ANNUAL REVIEWS

Annual Review of Political Science

Party and Ideology in American Local Government: An Appraisal

Sarah F. Anzia

Travers Department of Political Science and Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720, USA; email: sanzia@berkeley.edu

ANNUAL REVIEWS CONNECT

www.annualreviews.org

- Download figures
- Navigate cited references
- Keyword search
- Explore related articles
- Share via email or social media

Annu. Rev. Political Sci. 2021. 24:133–50

First published as a Review in Advance on November 30, 2020

The *Annual Review of Political Science* is online at polisci.annualreviews.org

https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102131

Copyright © 2021 by Annual Reviews. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See credit lines of images or other third-party material in this article for license information

OPEN ACCESS

Keywords

local politics, policy, representation, national, political parties, ideology

Abstract

For decades, research on US local politics emphasized the distinctiveness of local government, but that has begun to change. In recent years, new data on partisanship and ideology have transformed the study of local politics. Much of the ensuing scholarship has concluded that local politics resembles politics in state and national governments: partisan and ideological. I argue that such a conclusion is premature. So far, this newer literature has been insufficiently attentive to the policies US local governments make—and to the fact that they are mostly different from the issues that dominate national politics. Going forward, scholars should prioritize measurement of preferences on these local government issues, develop theories of when and why local political divisions will mirror national partisanship and ideology, and investigate why there are links between some local policies and national partisanship and ideology—and whether those links also exist for core local government issues.

INTRODUCTION

The study of US urban and local politics was for a long time viewed as separate from "American politics" research (Peterson 1981, Judd 2005, Trounstine 2009). Mainstream American politics research was mostly about the federal government, national policy, and elections for national offices. Even as more political scientists started taking an interest in the US states (e.g., Erikson et al. 1993), research on the nation's cities, counties, school districts, and special districts continued to be treated as something different—despite the fact that local governments are the primary decision makers on important, nationally salient issues like policing and law enforcement, housing development, and public education.

This historical divide was driven partly by differences in research methods. Much of the traditional urban politics literature is qualitative, based on case studies of particular cities, in contrast to the highly quantitative American politics literature. Until recently, however, even quantitative studies of US cities and school districts were not considered mainstream American politics research (e.g., Moe 2006, Berry & Howell 2007, Oliver & Ha 2007). Just as important to this divide was the substance of the research itself—that it was about local government—and an understanding that local politics is different from national politics.

Mainstream American politics research and local politics research share a deep interest in political representation—questions about whose interests get represented in government and to whom policy makers are responsive in making policy—but they have tended to study representation in different ways, with different emphases. In national and state politics accounts of political representation, partisanship, ideology, and public opinion play leading roles (e.g., Stimson et al. 1995, Bartels 2008, Shor & McCarty 2011, Gilens 2012, Lax & Phillips 2012, Caughey et al. 2017). Research on local politics, by contrast, has emphasized the importance of homeowners, racial and ethnic divisions, local political institutions, and the clout of certain groups like business or public sector unions (e.g., Stone 1989, Fischel 2001, Trounstine & Valdini 2008, Hajnal 2009, Moe 2011, Anzia & Moe 2015). Party and ideology have not featured as prominently, and some local politics scholars assert that partisan and ideological divides are simply less important in the local context than in national politics (e.g., Peterson 1981, Oliver et al. 2012).

In recent years, however, a new body of research on local political representation has started to bridge this historical divide, fueled by new data on public opinion, party, and ideology at the local level (e.g., Ferreira & Gyourko 2009, Tausanovitch & Warshaw 2013, Einstein & Kogan 2016, Schaffner et al. 2020). This work suggests that local politics may not be as distinctive as many scholars thought. It concludes that party and ideology do seem to matter in local government (e.g., Tausanovitch & Warshaw 2014, de Benedictis-Kessner & Warshaw 2016) and that local political attitudes seem to have nationalized (Hopkins 2018). Casual readers of this new research might infer that politics in US local governments today looks a lot like politics in state and national governments: partisan, ideological, and nationalized.

My argument in this article is that such an inference would be premature, and that while party and ideology do matter for some local issues, much of what is most important about local politics is probably not well explained by nationally forged partisan and ideological commitments. The newer literature on local political representation has had the laudable effect of increasing political science attention to US local governments, and its focus on measuring constituencies' policy preferences is one that the traditional local politics literature should learn from and build on. But so far the newer literature has largely achieved all this by applying the dominant paradigm from national politics research to the local context—without sufficient reflection on whether that paradigm is a good fit for the local cases it examines. To make progress, scholars should also turn back to the more traditional local politics literature and directly engage with its arguments of how local politics is different from national and state politics.

There are many such differences, but here I focus on one that is especially important for how we think about partisanship, ideology, and national forces in local politics: that the main functions of US local governments—meaning what they actually do and what issues they make policy on—are mostly different from the issues that dominate national politics. Most modern American politics research does not focus heavily on how the particulars of a given issue or policy shape its politics (Hacker & Pierson 2014), so perhaps it is not surprising that this distinction has so far received little attention. But it can be hugely consequential. If political parties and ideology to some extent represent positions on bundles of issues (e.g., Converse 1964, Carmines & Stimson 1989, Bawn et al. 2012), then evaluating the role of party and ideology in local government naturally requires that we consider how local government issues differ from national issues.

With this as the anchor for my discussion, I highlight three broad features of the newer literature on local political representation and point to promising directions for future research in each area. First, I discuss the new measures of local partisanship, public opinion, and ideology that have propelled this literature forward. While they are often used or interpreted as measures of political preferences in local politics, they should actually be viewed as preferences on mostly national issues at the local level. Second, the recent advances of this literature have so far been mostly empirical and would benefit from greater attention to theory—in particular, theorizing on why citizens' and elites' preferences and positions on local issues would be related to their national-level party affiliations and ideologies. Third, I assess what we have and have not yet learned from quantitative empirical studies demonstrating that partisanship and ideology are linked to local policy outcomes. I argue that before we draw general conclusions about the importance of party, ideology, or nationalization in local politics, we need research on a broader set of local policies, empirical exploration of the mechanisms that underpin any such links, and consideration of omitted variables that are plausibly correlated with both local policy and partisanship and ideology. On this last point, interest groups should be at the top of the list.

