How do Public Officials Learn About Policy? A Field Experiment on Policy Diffusion

Miguel M. Pereira
University of Southern California
`m.pereira@usc.edu`

October 23, 2020

**Forthcoming at the
British Journal of Political Science**

Abstract

Prior research suggests that partisanship can influence how legislators learn from each other. However, same-party governments are also more likely to share similar issues, ideological preferences, or constituency demands. Establishing a causal link between partisanship and policy learning is difficult. In collaboration with a non-profit organization, this study isolates the role of partisanship in a real policy learning context. As part of an email campaign promoting a new policy among local representatives, I randomized whether the program was endorsed by co-partisans, out-partisans, or both parties. The results show that representatives are systematically more interested in the same policy when endorsed by co-partisans. Bipartisan initiatives also attract less interest than co-partisan policies, and no more interest than out-partisan policies, even in more competitive districts. Together, the results suggest that ideological considerations cannot fully explain partisan-based learning. Implications for the study of policy diffusion, legislative signaling, and interest group access are discussed.

When facing a new issue in their constituency, elected officials can consider policy solutions that have been successfully implemented elsewhere. This ability to learn from the experience of others can make policy-making more efficient, allowing governments to replicate virtuous initiatives while avoiding flawed solutions (Böhmelt et al. 2016; Graham et al. 2013). However, the prospects of policy learning depend from whom public officials are willing to learn. If politicians systematically favor (or dismiss) initiatives implemented by a subset of peers, regardless of the specific characteristics of the policy, this process may actually produce inefficiencies. Bounded policy learning can lead to the proliferation of poor policy solutions. Despite the importance of partisanship in most aspects of political life, there has not been much work on its direct role in the diffusion of new ideas. In this project, I explore how representatives use partisan cues to consider which policies to pursue, and how these cues may constrain policy learning.

Prior work established that geographical proximity (Case et al. 1993), ideological congruence (Grossback et al. 2004), or demographic similarities among voters (Simmons and Elkins 2004) are associated with learning-based policy diffusion.¹ Observational studies based on aggregate patterns of policy adoption have played an important role in uncovering diffusion patterns (Graham et al. 2013). However, these contributions are unable to isolate the motivations of legislators to learn from each other.

To explore how partisanship shapes policy learning, I carried out a collaborative field experiment with a non-profit organization. *Welcoming America* is an advocacy group that promotes immigrant inclusion policies among American local governments. The experiment was embedded in an outreach campaign conducted by the organization to raise awareness for a new certification program. The email campaign targeted 18,741 local elected officials and included an endorsement by a county government that had recently adopted the policy with support from both parties.² The party affiliation of the officials endorsing the policy was

¹Learning is only one mechanism of policy diffusion. Other mechanisms include economic competition, imitation, or coercion (Shipan and Volden 2008). This paper focuses on learning-based diffusion. All references to “diffusion” should be interpreted as “learning-based diffusion.”

²The sample is composed by elected officials from city and county governments. See Appendix B for

manipulated without deception. Some officials received an endorsement from co-partisans. A second group received an endorsement from members of the other party. Finally, a third group received a bipartisan endorsement.

The study shows that local politicians are systematically more interested in *the same* certification program when endorsed by co-partisans. The differences are meaningful. Relative to an out-partisan endorsement, co-partisan endorsements are associated with a 10.7% increase in policy interest. In turn, the endorsement by *members of both parties* attracted no more interest than the out-partisan endorsement, and significantly less interest than the co-partisan policy. Bipartisan endorsements also did not attract more interest in politically competitive communities, where moderate policies are rewarded by voters (Ansolabehere et al. 2001; Carson and Williamson 2018). Hence, partisan cues do not seem to be used exclusively to filter policies that better reflect the preferences of the constituency. The results are more consistent with a pattern of learning based on ingroup favoritism.

Partisanship and Diffusion

A consistent finding in the policy diffusion literature is that legislators are more likely to learn from peers that are more similar to them (e.g., Case et al. 1993). Because partisanship is such an important political characteristic, it is likely to play a role in how officials respond to policies implemented by other governments. Prior observational work finds patterns consistent with this relationship (Graham et al. 2013). The dissemination of social distancing policies for COVID-19 may be the most recent example of this process (Adolph et al. 2020). However, same party governments are also more likely to face similar issues, as the constituents that elected them share analogous interests and demands. Hence, co-partisan officials may be inclined to independently try similar policy solutions at the same time. This process of independent experimentation would lead to patterns of policy innovation observably equivalent to the results of learning-based diffusion (Volden et al. 2008). Therefore,

more details.

observational studies – although compelling – leave out the possibility that the relationship between partisanship and diffusion is epiphenomenal.

