

**Where Turnout Matters:
The Influence of Turnout on Local Government Spending**

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ABSTRACT

There is a widespread belief among political practitioners and others that turnout matters in American elections. Empirical studies have, however, been mixed in their assessments. We suggest that important differences between national and local offices help to explain these divergent findings. We argue that turnout should matter more for lower level offices where turnout is much lower and potentially more skewed and where minority groups are often large enough to sway elections. Focusing on municipal elections, we find that turnout does affect policy outcomes. Higher voter turnout is associated with spending patterns that more closely reflect the preferences of minorities and lower class voters. Greater turnout means more redistributive spending, higher taxes, and less allocational spending.

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We know that the majority of Americans usually do not vote when given the opportunity. At best roughly half of eligible voters vote in national contests. At worst, fewer than ten percent of adults vote in local elections (Bridges 1997, Hajnal and Lewis 2003). We also know that those who do turn out to vote look very different from those who do not. Study after study of American elections has found that individuals with limited resources - the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, the less educated - vote much less consistently than those with ample resources (Verba et al 1995, Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

This has led to an almost iron-clad belief among party leaders and politicians that if a greater range of citizens turned out to vote electoral results and policy outcomes would be very different. If everyone voted or even turned out at the same rate, racial and ethnic minorities and members of other disadvantaged groups would lose out significantly less often than they do now. Because of these beliefs, millions of dollars and thousands of hours of campaign resources are expended on encouraging various segments of the public to vote. Democrats, the party presumed to win if turnout is more even, have repeatedly tried to make the vote more accessible, while Republicans have fought almost all of these efforts. And before almost any close contest, most of the actors involved are likely to cite turnout as the critical factor in the outcome. As one recent gubernatorial candidate proclaimed, "If we have a big turnout, I'll win" (Canedy 2002).

Existing Evidence

But does turnout really matter in American elections? Despite the almost universal acceptance of the importance of turnout among political practitioners, empirical evidence in American elections is mixed. Studies of national politics present the strongest challenge to the

belief that turnout matters.¹ First, these national level studies have found only marginal differences between the policy positions and political attitudes of voters and non-voters (e.g. Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Bennett and Resnick 1990, Gant and Lyons 1993, Norrander 1989). Even Verba, Scholzman and Brady who lament the distortion created by the unrepresentativeness of non-voting forms of political participation conclude that “voters are relatively representative of the public” (1995:512). Second, there is little evidence to suggest that winners would change if everyone voted. Some studies have certainly found that increasing turnout might alter the margin of victory slightly in some contests but the findings are often highly variable and the effects are never large (Highton and Wolfinger 2001, Citrin et al 2003, Shields and Goidel 1997). Most importantly, none of the elections examined would have ended with a different victor. As Petrocik recently noted, “There is no indication that the preferences of non-voters would have reversed many – or any – elections for which we have reliable evidence” (2003:20).

However, a second set of studies focusing on policy in sub-national politics has been somewhat more encouraging of the turnout hypothesis. Three landmark studies have demonstrated a clear link between how well different economic classes of voters are represented among a state’s voters and welfare policy in that state (Hill and Leighley 1992, Hill et al 1995, Peterson and Rom 1989). Other research has demonstrated a relationship between state level turnout and tax progressiveness (Martinez 1997). Another study has found a relationship

¹ Cross national comparisons have, however, found that turnout can significantly affect the prospects of left-leaning or workers’ parties and the types of policies governments enact, and the level of inequality in different societies (Pacek and Radcliff 1995, Hicks and Swank 1992). It is also clear that at times in American history, the disenfranchisement of groups like African Americans has led to highly discriminatory policies (Parker 1990, Handley and Grofman 1994).

between voter turnout at the county level and the amount of federal spending going to that county (Martin 2003).²

Two conclusions emerge from the existing research. First, there is little consensus about whether turnout matters in American politics. Some studies make strong claims about the centrality of turnout. According to Hill and Leighley, “Participation is critical in the formulation of state welfare policies” (1992:363). But others make similarly strong claims about the irrelevance of turnout. As Wolfinger and Rosenstone put it, “Demographic biases do not translate into discernible overrepresentation of particular policy constituencies” (1980:109-111). Second, where we look for turnout effects seems to be important. There is little evidence of major turnout effects at the national level in American elections but as we move toward smaller sub-national units, turnout seems to matter more.

Where Turnout Should Matter: The Case of Local Politics

We extend this research by looking at the effects of turnout in urban politics. We shift the focus to local politics for three reasons.

To begin with, there are two strong theoretical reasons to suspect that turnout matters more at the local level: 1) relatively low turnout and 2) relatively large disadvantaged, minority populations in many cities. First, turnout is much lower in local elections than in national contests. Although many lament low turnout in national elections, it is still true that in presidential contests, roughly seventy percent of eligible voters register to vote and of these registered voters approximately seventy percent actually vote. This is decidedly not the case in other types of elections. Data on municipal elections point to average turnout rates almost half

² These results have not, however, gone undisputed. Other research has found either that class bias in turnout at the state level has no effect on policy (Radcliff and Saiz 1998) or that increases in minority voter turnout actually lead to a white backlash and less spending on minority preferred outcomes (Radcliff and Saiz 1995).

that of national contests (Trounstine 2004, Hampton and Tate 1996, Karnig and Walter 1983). In some cases, local contests regularly fail to draw even ten percent of the voting age population (Hajnal et al 2002). Logic dictates that the *possible* extent of any skew produced by uneven turnout decreases as overall turnout levels increase. As detailed in Tingsten's (1937) "law of dispersion," the chances of skew are inversely proportional to overall electoral participation. If almost everybody turns out, there can be very little skew. If, however, only a small fraction of the population turns out, skew can be severe. Bias could certainly exist in any American election but it could be worst at the local level.

The second reason why turnout could matter more in local elections is the uneven geographic distribution of the population. Only a few very large groups can have a substantial impact on the national vote. Asian Americans, for example, are the third largest racial minority group but they make less than 4 percent of the total national population. Whether or not they vote is almost immaterial to the outcomes of national contests. At the national level, a similar story can be told for virtually any disadvantaged, minority group. The same is, however, not true for smaller geographic localities. Because there is segregation by race, income, and almost every other measure of class or social status, groups that are an insignificant or small segment of the national population become major players within smaller geographic boundaries. Latino impact, for example, is much more likely to be felt in cities like Los Angeles, Miami, and San Antonio, where Latinos make up half or more of the population, than it is nationally where Latinos make up only 12 percent of the population. If we are concerned about the effects of a skew in the electorate we need to look not just at the national electorate as a whole but at a series of smaller political units where the effect of different groups could begin to weigh in.

