Prioritized Interests: Diverse Lobbying Coalitions and Congressional Committee Agenda-Setting

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Abstract

For most congressional legislation, committee consideration is the first and most drastic winnowing point. Organized interest groups try to influence this winnowing. Many have suggested such influence arises from organizational resources. I offer an alternative view, based on the need of policy-motivated committee agenda-setters to assess the viability of bills prior to granting them consideration. Such needs incentivize agenda-setters to favor legislation supported by organizations representing diverse industries, causes, and other interests. Analyzing new data on organizations' positions on over 4700 bills introduced between 2005 and 2014, I show that committee consideration favors such "interest diverse" coalitions, and not coalitions that are large but homogeneous, or that give high levels of campaign contributions. These associations are stronger when viability information is more valuable; for majority party bills and bills introduced during divided government. This suggests that lobbying helps agenda-setters identify, and promote, legislation likely to garner widespread and diverse support.

Keywords: Congress, lobbying coalitions, agenda-setting, committee chairs, legislative politics

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How do organized interest groups influence lawmaking? Members of Congress and lobbyists for organized interest groups are among the most reviled figures in American life. Both are widely believed to be among the most unethical and dishonest professions, and there is widespread public perception that legislators pay too much attention to, and are influenced by, the desires of special interests, lobbyists, and campaign donors to the exclusion of constituents' concerns.[1] And indeed, interest groups commit substantial resources and efforts to gaining legislators' attention and exerting influence. In recent election cycles, interest groups have given – through Political Action Committees (PACs) – nearly half a billion dollars to federal campaigns, while spending over $ 3 billion per year to employ over 10,000 lobbyists.[2] Given the costs groups pay to accrue influence, and Americans' animosity toward that influence, one might assume that wealthy and well-resourced interests drive Congress's legislative agenda.

This is not clear from the available evidence. There have been conflicting findings about whether, or under what conditions, individual interest groups can influence the advancement of bills through the legislative process (Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Hojnacki, Kimball, Baumgartner, Berry and Leech 2012). A possible explanation for these conflicting findings is that individual organizations rarely have much sway over legislative advancement. Instead, lobbying influences policymaking when coalitions of organizations lobby "together" (cf. Hula 1999) toward a shared objective, particularly when those coalitions are large (Gilens and Page 2014; Grossmann and Pyle 2013) or possess high levels of lobbying-relevant resources such as lobbyists or campaign contributions (Baumgartner, Berry, Hojnacki, Kimball and Leech 2009; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015). And so, if large or high-resource coalitions have greater legislative influence, those interests may bias lawmaking in their favor, and animosity towards

[1]Representative polls include: Megan Brenan, December 26th, 2017, "Nurses Keep Healthy Lead as Most Honest, Ethical Profession", Gallup, https://bit.ly/2DEBXPd; Michael W. Traugott, July 6th, 2016, "Americans: Major Donors Sway Congress More Than Constituents", Gallup, https://bit.ly/2Hcppki; Lydia Saad, April 11th, 2011, "Americans Decry Power of Lobbyists, Corporations, Banks, Feds", Gallup, https://bit.ly/2qLNPub . (all accessed April 18th, 2018)

[2]See https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/ and https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/ (accessed April 18th, 2018).

legislators and lobbyists alike may be well-founded.

In fact, we know little of how interest groups influence congressional agenda-setting. Though Schattschneider (1960) argued that policy agendas were the result of private interests reframing their conflicts into problems of broad concern, little subsequent scholarship has investigated this possibility. Instead, research on congressional organization emphasizes how institutionally empowered legislators shape the floor agenda, particularly in the House (Shepsle and Weingast 1995; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Krehbiel 1991), and leverage congressional institutions – namely, Congress's standing committees – to serve their objectives. In focusing exclusively on the needs of different groups of legislators, such research not only discounts interest group influence, but also devalues the stage of the legislative process where interest groups are most active.

This article examines interest group influence on the legislative agendas of Congress's standing committees. Though reforms of the 1970s and 1990s empowered majority party leaders at their expense (Sinclair 2011), committees remain, for most legislation, the first and most drastic winnowing point. In the post-reform Congress, committee neglect has been the proximate cause of death for 82 percent of all bills and 77 percent of majority party bills.[3] Accordingly, interest group lobbying emphasizes the committee stage. Previous research has found that lobbying activity is associated with the efforts of individual committee members (Esterling 2007; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998; Hall and Wayman 1990), with issue areas emphasized in committee hearings (Leech, Baumgartner, La Pira and Semanko 2005), and with bills being considered in committee (Grossmann and Pyle 2013; Drutman 2010). These studies link lobbying to committee politics, but cannot discern whether the interest group coalitions lobbying a congressional committee shape that committee's legislative agenda. To the extent that lobbying coalitions influence which bills advance or are winnowed out at the committee stage, they shape Congress's legislative agenda. But must a coalition be well-resourced or well-connected to be influential?

Beyond being large or wealthy, a lobbying coalition may also be diverse. In general, diverse coalitions are those whose members vary in some politically-relevant aspect, such as ideology, organizational style,

[3]Author's analysis of E. Scott Adler and John Wilkerson, *Congressional Bills Project: (1974-2014)*, NSF 00880066 and 00880061. Views expressed are the author's alone.

or issue focus. Such diversity is the subject of Phinney's (2017) study of the interest group politics surrounding Clinton-era welfare reform. In particular, Phinney examines the conditions giving rise to diverse coalitions, and finds that the welfare reform bill was more likely to include policy proposals supported by diverse coalitions. While diversity may affect legislative formulation, Phinney's study cannot discern whether interest group influence extends to shaping the larger legislative agenda. Nor is it clear whether diverse coalitions are more influential than coalitions that are large but homogeneous, or that are generous campaign donors.

Here, I examine whether coalitions with a particular type of diversity influence which legislative proposals gain committee consideration. Coalitions vary in the extent to which their member organizations represent diverse industries, social causes, and other interests. I theorize that bills supported by coalitions with higher levels of "interest diversity" are relatively efficient at attracting the sustained support of a critical mass of rank-and-file legislators. Because such bills are more likely to continue advancing if granted initial consideration, the committee agenda-setter has incentives to allocate committee agenda space to bills supported by interest diverse coalitions. To test this expectation, I analyze new data on over 13,000 organizations' positions on over 4700 bills introduced in Congress between 2005 and 2014 (the 109th through 113th Congresses). I find that bills supported by coalitions with higher levels of interest diversity are more likely to receive committee consideration. Moreover, this association is stronger among bills for which the chair has incentives to value information about legislative viability: those sponsored by majority party members or introduced during periods of divided government. At the same time, I find little association between committee consideration and lobbying coalitions' size, or their interests' PAC contributions. These findings are consistent with my argument that interest diverse lobbying coalitions influence committees' legislative agendas because that diversity helps committee agenda-setters assess legislative viability.

This article makes several important contributions. First, it examines interest group influence across many groups, bills, and issue areas, and across a period that featured several shifts of party control in both the legislative and executive branches. Thus, it offers insights about both lobbying in general and the interactions between interest group influence and political institutions. Second, this study expands understanding of how lobbying becomes influential. It shows that lobbying organizations' identification with unorganized interests outside of Washington allows committee agenda-setters to use the organizations lobbying on a bill as an informational cue to assess the bill's ability to garner broad, sustained support. In this sense, interest groups can "inform" agenda-setting in Congress irrespective of the content of their advocacy activity. Third, this article expands knowledge of the scope of lobbying's influence on lawmaking. If lobbying's influence is confined to individual legislators or to the content of individual bills, it has limited implications for lawmaking; if it can influence which proposals Congress attends to at all, those implications are that much more sweeping and systemic. However, these implications may not be entirely malign. Even though individual groups pursue narrow, parochial concerns, the systemic impact of lobbying includes a "bias" of congressional agendas toward legislation favored by broad elements of the American polity, economy, and society.

