Ideology, Learning, and Policy Diffusion: Experimental Evidence[*]

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Abstract

We introduce experimental research design to the study of policy diffusion in order to better understand how political ideology affects policymakers' willingness to learn from one another's experiences. Our two experiments, embedded in national surveys of U.S. municipal officials, expose local policymakers to vignettes describing the zoning and home foreclosure policies of other cities, offering opportunities to learn more. We find that: (1) policymakers who are ideologically predisposed against the described policy are relatively unwilling to learn from others, but (2) such ideological biases can be overcome with an emphasis on the policy's success or on its adoption by co-partisans in other communities. We also find a similar partisan-based bias among traditional ideological supporters, who are less willing to learn from those in the opposing party. The experimental approach offered here provides numerous new opportunities for scholars of policy diffusion.

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The ability to learn from other governments about the effects of policies is one of the more powerful tools available to public officials in federal systems. Learning from others is especially important for local, regional, and state officials who typically do not have the resources to conduct extensive policy analyses on their own. These sub-national officials can benefit from widespread experimentation with novel policies, wherein policymakers abandon failures and help successes diffuse, but only if they are willing to learn from others' experiments.

However, officials may simply be less open to learning about policies that do not fit their world-view. Indeed strong empirical results suggest that governments are most likely to adopt the laws and practices used by ideologically similar governments (e.g., Grossback, Nicholson-Crotty, and Peterson 2004; Martin 2009; Gilardi 2010). What is much less clear, though, is the process by which policymakers brush aside ideologically incongruent policies.

Significantly, ideological considerations can play a role either early or late in the learning process (Bennett and Howlett 1992, Bowen and Zwi 2005). When ideology plays a role *early* in the process, government officials do not give themselves the opportunity to learn about laws and programs rooted in a different world-view. Without even accessing readily available information, some policy options are dismissed wholesale. In contrast, ideological divergence may arise *late* in the learning process after officials have become highly informed about numerous alternatives. Policymakers take the time to learn about a variety of policy alternatives but ultimately dismiss the options that deviate too substantially from their own ideological predispositions or those of their constituents.

Very different normative and policy implications emerge depending on when ideological considerations play a role in the learning process. If the role of ideology emerges late in the learning process, then a broad array of options will be examined carefully, with final policy

choices made based on weighing the policies' applicability, effectiveness, and coherence to the officials' governing philosophy. Here, it is possible that apt and effective policies stand a chance of overcoming ideological biases.

On the other hand, if officials are unwilling to even investigate ideologically distant policies, then these alternatives will be dismissed regardless of how appropriate and effective they might be upon adoption. In this case, it is not merely that policymakers weigh the alternatives with their ideological thumbs on the scale; instead, some options are not even placed on the scale in the first place. Evidence of effectiveness elsewhere falls on deaf ears.

Despite the importance of understanding which model of policy learning is taking place (and conditions under which obstacles to learning may be overcome), much of the current empirical literature on policy diffusion cannot discern when ideology plays a role in the learning process because it primarily focuses on later stages when policy is adopted. With some exceptions (e.g., Karch 2007), the literature on policy diffusion focuses mainly on which policies are adopted by which governments at which points in time (e.g., Graham, Shipan, and Volden 2013). These observational studies of *policy adoption* therefore tend to focus too late in the diffusion process to discern the full extent of how ideology affects learning.[1]

We propose an alternative approach to study the role of learning in the diffusion process. Recently, political scientists have used experiments to study classic problems, often producing important, new insights (e.g., Arceneaux and Johnson 2013; Butler and Nickerson 2011; Druckman 2004; Grimmer, Messing, and Westwood 2012). We argue that experiments can also be usefully applied to the study of policy diffusion. To be sure, there are limitations to this

[1] Some have placed the idea of "bounded learning" or "heuristic-based learning" central to their research agendas (e.g., Meseguer 2006), resulting in qualitative studies that highlight similar sets of concerns about where in the policymaking process various biases may emerge (e.g., Weyland 2007).

approach. For example, it is clear that little can (or should) be done to actually manipulate the policies chosen by governments and to observe the subsequent reactions of others. On the other hand, one can manipulate the information available to policymakers to determine the conditions under which they seek to learn from the experiences of others. This is precisely what we do in the current study.[2]

Specifically, we embedded experiments about information seeking within surveys administered to local government officials across the United States. As part of the survey, we provided vignettes about other cities' experiences with current problems facing municipalities (zoning/mixed-used developments and home foreclosures). We then asked whether the official would like to learn more about the policy, offering a link to further information to be provided at the end of the survey. Our results reveal strong ideological biases at this early stage of the policy learning process, with liberal policymakers being up to twice as likely as conservatives to express interest in learning more.

The experimental part of the research design explored whether such ideological biases could be overcome by changing how the government's policy experience was described in the vignette. In the experiments, we varied whether the policy was characterized as successful or failing and whether the adopting government was Republican or Democratic. Both frames had a significant impact in altering whether conservative policymakers were interested in learning more, strongly mitigating their ideological bias against learning about these policies. Partisan framing also affected liberal policymakers, who were significantly more interested in learning

[2] Similarly, scholars have used experiments to study the diffusion of other types of innovations (e.g., Rogers 2003, 70-72) and to examine policy learning among citizens (e.g., Taber and Lodge 2006).

about the policy when they discovered that a Democratic government had implemented it than in learning from Republicans.

These findings shed new light on the ideological nature of learning and policy diffusion, and especially on ways that policy entrepreneurs and others can help overcome ideological biases. Specifically, we find: (1) ideological biases exist even at the municipal level and on common local policy choices, (2) such biases occur early in the learning process, and (3) these biases can be overcome with an emphasis on policy success or on earlier adoption by co-partisans. Further, this work serves as a template for future experimental research on policy diffusion.

The Conditional Effect of Ideology on Learning and Policy Diffusion

Scholarship on policy diffusion is immense and fast-growing (e.g., Stone 1999; Meseguer and Gilardi 2009; Graham, Shipan, and Volden 2013). Some of the reason behind the increased interest is the opportunity to understand diffusion processes well beyond the geographic clustering of policies. For instance, scholars have focused on the many diverse mechanisms through which policies spread (e.g., Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett 2006; Shipan and Volden 2008), the role of similarities across governments (e.g., Case, Hines, and Rosen 1993; Simmons and Elkins 2004; Grossback, Nicholson-Crotty, and Peterson 2004), the conditions under which diffusion is enhanced or diminished (e.g., Walker 1969, Keleman and Sibbitt 2004, Brooks 2005), the influence of policy success (e.g., Meseguer 2006, Volden 2006), and the extent to which the nature of policies themselves influences their diffusion (e.g., Mooney and Lee 1995, Nicholson-Crotty 2009, Makse and Volden 2011).

The experimental approach that we advocate can shed new light on each of these. For now we restrict ourselves to the mechanism of learning-based policy diffusion, the role of

ideological similarity, the policy's perceived success, and the partisanship of previous policy adopters.

We expect officials' own ideological stances to strongly affect their affinity for different policy alternatives. In broad strokes, conservative policymakers tend to be cautious about expanding the role of government, while liberal policymakers may hesitate to rely on market forces. We argue that government officials who hold such viewpoints will be less likely to seek out information about policies that they are ideologically predisposed against. This reticence can arise because officials simply do not want to learn about a policy they are ultimately less likely to support. However, by choosing to not learn about it at all, policymakers miss the opportunity to learn about potentially useful programs and laws that they would in fact implement. We test this argument with the following hypothesis.

Ideological Learning Hypothesis: *Policymakers who are ideologically predisposed to adopting a policy will be more interested in learning about others' experiences than are those who are ideologically predisposed against the policy.*

Theoretical models suggest that the effect of such ideological considerations may be moderated by policy success. For example, the model in Volden, Ting, and Carpenter (2008) predicts that the policymakers most predisposed to a new policy idea will experiment with it regardless of evidence of failure or success. However, those who are less predisposed to the policy will only invest in learning about the policy if it has achieved success elsewhere.

Evidence of success may also work because unexpected information leads to learning (e.g., Meyer, Reisenzein, and Schutzwohl 1997; Schutzwohl and Borgstedt 2005; Atkeson and Maestas 2012). Officials who are predisposed against a policy will expect it to fail and so may be surprised when it achieves success. Consequently, evidence of success may make

policymakers more willing to overcome their priors and seek out more information. As a result of these dynamics, the effect of ideology on learning should be conditional on policymakers' perceptions of the policy's effectiveness, as follows:

Success Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis: *Evidence of policy success will significantly increase the interest in learning about others' experiences among those who are initially ideologically predisposed against a policy.*

Ideological-based biases against learning may also be overcome by fellow co-partisans. When co-partisans embrace a policy that an official opposes, this may signal to the official that the policy is not as inconsistent with her ideological worldview as she initially thought. In this sense, the co-partisans' support for the policy may influence learning because it causes her to update her priors and thus be more likely to seek out additional information in order to find out why her co-partisans embraced the policy.

The actions of co-partisans may also lead to enhanced learning by providing official with political cover. Officials may be reluctant to learn about a law or program that is not consistent with their ideological predispositions because of fears that embracing the policy will hurt their credibility within the party and their reelection prospects. However, when co-partisans elsewhere have already embraced the policy, officials have more political cover and are less likely to be singled out. Officials should thus be less likely to preemptively rule out these policies, which in turn should make them more willing to learn more.

