

Do Political Conservatives Prefer Private Sector Action to Mitigate Climate Change?

An Experimental Examination



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KEY QUESTIONS

- Are political conservatives more receptive to private sector climate policies?
 - Message framing vs. choice of solution (e.g., solution aversion; Campbell & Kay, 2014)
- Why might conservatives prefer private climate policies?
 - Attitude, policy feasibility, and policy effectiveness beliefs
- Do conservatives who read about private climate policies report reduced support for public climate policies?
 - Negative spillover (e.g., Truelove et al., 2014)

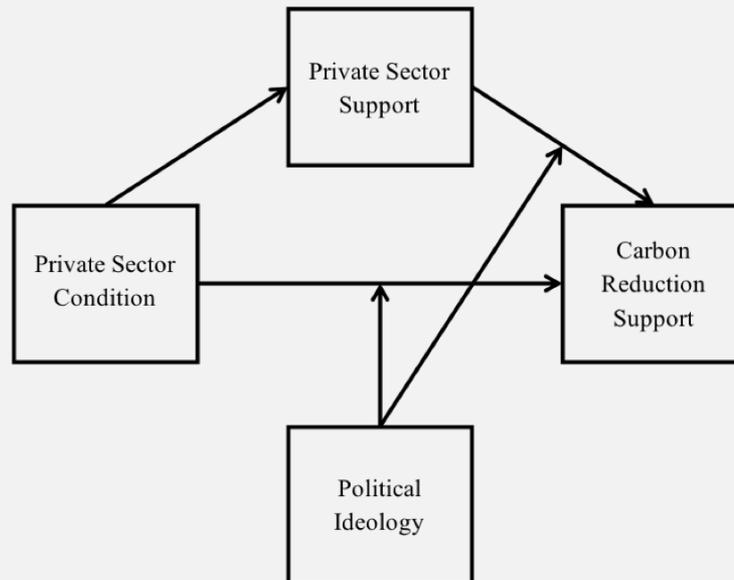


STUDY DESIGN

- US adults (MTurk; $N = 1,225$) randomized to a message about:
 - (1) private sector policies for climate change
 - (2) public regulation policies (non-tax) for climate change
 - or (3) or a public nationwide carbon tax policy
- **Measured before and after:**
 - Support for each of the three policies (completely oppose to completely support)
 - Support for reducing carbon emissions (completely oppose to completely support)
- **Measured after:**
 - Attitude (bad to good), feasibility (completely infeasible to completely feasible), and effectiveness (completely ineffective to completely effective)
 - Political ideology (very conservative to very liberal)

RESULTS

- Regardless of ideology, reading about private climate policies led to positive attitudes and effectiveness beliefs ($p = .003$ and $.013$)
- Conservatives who read about private climate policies found them particularly feasible ($p = .009$)



- Conservatives did not show decreased support for regulation, but did show decreased support for a carbon tax ($p = .034$)

CONCLUSIONS

- Conservatives prefer private sector climate policies
- Reading about private policies led to more positive attitudes and effectiveness beliefs, and for conservatives particularly positive feasibility beliefs
- Reading about private policies led to stronger support for private policies, and for conservatives this was linked to stronger mitigation support
- Mixed evidence whether reading about private policies led conservatives to support public policies less