

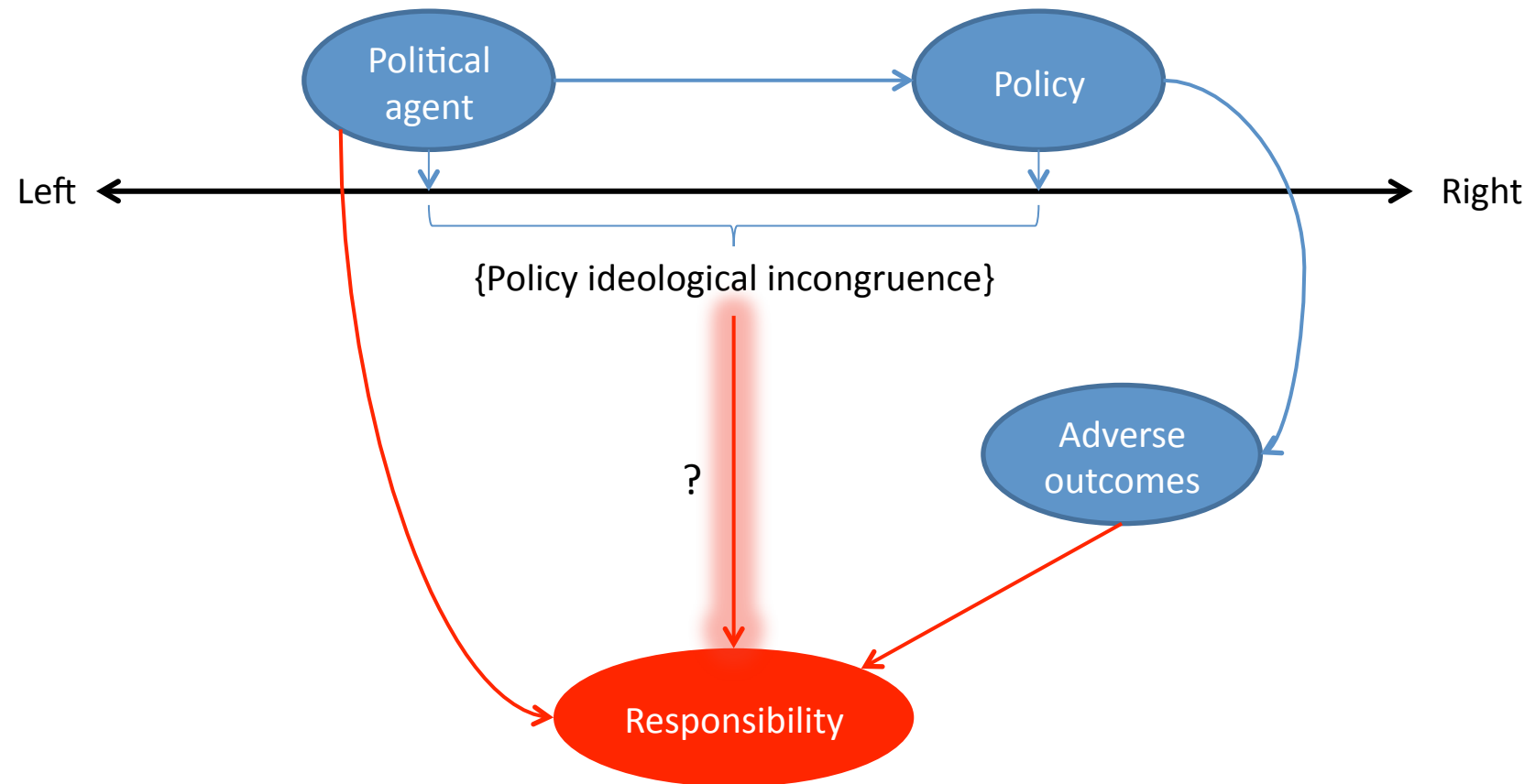
Expectations, Motivations, and Responsibility Attribution: How Policy Surprises Affect Public Reactions to Labor Market Regulation Policies

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Research Questions

- Does the *ideological congruence* between a policy and the political actor adopting it play a role in shaping responsibility attributions for adverse consequences of the policy?
- If so, what is the causal mechanism that may account for this effect?