For instance, President Bill Clinton, by embracing free trade and exploiting the timely support of partisan allies, was able to win over a sufficient number of Democrats to secure passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Box-Steffensmeier, Arnold, and Zorn

1997).[3] In the context of policy diffusion, Governor Tommy Thompson's efforts in Wisconsin opened up welfare reform to experimentation by other Republican policymakers across the country. Such examples serve to highlight how partisanship can play a role in overcoming ideological biases, as outlined in our final hypothesis.

Partisanship Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis: *Evidence of policy experimentation by co-partisans will significantly increase the interest in learning about others' experiences among those who are ideologically predisposed against a policy.*

Testing the Determinants of Learning and Policy Diffusion

In recent years, scholars have made significant progress in characterizing the nature of policy diffusion by using new empirical approaches to confront a range of methodological problems (e.g., Berry and Baybeck 2005, Franzese and Hays 2008, Gilardi 2010, Volden 2006); but many obstacles remain. Testing the above hypotheses, for example, is difficult because the research design must isolate policy learning from other diffusion processes. In addition to learning, governments compete, coerce, and imitate one another (e.g., Boehmke and Witmer 2004; Shipan and Volden 2008). Moreover, policy choices may appear interrelated merely because similar governments face similar circumstances at about the same time.

Further, researchers who want to test claims about learning need to look at the part of the diffusion process where learning actually occurs. The diffusion process is a long one that involves many steps, with learning at the beginning. Yet theories about learning-based diffusion tend to be tested with data about the end stage, adoption. By focusing on the *outcomes* from long-term political processes, researchers may miss how learning (or another mechanism) actually works. Therefore, it is important to explore earlier choices (e.g., Karch 2007), such as

[3] Certainly other factors, such as side payments and President Clinton's political influence over his party, were also at play in garnering Democratic support for NAFTA.

whether interest groups form or whether proposals are offered. There may be learning by governments that never reach the policy adoption stage; indeed, some learning may *lower* the likelihood of policy adoption (e.g., Mooney 2001).

Ideally, researchers would avoid these empirical obstacles and test hypotheses by using a research design that (a) isolates the early learning during the consideration of a new policy, while (b) capturing characteristics of the specific policymaker engaging in learning and (c) exogenously manipulating the policymaker's perceptions of the policy's success and its acceptance among co-partisans. We are able to match these ideal conditions rather well by embedding an experiment within an original survey of local government officials that we conducted in 2012.[4] We focus on municipalities and ask about common local issues of zoning and foreclosure policy (discussed below), for two main purposes. First, at the local level, there remains an extensive diversity of preferences across officials, with members of each political party arrayed from liberal to conservative, thus better allowing us to isolate the influence of ideological positions apart from partisanship. Second, these are issues that, despite revealing ideological differences, have not been so tainted by partisan polarization as to close off any further consideration by members of either political party.[5]

The online survey itself was created using Qualtrics and was administered to municipal officials by sending them a link to the survey.[6] Overall, the survey had a response rate of about twenty percent, on par with recent expert surveys of this nature (e.g., Fisher and Herrick 2013;

[4] The sample of city officials for the survey was constructed by first downloading a list of all of the cities in the U.S. Census. Research assistants then searched for the website of each town or city taken from the census. If the research assistants were able to identify the city's website, they then collected the name and email address of the city's mayor and council members (or the equivalent).

[5] Future work extending our approach to other levels of government or to more partisan-charged issues would be welcome.

[6] We sent each official in the sample an invitation and two follow up reminders.

Harden 2013). Policymakers from smaller towns were slightly less likely to take the survey, with the median city in the sample having a population of just over 10,000. About twenty-three percent of the respondents were serving as the municipality's chief executive (mayor or the equivalent), with the remaining respondents serving as city councilors (or the equivalent). A full description of the survey sample is provided in Appendix A.

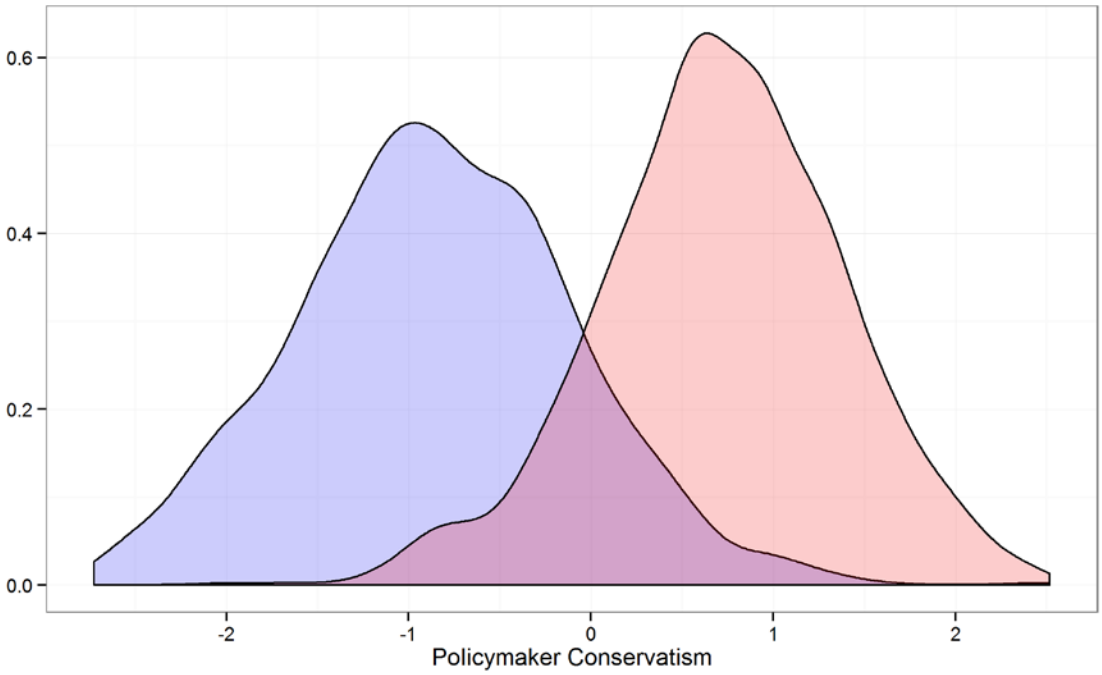
We are able to test the effects of ideology on policy learning because we asked survey respondents about their positions on a large number of issues. Estimating ideology through these questions avoids the sorts of biases that tend to accompany traditional measures of ideology like self-identification (Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2008). We drew questions from the "Political Courage Test" (formerly the National Political Awareness Test) that Project Vote Smart has administered to state and federal candidates in every election cycle since 1996. Specifically, policymakers were asked 28 questions drawn from the sample of 53 questions listed in Appendix B. We asked these questions at the end of the survey, to avoid priming on ideological dimensions during the experiments themselves.

Like previous researchers, we treated these questions with their binary response options like roll call votes to estimate the policymakers' ideal points (e.g., Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2001; Shor and McCarty 2011). Ideal points are estimated using a Bayesian item-response model (Jackman 2000, 2004; Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers 2004), in which the model assumes that candidate and citizen preferences are characterized by quadratic utility functions with independent and normally distributed errors.[7] The scale for their ideal points is constructed with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Higher values indicate more conservative preferences. We therefore label this key independent variable ***Conservatism***. Figure 1 displays

[7] Estimation is done with the "pscl" package (Jackman 2011) in R.

the distribution of this measure for the Republicans (red) and Democrats (blue) in our sample. Interestingly, unlike the U.S. Congress, where Democrats and Republicans no longer overlap ideologically, a substantial number of self-identified partisan municipal officials overlap.

Figure 1: Municipal Officials' Conservatism



Experiment #1: Ideology, Learning, and Policy Success

In each of the two experiments, we described a policy used elsewhere and then asked the official if he or she wanted to learn more about the other government's experiences. We varied key aspects of the policy we described in order to test whether those changes affected policymakers' interest in learning.

Our first experiment was designed to test the role of success in overcoming ideological biases against learning. In the experiment, officials read about a city that had recently converted an obsolete strip mall into a residential community (see Box 1 for the full text of the

experiment).[8] We then asked, "Would you want to learn more about the pros and cons of a program like this to see if it would work in your area?" We asked this question because it captures the first, necessary stage of learning-based diffusion—information-seeking. We included balanced language about both the pros and cons in the question to ensure that we were not priming respondents to systematically favor either treatment. Policymakers who answered "Yes" were given a link at the end of the survey that took them to an information page on policies in this area at the National League of Cities' website.[9] We use the official's response to this question to measure the outcome (dependent variable) for the analysis, ***Interest in Learning***, which takes a value of 1 for a response of "Yes" to this question and 0 for a response of "No."

Box 1: Experiment #1

Recently, many communities have confronted the problem of abandoned or underutilized retail stores or shopping centers. In some cases, city officials have chosen to re-purpose these properties, such as turning them into community centers or mixed-use developments. For instance, [one city][10] recently helped convert an obsolete strip mall into a residential community **[and quickly attracted enough residents to completely fill the community / but failed to attract sufficient residents to make the renovated community sustainable]**.

Would you want to learn more about the pros and cons of a program like this to see if it would work in your area?

____ Yes (we'll provide a link to an external website at the end of the survey)
____ No

Note: The experimental manipulations are given in bolded, bracketed text here. In the actual experiment it was displayed as regular text.

