

**Do politicians 'respond' to the public's
environmental concerns?**

Contents

Introduction:	3
Literature Review:	4
Data Review:	7
Conclusion:	9
Bibliography	10

Introduction:

There is a lot of proof that politicians are motivated by public sentiment. We make the assumption that politicians rationally foresee electoral losses or gains and may, therefore, change their attitude or strategy before elections, following Erikson et al. (2002). Opinion surveys may have fueled these expectations of the candidate's or party's chances of winning the election. Parties, every now and then, change their positions and they do it for the right set of purposes (Geer, 1996). To our knowledge, no one has, however, undertaken a journey to highlight the relationship between opinion of the local sage and political parties. This is significant information since the accuracy of representation may suffer from genuine and potentially harmful effects from opinion polls. When discussing existential threats like the environment, which require stakeholder participation beyond the state's primary focus, it is necessary to link policy-making and policy engagement from a literary viewpoint.

Answers to these queries have been put forth in a growing theoretical literature. Since policymakers and lobbyists frequently have partially incompatible preferences and the distribution of pertinent information is uneven, mathematical models of game theory are employed to understand the psychology of lobby (Ainsworth, 1993; Austen-Smith & Wright, 1994; Lohmann, 1994). Studies on voting or party politics are more popular than interest group studies (Baumgartner & Leech, 1998; Lowery & Gray, 1995). Because prior views, information levels, order of acts, communication structure, and reputation are difficult to measure, formal study of special interest group political activity as strategic information transmission is difficult (Sloof, 1998).

If surveys show that party support is dwindling, do politicians call for change? If this is the case, should a party change its platform or just the way it interacts with voters when it comes to topics with major consequences? To investigate this, we conducted a survey experiment with local stakeholders. We gave them the option to choose between a scenario in which their party was falling behind in the polls or, alternatively, a scenario in which their party was gaining ground without the use of deception. In exchange, we tallied the outcomes from both sides to draw attention to the prejudices that are driven by popular opinion. Can the environment be a valuable negotiating chip for politicians if it has the potential to have an immediate impact on a

sizable population but is ineffective at fostering collective decision-making? The concept sparked an extensive scientific investigation.

Literature Review:

Various studies on public opinions and policy making have focused on particular policy matters (Gilens, 2012; Lax & Phillips, 2012), allowing its influence to significant policy outcomes which are internally motivated (Stimson, et al., 1995). Considering the approach's shortcomings, the approach has remained short of defining the politicians' intake on public opinion in their decision making framework when the burgeoning question is related to the environment (Wlezien, 2016).

In available sources, it can be seen that politicians may vary their virtues in an attempt to pick and choose preferences in public opinions, but at the same time democracies encourage partnership between politicians and the public to a large extent. (Du, 2009). Although it may not be ideal for the public to influence all forms of policies, for example, minorities, which have limited franchise of representation, are most of the times on the receiving hand rather than on the directing hand for the policies (Wlezien, 2016; Burstein, 2014).

Early study suggested that policies reflected public sentiment and evolved with public preferences (Monroe, 1979). Later scholars (Page & Shapiro, 1983) used a single scale to gauge public attitudes and policy to analyze public opinion through time and discover major policy links. Wlezien, 1995 further demonstrates the correlation between public preferences and spending levels, even when institutional considerations are taken into account (Wlezien & Soroka, 2012). Not all studies are on the same page. There are some studies that contend that there are weak connections between the public and policy. According to (Gilens, 2012), the US favors affluents over poor. However, this study is criticised for its indecision to discriminate between issues of high politics and low politics, difference of ideas behind the ideas related to dire existence, and reflection of change of mind when it comes to the interest of public masses at large (Branham et al., 2017). Similar conclusions are reached by a second study that is primarily European and uses different approaches (Peters & Ensink, 2015). Despite the fact that it is still up for debate as to whether or not public preferences are taken into account when making policy

decisions, it is crucial to take into account the processes through which this link may (or may not) be created. According to earlier studies, institutions, interest groups, and policy concerns may influence this (Lax & Phillips, 2012; Wlezien & Soroka, 2012). These studies have ignored political parties, which link the public to policy outcomes.

