

MPD in the News: Australia and 'foreign-funded' environment groups

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Intelligence agencies should report on foreign interests in 'activist groups', Australian coal lobby group argues

Coal Australia also wants government to broaden restrictions on foreign donations to stop money flowing to environmental groups

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Dan Jervis-Bardy

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<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/sep/23/intelligence-agencies-should-report-on-foreign-interests-in-activist-groups-australian-coal-lobby-group-argues>

POL1050: Money, Power and Democracy

Class 6: Lobbying & MPD – 22/9/2025

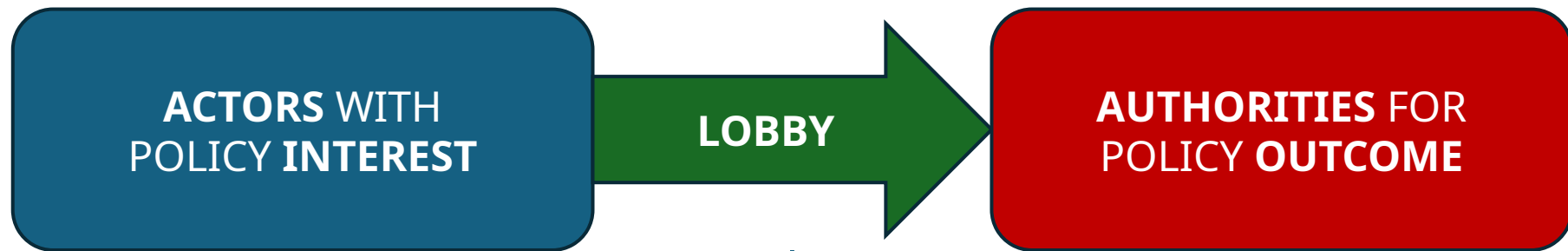
Schedule

This week: Lobbying

- Monday: *Lobbying Inside Out*
 - **What is it**

What is lobbying?

~ Advocacy, Public Affairs, Interest Representation, ...



Activities undertaken with the **purpose of influencing decisions & policies** adopted by public **authorities**

⇒ **Indirect path to power**

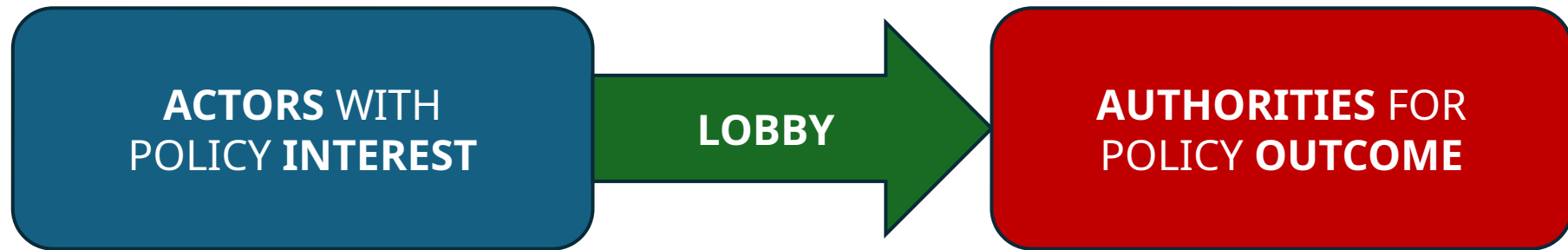
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- Monday: *Lobbying Inside Out*
 - What is it
 - **Who does it?**

Who lobbies?

- Technically anyone -> **Individual Representation**
 - Often through the use of professional lobby firms



Collective Representation via Interest Groups



Central idea (Beyers et al. 2008):

- Represent collective interests
- Engage in collective political advocacy
- Without competing in elections (see class on Wednesday)...
- but rather by interacting with political decision-makers in the form of lobbying

Schedule

This week: Lobbying

- Monday: *Lobbying Inside Out*
 - What is it
 - Who does it?
 - **How do you do it?**

Inside Lobbying -> policy-makers

- Face-to-face meetings
- Emails, letters, advocacy papers
- Drafting amendments
- Consultations, open hearings
- Events
- ...

Outside Lobbying -> public opinion

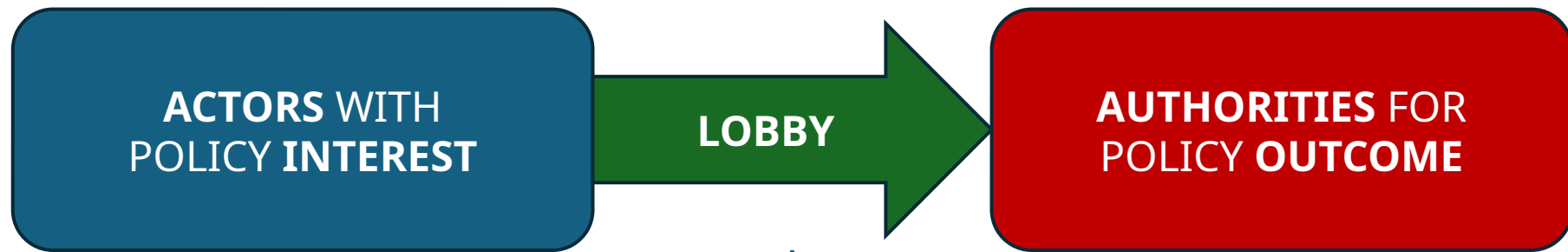
- Press/media engagements
- Campaigns, petitions
- Grassroots mobilization
- Demonstrations
- ...

