

Why Do Local Leaders Cooperate Across Boundaries? Results from a National Survey Experiment on Mayors and Councilors

Meghan E. Rubado
Cleveland State University

Prepared for presentation at Public Management Research Conference, Washington, D.C.
June 8-11, 2017

Abstract: This paper presents a theory of the mechanisms that drive the diffusion of interlocal cooperation among local governments and presents findings from an original national survey experiment. A survey with embedded experiments was designed to test for these mechanisms using a large sample of U.S. mayors and councilors. The theory argues that learning, development of trust, and interlocal competition should be key drivers of the spread of interlocal cooperation as a local policy strategy. The results provide support for the former two mechanisms, but a treatment designed to isolate the effect of the competition mechanism had no effect. Local leaders were more interested in pursuing a proposed cooperative agreement when it involved a city they had cooperated with in the past and when they learned about positive outcomes of cooperative experiments among neighboring jurisdictions. The study not only adds to our understanding of why local governments cooperate with neighbors for service provision, but it also expands diffusion theory by incorporating a new mechanism that lends itself to multi-partner policies – the development of networks of trust. Indeed, the importance of this mechanism is the strongest and most consistent finding.

Introduction

Local government leaders cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions regularly, choosing to engage in formal and informal interlocal agreements that promise financial savings, gains in efficiency, or enhanced quality of services and other improved outcomes. The theory developed here posits that municipal leaders are more likely to engage in cooperative behavior when they have had the opportunity to observe cooperative policies adopted by their neighbors because they gain useful information that both lowers the transaction costs of cooperation and enhances the incentives for successful cooperation. Successful interlocal cooperation, then, diffuses across local boundaries in much the same way other policies have been found to spread across space and time. One limitation of previous observational studies on the adoption of interlocal cooperation is a limited ability to isolate the hypothesized causal mechanisms that contribute to adoption. This manuscript presents findings from an original survey with embedded experiments that provide clear evidence of the mechanisms that drive the spread of interlocal cooperation.

The theory developed here argues that the causal mechanisms driving this diffusion are threefold: learning, development of networks of trust, and interlocal competition. When local governments experiment with cooperation, leaders in neighboring localities learn about the cooperative strategy, its potential benefits or drawbacks, and the behavior of participants in negotiating, monitoring, and enforcing cooperative agreements. They become more likely to cooperate themselves after exposure to nearby successful cooperation because they know more about cooperative policy options and potential partners. As a non-cooperating municipality's neighbors experiment with cooperation, it also becomes more likely to have trusted connections with local leaders who have

cooperation experience. Finally, leaders who watch their neighbors benefit from interlocal cooperation are more likely to feel compelled to secure similar gains to remain competitive for taxpayers who "vote with their feet."

This paper presents analysis of a survey with embedded experiments that tested the hypothesized mechanisms of diffusion on a sample of more than 800 local leaders, including mayors and council members in the United States. Analysis of their responses found that networks of trust were a consistent and strong predictor of elite interest in cooperative agreements. Local leaders were more interested in a proposed cooperative agreement when it involved a locality they had worked with in the past. The results also show support for the effects of the learning mechanism. Leaders were more interested in a cooperative proposal if they had read about a successful cooperative experiment in a neighboring municipality earlier in the survey. However, there was no support for the interlocal competition mechanism. In general, local leaders were equally interested in a cooperative proposal regardless of whether they had read a news story about a cooperative experiment going on in a neighboring locality they viewed as a competitor or one they viewed as a non-competitor.

Not only do the theory and findings presented below provide a more complete understanding of why local leaders choose inter-municipal cooperation when they do, they also add to an understanding of the diffusion process. Previous diffusion work has focused on mechanisms that influence policy adoptions by individual political entities (typically cities or states). The diffusion mechanisms for these adoptions are typically identified as learning, competition, and emulation (Gilardi 2015). However, by considering a policy choice that necessarily involves multiple entities as partners, this study illuminates an

additional mechanism: the development of trust through past partnerships, which turns out to be the strongest and most consistent predictor of respondents' interest in cooperative agreements. Finally, the experimental design of the project allows for clear distinction between mechanisms, which has been a consistent challenge in the diffusion literature (but see Butler et al. 2017).

