

Mayors, Partisanship, and Redistribution: Evidence Directly From U.S. Mayors

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Abstract

Policymakers and scholars are increasingly looking to mayors as policy innovators capable of addressing critical challenges, including income inequality. A robust scholarly debate contests whether mayors are (1) limited by economic constraints and unable to prioritize redistributive initiatives, or (2) spurred to pursue equity-oriented policies according to partisan and ideological preferences. No existing research, however, directly and systematically measures local political elites' preferences for redistribution. By interviewing and surveying 72 American mayors—including many from the nation's largest cities—we measure when and why mayors prioritize redistribution. We find that, while a majority of mayors' responses are consistent with being constrained by economic imperatives, a sizable minority prioritize redistributive programs. We also discover that partisanship explains much of the variation in a mayor's propensity for redistribution. This suggests that national political debates may be shaping local priorities in ways contrary to conventional views.

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Many politicians, policymakers, and academics, dissatisfied with federal and state government, have increasingly pointed to cities as venues for addressing socioeconomic challenges. As Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter succinctly summarizes: “Cities are incubators of change and innovation, and mayors are at the forefront of it all—we get things done” (Mathis, 2014). This optimism in cities includes redistributive policy, an arena that influential scholarship (e.g. Peterson, 1981) claims cities are constrained from pursuing. For example, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio made redistributive initiatives a centerpiece of his campaign. Moreover, at the 2014 U.S. Conference of Mayors meetings, he joined with several other mayors to form the “Cities of Opportunity Task Force” to investigate cities’ options for implementing equity-oriented policies (Taub, 2014).

Such examples notwithstanding, scholarly research offers little systematic evidence about how often city leaders prioritize redistributive policies and what affects their propensity to do so. In fact, leading theories of local policymaking imply or claim that city leaders will not pursue redistributive initiatives and that, contra most elements of American politics, mayors’ partisan affiliations do not meaningfully affect such priorities. Peterson (1981) famously argues that economic forces induce city leaders to pursue growth and focus on their tax bases. Recent empirical work on mayoral partisanship bolsters this perspective by arguing that mayors’ partisan affiliations do not affect cities’ spending patterns in areas other than policing (Gerber and Hopkins, 2011). These results are especially striking given the powerful left-right divide on redistributive policies at the national level, and the importance of partisanship as an explanatory variable more generally.

On the other hand, some recent research suggests that mayors do have leeway to follow electoral concerns and respond to partisan commitments. These studies depict a potent relationship between mass preferences and urban policy outcomes (Hajnal and Trounstein, 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014; Einstein and Kogan, 2015). Their findings, combined with some important limitations in the mayoral partisanship research, mean that questions about partisanship’s affect on local policy are very much open ones.

We address these issues and argue that: (1) redistributive policy is prominent on mayors' agendas, and (2) its prominence varies widely with partisan affiliations. More broadly, we argue for a more fundamental reconceptualization of cities. The evidence we provide suggests that views of cities and mayors as technocratic local service providers and developers constrained by their limited revenue streams are too narrow. National issues and divides are manifesting in city policymaking. While we only present data on redistributive policy, we suggest that it is but one example of cities taking on national issues such as inequality, climate change, and racial justice. To make these arguments we introduce new data collected directly from mayors. In an ambitious set of survey-interviews we asked US mayors a battery of policy and leadership questions. The set of over 70 mayors who participated comprises a wide and representative array of cities, including many of the nation's largest.

Underlying our substantive findings is a two part methodological argument. First, while the outcome metrics featured in most related research are very sophisticated and have important strengths, they also feature limitations. We argue that one way to supplement this work is by collecting information directly from elites within urban political institutions (Fenno, 1978; Perry, 1994). This is partly because none of the available observational data cleanly and directly speak to the issues and partly because much of the pertinent theory is as much about elite policy agendas and priorities as it is about policy outcomes. While our reliance on mayors' self-reported preferences and priorities has its own shortcomings, it provides a complementary way to understand the politics of redistribution. Second, the questions we asked mayors **do not** assess their personal preferences for redistribution or even their idealistic professional views. Instead, our questions are structured to assess mayors' *constrained* preferences in their professional roles. We did not ask them if they believe inequality is a problem in America. Nor did we ask about federal redistributive policies. Doing so and finding that Democrats gave more liberal answers would not be terribly interesting. Our questions require mayors to make explicit and pertinent tradeoffs and/or incur opportunity costs to take pro-redistribution positions. We believe we capture the true quantity of interest

in the redistribution literature: what urban elites prefer in light of economic, political, and social strictures.

1 Theoretical Expectations

Competing lines of scholarship suggest that mayors either respond primarily to economic or political imperatives. Peterson's (1981) influential research argues that competition from neighboring cities, along with state and federal regulatory power, makes city leaders unlikely to pursue redistributive policies. In a modified version of this economic primacy argument, Stone's (1989) regime theory allows for responsiveness to constituent interests, while still emphasizing the predominance of businesses and wealthy residents. All of this research leads us to **H1 Tax-base Constraints:** *Regardless of their partisan orientation, mayors will prefer economic development over redistributive policies.*

This perspective does not allow much room for elite and constituent preferences to act as driving forces of mayoral views towards redistribution. Despite these prominent urban politics works, there are nevertheless reasons to at least consider the possibility that local redistribution does vary with ideology, partisanship, and local preferences. At the national level, the influence of partisanship on voting behavior (Campbell et al., 1980; Green, Palmquist and Schickler, 2004, e.g.) and elite preferences and policy choices (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, 2005; Abramowitz, 2010) is well known. Its impact on local politics, however, is hotly contested. Studies of mayoral partisanship have argued that all else equal, electing a Democrat or a Republican mayor will have little effect on policy outcomes (Ferreira and Gyourko, 2009; Gerber and Hopkins, 2011).¹ These studies attribute the disconnect between mayoral partisanship and city spending to the constraints facing mayors. Despite their use of a sophisticated regression discontinuity design, there is reason to doubt that these studies actually demonstrate that mayoral partisanship has no effect. For example, ostensible

¹Though, using a regression-discontinuity design, Per (2003) finds that partisanship does matter for city councils in the Swedish context.

null findings may, in fact, stem from large standard errors as a consequence of inherently coarse spending data. Indeed, some of the key null findings in Gerber and Hopkins (2011)—including housing, roads, and taxes—actually have coefficient estimates that are fairly large in magnitude. In fact, these estimates are as large as the police spending estimate, which is the area Gerber and Hopkins (2011) find mayoral partisanship to have a significant effect.