Schedule

This week: Lobbying

- Monday: *Lobbying Inside Out*
 - What is it
 - Who does it?
 - How do you do it?
- **Today: *Lobbying & MPD***

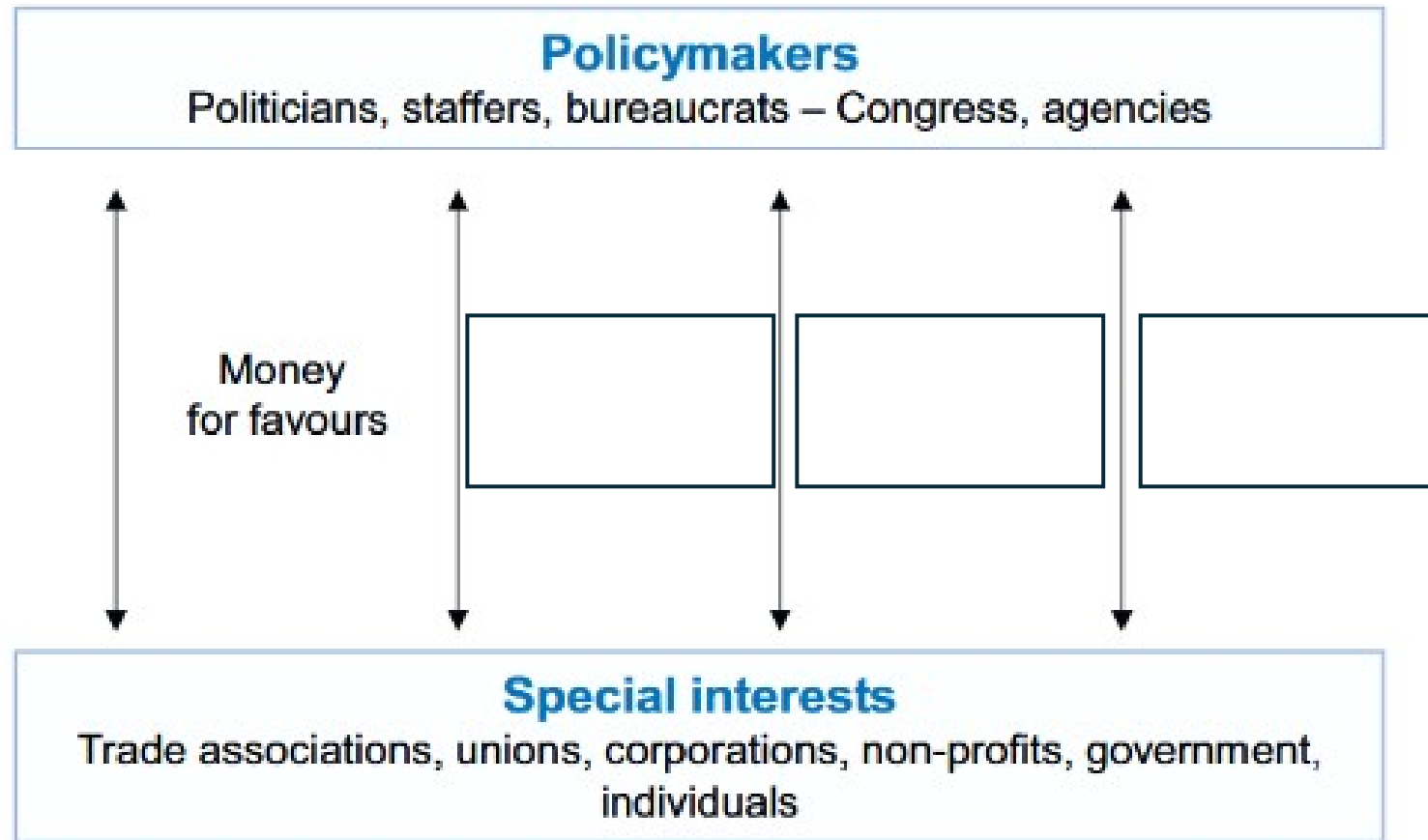
Lobbying as one-directional



Activities undertaken with the **purpose of influencing decisions & policies** adopted by public **authorities**