The second reason we choose to focus on local elections is that there is almost no research examining the link between turnout and policy outcomes at the local level. Scholars of urban politics have long suspected that skewed turnout affects outcomes (Dahl 1961, Browning et al 1984, Erie 1988, Bridges 1997). Nevertheless, empirical evidence directly addressing this question is limited. Leighley (2001) and Verba et al (1995) briefly report on participation rates for different racial, ethnic, and demographic groups in local elections and Hajnal and Trounstein (forthcoming) demonstrate a link between voter turnout and racial and ethnic representation on city councils but there is no research that looks systematically across cities at the *policy consequences* of a skewed electorate at the local level. Thus, the question of whether or not turnout matters at the local level remains largely unanswered.

Finally, we focus on urban politics because we believe that policy decisions at the local level play an important role in the lives of individual Americans (Pellissero 2003, Judd and Swanstrom 1994). In an era of policy devolution, as more and more policies are both initiated and implemented at the local level, the decisions that local governments make are taking on growing importance (Sellers 2001). Although presidential and Congressional elections get much of our attention, urban politics represents a critical component of American democracy. The vast majority of elected officials emerge from local contests and more votes are cast in the multitude of local elections than in national contests. In short, policy and electoral decisions made at the local level matter because it is a political arena that touches regularly and deeply on the daily lives of residents. If we are right and turnout is a central component driving local policy decisions, then who votes will clearly affect the well being of different groups in society.

Theories of Urban Politics

Turnout is certainly not the only factor that could affect local government spending priorities. The urban politics literature offers a range of different accounts of government decision making that we also consider (see Pelissero 2003, Judd and Swanstrom 1994, and Stein 1990 for overviews of this literature).

The pluralist model of urban politics maintains that local governments are open to influence from a wide range of groups (Dahl 1961, Clark and Ferguson 1983) and anticipate reactions of groups to policy choices. As such, local government decisions should largely be a function of public preferences. If most residents in a given locality favor greater redistribution of public resources – regardless of whether or not they actively vote - we should expect political actors in that locality to enact measures to increase redistribution. Thus policy follows the preferences of the median resident, not the median voter, and turnout should have no effect on spending patterns.

A second, perhaps even more common view is that local government decision making is largely a function of economic considerations (Peterson 1981, Tiebout 1956, Logan and Molotch 1987, Buchanan 1971). In this view, competition between cities for mobile capital and labor severely constrains local governments. Cities cannot redistribute resources to less advantaged segments of the population without fear of losing businesses and wealthy residents. Instead they must seriously consider reducing taxes and providing a mix of services that is most likely to attract and/or retain more privileged economic interests. This often leads to a pro-growth focus and a range of spending policies that encourage economic development (Logan and Molotch 1987, Elkin 1987). If this theory is accurate we would expect to see very little redistributive spending at all.

According to a third set of scholars, local policy is less a function of economic competition or political preferences and is instead more a function of local needs (Mladenka 1980, 1981). From this perspective, city governments operate in a technically efficient manner and simply distribute resources and services to those who need them. If true, we might expect governments in cities with large poor populations or severely disadvantaged neighborhoods to expend substantial resources on redistributive functions.

Local electoral institutions are another factor cited in the literature as influencing government spending decisions. Nonpartisan elections, the city manager form of government (as opposed to the mayor/council form), weaker mayoral powers, and the absence of term limits are all viewed by at least some urban scholars as reducing the responsiveness of local government to minority or lower-class interests (Bridges 1997, Welch 1990, Mladenka 1989, Clingermayer and Feiock 2001, Lineberry and Fowler 1967, Banfield and Wilson 1963 but see Morgan and Pelissero 1980). Although evidence for many of these relationships is still limited, there is a widespread belief that reform institutions have been instrumental in maintaining middle-class white control in a number of urban centers.

In the remainder of this paper, we compare the effects of turnout and these other accounts of local government finance. In doing so, we also control for a number of other basic features of the local policy environment like functional responsibility and intergovernmental grants that have been shown to be relevant to at least some aspects of urban fiscal policy. In the end, we find that turnout does matter in the local arena. Higher voter turnout is associated with different spending priorities. When few voters turnout, spending is concentrated in functional areas that favor privileged interests. When more voters turnout, spending on lower-class or minority preferred programs like welfare, public housing, health services, and education expands.

Moreover, the effects are substantial as we predict that expanded turnout could increase the amount of money going to redistributive programs by a third. In short, those who do not vote, can lose out.

Data and Methods

To see if turnout matters in the local context, we focus on the relationship between voter turnout in city council elections and local government policy. We focus on policy outcomes rather than on who wins and who loses the election for two reasons. First, it is not clear that simply replacing one leader with another always results in policy change. African Americans and Hispanics have, for example, been able to use the vote to attain widespread descriptive representation but that descriptive representation has often not led to any major policy transformation (Hero and Tolbert 1995, Smith 1996, Singh 1998 but see Kerr and Mladenka 1994). Second, policies could change even though the same leaders stay in power. By turning out to vote in greater numbers minorities and other disadvantaged groups could motivate incumbents to be more responsive to lower class and racial minority interests. Thus, if we really want to know whether turnout affects the welfare of different groups, we need to look at policy outcomes rather than simply at electoral outcomes. It is what a government does, not who is in office, that is the most unambiguous indication of whether or not turnout matters.

We focus on city council elections because they are arguably the most central election in most cities.³ We use aggregate voter turnout in each contest, since data on the class or racial skew of the local electorate in different cities are simply not available. We expect that as turnout in city council elections expands, the vote will be less skewed by class or race and less

³ Most U.S. cities have a council/city manager form of government and even in cities with mayors, the mayor seldom has veto power or unilateral control over the budget (Hajnal and Lewis 2003). Thus, council elections are almost always central to local policy making (Krebs and Pelissero 2003).

advantaged interests will have more of say in determining outcomes. There is ample evidence that turnout is, in fact, less skewed as turnout increases. Both Hill and Leighley (1992) and Jackson et al (1998) have, for example, shown that class bias in turnout across states in presidential elections declines as aggregate state turnout increases. Others have similarly found that higher turnout national elections are more representative of the class and racial makeup of the population (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Our own analysis of the state-wide initiative vote in California suggests that the vote becomes substantially more representative by income, race, age, and other socioeconomic characteristics in higher turnout elections (analysis not shown). It is also worth noting that turnout is much less skewed for political activities that incorporate large shares of the population (ie voting) than it is for those that involve smaller shares (ie working on a campaign or attending a protest) (Verba et al 1995).

