The American Municipal Officials Survey

Details of the 2016 AMOS Sample

The survey was conducted in two waves sent to two different samples of municipal officials. Invitations to the first wave were sent in May and June of 2016 to a sample of 27,862 elected mayors and legislators (e.g., city councilors, aldermen, supervisors, etc.) from 4,187 cities. Subjects were recruited via emails with a link to the survey. We sent each potential subject three emails one to two weeks apart, inviting them to participate. The sample was compiled by a for-profit organization that gathers contact information and email addresses of public officials from municipalities that have a website and a population above 10,000. The organization uses webcrawler software to identify when information changes on the contact pages of each city's website and then has research assistants update its contact list of officials accordingly. Unfortunately, this approach has a high error rate. Based on Qualtrics' email tracking, only 18,567 (or 67%) of the email invitations were delivered to an active email address. In addition, we looked up a sample of 832 officials in the list and found that only 44% of the email addresses were accurate. 2,165 officials answered questions on the first wave of the survey, resulting in a response rate of 17.8% based on the number of accurate emails in the list.[1] This rate is similar to

[1] The 17.8% is calculated as follows: 2,165/(.4375*27,862).

those from other surveys of municipal officials (e.g., Butler and Dynes (2016) report a response rate of 23%).

The second wave of the survey was conducted in June and July of 2016. The sample consisted of the email addresses of elected mayors and city councilors (or equivalent) gathered by Butler and Dynes (2017) for the 2012 and 2014 American Municipal Officials Survey (see the supplementary appendix from Butler and Dynes (2016) for more details on the 2012 sample and Butler and Dynes (2017) for more details on both samples). Excluding the email addresses from the first wave resulted in a list of 29,250 emails. The email addresses from the 2012 survey were gathered in January through March of 2012 by a team of undergraduate research assistants who searched for the website of 26,566 US municipalities. The email addresses from the 2014 survey were gathered in a similar fashion in early 2014 but excluded municipalities with a population below 3,000 due to the low percentage of small towns with websites. Given that these email addresses were gathered 2 to 4 years prior to this latest survey, we knew that a large percentage of the emails and names of the officials (in the case of cities that use generic email accounts for each office) would no longer be accurate. Indeed, 26% of the emails sent through Qualtrics were undeliverable. It is likely that many more of the email addresses are no longer monitored though they remain active. With 1,500 officials participating, the response rate for the second round of the survey was 6.9%.

The graphs and figures below provide additional descriptive statistics about the officials and municipalities in our sample as well as all municipalities across the U.S. The population of municipalities and demographic data on them are from the U.S. Census Bureau. We defined municipalities as general-purpose local governments using the following categorizations from the Census Bureau:

- Incorporated Places: In most states, they are called cities, towns, boroughs, and villages.
- Consolidated Cities: These are a "unit of government for which the functions of an Incorporated Place and its county or Minor Civil Divisions have merged."[2]
- Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) in CT, ME, MA, MI, MN, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, and WI. In these states, they are usually called townships or towns. We included Minor Civil Divisions from these states based on the Census Bureau's assessment that "Most of the MCDs in [these] twelve states ... serve as general-purpose local governments that can perform the same governmental functions as incorporated places."[3]

This resulted in a list of 24,083 municipalities. In the tables and figures, we use the term *city* instead of *municipality* to save space.

Tables A1 and A2 display the percent of respondents from each state as well as the percent of officials emailed from each state (i.e., respondents and non-respondents). The last column in both tables displays the percent of all municipalities from each state. As illustrated by these tables, respondents come from all states, save for Hawaii, and the percent from each state is similar to the percent of officials emailed from each state, though some states appear to have higher response rates than others. These results, combined with those in Tables A3 and A4, clearly show that our sample of municipal officials are quite diverse in terms of the states and types of municipalities they represent.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau. 2012. \Geographic Terms and Concepts { County Subdivision", http://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc cousub.html (January 9, 2014).
[3] Ibid.