⇒ **Indirect path to power**

Lobbying as a market exchange



Lobbying & Money ~ Private Funding (cf. Class 4)

- Donations/contributions by private actors (corporations, **interest groups**, individuals, ...) ~ *Demands*
- Large donors: *investment* logic (Bouton et al., 2024)
 - *Electoral* motive
 - ***Influence* motive**
- Interaction actors – policymakers = **contest/auction**
- **But is it effective?**



Measuring Lobby Success: Influence on Policy

Influence on policy: extremely hard to establish causal effect

- Many other factors play a role in policy outcome
- Usually through **preference attainment** approach:

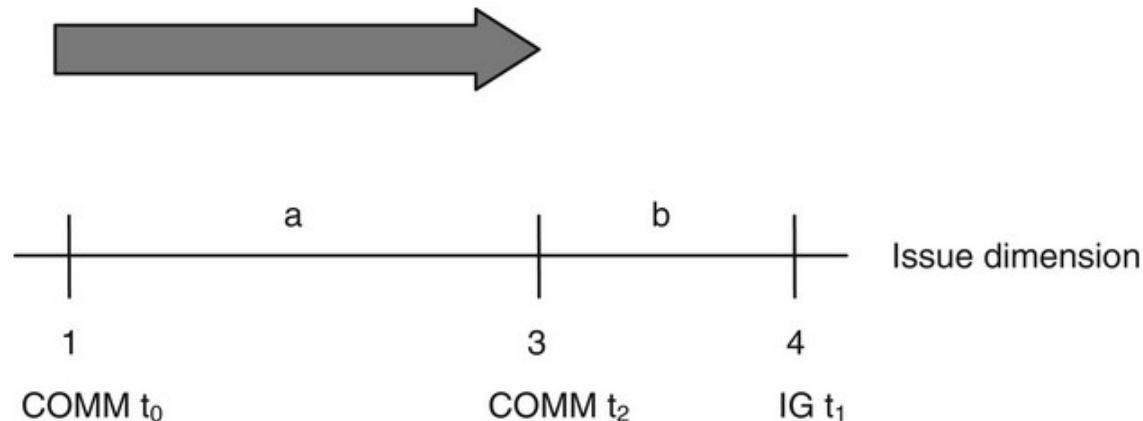


Figure 2. Success measurement.
Note: IG: interest group; COMM: Commission.

Measuring Lobby Success: Influence on Policy

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- Usually through preference attainment approach
- **Money?** Mixed results
 - Candidates can be 'bought' through contributions + by threatening to contribute to other candidates (Chamon et al. 2013)
 - Evidence from Lithuania (Baltrunaite 2020) and Colombia (Gulzar et al. 2022) suggest that contributions influence the winners of public contracts
 - ~ contest/auction
 - Use ban on corporate donations -> donors are now less likely to win

