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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Beyond Lobbyists: Artificial Intelligence and the Reconfiguration of Informational Power in Parliament

Gordan Struić
Master of Laws, University Specialist in Comparative Politics, PhD candidate | Office of the President of the Croatian Parliament, Zagreb, Croatia
Corresponding Author: Gordan Struić, **E-mail**: gordan.struic@gmail.com

| ABSTRACT
The growing institutional use of artificial intelligence (AI) in parliamentary work raises new questions about lobbying and political influence. Traditional informational models of lobbying explain influence through informational asymmetries between interest groups and legislators, whereby organized actors supply specialized knowledge that public officials cannot easily produce on their own. This article examines how the institutional application of AI within parliaments may reconfigure these asymmetries. Using a conceptual-analytical research design, the study maps five functional areas of AI use in parliamentary work – analytical support, support to the legislative decision-making process, administrative support, support for procedural transparency, and support for communication with the public – drawing primarily on the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Guidelines for AI in parliaments as a reference institutional framework. These functional capacities are analytically related to the core assumptions of informational lobbying theory. The analysis suggests that institutional AI can strengthen internal parliamentary capacities for information production and processing, thereby reducing structural dependence on external informational intermediaries. At the same time, this reduction of traditional informational asymmetry is accompanied by the emergence of new asymmetries related to technological infrastructure, algorithmic design, and institutional capacity for AI governance. Rather than eliminating political influence, institutional AI reshapes the conditions under which informational mediation and lobbying operate in contemporary legislative processes. The article contributes to the literature by shifting the analytical focus from lobbying actors and tools to the institutional conditions of informational sovereignty in contemporary parliaments.

| KEYWORDS

artificial intelligence, parliament, lobbying, informational asymmetry, legislative process

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Lobbying has, for a significant part of its historical practice, taken place through direct and personalized channels of communication between lobbyists acting on behalf of interest groups and decision-makers, where long-term contacts and the reputation of being a reliable source of information have served as mechanisms for stabilizing these relationships rather than as an independent source of political influence (Groll & McKinley, 2015). In this sense, lobbying operates in practice as an institutionalized process of mediating interest positions and specialized knowledge toward public officials through various communication channels. Accordingly, the literature primarily defines lobbying through the lens of information exchange, that is, as a process in which interest groups, via lobbyists, strategically transmit relevant knowledge and data to decision-makers (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992; De Figueiredo, 2002; De Figueiredo & Kelleher Richter, 2014; Horton, 2015).

Within the informational model of lobbying, the political influence of interest groups derives from their capacity to collect relevant information and to communicate it selectively and in a timely manner to political actors during the decision-making process (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992). Complementarily, resource exchange theories conceptualize the lobbying relationship as a form of instrumental reciprocity in which interest groups provide expertise and data, while policy-makers possess the authority

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to adopt binding decisions (Binderkrantz et al., 2014; Klüver, 2013; De Bruycker, 2025). In both theoretical approaches, informational asymmetry between lobbyists and public officials constitutes a fundamental precondition for political influence (Potters & Van Winden, 1992; Martimort & Semenov, 2007; Wen, 2024).

This asymmetry is particularly salient in the parliamentary context. Legislators are simultaneously involved in the consideration of a large number of legislative proposals, making it difficult for them to possess in-depth expertise in every individual area of public policy. Consequently, they rely on a combination of internal sources of expert support – primarily parliamentary services – and external informational sources in order to make informed decisions (Struić, 2025). In this context, interest groups hold a comparative advantage, as they systematically collect data and develop specialized knowledge tailored to their own interests, while lobbyists act as intermediaries who strategically transmit this information to legislators. Such asymmetric access to relevant information becomes the basis of the informational advantage of interest groups (Drutman & Hopkins, 2013; Wen, 2024). Empirical research further indicates that the informational contribution of lobbyists constitutes a significant aspect of their role: nearly one third of surveyed politicians, according to an OECD study (2014, p. 29), identify the provision of timely and useful information as its primary positive function.

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in the legislative process potentially alters the classical configuration of informational asymmetry. Existing research has largely focused on how AI tools are used to automate lobbying activities – such as analyzing legislative proposals, drafting targeted comments, or generating personalized communications addressed to legislators (Smith & Harris, 2023; EPRS, 2023). Such tools reduce the costs of lobbying, increase the volume and availability of relevant information, and potentially broaden access to the informational intermediary function for actors with limited resources.

