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Do Municipal Officials Represent the Views of their Constituents?

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Do Municipal Officials Represent the Views of their Constituents?

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Department of Political Science

Significance:
- Municipalities make decisions that effect millions of Americans every day
- Research has been done to assess the link between citizen’s preferences and municipal policy (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014)
- However, the link between the policies and the officials who make them is missing

Data: American Municipal Officials Survey (AMOS)
- The largest study of elected local officials in the country, more than 3000 observations in even numbered years
- In 2012 AMOS measured officials’ ideology by asking about 28 issues
- I combine the AMOS data with the city preference data (cities with pop. above 50,000) from Warshaw and Tausanovitch (2013)

Correlated Ideologies?
- I compare the preferences of cities to the preferences of officials elected city-wide - these variables are positively correlated
- Republican cities elect Republicans, and Democratic cities elect Democrats. Each have very different policy preferences.

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**Does an Officials’ Ideology Predict Policy Outcomes?**
- Conservative cities have lower taxes (Tausanovitch and Warshaw 2014)
- Does the ideology of the city official predict the policies which the city adopts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxes per Capita</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Policy Preferences (ideology)</td>
<td>-377.90*** (132.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official’s Policy Preferences</td>
<td>28.02 (47.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official is a Republican</td>
<td>34.82 (64.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official is a Democrat</td>
<td>40.23 (64.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Population</td>
<td>80.09 (51.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of the Population that was black in 2000</td>
<td>645.81** (285.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Taxes from Sales Tax</td>
<td>213.30** (104.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City is allowed to collect Sales Tax</td>
<td>31.27 (67.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy preferences of the City</td>
<td>-99.67*** (24.07)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Ideology and Policy**
- The ideology of officials and actual policy are not correlated
- The ideology of the citizens is a much better predictor of city policy
- Knowing the ideological/policy preferences of a city might be more predictive of a mayor’s policy preferences than the mayor’s political party itself