We therefore believe that the question of partisanship’s effect on mayoral preferences is very much an open one. This view is furthered by recent findings suggesting that mass partisanship and ideology have an impact on local spending patterns—a relationship that exists, at least in part, because of public opinion’s impact on elite behavior (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014; Einstein and Kogan, 2015). Thus, we derive our second prediction, **H2 Partisanship**: *Democratic mayors will be more inclined to prioritize redistributive policies than their Republican counterparts.*

The extant research on mass preferences and urban policy outcomes uses either presidential vote returns (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2010; Einstein and Kogan, 2015) or ideological preferences scaled on the national liberal-conservative dimension (Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014) to assess the connection between public opinion and urban policy outcomes. One implication we might draw from the independent variables used in these studies is that we should anticipate a sharper partisan divide in mayors’ attitudes on policies that are more clearly connected to national policy debates. For example, opinions on progressive taxes might be split by partisanship, while mayors’ views on gentrification—a more localized issue—might be less linked with partisan views. This suggests **H3 National Politics**: *Partisanship will better explain variations in mayors’ views when local policies overlap with national issues than on issues without an obvious link to national policy.*

We are certainly not the first to claim that political parties matter in city politics. Indeed, robust literatures explore the important role that local parties play in explaining priorities and policy outcomes. In particular, many of these scholars investigate urban reform and its implications for local party politics (Hawley, 1973; Welch and Bledsoe, 1988; Trounstine,

2008). Our focus differs in important ways by investigating the links between *national* partisan positions, divisions, and affiliations and local elites' *local* policy preferences and agendas.

There are, of course, a myriad of other considerations that might shape mayors' propensity for redistribution. When possible, we attempt to consider and/or control for them. For example, it may be that mayors of wealthier cities perceive themselves to be more insulated from competition from surrounding jurisdictions and/or have to worry less about their tax-bases. Therefore, they may be more likely to engage in redistribution (e.g. Peterson, 1981; Goetz, 1994; Hajnal and Trounstine, 2010). Alternatively, if local policy is a function of local needs (e.g. Lineberry, 1977; Feiock and West, 1993), we might expect the mayors of less wealthy cities to prioritize redistribution. Racial dynamics may similarly impact demand for redistribution. In particular, a more diverse population seemingly dampens public support for welfare spending as individuals are reluctant to endorse spending they expect to benefit other racial groups (Gilens, 1999; Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Hopkins, 2009, though see Hopkins (2011); Rugh and Trounstine (2011)). Finally, a growing body of research suggests that the size of a community shapes its politics in a variety of ways, including electoral behavior, elite powers, and constituent preferences (Judd and Swanstrom, 1994; Oliver and Ha, 2007). Specific to the question of redistribution, large cities' more disadvantaged populations might point their mayors toward more redistribution. Similarly, arguments about inter-jurisdictional competition militate in favor of the mayors of larger cities redistributing relatively more.

2 Data and Methods: Original Survey-Interviews of Mayors

In contrast to previous studies of local redistribution—which have focused on spending outcomes—we gathered our data directly from mayors. We did so by conducting a set of

original hybrid survey-interviews. About half of our observations were collected via in-person or phone interviews in which we walked through the questionnaire directly with a mayor, collecting closed-ended data, open-ended responses, and additional elaborations. Each of these conversations lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. The other observations were collected via an online version of the questionnaire. As we discuss below, the varied methods through which we collected data are indicative of our extensive efforts to connect with a hard to reach elite population. The in-person and phone interviews, and even some of the online responses, often required multiple correspondences with mayoral staff. We offered the mayors maximum flexibility by doing everything from offering an online version to attending one of their major conferences.

The data we use in this paper comprise two different groups that were recruited in slightly different ways: (1) mayors of big cities (population greater than 400,000); and (2) mayors of smaller and mid-sized cities. We aggressively (and personally) targeted the *entire population* of large city mayors (we describe these procedures in greater depth below). Conversely, our recruitment of the smaller and mid-sized cities centered on a generic email. While this mixed sampling strategy would be irregular in the context of a mass opinion survey, collecting preferences from elites such as mayors necessitates a mix of systematic and convenience sampling. While we combine these two samples in this paper, we also provide subgroup analyses to see when the large cities differ from the smaller ones and we estimate regression models that control for city size. Below, we also discuss potential biases, and how they do not actually manifest. Lastly, we note that extant research suggests that tidy large-N random sampling is not a plausible alternative for answering difficult questions about elites in large cities. Prior work in urban politics mostly comprises even smaller selected samples and/or case studies of interesting and informative cities. These methods have yielded substantial insights into urban politics and policy but raise their own generalizability questions as well.

We devoted more energy toward recruiting and accommodating big city mayors for both substantive and practical reasons. First, large cities, with hundreds of thousands of residents

are often the subject of prominent urban politics case studies (Sonenshein, 1993; Mollenkopf, 1994; Kaufmann, 2004) and generally have unique policy priorities and powers (Judd and Swanstrom, 1994). The behavior and preferences of their mayors may therefore be of particular interest to urban politics scholars. Second, more informally, these are the types of places many people tend to think about when discussing city government and policy. Third, and perhaps most importantly, these cities are also quite scarce in the broader universe of American cities. For example, large cities are a very small percentage of the membership in the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), a large professional association: a mere 3 percent of USCM members have over 400,000 residents (indeed, only 20 percent have populations over 100,000). Because these cities are scarce and have the busiest and hardest to access mayors, we made special efforts to recruit them to ensure enough observations from this special group. For one, we went to the summer meeting of the USCM to offer an in-person interview option to the mayors (especially the big city mayors) that attended. Mayors of the 50 largest cities by population and 15 other large city mayors who were registered for the conference received an email invitation that included a scanned personally addressed letter from Thomas M. Menino, the former Mayor of Boston, inviting them to schedule an in-person interview with us at the conference or to schedule a phone interview. Moreover, our research team obtained the contact information for all of these mayors' schedulers and/or assistants to ensure that invitations and follow ups were seen by pertinent people in mayors' offices and that they did not get lost at a mayor's generic public access email account.

Our data include 16 of the 46 mayors of cities over 400,000 in the U.S.² They also include a few other mayors of large cities. Overall, more than 1/3 of the large cities that received the full fledged recruitment participated, yielding a sizable and representative (see below) sample of hard to reach big city leaders. The fact that we “only” got 16 of the very large U.S. cities

²Cut-points are by their very nature arbitrary. We selected 400,000 because it fell as a natural dividing point in our sample. While all of the cities above it were recognizable principal cities (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget) in their metropolitan areas, many of the communities below 400,000 were either suburbs or principal cities in a micropolitan area. Our regression analyses (which employs city population as a continuous variable) ensure that any city size results we do find are not a consequence of cut-point effects.

to participate despite going to their conference, offering alternative participation methods, and working directly with a well-regarded and long-serving former mayor also demonstrates how difficult sampling this population is. We think it is strong vindication for our strategy of making extra efforts to access this group. Highlighting the difficulty in surveying big city mayors, *Politico Magazine*, presumably a publication with good access to political leaders, recently published a survey of mayors that included 21 *total* respondents (Rodriguez, 2015). Moreover, only five of their 21 respondents fell into our “large” city category of greater than 400,000, with most of their participating mayors hailing from cities closer to 150,000 than 400,000 people.³