However, a focus on AI as a tool of lobbying activity overlooks an equally important dimension of change: the application of AI within parliament itself. Advanced AI systems enable, for example, the automated analysis of legislative texts, the tracking of amendments, the production of summaries, the simulation of policy impacts, and the processing of large volumes of data related to parliamentary work. In this way, the internal analytical capacities of parliament are gradually strengthened, which may reduce its structural dependence on external informational intermediaries, namely interest groups and their representatives who are associated with lobbying activity in classical theoretical models (Hall & Deardorff, 2006). At the same time, such developments may generate new forms of asymmetry and dependence – for instance, on commercial technology providers, specialized internal data experts, or algorithmic systems whose decision-making logic remains opaque.

This article proceeds from the assumption that the key transformation does not occur exclusively at the level of lobbying tools, but rather at the level of parliamentary informational sovereignty. In this article, parliamentary informational sovereignty refers to the institutional capacity of parliament to independently produce, process, and evaluate information relevant to legislative decision-making, rather than relying primarily on external informational intermediaries. As an analytical framework, it employs an approach that maps the functional possibilities of applying AI in parliamentary work, with particular emphasis on how such technological enhancement reshapes the core assumptions of the informational model of lobbying.

Accordingly, the research question is as follows: how does the integration of AI into parliamentary practice alter the structure of informational asymmetry that has historically constituted the foundation of lobbying influence? Although the analysis focuses on the institutional capacities of parliament, lobbying is retained as the central analytical object in this study, examined through changes in the structural conditions of informational asymmetry. In other words, does AI strengthen parliamentary autonomy vis-à-vis external interest actors, including interest groups and their representatives, or does it instead establish new patterns of power and dependence within the legislative process? In this way, the focus of the discussion shifts from the actions of individual actors to the structural conditions under which informational mediation in the legislative process takes place in the context of AI application.

2. Literature review and theoretical positioning

The scholarly literature on lobbying in representative democracies consistently proceeds from an understanding of lobbying as a process of transmitting specialized information to decision-makers (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992; De Figueiredo, 2002; De Figueiredo & Kelleher Richter, 2014; Horton, 2015). Within this perspective, informational models of lobbying emphasize that political influence derives from the ability of interest actors, through lobbying practices, to provide legislators – who face constraints of time and resources – with relevant knowledge during the legislative process (Austen-Smith & Wright, 1992; De Figueiredo, 2002). In this framework, lobbying is not understood primarily as an attempt to alter legislators' preferences, but rather as a form of support through the provision of information and analytical resources (Hall & Deardorff, 2006).

Within institutional and resource-based approaches to lobbying, informational asymmetry is identified as a central mechanism of political influence. As legislators operate under conditions of incomplete information, interest groups may exert influence by

providing private and specialized knowledge relevant to decision-making (Potters & Van Winden, 1992; Martimort & Semenov, 2007). In this context, interest groups may acquire a comparative advantage because they possess specialized knowledge and information that public officials find difficult to obtain independently, as demonstrated by empirical analyses of lobbying practices and contemporary models of informational lobbying (Drutman & Hopkins, 2013; Wen, 2024).

More recent studies extend this discussion by analyzing the role of digital technologies in lobbying and political influence. Particular attention is paid to the use of AI as a tool for automating specific lobbying activities, such as analyzing legislative proposals, generating targeted comments, or producing personalized communications addressed to legislators (Smith & Harris, 2023; EPRS, 2023). Within these approaches, AI is predominantly viewed as an instrument in the hands of existing actors, with analytical attention focused on the efficiency and scope of lobbying practices, while the underlying structure of informational mediation toward parliament remains largely unexamined.

In parallel, a distinct body of literature and policy analysis has emerged on the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work. The Inter-Parliamentary Union's Guidelines for AI in parliaments (IPU, 2025) and the European Parliament Research Service's analytical briefing Artificial Intelligence, Democracy and Elections (EPRS, 2023) systematically map various functional areas in which AI can enhance research and analysis, the legislative process, administrative work, procedural transparency, and communication with the public within parliament. In this literature, AI is primarily viewed as a means of strengthening the internal administrative and analytical capacities of legislative bodies, rather than as an instrument of political influence exercised by extra-institutional actors.

However, a conceptual gap exists between these two strands of research. While the lobbying literature focuses on informational mediation toward parliament, and the literature on AI emphasizes the technological strengthening of capacities within parliament, this relationship has not been explicitly examined with regard to how the institutional application of AI affects the structure of informational asymmetry that has historically underpinned lobbying influence. It is precisely within this gap that the contribution of this article is situated. Accordingly, the analytical framework of the study is confined to theories of lobbying and informational asymmetry in the legislative process, while the broader literature on algorithmic governance and technological dominance falls outside the scope of this analysis.