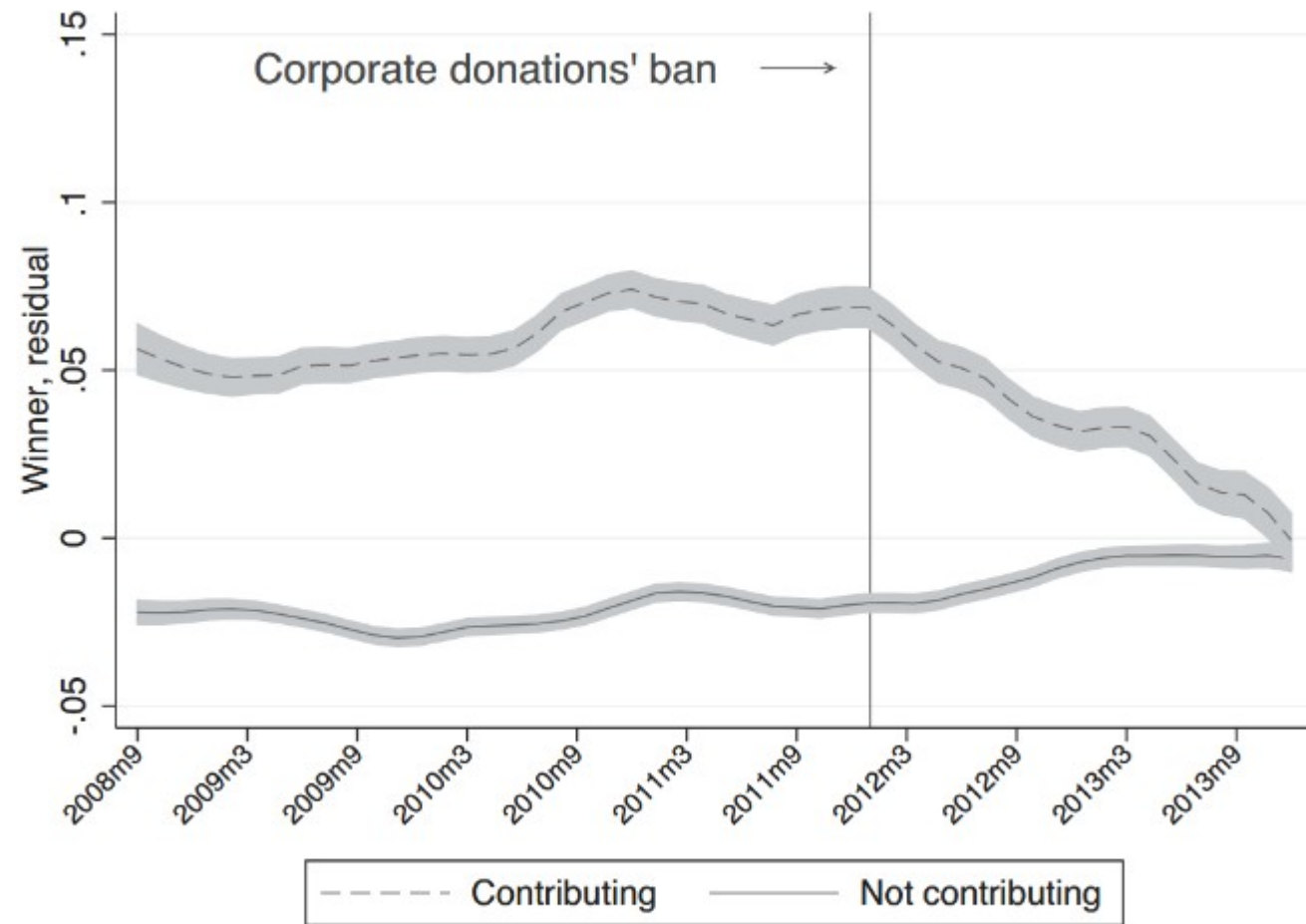


FIGURE 1. Probability of winning, residual. Locally smoothed means of the residual from the regression of the *Winner* indicator variable on procurement controls.

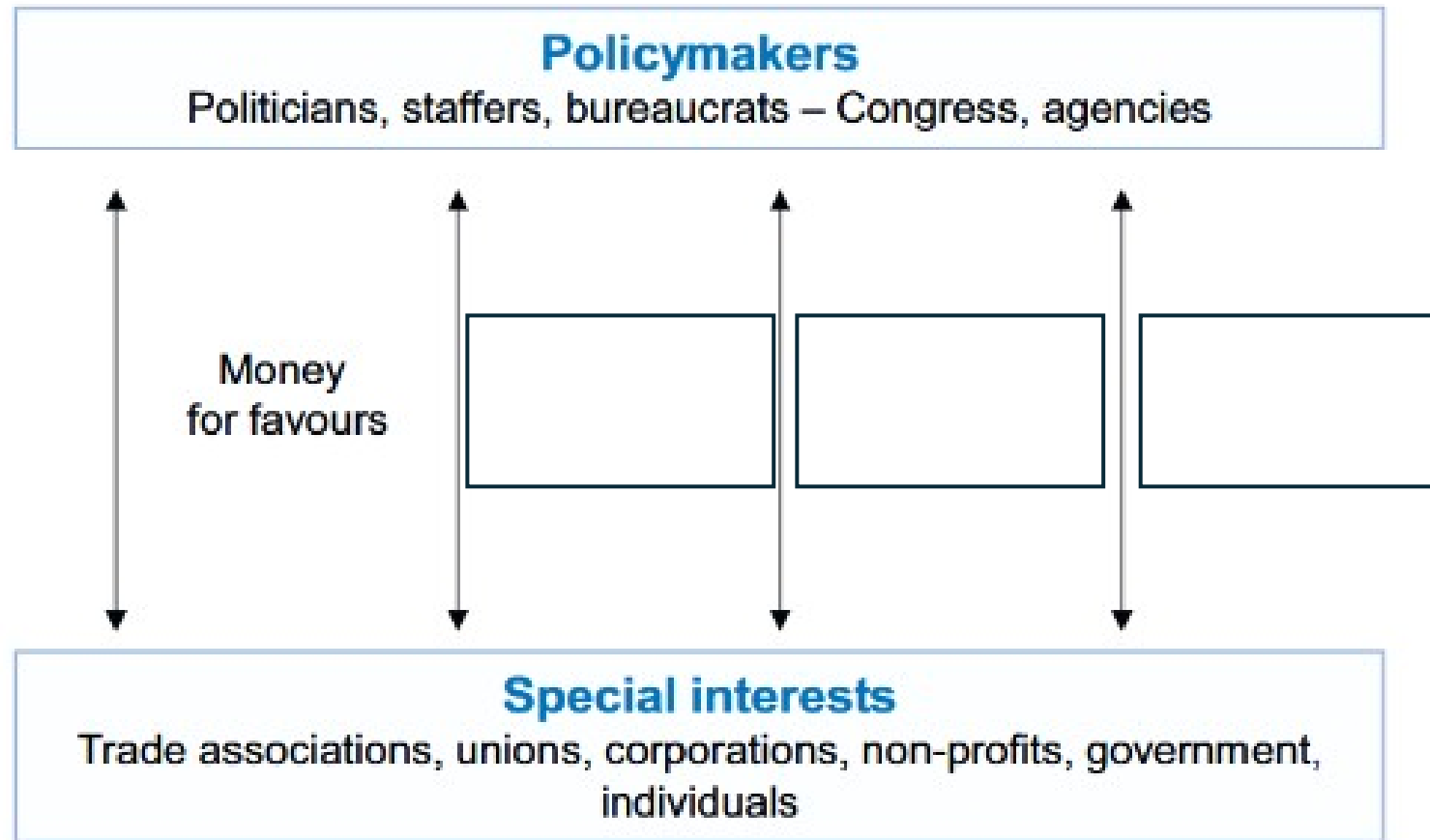
Baltrunaite, 2020. Political Contributions and Public Procurement: Evidence from Lithuania. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvz016>