Local politics research has come a long way in the last decade, so this is an opportune moment for reflection—and some course correction. The recent increase in political scientists' attention to local politics is a good thing. Local governments are an important component of American government, and the study of their politics should be considered an important part of the study of American politics. But that does not mean we should assume that local politics is the same as national politics, or simply adopt the dominant national politics paradigm for studying it. Instead, we should critically evaluate whether and when our models from national politics are a good fit for local cases, and we should be open to locally oriented theories and explanations when called for. That will help us to move toward a clearer understanding of local politics, and it will also result in a fuller, richer understanding of American politics as a whole.

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW: LOCAL POLITICS IS DISTINCTIVE

In the opening pages of his agenda-setting book, *City Limits*, Peterson (1981, p. 3) writes, "Too often cities are treated as if they were nation-states. What is known about the politics of nations, it is said, can be applied to the politics of cities within them. . . . It is the burden of my argument that local politics is not like national politics." For the three decades to follow, urban and local politics scholars largely abided by Peterson's advice to study city governments as city governments—and not as miniature republics. Cities face competitive pressures to maintain the tax base, so they focus heavily on economic development and growth and cannot easily pursue large programs of redistribution (Peterson 1981). Scholars in the regime theory tradition portray city governance as relatively informal, with important decisions happening behind the scenes, and with private actors (mostly business interests) serving in copilot roles alongside local public officials (Stone 1989,

Mossberger & Stoker 2001). Others emphasize the constraints that state governments impose on local governments' policy-making authority (e.g., Ladd & Yinger 1989, Gerber & Hopkins 2011), and still others have studied the effects of political institutions that grew out of the Progressive Era municipal reform movement (Trounstine 2008): More than 75% of municipal elections in the United States are formally nonpartisan (Wood 2002), most local governments hold their elections on days other than national and state election days (Anzia 2014), and many do not have districted legislatures or separately elected chief executives (Lubell et al. 2009).

In studying questions of representation, moreover, traditional[1] local politics research has emphasized political cleavages other than partisanship and ideology. One prominent theme is the political clout of homeowners. Fischel (2001) argues that homeowners have powerful incentives to invest in local politics and support policies that maintain local property values. Oliver et al. (2012, p. 70) write that "for voting in local elections, the impact of homeownership is as great as education and larger than age, which happen to be the two biggest predictors of turnout in national contests." Homeowners are also overrepresented in local planning commission meetings and are an important force behind the NIMBY (not in my backyard) impulses that limit new housing development (Hankinson 2018, Einstein et al. 2019). Traditional local politics research has also highlighted the importance of other dimensions of local politics, including race and ethnicity (e.g., Kaufmann 2004, Barreto 2007, Hajnal 2009, Trounstine 2018), age (Kogan et al. 2018, Anzia 2019), incumbency (Burnett & Kogan 2017, Payson 2017), and the strength of public sector unions (Moe 2011, Anzia & Moe 2015, DiSalvo 2015).

All of this work is about representation, but it is not focused primarily on partisan or ideological divisions. Local elections often do not feature meaningful party competition (Schleicher 2007, Trounstine 2009). Hajnal & Trounstine (2014) find that while party and ideology do help to explain vote choice in local elections, racial divisions are far more important. Oliver et al. (2012) argue that local politics in most places is less ideological and partisan than national politics, in large part because local governments do less and do different things (see also Adrian 1952).

THE NEW VIEW: LOCAL POLITICS IS PARTISAN AND IDEOLOGICAL

Until recently, research on local politics also lacked data on the key elements of the dominant paradigm for studying political representation in national and state politics: measures of public opinion and measures of policies or elites' positions on key issues (e.g., Erikson et al. 1993, Bartels 2008, Gilens 2012, Lax & Phillips 2012). Because of this lack, it was not really possible to evaluate whether local policies align with local public opinion—at least not with the standard mechanics of the mainstream political representation literature. That has changed in the last few years as researchers have made strides in measuring local public opinion, local candidates' party affiliations, and some local policies beyond fiscal outcomes. The result has been a rapidly growing body of work that looks a lot more like research on national and state political representation and that draws conclusions very different from those of the traditional local politics literature.

The most significant advances have been made in measuring partisanship, public opinion, and ideology at the local level. Some researchers have compiled US presidential vote data at the level of county or municipal government and have found that greater Democratic vote share is associated with higher local government expenditures and greater expenditures on certain functions

[1] I refer to this as the traditional view rather than the older view because some of the research I include in this group is not old. Also, while it is useful for discussion purposes to separate the traditional view from the newer view, this is not necessarily a sharp intellectual divide.

like public safety, parks and recreation, and infrastructure (Choi et al. 2010, Einstein & Kogan 2016, Sances 2019). Studies of elections in large cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Memphis, and Nashville find that voter ideology is an important predictor of vote choice (Abrajano et al. 2005, Boudreau et al. 2015, Sances 2018). Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2014) take a more expansive approach, pooling data from large national public opinion surveys and using multilevel regression and poststratification to estimate local ideology scores for more than 1,600 cities and towns. They find that cities with more liberal mass ideology have greater expenditures per capita (see also Palus 2010), raise more revenue, generate less revenue from sales taxes, and score lower on an index of policy conservatism constructed from data on local environmental policies.

Together, these findings are the basis of two important conclusions in this new literature. The first is that mass partisanship and ideology matter in local politics and, thus, that there is more room for politics in city government than Peterson (1981) argues. As Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2014, p. 621) write, "'Liberal' cities seem to get 'liberal' policies and 'conservative' cities seem to get 'conservative' policies. . . . This suggests that not only is city government political, but that it may have more in common with state and national politics than previous scholars have recognized." The second conclusion is that local governments are responsive to mass preferences. To again quote Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2014, p. 614), "In substantive terms, the relationship between preferences and outcomes is tight. This suggests that city governments are responsive to the preferences of their citizens."

Researchers have also made advances in collecting data on the party affiliations of local candidates and elected officials. This is a nontrivial exercise for many local governments, not only because collecting any data on local candidates is difficult but also because so many local elections are formally nonpartisan. (Most county elections are partisan, but most municipal elections are nonpartisan.) Researchers have now assembled data on the party affiliations of cities' mayoral candidates by doing surveys (Ferreira & Gyourko 2009); examining patterns in campaign finance data; checking whether local candidates ran for or held partisan office at some other time (de Benedictis-Kessner & Warshaw 2016); and scouring newspaper articles, city websites, and other sources (Gerber & Hopkins 2011). Recent years have therefore seen numerous studies estimating the effect of local officials' party affiliations on local policy.