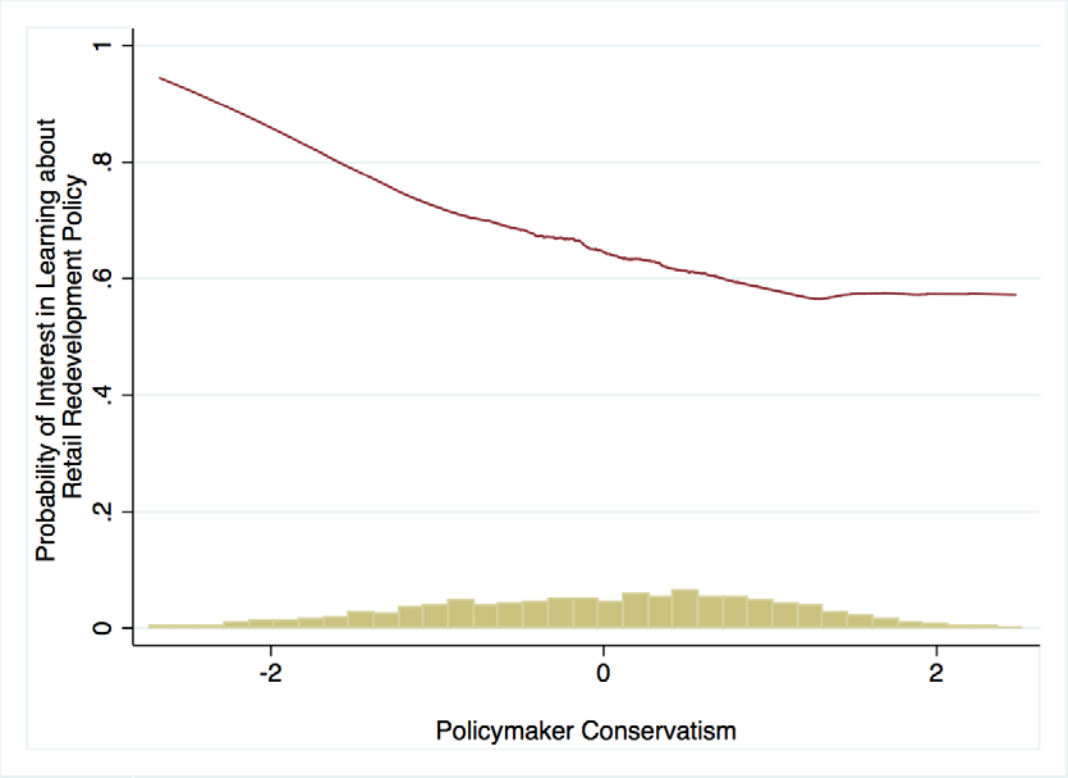
[8] Based on Dillon's Rule and various state restrictions, municipalities may vary in their autonomy and abilities to address the issues raised in the two experiments. Random assignment across treatments should help mitigate any concerns about the need to control for such external considerations.

[9] Although we did not track the users beyond the survey itself, future work could also explore the amount of time that officials spent gathering more information about the policies in question.

[10] For other purposes, we also manipulated whether this city was described as "large" or "about your size." That treatment has no effect on the substantive findings of our analyses, and all respondents across the city size treatment are pooled.

For the experiment, we varied whether the venture was a success. We indicated the success or failure of the policy in the last line of the description of the city and the policy it implemented. Policymakers assigned to the successful policy treatment read that the decision to convert the strip mall into a residential community "quickly attracted enough residents to completely fill the community." Those assigned to the failed policy treatment read that the same decision "failed to attract sufficient residents to make the renovated community sustainable."[11]

Figure 2: Diminished Interest in Learning among Conservative Policymakers

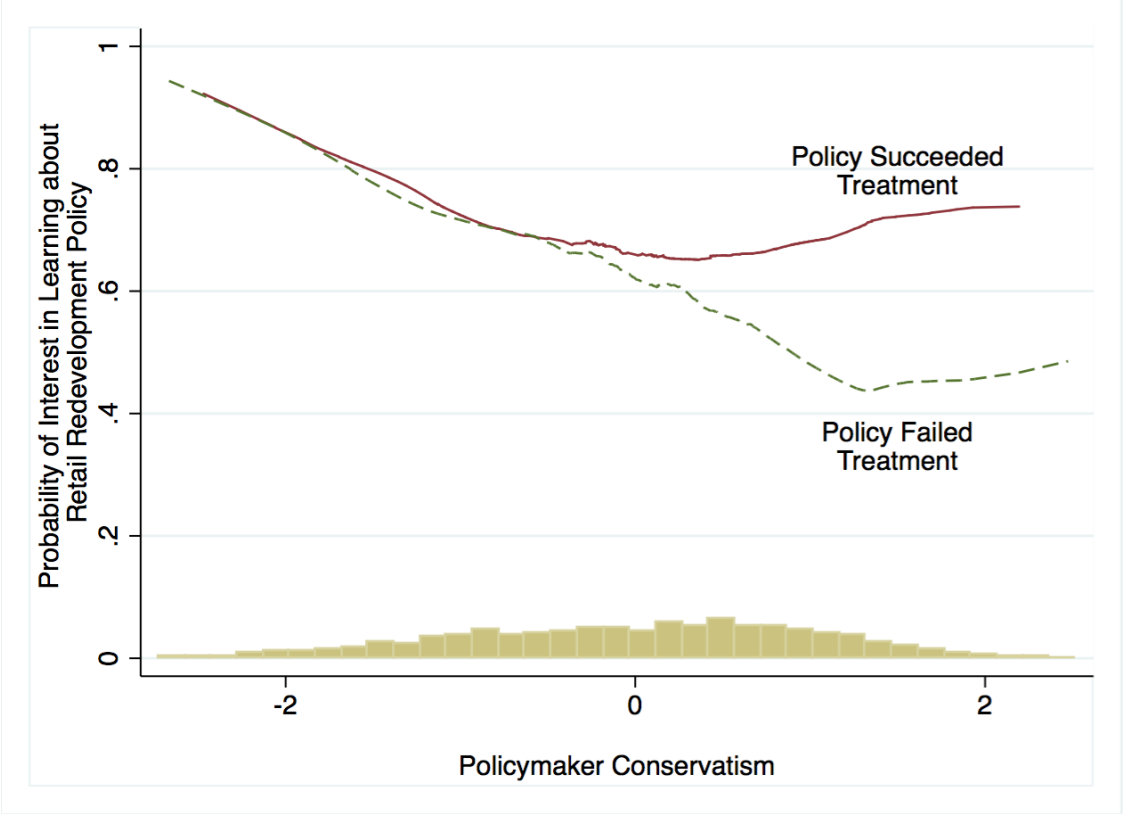


Notes: Locally weighted (lowess) averages of the probabilities for *Interest in Learning* in Experiment #1. The histogram shows the distribution of policymakers' ideology scores.

[11] We also included a "control" group, leaving out the description of the success or failure of the policy. As might be expected, the *Interest in Learning* among this control group was between the levels for the success and the failure groups, somewhat more in line with successes than with failures. Multinomial logit results based on the full dataset offer support for the same hypotheses as those reported for the subset of success and failures only.

As an initial test of the Ideological Learning Hypothesis, Figure 2 illustrates policymakers' Interest in Learning across the ideological spectrum. The figure shows the raw data, smoothed only by a lowess function. The histogram at the bottom of the figure shows the distribution of policymakers' ideal points. Consistent with the hypothesis, about 80% of the most liberal policymakers—who should be predisposed in favor of active government intervention in repurposing retail space—wish to learn more about the policy experience of other cities. In contrast, conservative policymakers were 20 percentage points less likely to express an interest in learning more. Although a majority still wanted to learn more, the drop in interest is quite large.

Figure 3: Ideological Learning from Success



Notes: Locally weighted (lowess) averages of the probabilities for *Interest in Learning* in Experiment #1. The dashed (solid) line represents the results for the "policy failed" treatment ("policy succeeded" treatment). The histogram shows the distribution of policymakers' ideology scores.

The level of interest is even lower among conservatives who were told that the policy had failed. Figure 3 shows similar lowess curves, now broken down across the two experimental treatments, with policy success indicated by the solid line and policy failure indicated by the dashed line. Three main findings emerge from the figure. First, for liberal policymakers (on the left-side of the figure), interest in learning is not conditional on policy success. More than 80% of them wished to learn more, regardless of whether the policy was described as a success or a failure. Second, both of the lines in the figure are downward sloping, suggesting that conservative policymakers are less interested than liberals in learning more about this policy. This is consistent with the Ideological Learning Hypothesis, given that conservatives are more distrustful of government interventions and so less interested in learning about such programs.

Third, the two lines diverge significantly for conservative policymakers. For the policy failure treatment, the line continues its downward trend. However, policy success is enough to stop this decline among conservatives. Consistent with the Success Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis, evidence of success is a significant factor in overcoming conservative policymakers' reservations about learning more about the other city's policy experiences. And the size of this effect is quite large. Among policymakers with ideal points above 1.0, the two lines are 20-30 percentage points apart; conservatives require greater evidence of policy success before they wish to learn more about policies that they initially view with suspicion.

We explore the robustness of these results by estimating empirical models that test the effect of ideology and success on learning while also controlling for other relevant factors. Logistic regression models are used because our dependent variable, *Interest in Learning*, is binary. As reported in Table 1, each model includes respondents' *Conservatism* to explore the effect of ideology.

