Author’s response to reviews

Title: Who calls the shots in tobacco control policy? Policy monopolies of pro and anti-tobacco interest groups across six European countries.

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Reviewer reports:

Jennifer McKell (Reviewer 2): My thanks to the authors for the substantial work done to respond to my earlier reviews. In particular, the way in which the more complex situations within Belgium and the Netherlands have been incorporated has been deftly handled. I also welcome the much clearer distinction between the dominant frames in Belgium and the Netherlands, and Italy and Germany being the difference between frames being tied to anti-paternalistic liberal-conservative political parties, and the society-wide belief that tobacco use is a personal issue only, respectively. I also accept the authors' response to my suggestion to move descriptions of efforts to introduce display bans in respective countries to the findings section, and agree that it is preferable to only include findings here that are based on data collected by the authors.

Regards the authors response to my suggestion, that they outline what the theory of policy monopolies adds, I understood, even implicitly, the value of the interest group approach. What isn't clear from the text is the value of using the theory of policy monopolies. The authors response to my suggestion, however, does set out the value of this theoretical approach: that the theory of policy monopolies 'posits that institutions are associated with the relative power of interest groups'. This was instantly illuminating and I think simply adding this explanation or something similar would be very helpful to understanding the approach taken.

We now include a justification for the use of this theory specifically, by adding a sentence about this in the manuscript (page 4, line 59 – page 5, line 7): “This interest-group theory is well-suited for a cross-national comparison, as it allows for the incorporation of framing and (political) institutions, which are both associated with the relative power of pro and anti-tobacco interest groups.”

Overall, however, I would recommend this manuscript for publication as I think it makes an important contribution to our understanding of influences on tobacco control policy-making.
Declarations

- Ethics approval and consent to participate

We have retyped the general part of the ethics approval and consent to participate (page 25, line 14-30).

- Consent to publish

We have retyped this part, to ‘Not applicable’, as the results and quotes are anonymized (page 27, line 27).

- Availability of data and materials

We have retyped this part (page 27, line 30-36).

- Authors' Contributions

We have retyped this part (page 27, line 56 – page 28, line 5).