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 - Evidence from Lithuania (Baltrunaite 2020) and Colombia (Gulzar et al. 2022) suggest that contributions influence the winners of public contracts
 - **BUT for true political *quid pro quo*, donors are largely unsuccessful (Fowler et al. 2020)**

Lobbying as a market exchange



Measuring Lobby Success: Access to Policymakers

- Supply-and-demand dynamics: **Access Goods** (information)

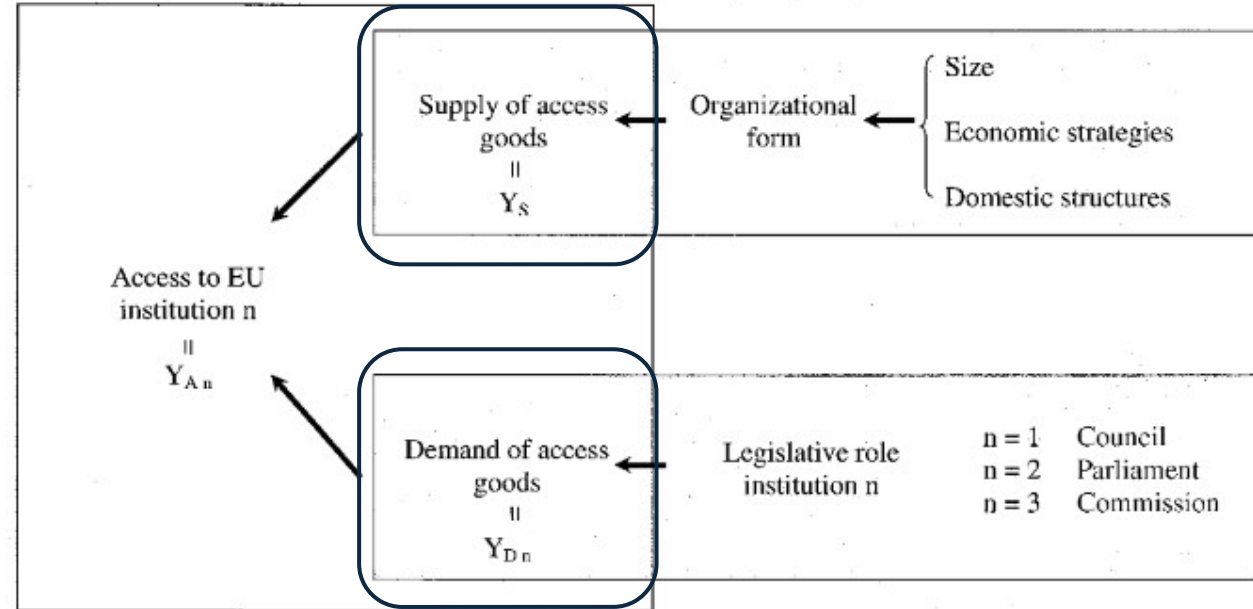


Figure 1 Supply-and-demand scheme

Measuring Lobby Success: Access to Policymakers

- Supply-and-demand dynamics: Access Goods (information)
- Generally more access for donors (Kalla and Broockman, 2016)