A Prospective Viability Theory of Committee Agenda-Setting

Building from several assumptions about legislators and interest group lobbying, I theorize how lobbying on a bill informs committee agenda-setters' beliefs about the legislative viability of that bill. This theory posits a scenario in which policy-motivated committee chairs must predict the intensity of both the support and the opposition that different legislative proposals will garner among other legislators. Lobbying helps chairs make these predictions, by showing them the breadth of interests with a stake in a bill as well as their support for or opposition to it. Anticipating how lobbying will mobilize rank-and-file legislators around different bills, chairs adjust their agenda-setting decisions.

This theory of interest groups as indicators of legislative viability rests on several assumptions.[4] First, legislators, including committee chairs, are motivated by the desire to advance legislation (Kingdon 1989; Fenno 1973). In addition to serving their policy goals, pursuing legislative advancement allows a legislator

[4]At a more basic level, I assume that: (i) committee chairs are rational actors; (ii) that lobbying on a bill is costly to interest groups; (iii) and that chairs can observe which groups are lobbying on a bill prior to making a decision about whether to grant that bill consideration.

to more effectively claim credit with constituents (Hall 1996) and to develop a reputation for legislative effectiveness that can be a source of influence within their chamber (Volden and Wiseman 2014). Second, committee chairs have some discretion in selecting bills for hearing. Indeed, chairs possess institutional prerogatives that allow them to select the topics, including bills, of hearings held by their committees (Oleszek 2011). This allows them, for many proposals in their committee's jurisdiction, to advance their own personal priorities in deciding whether to grant bills consideration.[5]

Third, with respect to particular bills, committee chairs observe other legislators' policy preferences and issue priorities with uncertainty. There is a constant crush of issues Congress might deal with, and many potential bills to address them. This makes it difficult for Congress to address problems (Jones and Baumgartner 2005), and also prevents individual legislators from developing coherent positions on every issue or bill. Instead, legislators take positions on most bills only *after* they have been granted agenda space (Kingdon 1995). Moreover, even if legislators had the opportunity develop priorities and preferences with respect to legislation, they wouldn't necessarily be able to do so. This is because there is an uncertain connection between a bill's provisions and its material and political effects (Arnold 1990). Indeed, reducing this uncertainty has been argued (e.g., Krehbiel 1991) to be a function of committee consideration of legislation. In deciding which bills to grant consideration, chairs by definition do not gain the benefits of having already granted that consideration.

Finally, I assume that interest group lobbying encourages legislators to invest effort on issues on which the legislator and interest group agree. This mobilization can result from many mechanisms: improving legislators' persuasiveness to their colleagues (Schnakenberg 2017); connecting legislators to important district interests (Hansen 1991; Kollman 1998); or subsidizing legislators' lawmaking efforts (Hall and Deardorff 2006; Esterling 2007). This implies that lobbying mobilizes allied legislators to more intensely support or oppose a bill.

[5]Chairs may incur prohibitive costs to neglect party priorities and reauthorization bills. However, party control of a given committee's agenda is conditional (Aldrich and Rohde 2001; Maltzman 1997), while the volume of reauthorizations varies by committee and over time (Adler and Wilkerson 2012). To the extent that either predominate, the empirical associations predicted here should be weaker.

These assumptions in place, a committee chair's decision-making can be characterized as the allocation of scarce agenda space among bills referred to her committee. In doing so, she will, to the extent possible, grant consideration to bills in such a way as to maximize her policy gains. In evaluating bills for this purpose, a chair may face a trade-off between a bill's value to her and its viability. Because she has discretion over her committee's agenda, she will prefer to allocate committee consideration to bills she prefers to the status quo while neglecting bills that she does not. However, because she derives utility from legislative advancement, her evaluation of a bill will be conditioned by her predictions regarding that bill's ability to advance further, should she grant it consideration. As a result, a chair should prefer granting consideration to bills that she prefers to the status quo *and* that are more likely to pass subsequent stages of the legislative process, all else equal. And, thus, a bill will be more likely to be granted consideration if the chair of its committee of referral has reason to believe that it will be viable in later legislative stages. Given this, forces that change a chair's assessment of a bill's viability also change the probability that the bill is granted committee consideration in the first place.

Interest Groups and Prospective Legislative Viability

Optimal committee agenda-setting would be straightforward if the chair could observe bill viability perfectly. However, chairs observe viability with uncertainty. To overcome this uncertainty, chairs look for cues in their political environment (Krutz 2005; Simon 1985). Lobbying can serve as such a cue, if chairs can learn about the viability of bills by observing the organizations lobbying on them.

Lobbying can affect the chair's perception of a bill's legislative viability. Viability requires that a bill garner from other legislators not only support, but sustained attention. The bill must remain a priority, lest other demands on legislators' time – from the crush of other policy problems to campaigning and fundraising obligations – sweep the bill aside. Because lobbying can intensify a legislator's support for or opposition to a bill, a lobbying effort able to mobilize many legislators affects whether a bill has the sustained support necessary to pass. Because chairs prefer granting consideration to viable bills, the influence of lobbyists on the intensity of a bill's support or opposition informs the chair's decision to grant the bill consideration.

At the same time, interest group influence rarely happens in isolation. In most cases, more than one group is lobbying on a bill at any given time. Groups often compete on legislative issues (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Holyoke 2011), forming what Baumgartner et al. (2009) refer to as two lobbying "sides"; supporters of a policy proposal and opponents of that proposal. Within a side, interest groups may coordinate lobbying efforts by forming coalitions with one another (Hula 1999). The construction of coalitions, and by extension sides themselves, helps interest groups gain large numbers of allies in Congress and, through them, policy influence (Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015). Thus, the factors that allow the groups on one side of a bill to intensify many legislators' support also make those groups more influential over committee chairs' agenda-setting decisions.

The Electoral Connection, Interest Diversity, and Legislative Viability

Interest groups help legislators connect their lawmaking activities to their reelection. Legislators seek reelection (Mayhew 1974; Kingdon 1989), but not by appealing to their median voter. Instead, they build support among a collection of industries, ethnic- or other identity-based communities, and other "subconstituencies" salient to their district's voters (Bishin 2009; Fenno 1978). These subconstituencies have distinct issue priorities and policy preferences, which their representatives benefit from pursuing (Sulkin 2005; Hall 1996). However, subconstituencies do not necessarily communicate their preferences on particular bills. Instead, legislators must infer these, either by investing scarce time and effort or by relying on a legislatively active proxy for their district interests.

This proxy role is served by interest groups. By definition, an organized interest group represents an industry, demographic group, social cause or other shared interest; they also monitor legislation and suggest policy proposals their members will prioritize. Thus, legislators use groups as proxies for broader societal or economic interests (Grossmann 2012*b*), and grant access to groups that represent key district interests (Hansen 1991; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998). However, each group can only appeal to a subset of legislators this way: those whose reelection prospects rely on the subconstituencies that the group represents. Thus, most interest groups cannot influence committee chairs' legislative agenda-setting decisions through the subconstituencies they represent. A lobbying *side* can overcome this limitation, if its members represent many different subconstituencies. Such coalitions' members may be electorally relevant to, and hence better able to gain access to, more legislators.

