Persuasive Lobbying and the Value of Connections

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Abstract

The inflow of money into politics and the influence of interest groups on policies are well-documented, but the monetary value of accessing policymakers is less well-understood. As a result, it is unclear what inferences researchers can draw from lobbying expenditures about interest groups' strategies and their ideological alignment with policymakers. We study a model of informational lobbying with a collective decision-making body and endogenous reforms to investigate the determinants of the value of access. We show that the funds flowing to a given policymaker depend not only on this policymaker's ideology and procedural power, but also on the overall distribution of preferences and power among other policymakers. Two policymakers with the same ideology and procedural power might therefore attract different amounts of contributions, depending on the preferences of fellow policymakers. Our results help clarify empirical research linking lobbying expenditures by interest groups to politicians' ideologies and power.

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1 Introduction

A long tradition in political science has sought to understand which groups in society exert more influence on policies (Schattschneider, 1960; Dahl, 1961; Baumgartner et al., 2009; Gilens and Page, 2014). A common finding is that upper class and business interests are better represented in the policy making process (Gilens, 2012; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012; Bonica, 2013; Crosson, Furnas and Lorenz, 2020), suggesting that money can bias the representation of interests. Yet, to understand how money biases this representation, it is important to understand how interest groups strategically allocate funds across policymakers.

Money allows interest groups to both support the election of favorable policymakers and obtain access to them (Wright, 1990; Milyo, Primo and Groseclose, 2000; Tripathi, Ansolabehere and Snyder, 2002; Kalla and Broockman, 2016; Barber, 2016; Liu, 2022; Kim, Stuckatz and Wolters, 2024). Numerous studies have shown that interest groups contribute and seek access to ideologically-aligned policymakers and those with more procedural power (see, e.g., Hojnacki and Kimball, 1998; Miller, 2022; Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022). The view that there is a positive relationship between the value of access, ideological alignment, and procedural power has, in turn, led scholars to use campaign contributions data to draw inferences about both the strategic choices of interest groups (Langbein, 1993; Holyoke, 2009; Powell and Grimmer, 2016; Fouirnaies, 2018), and their ideological position (Bonica, 2013). This view has an intuitive appeal: if money helps elect candidates who can further an interest group's agenda, then more resources should be exchanged with policymakers who are more ideologically aligned and hold more procedural power.

However, the ultimate goal of interest groups is typically to use this access to share information and influence policies (Ainsworth and Sened, 1993; Bouwen, 2004; Levine, 2009; Chalmers, 2013; Schnakenberg, 2017; Awad, 2020). The informational nature of lobbying complicates the link between resource exchange, power, and ideology: policymakers with little procedural power can be very valuable if they can influence the views of key veto players, while powerful policymakers, such as committee chairs, themselves play the role of information intermediaries by relaying information shared by interest groups. The nature of the relationship between the value of access, ideological preferences, and procedural power, when access is used to provide information, therefore remains an open question.

We propose a theory of interest groups' willingness to pay for private access to policymakers. While many studies focus on the decision of *whether* to form a connection with a policymaker, we study *how valuable* these connections are. This approach, combined with a rich environment in which policy proposals are endogenous, allows us to show that more closely-

aligned policymakers are not necessarily more valuable. This is particularly the case for powerful policymakers, for whom the relationship between ideology and value is especially complex. Moreover, we show that the entire distribution of ideological preferences and procedural power across policymakers matters for the value of access.[1] Focusing solely on dyadic relationships between interest groups and individual legislators can therefore be misleading. We show that these two results have important implications for the relationship between money and influence and the inferences that can be drawn from campaign contributions, when contributions also serve to gain access.

We analyze a model in which a group of policymakers chooses between a reform and the status quo. The reform's value is uncertain and varies across policymakers. An agenda setter (e.g. the chair of a committee, or the speaker in a legislature) first chooses whether or not to put the reform to a vote. If the reform is put to a vote, policymakers vote for or against it. An interest group, which prefers the reform to the status quo, privately observes information about the reform's value. It can disclose that information either to the agenda setter before the reform is proposed, or to other policymakers once the reform has been proposed. The interest group can provide information to policymakers either publicly – so that all policymakers observe the same information – or privately – so that only a selected policymaker observes it. If a policymaker privately receives that information, she can publicly endorse her preferred policy.

Privately sharing information is more valuable to the interest group when the targeted policymaker is easier to persuade, i.e., when she and the interest group are more aligned. However, to be valuable, the targeted policymaker's endorsement must also persuade a majority of policymakers. The targeted policymaker must not only be *persuadable* but also *persuasive*. This requires that the targeted policymaker is sufficiently aligned with the median policymaker. Finally, the agenda setter must also be willing to propose a reform, anticipating the targeted policymaker's endorsement and its effect on votes. This requires that the median and agenda setter are sufficiently aligned.

Our theory departs from existing approaches in three important ways. First, while the existing literature has focused on which policymaker is the most beneficial to interest groups (De Bruycker, 2016), we derive the value of a connection to *every* policymaker in a collective decision-making body. Identifying the value of each policymaker is important for two reasons. First, it is insightful to understand why some policymakers are *not* valuable.

[1] Judd (2023) draws similar conclusions in the context of quid pro quo lobbying and legislative bargaining. We discuss the differences between the two papers below.

While existing studies would suggest that this is because the policymakers are either too ideologically distant (Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022) or insufficiently powerful (Fouirnaies, 2018; Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022), we show that a policymaker can have no value to an interest group even when they are closely aligned or have procedural power. Second, the policymaker who is most valuable to the interest group might not be willing to grant access (e.g., for reputational reasons, see Crosson, Furnas and Lorenz, 2023). Empirical studies will only observe links between interest groups and policymakers who are willing to form such a connection. It is therefore important for theoretical work to depart from focusing solely on the most valuable connections.

Our second contribution is a novel conceptualization of the value of access. To assess the value of gaining private access, we compare the interest groups' expected gains when they have private access to a policymaker to their expected gains when they do not have private access. This comparison depends on the likelihood that the interest group's preferred policy is chosen in one scenario or the other. Importantly, not having private access does not mean that the interest group lacks policy influence. Indeed, interest groups routinely influence policies by participating in legislative hearings (Ban, Park and You, 2023) and notice-and-comment procedures (Dwidar, 2022), or by taking position publicly (Crosson, Furnas and Lorenz, 2020), which do not require private access. Our model allows us to assess how an interest group's influence differs when it has private access compared to the counterfactual world in which it does not. Explicitly considering this counterfactual world paints a different picture. While private access can give the interest group influence over policies, that influence can be the same or even lower than the influence it would have by lobbying publicly.

Third, we consider a rich environment in which (i) policy proposals are endogenous, (ii) information can be verified, and (iii) voting rules can vary. The model's richness allows us to explore how a wide range of institutional characteristics affects the value of private access. When policy proposals are controlled by an agenda setter, the value of access to a given policymaker depends on the ideological alignment between the policymaker and the agenda setter, and between the agenda setter and the median policymaker. We also show that, when policies are more complex, and the interest group's information is less reliable, the range of valuable connections shrinks but the value of connections within that narrower range increases. Finally, we show that introducing stricter decision rules can have non-monotonic effects on the value of a connection.

This approach reveals two important implications. First, focusing on dyadic relationships (between individual interest groups and policymakers) is insufficient to understand interest groups' willingness to pay for access, and therefore the relationship between money and

influence in politics. Instead, the value of a connection to a given policymaker depends on the distribution of ideological preferences and procedural power across the entire group of policymakers. Second, the relationship between the value of access, ideology, and power is non-monotonic. The value of a connection to a policymaker with no agenda setting power increases in ideological alignment, but only up to a point, after which it drops to zero. The value of a connection to an agenda setter also increases with ideological alignment but can be positive for large ideological disagreements: When disagreement is important, the agenda setter would not trust any other policymaker's endorsements so lobbying the agenda setter is the interest group's only chance of obtaining its preferred policy.

Our focus on the value, rather than the existence, of connections allows us to apply these insights to two frequently used empirical strategies: using campaign contributions to learn about who interest groups want to get access to (Langbein, 1993; Holyoke, 2009; Igan and Mishra, 2014; Fouirnaies, 2018) and using campaign contributions to infer ideological preferences (Bonica, 2013). Our results provide a theoretical basis for the interpretation of findings in these studies. First, because the value of a connection depends on alternative means of lobbying, such as contributing to public consultations or making public statements, campaign contributions measure the value of access *relative* to the interest group's influence through these alternative means.[2] As a result, two policymakers with identical ideological alignment to an interest group might receive different campaign contributions depending on the distribution of ideological preferences among other policymakers. Moreover, these two policymakers might receive different campaign contributions depending on which *other* policymaker holds procedural power. This could lead an observer to incorrectly infer that these two policymakers have different preferences or that the interest group is using different targeting strategies. Finally, our results on the value of access to the agenda setter imply that this value is derived from the dual role of the agenda setter as a gatekeeper and as an information intermediary. While this does not contradict the findings that committee chairs (Fouirnaies, 2018) or powerful parties (Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022) are more valuable, it clarifies the interpretation of these findings.

[2]Consider for instance the case of technology firms that are actively lobbying the European Parliament to influence the Digital Markets Act (Bank et al., 2021) and have made donations to political parties to get private access to policymakers (Haeck, Wheaton and Coi, 2024). The value of access to these firms is not simply based on the influence that these firms exert via this private access relative to no lobbying effort. Indeed, if these firms did not have private access to policymakers, they would still influence policies by contributing to public consultations, which they regularly do (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2024).

2 Relation to the literature

Defining the value of access. Numerous studies have noted the importance of resources in obtaining access to policymakers (Miller, 2021). Hojnacki et al. (2012), Kim, Stuckatz and Wolters (2024), and Kalla and Broockman (2016) show that campaign contributions allow interest groups to obtain access to legislators, while Allern et al. (2021) show that financial contributions strengthen the links between parties and labor unions. Yet, few studies formally define interest groups' *willingness to pay* for access. Binderkrantz, Pedersen and Beyers (2017) defines *access* as "passing a threshold, controlled by relevant gatekeepers" (Binderkrantz, Pedersen and Beyers, 2017, p. 308). However, they do not define the *value* to interest groups of passing this threshold. Miller (2021) instead emphasizes the importance of focusing on 'direct contacts' as it allows interest groups to share information and expertise. Our conceptualization of the value of access is close to Lowery (2013) who argues that an appropriate definition of *influence* needs to take into account both the different ways of exerting influence and the counterfactual policy choices in the absence of lobbying. Rather than equating the value of access and influence, we argue that an appropriate definition of the value of private access should compare influence with private access to influence in a counterfactual world without it. Importantly, the counterfactual is not necessarily the absence of lobbying, but alternative forms of lobbying, such as publicly sharing information in legislative hearings. This contrasts with Judd (2023), who studies the value of access in a legislative bargaining setting. In Judd (2023), access allows subsequent political influence via quid-pro-quo lobbying. Like Judd (2023), we find that the distribution of preferences and bargaining power across policymakers matters for the willingness to pay for access. However, as lobbying is *informational* in our model, the distribution of preferences and bargaining power affects who trusts the interest group's information and therefore what information ultimately feeds into policy decisions. While Judd (2023)'s model is particularly useful to understand political influence in the context of quid-pro-quo lobbying, our findings refine our understanding when money is used to buy access, and information to influence policies.

Who do interest groups target? Interest group scholars have extensively studied which policymakers get lobbied and receive campaign contributions, and shown that both the ideological proximity (Langbein, 1993; Kollman, 1997; Hall and Miler, 2008; Gullberg, 2008; Holyoke, 2009; Marshall, 2010; Mian, Sufi and Trebbi, 2013; Igan and Mishra, 2014) and the political power of policymakers (Hall and Wayman, 1990; Powell and Grimmer, 2016; Fouirnaies, 2018; Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022) make them more likely to be targeted by interest groups. In their seminal contribution, Hojnacki and Kimball (1998) argue that the

decision to target ideologically close legislators is determined by the legislator's capacity to influence a bill's content and its fate in the legislature. Our theory extends this idea by explicitly considering the possibility that agenda setters can also be information intermediaries. This innovation implies that the relationship between ideology and procedural power is non-monotonic. This contrasts with Haugsgjerd Allern et al. (2022) who posit a monotonic interaction between ideological proximity and power.[3] The non-monotonicity has important consequences for empirical inferences and arises for two reasons. First, because our theory accounts for the influence interest groups can have even when they lack private access. Second, because the relationship between ideology and procedural power depends on the entire distribution of ideology across policymakers. The second reason implies that the literature should move away from studying dyadic relationships between interest groups and policymakers. This is in line with Crosson, Furnas and Lorenz (2023) who study the effect of competition and polarization between parties on interest groups' partisan alignment. However, our argument differs from theirs. They propose that interest groups diversify the set of issues they support to strengthen their partisan alignment. Instead, our mechanism depends on the possibility to transmit information through a network of policymakers rather than the interest group's desire to signal partisanship.

Institutions and the value of connections. Finally, we build on the literature studying how institutions shape interest group influence. The importance of intervening early, while policies are being drafted, has long been recognized in the literature (Schattschneider, 1960; Hall and Wayman, 1990). However, few studies explicitly consider how the agenda setting process affects the value of access in the context of informational lobbying. An exception is Dellis (2023), who studies who interest groups target when they sequentially search for information. In equilibrium, the interest group does not provide information to the agenda setter who is always included in the winning coalition. In our model, the agenda setter can strictly lose from proposing a policy once information is revealed to another policymaker. As a result, lobbying the agenda setter becomes valuable. Austen-Smith (1993) also studies whether a lobbyist wants to share information at the agenda-setting stage, at the voting stage, or both. As we allow the interest group to lobby any policymaker – not just the agenda setter or the median – we can analyze how interest groups value connections with those who are neither agenda setters nor pivotal policymakers.

[3]Berkhout, Hanegraaff and Statsch (2021) further refine this finding by showing that the populist nature of a party reduces the importance of power and proximity.

3 Model

An odd number n of policymakers collectively decides between the status quo $x = 0$ and a reform $x = 1$. We let $X = \{0, 1\}$ denote the policy space and N the set of policymakers. An interest group (IG) observes the *state of the world* $\theta \in \Theta := [0, 1]$, which represents technical information about the quality of the reform $x = 1$. The policymakers do not observe θ and have a common prior belief that θ is distributed uniformly on $[0, 1]$. We denote the prior density of θ by $\mu_0(\theta) = 1$. One of the policymakers, the agenda setter (denoted $A \in N$), has gate-keeping power: she can decide whether to put the reform $x = 1$ to a vote or maintain the status quo. We let $\tilde{x} \in X$ denote the agenda setter's decision. If the reform is proposed, the policymakers hold a majority vote where each policymaker i votes either for the reform ($x_i = 1$) or against it ($x_i = 0$).

The IG can disclose information about the state θ in two ways. First, the IG can disclose the state *publicly* to every policymaker. We let r_P denote this report. Public disclosure does not require access to a policymaker and takes place once the agenda setter has proposed the reform.[4] Second, the IG can *privately* provide a report r_j to a specific policymaker $j \in N$ (possibly including the agenda setter). In both cases, the report is verifiable, so the IG cannot lie but it can withhold evidence. Given the state θ, the group can therefore disclose the state $r = \theta$ or disclose nothing: $r = \emptyset$.

The policymaker who received a private report can make a public endorsement for or against the reform. Endorsing a policy means sending a cheap talk recommendation to all other policymakers before they vote, denoted by $e_j \in \{0, 1\}$.

Finally, every policymaker i observes the agenda setter's proposal $\tilde{x}$, the public report r_P, which policymaker j received the information privately, and this policymaker's endorsement e_j, before choosing whether to vote for or against the reform, $x_i \in X$.

We start from the premise that the IG has gained access to a policymaker j before the start of the game. The IG can only share information privately with the policymaker to whom it has access.[5] This allows us to derive the value to the IG of having access to policymaker j for every $j \in N$.

[4] In many institutions, proposing a policy opens a range of venues for interest groups to share information publicly with policymakers such as public consultations, notice-and-comments periods, or legislative hearings.

[5] Awad (2020) shows that when preferences are 'nested', as is the case here, IGs do not benefit from sharing information with multiple policymakers.

The timing of the game depends on whether the IG has access to the agenda setter or to another policymaker. If the IG has access to a policymaker other than the agenda setter, $j \neq A$, the timing is as follows:

1. The IG observes the state θ.
2. The agenda setter observes to which policymaker j the IG has access and proposes a policy $\tilde{x} \in X$.
3. If the agenda setter maintains the status quo $\tilde{x} = 0$, the game ends. Otherwise, if $\tilde{x} = 1$, the IG shares a report $r_j \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$ privately with policymaker j.
4. Policymaker j observes r_j and either publicly endorses the reform, $e_j = 1$, or not, $e_j = 0$.
5. The IG shares a public report $r_P \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$.
6. All policymakers observe who has been lobbied (j), whether the reform is proposed $(\tilde{x})$, the public report r_P, and the endorsement (e_j), and vote.

If the IG has access to the agenda setter, $j = A$, then it can share a report $r_A \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$ with the agenda setter before stage 2. However, it no longer shares a private report with another policymaker $j \neq A$ in stage 3 and no policymaker makes an endorsement in stage 4.

Payoffs. The IG's payoff is state-independent but depends on whether the reform passes: $v(x) = x$, $x \in X = \{0, 1\}$. Let $x^*(\theta)$ be the equilibrium reform in state θ, and let

$$V(x^*) = \int_{\theta \in \Theta} x^*(\theta) \mu_0(\theta) d\theta$$

be the IG's ex ante equilibrium payoff.

Each policymaker i is identified by a threshold $c_i \in (0, 1)$ and receives the following payoff for policy $x \in \{0, 1\}$ and state θ:

$$u_i(x, \theta) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } x = 0 \\ \theta - c_i & \text{if } x = 1. \end{cases}$$

The parameter $c_i \in (0, 1)$ captures policymaker i's *status quo bias*. The higher c_i is, the higher the state needs to be to convince policymaker i to support the reform. Since the IG prefers the reform, we say that the lower c_i is, the more *ideologically aligned* policymaker i is to the IG.

Equilibrium. Our solution concept is Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium (PBE) in pure strategies. When multiple equilibria exist, we focus on the interest-group preferred equilibrium. We show in the SI (pp. 43–45) that our results remain robust to selecting the agenda setter-preferred equilibrium for some range of parameters, but that these equilibria are not necessarily the most informative equilibria. We also make two standard assumptions to rule out other unintuitive equilibria: *sincere voting* (policymakers vote for the policy that maximizes their expected payoff) and *sincere endorsements* (policymakers endorse the policy that maximizes their expected payoff).[6] The SI (pp. 1–2) formally describes the players' strategies, the equilibrium concept, and contains all proofs.

Parametric assumptions. To rule out the uninteresting case in which policymakers implement the IG's favorite policy absent any information, we assume that the median policymaker and the agenda setter, whose thresholds are denoted c_M and c_A respectively, are sufficiently status quo biased: $c_A > \frac{1}{2}$ and $c_M > \frac{1}{2}$. The expected value of the reform $x = 1$ absent any information is $\mathbb{E}[\theta] = \frac{1}{2}$, given the uniform prior μ_0 over $[0, 1]$. Therefore, without further information, the agenda setter is unwilling to propose the reform and the median (and thus a legislative majority) is unwilling to approve it.[7]

3.1 Model interpretation and scope

Our stylized model cannot capture all aspects of the interaction between interest groups and policymakers. It is most applicable to situations in which (1) there is a well-defined policy issue, (2) choosing the correct policy requires some expertise which the interest group has but policymakers do not, and (3) policymakers can be divided even after seeing some evidence. An example would be the regulation of complex financial products (Mian, Sufi and Trebbi, 2013). However, our model is not as well-suited to capture policy issues whose salience differs across policymakers, which involve some broad policy agenda, and where ideology matters more than expertise, such as civic rights or abortion policies. Within this scope, however, our model captures a wide range of possible scenarios.

Lobbying networks. While we assume that the intermediary j is herself a policymaker, this assumption is not necessary for our results: j could be part of the wider network of influential agents in the policy making process to whom the IG has access. The value of

[6] Assuming sincere endorsements is not necessary for the strategy profile we characterize to be an equilibrium. However, babbling equilibria also exist without this assumption.

[7] If both $c_A < \frac{1}{2}$ and $c_M < \frac{1}{2}$, the IG-preferred equilibrium would be for the IG to provide no information in any state, and the reform would pass in every state.

access could therefore correspond to the IG's willingness to pay for hiring a former politician or staffer who is trusted by current policy makers (see e.g., Bertrand, Bombardini and Trebbi, 2014; Hirsch et al., 2023).

