When Voters Matter: The Limits of Local Government Responsiveness – Online Appendix

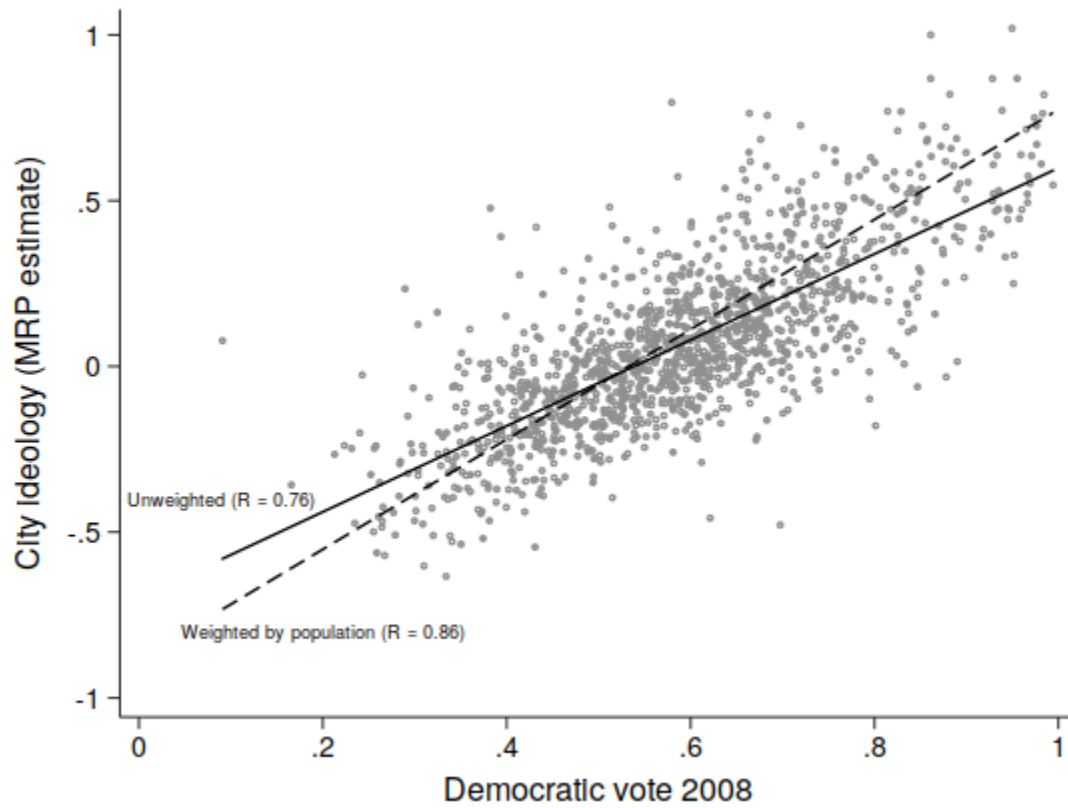# A1 Correlation Between MRP Ideology and Democratic Vote