Diffusion and Interlocal Cooperation

To date, scholarly research on interlocal cooperation and the mechanisms of policy diffusion have remained separate. Diffusion studies have not explored how cooperation among local governments spreads across municipal boundaries, and research on how and why local governments cooperate has not addressed the potential influence of cooperation by neighboring localities.

Mechanisms of Diffusion

A large body of work has explored the general mechanisms of policy diffusion and how these may vary depending on the type of policy or innovation that is under consideration. The literature generally agrees on three primary mechanisms of diffusion: learning, emulation, and competition. Emulation refers to the general level of social acceptance of a particular policy, regardless of objective outcomes. For example, state leaders may defend new taxes by noting that similar taxes exist in other states (Berry and Berry 1992). Simple emulation, or copycat behavior, may drive policy adoption in smaller cities who look to bigger cities for policy guidance (Shipan and Volden 2008). Since interlocal cooperation involves particularly high transaction costs, and often very low levels of citizen interest, the theory presented here does not propose a causal role for the emulation mechanism in the diffusion of cooperation.

The learning process, by which information about the outcomes of policy innovations spreads and affects the decisionmaking of leaders in other units of government, has been found to be a consistent driver of diffusion (Shipan and Volden 2008, Berry and Berry 1990). Berry and Berry (1990) in their study of state lottery adoptions test separately internal factors that make states more likely to adopt lotteries, as well as regional diffusion – measured as the number of immediate neighbor states that have adopted lotteries. The authors theorize that learning through professional and political networks, shared media markets, and shared borders influences adoption likelihood. Lotteries are more likely to be adopted when state political elites have learned about lotteries adopted in neighboring states.

Recent diffusion work has shown that the learning mechanism is dependent on policy outcomes. Mooney (2001) demonstrates that policy outcomes are key to understanding when policies diffuse across states. For example, if states have begun adopting a new policy, but experience bad outcomes as a result of the policy, then neighboring states will notice, learn from the information, and choose *not* to adopt the policy. Here, we would expect a negative regional effect associated with a halt or reversal in the diffusion process. Social learning is a complex process, the outcomes of which will be highly variable, depending on the nature of the policy area, as well as the information available to policymakers regarding the policy and its effects. Similarly, in a state-level study of the Children’s Health Insurance Program, Volden (2006) finds support for the importance of policy outcomes on the diffusion process. He finds that early adopters whose policies result in more low-cost health insurance are more likely to be emulated.

Competition also drives diffusion of policies across state and local boundaries, the literature shows. Berry and Berry (1990) reason that states bordered by states with lotteries will be pressured to adopt their own lotteries to prevent losing tax revenue to competitor states. Citizens who live near state lines would otherwise be inclined to cross over the boundary to play external lotteries in neighboring states. Competition among states was found to affect welfare payment levels (Volden 2002). While states may want to increase their payment levels to keep up with inflation, they hesitate to do so until their neighbors do. The driving mechanism is that states fear that if their payment levels are higher compared to their neighbors, they may attract needy citizens from other states or drive out wealthier citizens who do not want to pay for the increase. This “race to the bottom” is the result of the competitive nature of states, which must look to their neighbors to determine the optimal package of taxing and spending (Volden 2002, Tiebout 1956).

Throughout much of the diffusion literature, however, operationalization of the hypothesized mechanisms is inconsistent and often conflicting, with the same indicators used to measure distinct mechanisms across studies (Maggetti and Gilardi 2015). This paper allows for more precise isolation of these mechanisms with the use of experimental treatments imposed randomly through an online survey of local leaders.