Nature of the IG's information. We model the IG's information as a private signal that can be withheld from policymakers. We interpret this signal as capturing the IG's *expertise*: the IG is better equipped to find information about the effects of the policy than policymakers. While a single piece of information might not sway a policymaker's decision, the IG's signal is a shorthand for the various pieces of evidence (about either the policy itself or constituents' views) that the IG could share to influence policymakers. The possibility to conceal information from a connection is not necessary for the results. We show in the SI (pp. 43–45) that the equilibrium we characterize is outcome-equivalent to an equilibrium in which the IG always discloses the state when reporting privately to its connection. What matters is that the IG can choose whether to provide this information publicly or not.

Nature of the issue. Our model focuses on a single policy issue. However, the model's parameters can capture various dimensions of this issue. First, the distribution of preferences across policymakers captures the conflictual nature of the issue. When more policymakers are located at the extremes (i.e., with very low or very high thresholds c_j), they are more polarized than when they are all concentrated around the midpoint. Second, our extension in Section 4.4 captures issue complexity: a more complex issue is one on which the IG is less likely to have accurate information. We show that this affects the value of connections.

Uncertainty about connections. We assume that the agenda setter knows which policymaker the IG has access to. If she did not, she would decide whether to propose the reform based on her expected payoff given her beliefs over the IG's connection. We show in the SI (pp. 46–48) that the logic of our results continues to hold in this case. The value of connections is generally unchanged, but for some parameter values, the value of a connection can be positively or negatively affected by the agenda setter's uncertainty over the IG's connection.

4 Analysis

4.1 Public Lobbying

We start by deriving the IG's disclosure strategies and expected payoff when it can only disclose information publicly. The IG can only provide information if the agenda setter has proposed the reform ($\tilde{x} = 1$). Given that the agenda setter is ex ante opposed to the reform ($c_A > \frac{1}{2}$), it is seemingly impossible for public information alone to help the IG. However, we show that, if the agenda setter is sufficiently aligned with the median policymaker, the agenda setter is happy to propose the reform and 'delegate' the decision to the legislature.

Suppose that the agenda setter has proposed the reform. After the reform is proposed, the agenda setter *de facto* loses her bargaining power, and the median policymaker becomes decisive.[8] Each policymaker supports the reform if, given the publicly available information, they believe that the state is above their threshold: they vote $x_i = 1$ if and only if $\mathbb{E}[\theta|r_P] \geq c_i$. When the IG discloses the state, $r_P = \theta$, a majority of policymakers therefore supports the reform if and only if the state exceeds the median's threshold: $\theta \geq c_M$. When the IG withholds information $r_P = \emptyset$, the policymakers' beliefs depend on the IG's disclosure strategy. We show that an equilibrium exists in which the IG discloses any $\theta \geq c_M$ and withholds any $\theta < c_M$, and policymakers infer that the state must be less than c_M absent disclosure ($r_P = \emptyset$).[9]

Lemma 1. *Suppose that the IG lacks private access to any policymaker. If the agenda setter has proposed the reform, $\hat{x} = 1$, the reform passes if and only if the state is above the median's threshold: $\theta \geq c_M$.*

How does the agenda setter decide whether to propose the reform? The agenda setter anticipates that, if proposed, the reform will be approved whenever $\theta \geq c_M$. The agenda setter's decision therefore depends on her preferences relative to the median's preferences. If the median is harder to persuade than the agenda setter, $c_A < c_M$, then the agenda setter anticipates that a majority only approves the reform when the agenda setter would have approved it too (i.e., when $\theta \geq c_M > c_A$). Therefore, the agenda setter 'trusts' that the reform will pass only when she would have approved it herself and is happy to propose it.

If the median is easier to persuade than the agenda setter ($c_M < c_A$), the agenda setter may still be willing to propose the reform. In this case, the agenda setter would not always agree

[8] In our setting, Duggan (2014) implies that the median policymaker is decisive over policies.

[9] Following a standard unraveling argument (e.g. Grossman, 1981), the IG can never persuade a majority of policymakers by withholding the report.

with the median's vote. However, since the median approves the reform $x = 1$ whenever she observes evidence $\theta \geq c_M$, the agenda setter believes that the expected value of a reform accepted by the median equals $\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_M] = \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.[10] She therefore 'trusts' the median to make the right decision on average whenever $\frac{1+c_M}{2} \geq c_A$, or, equivalently, if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$.

Thus, the agenda setter is only willing to propose policy $x = 1$ if the median is sufficiently aligned with her or more status quo biased. In this case, the IG obtains its preferred policy whenever it can convince the median, i.e., when $\theta \geq c_M$.

Proposition 1. *When the IG lacks private access to any policymaker, the agenda setter is willing to propose policy $x = 1$ if and only if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$. The IG's ex ante payoff is*

$$V^{Pu} = \begin{cases} 1 - c_M & \text{if } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

4.2 Private Lobbying

We now turn to the possibility of sharing information privately with a policymaker. We evaluate the IG's value of having private access to a policymaker relative to lobbying publicly.

We first analyze the endorsement decision of a policymaker who privately receives information from the IG, and the impact of that endorsement on other policymakers' voting decision. Private access is valuable because it allows the IG to use a policymaker as an *information intermediary*: a middleman who can observe the IG's information and transmit it to other policymakers in the form of a coarser recommendation. If that policymaker is more aligned with the IG than the median or the agenda setter, she can be more easily persuaded to support the IG's preferred policy while still making a persuasive endorsement.

An intermediary j endorses policy $x = 1$ whenever the IG discloses to her that the state is $\theta \geq c_j$. Given this strategy, other policymakers infer that the expected value of the state, following a favorable endorsement, is $\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_j] = \frac{1+c_j}{2}$. Policymaker i therefore supports policy $x = 1$, following a favorable endorsement by intermediary j, if $\frac{1+c_j}{2} \geq c_i$, or, equivalently, if $2c_i - 1 \leq c_j$.

4.2.1 Lobbying a policymaker with no agenda setting power

While private lobbying can be valuable, it is only effective if two conditions are met. First, the median policymaker must be persuaded by policymaker j's endorsement. Second, conditional

[10] This expression follows from the uniform distribution of θ on $[0, 1]$.

on knowing that the median policymaker follows j's endorsement, the agenda setter must be willing to propose the reform.

We first define situations in which private lobbying can be valuable to the IG, i.e., where private lobbying affects the policy choice in a way that cannot be replicated with public lobbying.

Definition 1. *A favorable endorsement from j, $e_j = 1$, **induces** policy $x = 1$ if, in equilibrium,*

1. *the IG only shares information privately,*
2. *the agenda setter proposes the reform, and*
3. *a majority of policymakers votes for the reform if and only if policymaker j endorses it, $e_j = 1$.*

The following proposition formally establishes the conditions under which such a situation occurs in equilibrium.

Proposition 2. *If the IG has access to policymaker $j \neq A$, an equilibrium exists in which a favorable endorsement from j, $e_j = 1$, induces policy $x = 1$ if and only if:*

1. *The agenda setter trusts j: $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$,*
2. *j can persuade the median: $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$, and*
3. *j is less status quo biased than the median: $c_j \leq c_M$.*

If these conditions are satisfied, the IG's ex ante payoff from private access to $j \neq A$ is

$$V_j^{Pr} = 1 - c_j.$$

The first constraint ensures that the agenda setter, anticipating how the intermediary will endorse the reform, is willing to propose policy $\tilde{x} = 1$. This requires that $\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_j] = \frac{1+c_j}{2} \geq c_A$ or equivalently, that $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$. The second constraint ensures that the median follows the intermediary's endorsement. If this is not satisfied, the agenda setter might be willing to propose the policy, but it would not receive majority support.

The third condition captures an important constraint faced by the IG. The agenda setter might be willing to propose the reform because she expects the IG to share information with a policymaker whom the agenda setter trusts ($c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$). However, proposing the reform also opens venues for the IG to share information publicly. If the IG does so, the relevant threshold for persuasion becomes that of the median policymaker. Therefore, when

the median is sufficiently less status quo biased than the agenda setter ($c_M < 2c_A - 1$), the IG faces a commitment problem. The IG would like to commit to sharing the information with a policymaker that the agenda setter trusts ($c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$). However, if it observes information that would fail to persuade that intermediary but would successfully persuade the median, $\theta \in [c_M, c_j)$, it would deviate to sharing the information publicly once the reform is proposed, $r_P = \theta$. Anticipating this, the agenda setter would refuse to propose the reform. Condition 3 ensures that the IG has no incentives to deviate to public lobbying after the reform is proposed.

If at least one condition is violated for a given c_j, then either policy $x = 1$ cannot pass when j is the information intermediary (because the median cannot be persuaded to approve the reform or the agenda setter is unwilling to propose it), or it has the same chances of passing as under public lobbying. The proposition therefore reveals that an intermediary other than the agenda setter is effective only when c_A is not too large relative to c_M ($c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$).

The IG benefits from privately sharing information because it allows the reform to be proposed and pass even given some states which would have led the agenda setter or the median to reject it. Specifically, when $\theta \in [c_j, c_M]$ or $\theta \in [c_j, c_A]$, the reform would have been rejected by the legislature or not proposed at all if all policymakers knew the state. Instead, the reform can be successfully endorsed by the intermediary and the endorsement can persuade a majority to vote for the reform. The IG's expected gain from privately sharing information with policymaker j is then the probability that the state is above j's threshold, that is $V_j^{Pr} = 1 - c_j$.

4.2.2 Lobbying the agenda setter

If there is no j such that c_j satisfies all three conditions in Proposition 2, then the only intermediary who could potentially influence the policy choice in favor of the IG is the agenda setter. This is the case whenever $2c_A - 1 > c_M$.

Sharing information with the agenda setter potentially serves two roles. First, the agenda setter can be used as an information intermediary. If the agenda setter received information from the IG, then proposing the reform signals that she observed a state $\theta \geq c_A$, and therefore implicitly serves as an endorsement. If $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$, the median is happy to support the proposed reform even without seeing the information provided by the IG.[11]

Second, privately sharing information with the agenda setter means that the IG does not face

[11]This first role is reminiscent of the agenda setter's proposal reflecting private information about the underlying state in Gilligan and Krehbiel (1987).

the commitment problem described in the previous section. If the agenda setter observes the information privately, she will only propose a reform if the IG has disclosed evidence above her threshold. The agenda setter is therefore no longer concerned about what information the IG might publicly disclose. Lobbying the agenda setter only works if the median is also willing to approve the reform, conditional on knowing that the agenda setter supports it. That is, provided that $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$. This condition holds whenever the IG faces the commitment problem.[12] The following proposition summarizes when the IG values access to the agenda setter.

Proposition 3. *When the agenda setter is sufficiently more status quo biased than the median ($2c_A - 1 \geq c_M$), the IG can induce the reform $x = 1$ if and only if it has access to the agenda setter directly. The IG's ex ante payoff from private access to the agenda setter is $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.*

Proposition 3 describes a sufficient condition for the IG to successfully influence the policy choice by sharing information with the agenda setter. However, it is not the only case where the agenda setter is valuable. Since the agenda setter can also play the role of an information intermediary, obtaining access to the agenda setter can also be valuable when that condition is not satisfied. This is the case as long as the median can be persuaded to support policy $x = 1$ when the agenda setter proposes it, that is whenever $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$.

4.3 The Value of Connections

We can now derive the value of access to policymaker $j \in N$. We introduce two definitions to formally state the results.

Definition 2. *A policymaker is an effective intermediary if either she is the agenda setter and can persuade the median ($c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$) or she is not the agenda setter but her threshold satisfies all three conditions in Proposition 2.*

Using this definition, we define the value of a connection to policymaker j as the difference between the ex ante probability of successfully inducing policy $x = 1$ when sharing information privately with j and that probability when sharing information publicly. We set the value to zero if that difference is negative as the IG would always prefer to share information publicly in this case.

[12] Since $c_i \geq 2c_i - 1$ for all $c_i \leq 1$, then $2c_A - 1 \geq c_M$ (the condition under which the commitment problem arises) implies that $c_A \geq c_M \geq 2c_M - 1$.

Definition 3. *The value of a connection is*

$$V(j) := \begin{cases} \max\{0, V_j^{Pr} - V^{Pu}\} & \text{if } j \text{ is effective.} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

4.3.1 Value of a connection to a policymaker with no agenda-setting power

The following proposition characterizes the value of a connection to some $j \neq A$ as a function of the preferences of the agenda setter and those of the median policymaker.

Proposition 4.

1. *If the median is closely aligned with the IG and insufficiently aligned with the agenda setter,* $c_M \in \left(\frac{1}{2}, 2c_A - 1\right)$*, the value of a connection to policymaker* j *is* $V(j) = 0,\ \forall j \neq A$*.*

2. *If the median has intermediate preferences,* $c_M \in [2c_A - 1, c_A)$*, the value of a connection to policymaker* $j \neq A$ *is*

   - $V(j) = c_M - c_j$ *if* j *is sufficiently status quo biased* ***relative to the agenda setter*** *(*$c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$*) but not more than the median (*$c_j < c_M$*),*
   - $V(j) = 0$ *otherwise.*

3. *If the median is more status quo biased than the agenda setter* $c_M \in [c_A, 1)$*, the value of a connection to policymaker* $j \neq A$ *is*

   - $V(j) = c_M - c_j$ *if* j *is sufficiently status quo biased* ***relative to the median*** *(*$c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$*) but not more so than her (*$c_j \leq c_M$*),*
   - $V(j) = 0$ *otherwise.*

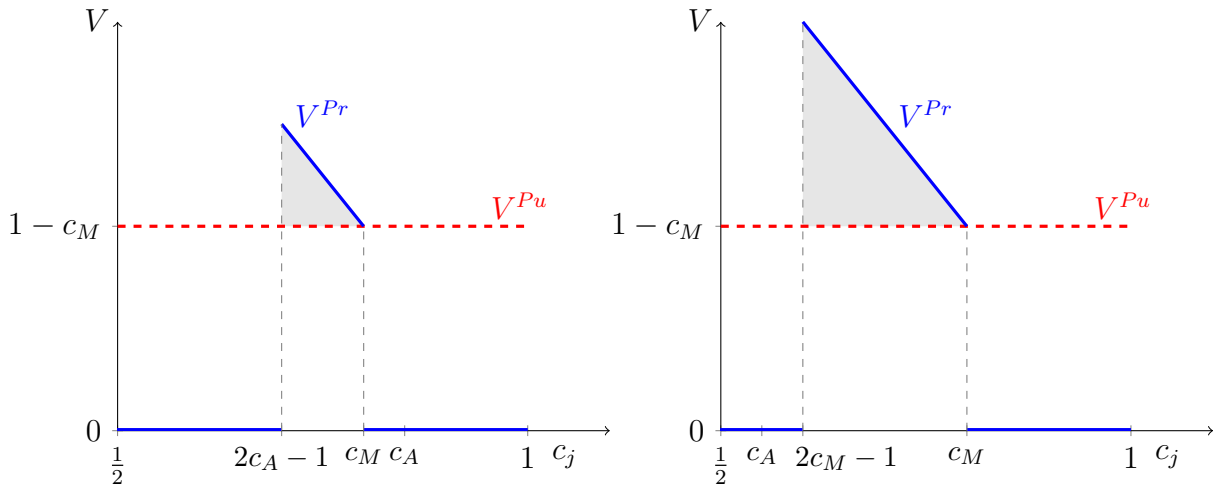
In the first case, there is no policymaker whose recommendation would be trusted by the agenda setter and who would prevent the IG from deviating to public disclosure (Proposition 2). Private lobbying is therefore only effective with a connection to the agenda setter. Moreover, publicly sharing information is impossible in this case as the agenda setter would not trust the median. The payoff from privately lobbying a policymaker other than the agenda setter and the payoff from public lobbying are therefore both zero.

In the second and third case, both sharing information privately and sharing information publicly can be effective. The value of publicly sharing information is $1 - c_M$ (Proposition 1). For each effective policymaker j, we can therefore simply compute the difference between V_j^{Pr} from Proposition 2 and V^{Pu} from Proposition 1. Figure 1 illustrates the value of a connection

Figure 1: The Value of Public and Private Lobbying

(a) Case 2 of Proposition 4.

(b) Case 3 of Proposition 4.



Note: The figure depicts the value of public lobbying and of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \neq A$, fixing the values of c_M and c_A. The two panels display different cases of Proposition 4. For a given c_j, the gray shaded area displays the value of a connection with j, $V(j)$.

to j in these two cases. When the status quo bias of the connected policymaker, c_j, is low, the value of private lobbying (the solid line) is zero as the connected policymaker is not trusted by other policymakers. When c_j is moderately large, the policymaker is trusted by others and easier to persuade than the median and the value of private lobbying is therefore positive and larger than the value of public lobbying. However, this value decreases as the policymaker becomes more status quo biased and eventually drops to zero. The value of access, captured by the difference between the solid and the dashed line depends not only on the connected policymaker's preferences (c_j) but also on the median's preferences (c_M) and those of the agenda setter (c_A).

Proposition 4 has three takeaways. First, the value of a connection depends on the preferences of the policymaker relative to those of the IG (i.e., c_j), but also on the policymaker's preferences relative to those of the median and agenda setter. Second, connections can have no value, i.e., private access is not always valuable. This holds when the agenda setter and the median are too misaligned. Third, the value of a connection to a policymaker is non-monotonic in the alignment between that policymaker and the IG (captured by c_j). The intermediary's value increases in the level of alignment with the IG (i.e., decreases in c_j) as long as she can persuade the median and be trusted by the agenda setter. However, when she is too aligned with the IG, her value drops back to zero.

4.3.2 Value of access to the agenda setter

We now turn to the value of access to the agenda setter, which we can derive using the results from Proposition 3.

Proposition 5. *The value of a connection to the agenda setter is:*

1. $V(A) = 0$ *if the agenda setter is not sufficiently status-quo biased relative to the median,* $c_A < 2c_M - 1$.
2. $V(A) = c_M - c_A$ *if the agenda setter has intermediate preferences,* $2c_M - 1 \leq c_A \leq c_M$.
3. $V(A) = 0$ *if* $c_M < c_A \leq \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.
4. $V(A) = 1 - c_A$ *if the agenda setter is very status-quo biased* $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.

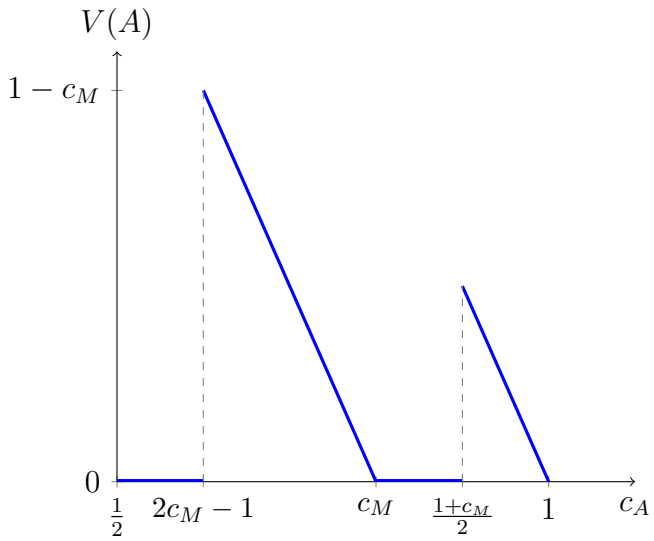
When the agenda setter is not sufficiently status quo biased, the act of proposing the reform does not persuade the median. As a result, the IG would need to reveal information publicly after disclosing information to the agenda setter, so the probability of getting its preferred policy is $1 - c_M$. If, instead, the IG only discloses information publicly, the agenda setter would still propose the policy since she trusts the median to make the right decision ($2c_A - 1 < c_M$), and the value of doing so would also be $1 - c_M$. Therefore, there is no value of privately accessing the agenda setter.

When the agenda setter is sufficiently status quo biased relative to the median ($2c_M - 1 \leq c_A$), the median is persuaded to support the reform when the agenda setter proposes it. The agenda setter would also be willing to propose the reform under public lobbying as long as c_A is not too high ($c_A \leq \frac{1+c_M}{2}$). The value of access to the agenda setter is therefore the difference between the probability of persuading the agenda setter and the probability of persuading the median. This value is only positive if the agenda setter is less status quo biased than the median ($c_A < c_M$). Otherwise, if $c_A \geq c_M$, the median is easier to persuade than the agenda setter *and* the agenda setter trusts the median to make the right decision so the IG would be better off by only disclosing information publicly.

When $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, the agenda setter no longer trusts the median and the IG cannot commit not to disclose the information publicly once the reform is proposed. The only way to ensure the reform is approved with private lobbying is to have a connection with the agenda setter. The value of public lobbying is zero in this case as the agenda setter would not be willing to propose the reform. The value of a connection with the agenda setter is therefore $V_A^{Pr} - V^{Pu} = (1 - c_A) - 0 = 1 - c_A$.