Table A1: Respondents from Each State (AL-MT)

	% of Respondents from each state		% of Officials Emailed from each state	% of All Cities from each state
	Freq.	Percent	Percent	Percent
Alabama	31	0.91%	1.55%	1.85%
Alaska	9	0.26%	0.37%	0.61%
Arizona	45	1.32%	1.43%	0.38%
Arkansas	35	1.02%	1.25%	2.00%
California	230	6.72%	6.89%	2.09%
Colorado	71	2.08%	2.26%	1.13%
Connecticut	68	1.99%	1.91%	0.80%
Delaware	12	0.35%	0.36%	0.23%
District of Columbia	0	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%
Florida	113	3.30%	3.70%	1.80%
Georgia	57	1.67%	2.31%	2.20%
Hawaii	0	0.00%	0.03%	0.04%
Idaho	16	0.47%	0.55%	0.81%
Illinois	207	6.05%	6.32%	5.21%
Indiana	56	1.64%	2.07%	2.29%
Iowa	72	2.10%	1.71%	3.79%
Kansas	43	1.26%	1.17%	2.51%
Kentucky	32	0.94%	1.37%	1.68%
Louisiana	12	0.35%	0.60%	1.23%
Maine	40	1.17%	1.23%	2.13%
Maryland	45	1.32%	0.89%	0.77%
Massachusetts	126	3.68%	2.73%	1.60%
Michigan	200	5.85%	4.77%	6.46%
Minnesota	134	3.92%	3.83%	3.63%
Mississippi	25	0.73%	0.73%	1.20%
Missouri	112	3.27%	2.71%	3.84%
Montana	11	0.32%	0.26%	0.53%

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Table A2: Respondents from Each State (NE-WY)

	% of Respondents from each state		% of Officials emailed from each state	% of All Cities from each state
	Freq.	Percent	Percent	Percent
Nebraska	10	0.29%	0.52%	2.13%
Nevada	9	0.26%	0.14%	0.09%
New Hampshire	22	0.64%	0.76%	1.03%
New Jersey	131	3.83%	4.60%	2.40%
New Mexico	27	0.79%	0.71%	0.43%
New York	228	6.66%	5.54%	6.44%
North Carolina	131	3.83%	2.92%	2.24%
North Dakota	14	0.41%	0.35%	1.43%
Ohio	145	4.24%	4.93%	3.85%
Oklahoma	26	0.76%	0.82%	2.37%
Oregon	74	2.16%	1.62%	0.97%
Pennsylvania	136	3.98%	3.96%	4.82%
Rhode Island	17	0.50%	0.54%	0.18%
South Carolina	26	0.76%	1.09%	1.08%
South Dakota	13	0.38%	0.36%	1.25%
Tennessee	66	1.93%	1.49%	1.42%
Texas	137	4.00%	5.47%	4.91%
Utah	65	1.90%	1.29%	0.99%
Vermont	24	0.70%	0.60%	1.17%
Virginia	65	1.90%	1.37%	1.01%
Washington	64	1.87%	2.22%	1.16%
West Virginia	24	0.70%	0.54%	0.93%
Wisconsin	147	4.30%	4.78%	6.49%
Wyoming	18	0.53%	0.34%	0.39%
Total	3,421	100%	100%	100%

Table A3 provides descriptive statistics about the municipalities in and out of our sample. The data come from multiple sources, as indicated in the notes on Table A3. Column 1 displays information about all municipalities. It is important to note that the large majority of cities are small, rural, and overwhelmingly non-Latino white. The mean population is just 9,118 while the median population is 1,324. To provide an additional comparison to the types of municipalities where most Americans live, Column 2 displays the same descriptive information except that the

sample of all municipalities is weighted based on each municipality's population as a proportion of the total population of all municipalities. With these weights, the mean city's population jumps to 583,120 and the median's is 62,298. This is more reflective of where most Americans live. For instance, if all of the municipalities are ordered by population from smallest to largest, the median resident across all cities would be found in Maple Grove City, MN, a suburban city with a population of 61,567, which is right at the median in the population weighted results in Column (2). The 25th percentile resident is in a city of 17,000 while the 75th percentile is in one of 260,000.

In column (3), we display data on municipalities that had at least one official who was invited to participate in the survey. In other words, these are the municipalities of officials in our sampling frame. Finally, in column (4), we have data on municipalities that had at least one respondent to the survey—i.e., our actual sample. Overall, the municipalities of officials whom we emailed or who responded are quite similar to each other and fall between the municipalities where most Americans reside (Column [2]) and the broader sample of all municipalities (Column [1]), with the municipalities with respondents (Column [4]) slightly more similar to those in Column (2) than the municipalities emailed (Column [3]).

Figures A1 through A3 display a density plot of the different municipal characteristics found in Table A3. What stands out is how similar municipalities with respondents are to all of the municipalities with officials included in the sampling frame. The one area where the distributions are most different are in population, in which respondents were more likely to be from slightly larger municipalities.