In addition to gaining access to more legislators, coalitions whose members represent many subconstituencies are also diverse. Coalitions can be diverse in many ways; for example, in their members' ideological or partisan identities, organizational styles, or preferred advocacy tactics. Phinney (2017), in the most thorough treatment of coalition diversity to date, argues that diverse coalitions are more likely to arise around a policy proposal that gains elite-level salience, faces strong opposition, or has uncertain policy consequences. Moreover, Tattersall (2013) and Phinney both argue that fostering coalition diversity can remit organizational benefits to a group, by introducing it to new ideas, innovative advocacy strategies, and a broader set of potential future group leaders. Thus, coalitions have both external and intrinsic incentives to foster their diversity. In addition, coalitions gain influence by promoting their diversity. Drawing on a signaling model, Phinney (2017) argues that legislators find diverse coalitions' signals about policy proposals more credible, for at least three reasons. First, diverse coalitions synergize their members' advocacy tactics and organizational networks. Second, they send a more heterogeneous signal to legislators about the quality of a legislative proposal. Third, diverse coalitions are harder to maintain, making their legislative signals costlier. Thus, legislators have reason to believe that bills favored by diverse coalitions are more deserving of their attention and support than those favored by homogeneous coalitions, all else equal.

Interest diverse coalitions combine the access-gaining benefits of subconstituency relevance with the heterogeneous signaling of diverse coalitions. I define a lobbying side's *interest diversity* as the degree of variety in distinct subconstituencies represented among its member organizations. For example, consider two sides of a hypothetical healthcare bill: one side consists of three pharmaceutical companies; the other consists of one doctors' association, one health insurance carrier, and one patient advocacy group. While the two sides are of equal size – three organizations each – the second side is more interest diverse because the interests its members represent are more distinct from one another. Interest diverse coalitions are more likely to include members representing important reelection subconstituencies for a given legislator. Hence, they should be better able to gain access to legislators than a homogeneous coalition, all else equal.

At the same time, because their diversity is observable and relevant to a given legislator, they will send more credible signals about the quality of a given bill; these signals will better mobilize that legislator to actively support or oppose the bill.

Coalition interest diversity may inform committee chairs' agenda-setting decisions. If an interest diverse coalition has formed on one side of a bill, legislators will observe that diversity and infer that the bill is not only good (or bad), but relevant to them. Thus, interest diverse coalitions will mobilize legislators' support for or opposition to a bill more effectively than less-diverse coalitions, all else equal. Moreover, because lobbying efforts tend to focus on the committee stage (Drutman 2010; Hojnacki and Kimball 1998), interest diversity can be observed by committee chairs prior to making their agenda-setting decisions. These qualities make interest diversity a useful heuristic for chairs in predicting the legislative viability of bills. If a bill's supporters are more interest diverse than its opponents, chairs have reason to believe that the bill will garner more support than opposition from legislators in the future. Likewise, if a bill's opponents are more interest diverse than their supporters, the bills' opposition may prove less viable. Hence, the balance of interest diversity across the two sides of a bill is a heuristic chairs can use to assess legislative viability. I expect that they will adapt their agenda-setting decisions in response to the interest diversity of the lobbying coalitions arrayed on that bill.

Hypothesis 1: To the extent that the set of interest groups supporting a bill is higher in interest diversity than that opposing the bill, the bill is more likely to be granted committee consideration.

Alternative Sources of Interest Group Influence

Though this article focuses on interest diversity as a source of interest group influence, prior research has identified two other important coalition attributes that may be sources of legislative influence. These sources are campaign contributions and organizational numbers. While the prospective viability theory posited here is agnostic as to the influence of contributions and side size themselves on committee consideration, either attribute may potentially confound the relationship between interest diversity and committee consideration. Thus, they are the subject of alternative hypotheses that this article will test.

Campaign Contributions. One of the most common concerns about organized interests is their ability to direct money to legislators' campaigns. Campaign contributions can incentivize legislators to get involved in issues (Esterling 2007; Hall and Wayman 1990), to grant access (Kalla and Broockman 2016; Powell and Grimmer 2016; Fouirnaies 2017), to introduce legislation (Box-Steffensmeier and Grant 1999), and to vote in accordance with a donor's preferences (Denzau and Munger 1986; Stratmann 1998). However, these individual-level changes do not often lead to increased legislative viability. Indeed, recent research by Mahoney and Baumgartner (2015) suggests that individual organizations' resources (including PAC) are not associated with the building of legislative support for a lobbying side; instead it is the total accumulation of resources among interests across the two sides of a bill that garners legislative support to one side or the other. Thus, a bill's viability may be buttressed if supporting interests' campaign contributions outweigh opponents', or undermined if opponents' contributions outweigh supporters'.

Hypothesis 2: To the extent the set of interest groups supporting a bill has higher levels of campaign contributions than that opposing the bill, the bill is more likely to be granted committee consideration.

Campaign contributions are prevalent in congressional politics, but it is unclear that this affords influence over bills' committee consideration. PAC contributions appear motivated by individual-level goals: buying access to key incumbents; rewarding voting behavior; and supporting the reelection of ideological allies. An impact of this individual-level influence on committee agendas is not automatic. Contributions may accrue access, but it is unclear what chairs can learn about the viability of a bill based on the contributions of organizations aligned for or against it, or if chairs observe campaign contribution levels from lobbying organizations the way they observe the interests those organizations represent (see Drutman 2010, p 835). Thus, there is reason to doubt that PAC contributions impact committee agenda-setting decisions.

Side Size. Alignment of interest groups across lobbying sides may influence whether a policy change is adopted. Gilens and Page (2014) find that the balance of interest group alignments between those supporting and those opposing a policy change is an important predictor of policy adoption, even when controlling for the preferences of middle-income citizens and economic elites. Legislators often know which organizations they tend to agree with on policy matters, and may follow signals from them (Kingdon 1989). Having a large number of organizations on one side might indicate that side's collective clout or ability to persuade legislators to their cause. Thus, larger sides may be more likely to prevail.

Hypothesis 3: To the extent that the set of interest groups supporting a bill has more organizations than that opposing the bill, the bill is more likely to be granted committee consideration

However, there are at least two reasons to doubt that sheer numbers make a lobbying side effective. First, groups vary substantially in their access to a given legislator; in particular, legislators prefer to grant access to interests that share their policy preferences or represent district interests (Bauer, Pool and Dexter 1964; Hansen 1991). A side can be large, but if its members can only access a few legislators then its influence may be limited. Second, coalition work is costly for individual coalition members (Hojnacki 1997). It would be counterproductive to coordinate a coalition among groups on a side unless that coordination provided benefits beyond what the members could accomplish on their own. Thus, large sides may be influential, but that influence should accrue from factors other than their size itself.

While I have argued for an informational rationale for interest group influence on committee agenda-setting, partisan and distributive considerations may also play a role. Partisan theories of legislative organization (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Aldrich and Rohde 2001) make no explicit predictions about the role of interest groups in legislative agenda-setting. Instead, they emphasize the role of majority party leaders in shaping Congress's legislative agenda to reflect their caucus's policy consensus (or lack thereof). This suggests that the key source of viability for a bill is the consensus around it within the majority party. Insofar as this consensus can be affected by interest diverse lobbying coalitions, partisan theories would predict Hypothesis 1. For their part, distributive theories (Adler and Lapinski 1997; Weingast and Marshall 1988) emphasize how Congress resolves the differing priorities of its members. In this framework, members join those committees with jurisdiction over programs their constituencies care about most, then ensure that each legislator secures policies preferred by their own, homogeneous, "high demanders" (cf. Weingast and Marshall 1988) by logrolling across committees. The key feature of this logrolling is that members not on a committee *defer* to the preferences of the members of the committee on programs within a committee's jurisdiction. Thus, under a distributive model, downstream viability is not a concern for committee agenda-setters, and appealing to diverse interests is unnecessary; distributive theories would not predict Hypothesis 1. Moreover, if agenda-setters care only about the "high demanders" relevant to their committees, bills supported by lobbying coalitions with lower levels of interest diversity might be more likely to gain committee consideration; thus, distributive theories might predict the *opposite* of Hypothesis 1. Though the purpose of this article is not to adjudicate between theories of legislative organization, my empirical strategy permits consideration of informational, distributive, and partisan mechanisms of interest group influence.