It is possible to establish a hierarchy to find the most successful political activities and consumer behaviors. Voting is a very successful means to influence political decision-making, while writing letters or emails to elected officials is somewhat effective and internet debates are less effective (Hooghe & Marrian, 2012). However, it's possible that other jurisdictions or different concerns will not follow these rough rankings. More chorus may result from a sudden surge of constituent messages on a new subject than from earlier communications.

People are more likely to undermine issues that call for collective action, such as climate change, because it causes them to become self-censored. This is unfortunate since, according to Taddicken et al. (2019), people often underestimate foreign climate change concern. Geiger and Swim (2016) highlights that the public merely appreciates carbon politics and so does a politician (Hertel-Fernandez, et al., 2019), it commands underestimation of severity of the issues related to climate change. Republican citizens who deny climate change may have disproportionate contact with political elites, contributing to their incorrect beliefs, according to several American studies (Broockman & Skovron, 2018). Even in the face of compelling public opinion, such misconceptions have proven challenging to address since authorities are reluctant to update their estimates of constituency desire (Kalla & Porter, 2019).

Legislators are discouraged from acting on climate change, according to a study done in the UK, since they believe that doing so would not be in line with the needs of their constituents because of the constituents' silence on the matter (Willis, 2018). It's beneficial for elites or the public to start a feedback loop that raises the other group's concern and action (Brulle, et al., 2012; Carmichael & Brulle, 2012). There is evidence that elite cues impact public climate change concern.

There is a significant amount of research that examines how political parties work to represent the population. In addition to these works, elections are expected to give political parties the authority to speak for their supporters, ensuring that public opinion and public policy are closely related (P, 2008). Many studies find a link between party affiliations and public perception on left-right and other ideological axes (Fagerholm, 2015). This essay contends that

parties are bound by both internal party dynamics and external influences, despite having strategic motivations to react to popular preferences. Left-right scales are commonly used to measure public preferences and policy stances. Recently, authors have examined more tangible elements, such as immigration or climate policy, to better understand how these factors affect political parties' policy stances and policy priorities (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Kluver & Spoon, 2016). A citizen with radical views in both directions is moderate on public policy scales. Policy dimension studies have this issue since they measure citizen's preferences, not ideologies (Broockman & Skovron, 2018). The leaders of political parties, for example, are more extreme elite actors than others because they constantly lean to one side of the spectrum. When contrasting the gap between popular choices and those of elite actors, this becomes troublesome.

However, there are diverse opinions in academic circles about whether the authoritarian government takes environmental concerns into account. Environmental authoritarianism describes China's environmental governance (Mol & Carter, 2006). They say the Chinese public cannot participate in environmental policymaking and that there is no system to guide popular participation (Mol & Carter, 2006). As a result, the general public has no influence over the creation and application of environmental policies (Lei, 2009; Gilley, 2012). However, The Chinese government holds hearings on major environmental concerns, petitions, and environmental impacts, according to various scholars. These hearings have allowed public opinion on environmental issues to be compiled for environmental decision-making (Zhong & Mol, 2008; Du, 2009). Data suggests that public opinion has influenced environmental governance policy. In representative democracies, interest groups have limited political influence because policymakers must measure political support from any one organization against other available sources, such as public opinion (Denzau & Munger, 1986; Truman, 1951). However, experts have noted that the Chinese government has established several mechanisms, including hearings on serious environmental issues and petitions and environmental impact assessments. These hearings collected the public's environmental concerns to help make environmental choices (Zhong & Mol, 2008; Du, 2009). According to the facts, public opinion has influenced environmental governance. In representative democracies, decision-makers must weigh support from any one organization against other potential sources, such as opposing public opinion (Denzau & Munger, 1986; Truman, 1951). Thus, organized interests are less able to lobby

lawmakers with self-serving demands. Thus, lobbyists must represent others. This may serve the "public interest" or, less ideally, the policymaker.

This study examined environmental dissatisfaction and national environmental spending to explore how public opinion affects environmental governance. According to the facts, public opinion has influenced environmental governance.

Data Review:

To the best of our ability, the following is our understanding of the following: For numerous reasons, Germany is the study's main emphasis. First, it has enough high-quality survey data to calculate party supporter preferences. This article uses the fortnightly German Politbarometer to estimate party supporter demographics.