Table A3: Characteristics of Municipalities by Sample Status

		(1) All Cities	(2) All Cities, weighted by pop.	(3) Cities Emailed	(4) Cities w/ at least 1 Respon-dent
City Population	Mean	9,118	583,120	26,001	39,969
	Median	1,324	62,298	7,481	11,936
% Population Minority	Mean	15.5%	33.3%	21.3%	21.6%
	Median	5.8%	28.3%	12.0%	13.2%
% Population w/ Some College or More	Mean	19.5%	18.6%	19.8%	19.8%
	Median	19.3%	18.4%	19.8%	19.8%
Median Income (in 2012 $1,000)	Mean	$46.9	$55.6	$55.0	$56.3
	Median	$41.8	$48.1	$48.5	$50.2
% Population Not in Labor Force	Mean	28.4%	28.0%	28.4%	28.1%
	Median	27.3%	27.0%	27.3%	27.2%
% Population Unemployed	Mean	8.5%	9.1%	8.6%	8.5%
	Median	7.5%	8.7%	7.8%	7.7%
% Population Homeowners	Mean	16.2%	17.3%	17.3%	17.3%
	Median	16.3%	17.3%	17.3%	17.3%
% Population with 2nd Mortgage	Mean	0.8%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
	Median	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Form of Government					
% Mayor/Council without City Manager		65.7%	50.6%	53.9%	50.8%
% Mayor/Council with City Manager		14.8%	40.0%	29.9%	36.4%
% Commissioners		1.6%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%
% Supervisors		17.5%	8.0%	14.6%	11.2%
% Town Meeting		0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
% Representative Town Meeting		0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
% with some Town Meeting decision-making		17.6%	8.6%	5.9%	11.2%
% with Home Rule Charter		19.6%	47.5%	30.9%	36.3%
% with Republican Rep. in U.S. House		47.5%	38.7%	51.1%	49.5%
Citizens' Policy Preferences (only for cities w/ pop. at or above 25k; range: -1 to .6; higher = more conservative)	Mean	-0.08	-0.18	-0.07	-0.08
	Median	-0.05	-0.15	-0.03	-0.04

Notes: Column (1) includes all cities, towns, Population figures are from the 2010 U.S. Census. Form of government figures are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 Census of Governments. The partisanship of the Representative of the U.S. House that represents each city is based on Congressional membership in March, 2016. Cities that crossed multiple House districts were matched to the district in which a plurality of the city's population resided. Citizens' Policy Preferences are from The American Ideology Project, which are estimated based on surveys conducted from 2000 to 2011. See Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2013) for more details on this measure.