New Data on Interest Groups' Bill Positions, 2005-2014

To assess how committee consideration is shaped by interest groups, I collect new data on each. To capture committee consideration of bills, I use data from the Congressional Bills Project (CBP) and the legislative tracking website Govtrack. I also use Govtrack, the CBP, as well as data from the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP), for various control variables in the model estimates reported below. Summary statistics for all variables used in this analysis are presented in the Online Supplement.

Critically, I require data on interest groups' bill positions. Neither common source of lobbying data has such information for large numbers of bills. Many lobbying studies (e.g., Grossmann and Pyle 2013; Leech et al. 2005) rely on data gleaned from reports filed by lobbying organizations under the Lobby Disclosure Act (LDA). LDA reports specify issues, and sometimes bills, on which an organization lobbied. However, LDA reports rarely contain information about registrants' positions on particular bills; thus, they cannot test this article's empirical expectations. The other common data source is to interview or survey lobbyists (e.g., Baumgartner et al. 2009). Interviews can glean rich detail about groups' legislative activities, but are limited in two ways. First, the cost of conducting interviews often means that interview-based studies cover a small number of issue areas (see Baumgartner and Leech 1998). Second, lobbyists' perceptions color their explanations for phenomena, such as committee consideration, outside of their direct control. Thus, I can rely on neither LDA reports nor interviews for present purposes.

Instead, I collected new data on organizations' positions on congressional legislation. The non-profit, non-partisan organization Maplight documents public positions taken by interest groups, advocacy groups, institutions, and firms on specific bills, beginning in the 109th Congress (2005-2006).[6] Maplight

[6]Previous research uses Maplight data on individual bills (Galantucci 2015; Laposata, Kennedy and

researchers examine news stories, blogs, websites as well as letters sent by organizations to members of Congress. As of February 2016, Maplight had documented 67,827 positions (supporting, opposing, or "NA"[7]) taken by 13,603 organizations on 5,390 bills introduced during the 109th to 113th Congresses. I collected these data using Maplight's application programming interface (API).

Beyond the bill positions themselves, this analysis requires information on the interests a given group represents. For both, I rely on a taxonomy developed by the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP). The taxonomy includes over 400 interest group categories, allowing for nuanced distinctions between interests of different types.[8] Maplight applies these interest group categories to each organization taking a position on a particular bill, according to the particular organization's reasons for lobbying the bill. [9] For these interests' campaign contribution levels, I collected Federal Election Commission (FEC) data compiled by the CRP itself; CRP uses its taxonomy for categorizing campaign contributions. [10] Merging across these datasets results in a combined dataset of 4757 regular House (H.R.) and Senate (S.) bills from the 109th to 113th Congresses for which Maplight has documented at least one interest group position and the CRP has collected relevant campaign finance information.[11]

Glantz 2014; Moore, Powell and Reeves 2013). This article uses Maplight's entire dataset.

[7]In the analyses reported below, I treat positions of "NA" as an indication of interest in the bill, and so groups with "NA" positions are included in interest group salience measure, but no other variable.

[8]The taxonomy organizes interests at three levels: Sectors (e.g. Healthcare vs. Defense); Industries (e.g. Public Sector Unions vs. Transportation Unions, within the Labor sector); and "interest group categories" (e.g. Foreign Policy Hawks vs. Foreign Policy Doves, within the "Foreign & Defense Policy" industry, within the "Ideology/Single Issue" sector). For more information about these codes, see CRP's website (https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/slist.php, accessed August 27, 2017).

[9]More information can be found on Maplight's API page (https://maplight.org/data_guide/bill-positions-api/, accessed April 20th, 2018).

[10]For more information on the CRP methodology for categorizing contributions, see https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/methodology.php (accessed August 27th, 2017).

[11]I exclude from this analysis both reauthorization and appropriations bills. Lobbying on such bills is less focused on affecting its passage than on securing amendments to a program's funding levels or statutory authorization. To identify appropriations bills, I follow Grossmann and Pyle (2013) and find

The bills analyzed here are a large set of "newsworthy" bills, but not a random sample of bills. One criterion for "newsworthiness" is legislative advancement.[12] As a result, Maplight data exhibit some selection on this study's dependent variable, committee consideration. Indeed, the CBP reports that although only 7 percent of bills in the 109th to 113th Congresses received consideration in committee in their chamber of origin, about 30 percent of Maplight bills from the same time period were reported from committee. Sample selection procedures that, like Maplight's, are correlated with a dependent variable tend to attenuate causal effect estimates (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). Thus, the true effects of interest group lobbying side attributes may be larger than reported here.

The Dependent Variable: Committee Consideration. My theory concerns the allocation of consideration to bills in committee. By default, committee consideration has three stages: First, a hearing, which features testimony about the bill from witnesses – often, federal bureaucrats and representatives of firms or industries likely to be affected by the proposal in question; Second, a markup, in which committee members develop a specific bill, through amendments to an initial proposal; Third, a vote on whether to report the bill to the full chamber (Oleszek 2011). I focus on markups and reports. Granting a markup implies that a chair has settled on a specific bill, and any members (including the chair) who wish to amend the bill must put effort into developing those amendments (Evans 2001; Hall 1996). Hearings, by contrast, are often loosely tied to specific bills, but even when they are tightly connected, the viability of the bill being "heard" is not as important as drawing committee members' attention to it (Kingdon 1995). Thus, markup and reporting are the earliest definitive indications that a specific bill has been granted

bills whose titles include any of the following strings: "making appropriations", "making supplemental appropriations", "emergency supplemental appropriations", "making miscellaneous appropriations", and "supplemental appropriations". Reauthorization bills were identified as those including the string "reauthoriz" in their extended titles. This study's findings are robust to including both types of bills.

[12]Maplight describes its process for selecting bills for research as follows (http://maplight.org/us-congress/guide/data/support-opposition, retrieved March 28, 2016.): "We gather this data for newsworthy bills: bills that move forward in Congress or that are mentioned in the news or blogs. We do not research... ceremonial bills (such as naming post offices)."

agenda space. To collect which bills have received consideration, I used web scraping to gather records of bills' legislative progress from Govtrack. For each bill, if any full committee in the bill's chamber of origin marked up or reported the bill, I recorded the bill as having received *Markup or Reporting* and use this as the dependent variable in the models reported below. In the online supplemental materials, I show that the results presented here are robust to alternative measures of committee consideration.

Independent Variables: Lobbying Side Attributes. To test the hypotheses outlined above, I measure three attributes of the interest group sides on each bill. These attributes are a side's interest diversity, campaign contributions, and size.[13]

H1: Net Interest Diversity. mean 3.2, sd 8.9. Hypothesis 1 predicts that the balance of interest diversity across bill sides should be associated with committee consideration. To measure interest diversity, I use the CRP interest group categories assigned to each organization lobbying on a bill. I measure a side's interest diversity as the number of unique such categories among organizations on that side. To return to the earlier example, a side composed of three pharmaceutical companies would have an interest diversity score of 1, while a side comprised of one doctors' association, one health insurance carrier, and one patient advocacy group would have an interest diversity score of 3. To measure the balance of interest diversity between a bill's supporting organizations and its opposing organizations, I subtract the latter from the former; this produces a Net Interest Diversity score.