Admittedly, aggregate turnout is likely to be only an imprecise proxy for class or racial/bias. Given the noise in our measure, our results should, if anything, underestimate the magnitude of the effects of class or racial/bias on government spending patterns. If this is noise is too severe or if we are wrong and there is no underlying relationship between local voter turnout and the skew of the electorate, our tests should reveal no relationship between turnout and government spending.

Data on voter turnout are from the 1986 International City/County Manager's Association (ICMA) survey. The ICMA survey is mailed to city clerks in every city in the United States with over 2,500 residents and has a response rate of 66 percent.⁴ The survey

⁴ Analysis comparing the socioeconomic status and racial demographics of ICMA cities with the population of all U.S. cities indicates that the ICMA is representative of the nation as a whole (Aghion, Alesina, and Trebbi 2005). Similar analysis comparing cities that responded to the survey with cities that did not indicates that there is no obvious response bias (Aghion, Alesina, and Trebbi 2005).

reports figures for registration and turnout in the most recent city council election.⁵ Clerks were asked to provide the percentage of eligible voters who are registered to vote and the percentage of registered voters who voted in the most recent city wide election.⁶ In subsequent analysis we focus primarily on turnout of registered voters but in alternate tests we repeat the analysis with turnout of eligible voters.⁷

To see if turnout affects what governments do, we focus on government fundraising and spending patterns. Change in how cities raise and spend their money is arguably the most important way local governments can affect policy. Unless a local government actually commits substantial economic resources to a policy, that policy is likely to have a marginal impact. In our analysis, we break down government spending and fiscal policy into different areas that are more or less popular among different segments of the city population. We especially want to isolate spending on the priorities of groups like racial and ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged populations who vote less regularly and to contrast this with spending on the priorities of more advantaged interest. To map onto these divergent priorities as closely as possible, we focus on three standard spending areas: 1) redistributive spending, 2) developmental spending, and 3) allocational spending. In addition to see if turnout affects more fundamental decisions about

⁵ Although there are more recent ICMA surveys, the 1986 survey is the only ICMA survey that asks specifically about local voter turnout.

⁶ City clerk turnout reports have been validated elsewhere (Hajnal et al 2002). When we compared city clerk turnout figures to actual election returns reported by the board of elections for a sample of elections, we also found that the city clerk reports were quite accurate.

⁷ Since different jurisdictions have used a range of registration requirements to exclude or include different segments of the population (Parker 1990, Davidson and Grofman 1994), one might want to focus exclusively on the turnout of eligible voters. The problem is that city clerks have to estimate the eligible population. There is no data source that provides yearly data on local eligible populations. Since, cities and counties (often city clerks themselves) must compile and record data on total voter turnout and voter registration for every election, reports of registered voter turnout are more accurate. In the end, it does not matter which measure we use. Turnout of registered and turnout of eligible voters are closely correlated ($r=.87$). Also, when we repeat the analysis with the percent of eligible voters, we get similar results.

overall fiscal capacity, we look at two further measures: 4) per capita taxation, and 5) per capita debt.

Although it is clear that no racial/ethnic group or other demographic group unanimously prefers one spending area over all others and it is equally clear that all groups favor some mix of different types of spending, there is ample evidence that spending priorities diverge across groups in the urban context. Surveys of urban residents and evidence from national polls both clearly show divergent priorities between poor, minority respondents who vote less regularly and more advantaged, white respondents who vote more regularly. Using different urban surveys, Lovrich (1974), Deleon (1991), Welch et al (2001), and Clark and Ferguson (1983) all find that poor, minority voters are especially concerned about redistribution and social services, while whites and the middle class are especially concerned about attracting businesses and others aspects of development, reducing taxes, and improving their quality of life through better parks and recreation and easier transportation.⁸ The differences between advantaged and disadvantaged interests on distributional and developmental policy are the starkest but there are also clear differences on allocational spending. Lovrich (1974), in particular, finds that whites ranked police protection and environmental issues like garbage collection, pollution, and parks and recreation as top urban priorities, while blacks and Hispanics did not. Whites, who generally did not favor greater spending, were nevertheless willing to support increased funding for these kinds of allocational services. National and state level polls also regularly reveal sharp differences in preferences on overall spending, taxation, and particular spending priorities that tend to fit this same pattern. Erikson et al (1991), Himmelstein and McRae (1988), Welch and Sigelman (1993), Verba et al (1995), and Kinder and Sanders (1996) report that that

⁸ The notion that business interests and other privileged groups regularly seek greater developmental spending is widely supported in the urban politics literature (Logan and Molotch 1987, Swanstrom 1985).

redistributive policies generally garner more support among racial and ethnic minorities and other less advantaged groups than among whites and other more privileged interests.⁹ As Lovrich puts it, there is “a degree of consensus among minority voters as to priorities which cluster very differently from those of Anglo voters” (1974:707).¹⁰ If local governments respond to who actually turns out to vote, increases in voter turnout that add more disadvantaged, minority voters into the electorate should lead to significant changes in local government spending.

Since all spending data are from the 1987 Census of Governments, we are limited by the specific spending categories that the Census codes in its data tables. In line with Peterson (1981), Stein (1990), and other research on local government spending, the specific local government functions that fit into each spending area are as follows: redistributive (welfare, public housing, health services, and education), developmental (highways, streets, transportation, and airports), and allocational (police services, fire protection, corrective services, sewerage, and solid waste). For each of the three spending areas, we measure the proportion of total government expenditures that goes to programs in that area.¹¹

In each spending area, we only include those specific spending categories that we feel fit clearly into that spending area. We drop from our analysis categories of spending (like government administration, judicial functions, or insurance) that are harder to categorize.

Nevertheless, even among the specific categories that we do include, all do not fit equally well

⁹ Our analysis of the cumulative files of the National Election Studies and the General Social Survey indicates that less advantaged, minority respondents are more willing to increase spending to expand public services, are less apt to view taxes as wasteful, are more in favor of redistribution in various forms, and are more in favor of education spending than more advantaged, white interests.

¹⁰ Whether each of these different categories disproportionately serves distinct populations is more difficult to ascertain.

¹¹ Combined the three areas of spending account for an average of 52 percent of all local government expenditures, the remainder is spread widely across smaller categories.

into the three larger spending areas. Some could argue, for example, that educational spending, is not clearly redistributive as it serves both advantaged and disadvantaged interests. To address this issue, we repeated the subsequent analysis two different ways. First, we dropped categories of spending like education that arguably fit less clearly into one of the three larger spending areas. Second, we broke down the larger spending areas into their constituent components and re-ran the regressions focusing on each single spending category. This secondary analysis generally confirmed our primary analysis. Specific findings are detailed below.