Table 1: Success and Ideological Learning

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Respondent's Conservatism	-0.34***	-0.51***	-0.54***
	(0.10)	(0.14)	(0.18)
Conservatism × Success		0.34*	0.43**
		(0.19)	(0.21)
Treatment: Success		0.29	0.32
		(0.19)	(0.20)
Considered Issue Before			1.35***
			(0.22)
Democrat			0.03
			(0.32)
Republican			-0.02
			(0.25)
Partisan Election			-0.13
			(0.24)
Total Population (10K)			-0.00
			(0.00)
Percent Black			1.69
			(1.07)
Percent Latino			0.31
			(0.80)
Percent with Some College			-0.64
			(0.91)
Unemployment Rate			-2.02
			(2.03)
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage			-1.58
			(1.10)
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage			2.24
			(2.71)
Constant	0.64***	0.50***	0.72
	(0.09)	(0.13)	(0.79)
N	541	541	514
χ^2	13.2***	19.7***	71.3***

Notes: Logit analysis of the dichotomous *Interest in Learning* dependent variable, from Experiment #1. Self-identified Independents/Non-partisans are the excluded group in Model 3. Standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$, two-tailed.

Model 1, which gives the results when not including any control variables, confirms the pattern shown in Figure 2. The negative coefficient on *Conservatism*, which is statistically

significant ($p < 0.01$), means that conservatives generally show a lower level of interest in learning more about this policy.

Most importantly, the predictive power of ideology is moderated by whether the policy in question was successful. Model 2 tests the moderating impact of success by including a term for the interaction between the ideology measure and the ***Success*** indicator, which takes a value of 1 for subjects exposed to the success treatment, in the regression model. The positive and statistically significant coefficient on the interaction term indicates that evidence of success is much more important for conservatives than for liberals. This is in line with expectations from the Success Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis. The large negative coefficient on *Conservatism* indicates a significant ideologically based learning bias for policies described as failures, whereas the similar effect for successful policies is calculated by adding the coefficient on the interactive term to this main effect. In so doing, we see that the effect of ideology is diminished to a third of its size upon characterizing the policy as a success rather than a failure.[12]

These results are also robust to including control variables in the regression model. The control variables added to Model 3 come from the information gathered in the survey and from details about cities gathered independently from the American Community Survey.[13] Using information from these sources, we controlled for the policymaker's partisanship (with self-identified Independents/Non-partisans representing the excluded category) and electoral status, as well as the city's size, racial makeup, average educational attainment, unemployment rate, and

[12] The slope for *Conservatism* among those receiving the successful treatment is (-0.51) + 0.34 = –0.17, which is only 33% as large as the -0.51 slope for the failed policy treatment. Of course, the impact of these variables on the probability of *Interest in Learning* taking a value of one depends on values taken by other independent variables and on the logit function.
[13] The smaller sample size is the result of missing data for some of the control variables.

potential foreclosure status. All variables, their sources, and descriptive statistics are given in Appendix C.

Perhaps most importantly, we control for whether the officials had considered the issue before. We measure prior interest in the issue based on policymakers' responses to the following question that we asked earlier in the survey: "Have you ever considered redevelopment and rezoning of abandoned retail space in your area?" We control for prior interest in the issue to prevent omitted variable bias and to provide something similar to a manipulation check. If our experiment is capturing true interest in a policy, then the policymakers who represent communities confronting this issue *should be more interested* in learning about the policy.

The large and positive coefficient on the variable *Considered Issue Before* provides strong evidence that our experiment is capturing real interest among policymakers in learning more about the policy. Setting all other variables at their means in Model 3, the policymakers for whom mixed-use developments were recently relevant have a 74% chance of responding that they want to learn more, relative to only 40% for those who had not previously considered the issue.

The results of Model 3 provide further strong support for the Success Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis. Significantly, the moderating effect of success on the ideological bias in learning holds after controlling for the individual-level factors. In fact, the coefficient on the interaction term is about a half a standard deviation larger in magnitude than in Model 2, and is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. To put this in perspective, moderate policymakers (*Conservative* = 0) express an interest in learning from failures 71% of the time and from successes 77% of the time. In contrast, the comparable rates for conservatives (*Conservative* =

1.5) are 52% and 74%, a difference of 22 percentage points.[14] This gap is about the same size shown in Figure 2 without controlling for other factors affecting the desire to learn. These results support the Success Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis, showing that ideological policy skeptics require evidence of success in order to be enticed to learn more, whereas those ideologically predisposed to a policy do not require such evidence.

Experiment #2: Ideology, Learning, and Partisanship

In our second experiment we look at the moderating effect of partisanship on the ideological bias in policymakers' interest in learning more about housing policies to deal with foreclosures and vacant properties. This experiment was again embedded within the 2012 National Municipal Official Survey, although it was delivered to a different, randomly-chosen subset of officials than those in the first experiment. Our vignette, shown in Box 2, described a community that had an increase in foreclosures and dealt with it by passing various measures (including a measure to allow neighbors to buy and maintain a foreclosed property after the house was demolished). We then asked the policymakers, "Would you want to learn more about the pros and cons of a program like this to see if it would work in your area?" We altered the specific policy across Experiments #1 and #2 as a way to ensure that our findings for the baseline Ideological Learning Hypothesis were robust to alternative policies, although we maintained nearly every other aspect of the experiment for the sake of consistency. As in Experiment #1, we noted that if they clicked yes we would give them a link at the end of the survey to an external website on the topic (officials who clicked "yes" were redirected to information about these

[14] This is calculated based on Model 3, setting all control variables to their means (modes for dichotomous variables). The estimated marginal effects are for Republicans and are practically unchanged when looking at Democrats or Independents at those same levels of *Conservatism*.

policies provided on the National League of Cities' website). We again code the variable *Interest in Learning* so it takes a value of 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No."

Box 2: Experiment #2

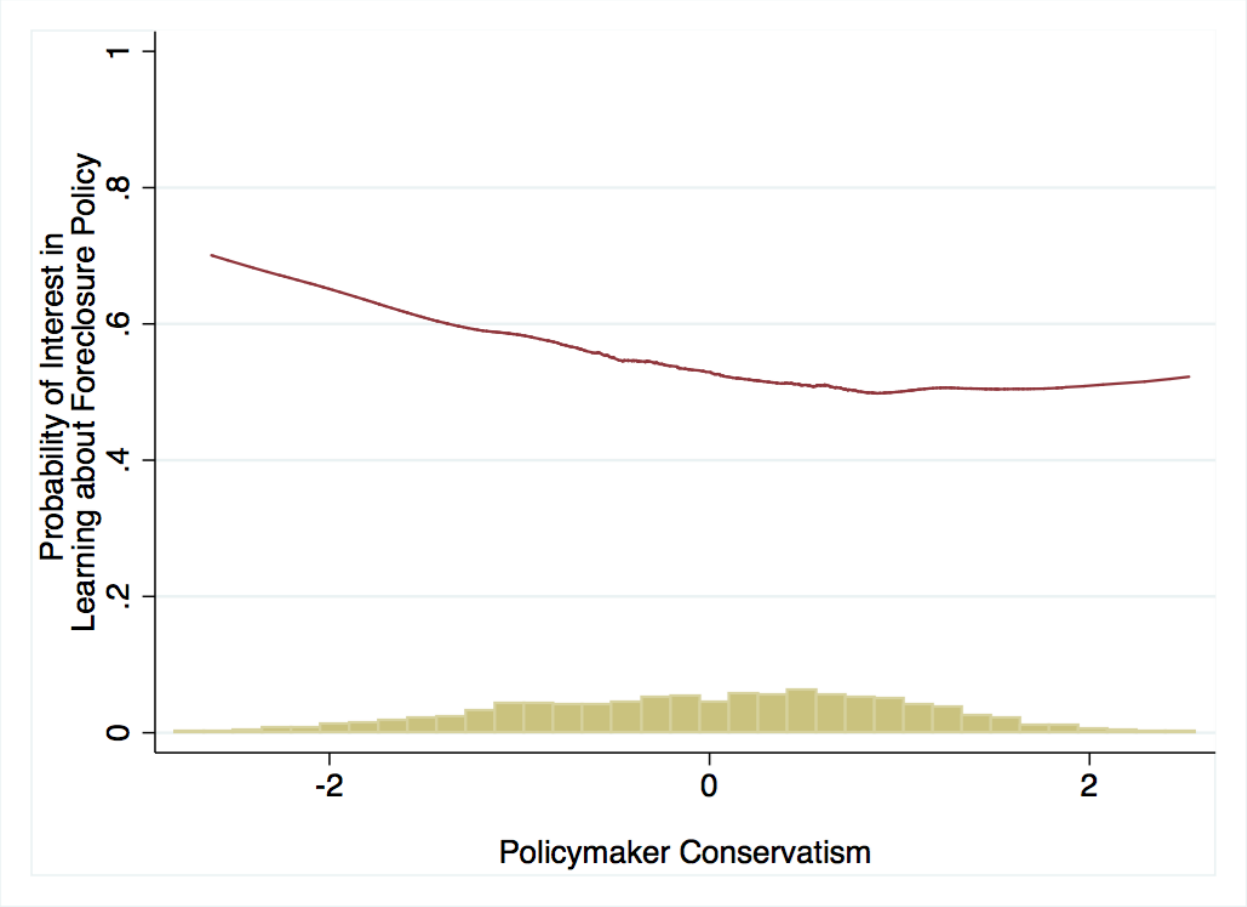
In a community dealing with an increase in foreclosures, **[Republican/Democratic]** officials passed a comprehensive measure to address foreclosures and vacant properties. Among other aspects, the policy facilitated neighbors purchasing and maintaining their former neighbors' property after the house was demolished. Would you want to learn more about the pros and cons of a program like this to see if it would work in your area? ____ Yes (we'll provide a link to an external website at the end of the survey) ____ No

Note: The experimental manipulations are given in bolded, bracketed text here. In the actual experiment it was displayed as regular text.