Figure A1: Density Plot of Municipalities' Population by Sample Status

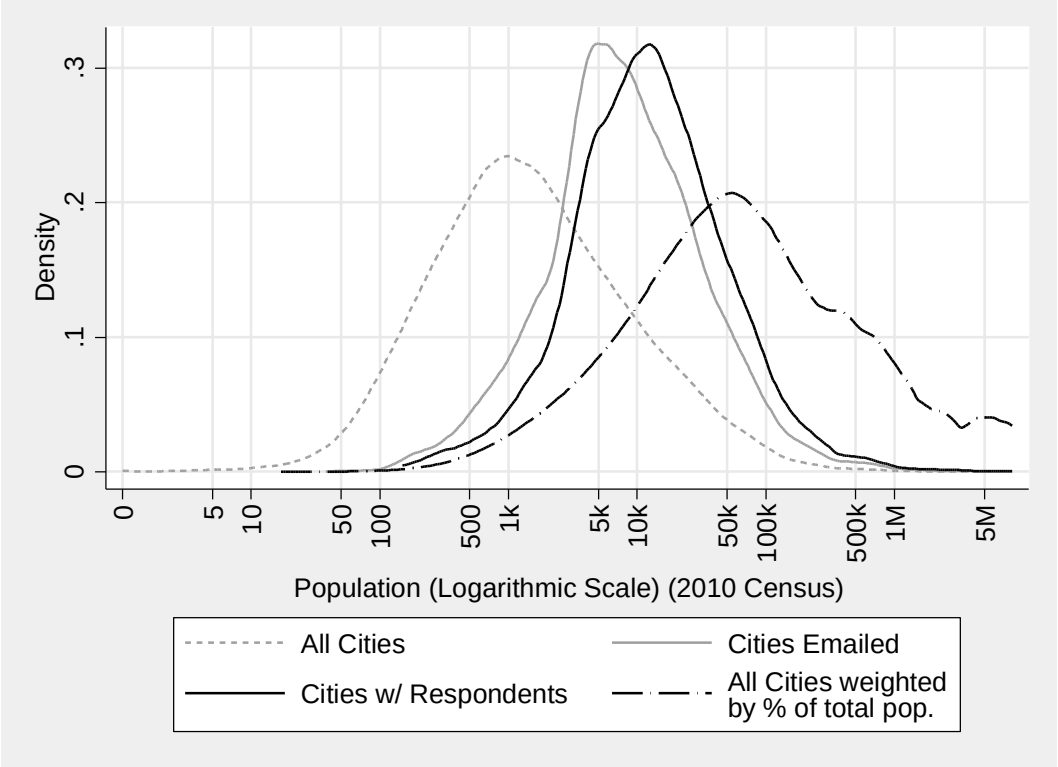


Figure A2: Density Plot of Municipal Characteristics from Table A3, Part I

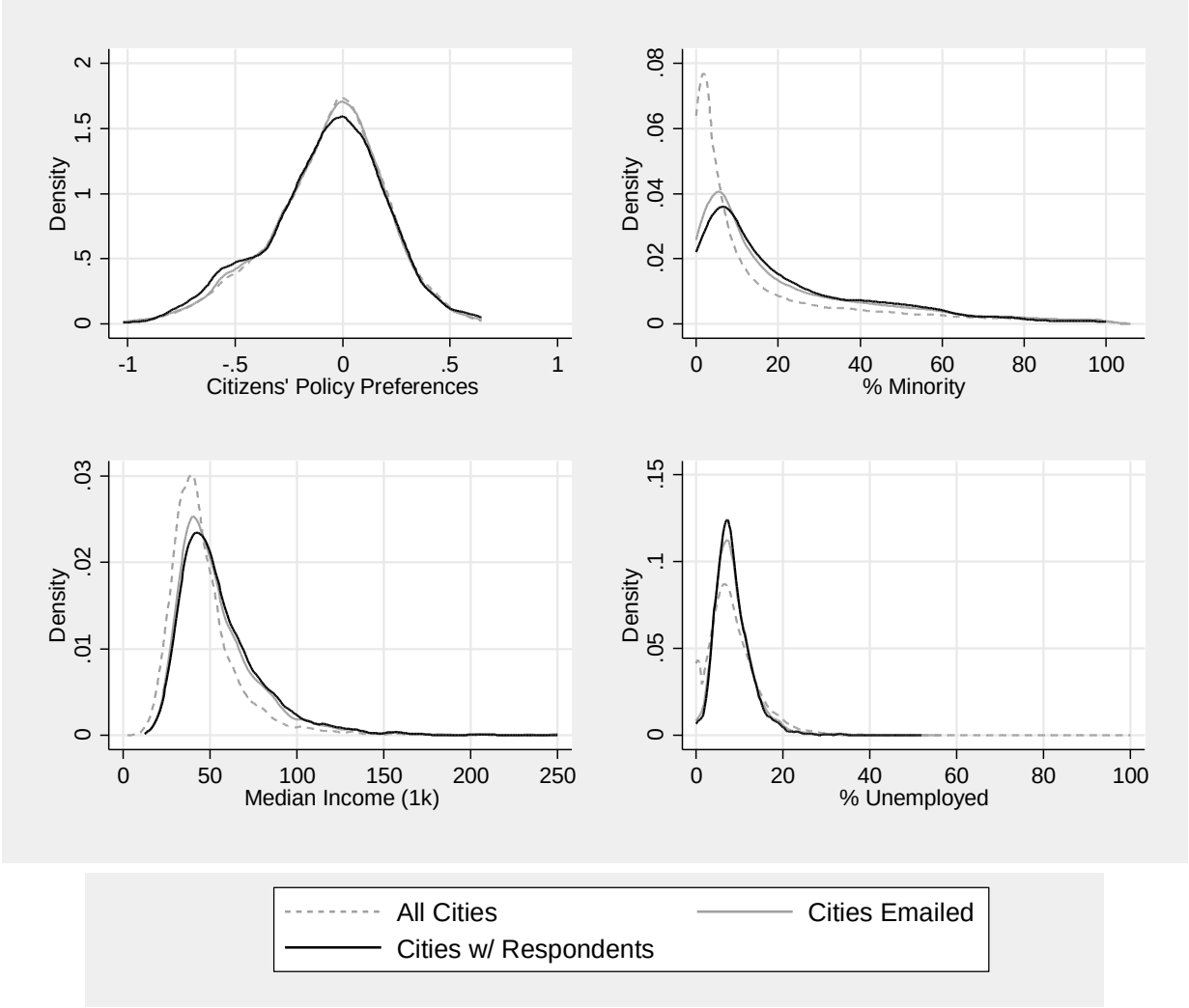