Of course, America’s largest cities contribute only a fraction of the country’s important urban policy making. Therefore, as part of the broader project, we reached out to a much wider array of cities using a less intensive approach. We sent an e-mail invitation to *all* mayors in the 2014 USCM database. This list includes all of the large cities, hundreds of small cities and everything in between. We opted to recruit broadly and used membership in the association as our survey frame. In essence we included *all cities* that see themselves a policymaking cities (regardless of governing structure) as indicated by their membership in the association.⁴ All of the mayors/cities that belong to the association received a more generic email invitation (to their official but not necessarily direct or personal accounts) and a similarly generic follow up. We offered them the same wide range of options for participating, and most of the smaller city mayors participated online or over the phone.⁵

In sum, the data we analyze below come from two closely related samples: (1) an intensively recruited group of all of the large cities in which we had approximately a 33% response rate and (2) a much more passively recruited group of “all cities” in which the response rate

³Also different from our more academic survey, Politico published the names of the participants which allows us to evaluate the size of the cities in their pool.

⁴There are 46 cities with populations over 400,000 in the USCM database (and in the U.S.), 482 with populations between 50,000-400,000, and 1427 total.

⁵We also spoke with a few of these mayors (particularly some of the larger smaller cities) at the conference. As we indicated above, the group that received the more intensive recruiting included the mayors of some larger (but sub 400,000 person) cities that attended the conference.

was significantly lower (5%). It is natural to wonder about the representativeness of our respondents and the potential biases our approach may have induced. We turn to this question in detail in the next paragraphs, but before doing so, we briefly highlight some of its merits (and limitations) by juxtaposing our efforts to an ostensibly similar and ambitious study of local government officials. Butler et al. (2014) collected data from mayors and councilors in the “American Municipal Official Survey.” They gather their data using an online survey and report approximately 4,000 responses. This number is obviously impressive and we know that their data collection and analysis will yield a number of important findings and papers. Their large-N approach also illustrates the tradeoffs inherent in studying elites in local politics. Their median respondent is from a community of only 10,000 people, which means that they are often studying small town local government rather than cities. Moreover, their survey is online only which means it is likely that at least some of their responses come from staffers. Finally, their focus appears to be applying tools and theories familiar in national politics to local politics. Their questions ask about national ideological debates so that they can scale city officials in ideological space, as others have done with federal and state legislators and judges, for example. This scaling effort will mark a major contribution in the study of local politics, but importantly, it is fundamentally different than our approach. As we elaborate below, we ask questions about policy priorities and questions that force mayors to make realistic budget and/or constituency tradeoffs. What’s more, while we have some responses from somewhat smaller cities, we are not studying small towns; we are studying everything from small cities to America’s very largest urban centers, and doing so by, in most cases, talking directly to these cities’ mayors.

Another reasonable comparison might juxtapose our sample with the many excellent urban politics case studies. Based on the representativeness of our sample, outlined below, we believe that it is more reasonable to generalize from our medium-N sample than from case studies of the largest cities only. These case studies, of course, offer a number of different valuable insights about the policymaking process—they do not, however, typically provide

the generalizability that we can offer in our survey-interviews.

To demonstrate generalizability, we now include an extensive discussion of representativeness and response bias. Because we are studying elites in their professional capacity and asking them questions about their in-office preferences, we believe the most important place to check for representativeness is in the traits of the *cities* the mayors lead, just as one would check the demographics of congressional districts to evaluate the representativeness of a sample of legislators that focused on their priorities and voting. The participating mayors hail from 30 different states and all regions of the country.⁶ Table 1 uses 2012 demographic data from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey⁷ to illustrate how our sample demographics align with those of all of the nation's cities. We split the demographic comparison, and some of our analysis below, into "big cities" and "small cities" using 400,000 as our cut-point. These demographic comparisons demonstrate that despite some minor population count skews, the cities that responded generally look like American cities as a whole. While our cities are slightly whiter and less Hispanic than cities as a whole, these differences are minor. Most importantly given our focus on redistributive policy, our sample's economic characteristics almost perfectly match those in the full set of cities. Thus, we can discount some of the most obvious and problematic potential skews. Our mayors *do not* represent constituencies with abnormal needs for redistributive policies.

A second obvious area of concern would be partisanship. We used a couple of different metrics to ensure that our sample did not have a partisan skew—a particularly important check given our focus on partisanship and the fact that a former Democratic mayor participated in recruitment. First, we compared the proportion of our sample that was Democratic to the overall national share using data from Gerber and Hopkins (2011). The two-party partisan split in our data is 65% Democrat. This is virtually identical to the figure included in the appendix in Gerber and Hopkins (2011) (67%). Second, we measured the mass parti-

⁶Only 56 of 72 mayors completed the entire survey. While this level of retention is actually good, it does mean that for some of our measures of redistribution, we have fewer observations to work with. All of the analyses presented below include the numbers of observation.

⁷All demographic data below are 2012 ACS 5-year estimates.

sanship in our sample relative to cities across the country using 2008 Democratic presidential vote share from Einstein and Kogan (2015).⁸ The average partisan composition of our sample is virtually identical to that of cities as a whole (the comparison is displayed in Table 1). To ensure that these average comparisons did not mask a bias towards political extremism, we also compared the distribution of the Democratic vote share in our sample relative to cities nationally. Again, we found remarkably similarity: the percentage Democrat at the 25th and 75th percentiles of our data never differed by more than three percentage points from their counterparts in the national data. Our mayors thus lead cities that are politically representative of country as whole. They are *not*, for example, from a mix of ideologically extreme places that cancel each other out in aggregate statistics.

As we noted above, the most important areas to test for representativeness are those that comprise city, constituent, and/or partisan traits that could directly speak to needs or preferences for redistribution. Nevertheless, it is also possible that we obtained a skewed sample of mayors that is masked by a representative sample of cities. Therefore, we also used biographies on city websites supplemented with Google searches to collect data about the mayors themselves. We collected these data for all cities in the U.S. with over 400,000 people and for a random sample of 50 smaller cities. We focused on factors (in addition to partisanship) that relate to a) the propensity to participate given our recruitment tactics and b) the propensity to endorse redistributive policies. Recruiting participants at the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting using a letter from former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino could induce two types of bias. One possibility is that we ended up with an unusual sample of mayors who are close with Mayor Menino. For example, our sample might comprise older mayors with whom Mayor Menino worked for years. This was not the case. The ages of participants closely mirror the broader populations. In fact, if anything, the large city mayors were slightly younger as a group. We also did not obtain a sample dominated by mayors from

⁸We opt for mass partisanship data rather than ideological scaling data (Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014) to maximize the available number of observations; the data in (Einstein and Kogan, 2015) contain almost eight times the number of cities.