We experimentally manipulated whether the officials who implemented the policy were Republicans or Democrats (see the bolded text in brackets in Box 2) in order to test whether government officials are more interested in learning from co-partisans. If the Partisanship Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis is correct, officials should be more interested in the policy implemented by their co-partisans than by the opposing party, especially among those respondents who are ideologically predisposed against the policy.

Figure 4 gives the average percent of policymakers expressing an interest in learning more about the policy as a function of their ideology. As with Figure 2, this figure shows the raw data across both treatments, smoothed only by a lowess curve. Once again, the figure offers preliminary support for the Ideological Learning Hypothesis. The more conservative policymakers are about 20 percentage points less interested in learning about other cities' foreclosure policies than are their liberal counterparts.

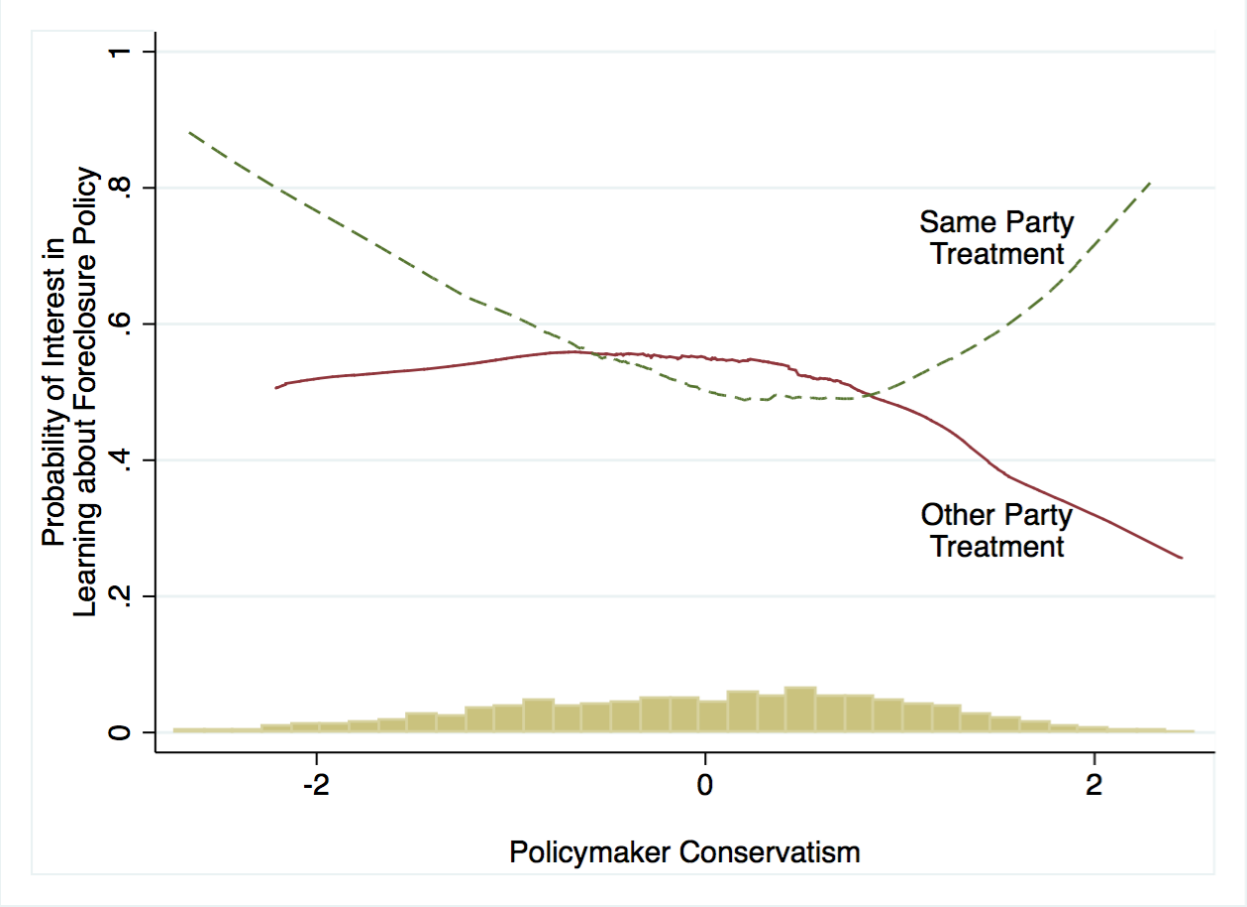
Figure 4: Conservative Disinterest in Learning about Foreclosure Policy



Notes: Locally weighted (lowess) averages of the probabilities for *Interest in Learning* in Experiment #2. The histogram shows the distribution of policymakers' ideology scores.

The key treatment in the second experiment is whether the officials in the implementing community were from the same party as the policymaker reading about the program. Therefore, based on whether the officials in the vignette were described as Republican or Democratic, we created the indicator variable ***Same Party*** to take a value of 1 if respondents were from the same party as the officials in the vignette and 0 if they were from the opposing party. Non-partisan and Independent respondents are thus excluded from this analysis (and from the results shown in Figure 4).

Figure 5: Ideological Extremists Learning from Own Party



Notes: Locally weighted (lowess) averages of the probabilities for *Interest in Learning* in Experiment #2. The dashed (solid) line represents the results for the same party treatment (other party treatment), based on self-reported partisanship. The histogram shows the distribution of policymakers' ideology scores.

If the Partisanship Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis is correct, we should see that ideological conservatives (who in this case are almost entirely Republicans) should be much more interested in learning from members of their own party than in learning from the other party. Illustrating a smoothed version of the raw experimental data, Figure 5 shows just such a pattern. As with Figure 3, the two lines show locally weighted average interest in learning across treatments, here with the solid line showing the level of interest when the implementing officials are from the opposition party and the dashed line when the implementing officials are co-partisans.

The results are striking. While conservatives (typically Republicans) have little interest in learning about the opposition's policies in this area, their interest is piqued when given the opportunity to hear about Republicans' activities. This interest in learning from co-partisans mitigates and actually reverses the ideological bias. For policymakers who are more conservative, their interest in learning from co-partisans is even higher than the interest among moderates. For conservatives, the interest-in-learning gap between the other-party treatment and the same-party treatment rises to about 40 percentage points.

While less relevant to testing the Partisanship Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis, the other parts of the figure are also intriguing. For moderates, there is little difference between wishing to learn from co-partisans or from the opposing party, with perhaps even a small enhanced desire to reach across party lines. These moderates appear like "ambivalent partisans," the source of the policy evidence does not affect their interest in learning more (e.g., Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen 2012). In contrast, only half of liberals (on the left side of the figure) are interested in learning from Republicans, whereas more than 70% want to hear about Democratic policy experiments. Thus the effect of partisanship, while helping overcome the ideological bias among a policy's opponents, raises concerns for a new partisan-based bias among a policy's traditional ideological supporters. Rather than being a force that solely broadens the pattern of learning and policy diffusion, partisanship can also undermine such learning precisely where it is most likely to occur absent any partisan cues. Finally, as shown in Appendix D, the same patterns in Figure 5 emerge upon examining Democrats and Republicans separately.

Table 2: Ideological Extremism and Partisan Learning

	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Respondent's Conservatism	-0.18**	-0.12		
	(0.08)	(0.12)		
Conservatism × Same Party		-0.10		
		(0.16)		
Treatment: Same Party		0.11	-0.48*	-0.56**
		(0.17)	(0.25)	(0.28)
Respondent's Extremism			-0.18	-0.20
			(0.18)	(0.19)
Extremism × Same Party			0.81***	0.89***
			(0.25)	(0.27)
Considered Issue Before				1.05***
				(0.20)
Democrat				0.25
				(0.19)
Partisan Election				0.30
				(0.21)
Total Population (10K)				0.02*
				(0.01)
Percent Black				1.51*
				(0.85)
Percent Latino				-0.28
				(0.72)
Percent with Some College				-2.77***
				(0.95)
Unemployment Rate				-2.78
				(2.56)
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage				-0.47
				(1.10)
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage				-2.89
				(4.17)
Constant	0.15*	0.10	0.23	0.64
	(0.08)	(0.12)	(0.18)	(0.76)
N	575	575	575	551
χ^2	4.9**	5.7	15.8***	87.2***

Notes: Logit analysis of the dichotomous *Interest in Learning* dependent variable from Experiment #2. Standard errors in parentheses. *** *p<0.01*, ** *p<0.05*, * *p<0.1*, two-tailed.

In Table 2, we test the robustness of the results relating to ideological bias and partisan learning by using logit regressions to estimate models that include the same set of controls used

in the regressions from the first experiment. Model 4, like Model 1 in Table 1, provides strong support for the Ideological Learning Hypothesis. Conservatives are considerably less likely to express an interest in learning about other municipalities' policies in this area than are liberals. Model 5 shows something of a muddled result, with neither the main effect for *Conservatism* nor its interaction with the *Same Party* treatment attaining statistical significance. This is a consequence of trying to project a linear model onto a clearly nonlinear pattern, as illustrated in Figure 5. To account for this, we create a new variable, ***Extremism***, which equals the policymaker's *Conservatism* if the respondent is Republican. For Democratic policymakers, *Extremism* is set at (-1) × *Conservatism*. Thus, the most conservative Republicans and most liberal Democrats have the highest values of *Extremism*.