Interlocal Cooperation

Existing literature on the topic of interlocal cooperation has provided insights into conditions under which local governments are more likely to adopt interlocal agreements. For example, they have been found more likely to cooperate when there is a greater availability of potential partners (Post 2002), when leaders have more connections with leaders in neighboring jurisdictions (LeRoux et al. 2010, Kwon and Feiock 2010), when

cooperation is sought by entrepreneurs in city governments (Zeemering 2008), and when the service to be provided through cooperation is uncontroversial and associated with uniform citizen preferences (LeRoux and Carr 2010). Much of this research on cooperation among general-purpose governments has leaned heavily on the Institutional Collective Action (ICA) framework, which extends theories of individual-level collective action to institutional decisionmaking (Feiock 2013). Successful interlocal cooperation attempts must hurdle high costs, including informational, bargaining, monitoring, and enforcement costs. Cooperation occurs when expected gains are sufficiently high and transactions costs sufficiently low to make an agreement attractive to all partners (Feiock 2007, Coase 1960).

In sum, the existing literature has established that interlocal cooperation is a high-cost endeavor that is more likely to occur under certain conditions. However, earlier observational studies of interlocal cooperation have failed to investigate the diffusion of cooperation across space and time, as well as the mechanisms that might drive the spread of cooperation from neighbor to neighbor. This paper proposes that when cooperation occurs among some localities, the neighbors of these cooperators (as well as the cooperators themselves) learn from these experiences and develop networks of trust through new and stronger connections among leaders. Leaders, who must compete with neighboring jurisdictions for taxpayers and development, pick up on the cooperative behavior when it makes sense to do so. This process is driven by the mechanisms of learning, development of networks of trust, and interlocal competition.

Theory

Given the high-cost nature of intergovernmental cooperation, simple emulation, or copycat behavior, is not expected to cause the spread of cooperative agreements. These

agreements involve multiple players with limited information and transaction costs that include negotiating deals, monitoring, and enforcing. While cities may copy some policy choices with little debate or analysis, this behavior would be more likely to occur in low-cost policies.

H1: A local leader's level of interest in pursuing interlocal cooperation will be unaffected by simply hearing that a cooperative agreement has been struck in neighboring municipalities.

The first hypothesized mechanism of diffusion for interlocal cooperation is learning. When some local governments begin cooperating, leaders in neighboring localities learn about the agreements through professional networks and media coverage. They have the opportunity to learn about cooperation as a strategy, the behavior of involved partners, and the outcomes of the cooperative agreements. This information lowers transaction costs for these leaders in future cooperative agreements. After learning about cooperative agreements and their outcomes, local leaders will become more likely to adopt successful attempts and avoid replication of failed efforts.

Hypothesis 2: When local leaders are provided with information about a cooperative agreement in a nearby locality and outcome information that indicates the agreement is providing benefits to the involved partners, they will be more interested in cooperation. When they learn the cooperative experiment has failed or had other negative effects for partner cities, they will be less interested in pursuing cooperation themselves.

The second hypothesized mechanism of diffusion of cooperation is development of networks of trust. When local leaders experiment successfully with cooperation in one functional area, they develop trust with the leaders of neighboring municipalities and will be more likely to coordinate on other functions with the same partners in the future. The

trust developed through past cooperation helps reduce uncertainty at the bargaining table and ameliorates concerns about defection of partners or dominance by a partner seeking an unfair share of the benefits of cooperation.

Hypothesis 3: Local leaders who have cooperation experience will be more likely to cooperate with municipalities with which they have already cooperated, as compared to those with which they have no history of cooperation.

The third mechanism expected to drive the spread of cooperation is interlocal competition. When local officials see their proximate peers cooperating successfully, they are driven to join the cooperative agreement or form their own agreement with other partners in order to remain competitive for development and taxpayers who vote with their feet. Local leaders want to avoid losing tax base to cities that are offering more attractive tax-and-spend packages. So, when they see cooperative experiments in cities that attract citizens with similar preferences (competitor cities), they will feel more pressure to pick up on successful cooperation to realize the same benefits and remain competitive.

Hypothesis 4: Leaders will be more driven to adopt cooperation when they learn that cities they see as competitors (as compared to those they do not see as competitors) are engaging in successful interlocal cooperation for service provision.