Table 1: Comparison of average traits of cities in our sample to all cities.

Variable	Under 400,000 People		Over 400,000 People	
	In Sample	All Cities	In Sample	All Cities
Population				
Population	94,200	74,300	777,200	1,015,300
Population Density	3,200	3,800	4,800	5,300
Race				
% White	63%	58%	49%	43%
% Black	13%	12%	21%	22%
% Hispanic	14%	20%	18%	25%
Socioeconomic				
Median Household Income	\$57,600	\$58,400	\$49,200	\$48,800
% Poverty	16%	15%	19%	20%
% Unemployed	6%	6%	7%	7%
% Owner Occupied	53%	56%	46%	45%
Political				
% 2008 Obama Vote	60%	59%	65%	65%
Number of Responses	57		16	

Notes: 1)Some numbers are rounded. 2)Not all mayors answered all questions. We included all mayors that completed the open-ended priorities and challenges section of the survey in these demographics. All data are from the 2012 American Community Survey and the Office of Management and Budget (we use the OMB's 2013 list of principal cities for classification). Cities under 30,000 people are excluded. (Our smallest is approximately 28,000 people).

the northeast; instead our participating mayors were geographically representative of the country as a whole. Finally, as we elaborated above, we also did not get an unusual partisan skew which one might expect if we obtained a sample dominated by Mayor Menino's former Democratic allies. A second possibility is that using the conference would result in a sample of extraordinarily well-networked and/or ambitious mayors. This concern would most apply to the smaller cities since smaller city mayors who attend the national conference may be especially different from those who do not. Because attendance at the 2014 conference was endogenous by default, we use attendance at the 2015 summer conference as an indicator of networkedness. We find no differences within the critical smaller cities group (37% vs. 34%, χ^2 $p = .76$). A higher fraction of the big city mayors we spoke with attended the 2015 conference, but this difference is also not statistically significant ($p=.23$). Indeed, because of the small number of observations, if only two large city participants switched behaviors the ostensible difference would disappear. One final possibility, given our focus on redistribution vs. development tradeoffs, is that mayors with business backgrounds could have different views. Thus, we coded whether a mayor included a job like "businessman" in his/her biography. Both larger and smaller city mayors in our sample were slightly more likely (but not significantly so $p=.29$ and $p=.22$) to have business backgrounds than the corresponding comparison groups. While not a statistically significant result, we are attentive to the possibility that this slight skew towards business backgrounds might bias our results in favor of H1, with mayors from the business community more inclined towards development in lieu of redistributive policy. Last, but perhaps most importantly, we reemphasize the fact that the survey was pitched as a general survey about city leadership. It was *not* publicized as a survey about inequality or redistribution or even economic policy. Thus, it is very unlikely mayors' participation choices were driven by their views on the issues we report on in this paper.

2.1 Measuring Constrained Redistributive Preferences

Eliciting meaningful responses is critical to addressing the questions we seek to answer. We thus paid close attention to question wording and design. Rather than attempt to devise one perfect way to capture redistribution preferences, we adopt a triangulation strategy in which we rely on different styles of questions and analysis. Most critically, we tried to design questions to capture mayors' *professional constrained preferences*. As we noted earlier, simply asking if mayors believe inequality is a problem or asking them about federal programs would not be very informative. Instead, we aim for the constrained preferences at the heart of the arguments that cities do not redistribute and that mayoral partisanship is inconsequential.

Perhaps the most direct way we measure mayors' preferences is by asking them two open-ended questions about their agendas. In one we simply ask: "What are your current top two policy priorities?" The second related question taps into willingness to expend political capital on contentious policy initiatives: "In the next year, on what two issues do you plan to expend the most political capital?" We coded the answers, however expansive, into a manageable set of categories, e.g. "education," "economic development." In this article, we are primarily interested in responses that fell into our "Socioeconomic Issues" category, which includes priorities related to poverty, inequality, and affordable housing.

One important strength of these questions is that they do not force respondents to name or discuss redistribution. They assess whether inequality and redistribution are top-of-the-head considerations for mayors in comparison to other priorities. We argue that they capture constrained preferences in two related ways. For one, there is a big opportunity cost to naming an equity related policy as one of the top two. Namely, every time a mayor does so, he/she has decided to omit something else like education, infrastructure, crime, or economic development. Naming an equity policy instead is a strong signal that redistribution is truly important to a mayor's agenda. Moreover, these other policy areas also help alleviate concerns about social desirability bias as it is not obvious that addressing inequality is any more

the “correct” answer for a mayor than any of these other core urban policy issues. Second, these lists of top two priorities/capital expenditures already have various institutional constraints baked into them. While some mayors may place controversial items on their lists, it is less likely that they will include items that they are not serious about or that they have no chance of advancing.

Finally, an additional strength of these questions relates to one of the limitations in prior studies that use spending data. Spending data (primarily collected using the Census of Governments) are necessarily provided in coarse categories. They therefore require scholars to make tough choices about what exactly constitutes redistributive spending. For example, Hajnal and Trounstein (2010)—in keeping with much of the field—categorize public welfare, public health, housing and community development, and education as redistributive programs. Einstein and Kogan (2015) similarly use the fact that 87% of cities in their sample exhibit zero welfare expenditures as support for Peterson’s (1981) arguments concerning economic constraints. These choices make the best of the available data; but they necessarily miss swaths of redistributive spending happening in other policy arenas, like transit and development, and they do not capture the variation that occurs within these broad spending categories. Our survey of mayors thus offers a complementary approach by offering us access to the micro-policies cited by mayors. We then are able to categorize programs across policy arenas as redistributive or not, permitting us to include initiatives like redistribution-oriented transit programs explicitly focused on bringing transit to lower-income neighborhoods that previous studies have missed.

To supplement these open-ended questions, we also analyze responses to two questions about policy tradeoffs that are likely relevant to many mayors. These questions explicitly capture constrained attitudes towards inequality. In each (full wording below where we report the results), we pose a tradeoff and ask mayors how strongly they agree or disagree. One pits fighting inequality against the possibility that doing so will adversely affect the tax base. The other juxtaposes rising property values against the displacement of some

lower-income current residents. The first of these tradeoffs focuses on income inequality, a prominent and partisan national issue. The second, concerns gentrification and taps a more local set of redistributive concerns. Combined, they help us evaluate H3 (National Politics).

Finally, we asked mayors how often they utilize advocacy and business groups (among others) as sources of policy information. Like the tradeoff questions, these survey items attempt to address general attitudes towards redistribution, inequality, and development across an array of policies. We also assessed the extent to which mayors viewed their relationship with business groups (among others) as cooperative (see Appendix for exact wording). While directly measuring political power is challenging if not impossible (e.g. Bachrach and Baratz, 1962), these questions allow us to at least roughly gauge which groups have access to city government.

