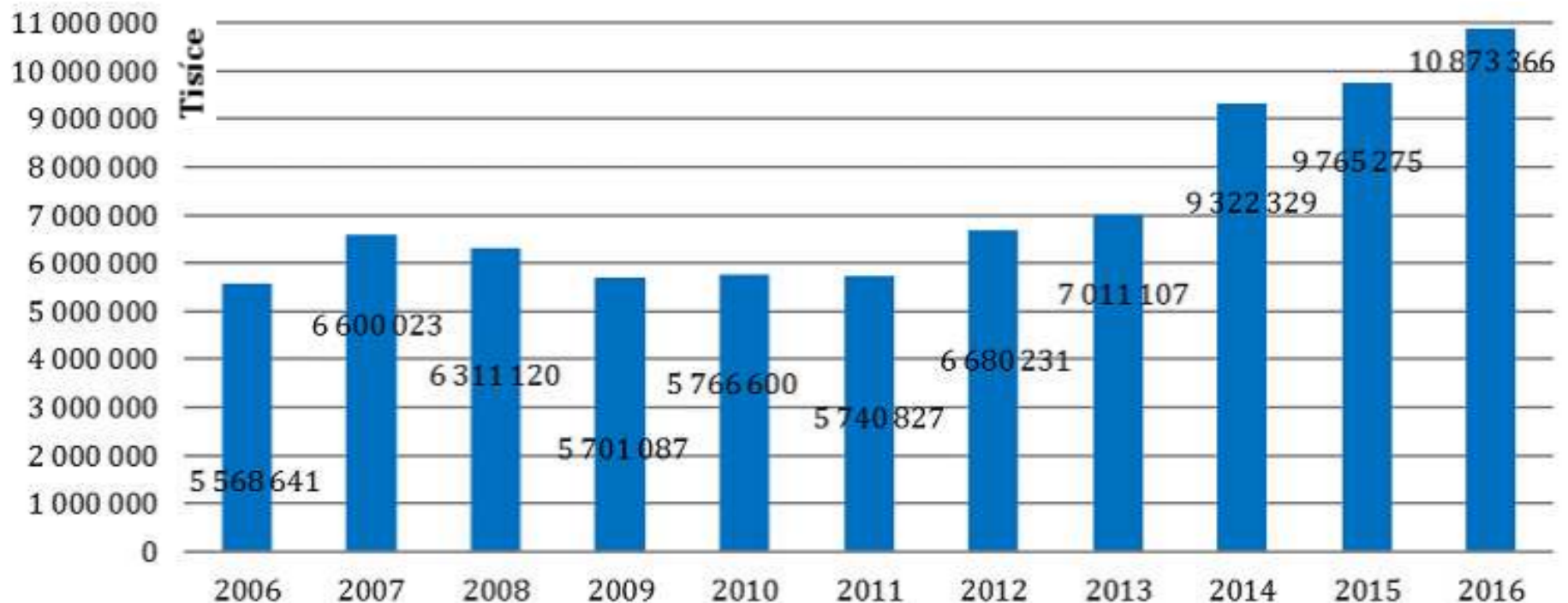


FUNDING NGOS

- Nonprofit, typically citizen-based organizations
 - Independent from the government (formally)
 - Often heavy dependence on public budgets
-
- Fundraising
 - Grants and project funding
 - Programme funding
 - Other revenue