Method and Data

A unique survey with embedded experiments tested the hypothesized mechanisms. The design, outlined below, allowed for careful isolation of these mechanisms with particular treatments that were randomly assigned to the respondents, more than 800 mayors and councilors across the United States. The survey instrument, designed and distributed through Qualtrics, was provided via Web link in an email to roughly 25,000

mayors and councilors in July 2015. Of these, 1,861 respondents started the survey and 1,052 completed it. After restricting the survey to those respondents who completed the questions necessary to receive all treatments, the number of respondents was 874. The link to the Qualtrics survey was sent to emails contained in the 2014 American Municipal Officials Survey dataset.¹ The AMOS project was launched in 2012 by researchers at Yale University. The dataset, which was provided to the author by the original AMOS project investigators, contains names and e-mail addresses of elected municipal legislators (e.g., city councilors, alderpersons) and executives (e.g., mayors, first selectmen) from a large sample of municipalities from across the United States.

The dependent variable in the analysis below is the respondent's interest level in a hypothetical, proposed cooperative agreement, which is measured on a 0-10 scale. The survey imposed treatments that ought to affect this score if the hypothesized diffusion mechanisms are at work in predicting cooperation. Two of the three treatments in the survey were provided through a short mock news story displayed to each respondent. The story shown was randomly assigned to be either a control news story about criminal charges against the owners of a dog rescue charity or a story about an interlocal cooperation agreement for roads maintenance involving a nearby locality. Roads/streets maintenance was selected as the function of interlocal cooperation in this survey experiment because it is a service that nearly all local governments provide. Other services, such as police, fire, water, and health are provided by some, but not nearly all, municipal governments. Indeed, more survey respondents reported providing the roads/streets

¹ The survey was pretested on municipal leaders in the Syracuse, NY area in June 2015. All municipalities in Onondaga County (which includes Syracuse) were removed from the email listing prior to distribution of the complete survey.

service than any other single service. The control story about the nonprofit dog rescue was chosen as it had no connection to local government, and would have no effect on officials' preferences on interlocal cooperation.

Those respondents who received the treatment news story also received two additional treatments within it, one to test for the learning mechanism, and another to test for competition. For the learning mechanism, the news story was randomly assigned to display outcome information that was positive, negative, or ambiguous.

To test the competition mechanism, the survey varied whether the city mentioned in the news story was one the respondent viewed as a competitor or a non-competitor. This information was obtained through an earlier question in the survey in which the respondent was asked: "If someone relocating to your region for a new job were considering moving to your municipality given its real estate options and the levels of services provided, which one other specific municipality (city, town, borough, etc.) in your region do you think they would be most likely to also consider in their housing search?" A follow-up question replaced "most likely" with "least likely" to obtain an example of a non-competitor locality. The survey randomly selected one of these responses and filled it into the article so that the provided city was presented as having recently entered into a cooperative agreement. Figure 1 shows an example of one of these news stories. Here, the respondent was randomly assigned the cooperation news story (rather than a control story), the non-competitor city (rather than a competitor city), and positive outcome information (rather than negative or ambiguous information). In the survey, the respondent would have seen the name of an actual nearby city rather than "Non-Competitor City."

In total, the survey experiments created 14 distinct combinations of treatments/controls (see Table 1). The theory outlined above leads to expectations that the highest overall interest levels would be found among respondents who receive a news story about a competitor city (interlocal competition) with positive outcome information (learning) and later, in the outcome question, a cooperative proposal that involves a locality with which they have past cooperative experience (trust development). Average responses to the outcome question on interest level are compared across groups using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression to determine the effects of each treatment.

Table 1: All Possible Treatment/Control Combinations

		Proposal Question Involves Past Cooperative Partner	
		Yes	No
Control story		1	2
Competitor City	Outcome of Cooperation	Yes	No
Yes	Positive	3	4
	Negative	5	6
	Ambiguous	7	8
No	Positive	9	10
	Negative	11	12
	Ambiguous	13	14

Summary statistics on the demographic characteristics and key responses of survey participants are reported in Table 2. Responses to the dependent variable question on interest in a proposed cooperative agreement were left skewed, as most respondents selected interest levels of 8, 9, or 10. The median on this variable was 8, and the mean was 7.24, with a standard deviation of 2.86.