2.2 Measuring Independent Variables

To measure our key independent variable—mayoral partisanship—we asked mayors on the survey for their partisan identification, regardless of whether they run with party labels. For those who did not provide this information, we searched online for any records of party labels or connections to party politics. Below, we report the results of some statistical models. These models include, as a control, 2008 city presidential vote share from Einstein and Kogan (2015), the largest available data set on vote share at the municipal level. Unfortunately, such models cannot neatly parse mass partisan effects from a mayor’s personal affiliation. As we noted earlier, mass partisanship likely contributes significantly to mayoral partisanship and is thus subject to post-treatment bias. These issues would be more problematic if our central goal was to *separately* identify the effects of mass and mayoral partisanship on mayoral preferences. Instead, we are simply making an argument that mayors’ professional views about redistributive initiatives are filtered through a national partisan lens. Whether that partisanship stems from mass or elite divisions is beyond the scope of our analysis. It is fruitful ground for future research. In addition to these key partisan variables, we

also use a variety of data from the 2012 American Community Survey’s 5-year estimates as demographic controls. These variables include median property values, the proportion of a city that is non-white, and population count. We include these variables because, as we discussed above, there are theoretical reasons to expect them to have independent effects on redistribution.

3 Results

We begin with perhaps our toughest test by exploring whether mayors cite inequality and/or redistributive concerns as one of their top two open-ended) policy priorities or political capital expenditures. We use the label “socioeconomic equality” to refer to redistributive policies. This category encompasses all policies related to inequality, race and housing.

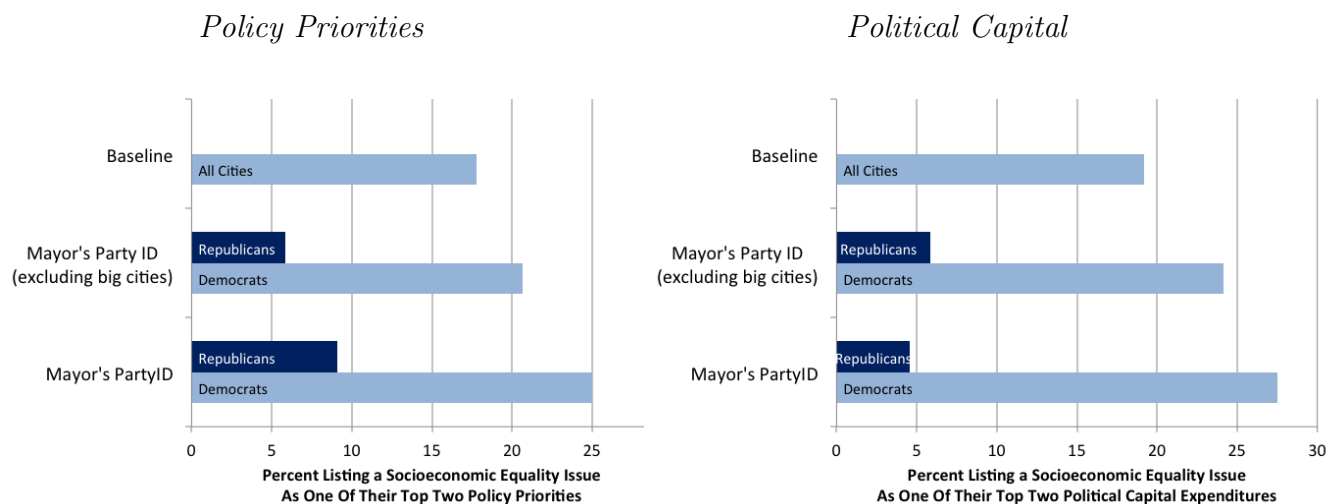
The policies that fell into this category are varied. For example, one mayor described his top priority as an overall focus on “equity.” He worried about not just economic inequality but also incarceration, racial inequality, and “inequality in access to government [and] trust in government.” He contended that “inequality is....about the people being estranged from government.” He linked these concerns with concrete policy priorities such as affordable housing, childcare, job training, and access to transit for lower income residents. Another mayor said that one of his top two priorities was “addressing chronic homelessness by moving people to permanent housing.” A third’s comments both highlight the efforts that mayors are making towards redistributive policy and even their willingness to work against the economic constraints. He said one of his top priorities was a “collective impact model to address health, education, and financial security” and that one of his two biggest political capital expenditures would go toward generating “business community support for his poverty initiatives.” Other examples of redistributive efforts include one mayor’s initiative to study and address black male achievement and others’ focus on “living wage jobs.”

With these quotations and paraphrases providing some detail about the mayors’ views

and additional insight into our open-ended questions, we now turn towards testing the hypotheses more rigorously. The first—that cities will not pursue redistribution because of economic constraints—is only technically falsifiable if we trivialize it by taking it literally. We avoid doing this by using the answers to the open-ended questions to explore the relative frequency of redistributive priorities. Figure 1 displays the extent to which mayors’ top two policy priorities and political capital expenditures fall into the socioeconomic equality category and tabulates these results by their partisanship. The “baseline” (all mayors) in Figure 1 reveals that 18 percent of all mayors offer socioeconomic inequality as one of their top two policy priorities and 19 percent did the same for political capital. Comparisons to other policy areas we may expect mayors to mention help provide context. 33 percent cite economic development as a priority and 21 percent mention infrastructure. Similarly, 26 percent list economic development as a political capital expenditure and 24 percent cite infrastructure. Equity-oriented policies are thus slightly—but not dramatically—less likely to appear as a top-of-the-head consideration. In contrast with the economic imperatives perspective (*H1*), almost one fifth of mayors listed an inequality issue—amid the many policies they could have selected—as one of their top two.

Figure 1 also allows us to begin to explore *which* mayors pursue redistributive initiatives. As the crosstabulations show, the open-ended responses provide strong initial support for *H2*. Partisanship appears to have a potent impact on mayoral preferences. Democratic mayors are much more likely to list socioeconomic inequality as one of their top two policy issues. χ^2 tests show that the partisan difference on policy priorities is nearly significant at the .1 level, and that the difference on political capital is significant at the .05 level. Moreover, these results hold even when big cities are excluded (results displayed in Figure 1), indicating that partisanship affects these priorities irrespective of size (and the other unique traits common to big cities). Finally, comparisons to other bivariate differences both highlight partisan differences and further suggest that partisanship, and not other variables that may correlate with mayoral partisanship, matters. Cities in the top 1/3 of the national distribution of

Figure 1: Mentions of socioeconomic equality as one of top two priorities and political capital expenditures by key variables



median housing values are not significantly different than those in the bottom third. The same is true when comparing those in the top 1/3 to the bottom 1/3 of the percent minority residents distribution. The only other covariate that is significant is city size and it is only significant in the priorities measure.