Figure A1: Correlation between MRP estimate of local ideology and Democratic vote in Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2014) cities.
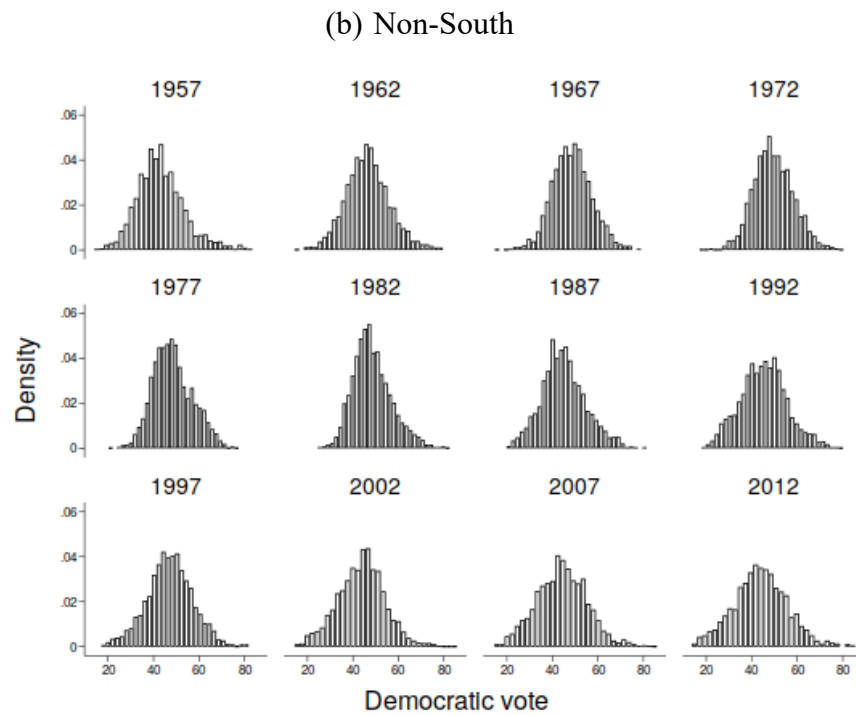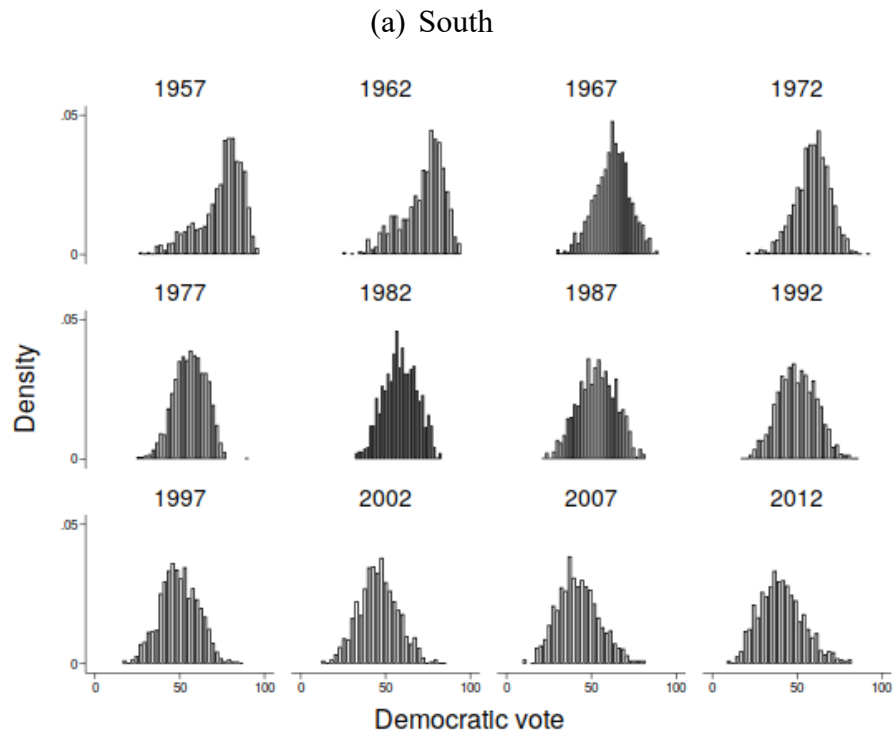
A2 Distribution of Democratic Vote

(a) South

(b) Non-South

Figure A2: Distribution of Democratic vote, by South.

A3 Predicting Current Spending with Future and Past Voting

Here I present results of a test of whether Democratic vote share is simply becoming a better measure of liberalism over time. First, I calculate the average Democratic vote in each county over the full post-1970 period, and see if this is correlated with pre-1970 spending. If latter partisanship is simply a better measure of local preferences – and assuming those preferences are relatively constant over time – there should be a stronger correlation between post-1970 vote and pre-1970 spending than there is between pre-1970 vote and pre-1970 spending. Second, I calculate the average Democratic vote in each county for pre-1970, and show how it is correlated with each year in Figure 2. If latter partisanship is simply a better measure, then pre-1970 voting should not be correlated with post-1970 spending.

Table A1 presents the results. The first two panels split the data into two periods, before 1970 and after 1970. I then examine the relationship between pre-1970 Democratic vote and pre-1970 spending (column 1), post-1970 vote and pre-1970 spending (column 2), pre-1970 vote and post-1970 spending (column 3), and post-1970 vote and post-1970 spending. Panel (a) presents results for counties not in the South, and panel (b) presents results for counties in the South. To compute these relationships, I collapse the independent and dependent variable on either side of the time cutoff, and fit regressions weighted by population and including state fixed effects.

A strong correlation between post-1970 voting and pre-1970 policy, relative to the correlation between pre-1970 voting and pre-1970 policy, supports the "better measurement" interpretation. In both panel (a) and panel (b), comparing columns (1) and (2), this is indeed what we see, though the problem is markedly greater for the South.

If latter partisanship is simply a better measure than historical partisanship, pre-1970 voting should not be correlated with post-1970 policy (or it may be negatively correlated). Looking at column (3) in panel (a) of Table A1, we see that pre-1970 voting is in fact correlated with post-1970 policy, though the correlation is weaker than the post-1970, post-1970 correlation in column (4). Yet this is not true for Southern counties: column (4) in panel (b) of Table A1 shows the predicted negative correlation.