Two recent studies have tried to isolate the effect of partisanship on policy learning. Butler et al. (2017) looked at the ideological preferences of local officials. The authors studied the willingness of officials to learn about a liberal policy and find that the more liberal a politician, the more interested she is in considering the policy. However, this effect is moderated by whether the policy is currently being implemented by co-partisans. The same patterns were uncovered for a conservative policy (Butler and Pereira 2018a). Both studies are based on survey experiments with elected officials. Whether these patterns translate into the behavior of representatives in office remains unclear (Barabas and Jerit 2010). Individuals derive utility from partisan cheerleading in surveys (Bullock et al. 2013; Butler and Pereira 2018b). Hence, survey-based evidence can overstate the impact of partisanship. The empirical strategy I adopt here allows me to overcome these limitations and directly test the behavioral implications of partisan-based learning.

Moreover, to the extent that early adopters’ partisanship plays a role, it remains unclear why. Public officials may use partisan endorsements to infer the ideological content of a given policy. As reelection-seeking actors, legislators benefit from pursuing policies aligned with the preferences of their constituents (Canes-Wrone et al. 2002; Hall 2015), even in low-information elections (Hogan 2008). However, most policy issues are complex and officials have limited resources to process all the relevant information (Zelizer 2019). Partisan endorsements can be an efficient cognitive shortcut.

At the same time, ingroup favoritism may also explain why representatives rely on partisan cues. Partisanship is a powerful social identity (Barber and Pope 2019). In recent years, researchers have documented a growing divergence in affect toward members of the other party (Iyengar et al. 2012). Partisans are progressively willing to exhibit animus and distrust toward members of the other party (Abramowitz and Webster 2018). If public officials process new policy information through an ingroup-outgroup lens, any initiative associated with

the other party should be deemed as less credible, or trustworthy, and generate less interest. This study was not designed to adjudicate between potential mechanisms for partisan-based learning. Still, the results shed some light on the plausibility of these different explanations.

Empirical Strategy

In order to reproduce a process of policy diffusion, I conducted a between-subjects field experiment in collaboration with an advocacy group. Welcoming America is a non-governmental organization that promotes immigrant inclusion policies in local governments. The experiment was embedded in an outreach campaign conducted by the organization in February 2018 and targeting local elected officials. The main goal of the campaign was to disseminate a recently developed certification program: Certified Welcoming. The program provides a policy roadmap for governments to promote immigrant inclusion, such as language access requirements and protocols for hiring practices. To raise awareness for the new program, Welcoming America sent one email to county and city elected officials who were not already part of the organization’s network. The message was sent to 18,741 representatives, representing 4,505 different communities.³ Elements of the email were experimentally manipulated to isolate the effect of partisanship on policy learning.

The empirical strategy adopted here departs from previous work in two relevant ways. First, it allows me to focus on the individual-level motivations of public officials to learn from their peers. Studies of policy diffusion have mainly focused on aggregate patterns of dissemination (Graham et al. 2013). This approach is valuable to address several questions related to policy diffusion but makes it difficult – if not impossible – to identify the processes leading to the adoption of a new policy. The design proposed here allows me to explore previously uncovered dynamics of policy diffusion. Second, by collaborating with an advocacy group I am able to observe how elected officials behave in a realistic and familiar environment.

³The data came from two main sources: the Google Civic Information API, and the American Municipal Officials Survey. Appendix B describes how this sample was created.

Interest group contacts are only one of many ways through which officials learn about new policies. However, the pervasiveness of lobbying activities at all levels of government (de Figueiredo and Richter 2014) gives me confidence that representatives are familiarized with this method of acquiring new information.

Experimental Conditions

The email included an endorsement by local officials from Salt Lake County, an early adopter of the policy.⁴ To explore the role of partisanship in policy interest, partisan cues in the endorsement were manipulated. Both Republicans and Democrats in Salt Lake County supported the policy. Hence, it was possible to randomly assign partisanship *while holding both the policy and the endorsing municipality constant*. The three versions of the endorsement are described in Box 1. Appendix A includes one version of the full email.