In our analysis, we also control for a range of other factors that could affect local government spending priorities. First, to see if local governments are largely responding to public preferences, we include a measure of the Democratic presidential vote share at the county level (City and County Data Book 1986). Specifically, we average the 1984 and 1988 Democratic vote share.¹² Second, to account for economic competition and the belief that governments will only expend substantial resources on redistributive functions when they have considerable financial resources and excess spending capacity, we include a range of measures of overall spending capacity. These include total general revenue, recent changes in government revenue, per capita debt, the existing tax rate, and local bond ratings. Revenue data as well as all tax and debt figures are from the 1987 Census of Governments. Bond ratings are compiled in the City and County Data Book (1986). Third, to see if local governments are more technocratic and are simply providing services to those who need them, we include several measures of need. Specifically, our analysis incorporates the poverty rate in the city, the proportion of the population that is African American or Hispanic, the percentage of adults without a high school education, and the citywide crime rate. Demographic data are from the Census (1990). Crime

¹² County boundaries do not always conform well to city geographic boundaries but the county preferences should in most cases provide at least a reasonable approximation of the city preferences. The presidential vote, by city, is unfortunately not available.

figures are derived from the City and County Data Book (1986). Fourth, since a range of urban theorists have cited electoral institutions as a central influence on government spending decisions and in particular have pointed to reform structures as particularly unsupportive of minority, disadvantaged interests, we assess the roles of nonpartisan elections, the city manager form of government (as opposed to the mayor/council form), weaker mayoral powers, and term limits.¹³ Data on local institutional structure are derived from the 1986 ICMA survey.

Finally, we also take into account a range of smaller features of the local environment that have been shown to be relevant to at least some aspect of fiscal policy. Since governments that are more successful at tapping into federal or state funds may have more leeway in spending and may thus be able to increase redistributive spending, we included the proportion of all revenue from state and federal governments as a measure of inter-governmental revenue (Schneider 1988, 1989). Government spending may also be affected by fiscal constraints placed on city government by state law or voter initiative (Stein 2003, Schneider 1989). To address this possibility we control for the existence of a constitutional or statutory limitation on the amount of debt a city may incur and the presence of constitutional or statutory law mandating a balanced budget for the city (source: U.S. Advisory Commission on Inter-governmental Relations 1993). Another factor that could affect local fiscal policy is the intensity of governmental competition at the local or regional level. Schneider (1989), for example, argues that the more local governments a city has to compete with the more constrained its own spending will be. To control for this possibility, we include a measure of the number of incorporated places in the

¹³ In alternate tests, we also try to assess the extent to which each city is run by a machine by including a measure of the percentage of the city's budget spent on payroll jobs. We find that more 'machine-like' cities do, in some cases, spend marginally more on redistributive spending. Including this measure, however, has little effect on the other relationships we examine.

county.¹⁴ (Source: Census of Governments 1987). Since the nature of cities differs substantially by region, city type, and city size, we add dummy variables for each region (West, Midwest, Northeast, and South), for city type (suburb and central city), and for city size (total population and population growth). Finally, we control for basic demographics (percent white, percent college educated, percent homeowner, percent non-citizen), that could be viewed as potential influences on government spending decisions. Each of these measures is derived from the Census (1990).

Turnout and Government Spending Priorities

Does turnout matter in local elections? In Table One we begin to answer this question by assessing the effects of voter turnout on three broad categories of government spending. Specifically, the table reports the results of three O.L.S. regressions with the proportion of city expenditures going to redistributive, developmental, and allocational spending as the dependent variables.¹⁵ The key independent variable is the percent of registered voters that turned out in the city's most recent election. As turnout increases across cities, we expect that racial and ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups are more likely to vote and more likely to have their preferences translated into public policy. **[Table One Here]**

The results indicate that turnout does matter.¹⁶ As can be seen in the first row of Table 1, higher turnout in local elections leads to significantly greater spending on redistributive functions and significantly less spending on allocational programs. Even after controlling for

¹⁴ In alternate tests, we also included the number of cities in the local SMSA but found that the results were nearly identical

¹⁵ Since it is possible that the proportion of spending going to each area is related to the proportion of spending going to the other two areas, we repeated the analysis using seemingly unrelated regressions but found that it made no difference to the substantive conclusions.

¹⁶ We reach the same conclusion if we measure spending as per capita spending rather than as a proportion of government spending.

public preferences, spending capacity, and needs, the more people who turn out to vote, the more local governments are likely to spend their money on welfare, public housing, and other redistributive programs and the less likely they are to spend it on waste management and other forms of allocational spending.¹⁷ This implies that if more racial and ethnic minorities and members of other disadvantaged groups do turn out to vote, they may be able to pressure governments into spending on policies that are more in line with their preferences.

Table 1 also indicates that the effects of turnout are meaningful. Increasing the proportion of registered voters who turn out from 19 percent (one standard deviation below mean turnout) to 59 percent (one standard deviation above the mean) would increase the proportion of city government spending on redistributive programs by 1.8 percentage points. At first glance, this may not seem like a substantial shift. However, given that the average city spends only 7.8 percent of its budget on these redistributive programs, this kind of increase in turnout could potentially increase the amount of redistributive spending by one quarter in some cities. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to expect large changes in turnout in some cities. Existing research suggests that simply changing the timing of local elections to coincide with national elections increases registered voter turnout by 36 percentage points (Hajnal and Lewis 2003).

¹⁷ When we re-ran the analysis using sub-categories of spending, we found that the areas of spending most closely associated with poor, minority interests were most affected by turnout. Specifically, in terms of allocational spending, the only area where changes in turnout were significantly and substantially linked to changes in spending was waste management - an area that is a higher priority for middle class communities (Trounstone 2004). Spending on parks and recreation and police services, two areas that are may be similarly important for middle and lower class interests, was not as clearly related to turnout. Most subcategories of redistributive spending were related to turnout. In particular, we found that increased turnout led to substantial increases in both welfare spending and educational spending. Perhaps most interestingly, the only subcategory of developmental spending where we found a significant relationship with turnout was airport spending. Higher turnout meant less developmental spending on airports. Since airport spending is the area of developmental spending that could be the least popular among poor, minority populations who rarely fly, we might have expected to find the strongest negative relationship here. However, given that most cities do not have any fiscal responsibility for airports, this last result may be more suggestive than conclusive.