The findings have been somewhat mixed. Two early studies that use regression discontinuity design (to compare mayoral races in which a Democrat barely won or lost against a Republican) conclude that the effect of elite partisanship on local policy is limited. Ferreira & Gyourko (2009) find no effect of mayoral partisanship on fiscal outcomes, and Gerber & Hopkins (2011) find that the election of Republican mayors leads to a greater share of local spending on police and fire protection but no other significant effects. In a more recent study, Thompson (2020) finds that Democratic and Republican elected sheriffs (county officials) comply with federal government immigration requests at similar rates. But other studies find clearer effects of elite partisanship. De Benedictis-Kessner & Warshaw (2016, 2020) find that having a Democratic mayor in cities or a Democratic legislature in counties leads to greater local government expenditures. Gerber (2013) finds that local climate policies in Michigan vary with the party of local officials. And in a study of local legislative votes, Burnett (2019) finds that San Diego's Democratic and Republican city councilmembers tend to take different positions.

Some political scientists have made related claims that local politics is nationalized—or that national partisan and ideological forces are now permeating local politics. Hopkins (2018) shows that public opinion on national surveys like the American National Election Studies is better predicted by the party identification of the respondent than by the particulars of the respondents' local context. Hertel-Fernandez (2019) suggests that while the American Legislative Exchange Council and other conservative networks have so far focused mostly on the US states, cities and

counties may be their next frontier. And in a study of four large urban school districts, Reckhow et al. (2017) show that a sizable share of campaign contributions in school board elections come from nationally networked, wealthy donors from outside the district. A theme of all of this research is that local politics may be more heavily shaped by partisanship, ideology, and national forces than the traditional local politics literature suggests. As Hopkins (2018, p. 123) writes, "Local issues appear more to be extensions of national issues than alternatives to them."

AN APPRAISAL

New measures of partisanship and ideology have thus begun to transform the study of local politics. By inserting a focus on party, ideology, and nationalization into research on local politics, these advances have increased American politics scholars' interest in US local government—and have brought the study of local political representation into the mainstream (Warshaw 2019). This is a positive development, given the importance of local government and policy. But because much of this newer literature draws different conclusions than traditional local politics scholarship, finding that partisanship and ideology are more important to local politics than previously thought, it is a good time to take stock of what we have and have not yet learned—and identify areas where more research would be most productive.

My proposal is that this newer literature has not yet paid sufficient attention to the differences in what local governments and the federal government do—the issues they consider, the policies they make—and the implications of those differences for whether local politics is structured by party and nationally oriented ideology. As a starting point, it is important to briefly summarize what local governments do. This is straightforward for special-purpose governments, because by definition they perform only one function (Berry 2009): School districts provide public education, library districts provide public libraries, and so on. But what about municipal governments—the subject of most local politics research? At the heart of what municipal governments do are economic development, land use, and the provision of city services. In a 2008–2009 survey of Chicago-area local politicians, Oliver et al. (2012, pp. 105–6) find that the most important issues in local elections are economic development, property development and zoning, taxes, and city services. Some of the most common city services are street repair, parks, water, sewage, police protection, and fire protection (p. 25). County governments are less studied by political scientists (de Benedictis-Kessner & Warshaw 2020), and their functions vary across states, but they most often include law enforcement, public utilities, public health, hospitals, corrections, parks, roads, and courts. Some of these issues have parallels to the national issues that divide the major political parties, but many of them do not.

Yet most of the newer literature on local political representation spends little time discussing the policy particulars of local government. Perhaps this is not surprising, given that most national and state political representation research does not delve into policy particulars, either (Hacker & Pierson 2014); it usually scales multiple policies on a single liberal–conservative dimension (e.g., McCarty et al. 2006, Caughey & Warshaw 2018), and when it does examine separate policy areas (e.g., Lax & Phillips 2012, Grumbach 2018), the main focus is the general picture of representation rather than particular policies.[2] In some cases, these approaches may be fine, and research can proceed without in-depth analysis of particular issues. But here the question is whether local politics is structured by party and ideology in ways similar to state and national governments. That local governments deal with mostly different issues is therefore quite relevant.

[2] In contrast, the policy feedback literature focuses on how the characteristics of policies shape the particulars of their politics (e.g., Schattschneider 1961, Pierson 1993, Campbell 2003).

In the following subsections, I evaluate the current state of this newer literature from three different angles: measures and interpretations of those measures, theory, and empirical assessments of how party and ideology affect local policy. I assess what this new work has and has not yet done, discuss how that should shape our interpretations of its findings, and propose some promising directions for future research.

Distinguishing Between Local-Level Preferences and Local Government Preferences

The measures of local partisanship and ideology are natural places to begin because they are some of the most significant advances of this newer literature on local political representation. These measures are undeniably measures of partisanship and ideology at the local level, but that does not necessarily make them measures of preferences and positions on local issues, even though they sometimes are interpreted as such. Actually, these new measures should be viewed as local-level preferences or positions on mostly national issues. There can be very good uses of such measures, but it may not be safe to assume that they are highly correlated with preferences on the main issues that animate local government.

This is easiest to see for local-level measures of how people voted in US presidential elections. It is not obvious whether citizens' choices over the major parties' presidential candidates would be highly correlated with their views on local economic development, zoning, police and fire protection, and sewers and roads. Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2013, 2014) do better by decoupling the measurement of local-level preferences from the positions of presidential candidates, instead scaling policy question data from large national public opinion surveys, but still, most of the policy questions asked on these national surveys are about national policy issues, not core local government issues. Thus, the end result—their measure of mass ideology—is more a measure of local-level preferences on national issues than a measure of citizens' preferences on local government issues.[3]

Similarly, Hopkins's (2018, ch. 5) analysis of "local contexts in a nationalized age" could easily be misinterpreted as a study of whether national forces have infiltrated local politics, but it is not. Instead, Hopkins evaluates whether respondents' policy views as expressed in national public opinion surveys are best explained by party identification or by local contextual factors, such as proximity to a military base. The policy questions he explores do have some overlap with what local governments do (such as anticrime spending) but are mostly issues that are primarily the charge of the federal government. His results therefore demonstrate that political views on national issues are better explained by party identification than by local contextual factors, but they do not directly address the questions of whether local politics has nationalized or whether party identification explains political behavior on matters facing local government.

It is possible that local-level preferences on national issues are highly correlated with preferences on local government issues, but that is a hypothesis to be tested—not a link we can assume. A few studies have begun to put this hypothesized link under the microscope, and the results suggest that people's nationally forged party affiliations and views on national policy issues do not always map onto to their preferences on local government issues.