Research Questions



The "Nixon goes to China" thesis

- It is often the case that a change in policy is brought about by elected officials from the party that traditionally is opposed to the change

The "Nixon goes to China" thesis

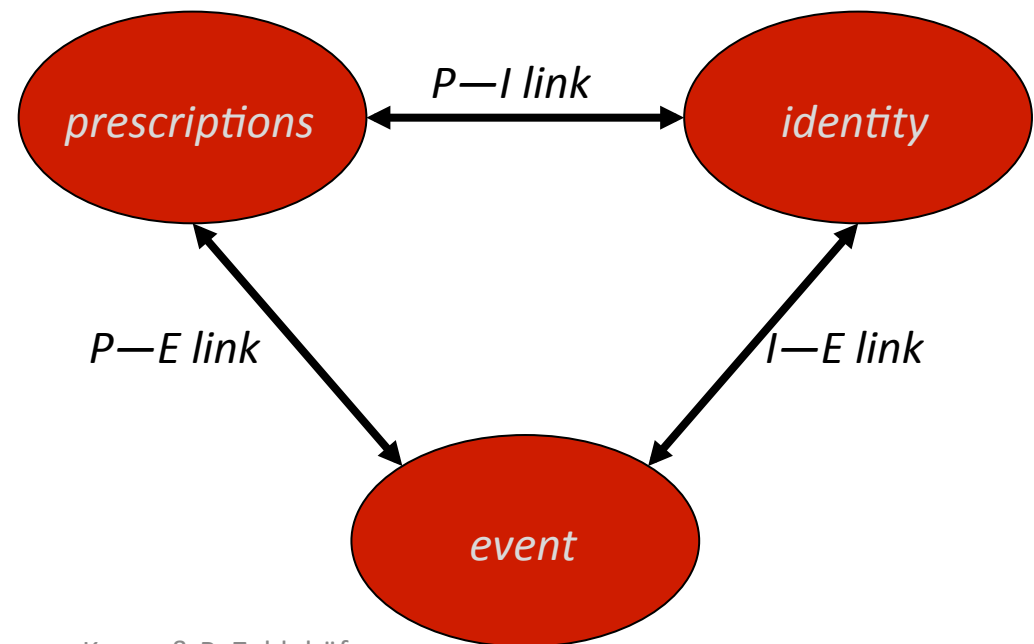
Period	Case
1889	Otto Von Bismarck established social insurance
1914	Asquith's Liberal government led Britain to war in alliance with France
1972	Nixon's visit to China opens the door to its international legitimization
Early 1970s	Nixon boosted welfare spending and drastically increased environmental regulation
late 1970's	Hawkish Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin returned the Sinai to Egypt
1980's	Socialist President Mitterrand of France privatized some public sector functions in the 1980s
Mid 1980s	Populist Paz Estenssoreo initiated profound market-oriented economic reforms in Bolivia.
Mid 1980s	Labour government in New Zealand undertook a radical program of free market deregulation.
1989-1995	Populist president Carlos Saúl Menem launches a drastic program of market-oriented reforms in Argentina.
1990s	Peru under Fujimori underwent profound market-oriented economic reforms.
1990s	Social democratic parties cut pension generosity more than other parties
Late 1990's–2006	Tony Blair initiated a fundamental restructure of public services.
1992	The relative difficulty of the Conservatives in curbing social spending led them to resort to tax increases instead.
1996	President Clinton abolished welfare as we know it
1990-2003	Left-wing (dovish) Israeli governments were much more aggressive in applying antiterrorism deterrence policies
2008-2012	A sharp increase in drone attacks by the US under the Obama administration.