FIGURE 1 Access Gained to Congressional Staffers, by Experimental Condition

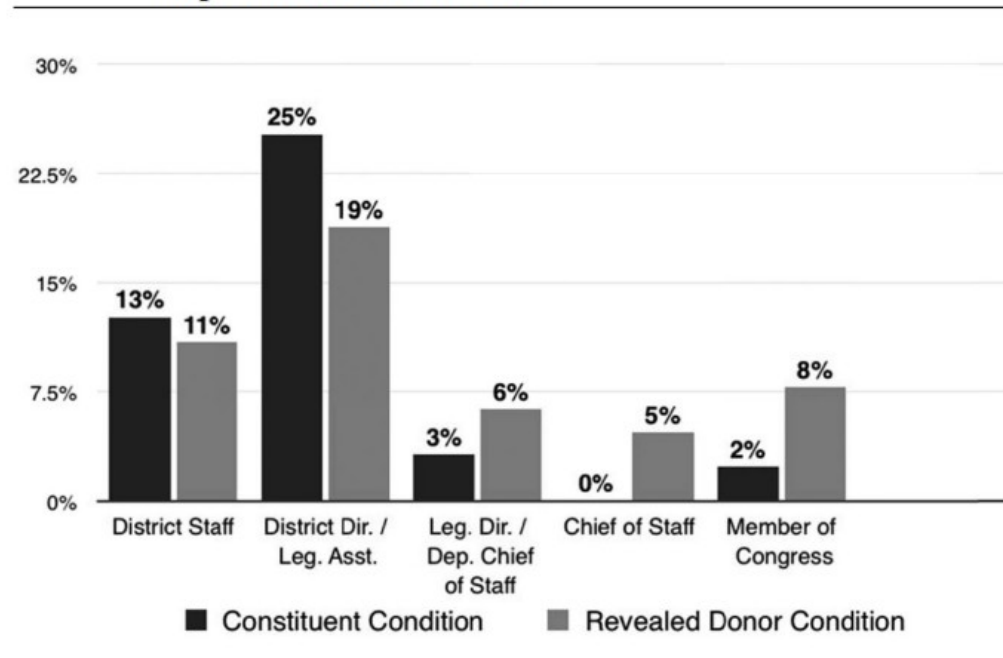