[3] So far, attempts to estimate mass ideology based on local issues have been limited to a few cities such as San Francisco (Boudreau et al. 2015) and Memphis and Nashville (Sances 2018). Schaffner et al. (2020) also rely on a measure of citizen ideology in municipal governments, but because it is a proprietary measure developed by Catalist, it is unclear whether it is constructed using national or local issues.

One is a survey by Marble & Nall (2020) that elicits respondents' preferences on housing policy. When they ask respondents for their views on housing policy generally, specifically how much they support a federal government role in guaranteeing housing, Democrats report more liberal positions than Republicans. The authors refer to this as ideology. But when the questions turn to local policies that could increase local housing development, homeownership plays a larger role than their measure of ideology: Liberal homeowners are less likely to support local housing development than liberal renters, and their positions look very similar to those of conservative homeowners.[4] Marble & Nall (2020) conclude that liberal homeowners' self-interest in maintaining local property values clashes with their nationally forged liberal ideology.

Jensen et al. (2019) carry out a conjoint survey experiment with respondents in eight large US cities. They present each respondent with two bundles of six local policies and ask which of the bundles the respondent would prefer to see implemented. Importantly, the policy areas explored are core issues of local government, including local tax policy and local services like public safety, public transportation, and public education. They find that strong Democrats and strong Republicans offer similar levels of support for most of the local policy proposals. While there are exceptions, such as school choice in K–12 education and proposals to strengthen or weaken unions, these authors find that on most local issues, opposite partisans are neither sorted nor polarized.

In their appendix, Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2014, pp. 628–29) present results suggesting that the degree to which local preferences align with national preferences might vary across local issues. Specifically, they put federal, state, and local policy questions on the same survey, and (allowing for four dimensions) they analyze whether responses cluster on different dimensions. They find that "the highest discriminating item is always a federal policy item" and that the municipal policy items do not cluster on any one dimension in particular. But they find differences between municipal policy items. Two of the items "stand out for high discrimination. . .about benefits for same-sex partners who are municipal employees" and "whether or not the city should take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." By contrast, "some issues that seem uniquely local. . .about closing parks and libraries, or. . .about the proper mix of sales and property taxes, are particularly noisy on all dimensions." One explanation, as they acknowledge, could be that environmental regulation and benefits for same-sex partners have substantive links to major national policy issues, whereas parks, libraries, and property taxes do not.

Despite some of the broad conclusions drawn in this newer literature, therefore, it is still an open question whether and when mass preferences on local government issues mirror preferences on national issues. Scholars have made strides in measuring partisanship and preferences at the local level, but we still need more research on whether those measures explain people's preferences and positions on local government issues.

The same critique applies to efforts to characterize the positions of local candidates and elected officials using their party affiliations. Until very recently, researchers have not had data on local officials' roll call votes or candidates' positions on local policies, so it is only natural that they would turn to elites' party affiliations as a way of measuring something politically relevant about them. But we should also be cautious in what we assume about the mapping of those party affiliations to their positions on local issues. Will a Democrat be more or less in favor of allowing development of more high-density housing? Will a Republican be more or less in favor of city government spending, especially considering that a large proportion of city expenditures go to public safety? These questions do not have theoretically easy answers, as I discuss below. But a new study of city

[4]Marble & Nall (2020) do not directly analyze local housing policy preferences by respondent party affiliation.

and county legislative roll call votes suggests that in most places local elites' policy positions aren't even structured by a single dimension (Bucchianeri 2020)—and that raises doubts about how well they map onto national party divisions.

In addition, it is important that the conclusions we draw from studies showing the effect of local officials' party affiliations have the appropriate scope. In state and national elections, nearly all candidates are clearly marked as Democrats or Republicans. This is not the case in local elections. That is not simply a measurement nuisance; it is substantively important. When most local elections are formally nonpartisan and one has to go far beyond local election records to find information on candidates' party affiliations, sometimes such information can be found, other times not. Yet analysis is conducted on only those candidates for whom party affiliation can be found, and they might be the most partisan of the bunch. Moreover, when scholars use regression discontinuity design to identify causal effects, they limit the analysis to cases where both Democrats and Republicans are competitive. Yet those cities and counties could be the ones where candidates' party labels are most likely to meaningfully distinguish between candidates. Furthermore, the difficulty of collecting all of these data has led scholars to focus on either partisan local elections only or mayoral elections for cities. That excludes a lot of local elections because, again, most local elections are nonpartisan, and most cities do not have independently elected mayors. My point is not that we cannot or should not do these studies, but rather that the scope of our conclusions should be appropriate for the scope of the data being analyzed.

Theoretical Matters

So far I have focused on the main measures of local partisanship and ideology and what we still need to learn about how partisanship and preferences on national issues are related to preferences on local government issues. American politics scholars can make progress on these questions by doing more quantitative empirical work, but going forward they should also take a more theoretical tack—and try to understand when, why, and how national partisanship is connected to local politics and local issues.

Engagement with the literature on political parties, party positioning, issue evolution, and realignment could be especially fruitful. A core motivating question of that literature is how particular issues do or do not come to define the major US parties, as well as how and why that changes over time (e.g., Sundquist 1973, Carmines & Stimson 1989, Mayhew 2000, Weaver 2007, Karol 2009, Schickler 2016). Debates in the literature about what drives this process of issue evolution—whether it is elites, citizens, groups, or some combination thereof—are less important here than the understandings that unite this work: that political parties are defined by issues, and that the issues that define the parties change over time (e.g., Adams 1997, Lindaman & Haider-Markel 2002, Bawn et al. 2012). Issues of race and civil rights are some of the best-studied examples in this literature; as is well known, the national Democratic and Republican Parties did not stake out distinct positions on race and civil rights until the mid-1960s (e.g., Carmines & Stimson 1989). One broad takeaway from this literature is that there is little that is fixed about the axes of party conflict (e.g., Fordham 2007, O'Brian 2019), and that particular issues may or may not come to define and divide the parties (e.g., Hansen 1991).

This could be an especially helpful literature for scholars to explore as they attempt to explain and understand the connections between national partisanship and local government policies and preferences. And it implies that the existence and strength of any such connection will likely vary by issue. For some local issues, such as environmental regulation, energy policy, or whether cities should extend employee benefits to same-sex partners, there is a fairly clear substantive connection to issues that divide today's Democratic and Republican Parties in national politics. For other issues, any such connection is less obvious.

Consider debates over the amount of government intervention in the economy, or the size of government. From one perspective, this is an axis of party conflict that could extend very naturally into the local government arena. All governments tax, spend, and regulate. Some might even argue that this is the source of an inherent partisan divide (e.g., Poole & Rosenthal 1997).