3. Methodological framework

This study is based on a conceptual-analytical research design aimed at examining structural changes in the distribution of informational power within the legislative process resulting from the institutional application of AI. Rather than conducting an empirical analysis of the behavior of individual actors, the research focuses on the institutional capacities of parliament and their implications for the conditions under which informational mediation takes place within the legislative process.

The methodological approach adopted in this article proceeds from an understanding of lobbying, in a functional and analytical sense, as a set of practices through which information, expertise, and arguments are introduced into the legislative process. However, this understanding of lobbying does not rely on its formal legal definitions, but instead allows for the analysis of the informational dynamics of legislative decision-making independently of the formal status of individual actors. Within this framework, AI is not conceptualized as a new political actor, but rather as an infrastructural factor – designed, implemented, and governed within the institution – that can reshape the ways in which information is produced, filtered, and evaluated in the parliamentary environment. Analytically, it is therefore necessary to distinguish between the institutional use of AI tools and the institutional capacity to govern them, as informational asymmetries may arise precisely in the gap between functional deployment and effective control over these systems.

The analysis is conducted through a functional reconstruction of the relationship between key areas of the institutional application of AI and the classical assumptions of the informational model of lobbying. In the first step, the functional capacities of AI that are relevant to parliamentary work are identified, particularly in the areas of legislative research and analysis, the legislative decision-making process, administrative work, the enhancement of procedural transparency, and support for public participation. These capacities are identified primarily on the basis of the IPU Guidelines (2025), which serve in this article as a reference institutional framework for mapping functional areas of AI application in parliamentary work, complemented by the use of the European Parliament Research Service's analytical briefing (EPRS, 2023) as a policy-analytical source. The EPRS document is not used in this study as a theoretical source, but rather as a policy-analytical reference point reflecting current institutional debates on the application of AI in democratic and legislative contexts.

In the second step, the identified functional capacities are examined in relation to the concept of informational asymmetry in order to assess how the institutional application of AI may reduce parliament's dependence on external informational sources or, alternatively, generate new forms of asymmetry and dependence. The analysis focuses on changes in the capacities for internal

production, processing, and verification of information, as well as on potential new dependencies linked to technological infrastructure, specialized expertise, and the opacity of algorithmic systems.

The objective of the methodological approach is not to test causal relationships, but to provide a theoretically grounded clarification of the reconfiguration of informational power within the legislative process. This approach is justified by the early stage of institutional AI adoption in parliaments and the limited availability of comparable empirical data, while enabling a precise linkage between established theoretical models of lobbying and the new institutional conditions of legislative decision-making. Accordingly, the study does not aim to measure concrete outcomes of political influence, but rather to reconstruct the structural conditions under which such influence is exercised.

4. Analysis: AI and the Reconfiguration of Informational Asymmetry

This chapter presents the main analytical findings of the study, structured around five functional areas of the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work.

The analysis is based on the understanding that the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work, as mapped in the IPU Guidelines across five functional areas, does not operate merely as a technical upgrade of existing procedures, but instead affects the core capacities of parliament for the production, processing, and verification of information, as well as the degree of its structural dependence on external informational sources. In the classical informational model of lobbying, informational asymmetry arises from the fact that interest groups possess specialized knowledge and information that legislators – due to constraints of time, resources, and expertise – are unable to produce independently. With the introduction of AI into parliamentary functioning, part of this asymmetry may be structurally reconfigured.

In accordance with the methodological framework, the analysis in this article is conducted across five functional areas of the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work: (1) analytical support, (2) support for the legislative decision-making process, (3) administrative support, (4) support for procedural transparency, and (5) support for communication with the public. These areas are identified primarily on the basis of the IPU Guidelines (2025), with reliance on the European Parliament Research Service's analytical briefing as a complementary policy source for specific dimensions of the institutional application of AI (EPRS, 2023).

4.1. Analytical Support and the Reduction of Dependence on External Informational Sources

The first and central area of the institutional application of AI concerns legislative research and analysis. AI tools enable the automated searching of large volumes of documents, comparative analysis of existing and proposed legislation, the identification of relevant precedents, and preliminary assessments of the effects of legislative solutions. In this way, the internal analytical capacities of parliamentary services and legislators are strengthened, particularly in the context of complex and technically demanding policy areas (EPRS, 2023).

From the perspective of the informational model of lobbying, this development may reduce the need for traditional informational subsidies that interest groups provide to legislators in order to compensate for their limited analytical capacities (Hall & Deardorff, 2006). When parliament possesses its own capacities for systematic and rapid information processing, the relative advantage of lobbyists who offer technical analyses and specialized data is weakened. Informational asymmetry is not eliminated entirely, but rather redistributed, as part of the knowledge production shifts to within the institution itself.