The "Nixon goes to China" thesis

- The economic theory regarding the NGC (Cowen & Sutter 1998, Cukierman & Tommasi 1998, Krueger 2000):
 - (1) Politicians in such cases are likely to enjoy a more favorable public reaction compared with comparable policies and policy makers in congruent cases;
 - (2) In such cases observers tend to infer that the policy motivation was to furnish an adequate response to environmental constraints, rather than to satisfy ideological preference.
- Both of these claims have not yet been empirically tested (but see: Cameron et al. 2000).

Responsibility attribution

- The ‘triangle model of responsibility’ (Schlenker et al. 1994)
[Since] “responsibility is a necessary component of the process to holding people accountable for their conduct”, accountability, as an evaluative reckoning requires information about three elements: *prescription*, *event*, and *identity* images” (Schlenker et al. 1994: 634).



Responsibility attribution

- Existing research on the emergence of political responsibility is consistent with the *identity-event* link – the role of a particular political agent's perceived control over a particular outcome.
- ‘Control’ is typically operationalized by institutional attributes such as divided/unified government, majoritarian/proportional systems, and degrees of coalition complexity (often referred to as 'clarity of responsibility' – Powell and Witten 1993)
- Its consequences were shown for retrospective economic voting (Anderson 1995, 2000; Lewis-Beck 1988; Leyden and Borrelli 1995; Powell and Whitten 1993), and responsibility attribution (Rudolph 2003).

Responsibility attribution

- Alicke's (2000) 'culpable control model' concentrates on the freedom of the actor to "effect desired behaviors and outcomes or to avoid undesired ones" in the formation of responsibility judgments:
 - ***Volitional behavior control*** (freedom to choose actions)
 - *Causal control* (unique impact on consequences)
 - *Volitional outcome control* (whether consequences were desired/expected)
- Motivation is associated with responsibility
- Motivation can not be observed – thus it is *inferred*

Responsibility attribution

- *Blame validation* processes: The tendency to view people rather than the environment as the prepotent controlling forces behind harmful events (Alicke 2000, Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Jones, 1979, 1990).
- The “tendency to assimilate behavior to expectations suggests that people, who behave in personality-consistent ways, will have difficulty seeking mitigation” (Alicke 2000: 569).
- **Driving this logic ‘in reverse’ suggest that behaving in contrast to expectations may act to dis-validate blame** (un-discussed implication in the psychological literature).

Policy congruence and responsibility attribution

- Thus, behavior that is incongruent with expectations is more likely to be accounted for by environmental constraints (vs. agency), whereas congruent behavior is more likely to be accounted for by agency
- *In the context of policy, we expect incongruent policy to elicit less responsibility (H1)*
- *And we expect this effect to be moderated by inferred policy motivation (H2).*

Empirical analyses

	Testing the causal effect of ideological incongruence	Assessing the causal mechanism

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A survey experiment in Israel (N = 402)	✓	
A survey experiment in Germany (N = 1508/794)	✓	✓

Empirical analyses

	Israeli experiment September 2011	German Experiment August 2013
Policy domain	Foreign and security	Labor policy
Ideological axis	Hawk—Dove	Right—Left
Type of political agent	Individual political leaders	Political parties

Experiment 1: Dovish and Hawkish policies in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

- September 2011: fielded in the context of the “State 194” campaign
- Web-based survey experiment
- Six experimental treatments: 2 policies (hawk/dove) X 3 political actors (hawks/doves)
- Reported responsibility attribution to the PM for the consequences of the policy (Cronbach $\alpha = .78$)



Experimental conditions

	Livni [Kadima] (D)	Netanyahu [Likud] (H)	Lieberman [Israel-Beitenu] (H)
Dovish policy			
Hawkish policy			

Experimental conditions

	Livni [Kadima] (D)	Netanyahu [Likud] (H)	Lieberman [Israel-Beitenu] (H)
Dovish policy	<i>Congruent</i>		
Hawkish policy		<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Congruent</i>

Experimental conditions

	Livni [Kadima] (D)	Netanyahu [Likud] (H)	Lieberman [Israel-Beitenu] (H)
Dovish policy	<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Incongruent</i>	<i>Incongruent</i>
Hawkish policy	<i>Incongruent</i>	<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Congruent</i>