H2: Net Campaign Contributions - $2,675,000 increments. mean 3.3, sd 14.3. Hypothesis 2 predicts that the balance of campaign contributions across bill sides is associated with committee consideration. I measure campaign contributions at the level of the interest category rather than at the organization level. While doing so imposes limitations on the measure,[14] measuring at the interest level accounts for two common features of PAC contribution strategy: First, that legislators appear to be less responsive to

[13]Though the present analysis relies on difference measures between sides' attributes, an analysis breaking these attributes down by side might prove insightful about whether particular attributes work better for bill-supporting or bill-opposing sides. Such an analysis entails complex collinearity, and more subtle, issues that are beyond the scope of this article to address. Hence, I leave it to future work.

[14]Because not all organizations in an interest category lobby on any given bill, this may include irrelevant PAC contributions. However, this overcounting is likely balanced out across a bill's sides. Thus,

individual organizations than to the overall landscape of resources marshaled around an issue (Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015); Second, that many organizations do not have their own PACs but instead give indirectly (e.g., through their trade associations). Thus, for each bill, I identify the CRP category code of each organization lobbying on that bill (as for Net Interest Diversity), and use CRP campaign finance records to identify the total value of contributions made by PACs in the same category during the cycle in which the bill was introduced. I total these categories' contributions on each side[15], then subtract the opposing interests' contributions from the supporters' contributions. Thus, negative values of this variable indicate that opposing interests gave more contributions than supporting interests. I scale the variable in increments of $2,675,000, the number of voting members of Congress (535) multiplied by the maximum allowable PAC contribution to a candidate per cycle ($5000). Thus, a one-unit increase in this variable is equivalent to one additional organization supporting a bill giving the maximum contribution to every member of Congress.[16] Thus, at this scale, any association between campaign contributions and committee consideration should be large in magnitude.

H3: Net Side Size. mean 6.2 sd 21.7. Hypothesis 3 holds that when one side is comprised of more organizations than another, the side with more organizations lobbying is expected to win. This variable is the number of organizations supporting the bill minus the number opposing it.

Controls

Coalition diversity is not random across proposals. Phinney (2017) finds that coalition diversity is more likely to arise in certain political contexts. These include: (1) when a bill is salient to policy elites (i.e., lawmakers and interest groups); and (2) when a side has a strong opponent but the sides are still close

the interest level measure captures much of the same variation as would an organization-level measure.

[15]This potential multi-counting addresses instances in which organizations in the same category lobby on opposite bill sides. The net effect of that code's contributions is weighted by the balance of organizations with that code on each side.

[16]CRP reports that only four organizations gave this much in the 2013-14 cycle. See: https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/index.php?cycle=2014&party=A (accessed April 12, 2018).

enough that a new member on either side might tip the balance.[17] If these factors are also associated with committee consideration, they are potential confounds to any estimated relationship between diversity and consideration. I control for these using the Maplight data. To measure *Interest Group Salience* (mean 12.5, sd 25.8), I total the number of organizations taking any position on the bill. I measure a bill's *Legislative Salience* (mean 30.7, sd 50.3), as its total number of cosponsors. Finally, I compare the sides' sizes to measure the bill's *Interest Group Competitiveness* (-|# of Supporters - # of Opponents|). (mean -9.4, sd 20.5) Specifically, I subtract the number of opponents from the number of supporters, take the absolute value of that difference, and then multiply that absolute value by -1. The resulting quantity is a non-positive number that captures how closely sized the two sides are; as the numbers of supporters and opponents converge, it approaches zero.

There are also common institution- and sponsor- level factors that make a bill more likely to receive committee consideration. As strategic, close observers of legislative politics, lobbyists are likely to understand these factors and direct lobbying toward bills that are more likely to make legislative progress. I include an indicator of whether the sponsor was a *Majority Party Member* of their chamber, indicators of whether they were a *Committee Member*, a *Majority Party Committee Member* (i.e., an interaction effect of Majority Party and Committee Member) or the *Committee Chair* for the bill's committee of referral, as well as whether the bill was introduced during a period of *Unified Government*. A bill's *Issue Area* is indicated using the bills's CAP major topic code, and its *Congress* is that in which it was introduced.

Empirical Strategy

How does interest diversity influence committee agenda-setting? To address this question, I model whether each bill received committee consideration in its chamber of origin as a function of the Net

[17] Phinney also finds that a proposal's policy uncertainty encourages coalition diversity, but there is no standard measure for uncertainty. The best available proxy is introduction timing; bills introduced earlier in a Congress are more likely to be carried over from previous Congresses, and therefore may be better understood. The results reported below are robust to controlling for bill introduction timing.

Interest Diversity of the organizations lobbying on the bill, as well as the those organizations' Net Side Size, and the Net PAC Contributions of the interests they represent. I embed this model within a simple regression framework. My measure of committee consideration is a binary indicator. Also, there are likely both time-invariant characteristics of legislative issue areas as well as common shocks affecting all bills in a given Congress. To account for these, I employ mixed effects logistic regressions, with Congress fixed effects and major topic code random intercepts.[18]

Without exogenous variation in Net Interest Diversity, I cannot eliminate endogeneity bias in my model estimates. However, I can examine whether committee consideration patterns are more consistent with my argument that interest diversity serves as a heuristic for legislative viability than with other explanations of interest group influence. To do so, I proceed in two steps. First, I examine whether committee consideration is more strongly associated with Net Interest Diversity than with Net Side Size or Net PAC Contributions, which operationalize the most common alternative expectations of interest group influence. Second, I demonstrate that the relationships between these lobbying side attributes and committee consideration are non-linear in ways that my theory explains but alternative theories cannot. Specifically, I examine how coefficient estimates on lobbying side attribute variables change for bills with more ambiguous, if not necessarily lower, legislative viability – those introduced by majority party sponsors or during periods of non-unified government. If these estimates are higher for majority- than minority-party bills and higher for bills introduced in divided vis-à-vis unified government, it would be consistent with the theory that interest groups influence committee agenda-setting by influencing agenda-setters' perceptions of bills' likelihood of further legislative advancement.

[18] Though guidelines from Clark and Linzer (2015) and Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2012) support this modeling strategy, I report, in the Online Appendix, model estimates making a variety of assumptions about error structure. All model estimates lead to the same substantive conclusions.

Results: Committee Agendas Favor Bills Supported by Diverse Interests

The model estimates for the lobbying side attribute variables are depicted in Figure 1 and fully reported in the Online Appendix. The figure presents the estimated coefficients of four mixed effects logistic regression models where the outcome variable is committee consideration (markup or reporting). Model 1 (point estimates drawn as circles in Figure 1), the base model, regresses consideration on the lobbying coalition attributes (Net Interest Diversity, Net PAC Contributions, and Net Side Size), an indicator for the sponsor being in the majority party, Congress (period) fixed effects and Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) major topic code random intercepts. Model 2 (diamonds) also includes controls for factors that encourage diverse lobbying coalitions: interest group salience, legislative salience, and interest group competitiveness. Model 3 (squares) contains lobbying coalition attributes, a majority party indicator, Congress fixed effects, major topic code random intercepts, and controls for other factors that increase committee consideration: committee membership, the interaction of committee membership and majority party status, committee chair sponsor, and unified government. Model 4 (triangles) is the full model specification, including all controls. Results with respect to Net Interest Diversity and Net Side Size are consistent across all four models; Net PAC Contributions' coefficient point estimates are positive across all models, though not statistically significant in the full specification. Thus, while subsequent discussion characterizes all models, I focus on the full model specification (Model 4).