Proposition 5 has two interesting implications. First, a connection with the agenda setter

Figure 2: The Value of Access to the Agenda Setter (Proposition 5)



Note: The figure plots the value of a connection to the agenda setter, $V(A)$, as a function of her preferences c_A.

can be valuable for different reasons. When the agenda setter is sufficiently aligned with the IG ($c_A \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$), she can be used as an *information intermediary*. Instead, when the agenda setter is sufficiently misaligned with the IG, the agenda setter is valuable because of her role as *gate-keeper*. She does not trust that a majority of policymakers would make the right decision once she proposes the reform and opens avenues for public lobbying, so the only way to persuade her is to lobby her directly.

A second implication of Proposition 5 is that the value of a connection to the agenda setter is non-monotonic in its alignment with the IG, as illustrated in Figure 2. As alignment decreases, the value first becomes positive when the agenda setter's proposal can persuade the median (at $c_A = 2c_M - 1$) and then decreases back to zero as the agenda setter becomes more difficult to persuade. However, when the alignment becomes sufficiently low that the agenda setter no longer trusts the median (at $c_A = \frac{1+c_M}{2}$), that value jumps again to a positive number before decreasing.

4.4 Policy Complexity and Expertise

In the baseline model, the IG observes the true state, θ, with certainty. This assumption captures an environment with low policy complexity: the IG has readily-available and accurate information. When policies are complex, however, the IG might need to gather evidence within a limited time frame, introducing the possibility that the IG's information may be

imperfect. Relaxing this assumption has two implications. First, imperfect information makes policymakers more skeptical about the information shared by the IG, and thus of the endorsement made by other policymakers. Second, policymakers may want to use their own research capabilities to verify the information shared by the IG.

To capture this possibility, suppose that the IG's signal is the true state with some probability $q \in (0,1)$ and a noisy signal, uncorrelated with the true state, with probability $1-q$. Neither the IG nor the policymakers know whether the signal is the true state.[13] We first show that, when the information is noisy but cannot be verified, the value of connections to some policymakers drops to zero. However, the value of access to the policymakers who remain valuable increases relative to the case of perfect information.

Proposition 6. *Suppose that $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$. When information is noisy ($q < 1$), the range of policymakers with strictly positive value to the IG shrinks to $c_j \in \left[\max\{2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}\}, c_M\right)$. The value of a connection to a policymaker with threshold in this range increases from $V(j) = c_M - c_j$ to $V(j) = \frac{c_M - c_j}{q}$.*

Policy complexity, in the form of noisy information, makes all policymakers more skeptical of the information they observe and more skeptical of another policymaker's endorsement. As a result, a policymaker needs to be more status quo biased for her endorsement to be effective, which reduces the range of valuable policymakers. The information's noisiness also reduces the probability of successfully influencing the policy, but that reduction is larger for public lobbying than private lobbying, so the value of private access increases.

When policies are complex, policymakers may also want to invest in gathering information themselves. We now show that, if policymakers can verify the information provided by the IG, the value of a connection can increase or decrease depending on the costs of verification.

Proposition 7. *If verification costs are sufficiently low, verification can decrease the value of a connection. If verification costs are intermediate, verification can increase the value of a connection.*

As verification allows the IG to persuade some policymakers who would not have been persuaded without it, it can be valuable to the IG. However, it can also reveal that evidence

[13] An alternative assumption is that the IG observes the true state with some probability $q \in (0,1)$ and no information with probability $1-q$. In this case, the IG knows that the information is unavailable. When the IG discloses no information, $r = \emptyset$, policymakers do not know whether the policymaker is concealing information or genuinely did not observe any information. We show in the SI (pp. 27–33) that this assumption does not alter our main results. The IG can only persuade a policymaker with threshold $c_i \geq \frac{1}{2}$ if it observed and disclosed a state $\theta \geq c_i$ and the same logic as in the baseline model applies.

turned out to be incorrect, which can be harmful to the IG. Since the information is more likely to be verified under public lobbying, the value of private access increases with verification if verification is more likely to be harmful and decreases with verification if it is more likely to be beneficial.

These results have implications for the relationship between the value of connections and the information capacity of the legislature (Minaudier, 2022; Fong, Lowande and Rauh, 2025). When the legislature has strong research capabilities, the cost of verification is low which can reduce the value of private connections. However, stronger research capabilities can also increase the value of private connections if the cost of verification does not fall sufficiently.

4.5 Varying Majority Requirements

In our baseline model, the reform requires a simple majority to pass. In some institutions, such as the Council of the EU, reforms require a supermajority (strictly more than 50% of the votes) to pass. Our model can be extended to allow for these alternative institutions: increasing the majority requirement simply corresponds to increasing the threshold of the pivotal policymaker. Interestingly, increasing the majority requirement can both increase and decrease the value of a connection to a given policymaker. Indeed, we show in the SI (pp. 33–35) that a small increase can solve the IG's commitment problem, by making it less tempting to deviate to public lobbying. However, a larger increase can reduce that value if it means the connected policymaker can no longer persuade the new pivotal policymaker.

4.6 The Value of a Connection for Policymakers

Our main analysis focuses on the value of a connection for the IG. Another interesting object is the value of a connection for policymakers. Being connected to an IG, and thus serving as the IG's intermediary, gives a policymaker some additional influence, which is valuable. We define the value of a connection to policymaker i as the expected payoff of i when she is connected to the IG minus her expected payoff when she is not connected to the IG (who is therefore restricted to public lobbying).[14] We show in the SI (pp. 36–42) that the IG is valuable to the policymaker whenever the policymaker is valuable to the IG and vice versa.

This result has two implications. First, it indicates that the IG and the policymaker it is connected to always jointly value their connection. Second, how the policymaker values that connection depends on the preferences of other policymakers. A connection to an IG is only

[14]In the SI (pp. 38–40), we also study the case where an absence of connection to policymaker i implies a connection to another policymaker j.

valuable to a policymaker if the policymaker has some policy influence, which requires being sufficiently aligned with the median and agenda setter.

5 Empirical Implications

In this section, we discuss several implications of our model for the empirical analysis of interest groups' preferences and strategies.

Public vs. private lobbying. Our results reveal that private lobbying often significantly increases the chances of persuading a majority of policymakers. This is consistent with empirical evidence showing that private meetings between interest groups and policymakers help interest groups obtain favorable policies (Porter, 1974; Ainsworth, 1997; Grotteria, Miller and Naaraayanan, 2022; Biguri and Stahl, 2024). However, Belloc (2015) also shows that interest groups exert influence through participation in public consultation meetings later in the legislative process, not just private meetings. Our results can also rationalize public lobbying. Indeed, Propositions 4 and 5 imply that public lobbying can be strictly more valuable than privately lobbying any policymaker. In particular, we should expect public lobbying to occur when all policymakers who are more closely-aligned with the IG than the median ($c_j < c_M$) are too aligned with the IG ($c_j < 2c_A - 1$ or $c_j < 2c_M - 1$).[15] We can interpret this condition as capturing issues that are more conflictual or on which the legislature is sufficiently polarized: public lobbying is more valuable when all the policymakers to the left of the median are sufficiently far from the median: $c_j < 2c_M - 1$.

Ideological alignment and the value of access. Many studies have shown that ideological alignment determines which policymakers special interest groups choose to meet and donate to. Some studies show that interest groups tend to lobby allies or ideologically close policymakers (Langbein, 1993; Kollman, 1997; Hall and Miler, 2008; Liu, 2022; Haugsgjerd Allern et al., 2022), while others show that interest groups sometimes lobby both allied and opposed policymakers (Gullberg, 2008), undecided policymakers (Miller, 2022), or only opposed policymakers (Holyoke, 2009). Some of these studies employ different methods to identify who interest groups target: either using surveys of lobbyists or using campaign contributions data. Yet, some contradictory results appear even when using the same methods. For instance, Holyoke (2009) and Langbein (1993) both use contribution data but the former finds that interest groups target opposed policymakers, while the latter finds that they

[15] See Implication 3 in the SI (pp. 42–43) for a formal statement.

target allies. One reason these results can differ is that the two studies analyze different policy issues. Holyoke (2009) studies lobbying by casinos in the New York state legislature while Langbein (1993) looks at lobbying over gun control at the federal level. Conversely, some studies look at the same issue area but also find opposite results. For instance both Gopoian, Smith and Smith (1984) and Gullberg (2008) examine lobbying on environmental issues. Yet, while Gopoian, Smith and Smith (1984) find that interest groups target allies, Gullberg (2008) shows that interest groups also lobby opponents. In this case, findings could differ due to different methodologies: Gopoian, Smith and Smith (1984) use campaign contribution data, while Gullberg (2008) use interviews of lobbyists. Our results help clarify how both differences in the issue studied and the methodology can generate different findings.

In our model, both lobbying allied policymakers and opposed policymakers can be valuable. Defining a friendly policymaker as one who would prefer the reform absent information ($c_j \leq \frac{1}{2}$) and an enemy as a policymaker who would oppose the reform without information ($c_j > \frac{1}{2}$), we have the following result:

Implication 1. *There can be friendly policymakers with whom a connection is valuable ($V(j) > 0$) if neither the median nor the agenda setter are too status quo biased:* $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} \leq \frac{1}{2}$. *Otherwise, only connections with enemies are valuable.*

However, this result shows that friendly lobbying is only valuable on policy issues where both a majority of policymakers and the agenda setter (e.g., the party leadership or a committee chair) are sufficiently aligned with the IG (though not necessarily in favor of the IG's preferred policy without additional information). That is, on issues that are relatively less conflictual. Therefore, different policy issues, on which key policymakers have different preferences, could explain why interest groups assign different values to accessing policymakers, even when their ideological alignment with a given policymaker does not differ across these issues.

Proposition 4 also reveals that, when friendly policymakers are valuable, their value is higher than that of enemies. However, this does not imply that the set of friendly policymakers who are valuable is larger than the set of enemies who are valuable. Consider for instance the left panel of Figure 1 and suppose that $2c_A - 1$ is just to the left of $\frac{1}{2}$. In this case, the range of valuable friends is relatively small but their value is higher than any enemies. As a result, studies that evaluate how common it is for interest groups to contact friendly policymakers based on campaign contributions might find that it is a very valuable strategy, while studies based on interviews or surveys might find that it is relatively less common as few friendly policymakers fall within the set of valuable connections. This suggests that the method in these studies can also affect the conclusions and could explain the conflicting

results in Gopoian, Smith and Smith (1984) and Gullberg (2008).[16]

These implications highlight the importance of focusing on the value of connections, rather than the choice of which specific policymaker to target, in contrast with the existing theoretical literature (Cotton and Dellis, 2016; Ellis and Groll, 2020; Awad, 2020; Awad and Minaudier, 2024; Dellis, 2023).

Procedural power and the value of access. Several studies have shown that policymakers' agenda-setting power, such as their position in a legislative committee or as party leader, makes them more likely targets of interest groups and affects the contributions they receive from interest groups. Fouirnaies and Hall (2015); Powell and Grimmer (2016); Fouirnaies and Hall (2018) and Fouirnaies (2018) show that interest groups selectively seek access to committees and that agenda setters are particularly valuable while Haugsgjerd Allern et al. (2022) show that interest groups are more likely to form 'lobby routines' with powerful parties. Together, these studies provide strong evidence that targeting policymakers with procedural power is particularly valuable to interest groups. Our results indeed show that, under certain conditions, the agenda setter is the most valuable connection:

Implication 2. *Holding the preferences of the median, c_M, fixed, the agenda setter is strictly more valuable than a policymaker with the same preferences, $c_j = c_A$, but no agenda-setting power, if and only if $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.*

The agenda setter is valuable not simply because she would block reforms in the absence of information. Indeed, she could be persuaded to propose the reform even without information when she trusts other policymakers. Nor is she valuable because of her role as information intermediary, since other policymakers could be at least as effective in that role. Instead, she is valuable because the threat that the IG might share information in unpredictable ways once the reform is proposed leads her to block reforms (Proposition 3). This additional value only arises when the agenda setter is sufficiently more misaligned with the IG than the median of the legislature. Our model therefore predicts that the value of agenda setters should be higher on conflictual policies, where there is a significant ideological distance between the agenda setter and the median voter.

Proposition 5 also clarifies under which condition the value of the agenda setter measured empirically is driven by her gate keeping power and under which condition it arises due to her role as an information intermediary. When the agenda setter is much more status quo biased

[16] Of course, the fact that these two studies were conducted at different times and in different contexts is likely to explain many differences. However, this example illustrates how our results can clarify which studies are comparable.

than the median policymaker ($c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$), the positive value of a connection to the agenda setter arises from her role as gate keeper. Otherwise, a positive value arises from her role as an information intermediary. Empirical estimates of the value of connections to agenda setters which use data from several legislatures and several policy issues (such as Fouirnaies (2018) or Powell and Grimmer (2016)) effectively combine these different roles into one. While this does not affect their conclusion that agenda setters are valuable connections, it cautions against the interpretation that gate keeping power alone generates this value. Empirically mapping the alignment of an agenda setter to its value to interest groups is not trivial. Two different agenda setters with different levels of alignment with the interest group can have the same value. Extrapolating from these two data points could incorrectly lead one to infer that the value of an agenda setter with an intermediate level of alignment is positive when it is in fact zero.[17]

Inferring ideological preferences from campaign contributions. A series of influential papers (McCarty and Poole, 1998; Bonica, 2013, 2018, 2019) has demonstrated the value of using campaign contributions to infer the ideological preferences of both interest groups and legislators. This approach has a number of advantages relative to roll-call based approaches (e.g., Poole and Rosenthal, 1985): it can estimate the preferences of non-incumbent politicians and those of interest groups supporting issues not voted on. However, these estimates are based on a spatial voting model in which interest groups contribute larger amounts to legislators with closer ideological preferences to help elect them. While these studies very carefully incorporate a range of non-ideological factors that could affect contributions, such as the procedural power of a legislator, her committee membership, or her party's strength (Bonica, 2013), our model suggests another dimension that may affect the interpretation of these inferred preferences. Indeed, our results show that, when contributions are used at least partly to gain access for informational lobbying, they do not just reflect the ideological distance between a policymaker and an interest group or the policymaker's procedural power, but also the ideological alignment between the policymaker and other key policymakers. In addition, our model reveals that the relationship between contributions, ideology, and procedural power can be non-monotonic. As a result, policymakers who receive the most contributions are not necessarily closely aligned and two policymakers

[17] Consider for example an agenda setter with threshold $c_A \in \left(\frac{3c_M-1}{2}, c_M\right)$. Since $\frac{3c_M-1}{2} > 2c_M - 1$, $\forall c_M < 1$, Proposition 5 implies that the value of that agenda setter is $c_M - c_A$. Consider now another hypothetical agenda setter with threshold $c'_A = 1 - (c_M - c_A) > c_A$. Since $1 - (c_M - c_A) > \frac{1+c_M}{2} \Leftrightarrow c_A > \frac{3c_M-1}{2}$, then Proposition 5 implies that the value of that agenda setter is $1 - c_{A'} = 1 - (1 - (c_M - c_A)) = c_M - c_A$. So the two agenda setters have the same value to the IG.

with the same level of contributions could have very different ideological alignment with the interest group.

6 Conclusion

This paper proposes a theory of interest groups' willingness to pay for private access to a policymaker. We show that, in line with the empirical literature, both the ideological alignment between the policymaker and the interest group and the agenda-setting power of the policymaker affect this value. However, we show that, contrary to what the literature often assumes, this relationship can be non-monotonic and depends on the ideological alignment between a policymaker and other key policymakers.

Our results highlight that focusing on dyadic relationships between interest groups and individual policymakers can mask some important determinants of the value of connections, and affects the inferences that scholars can draw from observing the exchange of resources between interest groups and policymakers. These implications suggest avenues for future empirical research which could evaluate how the ideological positions of policymakers relative to other key actors in the legislature affect the campaign contributions they receive, the meetings they hold with lobbyists, or their careers after politics.

These results confirm that forming connections with policymakers is valuable for interest groups, which can explain the tremendous inflows of money into politics. However, they also show that these funds, and their distribution across policymakers, have complex determinants. Future research could consider how the uneven distribution of money can, in turn, affect the behavior of policymakers, such as their decision to join committees.

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A Equilibrium definition

An equilibrium consists of:

1. A pair $(r_j(\theta), r_P(\theta))$ of report strategies for the IG where $r_j : [0,1] \to [0,1] \cup \{\emptyset\}$ such that $r_j(\theta) \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$ and $r_P : [0,1] \to [0,1] \cup \{\emptyset\}$ such that $r_P(\theta) \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$;
2. a proposal strategy for the agenda setter: $\tilde{\chi} : [0,1] \cup \{\emptyset\} \cup N \to \{0,1\}$;
3. a voting strategy for each policymaker $\chi_i : H_i \to \{0,1\}$ for all $i \in N$, where H_i is i's information set at the time of voting which contains a public report $r_P \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$, a private report $r_i \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$, the identity of the intermediary, j, and possibly the endorsement of the intermediary $e_j \in \{0,1\}$;
4. belief functions over the state $f_i^{\theta} : H_i \to \Delta[0,1]$ and beliefs functions over the evidence shown by the IG to the intermediary j, $g_i^{r_j} : H_i \to \Delta[0,1]$ for all $i \neq j$;
5. an endorsement strategy for the intermediary: $\xi_j : H_j \to \{0,1\}$, where the information set H_j contains a public report $r_P \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$ and a private report $r_j \in \{\theta, \emptyset\}$;
6. a belief function for the intermediary over the evidence provided by the IG: $g_j^{r_j} : H_j \to \Delta[0,1]$,

such that:

1. The agenda setter A proposes the reform if, given r_A, given the IG's choice of intermediary, j, and its disclosure strategy, and given the other policymakers' strategies, her payoff from proposing the reform is higher than maintaining the status quo. Let $\bar{X}(j, \theta)$ denote the expected policy choice of a majority of policymakers when the IG has access to policymaker j and the state is θ, given the IG's disclosure strategy $(r_j(\theta), r_P(\theta))$ and j's endorsement strategy $\xi_j(r_j(\theta), r_P(\theta))$. The conditions for the agenda setter to propose the reform in equilibrium are then:
   (a) If the IG has access to the agenda setter:
   $$\int_{\theta \in [0,1]} u_A(\bar{X}(A, \theta), \theta) f_\theta(r_A) d\theta \geq 0$$
   (b) If the IG has access to another policymaker $j \neq A$,
   $$\int_{\theta \in [0,1]} u_A(\bar{X}(j, \theta), \theta) \mu_0(\theta) d\theta \geq 0$$

2. Policymakers $i \in N$ vote sincerely:

$$x_i(h_i) = 1 \Leftrightarrow \int_{\theta \in [0,1]} u_i(x = 1, \theta) f_\theta(h_i) d\theta \geq 0$$

3. A policymaker j who receives a report r_j (and possibly observed a public report r_P too) sincerely recommends voting for the reform, $e_j(h_j) = 1$, if and only if:

$$\int_{\theta \in [0,1]} u_j(x = 1, \theta) f_\theta(h_j) d\theta \geq 0$$

4. Beliefs are updated according to Bayes rule.

B Proofs of baseline results

B.1 Proof of Lemma 1

Proof. Suppose that the agenda setter has proposed the reform and consider first the following strategy for the IG:

$$r_P(\theta) = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{if } \theta \geq c_M \\ \emptyset & \text{if } \theta < c_M \end{cases}$$

Suppose that $\theta \geq c_M$ so the IG discloses the state θ publicly. Given the assumption of sincere voting, each policymaker i votes for $x = 1$ over $x = 0$ if their utility from the reform given the state is weakly above their utility from the status quo, that is, if $\theta \geq c_i$. Since the reform passes if it receives a simple majority of votes, then the reform passes if the state is above the median's threshold: $\theta \geq c_M$. Therefore, if $\theta \geq c_M$, then the reform passes so the IG has no incentives to deviate and report $r_P = \emptyset$.

Suppose instead that $\theta < c_M$ so the IG conceals it: $r_P = \emptyset$. Then, given the IG's strategy, the policymakers infer that the state must be strictly less than c_M. As a result, a majority votes for the status quo. If the IG discloses the state instead, $r_P(\theta) = \theta$, a majority of policymakers also votes for the status quo, so the reform fails to pass and the IG has no incentives to deviate. Second, note that disclosing all the states, that is $r_P(\theta) = \theta$, $\forall \theta$ is also an equilibrium but leads to the same outcome as the strategy above: the reform passes

if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$.[18]

Finally, note that there cannot be an equilibrium in which concealing the information, i.e., sending $r_P = \emptyset$, leads the reform to pass. Suppose that there was. Then we would need the policymakers' beliefs when the state is concealed to be such that $\mathbb{E}[\theta | r_P = \emptyset] \geq c_M$. However, this would require that the IG discloses some $\theta < c_M$ (since $c_M > \frac{1}{2}$, and $\frac{1}{2}$ is the expected value of the state when the policymaker's strategy is to conceal *all* values of the state). But since such disclosure would lead the reform to fail, the IG would have an incentive to deviate and conceal that state instead.