I next implement this test in years after 1980. For this subsample, I examine the relationship between spending and voting before and after 1997 (roughly the midpoint of the post-1980 period). These results appear in panels (c) and (d) of Table A1, and show that, for Non-Southern counties, pre-1997 voting is in fact more strongly correlated with pre-1997 spending than is post-1997 voting (columns 1 and 2 of panel c). They also show that, for Non-Southern counties, pre-1997 voting is more strongly correlated with post-1997 spending than is post-1997 spending (columns 3 and 4). Both of these results are the opposite of what the better measurement interpretation would predict.

Panel (d) presents results for the South after 1980. As with the South prior to 1980, the results of the test continue to speak in favor of the better measurement interpretation.

As an additional check that "better measurement" is not driving the main results, I present responsiveness regressions for Southern counties and Non-Southern counties before 1980 in Table A2 of the Appendix. The key result in the paper is that within-county changes in Democratic voting lead to within-county changes in spending. The main text now presents this result only for Non-Southern counties, after 1980. The test in Table A1 suggests that for this subsample, Democratic vote is not becoming a better measure of preferences over time. However, it is still conceivable

that the responsiveness observed in the Non-South after 1980 could somehow be driven by measurement issues.

Yet if the responsiveness observed for the Non-Southern, post-1980 counties was somehow the result of Democratic vote becoming a better measure of liberalism over time, then we should see even more evidence of responsiveness in the South, before and after 1980, and the Non-South before 1980. The reason is that the test reported in Table A1 suggests these are the subsamples in which the "better measurement" problem is particularly acute. In fact, panels (a) and (b) of Table A2 show no evidence of responsiveness prior to 1980 in either region, while panel (c) shows less responsiveness in the South after 1980 as compared to the Non-South after 1980. Thus, over the periods where we are most concerned about the nature of Democratic party identification, we see no evidence of responsiveness, suggesting that changes in measurement are not driving the observed responsiveness reported in the main text.

(a) Non-South, All Years

	Pre 1970 Spending		Post 1970 Spending	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre 1970 Dem. Vote	0.18*** (0.01)		0.58*** (0.03)	
Post 1970 Dem. Vote		0.20*** (0.01)		0.71*** (0.02)
Observations	1930	1930	1930	1930

(b) South, All Years

	Pre 1970 Spending		Post 1970 Spending	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre 1970 Dem. Vote	-0.06*** (0.01)		-0.18*** (0.03)	
Post 1970 Dem. Vote		0.04* (0.01)		0.26*** (0.04)
Observations	1071	1071	1071	1071

(c) Non-South, Post-1980

	Pre 1997 Spending		Post 1997 Spending	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre 1997 Dem. Vote	0.54*** (0.02)		0.72*** (0.03)	
Post 1997 Dem. Vote		0.45*** (0.01)		0.62*** (0.02)
Observations	1930	1930	1930	1930

(d) South, Post-1980

	Pre 1997 Spending		Post 1997 Spending	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Pre 1997 Dem. Vote	0.11*** (0.03)		0.04 (0.05)	
Post 1997 Dem. Vote		0.27*** (0.02)		0.34*** (0.03)
Observations	1071	1071	1071	1071

Table A1: Predicting current spending with future and past voting.

(a) Non-South, Before 1980

	Spending		Revenue	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic vote	-0.06	0.02	0.05	0.05
	(0.11)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	9650	9650	9650	9650

(b) South, Before 1980

	Spending		Revenue	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic vote	0.02	0.00	0.01	-0.02
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	5355	5355	5355	5355

(c) South, After 1980

	Spending		Revenue	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic vote	0.19***	0.13**	0.15**	0.14**
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	7497	7497	7497	7497