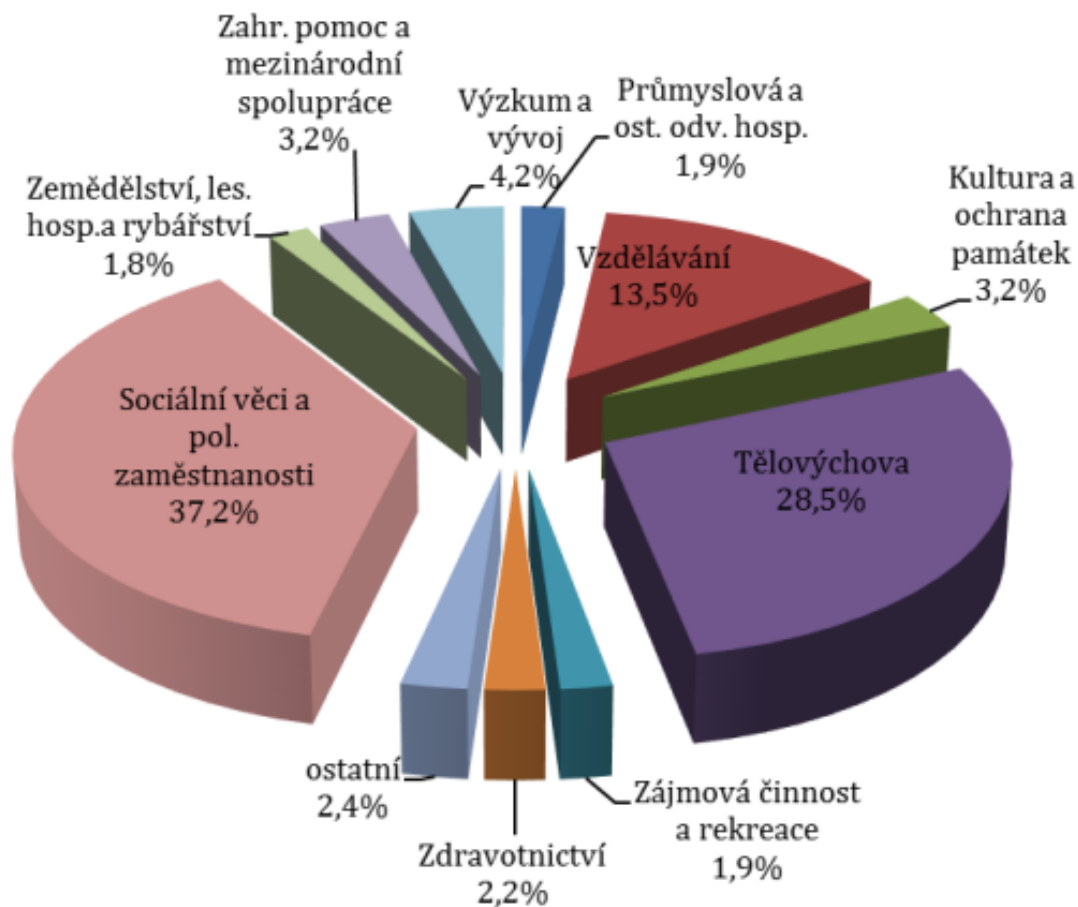
NGOS FUNDING FROM STATE BUDGET CZECH REPUBLIC in thousands

Graf 2. Vývoj objemu dotací pro NNO ze státního rozpočtu (v tis. Kč)



Rozbor 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, databáze kapitol státního rozpočtu, up

NGO STATE FUNDING BY FIELD



Zdroj: Databáze kapitol státního rozpočtu, upraveno

LOBBYING

- broad understanding – any activity aiming to influence political decisions
- **narrow understanding – negotiations or exchange of information between the lobbyist and a public official (decision maker, civil servant)**
- *diverse intensive activities of social groups, chambers and companies in the political and bureaucratic vestibule* (Beyme 1980)
- *'lobbying is the attempted or successful influence of legislative-administrative decisions by public authorities through interested representatives. The influence is intended, implies the use of communication and is targeted on legislative or executive bodies'* (Koepl 2001: 71)
- *lobbying confers an unfair advantage on those that can afford to carry it out and therefore runs counter to the notion of democracy* (Warleigh and Fairbrass 2002: 2)

WHO CAN (AND DOES) LOBBY?