Therefore, if $\theta < c_M$, then the reform fails whether the IG discloses the state or not, for any equilibrium disclosure strategy of the IG. If the agenda setter has proposed the reform, the reform therefore passes if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$ in any equilibrium. □

B.2 Proof of Proposition 1

Proof. From Lemma 1, we know that if the agenda setter proposes the reform, then the reform passes if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$. The agenda setter's expected payoff from proposing the reform is therefore

$$\mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_M) \left(\mathbb{E}[\theta | \theta \geq c_M] - c_A\right) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_M) \times 0$$

Since her payoff from keeping the status quo is 0, she proposes the reform if and only if:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_M) \left(\mathbb{E}[\theta | \theta \geq c_M] - c_A\right) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_M) \times 0 \geq 0 &\Leftrightarrow \mathbb{E}[\theta | \theta \geq c_M] - c_A \geq 0 \\
&\Leftrightarrow \frac{1 - c_M^2}{2(1 - c_M)} \geq c_A \\
&\Leftrightarrow \frac{1 + c_M}{2} \geq c_A \\
&\Leftrightarrow c_M \geq 2c_A - 1
\end{aligned}$$

If $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$, then the IG receives a payoff of 1 whenever $\theta \geq c_M$ since the agenda setter always proposes the reform and a majority of policymakers approves it if $\theta \geq c_M$. The IG's ex-ante payoff is therefore $V^{Pu} = \mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_M) = 1 - c_M$. If $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, then the agenda setter always sticks to the status quo, so the IG's payoff is 0. □

[18] This equilibrium can be supported if, for example, the policymakers believe that the state is $\theta = 0$ with probability 1 when they see the off-equilibrium report $r_P = \emptyset$.

B.3 Proof of Proposition 2

To prove the proposition, we show two results. The first, Lemma 2, shows that, if the conditions in Proposition 2 are satisfied, then an equilibrium exists in which a favorable endorsement induces policy $x = 1$. Conversely, if the conditions are not satisfied, this equilibrium does not exist. The second result, Lemma 3, shows that if the conditions are not satisfied, then there is no other equilibrium in which a favorable endorsement induces policy $x = 1$.

Lemma 2. *Consider the following strategy profile:*

1. *The agenda setter proposes the reform:* $\tilde{x} = 1$
2. *The IG discloses the state* θ *privately to policymaker* j, $r_j = \theta$, *if* $\theta \geq c_j$ *and otherwise conceals the state:* $r_j = \emptyset$. *The IG does not disclose anything publicly:* $r_P = \emptyset$, $\forall \theta$.
3. *Policymaker* j *endorses the reform,* $e_j = 1$ *if and only if she observes* $r_j = \theta \geq c_j$.
4. *A policymaker with threshold* c_i *votes for the reform if either*
   (a) $e_j = 1$ *and* $c_j \geq 2c_i - 1$,
   (b) *or* $e_j = 0$ *and* $c_j \geq 2c_i$,
   (c) *or* $r_P = \theta$ *and* $\theta \geq c_i$.

   Otherwise, she votes for the status quo.
5. *Policymakers believe that* θ *is uniformly distributed on* $[c_j, 1]$ *if* $e_j = 1$ *and uniformly distributed on* $[0, c_j)$ *if* $e_j = 0$.

This profile of strategies and beliefs is an equilibrium if and only if:

1. $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$,
2. $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$, *and*
3. $c_j \leq c_M$,

Proof of Lemma 2. We first show that if the conditions are satisfied, then the strategy profile constitutes an equilibrium. In the second step, we show if the conditions are not satisfied, then the strategy profile cannot be an equilibrium.

Step 1: sufficiency of conditions.

Policymaker's vote: Suppose that the agenda setter has proposed the reform $\tilde{x} = 1$. If the IG discloses the information publicly, $r_P = \theta$, then policymakers vote as in Lemma 1. Since the state is publicly available, the interim beliefs that the policymakers can form about the state, given the IG's decision to disclose it publicly rather than privately are irrelevant. Therefore, a policymaker i votes for the reform if and only if $\theta \geq c_i$.

If the IG does not disclose the information publicly, but policymaker j endorses the reform, $e_j = 1$, then given the assumption of sincere endorsements, it must be that policymaker j preferred the reform. That is, all other policymakers learn that policymaker j observed $\theta \geq c_j$ privately. The expected payoff of a policymaker i from the reform is then $\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_j] - c_i = \frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_i$. The policymaker therefore votes for the reform if $\frac{1+c_j}{2} \geq c_i$.

If instead, policymaker j endorses the status quo, $e_j = 0$, the expected payoff of a policymaker i from the reform is then $\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta < c_j] - c_i = \frac{c_j}{2} - c_i$. The policymaker therefore votes for the reform if $\frac{c_j}{2} \geq c_i$.

Since $c_M > \frac{1}{2}$, the reform can never pass if policymaker j endorses the status quo since $\frac{c_j}{2} < c_M$ for any $c_j \leq 1$. Instead, the reform always passes following a favorable endorsement as long as $c_M \leq \frac{1+c_j}{2}$ or $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$. **Therefore, if condition 2 in the Lemma ($c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$) is satisfied, then there is no incentive for the policymakers to deviate from this part of the strategy.**

IG's disclosure strategy: given sincere endorsements and the policymaker's vote, the IG anticipates that the reform will pass when it discloses state $\theta \geq c_j$ to the intermediary and $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$, or when it discloses the state publicly and $\theta \geq c_M$.

If $\theta \in [c_M, c_j)$, then the IG could profitably deviate by disclosing θ publicly instead of sharing it privately with j. Indeed, the payoff of sharing it with j is 0 as j would endorse the status quo, while the payoff of sharing it publicly is 1 since a majority of policymakers would vote for it. Therefore, for the strategy

$$r_j(\theta) = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{if } \theta \geq c_j \\ \emptyset & \text{if } \theta < c_j \end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad r_P(\theta) = \emptyset, \ \forall \theta$$

to be an equilibrium, it must be that the IG can never profitably deviate to publicly disclosing the state. This requires that $c_M \geq c_j$ so that there is no $\theta \in [c_M, c_j]$. **Therefore, if condition 3 in the Lemma is satisfied, then the IG does not deviate from its strategy.**

Agenda setter strategy: Given the policymakers' strategy and the IG's strategy, the

agenda setter's expected payoff from proposing the reform is:

$$\begin{aligned} U_A(\tilde{x}=1) &= \mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_j) \times (\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_j] - c_A) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_j) \times 0 \\ &= (1-c_j)\left(\frac{(1-c_j^2)}{2(1-c_j)} - c_A\right) \end{aligned}$$

This payoff is greater than the payoff from the status quo, $U_A(\tilde{x}=0)=0$, as long as: $\frac{(1-c_j^2)}{2(1-c_j)} \geq c_A$ or equivalently, $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$. **Therefore, if condition 1 in the Lemma is satisfied, then the agenda setter does not deviate from her strategy**.

Policymakers' beliefs: the policymakers' beliefs follow from Bayes rule. There are no off-path actions from the intermediary as she always either endorses the reform or the status quo. The only off-path actions for the IG are to disclose the state publicly or disclose a state $\theta < c_j$ privately to the intermediary. In either case the beliefs are irrelevant as the policymaker learns the state.

Step 2: necessity of conditions.

1. Suppose that $c_j < 2c_A - 1$. Then the agenda setter would deviate to keeping the status quo instead of proposing the reform, so the strategy is not an equilibrium.
2. Suppose that $c_j < 2c_M - 1$. In this case, the reform would not be approved by a majority of policymakers following the endorsement of the intermediary. As a result, the IG would have a profitable deviation by disclosing the state publicly whenever $\theta \geq c_M$. So her strategy is not an equilibrium.
3. Suppose that $c_j > c_M$, then the IG could profitably deviate to disclosing the state publicly whenever $\theta \in [c_M, c_j)$. So her strategy is not an equilibrium.

□

We can therefore conclude that, if the three conditions in Proposition 2 are satisfied, then there exists an equilibrium in which $e_j = 1$ induces $x = 1$, and that if the conditions are not satisfied, then the proposed strategy and beliefs profiles do not constitute an equilibrium.

It then remains to show that, if the conditions are not satisfied, then there are no other equilibria in which $e_j = 1$ could induce $x = 1$. We therefore show next that a favorable endorsement from j can induce policy $x = 1$ in equilibrium *only if* the conditions in Proposition 2 are satisfied.

Lemma 3. *If one of the following conditions is not satisfied, then there is no equilibrium in which a favorable endorsement from j induces policy $x = 1$:*

1. $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$,
2. $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$, *and*
3. $c_j \leq c_M$,

Proof of Lemma 3.

1. Suppose $c_j < 2c_A - 1$. If the other players play the strategy from Lemma 2, the agenda setter is not willing to propose the reform. There are two other strategy profiles in which the reform could pass following a favorable endorsement by j.

   First, if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and the IG discloses the information publicly while the intermediary endorses the reform if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$. However, this would involve public disclosure, which is ruled out by Definition 1 and the endorsement would not be sincere, which is ruled out by assumption.

   Second, the endorsement can lead to the reform passing if the intermediary endorses the reform if and only if $\theta \geq \max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\}$. However, the intermediary would have an incentive to deviate and endorse the reform whenever $\theta \in [c_j, \max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\}]$.

   Therefore if $c_j < 2c_A - 1$, there is no equilibrium in which a favorable endorsement induces reform $x = 1$.

2. Suppose $c_j < 2c_M - 1$. If the other players play the strategy from Lemma 2, a majority of policymakers vote against the reform when the intermediary makes a favorable endorsement $e_j = 1$. As in the previous case, the only strategy profiles that would lead to a majority voting for reform $x = 1$ for at least some states is when the IG discloses the state publicly, or when the intermediary only endorses the policy when $\theta \geq \max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\}$. As in the previous case, this either contradicts sincere recommendations or no public disclosure.

3. Suppose $c_j > c_M$. If the other players play the strategy from Lemma 2, then the IG would deviate to disclosing information publicly when $\theta \in [c_M, c_j]$. The only strategy that could lead to a majority voting for reform $x = 1$ for at least some states is when the IG discloses the state publicly when $\theta \in [c_M, c_j]$ and privately to j. This could only lead the reform to pass if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ (otherwise, the agenda setter would not propose the reform). However, this involves some public disclosure and therefore contradicts Definition 1. To see that the agenda setter would not propose the reform if $c_M < 2c_A - 1$ note that, in any equilibrium in which the IG discloses states $\theta \in [c_M, c_j]$ publicly and discloses $\theta \geq c_j$ privately to j, the agenda setter would prefer to keep the

status quo if $c_M < 2c_A - 1$ since the agenda setter's expected payoff of proposing $\tilde{x} = 1$ is:

$$\begin{aligned} U_A(\tilde{x}=1) =& \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_M) \times 0 + \mathbb{P}(c_M \leq \theta < c_j) \times (\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \in [c_M, c_j]] - c_A) \\ &+ \mathbb{P}(c_M \geq c_j) \times (\mathbb{E}[\theta|\theta \geq c_j] - c_A) \\ =& (c_j - c_M)\left(\frac{c_M + c_j}{2} - c_A\right) + (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1 + c_j}{2} - c_A\right) \\ =& \frac{(1 - c_M)(1 + c_M)}{2} - c_A(1 - c_M) \end{aligned}$$

Which is less than the payoff of keeping the status quo when $c_M < 2c_A - 1$.

□

Combining Lemma 2 and Lemma 3, we can conclude that the conditions in Proposition 2 are both necessary and sufficient for an equilibrium in which a favorable endorsement induces policy $x = 1$ to exist. This concludes the proof of Proposition 2.

B.4 Proof of Proposition 3

'Only if' part: when $2c_A - 1 > c_M$, there is no $j \neq A$ such that (1) $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$ and (2) $c_j \leq c_M$. Therefore, by Proposition 2, sharing information privately with the agenda setter is necessary to induce policy $x = 1$.

'If' part: to show that privately sharing information with the agenda setter is sufficient to induce policy $x = 1$ when $2c_A - 1 > c_M$, we show that the following strategy profile is an equilibrium and that it induces policy $x = 1$.

Lemma 4. *Suppose that $2c_A - 1 > c_M$, then the following strategy profile is an equilibrium:*

1. *The IG discloses the state θ privately to the agenda setter, $r_A = \theta$, if $\theta \geq c_A$ and otherwise conceals the state: $r_A = \emptyset$. The IG does not disclose anything publicly: $r_P = \emptyset,\ \forall \theta$.*
2. *The agenda setter proposes the reform, $\tilde{x} = 1$, if $r_A = \theta \geq c_A$ and keeps the status quo otherwise.*
3. *A policymaker with threshold c_i votes for the reform if $c_A \geq 2c_i - 1$. Otherwise, she votes for the status quo.*
4. *Policymakers believe that θ is uniformly distributed on $[c_A, 1]$ if the reform is proposed.*

Proof of Lemma 4.

Policymakers' strategies: We first consider the off path scenario in which the agenda setter has proposed the reform $\tilde{x} = 1$ but the IG discloses the information publicly, $r_P = \theta$. In this case, policymakers vote as in Lemma 1: a policymaker i votes for the reform if and only if $\theta \geq c_i$. We now turn to the on-path action: suppose that the IG shares the information with the agenda setter. The agenda setter's decision to propose the reform effectively acts as the agenda setter's endorsement. As for the case of other intermediaries discussed above, if the agenda setter proposes the reform ($\tilde{x} = 1$), then a policymaker i learns that the agenda setter must have observed some $\theta \geq c_A$ and therefore votes for the reform if $\frac{1+c_A}{2} \geq c_i$. If instead, the agenda setter does not propose the reform, then the status quo is maintained.

Agenda setter strategy: Given the policymakers' votes, the reform always passes when it is proposed by the agenda setter if $c_M \leq \frac{1+c_A}{2}$, that is, if $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$. If this condition is satisfied, the agenda setter expects the reform to pass if and only if she proposes it. Therefore, the agenda setter's optimal strategy is to propose the reform whenever she observes $\theta \geq c_A$. Conversely, if the agenda setter does not observe any information, she infers that the IG must have observed $\theta < c_A$, given the IG's strategy, and prefers not to propose the reform. Finally, if the IG were to deviate and disclose $\theta < c_A$ to the agenda setter, then the agenda setter prefers the policy not to pass and therefore does not propose it. At this stage, we can note that since $c_j \geq 2c_j - 1, \forall\ c_j \leq 1$, then $2c_A - 1 > c_M \Rightarrow c_A \geq 2c_A - 1 > c_M \geq 2c_M - 1$. **Therefore, if $2c_A - 1 > c_M$, then $c_A > 2c_M - 1$ so in this case the policy $x = 1$ is proposed and approved if the IG shares $\theta \geq c_A$ with the agenda setter.**

IG's disclosure strategy: given the agenda setter's strategy and the policymakers' vote, the IG anticipates that the reform will pass if and only if it discloses state $\theta \geq c_A$ to the agenda setter and $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$. The IG would therefore never benefit from deviating to concealing any $\theta \geq c_A$. Finally, the IG would not benefit from disclosing the information publicly when $2c_A - 1 > c_M$ since: (1) if $\theta \geq c_A$ then $\theta > c_M$, so a majority of policymakers would approve the policy if it is proposed even without observing the information publicly so the IG does not strictly gain from disclosing it, and (2) if $\theta < c_A$, then the agenda setter would not propose the reform so the IG would not have the opportunity to disclose information publicly. Therefore, the IG cannot profitably deviate from the strategy proposed in Lemma 4.

Policymakers' beliefs: the policymakers' beliefs follow from Bayes rule. There are no off-path actions from the agenda setter as there are always some values of θ for which she proposes the reform and some values of θ for which she maintains the status quo. The

only off-path actions for the IG are to disclose the state publicly or disclose a state $\theta < c_A$ privately to the agenda setter. In either case the beliefs are degenerate as the policymaker learns the state. □

This concludes the proof of Proposition 3.

B.5 Proof of Proposition 4

We compare the IG's ex ante payoff from having access to some policymaker $j \neq A$ (Proposition 2) to that of lobbying publicly (Proposition 1). We evaluate three cases.

1. If $c_M \in (\frac{1}{2}, 2c_A - 1)$.

   - Under public lobbying: the IG cannot induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying, so $V^{Pu} = 0$.
   - Under private lobbying: the IG cannot induce policy $x = 1$ unless $j = A$, so $V_j^{Pr} = 0,\ \forall j \neq A$.

   Therefore, $V(j) = 0$ for any $j \neq A$.

2. If $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$,

   - Under public lobbying: the IG can now induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying. The value of public lobbying is the ex-ante probability of inducing policy $x = 1$, that is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$.
   - Under private lobbying: the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ by sharing information privately with policymaker j as long as $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$. The value of private lobbying is the ex-ante probability of persuading j to endorse the policy: $V_j^{Pr} = 1 - c_j$. The value of sharing information with any other policymaker is 0 either because the agenda setter does not trust them ($c_j < 2c_A - 1$) or because the IG would prefer to share information publicly ($c_j > c_M$).

   Therefore,

$$V(j) = \begin{cases} \max\{0, (1 - c_j) - (1 - c_M)\} & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M] \\ \max\{0, 0 - (1 - c_M)\} & \text{if } c_j \notin [2c_A - 1, c_M] \end{cases} = \begin{cases} c_M - c_j & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{if } c_j \notin [2c_A - 1, c_M] \end{cases}$$

   The value in the first case is always positive as $c_M - c_j \geq 0$ for all $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$.

3. If $c_M \in (c_A, 1)$,

- Under public lobbying: the IG can now induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying. The value of public lobbying is the ex-ante probability of inducing policy $x = 1$, that is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$.
- Under private lobbying: the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ by sharing information privately with a policymaker j as long as $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ (the lower bound changes as $2c_M - 1$ is now greater than $2c_A - 1$ since $c_M > c_A$). The value of private lobbying remains: $V_j^{Pr} = 1 - c_j$ for these policymakers. The value of sharing information with any other policymaker is 0 either because the median would not be persuaded by their endorsement ($c_j < 2c_M - 1$) or because the IG would be better off sharing information publicly ($c_j > c_M$).

Therefore,

$$V(j) = \begin{cases} \max\{0, (1 - c_j) - (1 - c_M)\} & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M] \\ \max\{0, 0 - (1 - c_M)\} & \text{if } c_j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M] \end{cases} = \begin{cases} c_M - c_j & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{if } c_j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M] \end{cases}$$

The value in the first case is always positive as $c_M - c_j \geq 0$ for all $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$.

B.6 Proof of Proposition 5

Proof. We compare the IG's ex-ante payoff from having access to the agenda setter in Proposition 2 or in Proposition 3 to that of lobbying publicly as in Proposition 1. We evaluate the four cases.

1. If $c_A < 2c_M - 1$.
   - Under public lobbying: if $c_A < 2c_M - 1$, then $2c_A - 1 < c_A < 2c_M - 1 < c_M$. Therefore, $c_M > 2c_A - 1$ and the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying. The value of public lobbying is the ex-ante probability of inducing policy $x = 1$, that is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$.
   - Under private lobbying: by Proposition 2, if $c_A < 2c_M - 1$ then the median is not persuaded to vote for policy $x = 1$ when the agenda setter proposes the reform. There is therefore no value of privately lobbying the agenda setter: $V_A^{Pr} = 0$.

   Combining the two: $V(A) = \max\{0, 0 - (1 - c_M)\} = 0$.
2. If $c_A \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$.
   - Under public lobbying: if $c_A < c_M$, then $c_M > 2c_A - 1$ and the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying. The value of public lobbying is the ex-ante

probability of inducing policy $x = 1$, that is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$.

- Under private lobbying: by Proposition 2, if $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1$ the median is persuaded to vote for policy $x = 1$ when the agenda setter proposes the reform. Therefore, the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter: $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

Combining the two: $V(A) = \max\{0, (1 - c_A) - (1 - c_M)\} = c_M - c_A$.

3. If $c_A \in \left(c_M, \frac{1+c_M}{2}\right]$.

   - Under public lobbying: if $c_A \leq \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, then $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying. The value of public lobbying is the ex-ante probability of inducing policy $x = 1$, that is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$.

   - Under private lobbying: since $c_A > c_M$, the agenda setter's proposal of the reform persuades a majority of policymakers to support it. All the conditions from Proposition 2 are satisfied except for the third one. However, the third condition does not matter here as the agenda setter has seen the evidence. Therefore, the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter is also $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

   The difference with the previous case is that, since the agenda setter is more status quo biased than the median in this case, the IG would have been better off with public lobbying only. Indeed, we have: $V(A) = \max\{0, (1 - c_A) - (1 - c_M)\} = 0$ since $c_M - c_A < 0$.

4. If $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.

   - Under public lobbying: if $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, then $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, so by Proposition 1, the IG cannot induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying, so $V^{Pu} = 0$.

   - Under private lobbying: Since $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, Proposition 3 applies and the IG can induce policy $x = 1$ by getting access to the agenda setter. Therefore in this case, $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

   As a result, we have that $V(A) = \max\{0, (1 - c_A) - 0\} = 1 - c_A$.