Table A2: Results for South and Non-South before 1980.
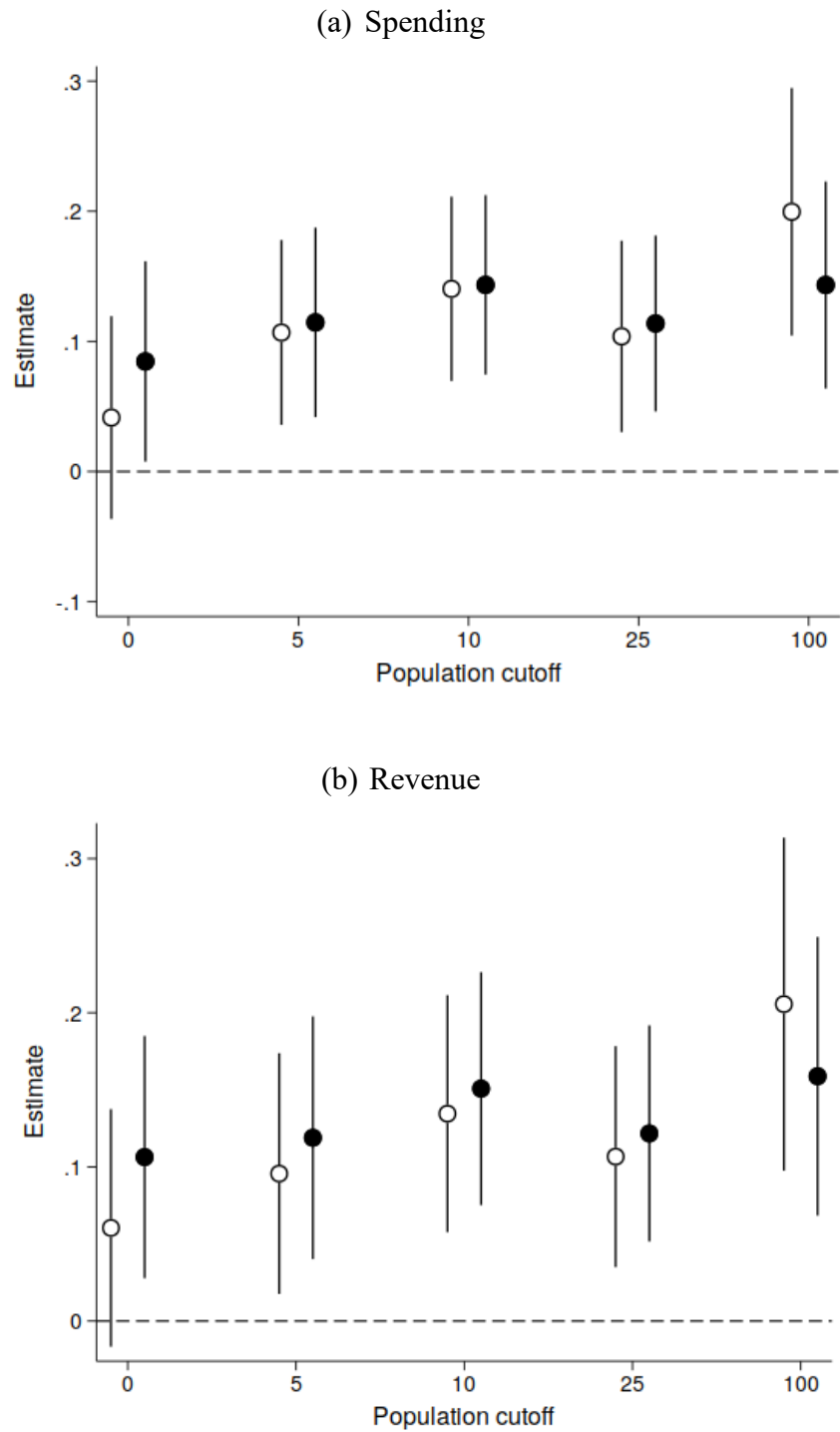
A4 Results Excluding Weights

(a) Spending

(b) Revenue

Figure A3: Results excluding weights.

A5 Bounding the Causal Effect of Democratic Vote

	Spending		Revenue	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Democratic vote	0.04***	0.23***	0.03**	0.20***
	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.04)
Covariates	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lagged outcome	Y		Y	
Fixed effects:				
County		Y		Y
State-year	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table A3: Bounding the causal effect of Democratic vote.

A6 Presidential Elections Only

	Spending		Revenue	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Democratic vote	0.28***	0.27***	0.28***	0.30***
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Median family income		0.49***		0.48***
		(0.07)		(0.05)
Share white		-0.07		0.00
		(0.07)		(0.06)
Share elderly		-0.25**		-0.16*
		(0.08)		(0.07)
Number of govs		0.12		-0.01
		(0.10)		(0.10)
Ln population density		-0.99***		-0.70**
		(0.24)		(0.23)
State revenue		0.51***		0.01
		(0.05)		(0.03)
Migration		0.01		0.00
		(0.02)		(0.01)
County fixed effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
State-year fixed effects	Y	Y	Y	Y
Number of years	7	7	7	7
Number of counties	1,930	1,930	1,930	1,930
Number of county-years	13,510	13,510	13,510	13,510

Table A4: Results excluding down-ballot races.