Turnout is not a panacea. Many cities already have fairly high voter turnout and even the highest turnout cities do not redistribute more than a small fraction of their revenue. Nevertheless, the results here suggest that attainable changes in voter turnout could have a significant impact on how many local governments spend their money and at least partially effect who wins and who loses in local democracy.

The results in Table 1 do, however, reveal one area where turnout has no obvious effects. There is no clear link between turnout and developmental spending. This is, at least at first glance, somewhat counterintuitive. Since developmental spending tends to most directly and most immediately benefit privileged interests in society, it might be the first thing that poor, minority residents would want to cut when they turn out to vote. The fact that developmental spending does not go down when turnout expands may indicate that cities feel they cannot cut developmental spending if they want to remain competitive and continue to attract businesses (Peterson 1981). Consistently high spending on developmental programs may also be a sign that cities, almost irrespective of who is involved in the electoral arena, tend to be dominated by business interests. Turnout and politics may play a role in some areas of local spending but the imperatives of the economic market and competition between cities appear to be dominant in other areas.

Turnout is also by no means the only factor governing spending policy decisions.¹⁸ Table 1 also indicates that public preferences matter. The general political leaning of the local population is critical to government spending behavior. All else equal, the results suggest that

¹⁸ Table 1 and subsequent Tables confirm the importance of a range of other factors cited in the urban politics literature. As expected, greater inter-governmental revenue allowed local governments to spend more on redistributive functions and to incur less debt (Schneider 1988, 1989). Also as expected, spending constraints, particularly in the form of legal limits on debt, led to less redistributive spending (Stein 2003, Schneider 1989). As some might predict, the west was more pro-development and cities in the Northeast spent more on redistributive programs and had higher taxes.

more Democratic cities spend twice as high a proportion of their budget on redistributive spending than more Republican cities. This provides additional support for a pluralist view of urban politics and suggests that Dahl (1961) and others are correct in maintaining that cities are responsive to citizen demands. The voice of the people is at least in part reflected in public policy.

At the same time, Table 1 suggests that economic constraints are also critical. The more money governments have to spend, the more generous they can be with redistributive spending. Recent increases in government revenue also tend to add to the amount of money that is funneled into redistributive spending. Put another way, if cities have limited economic resources, policies designed to increase development and economic competitiveness are likely to be maintained while redistribution is likely to experience the first and most dramatic cuts.

Another interesting finding to emerge from Table 1 concerns the role of need. At least theoretically, cities with larger populations in need of government assistance should spend more on redistributive programs. Yet, our analysis finds the opposite. Need is either insignificantly or significantly and negatively related to spending on redistributive functions. As Table 1 shows, cities with larger African American populations are less likely to spend on things like welfare, health, and public housing.¹⁹ Moreover, in alternate analysis, we also found that cities with higher crime rates spent less of their budgets on redistributive spending.²⁰ Paradoxically, spending on redistributive functions tends to be at its lowest where it is most needed. This, in

¹⁹ The relationship between redistributive spending and percent black is particularly interesting. What this relationship suggests is that redistributive spending drops in cities with larger black populations *after* controlling for income. In other words, all else equal, city governments appear to provide less redistribution when the target population is largely black than when the target population is primarily white. Racial discrimination is perhaps the most plausible explanation for this relationship.

²⁰ We do not include this variable in our base model because crime statistics were only available for a third of the cities.

some ways, supports Peterson's (1981) assertions. Cities with the greatest need for redistributive spending may be the ones least able to afford to undertake such spending. These relatively poor and relatively unattractive cities may be too desperate to spend on what some consider to be inefficient redistributive programs (Peterson 1981). Given this relationship, it is all the more imperative that those in need of public services become active in the local political arena. If the most needy members of society do speak through the ballot, the tendency for local governments to ignore their interests when times are tough could begin to be reversed.

The effects of local government institutions are also illuminating. Contrary to expectations, reform institutions do not always lead to decreased responsiveness to minority or lower-class interests. The effects of institutions are, in fact, quite mixed. While diminished mayoral power does lead to less redistributive spending, both non-partisan elections and the council-manager form of government lead to more redistributive spending, and term limits have no clear affect. These results are more in line with recent studies which show that reform institutions can be used by any class of interests (Trounstine 2004). In many cases like San Jose, where minorities and other less advantaged groups have now won a place in the governing coalition, they may be able to use the same reform institutions to insulate their own power.

To help ensure that the results in Table 1 do measure the underlying relationship between turnout and spending, we undertook a series of additional tests.²¹ First, we re-ran the analysis using turnout of the eligible population rather than turnout of registered voters. This alternate measure led to essentially the same set of conclusions. Second, we repeated the analysis using a

²¹ Since there is a possibility that turnout has become less important in recent years – although there is no obvious reason to think so – we repeated our analysis in Tables 1 and 2 with data from a 2001 survey of all cities in California (see Hajnal and Lewis 2003 for a description of the data). The sample is from one state and thus subject to some limitations but our results suggest that turnout continues to affect spending priorities. The results are not identical but the conclusion is the same. Once again increased turnout is associated with spending more in line with disadvantaged interests (analysis not shown).

series of alternate measures of fiscal capacity including total debt, current bond ratings, the current tax rate, and available cash and securities. These tests re-confirmed the importance of fiscal capacity in that several of these measures were significantly related to government spending. Equally importantly, all of the other significant relationships in Table 1 remained intact when these alternate fiscal capacity measures were added in. Third, to ensure that our results were not due to the fact that different cities have different spending mandates imposed from above, we tested a range of measures of fiscal responsibility or functional assignments (Clark and Ferguson 1983, Stein 1990). As noted above, we re-ran the analysis dropping education spending – a function that is sometimes one of the largest redistributive spending categories and sometimes completely outside the responsibility of cities. Our basic conclusion did not change. We also included a count of the number of spending categories that the government in question spent no money on – presumably a measure of the number of functional categories that were not part of the city’s responsibilities. In addition, we re-ran the analysis separately for central cities and suburbs to see if turnout mattered more in certain types of cities with different sets of responsibilities. Similarly, we included an interaction between turnout and city size in the analysis. We also included a series of interactions between turnout and region to assess whether turnout mattered more or less in different regions where cities might have more or different sets of functional assignments. Finally, we incorporated a number of different measures of local autonomy - whether the city had home rule, land area, and age of the city - to control for the fact that certain types of cities have more latitude in how they operate. Over all of these measures, we found some signs that greater functional responsibilities in a particular area leads to more spending in related areas and some indication that turnout matters more in the

northeast but the effects were highly variable and the inclusion of these measures did not substantially alter the relationships shown in Table 1 [analysis not shown].