□

C Policy complexity

C.1 Interest group has noisy evidence

We modify the model in three aspects to capture policy complexity. First, we allow the IG's information to be potentially incorrect. Second, we allow policymakers to verify that information at a cost. Finally, we allow the IG to share information publicly before the agenda setting stage.

C.1.1 Noisy but unverifiable information

We first make the following modification to the baseline model: instead of observing θ perfectly, the IG observes a signal s equal to

$$s = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{w.p. } q \\ \tilde{s} & \text{w.p. } 1-q \end{cases}$$

Where $\tilde{s}$ is a noisy signal independent of the true state θ and distributed uniformly on $[0,1]$. We prove the following result, from which Proposition 6 in the text directly follows:

Proposition 8.

1. *If* $c_M < 2c_A - 1 < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, $V(j) = 0, \forall j \in N$ *for both* $q < 1$ *and* $q = 1$ *so uncertainty does not affect the value of a connection.*

2. *If* $2c_A - 1 < c_M < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, *then*

   - *Without noise,* $V(j) = \begin{cases} c_M - c_j & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$
   - *With noise,* $V_j = 0, \forall j \in N$.

   So uncertainty weakly reduces the value of connections (strictly for $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$*).*

3. *If* $2c_A - 1 < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} < c_M < c_A$, *then*

   - *Without noise,* $V(j) = \begin{cases} c_M - c_j & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$
   - *With noise,* $V(j) = \begin{cases} \frac{c_M - c_j}{q} & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$

So uncertainty reduces the value of connections for $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}]$ *but increases the value of connections for* $c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right]$ *as* $\frac{c_M - c_j}{q} > c_M - c_j$.

4. *If* $2c_A - 1 < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} < c_A < c_M < \frac{1+q}{2}$, *then*

   - *Without noise,* $V(j) = \begin{cases} c_M - c_j & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$
   - *With noise,* $V(j) = \begin{cases} \frac{c_M - c_j}{q} & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$

   So uncertainty reduces the value of connections for $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}]$ *but increases the value of connections for* $c_j \in \left[2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right]$ *as* $\frac{c_M - c_j}{q} > c_M - c_j$.

Proof of Proposition 8.

Beliefs. Suppose that information is noisy, $q < 1$. Upon seeing some evidence s, a policymaker believes that the expected value of the true state is $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s] = qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2}$. A policymaker with threshold c_j therefore supports policy $x = 1$ if $qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} \geq c_j$ or, equivalently, if $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$. Note that since $\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} \geq 1 \Leftrightarrow c_j \geq \frac{1+q}{2}$, a policymaker with threshold $c_j \geq \frac{1+q}{2}$ never supports the reform for any $s \in [0,1]$. Conversely, since $\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} \leq 0 \Leftrightarrow c_j \leq \frac{1-q}{2}$, a policymaker with threshold $c_j \leq \frac{1-q}{2}$ always supports the reform for any $s \in [0,1]$.

Public lobbying. Suppose first that the agenda setter proposes the policy and the IG shares information publicly. Policy $x = 1$ passes if the median is persuaded, that is, if $s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$ and $c_M \leq \frac{1+q}{2}$. Otherwise, policy $x = 0$ is chosen. The expected utility of the agenda setter from proposing the reform if $c_M \leq \frac{1+q}{2}$ is therefore:

$$\begin{aligned}
u_A(\tilde{x} = 1) &= \mathbb{P}\left(s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] - c_A\right) \\
&= \mathbb{P}\left(s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left(q\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_A\right) \\
&= \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)\left(q\left(\frac{1 + \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}}{2}\right) + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_A\right) \\
&= \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)\left(\frac{1 + c_M}{2} - \frac{(1-q)}{4} - c_A\right)
\end{aligned}$$

and the payoff from keeping the status quo is $u_A(\tilde{x}=0)=0$. The agenda setter therefore proposes the reform if $\frac{1+c_M}{2}-\frac{(1-q)}{4}-c_A\geq 0 \Leftrightarrow c_M \geq 2c_A-1+\frac{(1-q)}{2}$.

If $c_M > \frac{1+q}{2}$, the agenda setter is indifferent between proposing the reform or not as it always fails. If $c_A > \frac{1+q}{2}$, the agenda setter never proposes the reform. We therefore focus on the case where $c_A, c_M < \frac{1+q}{2}$ throughout the rest of this section. This also implies that $2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2} < c_A$ and $2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2} < c_M$.[19]

The value of public lobbying is then:

$$V^{Pub}=\begin{cases}1-\left(\frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right) & \text{if } c_M \in \left[2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2}, \frac{1+q}{2}\right] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.}\end{cases}$$

Private lobbying of a non-agenda setter. Given the beliefs derived above, a policy maker with threshold $c_j \in \left[\frac{1-q}{2}, \frac{1+q}{2}\right]$ endorses policy $x=1$ if and only if they observe $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$. Another policymaker, i, who observes this endorsement will infer that j observed a signal $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$ and therefore believe that the expected value of the true state is $\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]=\frac{1+c_j}{2}-\frac{1-q}{4}$. A policymaker with threshold c_i is therefore persuaded by the endorsement of a policymaker c_j if and only if $\frac{1+c_j}{2}-\frac{1-q}{4} \geq c_i$, or equivalently, if $c_j \geq 2c_i-1+\frac{1-q}{2}$. If $c_j \leq \frac{1-q}{2}$ the policy maker always endorses policy $x=1$ while if $c_j > \frac{1+q}{2}$, the policy maker always endorses policy $x=0$. In these cases, other policymakers therefore believe that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j]=\frac{1}{2}$ following any on-path endorsement. The reform, $x=1$ therefore passes following the endorsement $e_j=1$ if $c_j \in \left[\frac{1-q}{2}, \frac{1+q}{2}\right]$ and $c_j \geq 2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2}$.

Given these strategies, the IG discloses s privately to j such that $c_j \in \left[\frac{1-q}{2}, \frac{1+q}{2}\right]$ and $c_j \in \left[2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right]$ if $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$ and conceals it otherwise. If $c_j \notin \left[\frac{1-q}{2}, \frac{1+q}{2}\right]$ or $c_j < 2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2}$ the IG discloses s publicly if $s \geq \frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$ and discloses nothing to j. If $c_j > c_M$, the IG discloses s privately to j if $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$ and publicly if $s \in \left[\frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}, \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$ (and conceals it otherwise).

The agenda setter then strictly prefers to propose the reform, $\tilde{x}=1$, if either

1. $c_j \in \left[\max\left\{2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2}, 2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2}\right\}, c_M\right]$, or
2. $c_j > c_M > 2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2}$, or
3. $c_j \in \left[2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2}, 2c_M-1+\frac{1-q}{2}\right]$ (and therefore $c_M > c_A$ so the agenda setter trusts the IG when the IG goes public).

[19] Also note that $c_M, c_A > \frac{1}{2} \Rightarrow c_M, c_A > \frac{1-q}{2}$.

If $c_j < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$ and $c_M < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$ or if $c_j > 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} > c_M$, the agenda setter strictly prefers to keep the status quo. Otherwise, the agenda setter is indifferent between proposing the reform or not.

Therefore, the value of privately lobbying j is:

1. If $c_M < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, $V^{Priv} = 0$.
2. If $2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} \leq c_M < c_A \leq \frac{1+q}{2}$,

$$V^{Priv}(j) = \begin{cases} 1 - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) & \text{if } c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right] \\ 1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

3. If $c_A \leq c_M < \frac{1+q}{2}$,

$$V^{Priv}(j) = \begin{cases} 1 - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) & \text{if } c_j \in \left[2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right] \\ 1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Value of a connection to a non-agenda setter. Comparing the value of private lobbying to the value of public lobbying, we therefore get:

1. If $c_M < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, $V(j) = 0$.
2. If $2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} \leq c_M < c_A \leq \frac{1+q}{2}$,

$$\begin{aligned} V(j) &= \begin{cases} \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right) - \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right) & \text{if } c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \\ &= \begin{cases} \frac{c_M - c_j}{q} & \text{if } c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

3. If $c_A \leq c_M < \frac{1+q}{2}$,

$$V(j) = \begin{cases} \frac{c_M - c_j}{q} & \text{if } c_j \in \left[2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right] \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

4. If $\max\{c_M, c_A\} > \frac{1+q}{2}$, then $V(j) = 0$ since any j that would persuade the median and the agenda setter (i.e., $c_j \geq \max\left\{2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}\right\}$) would be such that

$c_j > \frac{1+q}{2}$ so would never endorse policy $x = 1$ for any $s \in [0, 1]$.

Comparing to the value of a connection to j when the IG obtains perfect information, gives us directly the result in Proposition 8. □

C.1.2 Noisy but verifiable information

We now turn to proving Proposition 7 in the text. To do this, we first expand the model to allow the policymakers to verify the information and then derive examples in which verification increases the value of connections and examples in which verification decreases the value of connections.

Suppose that any policymaker who has observed the information from the IG can verify it at a cost k. If a policymaker verifies the information, she learns whether $s = \theta$ or $s = \tilde{s}$. Verifying takes place after the information is shared with a policymaker but before proposing the policy (if it is verified by the agenda setter) or before voting (if it is verified by another policymaker). The cost k is common to all policymakers but is only realized after the IG has disclosed the information. The IG believes that k follows some CDF G on $[0, +\infty)$. When the information is public, multiple policymakers can verify the information. We assume that the information is verified if the benefit of verifying it is higher than the cost for at least one policymaker.[20] If one of the policymakers verifies the information, all policymakers learn whether the IG's signal is truly θ or the noise $\tilde{s}$.

To limit the length of the analysis, we focus on the case where $2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} < c_M < c_A$ and analyze the value of a connection to some policymaker j with threshold $c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_M\right]$ such that $\frac{1}{2} < c_j$ and $\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} < c_M$. We know from Proposition 8 (Case 3), that, in this case, the value of a connection to j is $\frac{c_M - c_j}{q}$.

Public lobbying. Suppose first that the agenda setter proposes the policy and the IG shares information publicly. With no verification, policy $x = 1$ will pass if the median is persuaded, that is, if $s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$ and policy $x = 0$ will be chosen otherwise. If the information is verified by at least one policymaker, policy $x = 1$ will pass if the signal was correct and persuades the median, that is, if $s = \theta \geq c_M$ and policy $x = 0$ will be chosen otherwise. The expected utility of a policymaker with threshold c_i from verifying or not the information is therefore:

1. If $s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the policy passes if unverified or if verified and the signal is correct. Policymaker i's payoff from not verifying is $u_i(v_i = 0) = qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_i$ and her payoff

[20] This allows us to abstract from free riding incentives between policymakers.

from verifying is $u_i(v_i = 1) = q(s - c_i) + (1 - q) \times 0 - k$. The policymaker therefore verifies if $q(s-c_i)-k \geq qs+(1-q)\frac{1}{2}-c_i \Leftrightarrow (1-q)\left(c_i - \frac{1}{2}\right) \geq k$. The probability that at least one policymaker verifies is the probability that the cost of verifying is lower than the benefit for the policymaker with the highest benefit of verifying. Since the benefit of verifying is $(1-q)\left(c_i - \frac{1}{2}\right)$, it is highest for a policymaker with $c_i = 1$, so $\mathbb{P}(\text{at least one policymaker verifies}) = \mathbb{P}\left(k \leq (1-q)\left(1 - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) = G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)$.

2. If $s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the policy fails if unverified or if verified and the signal is incorrect. The payoff from not verifying is therefore $u_i(v_i = 0) = 0$ and the payoff from verifying is $u_i(v_i = 1) = q(s - c_i) + (1 - q) \times 0 - k$. policymaker i therefore verifies if $q(s - c_i) - k \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow q(s - c_i) \geq k$. Since the benefit of verifying is $q(s - c_i)$, it is highest for a policymaker with $c_i = 0$, so $\mathbb{P}(\text{at least one policymaker verifies}) = \mathbb{P}\left(k \leq q\left(s - 0\right)\right) = G(qs)$.

3. If $s < c_M$, then the policy fails whether verified or unverified, so no policymaker ever verifies the information.

Private lobbying of a non-agenda setter. Suppose next that the agenda setter proposes the policy and the IG shares information privately with policymaker j. If the policymaker does not verify, and the other policymakers know that, policy $x = 1$ will pass if policymaker j endorses the policy and the median is persuaded by policymaker j's endorsement, that is, if $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$ and $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$. Otherwise, policy $x = 0$ will be chosen. If policymaker j does verify the information, and the other policymakers know that, policy $x = 1$ will pass if the signal still persuades policymaker j and policymaker j's endorsement persuades the median. The first condition requires that $s = \theta \geq c_j$ and the second that $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$. Otherwise, policy $x = 0$ is chosen. Other policymakers do not know whether policymaker j verified the signal or not. However, since $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$ the endorsement persuades the median whether or not the information was verified. The decision to verify is then determined as follows:

1. If $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the policy passes if unverified or if verified and the signal is correct. Policymaker j's payoff from not verifying is thus $u_j(v_j = 0) = qs + (1 - q)\frac{1}{2} - c_j$ and her payoff from verifying is $u_j(v_j = 1) = q(s - c_j) + (1 - q) \times 0 - k$. The policymaker therefore verifies if $q(s - c_j) - k \geq qs + (1 - q)\frac{1}{2} - c_j \Leftrightarrow (1 - q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right) \geq k$. The probability that the information is verified is therefore:

$$G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\left(2c_j - 1\right)\right)$$

2. If $s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the policy fails if unverified or if verified and the signal is incorrect. The payoff from not verifying is therefore $u_j(v_j = 0) = 0$ and the payoff from verifying is $u_j(v_j = 1) = q(s-c_j)+(1-q)\times 0-k$. Policymaker j therefore verifies if $q(s-c_j) \geq k$. The probability that the information is verified is therefore:

$$G\left(q(s - c_j)\right)$$

3. If $s < c_j$, then the policy fails whether verified or unverified, so policymaker j never verifies the information.

IG's choice of private vs. public lobbying.

1. If $s \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the IG's payoff from private lobbying is $V_{Priv} = G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right) q + \left(1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right)\right) = 1-(1-q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right)$ and its payoff from public lobbying is $V_{Pub} = G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) q + \left(1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)\right) = 1 - (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)$ so the IG always lobbies privately since $2c_j - 1 < 1$.
2. If $s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the IG's payoff from private lobbying is $V_{Priv} = 1 - (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right)$ and its payoff from public lobbying is $V_{Pub} = qG(sq)$ so the IG lobbies privately, given s, if $1 - (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right) > qG(sq)$. The IG therefore always lobbies privately since $1 - (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right) > qG(sq) \Leftrightarrow 1 > (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right) + qG\left(sq\right)$, which always holds since $G(\cdot) \leq 1$ and $0 < q < 1$.
3. If $s \in \left[\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, c_M\right]$, the IG's payoff from private lobbying is $V_{Priv} = 1 - (1 - q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right)$ while $V_{Pub} = 0$ so the IG always lobbies privately.
4. If $s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the IG's payoff from private lobbying is $V_{Priv} = G(q(s - c_j))q$ while $V_{Pub} = 0$ so the IG always lobbies privately.
5. If $s < c_j$, then the IG's payoff from private or public lobbying is 0.

Agenda setter's decision. The agenda setter proposes the reform if the expected utility of proposing the reform is higher than the payoff from the status quo, 0. The agenda setter's

expected payoff from proposing the reform is therefore:

$$
\begin{aligned}
U_A(\tilde{x}=1) = \mathbb{P}\Big(s > \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\Big)\Bigg[& G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta > \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] - c_A\right) \\
& + \left(1 - G\left((1-q)\left((c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta > \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] + \frac{1-q}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\Bigg] \\
+\mathbb{P}\Big(s \in \Big[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\Big]\Big)\Bigg[& G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] - c_A\right) \\
& + \left(1 - G\left((1-q)\left((c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] + \frac{1-q}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\Bigg] \\
+\mathbb{P}\Big(s \in \left[\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, c_M\right]\Big)\Bigg[& G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, c_M\right]\right] - c_A\right) \\
& + \left(1 - G\left((1-q)\left((c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \left[\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, c_M\right]\right] + \frac{1-q}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\Bigg] \\
+\mathbb{P}\Big(s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\Big)\Bigg[& \int_{s=c_j}^{s=\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}} G(q(s-c_j)) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] - c_A\right) \\
& \times f\Big(s \mid s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\Big) ds\Bigg] + \mathbb{P}\left(s < c_j\right) \times 0
\end{aligned}
$$

That is,

$$
\begin{aligned}
U_A(\tilde{x}=1) = & \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)\Bigg[G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] - c_A\right) \\
& + \left(1 - G\left((1-q)\left((c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] + \frac{1-q}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\Bigg] \\
& + \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_j\right) q \left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] - c_A\right) \\
& \times \int_{s=c_j}^{s=\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}} G(q(s-c_j)) f\Big(s \mid s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\Big) ds
\end{aligned}
$$

This is greater than the value of the status quo, $U_A(\tilde{x}=0) = 0$ since $\int_{s=c_j}^{s=\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}} G(q(s-c_j)) f(s \mid s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]) ds = \mathbb{E}\left[G(q(s-c_j)) \mid s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] \leq G\left(q\left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_j\right)\right) =$

$G\left((1-q)\left(c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right)$ and $\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right]-c_A<0$ (since $c_A>\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}$), so that:

$$\begin{aligned}
U_A(\tilde{x}=1) \geq & G\left((1-q)\left(c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q\left[\left(1-\left(\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)\left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]-c_A\right)\right. \\
& \left.+\left(\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}-c_j\right) q\left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta \in\left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right]-c_A\right)\right] \\
& +\left(1-G\left((1-q)\left((c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q \mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]+\frac{1-q}{2}-c_A\right)\right) \\
= & G\left((1-q)\left(c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right) q\left(1-c_j\right)\left(\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>c_j\right]-c_A\right) \\
& +\left(1-G\left((1-q)\left((c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right)\left(q \mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]+\frac{1-q}{2}-c_A\right)\right) \\
\geq & 0
\end{aligned}$$

Since $\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>c_j\right]=\frac{1+c_j}{2}>c_A$ and $\mathbb{E}\left[\theta \mid \theta>\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]+\frac{1-q}{2}=\frac{1+c_j}{2}-\frac{1-q}{4}>c_A$ given $c_j \geq 2c_A-1+\frac{1-q}{2}$. Therefore, the agenda setter always proposes the reform.

Value of connections Finally, we can turn to the value of a connection to policymaker j. The expected payoff of the IG from privately lobbying j is:

$$\begin{aligned}
V_j^{Priv} = & \mathbb{P}\left(s \geq \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left[1-(1-q) G\left((1-q)\left((c_j-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right)\right] \\
& +\mathbb{P}\left(s \in\left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right)\left[\int_{s=c_j}^{s=\frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}} q G(q(s-c_j)) f\Big(s \mid s \in\left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\Big) d s\right] \\
& +\mathbb{P}\left(s<c_j\right) \times 0
\end{aligned}$$

The expected payoff from sharing information publicly is:

$$\begin{aligned}
V^{Pub} = & \mathbb{P}\left(s \geq \frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left[1-(1-q) G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)\right] \\
& +\mathbb{P}\left(s \in\left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right)\left[\int_{s=c_M}^{s=\frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}} q G(q s)) f\Big(s \mid s \in\left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q}-\frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\Big) d s\right] \\
& +\mathbb{P}\left(s<c_M\right) \times 0
\end{aligned}$$

The value of a connection to j is therefore:

$$\begin{aligned}V(j) = &\left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)(1-q)\left[G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right)\right] \\ &+ \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_M\right)\left[1 - (1-q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j-1)\right) - \mathbb{E}\left[qG(qs)|s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right]\right] \\ &+ \left(c_M - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)\left[1 - (1-q)G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j-1)\right)\right] \\ &+ \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_j\right)\left[\mathbb{E}\left[qG(q(s-c_j)) \mid s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right]\right]\end{aligned}$$

We now show examples of the distribution of costs, G such that the value of a connection increases relative to the value in the absence of verification, $V(j) = \frac{c_j - c_M}{q}$ (Proposition 8).

- First note that if verification is prohibitively costly for all policymakers, $G(x) = 0$ for all values of x that enter the expression above, then the value is indeed the same as in the absence of verification: $V(j) = \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_M\right) + \left(c_M - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right) = \frac{c_M - c_j}{q}$.
- If verification is costless, $G(x) = 1$ for all relevant x, then the value of a connection is:

$$V(j) = \left(c_M - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)q + \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_j\right)q = q(c_M - c_j) < \frac{c_M - c_j}{q}$$

  In this case, verification decreases the value of a connection.

