

WORKSHOP

The relationship between political institutions and the lobbying industry

March 5, 2019 - 9.00 H
University of Antwerp

GUEST LECTURES AND MASTER CLASS

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CALL FOR PAPERS

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 2, 2019

Over the past years, former EU Commissioners' private career paths have been the subject of intense public contestation. The movement of individuals from the private sector to public office and vice versa is known as "the revolving" door phenomenon. One need only to think of the "Barroso Gate" scandal. Jose Manuel Barroso led the European Commission for a decade until 2014. His move to start advising Goldman Sachs' clients on Brexit triggered a spate of criticism and substantial media attention. In the past few years, we have been witnessing unprecedented attention for the revolving door phenomenon from European civil society and in news media debates. Controversial cases of post-employment transitions have paved the way for more stringent EU transparency regulations. Revolving door practices are often associated with regulatory capture (Fox, 1974; Dal Bo, 2006; Barkow, 2010), conflict of interest and framed as a catalyst for "institutional corruption." These associations, although not empirically tested, harm the reputation and legitimacy of public officials and by extension of the EU political system. However, yet, mobility between public and private sector might also facilitate the development of civil servant skills, through gaining experience in the private sector (OECD, 2010). So far, few

scholars were concerned with the benefit that the exchange between public and private sector can bring to public administrations, such as opportunity for innovation, generational change, and labor market dynamism. In this workshop, the idea is to open up the discussion accounting for risks and benefits associated with the shift of incoming and outgoing skills.

Since the 1980s, studies in the United States have explored the revolving door practices and the effects of personnel exchange between the public and the lobbying industry (Milbrath, 1976; Salisbury, Johnson, Heinz, Lauman, & Nelson, 1989; LaPira and Thomas 2017). As a result, we now have extensive knowledge about Washington's magnitude of the phenomenon and its implications. In Europe however, we still lack systematic analysis. Most of the literature is based on empirics contextualized in the US. Accounting for differences and similarities with the American political context, this workshop intends to open an EU-centered discussion on the revolving door phenomenon looking at politicians' and lobbyists' career paths.

With this workshop, we aim to discuss to what extent personal interests shape relationships between interest representatives and political actors. And what are the implications for the representation of the general interest?

Questions include, but are not limited to the following.

From an interest group perspective:

To what extent do interest organizations benefit from revolving door practices, if at all?

How do lobbyists career paths change the way interests are represented?

Do revolving door lobbyists work on different issues, compared with non-revolving door lobbyists?

From the regulators perspective:

Why and when do public officials obtain positions in interest organizations?

To what extent do politicians use lobbying activities to build their career?

To what extent regulators respond differently to revolving door lobbyists, if at all?

We are looking for original research papers, book chapters, policy papers, project proposals engaging with the revolving door phenomenon and career path analysis from either a theoretical, empirical, or a methodological perspective (both quantitative and qualitative approaches). We welcome EU and country-level studies as well as comparative and multiple case studies.

Please send your abstract (200 words) to **Sharon.Belli@uantwerpen.be** by February 2, 2019. Please use the same email for any queries.