Upon reflection, however, even this is not entirely straightforward. In state and national politics, the Democratic Party is generally more favorable to larger government, whereas the Republican Party has traditionally been more supportive of limited government. But there are certain categories of even federal government spending that do not fit cleanly into this classification, such as defense spending, agriculture, and trade (Hansen 1991, Fordham 2007). At the state level, moreover, Grossmann (2019) finds that Republican majorities do not actually make drastic spending cuts, because major categories of state spending—such as K–12 education—are popular with constituents. At the local level, theoretical expectations are even more ambiguous. It could be that Democrats are more amenable to higher taxes in local politics than Republicans, but it is also important to consider what cities and counties do and do not spend money on. For example, police and fire protection make up a large share of the typical municipal government budget, and the vast majority of cities spend nothing at all on welfare (e.g., Einstein & Kogan 2016). Likewise, in counties, a sizable proportion of spending goes to sheriffs and corrections, and corrections is not an especially partisan issue area even at the state level (Grumbach 2018). Other large categories of spending in cities and counties are parks and recreation, streets and sanitation, health and hospitals, and highways and roads. Given these breakdowns of local government expenditures, would we expect Democratic officials and citizens to be more in favor of local spending and Republicans to be against local spending? Theoretically, the answer is not clear.

Continuing with this logic, there seem to be many local policy issues that are cross-cutting and not a comfortable fit within the national party system as it stands now. Policing is a good example. On the one hand, the law-and-order dimension of policing seems a good fit for today's Republican Party (Gerber & Hopkins 2011), and one could imagine that the Democratic Party might be a strong opponent of the police and police spending, given the extent to which the criminal justice system harms people and communities of color (e.g., Lerman & Weaver 2014). On the other hand, police officers are highly unionized public sector employees, and Democrats have long been the party more supportive of collective bargaining, unions, and their policy goals, such as better compensation (Dark 1999, Moe 2011, DiSalvo 2015). Then there are local issues, services, and priorities that seem not to have a partisan dimension, such as efforts to attract jobs to the city or to improve the sewer system. As it stands, it does not look as though the major national parties have absorbed many of these local issues.

It is even unclear just how involved the major political parties are in local politics. When political parties are active in local elections, it is almost always the Democratic and Republican Parties (Oliver et al. 2012), but we currently do not know how widespread their involvement is. American political development scholarship suggests that Progressive Era municipal reformers were fairly successful in reducing the activity of political parties in local elections (Bridges 1997, Trounstine 2008). Moreover, the modern literature lacks research on whether the two major parties are competitive in most local governments; presumably, there are many local jurisdictions that are relatively homogeneous and do not regularly feature Democratic candidates facing off against Republicans. Finally, American politics research does not yet provide modern accounts of how parties get involved in local politics and what their goals are in doing so. Sixty years ago, political scientists observed that parties rarely took different positions on local issues (Adrian 1959, Lee 1960, Banfield & Wilson 1963), but there has been almost no research on this topic since then. Going forward, our understanding of partisan and ideological forces in local politics would benefit greatly from a better understanding of national party involvement in local politics.

A related question is whether the major national parties have incentives to take stances on local government issues—or under what conditions they would. National party elites might reasonably want to stake out positions on local issues if doing so would broaden the party coalition, enhance the turnout of sympathetic voters, and peel off voters from the opposite party (Riker 1982, Carmines & Stimson 1989). One could argue that policing and law enforcement would be a good candidate for this approach in 2020, should national Republican and Democratic candidates see electoral advantages to taking distinct positions on the issue.

Most likely, however, the electoral calculus is more complicated than that. As a comparison point, consider education—a local issue that most observers would say is now partisan and nationalized (Wolbrecht & Hartney 2014). The major parties do tend to take different positions on education, with Republicans more amenable to school choice and teacher accountability reforms than Democrats. But the result has not been an ongoing, heated, partisan clash in state and national politics over whether to adopt choice and accountability reforms. Actually, with few exceptions, teacher unions have been quite successful in blocking the reforms they oppose (Moe 2011). Few governors today even attempt controversial education reforms (M.T. Hartney, manuscript in preparation), and education continues to be a mostly bipartisan issue in state politics (Grumbach 2018). The persistent intraparty tensions of the issue probably have a lot to do with it. Teacher unions are an important Democratic constituency, yet the very reforms they oppose are (or were) intended to help a different Democratic constituency: low-income and minority children in urban school districts. Republicans, meanwhile, do not want to alienate the many teachers and teacher union members who call themselves Republicans (Moe 2011). They have intense preferences regarding education, and most other Republicans probably cast their votes in state and national elections on the basis of other issues (Hess 2011). Even for this nationalized, partisan local issue, then, there are real limits on how much the major parties can gain from making it a centerpiece of their platforms.

As a final note on theoretical opportunities, we should be careful not to assume that issue absorption and extension can only trickle down from national to local. During the mid-twentieth century, some state party systems were ahead of the national parties on civil rights, and those state party positions constrained what the national parties could do (Schickler 2016; see also Chen 2007). Just as it is possible that national partisan forces might creep into local politics, it is also possible that local-level cleavages on issues like housing or policing have the potential to bubble up to state and national parties—and constrain what positions they can take.

On the Empirical Link Between Partisanship and Ideology and Local Policy

One could argue that all of this probing of the measures and reflection on theory is unnecessary. Studies show that mass partisanship, mass ideology, and elite partisanship do actually predict local policy. Those studies, after all, are the basis of conclusions that party matters in local government, that national partisanship and ideology map onto local preferences, and that local governments are responsive to citizens.

However, a close look at these studies suggests that the evidence is not sufficient for broad, general conclusions about the importance of party and ideology in local government, or the responsiveness of local governments to their citizens. This collection of studies examines a relatively narrow set of local policy outcomes. Far and away the most common dependent variables explored are fiscal outcomes such as total local government expenditures and tax revenue, because those data are available from the US Census of Governments. A few studies examine the effects of party and ideology on local policy outcomes related to environmental regulation and climate policy (Gerber 2013, Tausanovitch & Warshaw 2014). These are important local policy outcomes, to be sure, but

they do not capture all or even most of what local governments do. As discussed above, moreover, they may be policies for which a link to national party divisions is most likely.

