LOBBYING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS: OVERLAPPING OF TWO DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS

Original Scientific Paper

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Summary

Although lobbying as a profession has established itself within a large number of countries in the European Union and the United States of America, the term “lobbying” itself is often misunderstood and in some cases even identified with corruption or semi-legal intervening in the decision-making process. Lobbying today is accepted by the business world and politics as a professional activity which promotes the ideas or interests of different organizations and companies to certain persons or, in certain cases, to politicians. It is increasingly becoming an intrinsic part of democratic decision-making processes at all levels. This article deals with the definition of lobbying, the lobbying types and techniques and analyses the relationship and correlation between lobbying and public relations as disciplines. The authors compare the definitions, tools and techniques of lobbying and public relations and, by conducting a survey among PR and lobbying professionals, analyse their perspectives and differences regarding this topic, the method in which they define the correlation between the two professions and conclude that lobbying is a specialized field of public relations directed to decision-makers but that the rapid development of lobbying will undoubtedly lead to the development of lobbying as an independent profession.

Keywords: public relations, lobbying, lobbying and public relations techniques
1. Introduction

The term “lobbying” is still regarded by most people in the Republic of Croatia as the bribery of politicians or lobbying for personal interests. To many, lobbyists are unscrupulous individuals of questionable morality with unlimited budgets, who are on the edge of the law and seek to deceive and dupe public officials so that they favour certain interest groups. A brief overview of literature and seeking answers to the question of whether lobbying is a part of public relations or vice versa reveals that the answer depends on the individual asked, i.e. professional lobbyists, PR consultants, lawyers or university professors. Definitions of lobbying, lobbying types and techniques differ depending on who you ask to provide the definition; lobbying professionals or public relations practitioners, so the main intention of this paper is to compare definitions provided by scholars, researchers and practitioners from both professions. It is also the intention to find the point of distinction between the two disciplines. In the research part of this paper, the authors have analysed the attitudes and opinions of representatives of both professions, board members of national professional associations in Croatia for public relations (Croatian Public Relations Association) and lobbying (Croatian Lobbying Association). Based on these findings, distinctions and correlations between the two professions could be derived. In the research process, the qualitative in-depth interview method was used on six individuals from both associations. The main question of the research was to determine the relationship between these two professions.

2. Theoretical Framework of Lobbying and Public Relations

Vidačak (2007, 25) states that available papers on lobbying can be divided into two categories; those written by lobbyists-practitioners who focus on the lobbying methods and strategies and a smaller proportion of writers who approach lobbying academically and theoretically. Like the papers on lobbying, there are several categories of definitions of lobbying. They are usually closely linked with professional papers where they appear and, of course, with their author’s profession. Thus lobbying is differently defined in dictionaries, differently by professional lobbyists, and in their own way by PR professionals and public authorities. Vidačak highlights the difficulties in defining lobbying, since the available professional papers on lobbying show that there is a problem of distinguishing related terms such as “government relations”, “public relations” or “public affairs”. Most definitions similarly determine the purpose of lobbying, but
the differences mainly appear in understanding subjects and objects of lobbying activities, as well as methods of action that could be called lobbying (Vidačak, 147). According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, “lobby” is a large hall, in which MPs may meet members of the public. Webster's Dictionary (10 April 2015) defines lobbying as activities aimed at influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body on legislation. Dictionaries quite narrowly define the term lobbying, focusing on the influencing of the members of parliament. The question on whether lobbying is a part of public relations is explicitly answered by the definition by Cutlip, Center and Broom (2003, 19) in the book Effective Public Relations where lobbying is defined as “a specialized part of the public relations with the purpose of establishing and maintaining relationships with state authorities, in particular in order to influence adoption of laws and regulations”. The definition’s authors are all PR professionals and PR professors which is why their perception of lobbying as a specialized part of public relations is logical. If we summarise the majority of definitions on lobbying, the conclusion imposed by itself is that they all outline mainly two elements: communication with the target audience (decision-makers of specific decisions), as well as the process of influencing the decision-making. Zetter (2011, 43) defines lobbying as “the process of seeking to shape the public policy agenda in order to influence government (and its institutions) and the legislative programs”. The UK Public Affairs Council (9 April 2015) has produced a more wide-ranging and all-encompassing definition of lobbying. Their definition is: “Lobbying means, in a professional capacity, attempting to influence, or advising those who wish to influence, the UK Government, Parliament, the devolved legislatures or administrations, regional or local government or other public bodies on any matter within their competence”. A whole range of lobbying practitioners and theorists agree that there is no standard definition of lobbying as is also described by Scott (2015, 20), who adds that various definitions are sufficiently similar. Among many, he underlines the one by Berry (2001) which defines lobbying as “the effort of organized interests to inform policy makers and persuade them to choose particular policy choices”. Finally, Scott (2015, 20) concludes that the communication and the intent to influence, but not the actual influence, are both necessary and sufficient for the definition of lobbying.