4.2. Support for the Legislative Decision-Making Process and Changes in Legislative Dynamics

The second functional area concerns the application of AI in supporting the adoption of legislation and other legislative acts. AI systems may assist in drafting legislative proposals, tracking amendments, verifying normative consistency, and simulating the effects of specific legislative solutions. Such tools can enhance the coherence of the legislative process and reduce legislators' dependence on external interpretations of the legal and technical implications of proposed measures (IPU, 2025).

In this context, the informational advantage of interest groups that have traditionally acted as interpreters of complex normative solutions may be reduced. However, this does not eliminate the question of political influence; rather, it shifts it to the level of control over how algorithmic tools are used. Where the criteria, assumptions, and parameters underlying algorithmic simulations are predefined or lack transparency, informational asymmetry may be reconstituted – this time through the shaping of analytical frameworks within which legislative options are evaluated.

4.3. Administrative Support and the Redistribution of Institutional Capacities

The third area concerns the administrative application of AI in parliamentary work, including document management, work planning, material classification, and the automation of routine tasks. These capacities can relieve parliamentary services of administrative burdens and enable the reallocation of human resources toward analytical and advisory functions (IPU, 2025).

Although this dimension may appear technical at first glance, it also has indirect effects on informational asymmetry. By enhancing administrative efficiency, parliament strengthens its capacity to manage informational flows independently, thereby reducing the need for external logistical and organizational support. This further weakens structural dependence on interest groups that have often possessed the resources required for the continuous monitoring and processing of legislative processes.

4.4. Support for Procedural Transparency in Parliament

The fourth functional area concerns the role of AI in enhancing the transparency of parliamentary procedures. AI tools can enable systematic tracking of procedures, the structuring of information on the course of debates, and improved accessibility of legislative documents in more comprehensible and searchable formats for legislators and the public (IPU, 2025).

From the perspective of informational asymmetry, increased transparency can potentially strengthen both parliament and the public vis-à-vis interest groups, as arguments, proposals, and potential influences become more visible and subject to public scrutiny. However, transparency alone does not guarantee a reduction of asymmetry. Interest groups that possess advanced analytical capacities may use the same publicly available data to develop more sophisticated strategies of influence, thereby transforming rather than eliminating informational asymmetry.

4.5. Support for Communication with the Public and the Expansion of the Informational Field

The fifth area of the institutional application of AI concerns support for communication between parliament and the public, including the processing of public consultations, the analysis of citizens' comments, and the structuring of feedback. Natural language processing tools enable parliament to incorporate a substantially larger volume of public inputs into the legislative process without a proportional increase in administrative burden (EPRS, 2023; IPU, 2025).

In this sense, AI may function as a corrective to classical informational asymmetry, insofar as legislators are no longer reliant exclusively on organized interest groups as structured sources of information. However, the effect of this function depends on institutional design. In the absence of clear procedures and criteria, there is a risk that the automated processing of public inputs may evolve into a new form of non-transparent information filtering.

4.6. New Asymmetries and Forms of Dependence

Although the institutional application of AI may reduce parliament's reliance on classical lobbying-related informational channels, it may simultaneously generate new forms of informational asymmetry and institutional dependence. In this sense, the application of AI does not lead to the disappearance of informational power, but rather to its redistribution within the legislative process.

In this context, the risks associated with the institutional use of AI are analytically relevant insofar as they generate, intensify, or conceal new forms of informational asymmetry. Rather than constituting external side effects of technological modernization, these risks become an integral component of the reconfiguration of informational power within legislative decision-making. Most notably, new dependencies emerge with respect to commercial technology providers, proprietary algorithms, and specialized technical expertise that is often unevenly distributed within parliamentary structures (IPU, 2025).

From the perspective of the informational model of lobbying, this implies that political influence gradually shifts from the level of interpersonal relationships between lobbyists and legislators to the level of control over the infrastructure of knowledge. In such a context, lobbying does not necessarily take place through direct communication with legislators, but rather through the shaping of input data, analytical criteria, and interpretative frameworks employed by algorithmic systems. Informational asymmetry is therefore not eliminated, but reconfigured, confirming the core argument of this article that the institutional application of AI transforms, rather than eliminates, the structural conditions of political influence in the legislative process.