The Fiscal Effects of Voter Turnout

There are many ways local governments can affect local policy. They can, as we have shown, affect policy by deciding how to split up the existing revenue pie. But local governments can also affect policy through more fundamental fiscal decisions like raising money via higher taxes or incurring greater debt. In other words, they can change the size of the existing revenue pie. Especially in today's fiscally challenged urban environment, these kinds of fiscal decisions may represent one of the few avenues through which local governments can initiate major policies and affect the well-being of different groups.

To see if voter turnout affects this broader range of government behavior, in Table 2, we assess the link between voter turnout and tax and debt policy. Since the existing survey evidence indicates that racial and ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups not only favor greater government spending but also are more willing than privileged groups to increase taxes to pay for that spending, we expect that as the size of the electorate expands and the number of relatively needy or disadvantaged voters grows, local governments will choose to increase the local tax rate and the size of the existing debt (Lovrich 1974, Deleon 1991, Welch et al 2001, and Clark and Ferguson 1983). Put another way, to try to satisfy the increasing demand from less advantaged voters for more services, local governments should raise more money by raising taxes or incurring greater debt.²² **[Table Two Here]**

²² One issue we have not raised is the direction of causality. Governments could, in fact, spend more money on certain policy areas in order to encourage certain groups to turnout in higher levels in the future. For our purposes, it does not actually matter whether turnout increases affect spending priorities or whether spending changes increase turnout. In either case, the interests of more voters (and presumably more diverse voters) are more closely reflected in policy decisions when turnout is higher. Nevertheless, there is some evidence to suspect that turnout causes

Table 2 suggests that voter turnout also matters for these more fundamental government policy decisions. Greater turnout translates into substantially higher per capita debt. All else equal, moving from a city one standard deviation below mean turnout to a city at one standard deviation above mean turnout leads almost to a doubling of per capita debt. Greater turnout also appears to lead to increased per capita taxes. The relationship between turnout and taxes in the second column of Table 2 is positive but not quite significant. However, an alternate regression using turnout of eligible voters instead of turnout of registered voters shows a substantial, significant, and positive relationship between turnout and the local tax policy. [Analysis not shown] In short, when a larger and more diverse set of residents turns out to vote, governments appear to comply with this increased demand by raising taxes and increasing the local debt. The poor and other disadvantaged groups want more government services. They can get funds for those services if they vote more regularly. This is another sign that who votes matters.

The Contingent Effects of Turnout

Turnout, however, should not always matter. If elections are not competitive and incumbents know that they have very little chance of losing the next election, there is little incentive to respond to the pressures of newly mobilized voters. If however, elections are competitive and an incumbent stands a good chance of losing his or her next election, there is a much greater incentive to be aware of the preferences of new voters and to respond to these preferences. Similarly, if elections are competitive and a challenger wins over an incumbent, there is a real incentive for the new leader to follow the policy preferences of the new voting

spending changes rather than the reverse. For one, our turnout data are generally from a year or more preceding the spending data. Also, logically, it seems more likely that turnout among disadvantaged groups would lead to more spending and higher taxes than for increases in taxes to trigger greater turnout among less advantaged groups.

bloc. In short, the higher the turnover and the greater the competition, the more that voter turnout should affect government policy.

To see if the local electoral context helped shape the relationship between turnout and government spending patterns, we added a measure of turnover or competition – the percentage of incumbents who won reelection in the most recent city council election – and an interaction term for turnout and turnover to the regression model in Table 1.²³ If, as we suspect is this case, turnout matters more in competitive, high turnover cities, the interaction term should be negative and significant. **[Table Three Here]**

As the first column of Table 3 illustrates, competition is an important intervening variable.²⁴ The interaction term is negative and significant indicating that the effects of turnout on representation are significantly lower in cities with less competitive local elections. We suspect that two processes are at work. In one scenario, expanded turnout is leading to the election of a new and different set of leaders who then institute policies that are more in line with preferences of their core constituency. In a second scenario, in order to try to stave off electoral defeat, incumbents increase redistributive spending to respond to the preferences of an expanded and more diverse electorate.²⁵ In either case, the fewer incumbents who lose, the less turnout matters. Moreover, this interaction effect is substantial. All else equal, in a highly competitive city where half of incumbents lose their reelection bids, moving from low to high turnout leads to a 43 percent increase in redistributive spending (from 8.2 to 11.7 percent of the budget). In

²³ This incumbent reelection measure comes from responses to the ICMA survey and refers to the incumbents running in the most recent council election.

²⁴ It might also have been helpful to have another measure of competition like the average margin of victory in council elections. Unfortunately, no such measure is available across the range of cities.

²⁵ We also looked to see if term limits affected the link between voter turnout and government policy. If, as many believe, term limits increase competition and turnover, voter turnout might matter more in cities with term limits. However, when we added an interaction for turnout and term limits to the regression in Table 1, we found it was not significant.

contrast, in an un-competitive city where all incumbents win, moving from low to high turnout only leads to a 14 percent increase in redistributive spending (from 8.4 to 9.6 percent of the budget).

To further assess how the local electoral context affects the impact of turnout, we looked at the link between voter turnout and racial and ethnic minority representation on the local city council. Presumably, if turnout affects spending by increasing the number of local leaders who represent less advantaged segments of the population, increases in turnout may matter even more when they are accompanied by a shift in racial and ethnic leadership on city councils.

Leadership turnover may be important but it may be even more important when racial and ethnic minority leaders enter office. We test this possibility by adding measures of the proportion of African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans on the city council and interaction terms for turnout and the racial makeup of the council.²⁶

The results, as reported in the second column of Table 3, suggest that racial or ethnic minority representation on the city council is not necessary for turnout to affect local government spending priorities. The interaction terms are insignificant and the key independent variable, registered voter turnout, remains significant indicating that turnout matters regardless of the racial and ethnic makeup of the city council.²⁷ This implies that both white and non-white elected officials are recognizing and responding to changes in who turns out to vote.

Conclusion

²⁶ Ideally, we would like to have a measure of change in racial/ethnic representation. There is, unfortunately, no complete data set that has racial representation on city councils by year. The data on council racial/ethnic makeup come from the 1986 ICMA survey.

²⁷ Table Three also indicates that spending is not significantly related to the proportion of non-whites on the city council. This implies that descriptive representation on city councils has little effect on redistributive spending net the effects of turnout and public preferences.

The story presented here is fairly clear. Who votes seems to substantially affect how governments raise and spend their money. When fewer people vote and turnout is more skewed by race, income, and other factors, governments appear to behave differently than when turnout is higher and less skewed. Fewer voters means less redistributive spending, more allocational spending, lower taxes, and smaller government debt. This suggests that when disadvantaged groups fail to vote, local officials are likely to be unresponsive to their concerns.