Going forward, researchers should examine the relationship between party and ideology and a variety of other local policy outcomes, including those related to housing development and zoning, economic development and growth, police and fire protection, public parks, public health, streets and sanitation, and more. They should go beyond studying local service provision only in terms of spending on different functional categories and include policies governing how local government employees carry out their work, such as how police officers interact with the communities they serve and how local public schools teach their students. These types of policies are much more difficult to measure and collect data on than spending, but they are extremely important for how local governments provide services (Moe 2009, 2011; Anzia & Moe 2014; DiSalvo 2015). Before we can conclude that local politics is highly partisan and ideological, we need to evaluate the extent to which party and ideology explain variation in these types of local policies, in addition to the size of government and local environmental and energy policies.

For the studies that already exist, moreover, this is a good moment to unpack the demonstrated connection between partisanship and ideology and local policies—to study the mechanism. This calls for not only more theory building (discussed above) but also more empirical research. The trajectory of the nationally oriented literature on political parties can serve as a useful guide. Theories proposing that parties make a difference in how the US Congress operates (e.g., Rohde 1991; Cox & McCubbins 1993, 2005) were met with scholarship questioning whether it is actually parties doing the work (e.g., Krehbiel 1993) and scholarship further exploring how and why parties could have these effects (e.g., Jenkins & Monroe 2012). Now that there is an established research literature on party and ideology effects on local politics, scholars should pursue more in-depth exploration of both the causes of those effects and whether they could be epiphenomenal.

Warshaw (2019) helps point the way forward on the former: He proposes that local governments with more Democratic and liberal citizens tend to elect Democratic elected officials, who then enact liberal policies (see also Erikson et al. 1993). He shows empirically that cities and counties with more liberal mass ideology scores [using the Tausanovitch & Warshaw (2013, 2014) measures] tend to elect Democratic mayors and county legislatures. One issue with inferring a mechanism from this finding is that in cities and counties with more Democratic residents, local candidates (who live in those cities and counties) will be more likely to be Democrats as well, without voters necessarily selecting on the basis of that characteristic. There is also the question of how—in contexts where party labels do not appear on the ballot and knowledge of local government is low—voters are able to use candidates' party affiliations as cues for local candidates' positions (Bucchianeri 2020). In future research, scholars should continue to expand on and study these ideas.

Relatedly, and more generally, researchers should consider and evaluate the possibility that these links might not be voter driven. Some scholars have been quick to conclude that an established connection between citizen partisanship or ideology and policies like local government spending is evidence of local government responsiveness—where responsiveness is defined to mean responsiveness to the mass public. Perhaps it is. But before making that inference, researchers should consider omitted variables that could be correlated with local mass ideology, partisanship, and policy.

Local interest group activity is a potentially important one. For example, research on public sector unions and collective bargaining has found that they influence local politics and policy (e.g., Moe 2006, Strunk & Grissom 2010)—including by increasing spending on municipal government employee compensation (Anzia & Moe 2015). Public sector unionization and collective bargaining are also correlated with partisanship and ideology: They are more common in more Democratic

state and local governments. It could be, then, that by increasing spending on teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other local government employees, strong unions and collective bargaining have the effect of increasing local government spending overall. If so, then the positive relationship between constituency liberalism (or Democratic presidential vote) and local government spending found in recent studies may not actually be due to politicians responding to citizens' desires for more spending. It could instead be due to Democratic areas having stronger unions that are better able to push for local policies in their own interests. That would be responsiveness—but responsiveness to interest groups rather than citizens. Going forward, therefore, interest group activity needs to be considered and factored into studies of local political representation. Until then, we should continue to question whether links among party, ideology, and local policy are voter driven and whether they demonstrate local government responsiveness to citizens.

Studying interest groups in local politics could also help to expand the conceptualization of nationalization in ways productive for the study of both local and state politics. Hopkins's (2018) account of nationalization focuses on voter behavior and public opinion—and whether partisanship or local context is a better predictor. But one could also evaluate nationalization in a more group-oriented way, asking: To what extent are the interest groups and political organizations that are active in national politics also active in local politics? When they are, do they clash and coalesce in the same ways that they do in national politics? Some scholars have proposed thinking about the nationalization of local politics along these lines (Reckhow et al. 2017, Hertel-Fernandez 2019), but we still need more research on whether national interest group forces have permeated local politics on a broad scale.[5]

CONCLUSION

Research on urban and local politics long emphasized the distinctiveness of local government and was viewed within political science as something separate from "American politics" research. That has changed in recent years, as data and measurement innovations have revolutionized the study of local political representation and brought it into the mainstream of American politics research. It is good that American politics scholars are devoting more attention to local politics. Local government policies on policing, housing, public education, and taxes have profound and direct impacts on American citizens. They should be studied as an important part of American politics. And the new data and measures of local-level party affiliations and mass ideology are fantastic new resources for researchers, which have provided tremendous benefit to the discipline.

Notably, however, some of the conclusions of the newer quantitative empirical work that has ensued are at odds with the more traditional view that nationally forged partisan and ideological divisions matter less in local politics than in state and national politics. This newer research, equipped with new measures, focuses squarely on partisanship and ideology and finds that they do predict local policy outcomes.

It would be tempting to toss out old notions of local politics as distinctive. Perhaps, one might think, we can disregard Peterson's (1981) advice after all and move ahead with studying local governments as miniature republics.

I argue that it is too soon for that. While there probably is less consensus on local policy goals than Peterson envisions in *City Limits*, that does not mean that disagreements in local politics track

[5] As discussed above, scholars should not assume that any similarities found between local and national interest group systems are caused by national groups infiltrating local politics. With federated interest group structures, it could be the other way around, such as with teacher unions (Moe 2011, Finger & Hartney 2019).

national partisan and ideological lines. A first caveat is that, because there are important differences between what local governments do and what the federal government does, we need more research on citizens' and elites' positions and preferences on local government issues. Second, rather than assume that local political divisions mirror national partisan and ideological divisions, scholars should question whether and when such connections exist—and draw on the vast literature on political parties to generate theories and hypotheses. Third, scholars should continue to put the spotlight on findings that local partisanship and ideology predict local policy outcomes, both probing why those connections exist and asking whether there could be other independent variables—such as interest group activity—that could explain some of those relationships. In the meantime, we should avoid drawing broad conclusions about the importance of partisanship, ideology, and national forces in local politics.

This is a good moment for research on partisanship and ideology in local politics to turn back to and engage with the traditional local politics literature. It would certainly be easier to just forge ahead with this new, partisan-oriented way of studying local politics, because it fits within the dominant paradigm of studying political representation in national and state politics. Some scholars no doubt are excited that local politics research is finally speaking the language of mainstream American politics research, with its focus on partisanship and ideology, and with an understanding of responsiveness as alignment between policies and public opinion. But how far does this paradigm actually get us in understanding local politics? How well do theories and models built for national politics fit the local context? Closer and deeper engagement with the traditional local politics literature would help answer these questions—and point to productive, synergistic ways forward.

