THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATION ON POLICY: THEORY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS


This article analyzes recent research on the impact of non-party organizations on policy, describing its theoretical coherence, operationalization of key concepts, views of different types of organizations, hypothesis testing, efforts to generalize from its findings, and proposals for improving future research. The analysis shows that few relevant articles in major journals in political science and sociology test theory; researchers seldom explicitly define key concepts; though researchers regularly study interest groups and social movement organizations, much of their work focuses on other types of organizations; researchers regularly make no predictions about organizations' impact on policy, and when they do, a majority of their predictions are wrong. Researchers rarely generalize; they seldom claim that their conclusions have implications for theory; and their suggestions for future work are mostly generic. The analysis points to weaknesses in current research and proposes ways to overcome them.

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