Manipulation Check and the Experimental Effects on Responsibility Attribution – Israeli Experiment

	<i>Subjective likelihood of policy adoption</i>	<i>Responsibility attribution (1)</i>	<i>Responsibility attribution (2)</i>
<i>Netanyahu X hawkish policy</i>	2.712 (.453)***	.485 (.622)	.580 (.625)
<i>Lieberman X hawkish policy</i>	4.381 (.492)***	1.292 (.631)*	1.358 (.631)*
<i>Netanyahu</i>	-2.098 (.326)***	-.636 (.437)	-.600 (.437)
<i>Lieberman</i>	-2.575 (.336)***	-.449 (.443)	-.398 (.445)
<i>Hawkish policy</i>	-1.984 (.326)***	-1.675 (.447)***	-1.632 (.449)***
<i>Ideology (1- right, 5 – left)</i>	-.155 (.144)		.015 (.201)
<i>Income</i>	-.055 (.071)		-.280 (.101)**
<i>Gender (male)</i>	.280 (.187)		-.096 (.265)
<i>Age</i>	.008 (.006)		.002 (.008)
<i>religiosity</i>	.325 (.113)**		.190 (.161)
<i>Education level</i>	.141 (.104)		.081 (.146)
<i>Constant</i>		5.971 (.309)***	6.192 (.930)***
<i>Cut point 1</i>	-1.800 (.668)		
<i>Cut point 2</i>	-.823 (.665)		
<i>Cut point 3</i>	.765 (.663)		
<i>Cut point 4</i>	2.375 (.675)		
<i>F</i>		5.26	3.31***
<i>LR χ^2</i>	119.02***		
<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>		.05	.06
<i>Pseudo R-squared</i>	.10		
<i>N</i>	404	410	406

*Note: The model estimating subjective likelihood of policy adoption is an ordered logit model. The two models estimating responsibility attribution are OLS regression; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$*

Experiment 2: Labor policy in Germany

- 25 July - 19 August 2013
- Labor market regulation: Liberalization (R) / Minimum wage (L)
- Coalition parties
- Random assignment to four experimental treatments: 2 policies (left/right) X 2 coalitions (CDU/CSU & FDP / SPD & Greens)
- Inferred policy motivation – ideological or practical
- Reported responsibility attribution for the consequences of the policy (Cronbach $\alpha = .88$)



Experimental conditions

	CDU/CSU & FDP (R)	SPD & Greens (L)
Labor liberalization (R)		
Minimum wage (L)		