Table 2: Summary Statistics for Key Outcome Variable and Demographics of Respondents

	Mean	Standard Dev.
Cooperation Interest	7.24	2.86
Age	41.62	11.82
	% Survey Respondents	
Race		
White	91%	
Black	28%	
Hispanic	2%	
Gender		
Woman	30%	
Man	69%	
Party ID		
Republican	38%	
Democrat	35%	
Independent	23%	
Cooperation Level		
Cooperate Regularly	49%	
Cooperate Sometimes	38%	
Cooperate Rarely	7%	
Cooperate Never	7%	
		N=874

Results

The most consistent and striking finding across a series of OLS models is the effect of the past-partner treatment designed to test for the trust mechanism of diffusion. When local leaders were faced with a cooperative agreement proposal that involved a partnership with a city with which they had previous cooperation experience, they rated

their interest in the agreement significantly higher than if the proposal involved a city with which they had no previous cooperative agreements. Model 1 shows that respondents who received a past partner in the outcome question rated their interest about 1.5 points higher (on a 0-10 scale) than those who received the non-past partner treatment (see Table 3), controlling for the effects of the other treatments. Model 1 simultaneously tests the effects of all three hypothesized mechanisms with the analysis restricted to those respondents who received the positive or negative information treatment and who provided examples of nearby cities with which they had cooperated and those with which they had not cooperated. A response to both prompts was required in order to randomly assign the past-partner treatment designed to test the trust development mechanism. Unfortunately, a large share of respondents (roughly 500) did not provide an example of a city with which they had never cooperated. Model 2 shows analysis of the three treatments, as well, but also includes respondents who received a news story with ambiguous outcome information (learning treatment is discussed below). The size of the past-partner treatment is roughly the same in this specification and remains statistically significant.

The learning mechanism treatment was designed to test whether leaders who received positive or negative outcome information reported systematically different interest levels when asked about a cooperative agreement proposal. Leaders who received positive outcome information in the mock news story reported interest levels roughly 1 point higher (on a 0 to 10 scale) than those who received negative outcome information, controlling for the other treatments (see Model 2). This finding is consistent when the learning treatment is scaled to include respondents who received ambiguous information, which substantially increases the number of respondents in the model. Leaders who

received negative outcome information gave interest levels roughly .51 lower than those who received ambiguous information, and those who received ambiguous information scored their interest .51 lower, on average, than those who received positive outcome information (see Model 3). These coefficients are significant at the $p < .1$ level, and given the small sample size, these results suggest local leaders' interest in cooperation may be affected through the learning process as expected in *Hypothesis 2*.

On the question of whether simple emulation drives cooperation, the results show support for *Hypothesis 1*, which suggested this treatment should have no effect because of the high-cost nature of interlocal agreements. Respondents who received a news story about an interlocal agreement with ambiguous outcome information did not have higher average interest levels in the cooperative proposal as compared to those respondents who received the control news story about a couple arrested on fraud charges related to an animal rescue charity. All of the respondents who received the cooperation news story also received a treatment of either the competitor or non-competitor city in the story. Additionally, all respondents, including those who received the control news story, were treated with either a past partner or non-past partner city in the outcome question asking their interest level in cooperative agreement proposal. The mean interest level reported by local leaders who received the control news story is roughly identical to those who received a news story about a cooperative agreement going on nearby with no information about the outcome of the agreement (see Table 3, Model 3).² The model controls for the

² Model 1 was restricted to respondents who received either the control news story or a treatment story about a cooperative agreement with ambiguous outcome information. The ambiguous treatment respondents include those who were treated with a competitor city, as well as those who read about a non-competitor city. However, if the model is restricted to those who were treated with a competitor city, where differences in means would be expected to be highest, there is still no effect for the control news story.

effect of a past partner (versus non-past partner) being embedded in the outcome variable question, which is discussed above. Simply hearing about a cooperative experiment going on in a nearby locality appears to have no effect on local leaders' interest in pursuing a proposed cooperative agreement. The theory developed above predicted copycat behavior would be an unlikely driver of diffusion of cooperation due to high transaction costs.

Across most models, including tests of the entire sample, competition has no effect on cooperation interest. When the mock news story that reports a cooperative agreement going on nearby involves a competitor city, respondents reported neither higher nor lower interest levels in the cooperative proposal (see Models 1 and 2). *Hypothesis 4* posited that leaders confronted with a news story about a competitor city would be more interested in pursuing cooperation due to interlocal competition, and would therefore rate their interest higher on the 10-point scale when they hear their competitors are engaging in cooperation. This hypothesis was not supported by the data.