In Model 6, the patterns of Figure 5 clearly emerge once again. Most notably, the large, positive, and statistically significant coefficient on the interaction between *Extremism* and *Same Party* reveals the enhanced desire to learn from co-partisans among conservatives and liberals. Put simply, more ideologically extreme policymakers exhibit a stronger co-partisan learning bias.

Model 7 shows that this same relationship holds even when we include the individual-level and municipal-level control variables found in Table 1; ideological extremists from both sides of the spectrum strongly prefer to learn from co-partisans. For example, the probability that an ideologically extreme Republican (*Extremism* = 1.5) will indicate *Interest in Learning* more about the policy rises from 34% to 53% as we move from the other party treatment to the same party treatment.[15] The results for extreme Democrats are nearly identical.[16] In contrast,

[15] Calculations reported here hold all other variables at the means (modes for dichotomous variables).

for the more moderate policymakers of both parties (*Extremism* = 0), *Interest in Learning* is actually lower for co-partisans, consistent with the findings from Figure 5. Taken together, these results offer strong evidence for the Partisanship Overcoming Ideology Hypothesis.

The results from Model 7 also show that prior interest in this issue strongly predicts interest in learning more about the policy. This is the same pattern we saw in the first experiment. It is worth reiterating that the experiments involved two different sets of randomly chosen policymakers. Yet in both cases, the policymakers who cared most about this issue were the ones who wanted to learn more. This provides strong evidence that policymakers' desire to learn more about the policy (i.e., our dependent variable) captures real engagement with the issue and is not simply cheap talk.

Discussion and Future Directions

In order to gain the benefits of learning-based policy diffusion, it is important to understand and grapple with ideological-based biases. These biases are endemic and have a substantial effect on the early stages of policy diffusion. In the two municipal policy experiments presented here, conservatives were much less willing to learn about others' activist policies. On the basis of our evidence, we would expect that liberals, too, would be averse to learning about market-based policy interventions, such as privatization of traditionally city-provided services.[17] If policymakers, both liberal and conservative, are unwilling to learn from others, they stand little chance of adopting somewhat ideologically incongruent but promising policies at home.

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[16] The probability that an ideologically extreme Democrat (*Extremism* = 1.5) will indicate *Interest in Learning* more about the policy rises from 40% to 59% when moving from the other party treatment to the same party treatment.

[17] Studies exploring the robustness of our results to conservative-leaning policies would be welcome.

However, our experimental manipulations show that these biases against learning can be overcome to a large degree. Emphasizing either the success of these policies or co-partisan experimentation in other communities significantly enhances the willingness of ideologues to learn about others' experiences. Such findings offer clear implications to policy entrepreneurs looking to facilitate the spread of successful policies (e.g., Balla 2001, Haas 1992, Mintrom 1997). That said, there is a subtlety in our findings, in that emphasizing the acceptance of a policy by an opposing party can undermine the learning process among those who would otherwise be interested in learning.

These findings complement and extend earlier scholarship. For example, consistent with previously untested theoretical predictions (Volden, Ting, and Carpenter 2008), we establish that policymakers seek out additional information if the portrayal of the policy as a "success" overcomes their natural disinclination to consider a given intervention. Moreover, learning is conditional not only on ideology but also on partisanship. Both liberal and conservative policymakers are more likely to express an interest in learning from their co-partisans than from those in the opposing party. In contrast, moderates are equally willing to learn from the policy experiments conducted by officials in either political party. Extending observational studies that show how governments that share the same ideological and partisan preferences are more likely to adopt similar policies (e.g., Grossback, Nicholson-Crotty, and Peterson 2004), we establish that ideological biases arise at the earliest stage in the diffusion process. Without an intervention, such as an emphasis on consistency with partisan goals or highlighting the policy's success, ideological biases in learning may seriously alter the policy choices entertained by ideologically motivated policymakers.

In addition to these substantive findings, our study provides a template for incorporating experimental research design into studies of policy diffusion. In so doing, we see a long line of possible future studies. For example, scholars have been interested in discerning between the many possible mechanisms that lead to policy diffusion. We focus here on learning; but mechanisms such as competition, imitation, socialization, or coercion could be examined with clever experimental designs. For instance, policymakers could be primed to think about competition with their neighbors through a description of policies designed to lure away businesses. Under what conditions are competitive pressures heightened?

Second, scholars have been interested in the *conditional* nature of policy diffusion. We highlight two such conditions, but there are many others that can be studied carefully through experimental designs. For example, future experiments could manipulate information about the communities that implement the policy in the vignette to assess the role of similarities across governments in learning. Likewise, whether policy entrepreneurs, information clearinghouses, and interest groups are characterized (and perceived) as nonpartisan, as bipartisan, or as made up of co-partisans may influence policymakers' initial consideration of their ideas.

Third, the *types* of policies themselves affect the diffusion process and thus merit careful analysis. Future experiments could focus on policies that vary on many additional dimensions, including policy complexity, economic vs. morality policy, perception as a local vs. national issue, or favorability to conservatives rather than liberals, to name but a few. Future experiments could also extend beyond local officials to those at the state or national level, both within the U.S. and beyond, and to other relevant political actors such as bureaucrats or legislative staff members.

While we see fertile ground for experimental research on policy diffusion, ultimately the most useful conclusions will come from uniting theoretical, observational, and experimental approaches. For instance, observational studies have well characterized the policy adoption stage in the diffusion process. In contrast, we capture a very early stage – the interest in learning more about other governments' policy experiences. Combining these approaches can foster a better understanding of why the spread of policies appears to be based on the partisanship of policymakers. Scholars can expand upon this work with observational studies of bill introductions, experimental studies of policy entrepreneurs and interest groups, and theoretical understandings of still other stages of the public policy process. Doing so will allow us to better trace out the causal steps that lead to the interrelated web of policies across governments, and to better understand the politics behind such policy choices.

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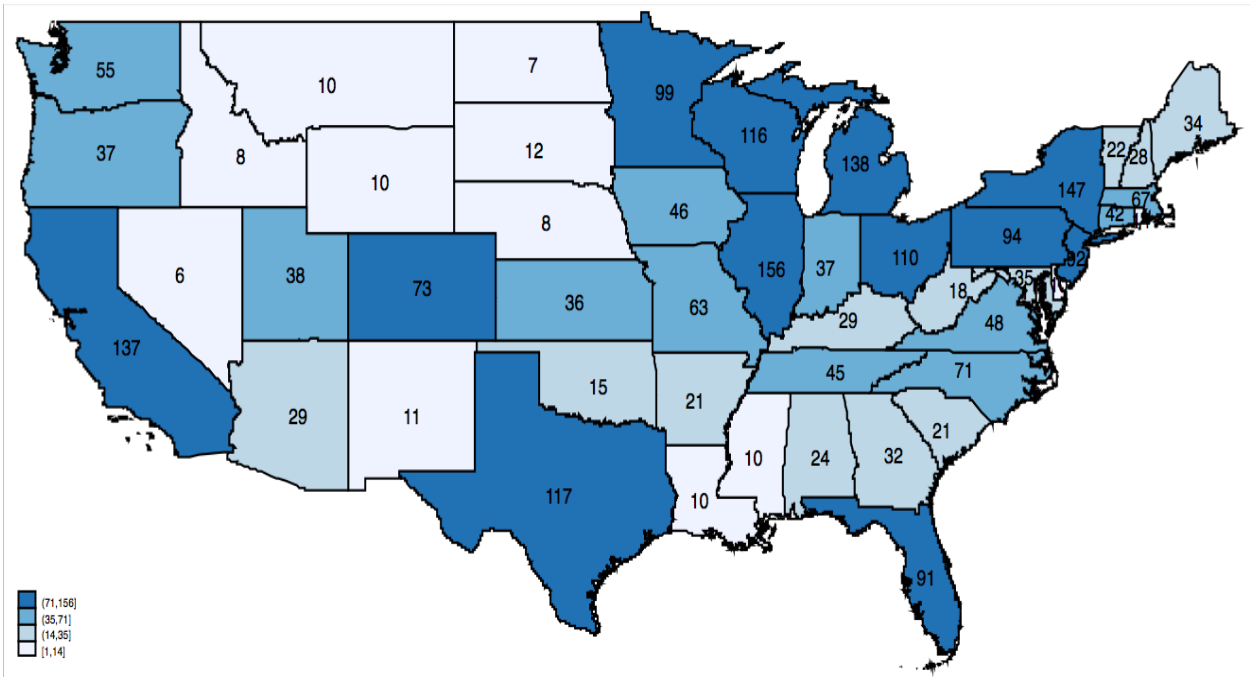
Appendix A: Details of the Survey

The survey experiments in our analysis were administered online in July and August of 2012 to a subsample of participants in the 2012 National Municipal Officials Survey (NMOS). The sample of city officials for the survey was constructed by first downloading a list of all of the cities in the U.S. Census. Student research assistants then searched for the website of each town or city taken from the census. If the research assistants were able to identify the city website, they then collected the name and email address of the city mayor and council members (or the equivalent). The survey itself was created using the web-based program Qualtrics and was administered to municipal officials by sending them a link to the survey.

