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What's the issue? : the lobbying and representativeness of political parties on specific policy issues

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Stellingen

1. While often correlated with policy change, public opinion and interest group activity are non-deterministic correlates of it.
2. When German political parties are faced with a choice between taking policy positions that are popular with the general public and positions that are popular with their supporters, they generally choose the position popular with their supporters.
3. Lobbying political parties, and especially friendly parties with a shared position on an issue, is less effective than one might expect based on existing accounts the lobbying strategies employed by policy advocates.
4. Political parties are sometimes more likely to react positively to policy requests from advocates they share historical ties with than requests from other policy advocates.
5. Studying the positions and activities of political parties on specific policy issues is an important addition to existing studies of the choices and representativeness of political parties.
6. Unidimensional studies of ideological congruence between public opinion and political parties are likely to overestimate the level of this congruence.
7. We do not know nearly enough about the effects of ties and contacts between interest groups and political parties on the content and legitimacy of policy.
8. The effects described under statement 7 are less self-evident and direct than is often assumed in the existing literature.
9. Even without campaign donations, democratic elections and the (policy) changes they produce are an understudied route to policy lobbying influence.
10. Doing research is like dancing: you learn it by doing.
11. Doing research is like a dance competition: keep smiling when the going gets tough.
12. Doing research is like food: it gets better when you go international.