On the other hand, there are even more definitions on public relations. One of the most comprehensive definitions was formulated by Rex F. Harlow, who collected and analysed as many as 472 definitions drawn in the period 1900-1976. In each definition he looked up main
elements and classified their core ideas. After a long analysis, Harlow published a definition that includes both conceptual and operational elements:

“Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of an effectively utilized change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends, and uses research and sound ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.” (Harlow, 1976, 36)

Contribution to the definition of public relations in Europe was also made by two Croatian scientists. Zoran Tomic (2008, 50) sees public relations as a process of an organization's communications with its internal and external public in order to achieve mutual understanding, build social responsibility and realize common interests. Božo Skoko (2004, 77) defines public relations as a skill which - using the achievements of communications, psychology and sociology - is used to create and foster the positive image and reputation of the organization (an institution, an individual or the state) in the public and to maintain good relationships with all segments of the public for own success, mutual understanding and cooperation, and prevention or neutralizing of adverse publicity. One of the newest definitions of public relations was formulated by PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) which, after an extensive research among public relations practitioners, formulated its new definition, the second definition after 1982. The new definition thus reads: “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” (Public Relations Society of America, 4 October 2015)

Whether lobbying makes part of public relations or not, it is itself inseparable from deliberating and decision-making. The decision making process was defined by Perko-Šeparović (1975, 41), who explains that decision-making is usually a manifestation of other processes and interactions that take place in the organizational system. The process of deciding reveals the subject's intentions, goals and planned means. The main goal of lobbying is to influence the decision-making process by providing adequate information to the subject of decision-making which will, in an ideal scenario, help him make the right decision, i.e. the one that the lobbyist is advocating. It is clear in what way lobbyists try to influence the decision-making process: they do this by communicating with decision-makers and presenting them facts that support the decision of the party they represent.
3. The Overlapping Points between the Two Professions

Explaining the correlation between lobbying and public relations, Heath (2005, 492) defined the types of lobbying the US tax service, or IRS, having specified two kinds of lobbying: (1) direct, which includes a call to action with regard to a law or regulation and involves paid individuals who enter into the direct, formal communication process with key officials and legislators, and (2) indirect, which does not include a call to action, it is known as grassroots lobbying, and is not directly aimed at key decision makers, rather at the so-called ordinary people and usually involves various public relations tools used to politicize certain issues or problems and to promote certain agenda. An important feature of indirect lobbying is mediation. The contact and communication between indirect lobbyists and decision makers is always mediated. This mediation is manifested in many ways through a two-tier communication (lobbyist - the general public - the decision maker) with the main objective being to influence primarily the general public which will by its actions drive the policy makers to decide in favour of lobbyists. Dennis Wilcox (2001, 267) defined the following indirect lobbying tools: advertising, free phone lines, faxing, web pages, direct e-mails. The same author explained that the primary purpose of these tools is to focus the target public to making phone calls, sending mails and establish communications with the decision makers. It is clear that indirect lobbying embraces activities that could be also described as public relations activities.