- Finally, suppose that $G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) = 1$ but that $G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1)\right) = 0$, $G(qs) = 0$, $\forall s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$ and $G(q(s - c_j)) = 0$, $\forall s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$. Note that this is possible since $\frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1) < \frac{1-q}{2}$, $q\left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) < \frac{1-q}{2}$ whenever $c_M < 1 - q$ and $q\left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_j\right) = \frac{1-q}{2}(2c_j - 1) < \frac{1-q}{2}$. In this case, the value of a connection becomes:

$$\begin{aligned}V(j) &= \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)(1-q) + \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} - c_M\right) \\ &\quad + \left(c_M - \left(\frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right) \\ &= \left(1 - \left(\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\right)(1-q) + \frac{c_M - c_j}{q} > \frac{c_M - c_j}{q}\end{aligned}$$

  Therefore in this case, verification increases the value of a connection.

C.1.3 Public lobbying before agenda setting

Finally, we show that, when verification is possible, the IG would strictly prefer to lobby the agenda setter privately, even if we relax the assumption that public lobbying is not possible before the agenda setting stage. Our result that the agenda setter can be strictly more valuable than another policymaker with the same preferences is therefore not driven by the assumption that public lobbying is not possible before the agenda setting stage.

Suppose that there is a new stage between stage 1 and 2 in which the IG can publicly disclose s to all policymakers (including the agenda setter) before the agenda setting stage. Following public disclosure, all policymakers observe s, decide whether or not to verify it, and potentially learn whether the signal was correct. We focus on the following case: the agenda setter is too status quo biased to trust the median, $2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2} > c_M$, but the IG has access to a policymaker j such that $c_j \in \left[2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}, c_A\right)$ and $c_j \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$.

IG's choice of private vs. public lobbying. Suppose that the agenda setter proposes the policy.

1. If the IG observes a signal $s < c_M$, it cannot persuade a majority to vote for policy $x = 1$ through public or private lobbying, so it has no incentive to share the information publicly.

2. If the IG observes a signal $s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)$, it would fail to persuade policymaker j, whether j verifies the information or not (since $c_j \geq \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$). If it disclosed the information publicly, then a majority would vote for policy $x = 1$ only if the information is verified and turns out to be correct. The IG is therefore better-off disclosing the information publicly than sharing it privately with j if:

$$V^{Pub} = G(qs) \geq 0 = V_j^{Priv}$$

   Therefore, the IG would prefer to disclose publicly in this case.

3. If the IG observes a signal $s \in \left[\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, c_j\right)$, the IG would fail to persuade policymaker j, whether j verifies the information or not but would persuade a majority if it disclosed the information publicly and the information is either not verified or verified and turns out to be correct. The IG is better-off disclosing the information publicly than sharing it privately with j since

$$V^{Pub} = G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)q + 1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) \geq 0 = V_j^{Priv}$$

4. If the IG observes a signal $s \in \left[c_j, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)$. The IG would persuade policymaker j, if j verifies the information and it turns out to be correct and would persuade a majority if it disclosed the information publicly and the information is either not verified or verified and turns out to be correct. The IG is better-off disclosing the information publicly than sharing it privately with j if:

$$V^{Pub} = G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)q + 1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) \geq V_j^{priv} = G\left(q(s-c_j)\right)q$$

This holds since:

$$\begin{aligned} & G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)q + 1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) \geq G\left(q(s-c_j)\right)q \\ \Leftrightarrow \quad & q\left(G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) - G\left(q(s-c_j)\right)\right) + 1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

Which holds since $G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) - G\left(q(s-c_j)\right) \Leftrightarrow \frac{1-q}{2} \geq q(s-c_j) \Leftrightarrow s < c_j + \frac{1-q}{2q}$ and since $s < \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q} \Rightarrow s < c_j + \frac{1-q}{2q}$. Therefore, the IG would prefer to disclose publicly in this case.

5. If the IG observes a signal $s \geq \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the IG would persuade policymaker j, if j verifies the information and it turns out to be correct or if j does not verify the information. It would persuade a majority if it disclosed the information publicly and the information is either not verified or verified and turns out to be correct. The IG is better-off disclosing the information publicly than sharing it privately with j if:

$$\begin{aligned} V^{Pub} &= G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)q + 1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) \\ &\geq V_j^{Priv} = G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)q + 1 - G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right) \end{aligned}$$

Which never holds since $G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) > G\left((1-q)\left(c_j - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)$. Therefore, the IG would prefer to disclose privately to j in this case.

Agenda setter's decision to propose the reform. The possibility that the IG discloses information publicly does not imply that the agenda setter refuses to propose the policy. This depends on the expected loss of the agenda setter given the range of s such that the IG would deviate to disclosing information publicly. The expected utility of the agenda setter

if it proposes the reform is:

$$U_A(\tilde{x}=1) = \mathbb{P}(s < c_M) \times 0 + \int_{s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]} G(qs)(s - c_A) f(s \mid s \in \left[c_M, \frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right])$$
$$+ \mathbb{P}\left(s \in \left[\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right) \left[G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)\left(q(\mathbb{E}\left[s | s \in \left[\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] - c_A)\right)\right.$$
$$\left. + \left(1 - G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right)\right)\left(q(\mathbb{E}\left[s | s \in \left[\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]\right] - c_A) + (1-q)\left(\frac{1}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\right]$$
$$+ \mathbb{P}\left(s > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) \left[G\left((1-q)(c_j - \frac{1}{2})\right)\left(q(\mathbb{E}\left[s \mid s > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] - c_A)\right)\right.$$
$$\left. + \left(1 - G\left((1-q)(c_j - \frac{1}{2})\right)\right)\left(q(\mathbb{E}\left[s \mid s > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right] - c_A) + (1-q)\left(\frac{1}{2} - c_A\right)\right)\right]$$

This value is lower than the value of keeping the status quo policy $x = 1$ if the agenda setter expected the IG to always shares the information publicly. Indeed, the only case in which the two values differ is when $s > \frac{c_j}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$. In this case, the IG prefers to share the information privately with policymaker j, but the decision made by j in these cases leads to the same outcome as if the information had been shared publicly. However, sharing it privately makes it less likely that someone will verify the information (since $G\left((1-q)(c_j - \frac{1}{2})\right) < G\left((1-q)(1 - \frac{1}{2})\right)$, which reduces the value of proposing the policy to the agenda setter. Since the agenda setter does not trust the median, $c_M < 2c_A - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, then the value of proposing policy $x = 1$ if the agenda setter anticipates that the IG always shares the information publicly is negative. Therefore, the value to the agenda setter of proposing policy $x = 1$ when the IG has a connection with policymaker j is negative, so the agenda setter prefers not to propose the policy. The only way for the IG to obtain policy $x = 1$ is therefore to either privately share the information with the agenda setter or to share it publicly before the agenda setting stage. This is similar to the commitment problem in the baseline model: if the IG could commit to sharing the information privately with policymaker j, then the agenda setter would propose policy $x = 1$. Indeed, whether policymaker j ends up verifying the policy or not, the agenda setter trusts that policymaker to make the right decision upon seeing the information shared by the IG.

Private lobbying of the agenda setter. Suppose next that the IG shares the information privately with the agenda setter. As in the case above, the agenda setter knows that, if $c_A \geq 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$, a majority of policymakers will vote for policy $x = 1$ if the agenda setter proposes it. This is independent of whether the agenda setter verifies the information

or not.[21] The agenda setter therefore verifies the information if:

1. If $s \geq \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the agenda setter proposes the policy and it passes if unverified or if verified and the signal is correct. The agenda setter's payoff from not verifying is therefore $u_A(v_A = 0) = qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_A$ and her payoff from verifying is $u_A(v_A = 1) = q(s - c_A) + (1-q) \times 0 - k$. The agenda setter therefore verifies if $q(s - c_A) - k \geq qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_A \Leftrightarrow (1-q)\left(c_A - \frac{1}{2}\right) \geq k$.

2. If $s \in \left[c_A, \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the policy is not proposed if it is unverified or if it is verified and the signal is incorrect. Otherwise, the policy is proposed and passes. The payoff from not verifying is therefore $u_A(v_A = 0) = 0$ and the payoff from verifying is $u_A(v_A = 1) = q(s - c_A) + (1-q) \times 0 - k$. The agenda setter therefore verifies if $q(s - c_A) - k \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow q(s - c_A) \geq k$.

3. If $s < c_A$, then the policy is never proposed, whether verified or unverified. So the agenda setter never verifies the information since this would result in a cost k but no benefits.

Public lobbying before agenda setting. Finally, suppose that the IG shares the information publicly before the agenda setting stage. With no verification, policy $x = 1$ will pass if both the median and the agenda setter are persuaded, that is, if $s \geq \max\left\{\frac{c_M}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}, \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right\}$ and the policy will be $x = 0$. If the information is verified by at least one policymaker, policy $x = 1$ will pass if the signal was correct and persuades both the median and the agenda setter, that is, if $s = \theta \geq \max\{c_M, c_A\}$ and policy $x = 0$ will be chosen otherwise. The expected utility of a policymaker with threshold c_i from verifying or not the information is then:

1. If $s \geq \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the policy is proposed and passes if unverified or if verified and the signal is correct. The payoff to some policymaker i from not verifying is therefore $u_i(v_i = 0) = qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_i$ and the payoff from verifying is $u_i(v_i = 1) = q(s - c_i) + (1-q) \times 0 - k$. The policymaker therefore verifies if $q(s - c_i) - k \geq qs + (1-q)\frac{1}{2} - c_i \Leftrightarrow (1-q)\left(c_i - \frac{1}{2}\right) \geq k$.

2. If $s \in \left[c_A, \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the policy fails if unverified or if verified and the signal is incorrect. The payoff from not verifying is therefore $u_i(v_i = 0) = 0$ and the payoff from verifying is $u_i(v_i = 1) = q(s - c_i) + (1-q) \times 0 - k$. Policymaker i therefore verifies if $q(s - c_i) - k \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow q(s - c_i) \geq k$.

[21] As above, the condition $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1 + \frac{1-q}{2}$ is a sufficient and not necessary condition for the majority to follow the agenda setter.

3. If $s < c_A$, then the policy is never proposed, whether verified or unverified, so no policymaker ever verifies the information.

Benefit of privately lobbying the agenda setter. Finally, we show that the IG's value of a connection with the agenda setter is strictly positive, even relative to publicly disclosing information before the agenda setting stage. To see this, we compare the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter to the value of publicly disclosing information before the agenda setting stage.

1. If $s < c_A$, then the IG cannot persuade the agenda setter to propose policy $x = 1$ whether the information is private or public. Therefore, the value of public lobbying is equal to the value of private lobbying, which is zero.
2. If $s \in \left[c_A, \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right]$, the value of private lobbying is $qG(q(s-c_A))$. The value of public lobbying is $qG(qs)$. Therefore, the IG would prefer to disclose the information publicly before the agenda setting stage. Intuitively, the IG benefits from being verified in this case as this is the only possibility to persuade the agenda setter to propose the policy. Since being verified is more likely under public lobbying than private lobbying, public lobbying is more valuable.
3. If $s > \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}$, the value of private lobbying is $1-(1-q)G\left((1-q)\left(c_A - \frac{1}{2}\right)\right)$. The value of public lobbying is $1-(1-q)G\left((1-q)\left(1-\frac{1}{2}\right)\right)$. Therefore, the IG would prefer to disclose the information privately to the agenda setter. The intuition is the reverse as the previous case: the IG benefits from not being verified.

In the first two cases, the value of a connection to the agenda setter is zero. In the first case, this is because private lobbying is not more valuable than public lobbying. In the second case, public disclosure is always an option even with private lobbying, and the IG strictly prefers public disclosure. However, in the third case, the value of a connection to the agenda setter is strictly positive. Therefore, the ex-ante value of a connection to the agenda setter when public lobbying before the agenda setting stage is possible is:

$$\begin{aligned} V_A &= \mathbb{P}\left(s < \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right) \times 0 + \mathbb{P}\left(s > \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left[G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) - G\left(\frac{(1-q)(2c_A-1)}{2}\right)\right] \\ &= \left(1 - \frac{c_A}{q} - \frac{1-q}{2q}\right)\left[G\left(\frac{1-q}{2}\right) - G\left(\frac{(1-q)(2c_A-1)}{2}\right)\right] > 0. \end{aligned}$$

C.2 IG missing verifiable evidence

Consider the following modification to the baseline model. Instead of observing the state $\theta \in \Theta$ with probability 1 in the first stage of the model, the IG observes $s = \theta \in \Theta$ with probability q and no information, denoted $s = \emptyset$, with probability $1 - q$.

Proposition 9. *When the IG fails to observe the state with some positive probability, the value of a connection to policymaker $j \neq A$ such that $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$ is equal to $V(j)$ as characterized in Proposition 4. The value of a connection to policymaker $j \neq A$ such that $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$ is equal to $V(j) = 0$. The value of a connection to the agenda setter is $V(A)$ as characterized in Proposition 5.*

Proof of Proposition 9. We begin by proving that the following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium when the IG is constrained to public lobbying.

Lemma 5. *When the IG has no private access to policymakers, the following strategy profile is an equilibrium.*

1. *The agenda setter proposes $\tilde{x} = 1$ if and only if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$.*
2. *The IG shares public report*

$$r = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{if } s = \theta \text{ and } \theta \geq c_M \\ \emptyset & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

3. *A policymaker with threshold $c_i \geq \frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)}$ votes in favor of the reform if and only if $r = \theta \geq c_i$. A policymaker with threshold $c_i \leq \frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)}$ votes in favor of the reform if $r = \theta \geq c_i$ or if $r = \emptyset$.*
4. *Policymakers believe that $\theta = s$ with probability 1 if $r = \theta$ and have beliefs such that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r = \emptyset] = \left(\frac{1-q}{2(1-q(1-c_M))}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_M}{2(1-q(1-c_M))}\right) \times \frac{c_M}{2}$ if $r = \emptyset$.*

Proof of Lemma 5.

Policymaker's beliefs: the beliefs following $r = \theta$ are trivial. Following $r = \emptyset$ and given the IG's strategy, the policymaker's beliefs are such that:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r = \emptyset] &= \mathbb{P}(s = \emptyset \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s = \emptyset] + \mathbb{P}(s = \theta \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta < c_M] \\ &= \left(\frac{1-q}{1-q+c_Mq}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_M}{1-q+c_Mq}\right) \times \frac{c_M}{2} \end{aligned}$$

Policymaker's voting strategy: The policymaker's voting strategy when $r = \theta$ follows directly from sincere voting. Instead, when $r = \emptyset$, given the policymaker's beliefs that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r = \emptyset] = \left(\frac{1-q}{2(1-q(1-c_M))}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_M}{2(1-q(1-c_M))}\right) \times \frac{c_M}{2} = \frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)}$, a policymaker i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$, if and only if $\frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)} \geq c_i$.

IG's strategy: following $s = \emptyset$, the IG has no choice but to report $r = \emptyset$. Following $s = \theta \geq c_M$, the strategy dictates that IG reports $r = \theta$. Given this report, a majority of policymakers votes for $x = 1$. If the IG deviates to $r = \emptyset$, all policymakers such that $c_i \geq \frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)}$ vote against the reform. Since $\frac{1-q+qc_M^2}{2(1-q+qc_M)} < \frac{1}{2}$ (given that it is a weighted average of $\frac{1}{2}$ and of $\frac{c_M}{2} < \frac{1}{2}$), then this comprises a majority of policymakers, so the policy chosen is $x = 0$. Suppose finally that $s = \theta < c_M$. The strategy dictates that the IG reports $r = \emptyset$ which leads the reform to fail. If the IG deviates to disclosing $\theta < c_M$, then a majority of policymakers also votes against the reform, so the IG has no incentives to deviate.

Agenda setter strategy: The agenda setter anticipates that, if she proposes the reform, the reform will pass if $r = \theta \geq c_M$ and the reform will fail otherwise. Her expected utility from proposing the reform is therefore $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = q(1-c_M)(\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_M] - c_A) + (1-q(1-c_M)) \times 0 = q(1-c_M)(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A)$. Her expected utility from keeping the status quo is $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = 0$. The agenda setter therefore proposes the reform if $q(1-c_M)(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A) \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and proposes the status quo otherwise. □

Next, we show that the following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium when the IG has a connection to policymaker $j \neq A$ and can engage in private lobbying.

Lemma 6. *When the IG has access to policymaker $j \neq A$, the following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium.*

1. *The agenda setter proposes $\tilde{x} = 1$ if $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$ and $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)} - (1-q)}{2q}$ or if $c_j \geq c_M$ and $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$, and keeps the status quo otherwise.*

2. *If $c_j \leq c_M$, the IG shares public report $r_P = \emptyset$ and a private report*

$$r_j = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{if } s = \theta \text{ and } \theta \geq c_j \\ \emptyset & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

   If $c_j > c_M$, the IG shares the same private report, r_j as above if $s = \theta \geq c_j$ or if $s = \theta < c_M$, shares a public report $r_P = \theta$ if $s = \theta \in [c_M, c_j]$, and shares reports $r_P = r_j = \emptyset$ if $s = \emptyset$.

3. *A connected policymaker j with threshold $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)} - (1-q)}{2q}$ endorses the reform,*

$e_j = 1$, *if and only if* $r = \theta \geq c_j$. *A connected policymaker with threshold* $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$ *endorses the reform if* $r = \theta \geq c_j$ *or if* $r = \emptyset$. *The connected policymaker believes that* $\theta = s$ *with probability* 1 *if* $r = \theta$ *and has beliefs such that* $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r = \emptyset] = \left(\frac{1-q}{2(1-q(1-c_j))}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_j}{2(1-q(1-c_j))}\right) \times \frac{c_j}{2}$ *if* $r = \emptyset$.

4. *If* $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, *a non-connected policymaker,* i, *with threshold* $c_i > \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}$ *votes in favor of the reform,* $x_i = 1$, *following* $e_j = 1$ *if* $c_j \geq 2c_i - 1$ *and votes in favor of the status quo,* $x_i = 0$ *otherwise. A non-connected policymaker with threshold* $c_i \leq \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}$ *votes in favor of the reform for any* $e_j \in \{0, 1\}$. *If* $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, *a non-connected policymaker with threshold* $c_i > \frac{1}{2}$ *votes for the status quo,* $x_i = 0$, *for any* $e_j \in \{0, 1\}$. *A non-connected policymaker with threshold* $c_i \leq \frac{1}{2}$ *votes in favor of the reform,* $x_i = 1$, *for any* $e_j \in \{0, 1\}$.

5. *A non-connected policymaker's beliefs are such that* $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_j] = \frac{1+c_j}{2}$ *and* $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] = \left(\frac{1-q}{2(1-q(1-c_j))}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_j}{2(1-q(1-c_j))}\right) \times \frac{c_j}{2}$ *if* $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$ *and are such that* $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] = \frac{1}{2}$ *if* $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$.

Proof of Lemma 6.

Non-connected policymaker's beliefs: the beliefs following $r_P = \theta$ are trivial. Following $r_P = \emptyset$, the beliefs depend on the endorsement of the connected policymaker j. If $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, then, given the connected policymaker and IG's strategies, the non-connected policymaker's beliefs are such that:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] &= \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s = \theta \geq c_j] = \frac{1 + c_j}{2} \\
\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] &= \mathbb{P}(s = \emptyset \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s = \emptyset] + \mathbb{P}(s = \theta \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta < c_j] \\
&= \left(\frac{1-q}{1-q+c_jq}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_j}{1-q+c_jq}\right) \times \frac{c_j}{2} \\
&= \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}
\end{aligned}$$

If $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, then given the connected policymaker and IG's strategies, the non-connected policymaker's beliefs are such that: $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] = \mathbb{E}[\theta] = \frac{1}{2}$.

Non-connected policymaker's voting strategy: The policymaker's voting strategy when $r_P = \theta$ follows directly from Lemma 5. Instead, when $r_P = \emptyset$, the policymaker's strategy depends on the endorsement e_j. If $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, then given beliefs that

$\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] = \frac{1+c_j}{2}$, a non-connected policymaker i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$ following $e_j = 1$, if and only if $\frac{1+c_j}{2} \geq c_i \Leftrightarrow c_j \geq 2c_i - 1$. Instead, following $e_j = 0$ and given the policymaker's beliefs that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] = \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}$, a policymaker i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$, if and only if $\frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)} \geq c_i$. If $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, then given the policymaker's beliefs that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] = \frac{1}{2}$, policymaker i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$ following $e_j = 1$ or $e_j = 0$, if and only if $\frac{1}{2} \geq c_i$.