Focusing on Germany preserves institutional and other country-level features that potentially affect public-party relations. The country provides a rich resource for understanding how the politics and public inter-twines for the sake of public policy. Deep insights about the proportional and mixed electoral systems used in western European politics are learned from it (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). First, all parliamentary parties belong to large party families, and several Western European countries have competitive party systems and comparable parties.

Additionally, the composition of government coalitions changed during the observation period, which spans from 2009 to 2019, and included wide, left- and right-wing partnerships, meaning that four of the nation's five major parties sporadically held power. Thus, with the exception of minority coalitions, all types of ruling coalitions in proportional or mixed electoral systems are covered by the German scenario, which supports the findings about the impacts of being a part of government. Party discipline in the Bundestag is comparable to Western European nations (Brettschneider, 1996; Sieberer, 2006). Thus, the study's main hypothesis—that Bundestag members from the same party want to seem to agree on most policy issues—should be correct. This study also uses politbarometer's high-quality surveys to examine how public opinion affects politicians' environmental attitudes.

This study measures policy change support with the Politbarometer. A unique MRP application was utilized to assess a party's supporters' preferences. MRP was created to improve survey study estimates for more exact demographic subgroups (Kastellec et al., 2010; Park,

2006). Unlike disaggregation, it provides reliable public opinion estimates (Lax & Phillips, 2009). The method employs a multilevel model with many demographic categories for each demographic cell to predict climate change policy support. When there are limited observations in particular subgroups, such as supporters of tiny parties, multilevel models provide higher estimates.

Nearly 1500 people make up the typical sample size for Politbarometer surveys. To assess party members' policy support, it's helpful to understand their demographics in a given year. This study uses all Politbarometer observations from a year to construct a large, nationally representative sample. This pooled annual data set estimates a party's supporters' age, gender, and education using Politbarometer weights. To determine party supporters, we integrate data from two poll questions. The first questions are a respondent's propensity to consistently and generally support a political party. After declaring their support, respondents were asked to rank a party from 1 to 5. Multilevel models for each topic using party support, age (10 categories), education (4 categories), and gender predict cell support. Weighted estimates show a party's supporters' support for a topic. Finally, the hypothesis is put to the test by bringing up the topic of climate change. This method makes it possible to calculate the breakdown of party supporters on a yearly basis, unlike other sources where results of elections were main source research studies.

Researchers that study issue ownership claim that the environment is a valence issue since parties often hold similar views on it (i.e., nobody wants to harm the environment). The notion of specialized themes, as it is used here, emphasizes issues rather than viewpoints, which is congruent with the notion of issue ownership competition. Furthermore, it's likely that between 1998 and 2010 the "niche" topics of environmentalism and euro-skepticism have declined in popularity.

The party's issues are examined in this segment. As other parties emphasize the issues more, a party's Euroscepticism becomes less niche. This hypothesis suggests that a party's niche may alter between elections. A political party's nicheness score is scaled by combining these two variables (for technical details, see Bischof, 2017a). The score from the manifesto is applied to any claims made within a year of the election for which it was drafted and within a year of the prior election. Public opinion-party position studies address other factors.

While parties created in a way that offers its members more influence, for instance, are more sensitive to their followers, parties that are more focused on leadership, on the other hand, tend to be more receptive to the median voter (Lehrer, 2012; Schumacher et al., 2013). Because most of them differ at the party level, these alternative explanations are essential, and the analyses incorporate political party dummies. The policy problem's media significance was controlled by the SZ's average daily number of stories about it. Party size—the fraction of Bundestag seats a party held at the time of the relevant remark—is also important.

Conclusion:

To understand "do politicians listen to public environmental issues?" investigations. This paper used earlier literature. Resources show that the public interest, interest groups, and politicians' opinions are carefully examined from various perspectives. However, the relevant and updated literature of the said research question is yet to be touched upon once again in this paper to comprehend possible outcomes in current timing. In order to refresh the literary canon of scientific study, this paper focused on the case selection study method. It concluded the results from available data from the politbarometer for Bundestag and found a significant correlation between politicians' decision-making and the part that public opinion plays on a larger periscope.