These findings represent an important addition to the existing body of work on American democracy for three reasons. First, and most obviously, they further corroborate the importance of turnout in American elections. This kind of evidence is critical in light of the strong assertions of many scholars who continue to claim that “outcomes would not change if everyone voted” (Highton and Wolfinger 2001:179). Second, they highlight differences between local and national politics and they suggest that broad conclusions about the merits or shortcomings of American democracy based exclusively on assessments of either national politics or local politics are likely to be misleading. Third, these findings should help us to better understand where turnout matters. Turnout matters more when turnout is exceptionally low (more in local than in national elections), where disadvantaged, minority groups represent large shares of the electorate (more in local than in national elections), and where electoral competition is higher (more in some cities than in others). Turnout does not always matter but if the right combination of circumstances is present, large segments of society can lose out when they don’t vote.

What can we do to help increase the participation and influence of traditionally disadvantaged groups in urban elections? A range of potentially fruitful policy prescriptions already exists. Research has, for example, already shown that moving the dates of local elections to coincide with the dates of national elections can almost double local voter turnout (Hajnal and

Lewis 2003). Since many cities around the United States are already moving to concurrent elections as a cost saving measure, this is a solution that has the potential to be broadly enacted. Research has also revealed that personal contact with racial and ethnic minority residents can greatly increase turnout (Lee et al forthcoming). And if the contact is by canvassers of the same race/ethnicity as the residents, it can have an even greater effect. Other solutions are more controversial. Advocates of greater voter participation among less advantaged segments of the population have also pushed for a streamlined citizenship process, proportional representation, cumulative voting, and universal registration (Shaw et al 2000, Guinier 1992). In the end, how well and how quickly these and other types of solutions are implemented could play an important role in alleviating real imbalances in American democracy.

We should also not ignore other critical features of the urban fiscal environment. Urbanists have long debated who or what it is that controls local government decision making. The results presented here suggest that the decisions local governments make are more complex than at least some previous accounts have suggested. What local governments do is a function of a complex interplay of politics, economics, and institutions. Municipal decision makers are businessmen reacting to economic constraints. They are technocrats who service the specific needs of their residents. They are politicians who listen to the views of the entire public. They are office seekers who respond to the preferences of active voters. And finally, they are rational actors constrained by the particular features of their local institutional structure. If we want to improve local policy outcomes or even if we just want to understand how certain outcomes are reached in our cities, we need to consider the interplay of all of these factors.

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Table 1. The Effects of Turnout on Government Spending Priorities

	Proportion of Government Expenditures to....		
	Redistributive Spending	Developmental Spending	Allocational Spending
VOTER MOBILIZATION			
Registered Voter Turnout	.044 (.019)**	-.003 (.012)	-.054 (.022)**
MASS PREFERENCES			
Democratic Vote for President	.082 (.041)**	-.066 (.025)***	-.042 (.046)
SPENDING CAPACITY			
Government Revenue	.381 (.131)***	-.159 (.078)**	-.353 (.146)**
Change in Revenue	.730 (.225)***	-.275 (.134)**	-.869 (.250)***
Median Household Income	-.009 (.005)*	.001 (.003)	.016 (.006)***
NEEDS			
Percent Poor	.017 (.088)	.087 (.052)*	.098 (.098)
Percent Black	-.089 (.039)**	-.037 (.023)	-.036 (.044)
Percent Latino	-.084 (.065)	-.028 (.039)	.086 (.073)
Percent Non-Citizen	.235 (.118)**	-.026 (.071)	-.195 (.132)
LOCAL INSTITUTIONS			
Mayor vs City Manager	-.045 (.010)***	.009 (.006)	.026 (.011)**
Mayoral Veto	.027 (.010)***	-.011 (.006)*	-.009 (.011)
Term Limits	.009 (.016)	.006 (.009)	-.009 (.018)
Nonpartisan	.062 (.011)***	-.002 (.006)	-.038 (.012)***
INTER-GOVERNMENT REVENUE			
Total state/federal govt revenue	.319 (.036)***	-.022 (.022)	-.084 (.041)**
SPENDING CONSTRAINTS			
Legal limits on debt	-.061 (.019)**	-.002 (.011)	-.011 (.022)
Balanced budget provision	-.010 (.014)	-.001 (.008)	-.011 (.016)
FRAGMENTATION			
Number of places in the county	.079 (.024)***	.001 (.014)	-.071 (.026)***
CITY TYPE			
Suburb	-.023 (.013)*	.013 (.079)	.063 (.014)***
Central City	.024 (.013)*	-.001 (.008)	-.003 (.015)
Population	-.051 (.012)***	.018 (.007)**	.048 (.013)***
Population Growth	.004 (.011)	-.002 (.006)	-.052 (.011)***
REGION			
West	-.023 (.018)	.065 (.011)***	-.043 (.020)**
Midwest	-.013 (.015)	.044 (.009)***	-.059 (.016)***
Northeast	.124 (.018)***	.006 (.010)	-.110 (.019)***
DEMOGRAPHICS			
Percent Asian	-.096 (.103)	-.076 (.062)	-.052 (.115)
Percent College Educated	-.023 (.049)	.052 (.029)	.129 (.055)**
Percent Homeowner	.044 (.041)	.043 (.024)*	-.139 (.046)***
Constant	-.055 (.040)	.069 (.024)***	.435 (.045)***
Adj R-squared	.39	.17	.14
N	1067	1067	1066

Source: Census of Governments 1987, ICMA Survey 1986, Census 1990,2000. Figures are coefficient and their standard errors ***p<.01 **p<.05 * p<.10