The quote in the endorsement was taken from an op-ed article co-signed by members of both parties.⁵ Local officials were randomly assigned to one of three groups: a Democratic endorsement, a Republican endorsement, or an endorsement from both parties. The treatment conditions were then recoded based on the party of the local official, leading to three randomly assigned group: (1) *Co-partisan endorsement* for Democrats/Republicans who received a Democratic/Republican endorsement; (2) the *Out-partisan endorsement* for Democrats/Republicans who received a Republican/Democratic endorsement; and (3) the *Bipartisan endorsement*.⁶ Appendix C describes how officials' partisanship was measured. The treatment conditions allow me to test whether there is a co-partisan bias in policy learning.

⁴When the study was fielded, only three local governments had been certified. The risk that officials already knew about the program was limited and orthogonal to the treatments.

⁵Available at <http://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=4219261&itype=CMSID>.

⁶I blocked randomization on three covariates potentially related with policy interest: city/county population size, presidential vote share, and data source. See Table D2 for balance tests.

Box 1: Versions of the partisan endorsement

Local [**Republicans/Democrats/Republicans and Democrats**] in Salt Lake County recently joined Certified Welcoming. The program is part of an effort to attract, retain, and engage immigrants in the city.

"Immigrants are families, homeowners, entrepreneurs, taxpayers and neighbors. Welcoming them and their contributions benefits our community", said [**Republican Lane Beattie/Democrat Ben McAdams/Lane Beattie (Rep) and Ben McAdams (Dem)**] from Salt Lake County

Outcome variables

Since I am interested in exploring the individual-level motivations of public officials to learn from the experience of others, the main outcomes in the analysis capture different levels of engagement with the certification program. To do so, I tracked who clicked on the different links available in the email. Several links were included in the message: a connection to the program's website labeled "**Learn more about Certified Welcoming**"; a link to subscribe the organization's newsletter; and links to the social media accounts of the organization. Figure A2 shows how these links were displayed.

Based on tracking information from the links, I created two complementary outcomes. *Policy Interest* is a binary measure that takes the value of 1 if a subject clicked on any of the links provided, and 0 otherwise.⁷ Additionally, to capture the level of engagement with the policy, *Degree of Engagement* is an ordinal variable that measures the number of links clicked by each subject. Figure D1 describes the distribution of the variable. Nearly one in four (24.8%) local officials in the study clicked in two or more links. Hence, while both outcomes capture interest in learning about the policy, they measure different forms of engagement.

⁷The results are substantively similar when each category of links is analyzed separately (Table E1).

Results

Across treatment conditions, 38.3% of local officials clicked in one or more links in the email.⁸ This result suggests that (1) the policy was deemed relevant to over a third of local officials, and (2) neither ceiling nor floor effects are likely to explain the main patterns observed.⁹

However, there are meaningful differences in policy interest across treatment groups. Both panels in Figure 1 describe treatment effects of receiving an out-partisan or bipartisan endorsement, relative to a co-partisan endorsement. The outcome variable in panels (a) and (b) is *Policy Interest* and *Degree of Engagement*, respectively. The results reveal a pattern of co-partisan bias in policy learning. Based on panel (a), on average, when the certification program is endorsed by members of the other party rather than members of the same party, officials are 4.1 percentage points less likely to show interest in learning about it (p -value < 0.01). This difference represents a 10.7% decrease in policy interest relative to the overall mean of the outcome.¹⁰ The analyses based on *Degree of Engagement* lead to similar conclusions. On average, the number of links clicked by an individual politician decreased 0.09 (s.e. = 0.03) when the policy was endorsed by out-partisans, rather than co-partisans.¹¹

These results provide an important validation of the external validity of recent studies of policy diffusion based on survey experiments (e.g., Butler et al. 2017). Partisan-based

⁸The analyses are restricted to public officials who opened the emails, since only these were exposed to the treatment. There are no significant differences in compliance across conditions (Table B1) and the intent-to-treat effects are substantively the same (Figure E6). Additionally, I restricted the sample of officials in the bipartisan treatment to one of the two versions of the email. The order of the parties in this condition was randomized. However, due to a coding error in one of the versions, one link was missing in the plain text version of the email. For this subgroup, the potential for engaging with the policy was smaller. To ensure perfect comparability between conditions, I only consider the random sample of officials in the bipartisan condition who received the first version of the email. The results are substantively similar for the full sample (Figure E3).