However, an interesting and unexpected finding resulted from analysis of those respondents who reported that their governments have not engaged in any interlocal cooperation. These non-cooperators could not receive the past-partner treatment because they have no past partners to identify. In this group, the competition mechanism had a large, negative effect on cooperation interest (see Table 3, Model 4). Among local leaders with no cooperation experience, hearing that a competitor city is trying out cooperation (as compared to a non-competitor city) actually makes them *less* interested in pursuing cooperation themselves, regardless of whether positive, negative, or ambiguous outcome information is provided. It may be that leaders of local governments that have never cooperated feel threatened by cooperative agreements among competitor cities but lack

the information and networks of trust to show interest in cooperation. This finding, while based on a small group of respondents (n=54), is worthy of further investigation in future work.

Table 3: OLS Model Results

Treatments	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Competitor City in Article (Competition)	0.28	0.3		-2.26**
	(0.54)	(0.36)		(0.9)
Past-Partner City in Cooperation Proposal (Trust)	1.52	1.59**	1.78**	
	(0.54)	(0.35)	(0.28)	
Positive Info in Article (Learning)	1.01*			
(Neg=0, Pos=1)	(0.53)			
Outcome Info in Article (Learning)		0.51*		0.3
(Neg=-1, Ambiguous=0, Pos=1)		(0.26)		(0.66)
Control News Article (Emulation)			0.12	
			(0.31)	
Constant	5.52	5.44	6.01	6.18
	(0.55)	(0.42)	(0.29)	(0.92)
	N=119	N=262	N=517	N=54
	R ² = .09	R ² = .09	R ² = .07	R ² = .11
** p<.05, * p<.1				
Robust standard errors in parentheses				

Discussion

The results of this national survey with embedded experiments demonstrate that local leaders were more interested in pursuing a proposed cooperative agreement when the agreement involved a partner city they had cooperated with in the past, lending support to the hypothesis that development of trust is an important driver of the spread of interlocal cooperation. Through past cooperative agreements, local leaders create connections and networks of trust across boundaries that lead to more cooperation in more functional areas of service provision in the future. Since interlocal cooperation is a policy choice that may be used for short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, local governments come in and out of periods of cooperation over time. The experience of past cooperation among local governments creates the relationships necessary to make cooperative agreements more likely in the future, or to expand existing cooperative behavior into new functional areas of local service provision.

The evidence is suggestive that learning, too, drives the diffusion of interlocal cooperation. Local leaders who received positive outcome information about cooperative experiments in nearby localities rated their interest in a cooperative proposal higher than those who received negative outcome information. Those who received negative outcome information rated their interest in the proposal lower than those who received ambiguous outcome information, as well. These results were significant only at the $p < .1$ level, but given the small sample size here, they suggest this mechanism may play an important role in this diffusion process.

Finally, the results indicate that local leaders are no more interested in pursuing cooperative agreements when they learn about cooperative experiments of neighbors they

see as competitors or those they do not. It may be that leaders are more driven by the intensity of interlocal competitive dynamics in their region, and not by a perceived challenge or threat by a similar neighboring jurisdiction that begins cooperating. For example, mayors and councilors situated in regions with highly fragmented local government may feel more intense pressure to replicate successful cooperative agreements, regardless of whether those agreements are undertaken by competitor or non-competitor cities. Further study is needed to tease out how interlocal competition may affect the spread of cooperation.

This paper relied on a survey experiment to separately test hypothesized mechanisms of diffusion of interlocal cooperation. The survey attempted to mimic the learning environment through use of a mock news story, which was presented to respondents. Later in the survey, it attempted to mimic the policymaking environment by proposing cooperative agreements with specific municipalities and asking the respondents to rate their interest. This, of course, does not approach perfect replication of real-world conditions. It may be that respondents were willing to rate their interest in this hypothetical agreement higher than they would have rated a real proposal. If this were true, though, the effect would be to produce conservative estimates of the effects, since this would have effectively reduced variation in interest levels across the board. Additionally, the mock news story did not appear in the respondents' own news sources, but rather was presented in a plain text with a news heading. This may have reduced the respondents' interest in the content or their sense of the credibility of the information presented. It cannot be ruled out that respondents would have different ratings of interest in

cooperation if they read an actual story in their hometown newspaper. Further study will be needed to ensure that these effects hold across research methodologies.