3.1 Inequality and Gentrification Tradeoffs

As we described above, our second approach to measuring constrained preferences utilizes closed-ended tradeoff questions. The first of these presents mayors with a tradeoff between reducing inequality and harming the interests of businesses and wealthier residents. This tradeoff speaks directly to the heart of economic arguments about cities' tax bases and their pursuit of redistributive policies. Specifically, we asked mayors how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

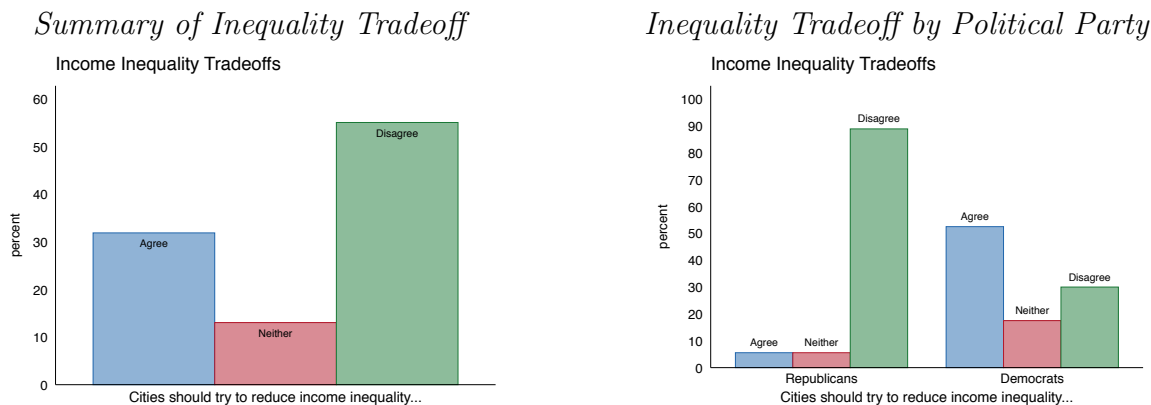
“Cities should try to reduce income inequality, even if doing so comes at the expense of businesses and/or wealthy residents.”

As with the responses to the open-ended questions, mayoral attitudes surround this first tradeoff question largely contradict *H1*. A significant number of mayors do, in fact, prioritize redistribution even when weighed against economic development and tax base considerations. The first panel of Figure 2 displays the proportion of all mayors who agreed and disagreed with the proposed inequality tradeoff. Just under one-third of mayors agreed—a sizable number in light of the economic imperatives arguments. While we certainly do not want to understate the predictive power of the economic imperatives literature—70 percent of mayors opposed the tradeoff—the fact that *any* mayors, let alone one third, are willing to sacrifice important components of their cities’ tax bases to ameliorate income inequality is striking. Moreover, the variation in responses helps to validate our claim that the question taps into real tradeoffs in a meaningful way. Mayors did not all cluster on what some might consider the politically correct answer. Indeed, a couple of comments from mayors who were conflicted by this tradeoff illustrate a) the importance of economic imperatives, b) the fact that even mayors who are skeptical of addressing inequality at the local level do not just set it aside, and c) that this tradeoff is a real challenge for them. One mayor of a mid-sized city said of addressing income inequality locally: “It is hard. Our city is not that big. It is really important but city has limited capacity.” Another who took a position against making the tradeoff nevertheless observed: “I do not think cities should try to get inside peoples pocketbook....but we need a more progressive tax structure for city services such as water rates.”

The second panel of Figure 2 separates these responses by the mayors’ partisanship. Once again, our analysis uncovers strong support for *H2*. While the overwhelming majority of Republican mayors do not believe that cities should reduce income inequality at the expense of wealthier portions of the community, roughly half of Democrats agree—a 40

Figure 2: Inequality Tradeoff

“Cities should try to reduce income inequality, even if doing so comes at the expense of businesses and/or wealthy residents.”



“Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” collapsed into “Agree” and “Disagree.” Partisanship based on self reported Party ID (irrespective of whether elections include labels) supplemented by Google searches where self reported not available on the survey.

percentage point partisan gap.⁹ Although the overarching takeaway from these results is that partisanship does seem to influence mayoral views on the inequality tradeoff, it is worth noting that roughly half of the Democrats did *not* agree. Economic constraints thus appear to affect mayors’ (including Democrats’) opinions on local redistribution.

In addition to these cross tabulations, we also estimated Ordinary Least Squares regressions (treating the underlying five point scale as continuous) for both the inequality and gentrification (described below) tradeoff questions.¹⁰ While regressions can take us beyond the cross tabulations, the small number of observations and associations between the key independent variables mean that interpreting the models also demands caution. Our key independent variable—mayoral partisanship—along with its tightly coupled partner, mass partisanship, appear in the models, along with a set of important demographic controls: city population (logged), median house price (logged), and diversity (percent non-white). Table 2 displays OLS coefficients and standard errors for the inequality tradeoff model in the first column. We return to the gentrification findings after presenting graphical cross tabulations.

⁹We note that some Republicans may, in good faith, reject the premise of the question—that there is a plausible tradeoff between reducing inequality and what is good for wealthy residents and businesses.

¹⁰The supporting information includes probit models and parsimonious models which support the OLS specification we report here.

Table 2: OLS models of agreement with the policy tradeoff statements. Higher values indicate more agreement. This means positive values indicate agreement with the pro-redistributive position on the Inequality Tradeoff and negative values do so on the Property Values Tradeoff.

VARIABLES	(1) Fight Income Inequality	(2) Rising Property Values
Democrat (Mayor)	1.20*** (0.39)	-0.05 (0.38)
% Dem Vote Share	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
City Population (Log)	-0.17 (0.14)	0.17 (0.14)
Median Price (Log)	0.07 (0.26)	-0.49* (0.26)
% Minority	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Constant	2.15 (3.56)	7.40** (3.62)
Observations	50	51
R^2	0.40	0.17

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The regression results support the cross tabulations. A mayor’s party affiliation is strongly associated with her agreement with the inequality tradeoff statement even when controlling for her constituents’ partisanship. As a reminder, because of concerns about post-treatment bias and mayoral partisanship acting as a mediator, we cannot conclude from these results that mayoral partisanship alone—and not mass partisanship—is the primary driver of attitudes towards the inequality tradeoff. Nevertheless, we do note that, while we do not have enough data to focus on a very narrow window like in a regression discontinuity design, the variation by a mayor’s partisanship holds when eliminating cities

that are less than 33% or greater than 67% Democratic.¹¹ In this window, 7% of Republican mayors agree and 85% disagree. Democrats are evenly split: 42% agree, 42% disagree. Without decomposing the mass versus mayoral partisan effects, we can take the regression results—alongside the cross tabulations—as strong support for H2. Partisanship is strongly associated with mayoral attitudes towards redistribution and income inequality.