⁹The same is true when considering policy interest by partisanship: 40.4% of Democrats and 36.7% of Republicans clicked in at least one link.

¹⁰This effect size is equivalent to the average difference in interest between officials from constituencies with Democrat and Republican majorities: 3.7 points, or 9.7% of the outcome average. Survey-based estimates of co-partisan bias render similar results. Butler and Pereira (2018a) find that the willingness of local officials to adopt a conservative policy reduces 11.5% when endorsed by members of the other party.

¹¹As described in Figure E2, the findings are driven mainly by Democrat officials. In Appendix E, I describe different possible explanations for these patterns.

Figure 1: The effects of partisan endorsements on policy learning.

Note: Points are estimates of the treatment effects of partisan endorsements on (a) *Policy Interest* and (b) *Degree of Engagement*. In panel (a), estimates are percentage point differences in the likelihood that an official clicked in one or more links in the email. In panel (b), estimates capture differences in the average number of links clicked. Thin/Thick bars represent 95%/90% CIs from linear models. Table D3 reports the full model results.

learning is not simply the result of partisan cheerleading (or satisficing) in the innocuous context of a survey (Bullock et al. 2013). Instead, it is reflected on behavioral efforts to learn about a new policy in what is usually an unmonitored environment. Elected officials express partisan bias in policy learning even in a context where electoral punishment is very unlikely since their behavior was not observable by voters or competitors.

The results for the bipartisan endorsement are also consistent with a dynamic of partisan-based learning. The policy endorsed by members of both parties, on average, attracted systematically *less interest* than the same policy when endorsed by co-partisans. For *Degree of Engagement*, for instance, the difference between co-partisan and bipartisan endorsements was 0.12 (s.e. = 0.04) representing a 17.4% decrease in the number of links clicked, relative to the mean value of the outcome. Moreover, the difference in levels of interest between bipartisan and out-partisan endorsements is indistinguishable from zero. For *Policy Interest*, the estimate for the difference in means is 0.6 percentage points (p -value = 0.73), while for the

level of engagement (panel b) the out-partisan endorsement generated slightly *more* interest than the bipartisan endorsement. Failing to reject the null hypothesis does not allow me to rule out small differences between groups. Still, the results suggest a tenuous relationship without a clear direction.

The lack of meaningful differences between out-partisan and bipartisan endorsements sheds an initial light into why public officials may rely on partisan cues. Policies with support from both parties are perceived as solutions of compromise (Harbridge et al. 2014). If elected officials were exclusively inferring ideological congruence from partisan cues, bipartisan endorsements should be favored over out-partisan endorsements. Appendix E shows that endorsements from both parties are also not favored over out-partisan cues in more competitive districts, where moderate policies are rewarded (Ansolabehere et al. 2001; Carson and Williamson 2018). Together, these results are consistent with a pattern of ingroup favoritism. Research on ingroup-outgroup relations established that the animus toward outgroup members spills over to 'deviant' ingroup members who engage with the outgroup (Marques et al. 2001; Stephan and Stephan 2009; Tajfel and Turner 1979). In this context, out-partisan and bipartisan endorsements should experience similar credibility penalties. That said, these arguments are speculative and require further investigation.

Discussion

Politicians are more likely to implement the policies of governments that look more like them (Case et al. 1993; Grossback et al. 2004). However, prior work has mostly focused on aggregate patterns of policy diffusion, making it hard to understand the decision-making process of public officials. This study joins a recent line of work showing how individual characteristics of legislators drive their motivation to learn from peers.

In a field experiment where politicians were introduced to a new policy endorsed by early adopters, I show that local representatives systematically reveal more interest in the same

policy when previously adopted by co-partisans rather than by politicians across the aisle, or by officials from both parties. Furthermore, policies previously adopted with bipartisan support attract no more interest than out-partisan policies, even in more competitive contexts. To some degree, public officials are making decisions based on characteristics of those who previously adopted the policy, rather than based on the content of the initiative. Shipan and Volden (2012) describe similar learning processes as *policy imitation*: when governments copy initiatives adopted by others without concern for the policies’ effects. As the authors put it, “the extent of learning in these circumstances is merely the acknowledgment that a government [...] has the policy and that it must, therefore, be something desirable” (790).