The payoffs of such engagement would accrue not only to the study of local politics but also to scholarship on state and national politics. Now that recent studies of local political representation have begun to erase the gulf between local politics research and more mainstream American politics research, there is potential for scholars focused on national and state government to also learn from local politics experts. Local politics scholarship was for a long time held back by a lack of local-level public opinion data, but the upside of this lack was that it left local politics scholars free to take a broader perspective—and to think about and evaluate the power of different constituencies, such as homeowners, older residents, whites, racial minorities, business, and public sector unions. Scholars were able to focus on the whole local political economy, even if in a fragmented, patchwork way. The result over the years was the generation and embrace of a broader conceptualization of power, influence, and responsiveness than that which became standard in the more data-rich national politics literature. Even with the recent advances in measuring local-level public opinion, partisanship, and ideology, research on local political representation should still be attentive to the broader array of forces that shape public policy. Research on national and state political representation should, too.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author is not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Neil O'Brian and Eric Schickler for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

Abrajano MA, Nagler J, Alvarez RM. 2005. A natural experiment of race-based and issue voting: the 2001 City of Los Angeles elections. *Political Res. Q.* 58(2):203–18

Adams GD. 1997. Abortion: evidence of an issue evolution. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 41(3):718–37

Adrian CR. 1952. Some general characteristics of nonpartisan elections. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 46(3):766–76

Adrian CR. 1959. A typology for nonpartisan elections. *West. Political Q.* 12(2):449–58

Anzia SF. 2014. *Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press

Anzia SF. 2019. When does a group of citizens influence policy? Evidence from senior citizen participation in city politics. *J. Politics* 81(1):1–14

Anzia SF, Moe TM. 2014. Collective bargaining, transfer rights, and disadvantaged schools. *Educ. Eval. Policy Anal.* 36(1):83–111

Anzia SF, Moe TM. 2015. Public sector unions and the costs of government. *J. Politics* 77(1):114–27

Banfield EC, Wilson JQ. 1963. *City Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press/MIT Press

Barreto MA. 2007. *¡Sí se puede!* Latino candidates and the mobilization of Latino voters. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 101(3):425–41

Bartels LM. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Bawn K, Cohen M, Karol D, Masket S, Noel H, Zaller J. 2012. A theory of political parties: groups, policy demands and nominations in American politics. *Perspect. Politics* 10(3):571–97

Berry CR. 2009. *Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multi-Level Governments*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Berry CR, Howell WG. 2007. Accountability and local elections: rethinking retrospective voting. *J. Politics* 69(3):844–58

Boudreau C, Elmendorf CS, MacKenzie SA. 2015. Lost in space? Information shortcuts, spatial voting, and local government representation. *Political Res. Q.* 68(4):843–55

Bridges A. 1997. *Morning Glories: Municipal Reform in the Southwest*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Bucchianeri P. 2020. Party competition and coalitional stability: evidence from American local government. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 114(4):1055–70

Burnett CM. 2019. Parties as an organizational force on nonpartisan city councils. *Party Politics* 25(4):594–608

Burnett CM, Kogan V. 2017. The politics of potholes: service quality and retrospective voting in local elections. *J. Politics* 79(1):302–14

Campbell AL. 2003. *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Carmines EG, Stimson JA. 1989. *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Caughey D, Warshaw C. 2018. Policy preferences and policy change: dynamic responsiveness in the American states, 1936–2014. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 112(2):249–66

Caughey D, Warshaw C, Xu Y. 2017. Incremental democracy: the policy effects of partisan control of state government. *J. Politics* 79(4):1342–58

Chen AS. 2007. The party of Lincoln and the politics of state fair employment practices legislation in the North, 1945–1964. *Am. J. Sociol.* 112(6):1713–74

Choi SO, Bae SS, Kwon SW, Feiock RC. 2010. County limits: policy types and expenditure priorities. *Am. Rev. Public Adm.* 40:29–45

Converse PE. 1964. The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. DE Apter, pp. 206–61. New York: Free

Cox GW, McCubbins MD. 1993. *Legislative Leviathan: Parties and Committees in the U.S. House of Representatives.* Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press

Cox GW, McCubbins MD. 2005. *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Dark TE. 1999. *The Unions and the Democrats: An Enduring Alliance*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press

de Benedictis-Kessner J, Warshaw C. 2016. Mayoral partisanship and municipal fiscal policy. *J. Politics* 78(4):1124–38

de Benedictis-Kessner J, Warshaw C. 2020. Politics in forgotten governments: the partisan composition of county legislatures and county fiscal policies. *J. Politics* 82(2):460–75

DiSalvo D. 2015. *Government Against Itself: Public Union Power and Its Consequences*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press

Einstein KL, Glick DM, Palmer M. 2019. *Neighborhood Defenders: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Einstein KL, Kogan V. 2016. Pushing the city limits: policy responsiveness in municipal government. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 52(1):3–32

Erikson RS, Wright GC, McIver JP. 1993. *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in the American States*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Ferreira F, Gyourko J. 2009. Do political parties matter? Evidence from U.S. cities. *Q. J. Econ.* 124(1):399–422

Finger LK, Hartney MT. 2019. Financial solidarity: the future of unions in the post-Janus era. *Perspect. Politics.* **https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719003438**

Fischel WA. 2001. *The Homevoter Hypothesis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press

Fordham BO. 2007. The evolution of Republican and Democratic positions on Cold War military spending: a historical puzzle. *Soc. Sci. Hist.* 31(4):603–36

Gerber ER. 2013. Partisanship and local climate policy. *Cityscape* 15(1):107–24

Gerber ER, Hopkins DJ. 2011. When mayors matter: estimating the impact of mayoral partisanship on city policy. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 55(2):326–39

Gilens M. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Grossmann M. 2019. *Red State Blues: How the Conservative Revolution Stalled in the States*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Grumbach JM. 2018. From backwaters to major policymakers: policy polarization in the states, 1970–2014. *Perspect. Politics* 16(2):416–35

Hacker JS, Pierson P. 2014. After the "master theory": Downs, Schattschneider, and the rebirth of policy-focused analysis. *Perspect. Politics* 12(3):643–62