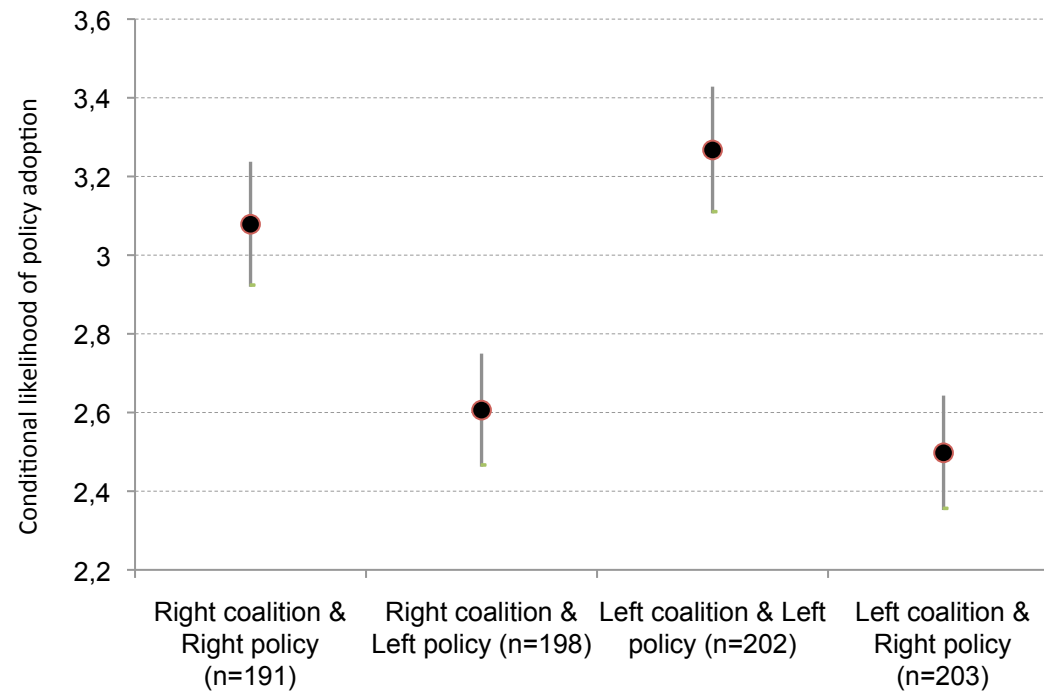
Experimental conditions

	CDU/CSU & FDP (R)	SPD & Greens (L)
Labor liberalization (R)	<i>Congruent</i>	
Minimum wage (L)		<i>Congruent</i>

Experimental conditions

	CDU/CSU & FDP (R)	SPD & Greens (L)
Labor liberalization (R)	<i>Congruent</i>	<i>Incongruent</i>
Minimum wage (L)	<i>Incongruent</i>	<i>Congruent</i>

Manipulation Check: The effects of experimental conditions on respondents' subjective likelihood of policy adoption



One-way ANOVA: $F = 93.62$, $p < .0001$, $n = 794$

Testing the causal mechanism

Incongruence → inferred policy motivation → Responsibility •

- Mediation analysis (Imai et al. 2011), implemented by the mediation package in Stata (Hicks & Tingley 2012).
- Controlling for: policy, coalition, gender, age, education, ideology, intention to vote, political knowledge

T=incongruence, M=inferred policy motivation, O=Responsibility attribution

$$ACME_i(T) \equiv O_i(T, M(1)) - O_i(T, M(0))$$

Experimental Effects on Responsibility Attribution and inferred policy motivation – German Experiment

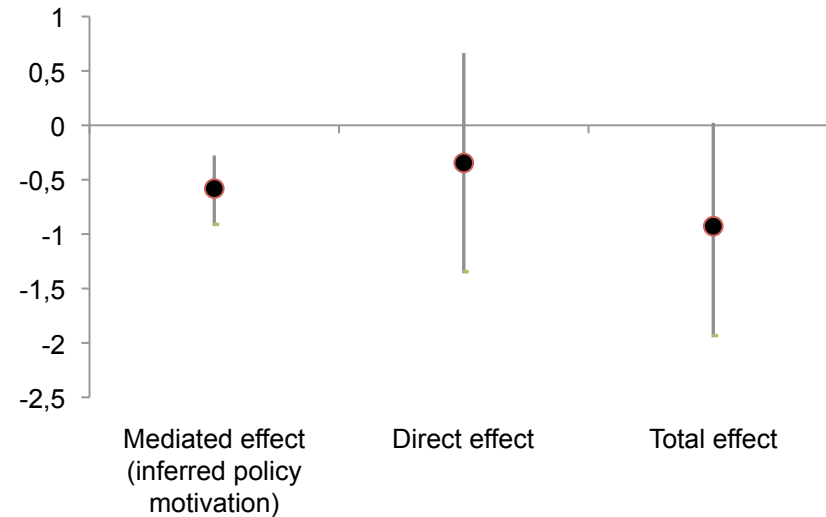
Table Six: The Experimental Effects on the Incongruence of Policy Change, and on Responsibility Attribution – German Experiment