The present study is constrained in a number of ways. First, the external validity provided by the field experiment came with inevitable costs to the control of the intervention. Although the certification program was largely unknown, the broad policy issue of immigration is highly salient and it is reasonable to expect that local officials had strong priors over the value of the policy. My intuition is that partisan cues may play a larger role in less salient issues, since fewer information is available. Second, the conclusions regarding policy learning rely on the assumption that legislators who chose to “Learn more about Certified Welcoming” indeed learned more about the policy. While the relationship between interest and learning is well established (Ainley et al. 2002), in this specific context this step was inferred. Finally, it is possible that Salt Lake County, not being the standard ‘leader’ in policy innovation, may have also influenced the results. Future scholarship could extend this experimental design to test whether the size of the community endorsing a policy, or its geographical proximity, impact officials’ willingness to learn.

Still, the results provide relevant insights to research on policy diffusion, legislative signaling, and interest group access. According to the patterns uncovered here, the prospects for policy diffusion are constrained in two meaningful ways. Partial attention to the experience of other governments may lead to inefficiencies in the policy-making process. First, public officials may be unnecessarily reinventing the wheel when only out-partisan govern-

ments have previously solved a given policy issue. Second, and more problematic, ingroup favoritism can lead to the persistence of poor policy solutions. If the modal policy alternative provided by co-partisans has flaws, partisan-based learning implies that poor policy choices will be reproduced.

The findings also speak to literature on legislative signaling. Previous work suggests that heterogeneous signals (e.g., bipartisan endorsements) are more credible and persuasive than homogeneous signals (Krehbiel 1991). The evidence gathered here is not consistent with this argument. The certification program attracted significantly more interest when endorsed by co-partisans, rather than members of both parties. This result is consistent with recent reassessments of information signaling models (Zelizer 2018).

Finally, the study is also informative to interest group research. Empirical work suggests that interest group access is mainly explained by the extent to which groups can provide resources to public officials (Salisbury 1969; Eggers and Hainmueller 2009; Kalla and Broockman 2016). On the other hand, formal theoretical work suggests that credibility plays an underappreciated role (Ainsworth 1997; Austen-Smith and Wright 1994). The results uncovered here provide some support for the latter perspective. Future extensions of the empirical strategy adopted here can better illuminate how public officials respond to different access strategies from advocacy groups.

Data Availability Statement. Replication materials can be found in Harvard Dataverse at: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/SWRGQI>.

Acknowledgments. I thank Daniel Butler, Peter Loewen, David Miller, Elin Naurin, David Nickerson, Patrik Öhberg, Margit Tavits, and Adam Zelizer for the valuable feedback on the project. Early versions of this manuscript were presented at the 2018 Harvard Experimental Political Science Graduate Student Conference, the Lisbon Meeting on Political Science and Economics 2018, and the 2019 Midwest Political Science Association meeting. The study received approval from the Institutional Review Board at Washington University in St. Louis (IRB ID #201712010).