Hajnal ZL. 2009. *America's Uneven Democracy: Race, Turnout, and Representation in City Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Hajnal ZL, Trounstine J. 2014. What underlies urban politics? Race, class, ideology, partisanship, and the urban vote. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 50(1):63–99

Hankinson M. 2018. When do renters behave like homeowners? High rent, price anxiety, and NIMBYism. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 112(3):473–93

Hansen JM. 1991. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919–1981*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press

Hertel-Fernandez A. 2019. *State Capture: How Conservative Activists, Big Businesses, and Wealthy Donors Reshaped the American States—and the Nation*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press

Hess FM. 2011. Our achievement-gap mania. *National Affairs*, Fall. **https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/our-achievement-gap-mania**

Hopkins DJ. 2018. *The Increasingly United States: How and Why American Political Behavior Nationalized*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press

Jenkins JA, Monroe NW. 2012. Buying negative agenda control in the U.S. House. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 56:897–912

Jensen A, Marble W, Scheve K, Slaughter MJ. 2019. *City limits to partisan polarization in the American public*. Paper presented at the 115th Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, Aug. 2–Sept. 1

Judd DR. 2005. Everything is always going to hell: urban scholars as end-times prophets. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 41(2):119–31

Karol D. 2009. *Party Position Change in American Politics: Coalition Management*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press

Kaufmann K. 2004. *The Urban Voter: Group Conflict and Mayoral Voting Behavior in American Cities*. Ann Arbor: Univ. Mich. Press

Kogan V, Lavertu S, Peskowitz Z. 2018. Election timing, electorate composition, and policy outcomes: evidence from school districts. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 62(3):637–51
Krehbiel K. 1993. Where's the party? *Br. J. Political Sci.* 23(2):235–66
Ladd HF, Yinger J. 1989. *America's Ailing Cities: Fiscal Health and the Design of Urban Policy*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press
Lax JR, Phillips JH. 2012. The democratic deficit in the states. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 56(1):148–66
Lee EC. 1960. *The Politics of Nonpartisanship: A Study of California City Elections*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press
Lerman AE, Weaver VM. 2014. *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
Lindaman K, Haider-Markel DP. 2002. Issue evolution, political parties, and the culture wars. *Political Res. Q.* 55(1):91–110
Lubell M, Feiock RC, Ramirez De La Cruz EE. 2009. Local institutions and the politics of urban growth. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 53(3):649–65
Marble W, Nall C. 2020. Where self-interest trumps ideology: liberal homeowners and local opposition to housing development. *J. Politics*. In press
Mayhew DR. 2000. Electoral realignments. *Annu. Rev. Political Sci.* 3:449–74
McCarty N, Poole KT, Rosenthal H. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
Moe TM. 2006. Political control and the power of the agent. *J. Law Econ. Org.* 22(1):1–29
Moe TM. 2009. Collective bargaining and the performance of the public schools. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 53(1):156–74
Moe TM. 2011. *Special Interest: Teachers Unions and America's Public Schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Inst.
Mossberger K, Stoker G. 2001. The evolution of urban regime theory: the challenge of conceptualization. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 36(6):810–35
O'Brian NA. 2019. Before Reagan: the development of abortion's partisan divide. *Perspect. Politics* 18(1):1059–78
Oliver JE, Ha SE. 2007. Vote choice in suburban elections. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 101(3):393–408
Oliver JE, Ha SE, Callen Z. 2012. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press
Palus CK. 2010. Responsiveness in American local governments. *State Local Gov. Rev.* 42:133–50
Payson JA. 2017. When are local incumbents held accountable for government performance? Evidence from US school districts. *Legis. Stud. Q.* 42:421–48
Peterson PE. 1981. *City Limits*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
Pierson P. 1993. When effect becomes cause: policy feedback and political change. *World Politics* 45(4):595–628
Poole KT, Rosenthal H. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press
Reckhow S, Henig JF, Jacobsen R, Litt JA. 2017. 'Outsiders with deep pockets': the nationalization of local school board elections. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 53(5):783–811
Riker WH. 1982. *Liberalism Against Populism*. San Francisco, CA: Freeman
Rohde D. 1991. *Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
Sances MW. 2018. Ideology and vote choice in U.S. mayoral elections: evidence from Facebook surveys. *Political Behav*. 40:737–62
Sances MW. 2019. When voters matter: the limits of local government responsiveness. *Urban Aff. Rev.* **https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087419878812**
Schaffner BF, Rhodes JH, La Raja RJ. 2020. *Hometown Inequality: Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press
Schattschneider EE. 1961. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston
Schickler E. 2016. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press
Schleicher D. 2007. Why is there no partisan competition in city council elections: the role of election law. *J. Law Politics* 23(4):419–74
Shor B, McCarty N. 2011. The ideological mapping of American legislatures. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 105(3):530–51

Stimson JA, Mackuen MB, Erikson RS. 1995. Dynamic representation. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 89(3):543–65
Stone CN. 1989. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946–1988*. Lawrence: Univ. Press Kans.
Strunk KO, Grissom JA. 2010. Do strong unions shape district policies? Collective bargaining, teacher contract restrictiveness, and the political power of teachers' unions. *Educ. Eval. Policy Anal.* 32(3):389–406
Sundquist JL. 1973. *The Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington, DC: Brookings Inst.
Tausanovitch C, Warshaw C. 2013. Measuring constituent policy preferences in Congress, state legislatures, and cities. *J. Politics* 75(2):330–42
Tausanovitch C, Warshaw C. 2014. Representation in municipal government. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 108(3):605–41
Thompson DM. 2020. How partisan is local law enforcement? Evidence from sheriff cooperation with immigration authorities. *Am. Political Sci. Rev.* 114(1):222–36
Trounstine J. 2008. *Political Monopolies in American Cities: The Rise and Fall of Bosses and Reformers*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press
Trounstine J. 2009. All politics is local: the reemergence of the study of city politics. *Perspect. Politics* 7(3):611–18
Trounstine J. 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press
Trounstine J, Valdini ME. 2008. The context matters: the effects of single member versus at-large districts on city council diversity. *Am. J. Political Sci.* 52(3):554–69
Warshaw C. 2019. Local elections and representation in the United States. *Annu. Rev. Political Sci.* 22:461–79
Weaver VM. 2007. Frontlash: race and the development of punitive crime policy. *Stud. Am. Political Dev.* 21(2):230–65
Wolbrecht C, Hartney MT. 2014. "Ideas about interests": explaining the changing partisan politics of education. *Perspect. Politics* 12(3):603–30
Wood C. 2002. Voter turnout in city elections. *Urban Aff. Rev.* 38(2):209–31