Connected policymaker's beliefs: the beliefs following $r_j = \theta$ are trivial. Following $r_j = \emptyset$, given the IG's strategy, the connected policymaker's beliefs are such that:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r_j = \emptyset] &= \mathbb{P}(s = \emptyset \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s = \emptyset] + \mathbb{P}(s = \theta \mid r = \emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta < c_j] \\
&= \left(\frac{1-q}{1-q+c_jq}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_j}{1-q+c_jq}\right) \times \frac{c_j}{2} \\
&= \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}
\end{aligned}$$

Connected policymaker's endorsement strategy: when $r_j = \theta \geq c_j$, the policymaker anticipates that endorsing the reform, $e_j = 1$ will lead a majority to vote for the reform if $c_j > \max\left\{2c_M - 1, \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}\right\}$. Instead, endorsing the status quo will lead a majority to vote for the status quo. Since $\theta \geq c_j$ the connected policymaker prefers the reform so does not want to deviate from $e_j = 1$. If $r_j = \emptyset$, given policymaker j's beliefs that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r_j = \emptyset] = \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}$, she endorses the reform if and only if $\frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)} \geq c_j \Leftrightarrow c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$. Therefore, if $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, policymaker j endorses the reform for $r_j = \theta \geq c_j$ or $r_j = \emptyset$. Instead, if $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, policymaker j endorses the reform if and only if $r_j = \theta \geq c_j$.

IG's strategy: following $s = \emptyset$, the IG has no choice but to report $r_j = r_P = \emptyset$. Suppose first that $c_j \leq c_M$. Following $s = \theta \geq c_j$, the strategy dictates that the IG reports $r_j = \theta$. Given this report, the connected policymaker j endorses the policy, $e_j = 1$. If $c_j > \max\left\{2c_M - 1, \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}\right\}$, then a majority of policymakers votes for $x = 1$. If the IG deviates to $r = \emptyset$, the connected policymaker endorses the status quo, $e_j = 0$ if $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$ and endorses the reform, $e_j = 1$, otherwise. In either case, a majority of policymakers vote in favor of the status quo since $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid e_j = 0] \leq \frac{1}{2} < c_M$ in both cases. Suppose finally that $s = \theta < c_j$. The strategy dictates that the IG reports $r = \emptyset$ which leads the connected policymaker to endorse the status quo, $e_j = 0$. Since $c_M > \frac{1}{2} \geq \frac{1-q+qc_j^2}{2(1-q+qc_j)}$, a majority of policymaker's vote for the status quo. Deviating to $r = \theta$ also leads j to endorse

the status quo, $e_j = 0$ and therefore also leads a majority to vote for the status quo. Suppose now that $c_j > c_M$. Following $s = \theta \geq c_j$, the IG prefers to report $r_j = \theta$ as it leads the policy to pass as above. If $s = \theta \in [c_M, c_j)$, the policy would fail if $r_j = \theta$ but $r_P = \theta$ since the connected policymaker would not endorse the reform, $e_j = 0$. However, by sharing $r_P = \theta$, the policy would pass as the median is persuaded. If $s = \theta < c_M$, the policy will fail for any reports, so the IG has no incentives to deviate.

Agenda setter strategy: Suppose first that $c_j \leq c_M$. The agenda setter anticipates that, if she proposes the reform, the reform will pass if $c_j > \max\left\{2c_M - 1, \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}\right\}$ and $s = \theta \geq c_j$. Her expected utility from proposing the reform is therefore $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = q(1-c_j)(\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_j] - c_A) + (1 - q(1-c_j)) \times 0 = q(1-c_j)(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A)$. Her expected utility from keeping the status quo is $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = 0$. The agenda setter therefore proposes the reform if $q(1-c_j)(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A) \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$ and keeps the status quo otherwise. If $c_j \leq \max\left\{2c_M - 1, \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}\right\}$, then the reform will fail whether or not the agenda setter proposes it so the agenda setter is indifferent between proposing it or not. If $c_j > c_M$, then the agenda setter anticipates that the reform will pass if $s = \theta \geq c_M$. The agenda setter therefore proposes the reform if $q(1-c_M)(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A) \geq 0 \Leftrightarrow c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and keeps the status quo otherwise. □

Finally, we show that the following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium when the IG has a connection to the agenda setter and can engage in private lobbying.

Lemma 7. *When the IG has access to the agenda setter A, the following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium.*

1. *The IG shares a report*

$$r_A = \begin{cases} \theta & \text{if } s = \theta \text{ and } \theta \geq c_A \\ \emptyset & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

2. *The agenda setter proposes $\tilde{x} = 1$ if and only if $r_A = \theta \geq c_A$.*

3. *A non-connected policymaker with threshold c_i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$ when it is proposed, $\tilde{x} = 1$ if $c_A \geq 2c_i - 1$ and votes in favor of the status quo, $x_i = 0$ otherwise.*

4. *The agenda setter's beliefs are such that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r = \theta] = \theta$ and $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r_A = \emptyset] = \left(\frac{1-q}{2(1-q(1-c_A))}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{qc_A}{2(1-q(1-c_A))}\right) \times \frac{c_A}{2}$. A non-connected policymaker's beliefs are such*

that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \tilde{x}=1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_A] = \frac{1+c_A}{2}$. *The policymaker's beliefs when* $\tilde{x}=0$ *are irrelevant since policymakers do not get to vote.*

Proof of Lemma 7.

Non-connected policymaker's beliefs: the beliefs following $r_P = \theta$ are trivial. Following $r_P = \emptyset$, the beliefs are such that:

$$\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \tilde{x}=1] = \mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s=\theta \geq c_A] = \frac{1+c_A}{2}$$

Non-connected policymaker's voting strategy: The policymaker's voting strategy when $r_P = \theta$ follows directly from Lemma 5. Instead, when $r_P = \emptyset$, policymaker i votes in favor of the reform, $x_i = 1$ when it is proposed, $\tilde{x}=1$, if and only if $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \tilde{x}_j = 1] = \frac{1+c_A}{2} \geq c_i \Leftrightarrow c_A \geq 2c_i - 1$.

Agenda setter's beliefs: the beliefs following $r_A = \theta$ are trivial. Following $r_A = \emptyset$, given the IG's strategy, the agenda setter's beliefs are such that:

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r_A = \emptyset] &= \mathbb{P}(s=\emptyset \mid r=\emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid s=\emptyset] + \mathbb{P}(s=\theta \mid r=\emptyset)\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta < c_A] \\
&= \left(\frac{1-q}{1-q+c_A q}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{q c_A}{1-q+c_A q}\right) \times \frac{c_A}{2} \\
&= \frac{1-q+qc_A^2}{2(1-q+qc_A)}
\end{aligned}$$

Agenda setter's strategy: when $r_A = \theta \geq c_A$, the agenda setter anticipates that proposing the reform, $\tilde{x}=1$ will lead a majority to vote for the reform if $c_A > 2c_M - 1$. Since $\theta \geq c_A$ the agenda setter prefers the reform so does not want to deviate to keeping the status quo, $\tilde{x}=0$. If $r_A = \emptyset$, given the agenda setter's beliefs that $\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid r_A = \emptyset] = \frac{1-q+qc_A^2}{2(1-q+qc_A)}$, she would propose the reform only if $\frac{1-q+qc_A^2}{2(1-q+qc_A)} \geq c_A$. Since $c_A > \frac{1}{2} \Rightarrow c_A > \left(\frac{1-q}{1-q+c_A q}\right) \times \frac{1}{2} + \left(\frac{q c_A}{1-q+c_A q}\right) \times \frac{c_A}{2} = \frac{1-q+qc_A^2}{2(1-q+qc_A)}$ for any $q \in (0,1)$, the agenda setter never proposes the reform following $r_A = \emptyset$.

IG's strategy: following $s = \emptyset$, the IG has no choice but to report $r_A = r_P = \emptyset$. Following $s = \theta \geq c_A$, the strategy dictates that the IG reports $r_A = \theta$. Given this report, the agenda setter proposes the reform, $\tilde{x}=1$. If $c_A > 2c_M - 1$, then a majority of policymakers votes for $x=1$. If the IG deviates to $r=\emptyset$, the agenda setter keeps the status quo, $\tilde{x}=0$. If $s = \theta < c_A$, the strategy dictates that the IG reports $r_A = \emptyset$ which leads the agenda setter to keep the status quo, $\tilde{x}=0$. Deviating to $r_A = \theta$ also leads the agenda setter to keep the status quo, $\tilde{x}=0$ and therefore is not a profitable deviation.

□

Using Lemmas 5, 6, and 7, we can directly prove proposition 9. When the IG is limited to public lobbing, the strategy and belief profile in Lemma 5 is the same as in Lemma 1.

1. If the IG is connected to $j \neq A$ such that $c_j > \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, the strategy and belief profile is the same as in Lemma 2. Therefore, following the proofs of Proposition 2 and 4, the value of a connection is equal to $V(j)$ as characterized in Proposition 4.

2. If the IG is connected to policymaker $j \neq A$ such that $c_j \leq \frac{\sqrt{(1-q)(4-3q)}-(1-q)}{2q}$, then Lemma 6 shows that the IG cannot induce policy $x = 1$ with private lobbying. The value of lobbying is therefore equal to $V(j) = 0$.

3. If the IG is connected to the agenda setter, the strategy and belief profile in Lemma 7 is the same as in Lemma 4. Therefore, following the proofs of Proposition 3 and 5, the value of a connection is equal to $V(A)$ as characterized in Proposition 5.

□

D Varying majority requirements

We now consider the possibility that, instead of requiring a simple majority ($\frac{n+1}{2}$ voters in favor), the reform requires a supermajority of votes in order to pass. That is, the reform passes if and only if at least a fraction $\frac{s}{n} > \frac{n+1}{2n}$ of policymakers vote for it.

Proposition 10. *The value of a connection to a given policymaker j can be non-monotonic in the majority requirement.*

Proof of Proposition 10.

We first note that, since all policymakers are ordered according to their threshold c_i, for each super majority requirement $\frac{s}{n}$, there exists a policymaker with threshold c_s such that, when all policymakers share the same beliefs, any policymaker with threshold $c_i \leq c_s$ votes for the reform if s votes for the reform.

Case 1: connection to a non-agenda setter $j \neq A$.

Suppose that $c_M < 2c_A - 1 < c_A$, and consider two successive increases in the majority requirement. The first to $\frac{s}{n} > \frac{n+1}{2n}$ such that $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$, the second to $\frac{s'}{N} > \frac{s}{N}$

such that $c_{s'} \in (c_A, 1)$. Consider the value of a connection to policymaker j such that $2c_A - 1 < c_j < c_s,\ 2c_{s'} - 1$.

1. Under the simple majority requirement (when the pivotal policymaker is the median M), the value of a connection to policymaker $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_s]$ is equal to $V(j) = 0$. This follows from part 1 of Proposition 4 since $c_M < 2c_A - 1$.

2. When the majority requirement increases to $\frac{s}{n} > \frac{n+1}{2n}$, the pivotal voter's threshold becomes $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$. The value of a connection to policymaker $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_s]$ becomes $V(j) = c_s - c_j$. This follows from Part 2 of Proposition 4 since (1) $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$, (2) $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1 > 2c_s - 1$ (where the second inequality follows from the fact that $c_A > c_s$)), and (3) $c_j \leq c_s$ (which is the equivalent to the condition that $c_j \leq c_M$ in Proposition 4). Therefore, the value of a connection to j increases from 0 to $c_s - c_j > 0$ with the initial increase in the majority requirement. Intuitively, the original pivotal policymaker (the median) was too easy to persuade, so the agenda setter could not trust that the IG would share information privately with its connection, policymaker j, if the state turned out to be $\theta \in [c_M, c_j)$. This made the value to a connection j equal to zero. In addition, since the agenda setter does not trust the median, the value of public lobbying was zero when the median was pivotal. Instead, since j is easier to persuade than the new pivotal policymaker S ($c_j < c_s$), privately lobbying j is more valuable than public lobbying and the agenda setter trusts that the IG would not deviate to public lobbying.

3. When the majority requirement increases further so that the pivotal policymaker's threshold is $c_{s'} \in (c_A, 1)$ and $2c_{s'} - 1 > c_j$, the value of a connection to j becomes $V(j) = 0$. This follows from Part 3 of Proposition 4 since $c_{s'} \in [c_A, 1)$ and since $c_j < 2c_{s'} - 1$ (which is the equivalent to the condition $c_j < 2c_M - 1$ in Proposition 4). Therefore, the value of a connection to j decreases from $c_s - c_j > 0$ to 0. Intuitively, the initial pivotal policymaker (s) had a threshold large enough to be trusted by the agenda setter, but not so high that the pivotal voter would be persuaded by the endorsement of policymaker j. When the majority requirement increases, the policymaker's endorsement no longer persuades the new pivotal policymaker so the value of the connection drops to zero.

Therefore, the value of a connection to j such that $2c_A - 1 < c_j < c_s,\ 2c_{s'} - 1$ first increases from 0 to $c_s - c_j > 0$ as the majority requirement increases from $\frac{n+1}{2n}$ to $\frac{s}{n}$, and then decreases from $c_s - c_j > 0$ back to 0 as the majority requirement increases from $\frac{s}{n}$ to $\frac{s'}{n}$.

<u>Case 2:</u> connection to the agenda setter A.

Suppose that $c_M < 2c_A - 1 < c_A$, and consider two successive increases in the majority requirement. The first to $\frac{s}{n} > \frac{n+1}{2n}$ such that $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$, the second to $\frac{s'}{n} > \frac{s}{n}$ such that $c_{s'} \in \left(c_A, \frac{1+c_A}{2}\right)$.

1. Under the simple majority requirement (when the pivotal policymaker is the median M), the value of a connection to the agenda setter is $V(A) = 1 - c_A$. This follows from Part 4 of Proposition 5 since $c_M < 2c_A - 1 \Rightarrow c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$.

2. When the majority requirement increases to $\frac{s}{n} > \frac{n+1}{2n}$, the pivotal voter's threshold becomes $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$. The value of a connection to the agenda setter becomes $V(A) = 0$. This follows from Part 3 of Proposition 5 since (1) $c_s \in (2c_A - 1, c_A) \Rightarrow c_s < c_A < \frac{1+c_s}{2}$. Therefore, the value of a connection to the agenda setter decreases from $1 - c_A > 0$ to 0 with the initial increase in the majority requirement. Intuitively, the original pivotal policymaker was not trusted by the agenda setter. This means that public lobbying was not valuable, while privately lobbying the agenda setter was valuable. Instead, since the agenda setter trusts the new pivotal policymaker s (given $c_s > 2c_A - 1$) but the new pivotal voter is easier to persuade than the agenda setter, the IG always prefers to disclose her information publicly, with or without access to the agenda setter. The value of a connection to the agenda setter is therefore zero.

3. When the majority requirement increases further so that the pivotal policymaker's threshold is $c_{s'} \in \left(c_A, \frac{1+c_A}{2}\right)$, the value of a connection to the agenda setter becomes $V(A) = c_{s'} - c_A$. This follows from Part 2 of Proposition 5 since $c_{s'} \in \left(c_A, \frac{1+c_A}{2}\right) \Rightarrow 2c_{s'} - 1 < c_A < c_{s'}$. Therefore, the value of a connection to A increases from 0 to $c_{s'} - c_A > 0$. Intuitively, the initial pivotal policymaker (s) was too easy to persuade so the IG preferred to lobby publicly. When the majority requirement increases, the pivotal policymaker now becomes harder to persuade than the agenda setter but trusts the proposal of the agenda setter so privately lobbying the agenda setter becomes valuable again.

□

E Value of connection for policymakers

In this section, we compute the value of a connection to the connected policymaker. To do this, we compare the ex-ante expected utility of the connected policymaker in equilibrium to her ex-ante expected utility without a connection. This approach requires defining the counterfactual in which the policymaker is not connected to the IG. We consider two pos-

sibilities. First, that the IG has no connection at all, if not connected to the policymaker of interest, and can only lobby publicly. Second, that the IG has a connection to another policymaker if no connected to the policymaker of interest.

E.1 Counterfactual 1: no connection

Proposition 11. *Suppose that, if a policymaker is not connected to the IG, then the IG can only engage in public lobbying. The value of a connection to the policymaker is strictly positive if and only if the value of the connection is strictly positive for the IG.*

Proof of Proposition 11. We begin by solving for the expected utility of policymaker i with threshold c_i when the policymaker is not connected to the IG. In this case, the IG is restricted to public lobbying. Given Proposition 1, the agenda setter proposes policy $x = 1$ if and only if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$. A majority of policymakers then vote in favor of the policy if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$. The policy chosen is therefore:

$$x = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \text{ or if } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \text{ but } \theta < c_M \\ 1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The ex-ante expected utility of policymaker i when not connected is therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} U_i^N &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ \mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_M)\left(\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_M] - c_i\right) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_M) \times 0 & \text{if } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases} \\ &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

Next, we compute the policymaker's expected utility when she is connected to the IG and her value of being connected relative to not being connected. We consider two cases.

Case 1: the policymaker is not the agenda setter: $i \neq A$. We say that i is effective if c_i satisfies all three conditions in Proposition 2, that is $c_i \geq 2c_A - 1$, $c_i \geq 2c_M - 1$ and $c_i \leq c_M$. Note that, if i is effective, we must have $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ since i being effective implies

$\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} \leq c_i \leq c_M$. In this case, following Proposition 2, the policy chosen is:

$$x = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i \text{ is effective and } \theta \geq c_i \\ 1 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \text{ and } \theta \geq c_M \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The ex-ante expected utility of policymaker i when she is connected is therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} U_i^C &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ \mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_M)\left(\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_M] - c_i\right) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_M) \times 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ \mathbb{P}(\theta \geq c_i)\left(\mathbb{E}[\theta \mid \theta \geq c_i] - c_i\right) + \mathbb{P}(\theta < c_i) \times 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is effective} \end{cases} \\ &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_i)\left(\frac{1+c_i}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is effective} \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

As a result, the value of being connected, $U_i = U_i^C - U_i^N$ is:

$$\begin{aligned} U_i &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_i)\left(\frac{1+c_i}{2} - c_i\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is effective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases} \\ &= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective} \\ \frac{(c_M - c_i)^2}{2} & \text{if } i \text{ is effective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

Case 2: the policymaker is the agenda setter: $i = A$**.** We say that A is effective whenever the value of a connection to A is positive in Proposition 5, that is, when $2c_M - 1 \leq c_A \leq c_M$ or $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$. In this case, following Proposition 3, the policy chosen is:

$$x = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } A \text{ is effective and } \theta \geq c_A \\ 1 & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \text{ and } \theta \geq c_M \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The ex-ante expected utility of the agenda setter when she is connected is therefore:

$$U_A^C = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_A)\left(\frac{1+c_i}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } A \text{ is effective} \end{cases}$$

As a result, the value of being connected, $U_A = U_A^C - U_A^N$ is:

$$U_A = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_A)\left(\frac{1+c_A}{2} - c_A\right) - 0 & \text{if } A \text{ is effective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_A)\left(\frac{1+c_A}{2} - c_A\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } A \text{ is effective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases}$$

$$= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } A \text{ is ineffective} \\ \frac{(1-c_A)^2}{2} & \text{if } A \text{ is effective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ \frac{(c_M-c_A)^2}{2} & \text{if } A \text{ is effective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \end{cases}$$

The results from Case 1 indicate that, for any $c_i \neq c_M$, $U_i > 0$ if and only if i is effective. That is, if $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} < c_i < c_M$. Proposition 4 shows that $V(i) > 0$ if and only if $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} < c_i < c_M$. Therefore, the value of a connection to policymaker i is strictly positive if and only if it is strictly positive for the IG.

The results from Case 2 indicate that $U_A > 0$ if and only if A is effective. Since we defined A as effective whenever $V(A) > 0$ in Proposition 5, then the value of a connection to the agenda setter is also strictly positive if and only if it is strictly positive for the IG. □

E.2 Counterfactual 2: connection to another policymaker

We now assume that, if the IG is not connected to policymaker i, it is connected to another policymaker j. In this case, the value to the policymaker of being connected to the IG can be positive even if the policymaker is not effective, but it can also be strictly negative.

Proposition 12. *Suppose that, if a policymaker i is not connected to the IG, then the IG can engage in private lobbying with another policymaker j. The value of a connection for policymaker i can be strictly positive or strictly negative even when policymaker i is not effective.*

Proof of Proposition 12. The expected utility of policymaker i from being connected to the

IG is the same as in the proof of Proposition 11. However, the expected utility from not being connected now depends on the identity of the alternative connection. To prove Proposition 12 it is sufficient to derive this value for an alternative policymaker i who is not the agenda setter, but the results would also extend to the case where the alternative is the agenda setter.