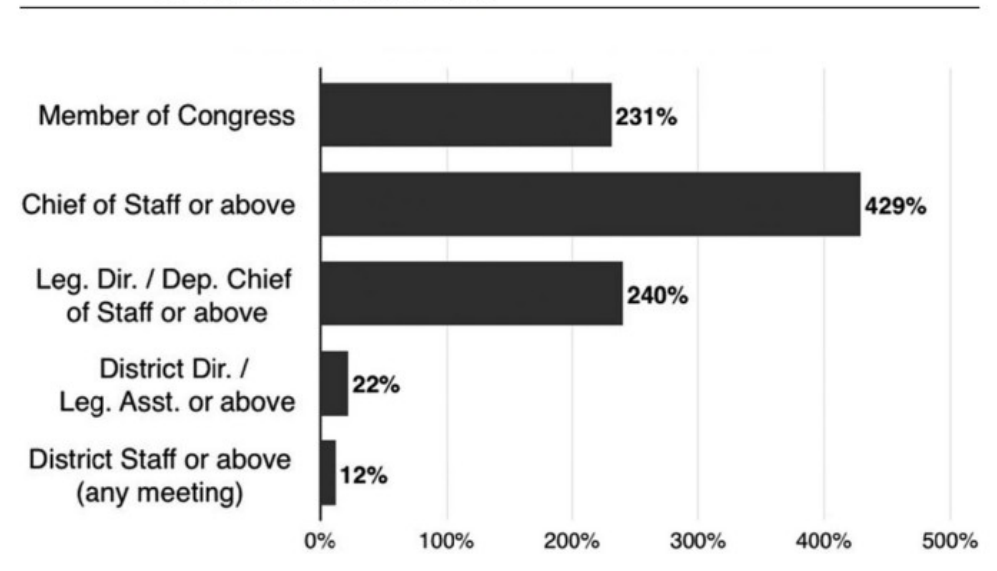
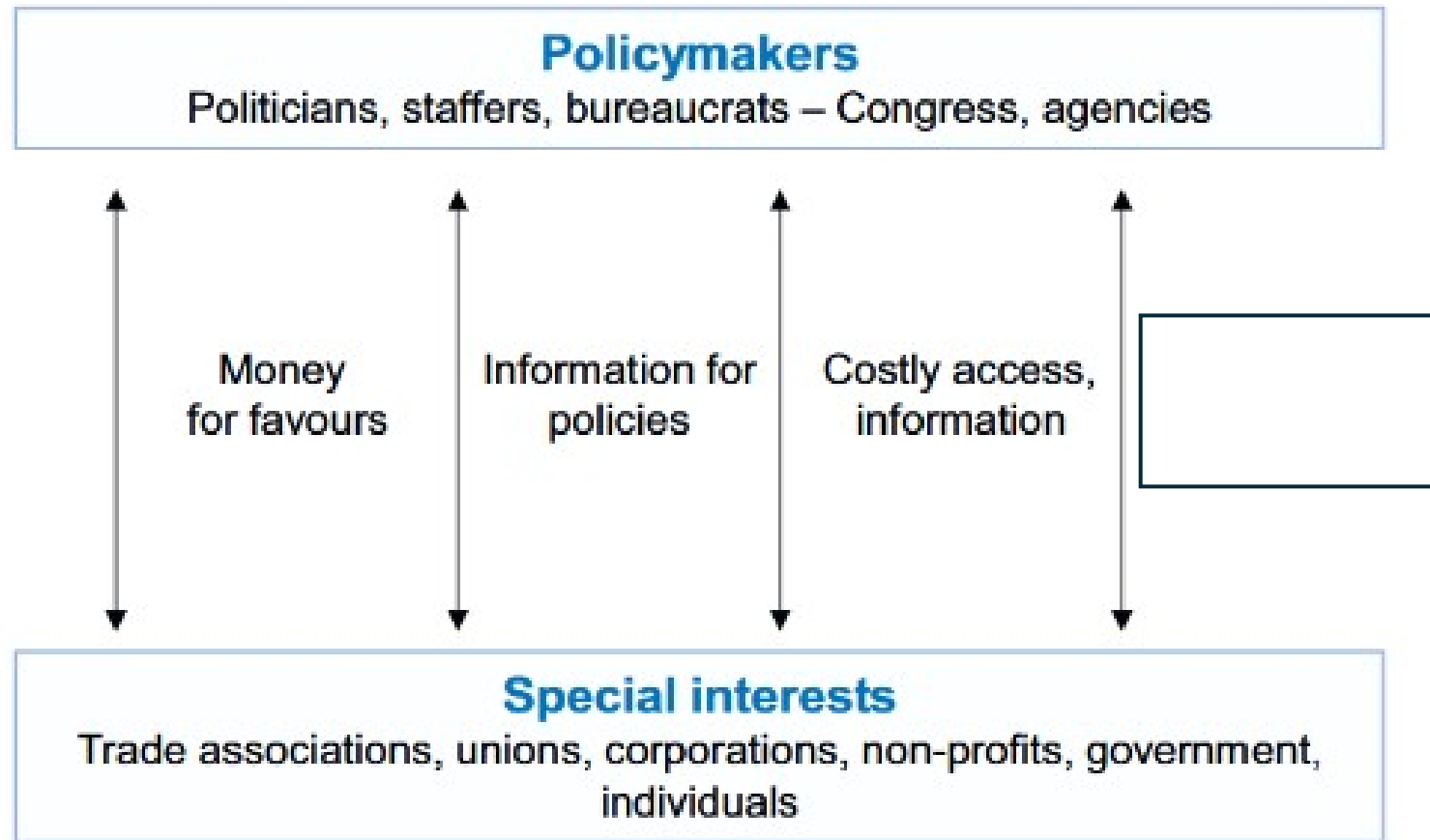