Table 2. Local Voter Turnout: Fiscal Effects

	Per Capita Debt	Per Capita Taxes
VOTER MOBILIZATION		
Registered Voter Turnout	1.39 (.554)**	.055 (.034)
MASS PREFERENCES		
Democratic Vote for President	-3.09 (1.16)***	.178 (.072)**
SPENDING CAPACITY		
Government Revenue	12.8 (3.72)***	1.14 (.229)***
Change in Revenue	26.2 (6.36)***	1.25 (.392)***
Median Household Income	.065 (.139)	.011 (.008)
NEEDS		
Percent Poor	-4.48 (2.46)*	-.089(.152)
Percent Black	.955 (1.11)	.006 (.068)
Percent Latino	-.495 (1.85)	-.267 (.114)**
Percent Non-Citizen	1.31 (3.35)	.435 (.207)**
LOCAL INSTITUTIONS		
Mayor vs City Manager	-.174 (.282)	-.054 (.017)***
Mayoral Veto	-.106 (.288)	.032 (.018)*
Term Limits	-.440 (.462)	.018 (.029)
Nonpartisan	.300 (.310)	.073 (.019)***
INTER-GOVERNMENT REVENUE		
Total state/federal govt revenue	-1.70 (1.03)*	.048 (.064)
SPENDING CONSTRAINTS		
Legal limits on debt	-.996 (.551)*	.019 (.034)
Balanced budget provision	.084 (.396)	.033 (.024)
FRAGMENTATION		
Number of places in the county	.031 (.066)	.096 (.041)**
CITY TYPE		
Suburb	1.47 (.374)***	-.014 (.023)
Central City	-.520 (.396)	.047 (.024)*
Population	-.016 (.003)***	-.012 (.002)***
Population Growth	.619 (.303)**	-.041 (.019)**
REGION		
West	.385 (.508)	.052 (.032)
Midwest	.376 (.414)	-.026 (.026)
Northeast	-.142 (.503)	.195 (.031)***
DEMOGRAPHICS		
Percent Asian	-.483 (2.94)	-.553 (.182)***
Percent College Educated	-.270 (1.38)	.204 (.085)**
Percent Homeowner	-.124 (1.16)	-.034 (.072)
Constant	2.88 (1.14)**	.013 (.017)
Adj R-squared	.06	.25
N	1070	1070

Source: Census of Governments 1987, ICMA Survey 1986, Census 1990. Figures are coefficient and their standard errors ***p<.01 **p<.05 * p<.10

Table 3. The Contingent Effects of Turnout on Redistributive Spending		
	Model 1	Model 2
VOTER MOBILIZATION		
Registered Voter Turnout	.156 (.057)***	.051 (.021)**
LOCAL COMPETITION		
Percent Incumbents Winning	-.031 (.026)	---
Percent Incumbents Winning*Voter Turnout	-.126 (.063)**	---
RACIAL REPRESENTATION ON COUNCIL		
Percent Black on Council	---	.113 (.095)
Percent Latino on Council	---	.005 (.110)
Percent Asian American on Council	---	-.007 (.322)
Percent Black on Council*Voter Turnout	---	-.224 (.209)
Percent Latino on Council*Voter Turnout	---	-.044 (.242)
Percent Asian on Council*Voter Turnout	---	.094 (.628)
MASS PREFERENCES		
Democratic Vote for President	.091 (.042)**	.084 (.041)**
SPENDING CAPACITY		
Government Revenue	.379 (.132)***	.392 (.132)***
Change in Revenue	.711 (.226)***	.702 (.228)***
Median Household Income	-.009 (.005)*	-.009 (.005)*
NEEDS		
Percent Poor	.019 (.089)	.012 (.088)
Percent Black	-.097 (.039)**	-.110 (.051)**
Percent Latino	-.064 (.067)	-.074 (.082)
Percent Non-Citizen	.218 (.120)**	.222 (.126)*
LOCAL INSTITUTIONS		
Mayor vs City Manager	-.047 (.010)***	-.045 (.010)***
Mayoral Veto	.028 (.010)***	.027 (.010)***
Term Limits	.009 (.017)	.009 (.016)
Nonpartisan	.063 (.011)***	.062 (.011)***
INTER-GOVERNMENT REVENUE		
Total state/federal govt revenue	.308 (.037)***	.316 (.036)***
SPENDING CONSTRAINTS		
Legal limits on debt	-.062 (.019)**	-.063 (.019)**
Balanced budget provision	-.009 (.014)	-.008 (.014)
FRAGMENTATION		
Number of governments in county	.077 (.025)***	.079 (.024)***
CITY TYPE		
Suburb	-.023 (.013)*	-.025 (.013)*
Central City	.022 (.014)	.023 (.013)*
Population	-.050 (.012)***	-.051 (.012)***
Population Growth	.004 (.011)	.004 (.011)
REGION		
West	-.027 (.018)	-.026 (.018)
Midwest	-.013 (.015)	-.015 (.015)
Northeast	.128 (.018)***	.122 (.018)***
DEMOGRAPHICS		
Percent Asian	-.082 (.110)	-.096 (.113)
Percent College Educated	-.029 (.050)	-.024 (.049)
Percent Homeowner	.030 (.044)	.040 (.041)
Constant	-.076 (.048)	-.053 (.040)
Adj R-squared	.39	.39
N	1034	1066

Source: Census of Governments 1987, ICMA Survey 1986, Census 1990. Figures are coefficient and standard errors ***p<.01 **p<.05 * p<.10

APPENDIX

Table A1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS			
Variable	Mean (Std Dev)	Min	Max
Distributive Spending	.08 (.15)	0	.89
Developmental Spending	.13 (.10)	0	.95
Allocational Spending	.31 (.17)	0	.99
Per Capita Taxes	.25 (.31)	0	11.0
Per Capita Debt	.88 (4.40)	0	161
Registered Voter Turnout	.39 (.2)	.01	.98
Government Revenue (\$Mills)	.02 (.10)	0	3.4
Change in Revenue(\$Mills)	.005 (.02)	-.11	.89
Median Household Income (Thousands)	3.4 (1.7)	.62	15
Percent Poor	.11 (.08)	0	.53
Percent Black	.08 (.15)	0	.99
Percent Latino	.07 (.14)	0	.98
Percent Non-Citizen	.04 (.07)	0	.68
Mayor vs City Manager	.44 (.50)	0	1
Mayoral Veto	.32 (.47)	0	1
Term Limits	.04 (.20)	0	1
Nonpartisan	.72 (.45)	0	1
Total state/federal revenue (%age of all revenue)	.16 (.21)	0	1
Legal limits on debt	.04 (.20)	0	1
Balanced budget provision	.13 (.33)	0	1
Number of places in the county (Hundreds)	1.5 (1.5)	1	824
Suburb	.54 (.50)	0	1
Central City	.07 (.26)	0	1
Population (Thousands)	21(7.1)	0	3485
Population Growth (Percent)	.12 (.48)	-.89	24.7
West	.15 (.36)	0	1
Midwest	.30 (.46)	0	1
Northeast	.26 (.44)	0	1
Percent Asian	.02 (.04)	0	.69
Percent College Educated	.21 (.13)	0	.78
Percent Homeowner	.65 (.15)	.07	.99
Percent Black on Council	.04 (.11)	0	1
Percent Latino on Council	.02 (.11)	0	1
Percent Asian American on Council	.00 (.02)	0	.67
Percent Incumbent Reelected	.33 (.22)	0	1