ANYONE

WITH THE RESOURCES

- Businesses, NGOs, states, municipalities, IGOs, INGOs and **professional lobbyists**



<https://spectator.imgix.012/10/Lobbying.jpg?format&crop=faces,en>

w=600&h=400

LEGITIMACY OF LOBBYING

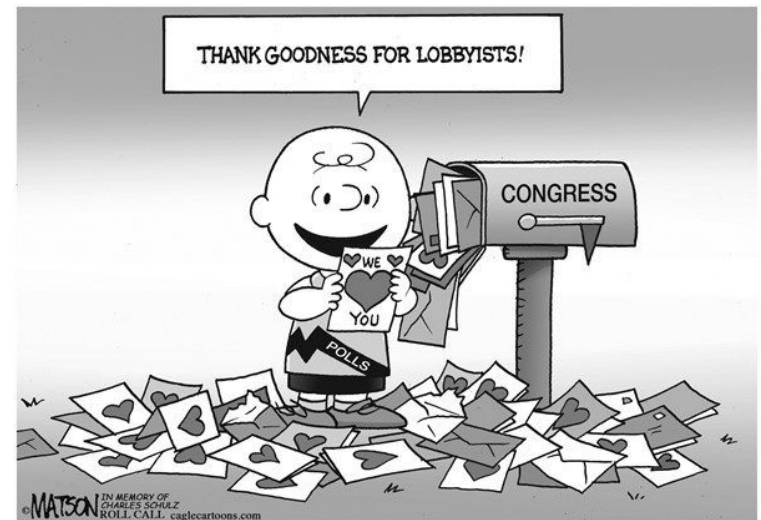
Should decision-makers let themselves be lobbied?

WHY?

WHEN?

BY WHOM?

HOW?



https://poststar.com/news/opinion/editorial/commentary-slow-down-the-revolving-door-from-congress-to-lobbying/article_c0cd1ac0-b7e4-11e4-8334-7ff2a676b41c.html



https://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/b/business_lobbies.asp

LOBBYING VS. BRIBERY

Similarities

- **Immediate goal of lobbyist/bribers:** to influence policy-making decisions (or administrative decisions)
- **means/method:** to provide politicians or public officers resources
- Both are based on negotiations between the lobbyist or briber and the policy-maker or decision-maker (mutual exchange) and require a certain level of trust.

LOBBYING VS. BRIBERY

Differences between the concepts:

Lobbying:

- **Type of resources (payment):** information, know-how, expertise, services?, favours?
- **Gain:** public and private
- **Means:** providing information supporting the lobbyists' position
- **Goal of the decision-maker:** to help to clarify benefits and costs of each decision, gather information on the issue and on positions of stake-holders
- **Ultimate goal of lobbyists:** To promote their interests or interests of their clients

Bribery:

- **Type of resources (payment):** money, gifts, services, influence, favours
- **Gain:** private only
- **Means:** providing incentives for decision-makers to adopt the preferred decision.
- **Goal of the decision-maker:** personal enrichment or another type of private gain
- **Goal of corrupters:** Promote their interest and make decision-makers misuse their power.

“CASINO JACK” ABRAMOFF



CLASSIC
TRAILER

Casino Jack (2010) Official Trailer #1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lg12GW49TOQ>

DIRTY “LOBBYING”

THE CASE OF JEFF ABRAMOFF



- Jack Allan Abramoff (*1959)
- Republican Lobbyist, movie producer
- Greenberg Traurig, „Team Abramoff“, Michael Scanlon
- An elaborate network of favour granting, gift giving and information exchange.
- Jack Abramoff Native American lobbying scandal (SunCruz Casinos)
- 2006 and 2008 sentenced to 6 years and 4 years (released in 2010)

If lobbying is not bribery... Why is it still controversial?

- General lack of transparency.
- More resources = more influence.
- Diffuse vs. concentrated interests.
- Professional lobbyists are typically more effective (at least in some political systems) **WHY?**



When is lobbying legitimate? Can there be objective criteria?

- Transparency
- Public good?
- ?



**“Of course we’ll make a decision ...
once we have considered the 5243 factors.”**

A) Is money all that determines lobbying success? B) Can a lobby be successful without (significant amounts) of money?

A) **OBVIOUSLY NO**. However, it is a powerful determinant.

B) In some circumstances (the use of internet, emotional issue, limited opposition and if employed with other strategies)

- “the language of money” in lobbying (and policy-making in general) – e.g. USA: medical coverage for the ABA therapy or Ford Pinto cost benefit analysis (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9TAuSelsag>)

Literature

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