Speaking of public relations, Cutlip, Center and Broom (2003, 9) underlined that public relations is often replaced with its pertaining activities and components. Thus, with the example of publicity, they described lobbying as “often the most obvious public relations activity in the United States capital, Washington D.C., and in the capitals of individual federal states”. On the other hand, Skoko (2006, 84) wrote that public relations includes taking care of the development of relations with a range of social and business groups and the public. At the same time, he describes media relations, relations with the market, relations with investors and shareholders, relations with professional audience, relations with business audiences (Business to Business), relations with public institutions, lobbying, internal communication, crisis communication and hazard management, counselling in public relations, topic management and event organization as the basic types of public relations (Skoko, 2006, 92).

In analysing the correlation between lobbying and public relations, it is desirable to also identify the lobbying strategies that are associated with lobbying types. Both Duhamel and Meny (1992,
595) wrote that lobbyists have three types of strategies available: internal, external and election strategy. Internal strategy is more traditional and prefers the direct contact with decision-makers. It includes primarily the identification of the key actors in the decision-making process (influential persons, parliamentary committees, public administration), followed by the identification of the appropriate approach to these actors. As part of internal strategy, personal relationships play a more important role than the reputation of the interest group and its human and other resources. It is important to note that the internal lobbying strategy relies exclusively on communicating with decision makers or those who have access to them. It also implies direct lobbying. External lobbying strategy is more an indirect strategy that involves using of the media or civil society representatives to influence public decisions. In applying external strategies, lobbyists can, for example, disseminate paid articles or ads through print or electronic media, or they can organize events such as strikes or protests that will be covered by the media. Thanks to rapid development of contemporary information and communication technologies, new techniques of external lobbying are also appearing, such as sending en masse e-mail messages to politicians or parliamentarians by an increasing number of individuals or interest groups, while the influence and pressure on decision-makers have been increasing in the recent several years through social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). In general, external strategies are used by groups that can mobilize a larger number of followers or citizens who do not have the privilege of direct access to the centres of political decision-making or by groups that fail to achieve their goals by internal strategies. Duhamel and Meny emphasised that the use of external strategies is unacceptable for lobbying as an independent discipline due to the adoption of measures that are too technical and because of very specific interests. Finally, lobbying election strategy is based on the potential of lobbyists to mobilize voters, the electorate, to take directly on the costs of the campaign, i.e. to support candidacy of certain politicians in elections. The lobbying election strategy has been developed especially in the US where it is mostly manifested in the so-called Political Action Committees (PAC) or coalitions of organizations that advocate same interests, and collect and distribute funds in favour of their candidates.

The most recent example of a lobbying election strategy is evident in the preparation of the upcoming 2016 presidential elections in the United States, with lobbyists being active in raising funds for the campaigns of candidates. A likely candidate Hillary Clinton, announcing her presidential candidacy, said she expected to raise 2.5 billion dollars among democrats (The New York Times, 12 April 2015).
A very useful baseline for detecting the overlapping points between these two professions was given by Grunig (1984, 120) who defined five specific groups of lobbying activities: (1) establishment of coalitions, (2) research and preparation, (3), contacts with influential individuals, (4) preparation of witnesses and speakers, and (5) focusing debates. A look at these five areas reminds of similar activities in public relations. Hence it is possible to compare these five areas directly with the segment of media relations, which suggests a very close relationship of these two professions.

![Figure 1: Relationship between lobbying and media relations (Grunig, 1984)](image.png)

Along these lines, Grunig (1984) considers that, in order to lobby more successfully, it is necessary to connect with interest groups whose goals are similar to ours. This may prove to be a very complicated kind of cooperation since it would be rare to find two groups with exactly same interests and goals. If we compare this particularity of lobbying with media relations, it is obvious that it is equal in joint appearances in the media of two or more groups. Equally so in lobbying, a joint appearance of two interest groups that are only seemingly fighting for the same goals will have a greater chance of success. The next particularity of lobbying is research and preparation. Reports and other documents prepared by various lobbyists can be of great help to the legislator in rendering a right decision. However, in order to be well prepared to impact a decision, lobbyists must first determine which groups or individuals are important to influence.
The same is valid for media relations. Each and every activity directed at the media begins with the research of press clippings and discovering which of the media, editors and journalists cover the topic of our concern and which of them was so far prone to be in our favour, and who was not.