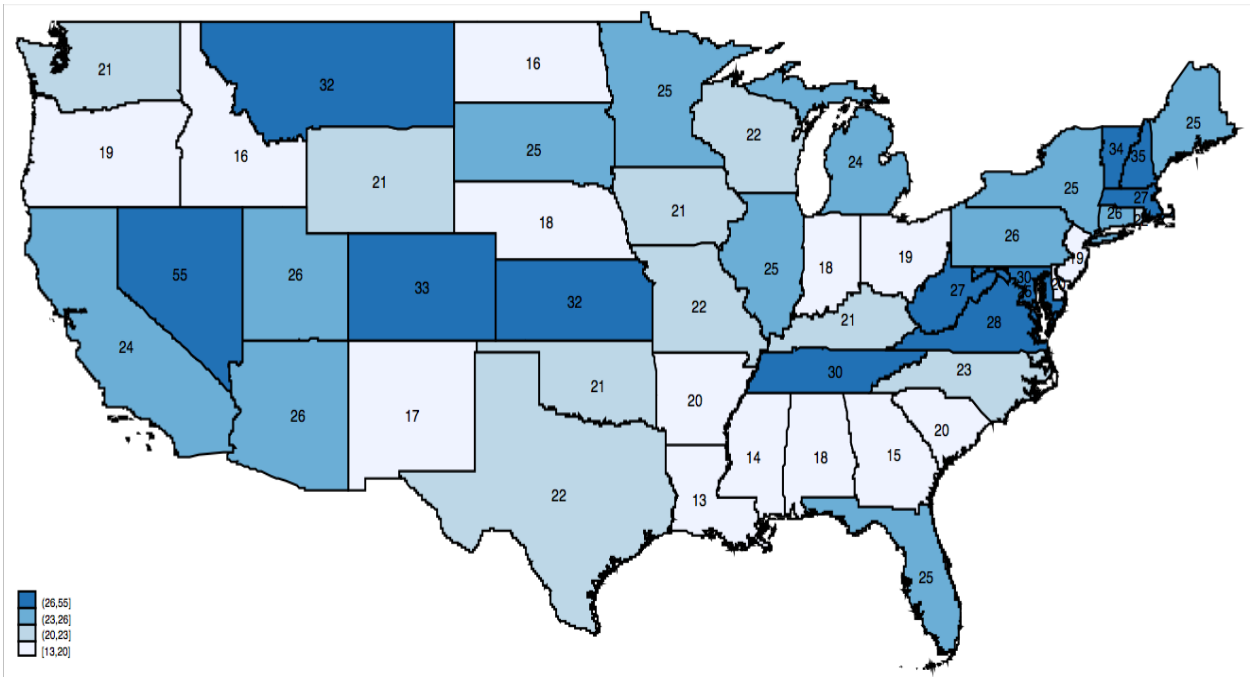
The response rate for the two survey experiments (which were administered to separate subsamples of officials) was around 23%, on par with recent expert surveys of this nature (e.g., Fisher and Herrick 2013, Harden 2013). As illustrated in the figures below, participants in the survey experiments provide broad geographic coverage across the United States.

Number of Municipal Officials (from each State)
Participating in either Experiment 1 or 2



Notes: Darker colors indicate greater participation in the survey.

Response Rates (by State) of Municipal Officials
Invited to Participate in either Experiment 1 or 2



Notes: Darker colors indicate greater participation in the survey.

Appendix B: Issue Position Questions

The table below lists the set of 53 questions used to estimate the ideological issue preferences of the policymakers. Policymakers were asked a randomly chosen subset of 28 of these questions. For each question we asked the policymaker to answer yes or no. The table also indicates the percent of "Yes" responses to each issue stance question as well as the discrimination parameter and intercept for each question, used to construct the ideological ideal points used throughout the paper.

Issue Position Questions

Question wording	% Answering Yes	Discrimi-nation parameter	Intercept
Do you support eliminating public funding for abortions and public funding of organizations that advocate or perform abortions?	45%	1.27	0.27
Do you support federal funding to create lines of stem cells from new embryos?	65%	-0.84	-0.49
Do you support prohibiting the late-term abortion procedure known as partial-birth abortion?	59%	0.59	-0.25
Should abortions always be legally available?	63%	-0.78	-0.45
Do you support including sexual orientation in your state's anti-discrimination laws?	71%	-0.82	-0.75
Do you support requiring that crimes based on sexual orientation be prosecuted as federal hate crimes?	54%	-0.57	-0.11
Should your state recognize civil unions between same-sex couples?	64%	-1.03	-0.58
Do you support affirmative action in state college and university admissions?	43%	-0.82	0.22
Should the federal government consider race and gender in government contracting decisions?	22%	-0.84	1.16
Do you support opening a select portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil exploration?	60%	1.36	-0.39
Do you support requiring the federal government to reimburse citizens when environmental regulations limit use of privately owned lands?	55%	0.39	-0.14
Do you support the U.S. re-entering the Kyoto treaty process to limit global warming?	52%	-1.77	-0.22
Should state environmental regulations be stricter than federal law?	44%	-0.59	0.19
Do you favor allowing citizens to carry concealed firearms?	61%	0.91	-0.37
Do you support banning the sale or transfer of all forms of semi-automatic weapons?	49%	-0.75	0.02

Do you support increasing restrictions on the purchase and possession of firearms?	50%	-1.12	-0.02
Do you support amnesty for certain illegal immigrants who already reside in the U.S.?	62%	-0.86	-0.43
Do you support establishing English as the official and recognized language of the U.S.?	72%	1.02	-0.84
Do you support prohibiting states from passing laws that deny human services (medical care education) to illegal immigrants or their children?	43%	-0.11	0.18
Do you support the enforcement of federal immigration laws by state and local police?	70%	0.94	-0.723
Do you support using military tribunals to try suspected terrorists when ordinary civilian courts are deemed inappropriate or impractical?	80%	0.57	-1.01
Should law enforcement agencies have greater discretion to monitor domestic communications, to prevent future terrorist attacks?	46%	0.31	0.11
Should the U.S. contribute more funding and troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions?	31%	-0.62	0.60
Should the U.S. support the creation of a Palestinian state?	52%	-0.66	-0.09
Do you support decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana?	62%	-0.54	-0.37
Do you support imposing truth in sentencing for violent criminals so they serve full sentences with no chance of parole?	74%	0.51	-0.73
Do you support limiting the number of appeals allowed to inmates on death row?	68%	0.59	-0.55
Do you support the death penalty in your state?	61%	0.88	-0.37
Do you support increasing the minimum wage?	56%	-0.91	-0.23
Do you support providing direct financial assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure?	36%	-0.58	0.39
Do you support reducing government regulations on the private sector in order to encourage investment and economic expansion?	69%	1.23	-0.75
Do you support the right of workers to unionize?	80%	-0.59	-1.02
Do you support a merit pay system for teachers?	83%	0.31	-0.98
Do you support abstinence-only sexual education programs?	24%	0.72	0.89
Do you support increasing state funds for hiring additional teachers?	65%	-0.66	-0.46
Do you support providing parents with vouchers to send their children to any participating school: public, private, or religious?	50%	0.75	0.02
Is the tenure process for public school teachers producing effective teachers?	15%	-0.42	1.13
Do you support allowing doctors to prescribe marijuana to their patients for medicinal purposes?	71%	-0.52	-0.65
Do you support implementing a universal health care program to guarantee coverage to all Americans regardless of income?	54%	-2.26	-0.40

Do you support monetary limits on damages that can be collected in malpractice lawsuits?	77%	0.47	-0.82
Do you support requiring individuals to purchase health care insurance?	43%	-1.30	0.26
Do you support implementing a government-financed single-payer national health care system similar to that of Canada?	41%	-1.50	0.38
Do you support making President Bush's tax cuts permanent?	52%	1.46	-0.03
Do you support replacing the U.S. income tax structure with a flat income tax?	61%	0.64	-0.36
Do you support the permanent repeal of the federal estate tax?	58%	0.87	-0.28
Do you support increasing federal taxes on gasoline and diesel fuels to promote conservation and alternative fuel development?	40%	-0.99	0.37
Do you support increasing employment and job training programs for welfare recipients?	90%	-0.47	-1.42
Do you support limiting the benefits given to single women if they have additional children while receiving welfare benefits?	69%	0.56	-0.58
Do you support programs that provide job training and placement services for at-risk youth?	95%	-0.55	-1.92
Do you support providing child care for welfare recipients who work?	81%	-0.52	-1.00
Do you support redirecting welfare funding to faith-based and community-based private organizations?	39%	0.64	0.33
Do you support cutting taxes, even if it means deep cuts in government programs?	51%	1.32	0.00
Do you support efforts to consolidate 911 services with neighboring areas as a way to save municipal funds?	86%	-0.03	-1.08

Appendix C: Summary Statistics and Variable Descriptions

Summary Statistics for Variables in Table 1

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Interest in Learning	0.65	0.48	0	1
Treatment: Policy Successful	0.50	0.50	0	1
Conservatism × Treatment: Success	0.02	0.70	-2.47	2.19
Conservatism	0.04	1.00	-2.67	2.47
Considered Issue Before	0.75	0.44	0	1
Democrat	0.29	0.46	0	1
Republican	0.41	0.49	0	1
Partisan Election	0.27	0.44	0	1
Total Population (10K)	6.0	39.1	0.03	839.2
Percent Black	0.08	0.12	0	0.83
Percent Latino	0.10	0.14	0	0.80
Percent with Some College	0.22	0.12	0	0.63
Unemployment Rate	0.08	0.05	0	0.52
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage	0.69	0.11	0.24	1
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage	0.04	0.04	0	0.66