Net Interest Diversity is positively associated with committee agenda-setting. Across all models, its coefficient is positive and its 95% confidence interval excludes zero. Thus, high interest diversity among a bill's supporters (relative to its opponents) is associated with committee consideration. Figure 2 displays the predicted probability of committee consideration (markup or reporting), the full model specification, over the range of Net Interest Diversity, with other variables at their means. A shift from one standard deviation below mean Net Interest Diversity to one standard deviation above the mean is associated with at 9.3 percent increase in the probability that the bill will be granted some form of committee consideration. Given that, all else equal, a given bill only has a 30 percent chance of gaining committee consideration, this is a substantively significant improvement. This suggests that committee agenda-setters prefer to grant consideration to bills that are supported by a diverse range of industries,

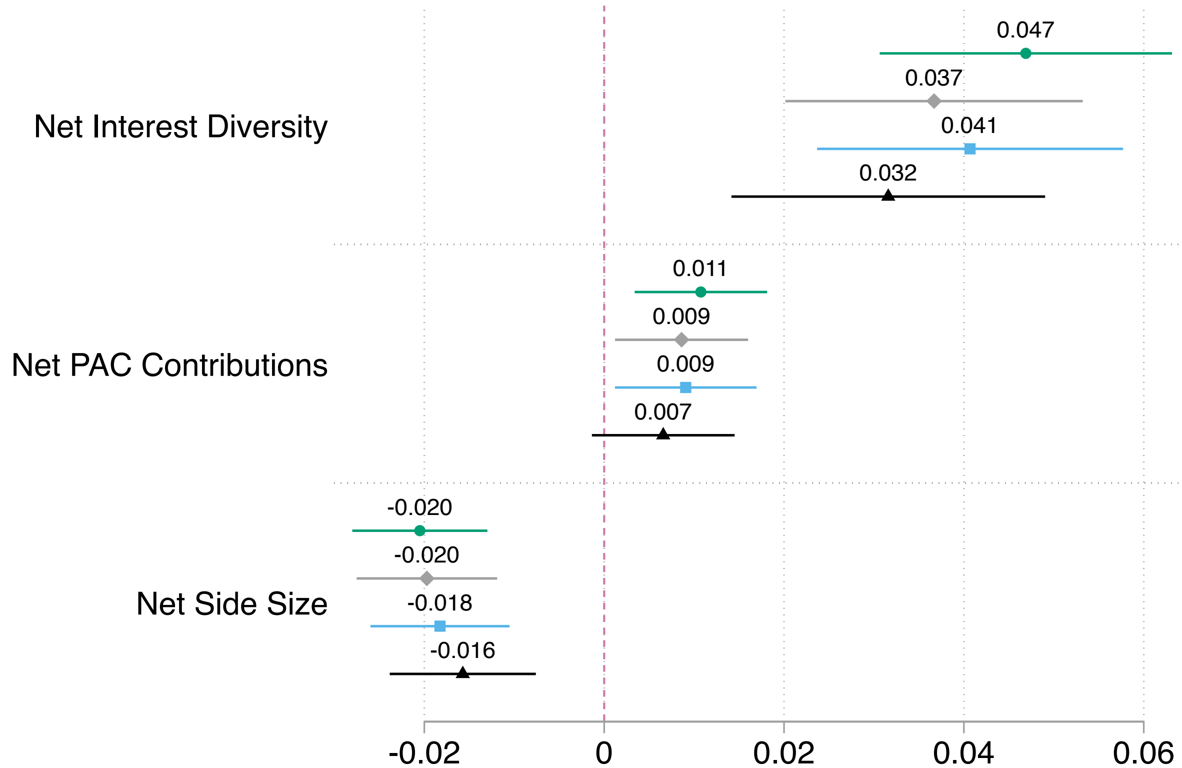

Figure 1: Lobbying Side Attributes and Committee Consideration Across Four Model Specifications

Point estimates (with 95% confidence intervals represented by solid lines) for coefficients of interest from the four mixed effects logit models of committee consideration. Coefficients from a given model share their point estimate marker's shape. Model 1 (Circle), the base model, contains the lobbying coalition attributes, a majority party indicator, Congress fixed effects, and issue area random intercepts. Model 2 (Diamond) adds controls for factors that encourage interest group diversity. Model 3 (Square) adds to the base model controls for factors that encourage committee consideration. Model 4 (Triangle) is the full model specification. Full results table in the Online Appendix.

social causes, and other interests.

Contrary to much discourse on money in politics, the direct impact of campaign contributions on committee agendas appears to be positive, but inconsistent and substantively negligible. The coefficient on Net PAC Contributions is statistically significant in all the models depicted in Figure 1 except in the full model specification (Model 4). Figure 2 displays the predicted probability of committee consideration (markup or reporting), in Model 4 of Figure 1, over the range of values of *Net PAC Contributions*. It depicts a weak relationship between *Net PAC Contributions* and committee consideration; though its degree of statistical significance (or lack thereof) varies by model specification, the coefficient on *Net*

PAC Contributions is very small regardless. This result is particularly surprising given that each one-unit increase in *Net PAC Contributions* represents giving the *maximum* annual single-PAC contribution to *every* member of Congress. Given this scale, if campaign contributions had the dominant agenda-buying power often attributed to them, we would expect to find an effect both more robust and much larger.

Also contrary to expectations, Net Side Size is *negatively* associated with committee consideration. Across all models, the coefficient of Net Side Size is negative and statistically significant. Figure 2 displays the marginal predicted probability over the range of Net Side Size (all other variables at their means), for Model 4 of Figure 1. A shift in Net Side Size from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean is associated with a 10.8 percent decrease in the probability that a bill received committee consideration. This complicates interpretation of the marginal effect of Net Interest Diversity, because a coalition would presumably increase diversity by adding new members. However, given that a one-standard deviation shift in Net Interest Diversity is 8.9 interest group categories, while a standard deviation shift in Net Side Size is 21.9 organizations, a side can add meaningful diversity without adding much counterproductive size.

Regardless, the negative coefficient on Net Side Size is counterintuitive. However, the theory advanced here is amenable to a finding that the coefficient on Net Side Size is small or non-positive. The theory contends that interest groups' influence is a product of their heuristic value to the agenda-setter. If so, and a coalition is homogenous, the marginal informational value of, and influence gained from, each coalition member is minimal. Moreover, other research (e.g., Hojnacki 1997) finds that coalitions require resource investments from coalition members. These investments might make coalition members, in aggregate, less effective than if they had been directed toward additional non-coalition lobbying. Thus, there is theoretical justification to anticipate that coalitions may not be productive if they are not more than the sum of their members. A non-positive coefficient on Net Side Size, therefore, is less surprising than it may seem at first. When examining Net Side Size without Net Interest Diversity (see the Online Appendix), it appears that the effect of Net Side Size is statistically indistinguishable from zero. This suggests either that the effect of side size by itself is indeed null, or else that side size is counterproductive unless new coalition members contribute something else to a coalition.