Contacting influential individuals is the next particularity of lobbying. Each legislative body consists of a large number of individuals. The task of lobbyists is to identify who among them has a huge impact on the others, who dominates in direct discussions and who among them has a special interest in the adoption of certain laws and regulations. Along these lines, Kinzer (1971, 48) points out that legislators are especially “vulnerable” to arguments when lobbyists succeed in demonstrating the ability to obtain positive publicity by taking a certain attitude, the interest of his or her voters in a specific topic and the possible impact of certain law on taxpayers. If we apply this to media relations, we will notice a classic contact with influential editors and journalists who, by different communication techniques and argumentation of facts and own views, are attempted to be won over.

Preparing speakers and witnesses is also common to both lobbying and media relations. For a long time, specialist PR agencies and consulting companies have been offering services of various media and other trainings that prepare individuals for their public appearances or contacts with key decision-makers. According to Grunig (1984), the last particular characteristic of lobbying is focusing debates. This refers to the lobbyists’ attempt to focus the legislator’s attention and interest to a fact or facts that could lead to the acceptance of the attitude or views of their clients. This particularity could be copied on the media relations where it could present a process of managing topics i.e. the ability to impose certain topics that are in favour of the organization that we represent.

4. Previous Research on Public Relations and Lobbying

A very similar research to one conducted in this paper was undertaken by Tusinski Berg (2009, 2) with the main purpose to begin connecting our understanding of lobbying and public relations as communication activities. The author undertook a survey of 222 registered lobbyists in Oregon, USA to reveal the range of communication activities in which they are engaged, as well as the range of organizations on whose behalf they lobby, and their description of their occupational role. Based on their responses and their descriptions of their occupational role,
this article found that many lobbyists, like many public relations professionals, do think about their role as a form of advocacy (Tusinski Berg, 2009, 1). Results of this study indicated that respondents perceived themselves performing all four public relations roles: communication manager role; senior adviser role; media relations role; and communication technician role (Tusinski Berg, 2009, 11) and that lobbyists are more frequently engaged in communication management activities than traditional communication technician tasks. Results also indicated that lobbyists perceive themselves performing two public relations roles because findings indicate a dichotomy between the manager and technician roles (Tusinski Berg, 2009, 14).

Dejan Verčič and Ana Tkalac Verčič (2012) also investigated the correlation between lobbying and public relations. These two authors analysed definitions of lobbying and public relations given by the literature from two scientific fields: political sciences literature and public relations literature. Same authors note that, based on the findings from political sciences literature, lobbying is nearly impossible to define and quote Baumgartner and Leech (1998) who emphasise that the word lobbying has seldom been used the same way twice by those studying the topic (2012, 15). On the other hand, the same authors, while analysing the literature from the field of public relations, note that public relations as a profession developed many concepts analyzing lobbying processes, including framing (Knight, 1999), information subsidies (Gandy, 2003), issues management (Jones, Chase, 1979, Coombs, 1998), relationship building (Kovacs, 2001) and relationship management (Wise, 2007), but an agreement on what lobbying is and where it fits into public relations practice is still lacking.