Summary Statistics for Variables in Table 2

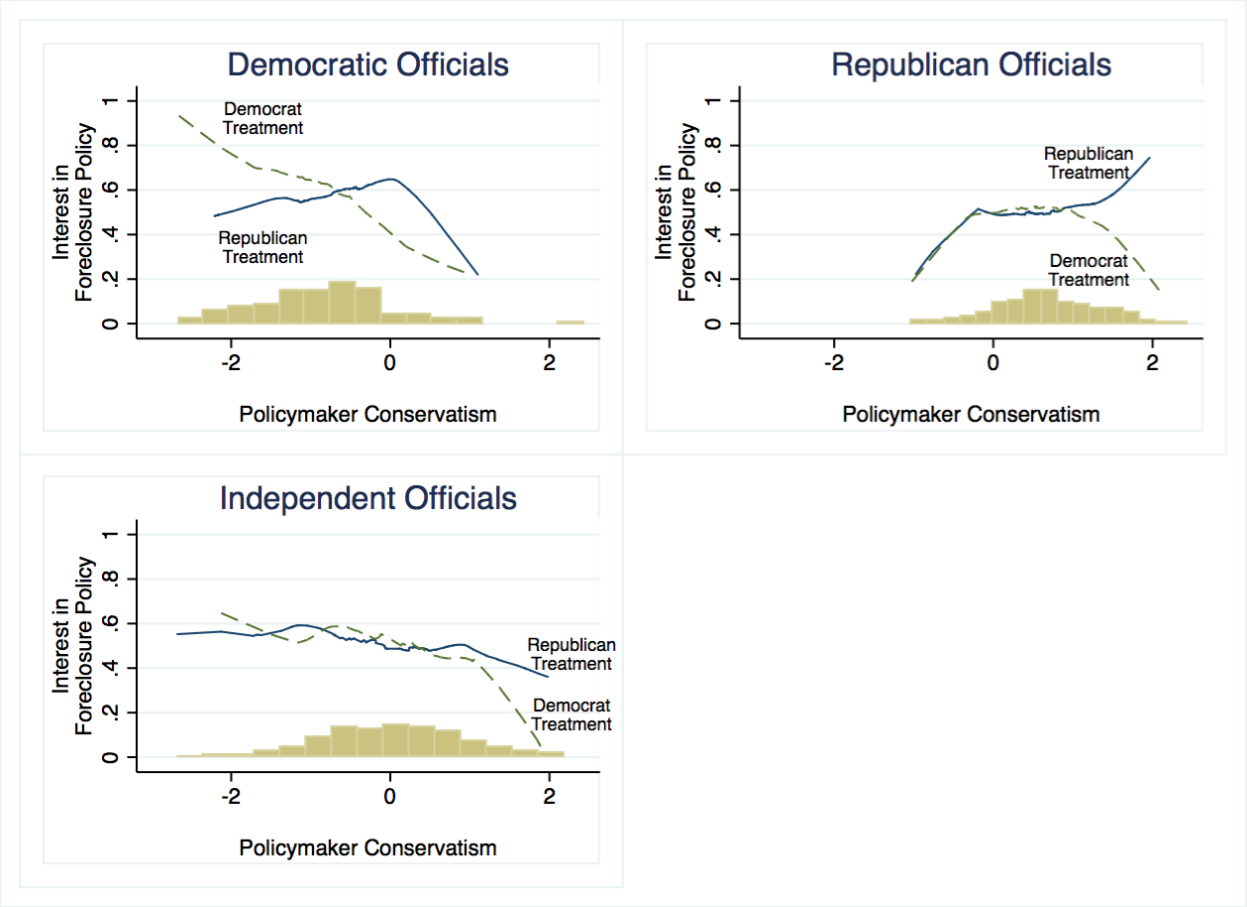
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Interest in Learning	0.54	0.50	0	1
Conservatism	-0.03	1.05	-2.7	2.44
Conservatism × Same Party	-0.03	0.75	-2.7	2.29
Treatment: Same Party	0.51	0.50	0	1
Extremism × Same Party	0.39	0.64	-0.97	2.66
Ideological Extremism	0.77	0.70	-2.43	2.66
Considered Issue Before	0.47	0.50	0	1
Democrat	0.46	0.50	0	1
Partisan Election	0.33	0.47	0	1
Total Population (10K)	7.1	40.7	0.01	839.2
Percent Black	0.09	0.13	0	0.83
Percent Latino	0.10	0.14	0	0.92
Percent with Some College	0.22	0.12	0	0.63
Unemployment Rate	0.08	0.05	0	0.50
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage	0.68	0.10	0.28	1
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage	0.04	0.03	0	0.14

Description of Variables in Analysis

Variable	Description	Source
Dependent Variable		
Interest in Learning	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent answered "Yes" to the question of whether they would like to learn more about the program described in the vignette. Equals 0 if respondent answered "No" to the question.	Survey experiment in 2012 NMOS
Independent Variables		
Treatment: Policy Successful	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent assigned to read the story about a successful policy. Equals 0 if respondent assigned to read the story about an unsuccessful policy.	Survey experiment in 2012 NMOS
Conservatism	Ideal point estimate of respondents' preferences over a range of political issues using issue position questions from the "political courage test" that Project Vote Smart administers to state and federal candidates. Lower values indicate that the policymaker has more liberal preferences, and higher values indicate more conservative preferences.	2012 NMOS
Treatment: Same Party	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent self-identifies with the same party as that of the officials in the vignette; 0 otherwise. Only respondents who identified as either a Republican or Democrat are included in this measure.	Survey experiment and 2012 NMOS
Ideological Extremism	Equals the policymaker's *Conservatism* if the respondent is Republican. For Democratic policymakers, *Extremism* is (-1) multiplied by their *Conservatism*.	2012 NMOS
Considered Issue Before	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent in earlier question indicated that she had ever considered the policy presented in the vignette. Equals 0 if respondent indicated that she had not.	2012 NMOS
Democrat	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent self-identifies as a Democrat; 0 otherwise.	2012 NMOS
Republican	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent self-identifies as a Republican; 0 otherwise.	2012 NMOS
Partisan Election	Indicator variable. Equals 1 if respondent was elected in a partisan election, meaning that the respondent's party was indicated on the ballot.	2012 NMOS
Total Population (10K)	Estimated 2009 population of the respondent's city.	U.S. Census Bureau
Percent Black	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that is black.	U.S. Census Bureau
Percent Latino	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that is Latino.	U.S. Census Bureau
Percent with Some College	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that has more than a high school education.	U.S. Census Bureau
Unemployment Rate	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that is unemployed	U.S. Census Bureau
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that has an unpaid mortgage.	U.S. Census Bureau
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage	Proportion of the population in the respondent's city that has an unpaid second mortgage.	U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix D: Interest in Learning, By Party and Treatment

This appendix provides results that explore the effects shown in Figure 5 and Table 2, broken down by officials' self-identified partisanship.



Notes: Locally weighted (lowess) averages of the probabilities for *Interest in Learning* in Experiment #2. The dashed (solid) line represents the results for the Democrat treatment (Republican treatment), with figures subdivided based on self-reported partisanship. The histogram shows the distribution of policymakers' ideology scores within each party.

Ideological Extremism and Partisan Learning, by Respondents' Party

	Republicans		Democrats	
	(A1)	(A2)	(A3)	(A4)
Respondent's Conservatism	-0.24	-0.26		
	(0.28)	(0.31)		
Conservatism × Same Party	-0.66*	-0.71*		
	(0.37)	(0.40)		
Respondent's Liberalism			-0.19	-0.11
			(0.23)	(0.26)
Liberalism × Same Party			0.98***	1.23***
			(0.35)	(0.41)
Treatment: Same Party	-0.34	-0.47	-0.68*	-0.82*
	(0.34)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.45)
Considered Issue Before		1.12***		0.93***
		(0.26)		(0.32)
Partisan Election		0.23		0.54*
		(0.29)		(0.33)
Total Population (10K)		-0.02		0.09**
		(0.02)		(0.03)
Percent Black		2.41*		0.87
		(1.44)		(1.12)
Percent Latino		1.05		-1.08
		(1.16)		(0.99)
Percent with Some College		-2.71**		-3.16**
		(1.33)		(1.52)
Unemployment Rate		-6.35*		2.22
		(3.70)		(4.31)
Percent: Unpaid 1st Mortgage		1.62		-3.90**
		(1.48)		(1.83)
Percent: Unpaid 2nd Mortgage		-4.96		0.65
		(5.36)		(7.41)
Constant	0.11	-0.41	0.45*	2.57**
	(0.25)	(1.03)	(0.27)	(1.25)
N	314	300	261	251
χ^2	4.0	38.4***	11.8***	66.3***

Notes: Logit analysis of the dichotomous *Interest in Learning* dependent variable from Experiment #2. Standard errors in parentheses. *** *p<0.01*, ** *p<0.05*, * *p<0.1*, two-tailed. Models A1 and A2 present the results for Republicans, and Models A3 and A4 present the results for Democrats. The results of the analysis confirm the patterns shown in the figures above.