We now turn to the second policy tradeoff which, as we indicated above, concerns gentrification. This issue also speaks to economic inequality and the tax base, but in different ways than the other tradeoff. It does not map onto national partisan divides as neatly as more general questions of redistribution and inequality. It is more of a local issue. The exact wording of this second tradeoff statement is:

“It is good for a neighborhood when it experiences rising property values, even if it means that some current residents might have to move out.”¹²

The cross tabulations from this question reveal that—consistent with H3—national partisan alignments are not associated with preferences on the redistributive issue that is primarily local and not part of national politics. In general, mayors are more evenly divided. Approximately 40 percent agree with the gentrification tradeoff, 30 percent disagree, and 30 percent neither agree nor disagree (second panel of Figure 3).

These results suggest that there are significant differences in how mayors think about the tradeoffs inherent in addressing income inequality and gentrification. These differences are actually largely consistent with the economics imperatives literature. The inequality tradeoff

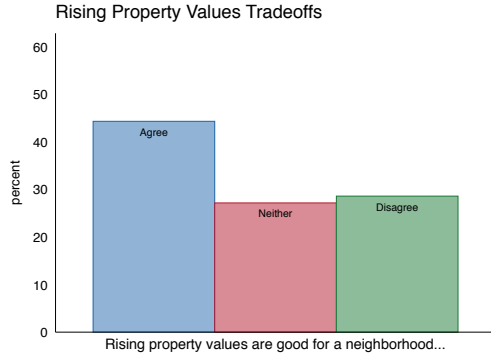
¹¹Eliminating cities that are more dominated by one party removes more than half of observations, particularly because many cities are overwhelmingly Democratic.

¹²This tradeoff roughly tries to capture key facets of Smith’s (1998) seminal definition of gentrification, which centers on neighborhood renewal—in particular the in-migration of an affluent population and reinvestment in the local infrastructure. While the issue of whether displacement is in fact a necessary component of gentrification is debated (Atkinson, 2004; Pattillo, 2008), we include it here, again, to force mayors to make a tradeoff that displays a true *prioritization* of redistributive initiatives.

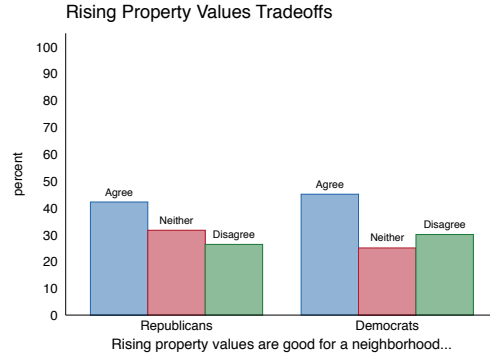
Figure 3: Gentrification Tradeoff

‘It is good for a neighborhood when it experiences rising property values, even if it means that some current residents might have to move out.’

Summary of Gentrification Tradeoff



Gentrification Tradeoff by Political Party



“Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” collapsed into “Agree” and “Disagree.” Partisanship based on self reported Party ID (irrespective of whether elections include labels) supplemented by Google searches where self reported not available on the survey.

deals much more explicitly with redistribution than the gentrification tradeoff, which both alludes to tax base losses while also addressing low-income resident displacement.

3.2 Relationships with Advocacy and Business Groups

The final way we test attitudes towards redistribution is to explore mayors’ relationships with interest groups likely to move policy in a redistributive (or non-redistributive) direction: advocacy and business groups. These analyses also offer insight into which groups have access to the central apparatus of urban governance. We use two approaches to assess these issues. In the first, we measure the relative amount mayors use business and advocacy groups as sources of policy information. In the second, we report the extent to which mayors rate their relationships with business as cooperative. This cooperation question only focuses on business because the question did not include advocacy groups as one of the entities to be rated.

The results suggest that mayors generally use business groups more than advocacy groups as a source of policy information, but only by modest amounts. Only 10 percent of mayors rated advocacy groups more highly as a source of policy information. On a five-point scale, business was rated an average .4 points higher.

Amid these general trends, we find some important variation. In particular, all six of the cities that rated advocacy groups higher than business were governed by Democratic mayors. An OLS regression (Column 1 of Table 3) featuring the difference between business and advocacy group ratings (as information sources) as its dependent variable confirms that partisanship correlates with relative reliance on business and advocacy groups. In the regression model, however, *mass* rather than mayoral partisanship appears to explain variations in mayors' predilection for turning to advocacy groups, relative to business groups. Though no longer statistically significant, mass partisanship appears to operate similarly in a model where business as a source of policy information is the dependent variable (now on its own in Column 3 of Table 3 rather than relative to advocacy groups).

Column 2 of Table 3 confirms the strength of partisanship as a predictor of a mayor's relationship with the business community. This model—like much of this article—suggests a more prominent role for mayoral partisanship, either as a mediator for mass partisanship or a separate measure of elite ideology. The model analyzes the relationship between our key independent variables and a mayor's assessment of cooperation with the business community. The statistically significant coefficient on mayoral partisanship reveals that Democratic mayors give lower ratings on average to business groups as cooperative partners.

4 Mayors and Redistribution

Taken in concert, our results suggest several general conclusions. First, while the economic imperatives scholarship (*H1*) is certainly supported in the sense that many cities prioritize business interests and economic growth, the data also show that this theoretical orientation misses the fact that a substantial minority of mayors actively engage in redistribution. Evidence for this fact manifests in answers to open-ended questions, in considerations of difficult tradeoffs that require fiscal sacrifices, and in some mayors' close relationships with groups that endorse redistribution.

Table 3: OLS models estimating mayoral ratings of business as a source of policy information and cooperation. DV in model 1 is the difference in ratings between business groups and advocacy groups as a source of policy information. DV in model 2 is ratings of cooperative relationships with business groups. DV in model 3 is ratings of business groups as a source of information.

VARIABLES	(1) Business – Advocacy (Info)	(2) Business (Relationship)	(3) Business (Info)
Democrat (Mayor)	-0.04 (0.37)	-0.99* (0.60)	0.05 (0.33)
% Dem Vote Share	-0.02* (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
City Population (Log)	-0.03 (0.14)	-0.15 (0.23)	0.15 (0.12)
Median Price (Log)	0.08 (0.25)	0.13 (0.43)	0.05 (0.23)
% Minority	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Constant	0.92 (3.61)	9.96 (6.01)	2.13 (3.28)
Observations	48	45	48
R^2	0.12	0.11	0.09

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Partisanship based on self reported Party ID (irrespective of whether elections include labels) supplemented by Google searches where self reported not available on the survey. Median housing price, population, and % minority based on 2012 ACS 5-year Estimates.