Bibliography

- Alan, D., Monroe. (1979). Consistency between Public Preferences and National Policy Decisions. *American Politics Quarterly*, 7(1):3-19. doi: 10.1177/1532673X7900700101
- Alexander, Hertel-Fernandez., Matto, Mildemberger., Leah, C., Stokes. (2019). Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 113(1):1-18. doi: 10.1017/S0003055418000606
- Andreas, Fagerholm. (2016). Why Do Political Parties Change their Policy Positions? A Review. *Political Studies Review*, 14(4):501-511. doi: 10.1111/1478-9302.12078
- Arthur, P.J., Mol., Neil, Carter. (2006). China's environmental governance in transition. *Environmental Politics*, 15(2):149-170. doi: 10.1080/09644010600562765
- Benjamin, I., Page., Robert, Y., Shapiro., Robert, Y., Shapiro. (1983). Effects of Public Opinion on Policy. *American Political Science Review*, 77(1):175-190. doi: 10.2307/1956018
- Bruce, Gilley. (2012). Authoritarian environmentalism and China's response to climate change. *Environmental Politics*, 21(2):287-307. doi: 10.1080/09644016.2012.651904
- Christopher, Wlezien. (1995). The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(4):981-. doi: 10.2307/2111666
- Christopher, Wlezien. (2017). Public Opinion and Policy Representation: On Conceptualization, Measurement, and Interpretation. *Policy Studies Journal*, 45(4):561-582. doi: 10.1111/PSJ.12190
- Christopher, Wlezien., Stuart, Soroka. (2012). Political Institutions and the Opinion–Policy Link. *West European Politics*, 35(6):1407-1432. doi: 10.1080/01402382.2012.713752
- Daniel, Bischof. (2017). Towards a renewal of the niche party concept: Parties, market shares and condensed offers. *Party Politics*, 23(3):220-235. doi: 10.1177/1354068815588259
- David, Austen-Smith. (1993). Information and influence: Lobbying for agendas and votes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(3):799-. doi: 10.2307/2111575

- David, Austen-Smith., John, R., Wright. (1996). Theory and evidence for counteractive lobbying. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(2):543-564. doi: 10.2307/2111637
- David, E., Broockman., Christopher, Skovron. (2018). Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion among Political Elites. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3):542-563. doi: 10.1017/S0003055418000011
- David, Lowery., Virginia, Gray. (1995). The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in the American States. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(1):1-. doi: 10.2307/2111755
- Eric, Merkley., Dominik, Stecula. (2021). Party Cues in the News: Democratic Elites, Republican Backlash and the Dynamics of Climate Skepticism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(4):1439-1456. doi: 10.1017/S0007123420000113
- Frank, Brettschneider. (1996). Public opinion and parliamentary action: responsiveness of the german bundestag in comparative perspective. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 8(3):292-311. doi: 10.1093/IJPOR/8.3.292
- Frank, R., Baumgartner., Beth, L., Leech. (1998). Basic Interests: The Importance of Groups in Politics and in Political Science.
- Gijs, Schumacher., Catherine, E., De, Vries., Barbara, Vis. (2013). Why do parties change position? Party organization and environmental incentives. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2):464-477. doi: 10.1017/S0022381613000145
- Heike, Klüver., Jae-Jae, Spoon. (2016). Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(03):633-654. doi: 10.1017/S0007123414000313
- Ian, Budge. (2001). Validating the Manifesto Research Group approach: Theoretical assumptions and empirical confirmations. 50-65. doi: 10.4324/9780203451656_CHAPTER_4
- Jason, Seawright., John, Gerring. (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2):294-308. doi: 10.1177/1065912907313077