However, it is not guaranteed that the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work will lead to a reduction in structural dependence on external informational sources. In an alternative scenario, AI systems may further intensify parliament's institutional dependence if legislative bodies lack sufficient capacity to understand, oversee, and critically evaluate their own algorithmic tools. Under such conditions, informational asymmetry does not disappear but deepens, with political influence potentially shifting from direct communication toward control over the infrastructure of knowledge. A particular risk in this regard is the possibility that interest groups may, directly or indirectly, participate in shaping the technical standards, models, or

data upon which AI systems are built, thereby re-concentrating reconfigured informational power outside formal democratic procedures.

5. Conclusion: AI and Informational Power in Parliamentary Lobbying

This article set out to address the research question of how the institutional application of AI in parliamentary work affects the structure of informational asymmetry that, in classical theoretical models, has constituted the foundation of lobbying influence. Drawing on the informational model of lobbying and a conceptual-analytical methodological framework, the analysis demonstrates that the application of AI does not result in a simple weakening or disappearance of the political influence of interest groups, but rather in its structural transformation.

Although the analysis is grounded in international guidelines and policy frameworks, its key findings are applicable to representative legislative bodies more broadly, insofar as their decision-making relies on institutionalized informational mediation and knowledge infrastructure.

On the one hand, the institutional application of AI – particularly in the areas of analytical support, support for the legislative decision-making process, and administrative work – strengthens parliament's internal capacities for the independent production, processing, and verification of information. This reduces the structural dependence of legislators on external informational intermediaries that, in classical models of lobbying, held a comparative advantage due to their specialized knowledge and resources. In this sense, AI may function as an institutional corrective to traditional informational asymmetry between parliament and interest groups.

On the other hand, the analysis demonstrates that the institutional application of AI simultaneously generates new forms of informational asymmetry and dependence. Informational power does not disappear, but rather shifts from interpersonal relationships between lobbyists and legislators to the infrastructural level – namely, control over algorithmic systems, analytical parameters, information-filtering criteria, and the technical expertise required to manage these systems. In this context, political influence may be exercised indirectly, through the shaping of the conditions under which information is produced and interpreted within the institution, rather than exclusively through direct communication with decision-makers.

This reconfiguration of informational asymmetry carries significant normative implications for parliamentary democratic accountability. If political influence is increasingly shifting from direct communication between interest groups and legislators toward control over knowledge infrastructure and algorithmic processes, then questions of transparency, accountability, and oversight can no longer be tied exclusively to the behavior of lobbyists. Instead, they must necessarily extend to the design, governance, and institutional oversight of AI systems that participate in the legislative process. This implies that future regulatory approaches to lobbying cannot be confined solely to the conduct of actors, but must also encompass oversight of the knowledge infrastructure that structures legislative decision-making.

It is important to emphasize that these findings do not rest on the assumption that the institutional application of AI necessarily reduces informational asymmetry in parliamentary decision-making. Under conditions of insufficient institutional capacity to understand, oversee, and critically evaluate algorithmic systems, AI may instead intensify parliament's structural dependence. However, even in such a scenario, this represents a transformation – rather than the disappearance – of the mechanisms of political influence, with informational power shifting to the infrastructural level of the legislative process.

The contribution of this article lies in linking two research bodies that have thus far remained relatively separate – theories of informational lobbying and the literature on the institutional application of AI in parliaments. Rather than viewing AI exclusively as a tool in the hands of interest groups or as a technical enhancement of legislative procedures, the article demonstrates that AI functions as an infrastructural factor that alters the fundamental conditions of informational mediation within the legislative process. In doing so, the focus of the analysis shifts from the behavior of individual actors to the structural conditions under which political influence is produced.

At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of the present study. The article is based on a conceptual-analytical approach and does not include an empirical analysis of concrete parliamentary practices or the effects of specific AI systems. Moreover, the institutional application of AI in parliaments remains at an early stage of development, and the available policy documents and analytical reports still provide only a fragmented picture of the actual effects of these technologies. Future research should therefore empirically examine how the described changes in informational asymmetry manifest in specific parliamentary systems, as well as how regulatory and organizational frameworks adapt to new forms of infrastructural power. Such empirical inquiry could include, for example, analyses of changes in reliance on external policy briefs and expert inputs,

shifts in the structure of amendment activity, and the mapping of organizational capacities of parliamentary services for AI oversight and data governance.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the article demonstrates that the issue of lobbying under conditions of AI application cannot be reduced to the regulation of individual actors or technologies. The central normative and analytical question becomes how to ensure transparency, accountability, and democratic control over the knowledge infrastructure that increasingly shapes the legislative process. In this sense, the institutional application of AI does not eliminate the need to analyze lobbying influence, but rather renders it even more relevant – albeit at a new, structural level.

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ORCID iD: http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6528-4436
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