FIGURE 2 Percentage Increase in Access Revealed Donors Gained, at or above Each Level.

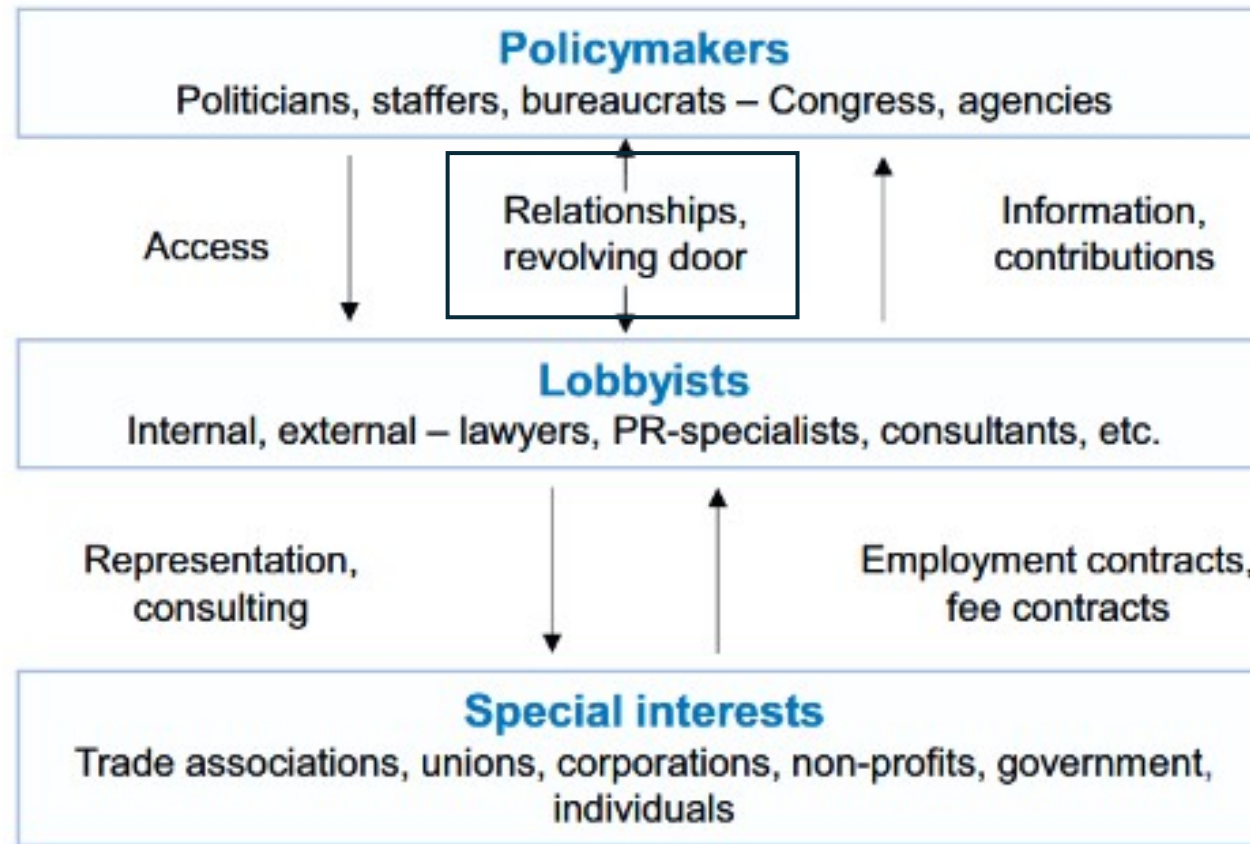


Note: Each bar shows the percent increase in the share of meetings that occurred at or above each level in the Revealed Donor condition relative to the Constituent condition. These can be obtained by comparing the fourth column of 1 to the third column.

Lobbying as a market exchange



Lobbying as a **Relationship** Market



Lobbying & Democracy: Parties vs IGs

- Closely intertwined: many parties originate in social movements (Allern and Bale 2012).
- They are both key organisations for modern democracies, providing an organised way to represent interests (Rasmussen 2012)
 - Political parties through elections
 - Interest groups through lobbying

But is one more important than the other?

- **Representation of special interest vs the people?**
- **Does it matter?**

Lobbying & Democracy: Parties **AND** IGs

- Usually: **collaboration dependent on needs**
 - IGs provide resources needed by parties to get votes/office
 - Parties provide access to policymaking
 - Means to overcome difficulties in a non-simultaneous political exchange (Allern et al. 2007)
- 'standard model' of interest group-party interactions:
 - Power: IGs meet with powerful parties
 - Ideology: IGs meet with ideological allies

Lobbying & Democracy: Corruption

- **Alternative to lobbying (no contract)**

- Corruption as (implicit) contract
- Usually in poor countries, but always less effective than lobbying (Campos & Giovannoni, 2006)



Exchange of resources with (explicit) understanding of getting certain decisions & policies adopted by public authorities

Lobbying & Democracy: Corruption

- Alternative to lobbying (no contract)
- **Corrupt lobbying as “duplicitous exclusion”**
 - Three elements (Warren, 2006):
 - 1) Unjustifiable exclusion (citizens from policymaking)
 - 2) Duplicity for norms of inclusion (citizens are told they matter, even though they do not)
 - 3) Beneficial for included and harmful for excluded (citizens lose trust in own judgement and in integrity of democratic project)
- Three concrete forms (Ron & Singer, 2019)
 - **Access corruption**



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 - Access Corruption
 - **Epistemic Corruption**

Purdue Pharmaceutical & Oxycontin

Epistemic Corruption, the Pharmaceutical Industry, and the Body of Medical Science

Sergio Sismondo ¹

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 33870067 PMCID: [PMC8028448](#) DOI: [10.3389/frma.2021.614013](#)

Abstract

When a knowledge system importantly loses integrity, ceasing to provide the kinds of trusted knowledge expected of it, we can label this *epistemic corruption*. Epistemic corruption often occurs because the system has been co-opted for interests at odds with some of the central goals thought to lie behind it. There is now abundant evidence that the involvement of pharmaceutical companies corrupts medical science. Within the medical community, this is generally assumed to be the result of conflicts of interest. However, some important ways that the industry corrupts are not captured well by standard analyses in terms of conflicts of interest. It is not just that there is a body of medical science perverted by industry largesse. Instead, much of the corruption of medical science via the pharmaceutical industry happens through grafting activities: Pharmaceutical companies do their own research and smoothly integrate it with medical science, taking advantage of the legitimacy of the latter.

Keywords: bias; conflict of interest; epistemic corruption; medical research; pharmaceutical industry.

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- Three concrete forms (Ron & Singer, 2019)
 - Access corruption
 - Epistemic corruption
 - **Representational corruption**

Astroturfing



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fmh4RdIwswE>

Conclusion

- Lobbying is a market exchange
 - Resources & information...
 - ...for access and influence
- Lobbying affects democracy
 - Interplay with parties creates widespread representation
 - But corruption leads to exclusion of citizens