- Jason, T., Carmichael., Robert, J., Brulle. (2017). Elite cues, media coverage, and public concern: an integrated path analysis of public opinion on climate change, 2001–2013. *Environmental Politics*, 26(2):232-252. doi: 10.1080/09644016.2016.1263433
- Jeffrey, R., Lax., Justin, H., Phillips. (2009). How Should We Estimate Public Opinion in the States. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1):107-121. doi: 10.1111/J.1540-5907.2008.00360.X
- Jeffrey, R., Lax., Justin, H., Phillips. (2012). The Democratic Deficit in the States. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(1):148-166. doi: 10.1111/J.1540-5907.2011.00537.X
- John, Gray, Geer. (1996). From Tea Leaves to Opinion Polls: A Theory of Democratic Leadership.
- Joshua, Kalla., Ethan, Porter. (2021). Correcting Bias in Perceptions of Public Opinion Among American Elected Officials: Results from Two Field Experiments. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(4):1792-1800. doi: 10.1017/S0007123419000711
- Kastellec, J., Lax, J. & Phillips, J., 2010. Estimating state public opinion with multi-level regression and post-stratification using R.. s.l.: Unpublished manuscript.
- Lei, Xie. (2011). Environmental Activism in China.
- Lijin, Zhong., Arthur, P.J., Mol. (2008). Participatory environmental governance in China: Public hearings on urban water tariff setting. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 88(4):899-913. doi: 10.1016/J.JENVMAN.2007.04.018
- Marc, Hooghe., Sofie, Marien. (2014). How to reach Members of Parliament? Citizens and Members of Parliament on the Effectiveness of Political Participation Repertoires. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 67(3):536-560. doi: 10.1093/PA/GSS057
- Martin, Gilens. (2012). Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America.
- Monika, Taddicken., Susann, Kohout., Imke, Hoppe. (2019). How Aware Are Other Nations of Climate Change? Analyzing Germans' Second-Order Climate Change Beliefs About Chinese, US American and German People. *Environmental Communication-a Journal of Nature and Culture*, 13(8):1024-1040. doi: 10.1080/17524032.2018.1561483

- Nathalie, Giger., Zoe, Lefkofridi. (2014). Salience-based congruence between parties & their voters : the Swiss case. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 20(2):287-304. doi: 10.1111/SPSR.12069
- Nathaniel, Geiger., Janet, K., Swim. (2016). Climate of silence: Pluralistic ignorance as a barrier to climate change discussion. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 47:79-90. doi: 10.1016/J.JENVP.2016.05.002
- Paul, Burstein. (2014). *American Public Opinion, Advocacy, and Policy in Congress: What the Public Wants and What It Gets.*
- Peter, Mair. (2008). The Challenge to Party Government. *West European Politics*, 31:211-234. doi: 10.1080/01402380701835033
- Qun, Du. (2009). Environmental Law and Justice in Context: Public participation and the challenges of environmental justice in China. 139-157. doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511576027.008
- Randolph, Sloof. (1998). Game-Theoretic Models of the Political Influence of Interest Groups.
- Rebecca, Willis. (2018). Constructing a ‘Representative Claim’ for Action on Climate Change: Evidence from Interviews with Politicians:. *Political Studies*, 66(4):940-958. doi: 10.1177/0032321717753723
- Robert, J., Brulle., Jason, T., Carmichael., J., Craig, Jenkins. (2012). Shifting public opinion on climate change: an empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the U.S., 2002–2010. *Climatic Change*, 114(2):169-188. doi: 10.1007/S10584-012-0403-Y
- Robert, S., Erikson., Michael, B., Mackuen., James, A., Stimson. (2001). *The Macro Polity.*
- Ron, Lehrer. (2012). Intra-Party Democracy and Party Responsiveness. *West European Politics*, 35(6):1295-1319. doi: 10.1080/01402382.2012.713747
- Scott, H., Ainsworth. (1993). Regulating Lobbyists and Interest Group Influence. *The Journal of Politics*, 55(01):41-56. doi: 10.2307/2132227
- Stimson, J., MacKuen , M. & Erikson, R., 1995. Dynamic representation.. *American Political Science Review*, Volume 89.

- Susanne, Lohmann. (1993). A Signaling Model of Informative and Manipulative Political Action..
American Political Science Review, 87(02):319-333. doi: 10.2307/2939043
- Ulrich, Sieberer. (2006). Party Unity in Parliamentary Democracies: A Comparative Analysis. The
Journal of Legislative Studies, 12(2):150-178. doi: 10.1080/13572330600739413
- Wouter, van, der, Brug. (2004). Issue ownership and party choice. Electoral Studies, 23(2):209-233. doi:
10.1016/S0261-3794(02)00061-6
- Yvette, Peters., Sander, J., Ensink. (2015). Differential Responsiveness in Europe: The Effects of
Preference Difference and Electoral Participation. West European Politics, 38(3):577-600. doi:
10.1080/01402382.2014.973260