5. Results of the Research: Correlation of Lobbying and Public Relations in Croatia – The Practitioners’ Attitude

With the aim of gaining a better insight into the relations between these two professions, this paper’s authors conducted a qualitative research by the method of in-depth interviews among the leading experts of public relations and lobbying in Croatia, whose representativeness was ensured by their membership in the management boards of professional associations of both professions: public relations ( Croatian Public Relations Association - Hrvatska udruga za odnose s javnošću or HUOJ) and lobbying (Croatian Society of Lobbyists - Hrvatsko društvo lobista or HDL). We analysed their attitudes in order to determine the similarities and differences with respect to the main subject of this paper and to gain insight into how prominent practitioners define the relationship of these two professions.
A total of six respondents (three members of the management board of each profession's organization) who participated in this study answered a total of seven specific questions:

1. How would you, in a simple way, define lobbying, and how would you define public relations?

2. What would you say are the most commonly used techniques of lobbying?

3. What would you say are the most commonly used techniques of public relations?

4. How would you describe the relationship of the professions of lobbying and public relations?

5. What do you consider to be the common elements of these two professions?

6. What do you consider to be the main difference between these two professions?

7. Can you define lobbying as part of public relations or vice versa?

5.1. **Respondents from the Lobbying Field**

First respondent from the group of lobbyists defines lobbying as “a specific way of communicating with decision-makers, i.e. as an activity of influencing decision-makers in the process of adoption of laws and by-laws, public policies and other decisions, in order to achieve own interests or those of a member or a client”, while public relations in her opinion develop and foster relationships with various publics, with the purpose of (a better) positioning, image and reputation. In the answers to the next two questions on the techniques of lobbying and public relations she highlighted as the most effective technique of lobbying a personal encounter i.e. a meeting, and in addition the sending of letters and mails, event organization with a special purpose, mobilization of the public, while in public relations she emphasized media campaigns. This respondent believes that lobbying and public relations have different goals, but are complementary. The elements of public relations, tools, techniques, are used in lobbying campaigns and vice versa. As common elements of these two professions she sees the fact that both are intended to inform, communicate, persuade, influence perception, while her main difference lies in the function, i.e. goal. The first respondent answered the last, seventh question as, “I think that in the first phase the lobbying is experienced as a part of the public relations (or marketing), but the development of this activity turns it into a separate field. The relationship
between these professions/areas is complementary, not exclusive, but not inclusive either. So I think these are two separate, but related areas.”

Another respondent from the group of lobbyists answered that the lobbying process entails “representing the interests of clients and endeavour to influence the adoption of suitable decisions in the legislative, regulatory and executive bodies”, while according to him public relations primarily strives to create and foster a company's good image and long-term relationships with consumers. This respondent lobbyist highlights the following steps in the lobbying techniques starting with a well thought-out monitoring process which provides insight into the decision-making process and motivation of individual legislative proposals. The next step is the elaboration of a comprehensive plan of action and a time frame of activities. The plan identifies the political, regulatory and other relevant factors for which separate narratives and argumentative procedures are formed. At each level of relations with public institutions it is crucial to act thoughtfully and ethically consistent. The most common techniques of public relations are press releases, media statements in press conferences, briefings with journalists or events for partners and customers. This respondent believes that the scopes of activities of these two professions in practice rarely overlap and considers that the services they provide are often complementary and achieve a stronger effect in synergy. What is common to them is the achievement of desired contacts and nurturing of long-term relationships with target groups. The main difference is that the public relations addresses general public by diverse communication approaches (to investors, consumers, internal communication) while relations with the government deal with the legal and regulatory issues and the efforts to influence the process of policy making. In the last question, another respondent lobbyist agrees that lobbying is a part of public relations, although, in practice, relations with public institutions and decision-makers are in great contrast to the practice of relations with media, consumers or investors. Relations with the government are a special niche in a wider area of strategic communications with an emphasis on persuasive efficiency in the decision making process of public institutions.

The last, third respondent from the group of lobbyists defines lobbying as the communication of attitudes by providing arguments aimed at influencing the decision-makers and the decision-making process so that the decisions taken favour the interest represented by the lobbyist. For this respondent, public relations is about communications i.e. continuous preparation and publication of information to stakeholders in order to build trust and reputation, i.e. to foster mutually beneficial relationships. As the most usual lobbying techniques she specified direct
contacts with decision makers (face to face, by phone or e-mail), mobilization of elites and various events (charity events, conferences, panel discussions, working lunches, etc.). In her opinion, the most common techniques of public relations are press releases, press conferences, and speeches. She considers lobbying and public relations to be compatible professions which can, under certain circumstances, greatly upgrade the implementation of a lobbying strategy. Their joint elements are building relationships, timely information, the significance of a timely action, the weight and the importance of reputation as the key factor which is a prerequisite for professional work of lobbyists and PRs, etc. The main difference, in her opinion, is that lobbying is an integral process of advocacy and covers a wider and more comprehensive action, while public relations are “only” a transfer of information and communication in the function of presenting projects, entities, institutions etc. This respondent from the group of lobbyists agrees that lobbying can be a part of public relations, but also vice versa, and concludes that public relations is a part of lobbying.