	(1) <i>Responsibility attribution</i>	(2) <i>Responsibility attribution</i>	(3) <i>Inferred policy motivation (ideological)</i>	(4) <i>Responsibility attribution</i>
<i>Incongruent</i>	-.819 (.490)+	-.900 (.494)+	-1.142 (.162)***	-.332 (.505)
<i>Inferred motivation (Ideo.)</i>				2.347 (.535)***
<i>Right coalition</i>	-.277 (.490)	-.371 (.497)	.236 (.163)	-.445 (.491)
<i>Right policy</i>	8.180 (.490)***	8.177 (.495)***	-.461(.162)**	8.385 (.491)***
<i>Gender (male)</i>		.307 (.524)	-.069 (.168)	.340 (.518)
<i>Education</i>		-.315 (.135)*	.003 (.043)	-.313 (.133)*
<i>Ideology (1- right, 5 – left)</i>		.066 (.036)†	.017 (.011)	.058 (.036)
<i>Intention to vote</i>		.009 (.271)	-.076 (.089)	.044 (.268)
<i>Political knowledge</i>		.168 (.401)	-.324 (.130)*	.326 (.398)
<i>Vote SPD</i>		-1.788 (.629)**	-.226 (.203)	-1.681 (.622)**
<i>Vote Greens</i>		-.923 (.874)	.073 (.275)	-.962 (.864)
<i>Constant</i>	14.772 (.486)***	15.206 (1.365)***	.599 (.436)	13.742 (1.390)***
<i>Chi-squared</i>			75.49***	
<i>F</i>	93.62***	30.70***		30.33***
<i>Pseudo R-squared</i>			.08	
<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>	.26	.28		.29
<i>N</i>	794	774	774	774

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Mediation Results with Controls

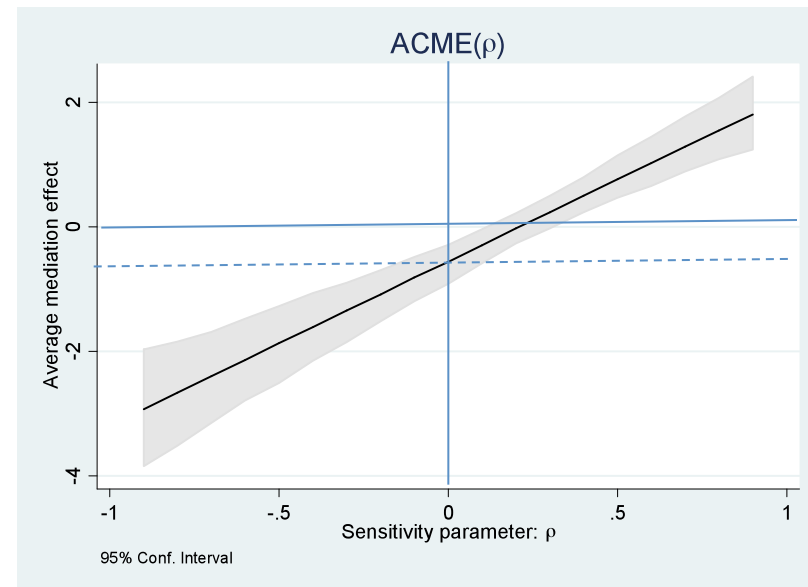
Total effect: -0.927 ($p = .069$)
 Direct effect: -0.346 (*n.s.*)
 Mediated effect: -0.582 ($p < .001$)



Sensitivity parameter (ρ) at which ACME=0:
 0.2*

The mediated effect is robust to unmeasured confounding variable, when the latter accounts for less than about 15.4% ($\sqrt{.0237}$) of the variance in both the mediator and outcome.

* ρ is the correlation between the error terms in the mediator and outcome regression models.



Current conclusions

- The two studies provide support for the hypothesis that ideological policy incongruence elicits less responsibility attribution.
- These results are consistent across differences in national setting, policy domain, and types of political agents (individuals/parties)
- Based on the German experiment it appears that this effect is moderated by inferred policy motivation.

Current conclusions

- The findings provides empirical support to the economic theory regarding the NGC thesis.
- The findings demonstrate the application of volitional—behavior control in the political context.
- Incongruence between political agents and policies affects reasoning processes of observers. These reasoning constitute a heuristic inference of policy motivation of political agents. Lastly, these inferred motivations play a role in constructing responsibility judgments.