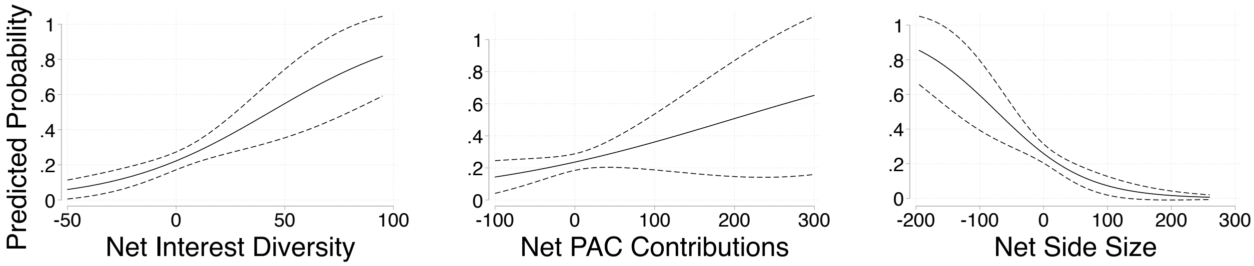

Figure 2: Effect of Lobbying Side Attributes on Predicted Probability of Consideration

Predicted probability (solid line), with 95% confidence intervals (dashed), of committee consideration across the range of each attribute with other variables at their means, from Model 4 of Figure 1.

Last, as I report in the Online Appendix, results with respect to other controls are consistent with prior work. Majority party status, committee membership, the interaction thereof, committee chairmanship, and unified government are all positively associated with committee consideration. The coefficient on Number of Cosponsors is small and likely attributable to chance, as in prior research. As expected, the coefficients on Number of Groups Lobbying and Interest Group Competitiveness are positive and unlikely due to chance. Like Net Side Size, however, these variables are functions of the number of groups lobbying for or against a bill. For models that include all three measures, the coefficients on these three variables imply that the addition of one group supporting a bill may be associated with either an increase or decrease in the probability of committee consideration, depending on baseline Net Side Size.[19] These intricacies notwithstanding, the results with respect to control variables suggest that Maplight bills are representative of congressional legislation.

Taken together, these results suggest that interest groups play a role in committee agenda-setting. In particular, committee consideration of a bill is associated with an interest diverse coalition supporting that bill; coalitions that are large, or that are generous campaign donors, are not found to be substantively associated with committee consideration. Thus, Hypothesis 1 finds support, while Hypotheses 2 and 3

[19] If baseline Net Side Size is negative, one additional supporter will also increase Competitiveness and the sum of the coefficients on Net Side Size (-0.016), Number of Groups Lobbying (0.022), and Competitiveness (0.018) will be positive (0.024). If baseline Net Side Size is non-negative, adding one supporter will decrease Competitiveness, and the sum of the coefficients will be negative (-0.012).

find little. This finding is consistent with the argument that lobbying influences committee agendas by providing the agenda-setter with information about various bills before their committee.

Moreover, these results partially clarify how legislative organization interacts with interest group influence. First, these results militate against a purely distributional mechanism for interest group influence. Under a distributive model, logrolling across committees obviates the need for individual bills to have broad appeal, instead catering to the narrow, parochial concerns of the members of committees to which those bills are referred. The positive and substantively significant coefficient on Net Interest Diversity suggests that logrolling across bills does not compensate for a lack of broad appeal in an individual bill. Alternatively, perhaps the logrolling upon which distributive models depend occurs *within* bills rather than *between* them; if such bills are designed to appeal to many different constituencies, it could be the case that a bill is appealing to diverse lobbying coalitions as a byproduct of knitting together the priorities of many different types of districts. To examine whether this possibility creates a spurious correlation between Net Interest Diversity and committee consideration, I consider a class of bills for which high demand constituencies are most likely to affect legislative viability; bills relevant to many districts and thus capable of mobilizing many legislators. All else equal, bills will be relevant to more districts to the extent they touch on more substantive topic areas. If distributive considerations create a spurious association between interest diverse lobbying coalitions and committee consideration, we should be able to mitigate the estimated association between them by controlling for bills' issue coverage. As I report in the Online Appendix, the association between Net Interest Diversity and Committee Consideration is robust to controlling for the issue breadth of legislation. Thus, it is unlikely that a distributional theory alone can explain the apparent influence of interest diverse lobbying coalitions.

However, findings consistent with Hypothesis 1 can be explained by partisan agenda-setting. Under a partisan model, majority party leaders look toward consensus within their caucus to drive their agenda-setting decisions. This may operate in two ways. First, majority leaders may block legislation controversial within their caucus (Cox and McCubbins 2005). To the extent that interest diverse lobbying coalitions might foster or prevent such controversy, bills supported by interest diverse lobbying coalitions may be more likely to pass partisan muster. Thus, partisan theories can explain findings consistent with

Hypothesis 1. On the other hand, conditional party government theories (Aldrich and Rohde 2001) suggest that parties use agenda-setting powers to bypass committees and guarantee floor consideration to bills when their caucus has achieved consensus on them. If interest diverse lobbying coalitions foster intra-party consensus on legislation, we should expect that bills supported by an interest diverse lobbying coalition are more likely to be selected from among other legislation introduced by members of the majority party to bypass committees and proceed directly to floor consideration. As I report in the Online Appendix, I find no differences in lobbying coalition attributes between such committee-bypassing bills and other bills introduced by majority party members. This suggests that, if interest group coalitions influence majority party leadership's decision-making, they do so in some way other than through parties' use of positive agenda power.

Though these initial results are novel, they do not yet evince this study's theory: that the chair's need to assess legislative viability generates conditions under which interest groups can be influential on committee agenda-setting. Showing that distributional and partisan concerns do not appear to explain interest group influence is not sufficient to show that informational considerations do explain interest group influence. To further investigate this, I turn next to the role of institutional alignments and majority party advantages in conditioning interest group influence.

Interest Diversity is More Influential for Bills with Ambiguous Viability

Here, I test whether the influence of interest diversity changes with the chair's prior beliefs about the viability of a bill. I assume that when a chair believes that a bill's viability is ambiguous – i.e., further advancement is neither certain nor impossible – she will give greater weight to external sources of information about that viability in deciding whether to grant consideration to the bill. If lobbying coalition interest diversity constitutes such information, it should therefore be more influential on a chair's consideration-granting decisions with respect to bills of ambiguous viability than bills for which viability is clearly high or low. This, in turn, suggests non-linearity in the association between interest diversity and committee consideration; it should be stronger for bills where viability is, a priori, more ambiguous. If this expectation holds, it is consistent with my theory's contention that the chair's need to anticipate legislative viability creates conditions for interest group influence.

I focus on two factors that make bills' legislative viability more ambiguous. First, the party status of the bill's sponsor. In the modern Congress, the majority party has strong agenda-setting powers in both chambers (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Den Hartog and Monroe 2011). Indeed, majority-party bills are much more likely to gain committee consideration than minority-party bills. However, majority sponsorship alone is insufficient to secure committee consideration: in fact, only about a third of majority-sponsored bills (1249 out of 3515) in the Maplight data received committee consideration. Thus, while the viability of minority-sponsored bills is low, the viability of majority-sponsored bills is not necessarily very high. Information distinguishing which majority-sponsored bills are viable *relative to other majority-sponsored bills* should therefore be valuable; because minority party bills are less viable regardless, additional information on their viability is less valuable. Thus, I expect the association between interest diversity and committee consideration to be stronger for majority-sponsored bills than minority-sponsored bills.

Second, I consider institutional alignments among the chambers of Congress and the White House. Divided government makes it harder to pass legislation (Kelly 1993; Binder 1999). This is because under divided government and ideological sorting between the parties, the ideological distance between pivotal voters across the stages of the legislative process tends to increase (Krehbiel 1998). In such situations, information that a bill can appeal to a wide range of legislators will be more valuable for a policy-motivated committee chair. Thus, Net Interest Diversity should be more strongly associated with committee consideration during divided government than during unified government.