The policy chosen when the IG is connected to policymaker $j \notin \{i, A\}$ is:

$$x = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } j \text{ is effective and } \theta \geq c_j \\ 1 & \text{if } j \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \text{ and } \theta \geq c_M \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

The expected utility of policymaker i when the IG is connected to policymaker $j \notin \{i, A\}$ is:

$$U_i^N = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } j \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } j \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } j \text{ is effective} \end{cases}$$

As a result, the value of being connected, $U_i = U_i^C - U_i^N$ is:

1. If j is ineffective,

$$U_i = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective and } c_M < 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective but } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ (1 - c_i)\left(\frac{1+c_i}{2} - c_i\right) - (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is effective}^{22} \end{cases}$$

$$= \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective} \\ \frac{(c_M - c_i)^2}{2} & \text{if } i \text{ is effective} \end{cases}$$

2. If j is effective,[23]

$$U_i = \begin{cases} (1-c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2}-c_i\right)-(1-c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2}-c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective} \\ (1-c_i)\left(\frac{1+c_i}{2}-c_i\right)-(1-c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2}-c_i\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is effective} \end{cases}$$
$$= \begin{cases} (c_M-c_j)\left(\frac{(c_i-c_j)-(c_M-c_i)}{2}\right) & \text{if } i \text{ is ineffective} \\ \frac{(c_i-c_j)^2}{2} & \text{if } i \text{ is effective} \end{cases}$$

Therefore, when j is ineffective, $U_i > 0$ if and only if i is effective and $U_i \geq 0$ in all cases. However, when j is effective, $U_i > 0$ if i is also effective, but the following two cases are also possible:

(a) $U_i > 0$ when i is ineffective. This occurs for instance when $c_i > c_M > c_j > \max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\}$. In this case, i is ineffective since $c_i > c_M$ but j is effective since $c_M > c_j > \max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\}$ so the first case applies. Since $c_M > c_j$, $c_i > c_j$, and $c_i > c_M$, then $U_i = (c_M - c_j)\left(\frac{(c_i-c_j)-(c_M-c_i)}{2}\right) > 0$. Intuitively, if $c_i > c_M > c_j$, policymaker i is more aligned with the median than with policymaker j. Since being an ineffective connection forces the IG to lobby publicly, it leads to a better outcome for policymaker i than if the IG privately lobbies policymaker j.

(b) $U_i < 0$ when i is ineffective. This occurs for instance when $c_M > c_j > \max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\} > c_i$. In this case, i is ineffective since $c_i < \max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\}$ but j is effective since $c_M > c_j > \max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\}$, so the first case applies. Since $c_M > c_j$, but $c_j > c_i$, and $c_M > c_i$, then $U_i = (c_M - c_j)\left(\frac{(c_i-c_j)-(c_M-c_i)}{2}\right) < 0$. Intuitively, since $c_M > c_j > c_i$, policymaker i is more aligned with policymaker j than with the median. Since being an ineffective connection forces the IG to lobby publicly, it leads to a worse outcome for policymaker i than if the IG privately lobbies policymaker j.

Intuitively, by being connected to the IG, the policymaker prevents the IG from being connected to another policymaker. If that alternative policymaker is very misaligned with the connected policymaker but effective, then being connected with the IG can prevent the legislature from implementing a reform that the connected policymaker disliked. However, if the alternative policymaker is aligned with the connected policymaker and effective, then

[23]Note that we must have $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ since j being effective implies $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} < c_j < c_M$.

being connected with the IG prevents the implementation of a reform that the connected, but ineffective, policymaker would have liked.[24] □

E.3 Proofs of Implications

Proof of Implication 1. We can prove this result by contradiction. Suppose that $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} > \frac{1}{2}$. By Proposition 4, a policymaker $j \in N$ is valuable only if $c_j \geq 2c_A - 1$ (when $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$) or $c_j \geq 2c_M - 1$ (when $c_M \in [c_A, 1)$). So a policymaker $j \in N$ is valuable only if $c_j \geq \max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\}$ Therefore, if $\max\{2c_A - 1, 2c_M - 1\} > \frac{1}{2}$, the only valuable policymakers are such that $c_j > \frac{1}{2}$. So there cannot exist friendly policymakers with whom a connection is valuable. □

Proof of Implication 2. Consider two policymakers, $j = A$ and $j \neq A$ such that $c_j = c_A$.

'If' part: If $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, then $c_M < 2c_A - 1$. By Proposition 5 (case 4), the value of the agenda setter, $j = A$, is $V(A) = 1 - c_A$. By Proposition 4 (case 1), the value of policymaker $j \neq A$ is $V(j) = 0$. Therefore if $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, then $V(A) > V(j)$ for any $j \neq A$ such that $c_j = c_A$.

'Only if' part: Suppose that $c_A \leq \frac{1+c_M}{2}$. There are three cases:

1. If $c_A < 2c_M - 1$, the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter is $V(A) = 0$ by Proposition 5 (case 1) and the value of privately lobbying $j \neq A$ is $V(j) = 0$ for any j such that $c_j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ by Proposition 4 (case 3). Since $c_A < 2c_M - 1$, then a policymaker $j \neq A$ with $c_j = c_A$ has a value of $V(j) = 0$ so the agenda setter is just as valuable as another policymaker with $c_j = c_A$.

2. If $c_A \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$, the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter is $V(A) = c_M - c_A$ by Proposition 5 (case 2). The value of privately lobbying $j \neq A$ is $V(j) = c_M - c_A$ for any j such that $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ by Proposition 4 (case 3). Since $c_A \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$, then a policymaker $j \neq A$ with $c_j = c_A$ has a value of $V(j) = c_M - c_A$ so the agenda setter is just as valuable as another policymaker with $c_j = c_A$.

3. If $c_A \in \left(c_M, \frac{1+c_M}{2}\right)$, the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter is $V(A) = 0$ by Proposition 5 (case 3). The value of privately lobbying $j \neq A$ is $V(j) = 0$ for any j such that $c_j \notin [2c_A - 1, c_M]$ by Proposition 4 (case 2). Since $c_A \in \left(c_M, \frac{1+c_M}{2}\right)$, then

[24] Underlying this result, however, is the assumption that the IG can only be connected to one policymaker at a time.

$c_A > c_M$, so a policymaker $j \neq A$ with $c_j = c_A$ has a value of $V(j) = 0$ and the agenda setter is just as valuable as another policymaker with $c_j = c_A$.

Therefore, the only case where the agenda setter is strictly more valuable than another policymaker $j \neq A$ with $c_j = c_A$ is when $c_A > \frac{1+c_M}{2}$. □

Implication 3. *Public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying any policymaker $j \in N$ if either:*

1. $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$ *and, for any* $j \in N \neq A$, *either* $c_j > c_M$ *or* $c_j < 2c_A - 1$, *or*
2. $c_M > \frac{1+c_A}{2}$ *and, for any* $j \in N \neq A$, *either* $c_j > c_M$ *or* $c_j < 2c_M - 1$.

Proof of Implication 3. From the proof of Propositions 4 and 5, we can identify the parameter values for which public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$:

1. If $c_M \in (\frac{1}{2}, 2c_A - 1)$, the value of public lobbying is zero, so public lobbying cannot be strictly more valuable than private lobbying for any $j \in N$.
2. If $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$, the value of public lobbying is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ such that $c_j \in (2c_A - 1, c_M)$ is strictly greater than public lobbying by Proposition 4. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ with $c_j < 2c_A - 1$ is 0 because the agenda setter is not willing to propose the reform. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ with $c_j > c_M$ is $1 - c_j$ which is strictly less than $1 - c_M$ since $c_j > c_M \Rightarrow 1 - c_j < 1 - c_M$. Therefore, when $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$ public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying any $j \in N \neq A$ such that $c_j < 2c_A - 1$ or $c_j > c_M$.
3. If $c_M \in (c_A, 1)$, the value of public lobbying is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ such that $c_j \in (2c_M - 1, c_M)$ is strictly greater than public lobbying by Proposition 4. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ with $c_j < 2c_M - 1$ is 0 because the median is not willing to follow their endorsement. The value of privately lobbying some policymaker j with $c_j > c_M$ is $1 - c_j$ which is strictly less than $1 - c_M$ since $c_j > c_M \Rightarrow 1 - c_j < 1 - c_M$. Therefore, when $c_M \in (c_A, 1)$ public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying any $j \in N \neq A$ such that $c_j < 2c_M - 1$ or $c_j > c_M$.

Similarly, we can directly identify from Proposition 5 situations in which public lobbying is strictly more profitable than privately lobbying the agenda setter:

1. If $c_A < 2c_M - 1$, the value of public lobbying is $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$ which is strictly greater than the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter: $V_A^{Pr} = 0$.

2. If $c_A \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$, the value of public lobbying is also $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$, which is weakly lower than the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter: $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

3. If $c_A \in \left(c_M, \frac{1+c_M}{2}\right)$, the value of public lobbying is also $V^{Pu} = 1 - c_M$, which is strictly greater than the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter: $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

4. If $c_A \geq \frac{1+c_M}{2}$, the IG cannot induce policy $x = 1$ with public lobbying, so $V^{Pu} = 0$. So the value of public lobbying is weakly lower than the value of privately lobbying the agenda setter, $V_A^{Pr} = 1 - c_A$.

Therefore, public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying the agenda setter when either $c_A < 2c_M - 1 \Leftrightarrow \frac{1+c_A}{2} < c_M$ or when $c_A \in \left(c_M, \frac{1+c_M}{2}\right) \Leftrightarrow 2c_A - 1 < c_M < c_A$. Moreover, public lobbying is strictly more valuable than privately lobbying some policymaker $j \in N \neq A$ such that $c_j < 2c_A - 1$ or $c_j > c_M$ when $c_M \in (2c_A - 1, c_A)$, and such that $c_j < 2c_M - 1$ or $c_j > c_M$ when $c_M \in (c_A, 1)$. If all policymakers $j \in N \neq A$ satisfy these conditions, then there are no policymakers that are more valuable than public lobbying. □

F Proofs of additional results

F.1 Alternative equilibrium selection criteria

The model we solve has multiple equilibria. In some of these equilibria, the IG is not more effective when lobbying privately than when lobbying publicly, so the value of a connection is zero. Therefore, the positive value of a connection depends on the choice of equilibrium and the criteria we use for equilibrium selection. In our model, we focus on the sender-preferred equilibrium, which gives us an upper bound on the value of a connection. We now show that our results also continue to hold with some, but not all, alternative equilibrium selection criteria. In particular, we show that, for a range of thresholds c_j of the connection j, the sender-preferred equilibrium is also the agenda-setter preferred equilibrium.

The equilibrium multiplicity arises due to the range of beliefs the policymakers could form when the IG conceals information, $r_j = \emptyset$ or $r_P = \emptyset$. We first note the following: Under public lobbying, the equilibrium in which the IG discloses any θ is outcome-equivalent to the equilibrium in which the IG discloses θ if and only if $\theta \geq c_M$. This observation is already explained in the Proof of Lemma 1. Since the median rejects the policy when $\theta < c_M$, the policy fails whether or not the IG discloses θ. This also holds for the IG's disclosure strategy

when engaging in private lobbying: When the IG only shares information privately with a connection j, the equilibrium in which the IG discloses any θ to j is outcome equivalent to the equilibrium in which the IG discloses θ if and only if $\theta \geq c_j$. The logic is the same as in the public lobbying case: the policymaker fails to endorse policy $x = 1$ whether the IG discloses $\theta < c_j$ or conceals it. The only concealment strategy that can therefore affect the outcome is the IG's choice to not disclose the information publicly when engaging in private lobbying. That is, the strategy $r_P(\theta) = \emptyset$ for all $\theta \in [0, 1]$ as part of the strategy described in Lemma 2.

Lemma 8. *The following strategy and belief profile is an equilibrium:*

1. *The IG discloses all states privately to j: $r_j = \theta$ for any θ.*
2. *Policymaker j endorses the reform if and only if $\theta \geq c_j$.*
3. *The IG discloses all states publicly: $r_P = \theta$ for any θ.*
4. *Policymaker i votes in favor of the reform if and only if $\theta \geq c_i$.*
5. *All policymakers believe that, if $r_P = \emptyset$, the state is distributed uniformly on $[0, c_M]$.*
6. *The agenda setter proposes the reform, $\tilde{x} = 1$ if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$.*

In this alternative equilibrium, the reform passes if and only if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and $\theta \geq c_M$. The IG's expected payoff is $V = 1 - c_M$ from both public and private lobbying. The agenda setter's expected payoff is $U_A = (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right)$ if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ and $U_A = 0$ otherwise.

Proof of Lemma 8. The on-path beliefs are trivial. The voting and endorsement strategies follow from sincere voting and sincere endorsement. Given our equilibrium concept (weak PBE), there are no restrictions on off-path beliefs, so following $r_P = \emptyset$ (which is off-path), the policymakers can believe that the state is distributed uniformly on $[0, c_M]$. Given these beliefs, any policymaker with threshold $c_i > \frac{c_M}{2}$ votes for the status quo following $r_P = \emptyset$. As a result, the reform fails whenever the IG deviates from $r_P = \theta$ to $r_P = \emptyset$. The agenda setter anticipates that, if proposed, the reform will pass whenever $\theta \geq c_M$ and is therefore happy to propose the reform only if $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$ (following the proof of Proposition 1). □

We call this equilibrium the *full disclosure* equilibrium. Instead, we refer to the equilibrium described in Lemma 2 as the *partial disclosure* equilibrium. The following results shows that the partial disclosure equilibrium can be both the IG-preferred and the agenda setter-preferred equilibrium.

Proposition 13. *The partial disclosure equilibrium is the agenda-setter preferred one if:*

1. $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, *or*
2. $c_M \in [2c_A - 1, c_A]$ *and the IG has a connection to* j *with* $c_j \geq c_M$, *or*
3. $c_M \in [c_A, 1)$ *and the IG has a connection to* j *with* $c_j \in [\max\{2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1\}, c_M]$.

Proof of Proposition 13. We simply compare the ex-ante expected payoff of the agenda setter in the two equilibria. In the full disclosure equilibrium, the ex-ante expected payoff of the agenda setter is:

$$U_A^F = \begin{cases} (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } c_M \geq 2c_A - 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

In the partial disclosure equilibrium, the ex-ante expected payoff of the agenda setter is:

1. If $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, $U_A = 0$ since the status quo is always maintained.
2. If $c_M \in [2c_A - 1, c_A]$,

$$U_A^P = \begin{cases} (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } c_j \geq c_M \\ (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{if } c_j < 2c_A - 1 \end{cases}$$

   Therefore, if $c_j \geq c_M$, the two equilibria are payoff-equivalent for the agenda setter. If $c_j < 2c_A - 1$, the full disclosure equilibrium is strictly preferred by the agenda setter. Finally, if $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M)$, the full disclosure equilibrium is strictly preferred by the agenda setter since $(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) < (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) \Leftrightarrow c_j \in [2c_A - c_M, c_M)$ but $2c_A - c_M > c_M$ if $c_A > c_M$.

3. If $c_M \in [c_A, 1)$,

$$U_A^P = \begin{cases} (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } c_j \geq c_M \\ (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) & \text{if } c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M] \\ 0 & \text{if } c_j < 2c_M - 1 \end{cases}$$

   Therefore, if $c_j \geq c_M$, the two equilibria are payoff-equivalent for the agenda setter. If $c_j < 2c_M - 1$, the full disclosure equilibrium is strictly preferred by the agenda setter. Finally, if $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M)$, the partial disclosure equilibrium is strictly preferred by the agenda setter since $(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) < (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) \Leftrightarrow$

$c_j \in [2c_A - c_M, c_M)$ and since $2c_A - c_M < c_M$ if $c_A > c_M$.

□

Finally, we note that the full disclosure equilibrium is the most informative equilibrium if we define the most informative equilibrium as the equilibrium which reduces the ex-ante probability that the policy is the wrong policy given the state for a majority of policymakers. Therefore, selecting the most informative equilibrium does not necessarily correspond to the agenda setter-preferred or the IG-preferred equilibrium. However, note that the agenda setter remains a valuable connection even when using the most informative equilibrium as an equilibrium selection criterion. Indeed, in the full disclosure equilibrium, the agenda setter would refuse to propose the reform whenever $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, unless the IG is connected to the agenda setter and the state is $\theta \geq c_A$.

F.2 Uncertainty over the IG's connection

Suppose that the agenda setter does not know for certain to which policymaker j the IG has access (unless the IG has access to the agenda setter herself). Instead, the agenda setter believes that the IG has access to policymaker j with probability p_j for each $j \in N_A$, where $N_A := N \setminus \{A\}$.

Proposition 14. *If the agenda setter does not know for certain to which policymaker j the IG has access,*

1. *If $c_M < 2c_A - 1$, the value of a connection is $V(j) = 0$.*
2. *If $2c_A - 1 \leq c_M \leq c_A$, and*

$$\sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \geq c_M\}} p_j(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1 + c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} p_j(1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1 + c_j}{2} - c_A\right) \geq 0$$

   then the value of a connection is $V(j) = c_M - c_j$ for any $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ and $V(j) = 0$ for any $c_j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M]$.

3. *If $2c_A - 1 \leq c_M \leq c_A$, but*

$$\sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \geq c_M\}} p_j(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1 + c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} p_j(1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1 + c_j}{2} - c_A\right) < 0$$

   then the value of a connection is $V(j) = 0$ for any $c_j \in [0, 1]$.

4. *If $c_A < c_M$, the value of a connection is $V(j) = c_M - c_j$ for any $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ and $V(j) = 0$ for any $c_j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M]$.*

Therefore, compared to the case where the connection is known to the agenda setter, the value of a connection increases for $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1]$ when $2c_A - 1 \leq c_M \leq c_A$, and $\sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \geq c_M\}} p_j(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} p_j(1 - cj)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) \geq 0$ and decreases for $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$ when $2c_A - 1 \leq c_M \leq c_A$, and $\sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \geq c_M\}} p_j(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} p_j(1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) < 0$. In all other cases, the value of a connection remains the same.

Proof of Proposition 14. We first summarize the equilibrium strategy of the policymakers and the IG once the reform is proposed and the expected utility of the agenda setter given that the IG is connected to some policymaker j. If $c_j \geq c_M$, the IG shares information privately with j if $s \geq c_j$, publicly if $s \in [c_M, c_j)$, and withholds it otherwise. The median follows the endorsement. The reform therefore passes whenever $s \geq c_M$. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the reform is $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right)$. If $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$, the IG shares information privately with j if $s \geq c_j$ and withholds it otherwise and the median follows the endorsement. The reform therefore passes whenever $s \geq c_j$. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the reform is $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right)$. If $c_j < 2c_M - 1$, the median does not follow the endorsement so the IG shares information publicly instead. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the reform is $U_A(\tilde{x} = 1) = (1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right)$.

We now turn to the agenda setter's decision to propose the reform. Let F the CDF of c_j given the distribution over the IG's connection, $\{p_j\}_{j \in N_A}$. Consider the following three cases:

1. **Case 1:** $c_M < 2c_A - 1$. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the reform is:

$$\mathbb{E}[U_A(\tilde{x} = 1)] = (1 - F(c_M))(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1 + c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} p_j(1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1 + c_j}{2} - c_A\right)$$

   This is less than the expected utility from the status quo, 0 since $c_M < 2c_A - 1$ implies $\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A < 0$ for any $c_j \leq c_M$. So the agenda setter never proposes the reform and the value of a connection is zero.

2. **Case 2:** $2c_A - 1 \leq c_M \leq c_A$. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the

reform is:

$$\mathbb{E}[U_A(\tilde{x}=1)] = (1 - F(c_M) + F(2c_M - 1))(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]\}} (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1]\}} (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right)$$

This can be either greater or smaller than the utility from the status quo, depending on the distribution $\{p_j\}_{j \in N_A}$, since $\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A \geq 0$ (as $c_M \geq 2c_A - 1$) and $\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A > 0$ for $c_j \in [2c_A - 1, c_M]$ but $\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A < 0$ for $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, 2c_A - 1]$. If it is greater than zero, then the agenda setter proposes the reform and the value of private lobbying is $V_j^{priv} = 1 - c_M$ for any $j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ and equal to $V^{priv} = 1 - c_j$ for any $j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$. Subtracting the value of public lobbying in this case, $V^{Pub} = 1 - c_M$ gives the result. If the expression is negative, then the status quo always prevails to the value of access is 0.

3. **Case 3:** $c_A < c_M$. The agenda setter's expected utility from proposing the reform is:

$$\mathbb{E}[U_A(\tilde{x}=1)] = (1 - F(c_M) + F(2c_M - 1))(1 - c_M)\left(\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A\right) + \sum_{\{j \in N_A | c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]\}} (1 - c_j)\left(\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A\right)$$

This is always greater than the expected utility from the status quo, 0, since $\frac{1+c_M}{2} - c_A \geq 0$ (as $c_M \geq c_A > 2c_A - 1$) and $\frac{1+c_j}{2} - c_A > 0$ for $c_j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ since $2c_M - 1 > 2c_A - 1$ so $c_j > 2c_M - 1 \Rightarrow c_j > 2c_A - 1 \Rightarrow \frac{1+c_j}{2} > c_A$. Therefore, the agenda setter always proposes the reform and the value of private access is $V_j^{priv} = 1 - c_M$ for any $j \notin [2c_M - 1, c_M]$ and $V^{priv} = 1 - c_j$ for any $j \in [2c_M - 1, c_M]$. Subtracting the value of public lobbying in this case, $V^{Pub} = 1 - c_M$ gives the result.

□