5.2. Respondents from the Public Relations Field

The first respondent from the group of public relations experts considers lobbying to be “a legitimate part of the democratic process in which individuals or groups advocate their interests and try to influence the decisions made by the government, regulatory or other competent authority”. On the other hand, she sees public relations as “strategic reputation management by building relationships with interest-influential groups”.

This respondent divides the lobbying techniques into direct and indirect ones. Direct lobbying techniques would be one-on-one meetings, contacts at various events organized by third parties. Indirect activities would be participation in a variety of campaigns, own campaigns aimed at creating public pressure. She also pointed out that an important part of the lobbying work is made of research and analyses which lobbyists use to acquire the necessary information to use in direct and indirect contacts. The respondent also mentioned a number of techniques of public relations of which we underline strategic consulting of management boards and strategic planning of communication activities in line with the organisation’s objectives, issues management, stakeholder relations, internal communications, media relations as well as planning of and conducting campaigns. In the analysis of the relation between these two professions, the respondent believes that public relations and lobbying complement each other.
A combination of the activities of both professions can bring about the objectives related to influencing the government's and regulator's representatives in the decision making process. She added that common elements are managing relationships with stakeholders, as well as research and analysis, and collaboration with the media and other groups in order to influence decision-makers. For this respondent, public relations is considerably more extensive than lobbying as the former involves relations with a much broader range of stakeholders and a much larger scope of activities. Lobbying is primarily directed at decision makers and in part at the general public, whereas public relations is directed at all internal and external stakeholders important for the organisation. Also, most lobbyists are not experts in public relations. However, in many cases, public relations includes lobbying activities, and many public relations experts are today engaged in lobbying. In this context, one could argue that lobbying is a separate discipline within public relations.

Another respondent from the group of public relations experts defines lobbying as the transfer and expression of views and opinions to influential publics or individuals, while public relations cover a much wider range of stakeholders, i.e. publics with which individual or organization communicates. PR does not necessarily result in a change of attitudes, opinions or influence the decision-making process (as in lobbying), but rather participates in achieving the desired perception. This respondent specified direct lobbying techniques such as meetings and briefings, preparation of analyses, studies and surveys that are the basis for the launch of a lobbying action. The creation of formal and informal coalitions and interest pooling, are also some of the most common and most visible lobbying techniques. One of the most usual techniques of indirect lobbying is public relations; e.g. sensitization and encouragement of the public in order to support certain lobbying actions. Another respondent, a PR, specifies among the PR techniques briefings, interviews and event organisation, relationships with the local community or corporate social responsibility. The respondent believes that lobbying and public relations overlap and complement each other, and sometimes, depending on the position of the communicator, they can also exclude each other. In practice, public relations most usually accompany lobbying actions and projects, and together they are considered as components of a broader concept of public affairs. It often happens that a PR communicator carries out also lobbying activities (e.g. lobbying in the media), while a lobbyist communicator rarely reaches out for PR activities. While both professions are characterised by a distinct multidisciplinarity, the competences of successful lobbyists and PRs can vary considerably. In recent times, there
is a trend on a part of PR practitioners to offer their activities and expertise in the field of lobbying or public relations. For this respondent, common elements are the capability to analyze, synthesize and disseminate messages and the capability to persuade and advocate certain ideas and messages. Also, neither in lobbying nor in PR is the communication unidirectional, and besides dialogue, a common feature of both professions is striving to compromise. In practice, both a lobbyist and a PR start the communication from the maximized positions, aware that their action, as a rule, will most usually result in a compromise because the achievement of an ideal, 100% impact is generally not possible. He considers lobbying to be a narrower term than public relations and explains that lobbying can be viewed as one of the techniques applied in various disciplines such as advocacy or public relations. This respondent answered to the last question that both professions are a part of a wider framework of communications science. Depending on source, both professions are in an interdependent relationship, but, in practice, lobbying often represents one of the components of public relations which is viewed as one of the tools of the integrated marketing communications, but the interdependent relationship between lobbying and public relations can change.