References

- Abramowitz, Alan I., and Steven W. Webster. 2018. "Negative Partisanship: Why Americans Dislike parties But Behave Like Rabid Partisans." *Political Psychology* 39: 119-135.
- Adolph, Christopher, Kenya Amano, Bree Bang-Jensen, Nancy Fullman, and John Wilkerson. 2020. "Pandemic Politics: Timing State-Level Social Distancing Responses to COVID-19." Available at: <https://faculty.washington.edu/cadolph/papers/AABFW2020.pdf>.
- Ainley, Mary, Suzanne Hidi, and Dagmar Berndorff. 2002. "Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate their relationship." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 94(3): 545-561.
- Ainsworth, Scott. 1997. "The Role of Legislators in the Determination of Interest Group Influence." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22(4): 517-533.
- Ansolahehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder Jr, and Charles Stewart III. 2001. "Candidate Positioning in US House Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 136-159.
- Austen-Smith, David, and John R. Wright. 1994. "Counteractive Lobbying." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 25-44.
- Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104(2): 226-242.
- Barber, Michael, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2019. "Does Party Trump Ideology? Disentangling Party and Ideology in America." *American Political Science Review* 113(1): 38-54.
- Böhmelt, Tobias, Lawrence Ezrow, Roni Lehrer, and Hugh Ward. 2016. "Party Policy Diffusion." *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 397-410.
- Bullock, John, Alan S. Gerber, Seth J. Hill, and Gregory A. Huber. 2013. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs about Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10 (December): 519-578.
- Butler, Daniel M., Craig Volden, Adam Dynes, and Boris Shor. 2017. "Ideology, Learning and Policy Diffusion: Experimental Evidence." *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (1): 37-49.
- Butler, Daniel M., and Miguel M. Pereira. 2018a. "How does Partisanship Influence Policy Diffusion?" *Political Research Quarterly* 71(4): 801-812.
- Butler, Daniel M., and Miguel M. Pereira. 2018b. "Are Donations to Charity an Effective Incentive for Public Officials?" *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 5(1): 68-70.
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, David W. Brady, and John F. Cogan. 2002. "Out of Step, Out of Office: Electoral Accountability and House Members' Voting." *American Political Science Review* 96(1): 127-140.

- Carson, Jamie L., and Ryan D. Williamson. 2018. "Candidate Ideology and Electoral Success in Congressional Elections." *Public Choice* 176: 175-192.
- Case, Anne C., James R. Hines, Jr., and Harvey S. Rosen. 1993. "Budget Spillovers and Fiscal Policy Interdependence: Evidence from the States." *Journal of Public Economics* 52(3): 285-307.
- de Figueiredo, John, and Brian Richter. 2014. "Advancing the Empirical Research on Lobbying." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 163-185.
- Eggers, Andrew C., and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. "MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics." *American Political Science Review* 103(4): 513-533.
- Graham, Erin, Charles R. Shipan, and Craig Volden. 2013. "The Diffusion of Policy Diffusion Research in Political Science." *British Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 673-701.
- Grossback, Lawrence J., Sean Nicholson-Crotty, and David A.M. Peterson. 2004. "Ideology and Learning in Policy Diffusion." *American Politics Research* 32(5): 521-545.
- Hall, Andrew B. 2015. "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?." *American Political Science Review* 109(1): 18-42.
- Harbridge, Laurel, Neil Malhotra, and Brian F. Harrison. 2014. "Public Preferences for Bipartisanship in the Policymaking Process." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 39(3): 327-355.
- Hogan, Robert E. 2008. "Policy Responsiveness and Incumbent Reelection in State Legislatures." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 858-873.
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood, and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(3): 405-431.
- Kalla, Joshua, and David Broockman. 2016. "Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558.
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1991. *Information and Legislative Organization*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Marques, José, Dominic Abrams, and Rui Serôdio. 2001. "Being Better by Being Right: Subjective Group Dynamics and Derogation of In-Group Deviants When Generic Norms are Undermined." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81(3): 436-447.
- Salisbury, Robert. 1969. "An Exchange Theory of interest Groups." *Midwest Journal of Political Science*: 1-32.
- Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. 2008. "The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(4): 840-857.
- Shipan, Charles, and Craig Volden. 2012. "Policy Diffusion: Seven lessons for scholars and practitioners." *Public Administration Review* 72(6): 788-796.

- Simmons, Beth A., and Zachary Elkins. 2004. "The Globalization of Liberalization: Policy Diffusion in the International Political Economy." *American Political Science Review* 98(1): 171-189.
- Stephan, Walter, and Cookie Stephan. 2009. "Intergroup Threat Theory." *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*. John Wiley & Sons, 1-12.
- Tajfel, Henri, and John C. Turner. 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* 33(47): 74.
- Volden, Craig, Michael M. Ting, and Daniel P. Carpenter. 2008. "A Formal Model of Learning and Policy Diffusion." *American Political Science Review* 102(3): 319-332.
- Zelizer, Adam. 2018. "How Responsive Are Legislators to Policy Information? Evidence From a Field Experiment in a State Legislature." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 43(4): 595-618.
- Zelizer, Adam. 2019. "Is Position-Taking Contagious? Evidence of Cue-Taking from Two Field Experiments in a State Legislature." *American Political Science Review* 113(2): 340-52.