Second, we discover that, in support of $H2$ (Partisanship), a disproportionate share of the mayors who prioritize equity are Democrats. These results suggest that important components of local politics fall on the left-right continuum as they do in national politics. While generally powerful as a predictor, partisanship does not govern preferences on all policies. Indeed, answers to the gentrification tradeoff question did not fall along partisan lines. As we noted above, some local policies do not induce common liberal-conservative

ideological divisions, consistent with *H3* (National Politics)

Despite our best efforts to elicit real and constrained priorities, we acknowledge that stated preferences in a survey may not reflect a mayor's true commitments or her ability to actually promulgate policies. Nevertheless, we argue that mayoral preferences are, at a minimum, important as a consequence of their agenda-setting power. While mayors certainly face an array of constraints when trying to implement redistributive policies (Peterson, 1981; Elkin, 1987; Stone, 1989; Logan and Molotch, 2007), as chief executives they are nevertheless uniquely positioned to put these issues on the agenda and shepherd programs through. Moreover, because our questions tap into constrained preferences, we believe they capture ideas and priorities that are much closer to becoming policy than they capture unrealistic dreams or socially desirable position taking.

While providing a full set of agendas is beyond the scope of this article, here, we offer some suggestive evidence that mayors who say they favor redistributive and equality-oriented initiatives actually pursue them. For all 23 mayors who said that they agreed with the inequality tradeoff, we collected information (via Google searches) on whether they publicly endorsed initiatives related to addressing "inequality" or "poverty" between the time we conducted our survey (June and July 2014) and mid-October 2014. Our goal here was simply to see if those who indicate a preference for local redistribution when posed as a tradeoff are doing something about it. With these straightforward searches we found that 68 percent of these mayors were publicly linked to redistributive initiatives. Many publicly proposed redistributive *municipal* legislation. This is a potent result, given the brief window of time between when we conducted our survey and collected evidence on public statements and actions. The fact that, over the course of four months, two-thirds of those who highlighted socioeconomic priorities made concrete efforts to place redistribution on their cities' agendas suggests that mayors' preferences represent an important quantity of interest with concrete implications for urban policy and governance.

Finally, some additional comments that emerged in our conversations support the idea

that mayors who highlighted redistributive priorities have already been taking such actions and are therefore not just adopting costless positions on a questionnaire. For example, when asked to cite his chief accomplishments, one large city Democratic mayor who strongly prioritized addressing inequality in his survey responses listed, among other achievements: his negotiation efforts in a local minimum wage initiative and his work towards universal pre-kindergarten. He described his chief policy priority as creating a “city of equity.” The list of concrete policy efforts targeting redistribution mayors in our sample mentioned is long. Among other things, these mayors have applied for and won grants to expand early childhood education offerings, implemented affordable housing requirements, and pushed for living wage ordinances. Taken in concert with our exploration of publicly endorsed initiatives, these results suggest that our survey successfully captured mayors’ constrained preferences and not just mayoral grandstanding.

5 Conclusion

Our analyses represent the first attempt to systematically assess mayors’ constrained preferences and priorities on pressing local issues. The ability to observe city leaders’ views offers unique leverage for exploring the mechanisms undergirding local redistribution. While our data have drawbacks—like any social scientific method—they provide a complementary lens through which to investigate how mayors respond to structural constraints. Indeed, our survey-interviews blend breadth and depth to provide a generalizable, but nuanced portrait of mayoral policy preferences.

Moreover, our findings offer evidence of a broader story about the nationalization of local politics. A significant segment of mayors are actively promoting initiatives in a salient policy arena previously thought to be outside their purview. What’s more, their preferences for initiatives in this sphere are heavily shaped by a partisanship consistent with the national parties’ positions. Local politics therefore may encompass a wider array of policies than

scholars have explored and may prove to be fertile ground for evaluating many hotly contested political science theories concerning national politics.

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Appendix

5.1 Survey Question Wording

Open Ended Questions

- What are your current top two policy priorities?

- In the next year, on what two issues do you plan to expend the most political capital?

Tradeoff Questions

- Cities should try to reduce income inequality, even if doing so comes at the expense of businesses and/or wealthy residents.
- It is good for a neighborhood when it experiences rising property values, even if it means that some current residents might have to move out.

Cooperation and Information Source Questions

- In general, how often do you rely on the following sources of policy information?
- Please rate the quality of your city's relationship with the following entities with 10 being 'cooperative and able to work together on important policies' and 0 being 'uncooperative and unable to work together on important policies.'

5.2 Additional Model Specifications

Table 4: Ordered Probit models of agreement with the policy tradeoff statements. Higher values indicate more agreement. This means positive values indicate agreement with the pro-redistributive position on the Inequality Tradeoff and negative values do so on the Property Values Tradeoff.

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Inequality		
Democrat (Mayor)	-1.16** (0.56)	
% Dem Vote Share	-0.03 (0.02)	
City Population (Log)	0.28 (0.20)	
Median Price (Log)	-0.13 (0.33)	
% Minority	-0.01 (0.01)	
cut1		
Constant	-1.71 (4.63)	3.43 (4.34)
cut2		
Constant	-1.15 (4.62)	4.26 (4.35)
Gentrification		
Democrat (Mayor)		-0.00 (0.48)
% Dem Vote Share		0.01 (0.02)
City Population (Log)		-0.30 (0.18)
Median Price (Log)		0.54* (0.31)
% Minority		-0.01 (0.01)
Observations	35	50
		51

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5: OLS models of agreement with the policy tradeoff statements (Excluding national democratic vote share). Higher values indicate more agreement. This means positive values indicate agreement with the pro-redistributive position on the Inequality Tradeoff and negative values do so on the Property Values Tradeoff.

VARIABLES	(1) Fight Income Inequality	(2) Rising Property Values
Democrat (Mayor)	1.43*** (0.29)	-0.14 (0.27)
City Population (Log)	-0.01 (0.13)	0.15 (0.12)
Median Price (Log)	0.19 (0.25)	-0.54** (0.24)
% Minority	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Constant	-0.90 (3.54)	8.01** (3.40)
Observations	58	59
R^2	0.39	0.15

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Partisanship based on self reported Party ID (irrespective of whether elections include labels) supplemented by Google searches where self reported not available on the survey. Median housing price, population, and % minority based on 2012 ACS 5-year Estimates.

Table 6: Parsimonious models of agreement with the policy tradeoff statements (Mayor's Party ID and Mass Partisanship only). Higher values indicate more agreement. This means positive values indicate agreement with the pro-redistributive position on the Inequality Tradeoff and negative values do so on the Property Values Tradeoff.

VARIABLES	(1) Fight Income Inequality	(2) Rising Property Values
Democrat (Mayor)	1.22*** (0.38)	-0.07 (0.40)
% Dem Vote Shar	0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Constant	1.32** (0.57)	3.34*** (0.62)
Observations	50	51
R^2	0.37	0.00

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Partisanship based on self reported Party ID (irrespective of whether elections include labels) supplemented by Google searches where self reported not available on the survey. Median housing price, population, and % minority based on 2012 ACS 5-year Estimates. Mass partisanship based on 2008 presidential vote share.