The third and final respondent from the group of public relations experts sees PR as a process of communication which should be directed to the common good, while lobbying activities are more focused on advocacy of exclusive interests of an organization or an individual for which it is being lobbied. According to his definition, public relations are an organized management of internal and external communications and communications with stakeholders. Lobbying activities usually include advocacy of own interests. This respondent said that lobbying techniques are: organized meetings, business communication and correspondence, eye-to-eye conversations, negotiations, presentations, persuasions, public discussion and public campaigns. Among PR techniques the respondent emphasized organized communication through various media and communications frameworks, business communication and correspondence. He believes that it is important that lobbyists understand their socially responsible role. In many countries, it is well defined by laws on lobbying, which is why it would be good to introduce such legislation also in Croatia. As regards public relations, in their fundamental purpose to inform the public and manage communications, it must have all the elements of social responsibility and professional standards. He thinks that what the two have in common is the ethical and organized communication with target groups. Lobbying activities are a part of public relations, whereas lobbying activities that are organized professionally and
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5.3. Interpretation of Research Results: Differences in the Attitude of the Two Groups of Respondents

As for the answer to the first question and the definition of these two professions, it is possible to observe that both groups are nearly unanimous on the definition of lobbying that is defined as the process of communication with the specific aim of influencing decision-makers. Professional lobbyists defined lobbying predominantly as a specific mode of communication i.e. as putting forward one’s own or client's views in order to influence decision-makers in the legislative, regulatory or executive bodies. Experts in public relations define lobbying as a communication process directed at influential audiences in which individuals or groups advocate theirs’ or others' interest and try to influence decisions that are pending adoption. Very similar attitudes could be observed in both groups with the answer to the second part of the question. Lobbyists define public relations as communications to various stakeholders aimed at creating a positive image, while experts in public relations, as expected, define public relations somewhat more extensive, highlighting that it is a process of strategic reputation management, and of establishing and maintaining organisations' good relationships with stakeholders.

In describing lobbying techniques, two groups are completely unanimous. Both groups mentioned meetings in person, correspondence and organization of events, while lobbyists particularly highlighted the process of monitoring and drafting of plans and strategies of action, while experts in public relations highlighted research and public campaigns. Similar situation could be observed in the analysis of responses to the third question, definition of public relations techniques. The two groups made similar definitions of public relations techniques, although it could be observed that the lobbyists described these techniques significantly narrower, mainly as media relations tools: press releases, press conferences and briefings, and media campaigns. On the other hand, experts in public relations highlighted much the extensive techniques: strategic consulting of management boards and strategic planning of communication activities in line with the objectives of the organisation, issues management, stakeholder relations,
internal communications, media relations, as well as planning and implementation of campaigns, media releases, press conferences and briefings, and media campaigns.

The fourth question, the correlation between public relations and lobbying, reveals the existence of a high level of mutual respect. Namely, the groups were unanimous about the fact that both professions rarely overlap and often complement each other, and that they achieve the best effects by acting together. Lobbyists are unanimous in their attitude that the two professions seldom overlap, but also that they complement each other thus enabling the achievement of more powerful effects. On the other hand, experts in public relations mostly believe that the public relations and lobbying complement each other, but are exclusive at times. Their common position could read that “a combination of activities of both professions can achieve goals related to influencing the government's and regulator's representatives in the decision making process”.