To test these expectations, I reestimate the full model specification (Model 4 of Figure 1) on four subsamples of the data. Per the discussion above, the subsamples constitute majority-party bills only, minority-party bills only, bills introduced under unified government only, and bills introduced during divided government only. Of particular interest here is how the coefficient on Net Interest Diversity varies across these subsamples. If committee chairs place greater value on information about legislative viability when that viability is more ambiguous, then one would expect that the coefficient on Net Interest Diversity would be higher for bills introduced by majority party members than for minority

Subsample	(1) Majority	(2) Minority	(3) Unified Govt	(4) Divided Govt
Net Interest Diversity	0.0384***	-0.00499	-0.0169	0.0319**
	(0.00973)	(0.0303)	(0.0310)	(0.00977)
Net PAC Contributions	0.00559	0.00673	0.00327	0.00551
	(0.00421)	(0.0149)	(0.0178)	(0.00419)
Net Side Size	-0.0182***	-0.000953	0.0145	-0.0155***
	(0.00457)	(0.0123)	(0.0208)	(0.00434)
Random Intercepts				
Major Topic Code	0.423**	1.357*	0.124	0.509**
	(0.153)	(0.686)	(0.0959)	(0.182)
Sources of Coalition Diversity Controls?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Institution and Sponsor Controls?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Congress Fixed Effects?	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	3508	1245	789	3968

Table 1: Associations Between Coalition Attributes and Committee Consideration Change with Institutional Conditions

Mixed effects logit models of committee consideration. Full results in Online Appendix. Standard errors in parentheses. $^{*}\ p < 0.05$, $^{**}\ p < 0.01$, $^{***}\ p < 0.001$

party members, and higher for bills introduced during periods of divided government than for unified government.

Table 1 presents, for each of these subsamples, the coefficient estimates for the lobbying coalition attributes in the full model specification (full results in the Online Appendix). The association between Net Interest Diversity and committee consideration is substantively stronger and statistically significant for majority party bills and bills introduced during divided government, but small and statistically indistinguishable from zero for minority party members' bills and bills introduced during unified government. For majority party bills, a shift from one standard deviation below mean Net Interest Diversity to one standard deviation above Net Interest Diversity (with other variables held at their subsample means) is associated with a 14 percentage point increase in the probability of committee consideration. For bills introduced during divided government, the two-standard deviation increase in Net Interest Diversity is associated with a 9 percentage point increase in probability of committee consideration. For minority party bills and bills introduced during unified government, the same increase in Net Interest Diversity is associated with *lower* probability of consideration, by 0.6 and 6 percentage points, respectively; however, these differences are both likely attributable to chance. These differences for Net Interest Diversity across institutional factors contrast with Net PAC Contributions, which maintains a small and statistically non-significant positive coefficient across all subsamples. The coefficients on Net Side Size are negative and statistically significant for majority-party bills and bills introduced under divided government, and are imprecisely estimated for both minority party bills and bills introduced under unified government. This reflects complexities, discussed above, in interpreting the coefficient of Net Side Size and is subject to similar caveats.

These results are consistent with a primarily informational basis for the influence of interest diverse lobbying coalitions. Neither distributional nor partisan models consider how interest group influence might vary between majority- and minority-sponsored legislation, nor do they predict differences in interest group influence across unified and divided government. However, chairs have reasons to value information about viability more highly for majority party bills and bills introduced during periods of divided government. Given that such information can be provided by interest diverse lobbying coalitions, I expect that the association between Net Interest Diversity and committee consideration will be stronger for majority party bills and bills introduced during divided government than for minority bills or bills introduced during unified government. Results are consistent with this expectation. Together with the full sample analyses, these subsample analyses not only show that lobbying, and particularly Net Interest Diversity, is associated with committee agenda-setting, but that it is more strongly associated with committee agenda-setting on bills where legislative viability is more ambiguous. To the extent this indicates that interest diverse coalitions are more influential when the information they provide is more valuable, these findings are consistent with the theory of prospective viability as a source of interest group influence on committee agendas.

Conclusion

In this article, I consider two questions: how do interest groups influence lawmaking? Does a group need to be well-connected or well-resourced to be influential? Analyzing a large new dataset of interest groups' positions on congressional legislation, I show that lobbying coalitions influence the first and most drastic legislative winnowing point in Congress: consideration in committee. Contrary to many previous accounts, I show that it is neither large nor moneyed coalitions that have consistent influence in committee agenda-setting. Rather, committee consideration is associated with coalitions comprised of organizations representing diverse industries, social causes, and other interests. In addition, I document non-linearities in the association between interest diverse coalitions and committee consideration; the association is stronger for majority party bills than minority party bills, and stronger during divided government than during unified government. The cross-sectional nature of the data inhibits causal inferences from any one of these results, but collectively they are consistent with the theory that lobbying helps chairs assess legislative viability, and is more influential when chairs place higher value on information about legislative viability.

Thus, this article contrasts with and expands upon previous accounts of interest group influence. While interest group research has focused on how interest groups make tactical decisions and influence legislator behavior (see Hojnacki et al. 2012), and to a much lesser extent how they influence policy outcomes (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Grossmann 2012*a*), this study joins only a few others in examining how interest groups influence legislative advancement. In doing so, it moves beyond other studies, which examine interest groups' legislative influence as a function of their numbers (Grossmann and Pyle 2013; Gilens and Page 2014) or their resources (Baumgartner et al. 2009; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015), to identify an alternative source of interest group influence on legislative advancement: interest diversity within lobbying coalitions. Expanding on the work of (Phinney 2017) and others, this article shows that coalition diversity not only influences legislative formulation, but also legislative advancement. While interest diversity may itself be an important antecedent of influence, this article has broader implications about how interest groups gain influence. What makes lobbying influential is not only its *messages*, but its *messengers*. In this case, lobbyists may or may not employ "informational" strategies *per se* (cf.

Austen-Smith and Wright 1994), but lobbying itself is informative because it clarifies the economic and societal interests at stake in a given bill. Future studies may examine other ways in which interest groups', and lobbyists', identities influence policymakers' decisions. Another contribution of this article is to show how interest groups may be incorporated into theories of American political institutions. This article is one of the first analyses of how interest group influence interacts with majority party power and institutional alignments. Future studies could expand upon this, examining differences in how lobbying coalitions influence various outcomes under different institutional contexts. In addition, while this article's finding that diverse coalitions matter more for ambiguously viable bills suggests the kinds of informational incentives emphasized by Krehbiel (1991), it does not rule out that mechanisms derived from distributional or partisan theories condition interest group influence through other lobbying coalition attributes not considered here. Examining how institutional factors, such as those emphasized in theories of legislative organization, condition interest group influence might not only provide further evidence on conditions under which varying theories hold, but might also suggest reforms that might indirectly encourage a more normatively desirable role of organized interests in the policy process.

In addition, this article has implications for how individual political actors pursue their goals within institutional contexts. Models of bargaining, gridlock, and agenda control (Baron and Ferejohn 1989; Krehbiel 1998; Cox and McCubbins 2005) routinely assume that legislative actors can predict the responses of other legislators to their actions. This article calls this assumption into question. Instead, legislative actors such as committee agenda-setters may depend on environmental cues to inform such predictions and, by extension, their subsequent decisions. To the extent this is true, and lobbying serves as such a cue, it suggests that lobbying's influence goes beyond individual pieces of legislation to shaping legislators' perception of their political reality.

Perhaps more optimistically, this article shows that the systemic effect of lobbying on lawmaking may be of a different character than is often believed. Individual organizations may pursue narrow, parochial interests, which in turn compel their legislator allies to champion those narrow interests. Even if this is true, and legislators find compromise costlier, it actually incentivizes consensus-driven legislative agendas. Interest diverse lobbying coalitions allow legislative agenda-setters to more precisely identify bills that will garner broad support, which in turn increases the likelihood that such bills will be promoted onto the agenda in the first place.

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