Overall, the findings suggest that learning is a predictor of the spread of cooperative policy, much like it has been found to drive the diffusions of other policies. However, the finding that trust development is the strongest and most consistent mechanism driving interest in cooperation is both new and intuitive. Given the high-cost nature of interlocal agreements, it makes sense that relationships developed over time through past cooperation would be key to producing more cooperation in the future. This mechanism has not been explored in the diffusion literature due to the focus of past research on policies adopted by single players, usually cities and states. Multi-partner policies diffuse, as well, though. The findings here suggest that future research on the diffusion of policies that involve multiple partners should consider investigating the role of trust development in that process.

References

- Berry, Frances Stokes, and William D. Berry. 1992. "Tax Innovation in the States: Capitalizing on Political Opportunity," *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(3): 715-42.
- Berry, F.S. and W.D. Berry. 1990. "State Lottery Adoptions as Policy Innovations: An Event History Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, 84: 395-415.
- Butler, Daniel M., Craig Volden, Adam M. Dynes, and Boris Shor. 2017. "Ideology, Learning, and Policy Diffusion: Experimental Evidence," *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(1): 37-49. DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12213.
- Coase, R. 1960. "The Problem of Social Cost," *Journal of Law and Economics*, 3(1): 1-44.
- Feiock, R.C. 2007. "Rational Choice and Regional Governance," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 29(1): 47-63.
- Feiock, R.C. 2013. "The Institutional Collective Action Framework," *Policy Studies Journal*, 41(3): 397-425.
- Gilardi, Fabrizio. 2015. "Four Ways We Can Improve Policy Diffusion Research," *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 16(1): 8-21.
- Gray, Virginia. 1973. "Innovation in the States: A Diffusion Study," *American Political Science Review*, 67: 1174-85.
- Kwon, Sung-Wook, and Feiock, R.C. 2010. "Overcoming the Barriers to Cooperation: Intergovernmental Service Agreements," *Public Administration Review*, 70(6): 876-84.

- LeRoux, Kelly, and Jered B. Carr. 2010. "Prospects for Centralizing Services in an Urban County: Evidence from Eight Self-Organized Networks of Local Public Services," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 32(4): 449-70.
- LeRoux, Kelly, P.W. Brandenburger, and S.K. Pandey. 2010. "Interlocal Service Cooperation in U.S. Cities: A Social Network Explanation." *Public Administration Review*, 70(2): 268-78.
- Maggetti, Martino, and F. Gilardi. 2015. "Problems (and Solutions) in the Measurement of Policy Diffusion Mechanisms," *Journal of Public Policy*, 36(1): 87-107.
- Mooney, Christopher. 2001. "Modeling Regional Effects on State Policy Diffusion," *Political Research Quarterly*, 54: 103-24.
- Nicholson-Crotty, Sean. 2009. "The Politics of Diffusion: Public Policy in the American States," *The Journal of Politics*, 71: 192-205.
- Post, Stephanie S. 2002. "Local Government Cooperation: The Relationship between Metropolitan Area Government Geography and Service Provision." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Aug. 29-Sept. 1, Boston.
- Shipan, Charles R. and C. Volden. 2008. "The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion," *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 840-57.
- Tiebout, Charles. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of Political Economy*, 44:416-24.
- Volden, C. 2002. "The Politics of Competitive Federalism: A Race to the Bottom in Welfare Benefits?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(2): 352-63.

Volden, C. 2006. "States as Policy Laboratories: Emulating Success in the Children's Health Insurance Program," *American Journal of Political Science*, 50: 294-312.

Zeemering, Eric S. 2008. "Governing Interlocal Cooperation: City Council Interests and the Implications for Public Management," *Public Administration Review*, 68 (4