Answers to the fifth question, which analysed the common elements of both professions, reveal that the attitudes on this topic are relatively similar in both groups. Namely, both groups agree that communications with stakeholders are important for both professions, including maintaining contacts with them, while public relations experts give additional importance to conducting communication campaigns in the media aimed at creating pressure. In this context, lobbyists highlighted the achievement, building and maintaining of contacts with target groups, while experts for public relations expanded these attitudes with the management of relations with stakeholders from state bodies, and the implementation of campaigns to raise public awareness for the adoption of certain decisions, as well as analysis and synthesis of issues.

As regards the differences between the two professions, which were dealt by the sixth, penultimate question, what surfaced was a common position that lobbying is a segment or a part of public relations. Namely, both groups are almost unison that the difference most often lies in the target of action, as well as stakeholders communicated to, while a prevailing view among respondents was that lobbying makes part of public relations. Respondents from the group of lobbyists saw the fundamental difference in the function i.e. the objective of activities and the target groups that one of these professions addresses, while public relations experts were unanimous in considering public relations much broader than lobbying, because it addresses a broader range of stakeholders unlike lobbying which is primarily aimed at decision-makers.
And the last, seventh question examined respondents’ attitudes on a possible unambiguous definition of one profession being a part of the other. Both groups were nearly unanimous about lobbying being a part of public relations and that these two fields are complementary with a number of joint activities and actions. The unanimous attitude of all respondents was that both professions and their activities are not exclusive but rather their joint and complementary actions can lead to the best impact. Lobbyists believe that lobbying is a part of public relations, but also that lobbying as profession is rapidly evolving and becoming a special field. Experts in public relations are unanimous in their attitude that lobbying undoubtedly makes part of public relations as the latter involves relations and communication with a much more extensive range of audience and stakeholders, while lobbying means the same, but with only one group of stakeholders – the decision-makers.

6. Conclusion

The term lobbying in Croatia, but also in the whole region, still has negative connotations. However, it is an indisputable fact that lobbying in developed markets such as the US and the European Union is accepted and regulated as a professional method of representing the interests of a certain group and making an impact on the legislative process. On the other hand, public relations in Croatia is still a relatively young profession which is on the verge of reaching a kind of coming of age. The primary intention of this study was to provide a basic theoretical framework for both professions, highlight their similarities and common areas and to analyse through the conducted research how their interrelationship is perceived by the most prominent representatives of both professions working in Croatia.

Based on the presented theoretical framework, comparison of definitions, tools and techniques of lobbying and public relations and the research conducted among prominent representatives of the professions of lobbying and public relations, it is possible to conclude that lobbying is a specialized field of public relations as it involves activities and tools similar to other types and segments of public relations and is directed at communications with a specific audience: the decision-makers. Lobbying, primarily as an activity that seeks to articulate the interests of the organization before one of its key audiences, decision-makers, is still a specialised part of public relations according to the authors of this study and the conclusions of the research. The research conducted has also shown certain differences in perception between the representatives of both
groups. Professional lobbyists are less prone to declaratively define lobbying as a part of public relations and bring both professions together in a way. On the other hand, representatives of the profession of public relations underlined that lobbying is a specialized part of public relations, as well as, for example, media relations.

Both groups are unanimous in their opinion that the two professions complement each other qualitatively and that the best results can be achieved by joint activities. However, the rapid development of lobbying is undoubtedly leading to the development of lobbying as an independent profession that has a number of shared elements with public relations and thus they overlap in terms of techniques, but have different goals of action and the stakeholders they address. The techniques, tools, strategies and attitudes in both professions are undeniably similar, with the main differences reflecting in the objectives i.e. audiences or stakeholder groups that are targeted for establishing and maintaining the communication process. Finally, the study showed that the differences between the professions can be described as almost negligible and the unanimous attitude is that these are professions that are, despite the overlapping, compatible, i.e. inclusive and provide the best results by joint and simultaneous efforts.

7. Reference List

Lobbying and Public Relations: Overlapping of Two Different Professions
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