Figure A3: Density Plot of Municipal Characteristics from Table A3, Part II

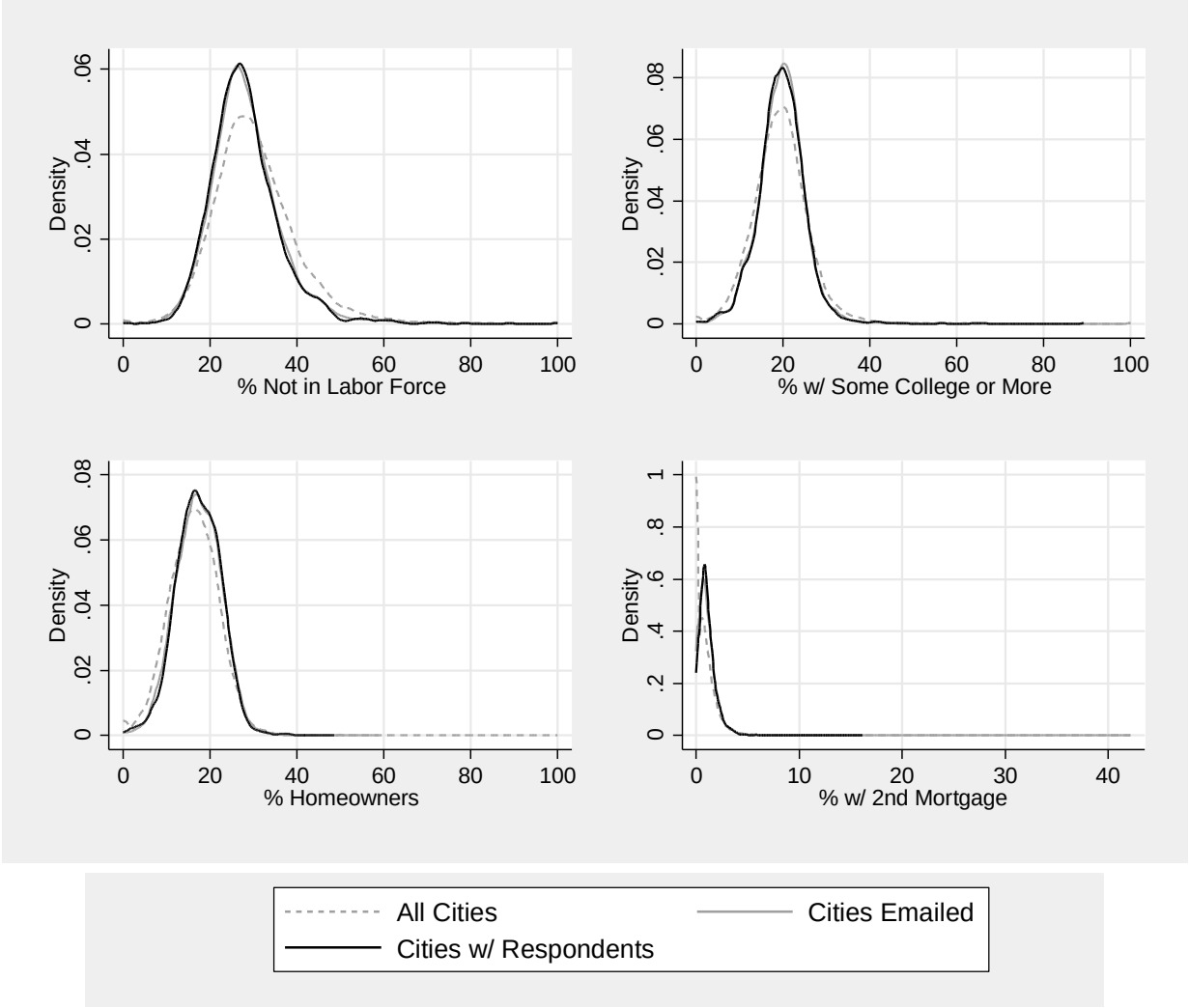


Table A4 displays individual level data on the officials emailed (the sampling frame) and the actual respondents (the sample). In general, there very little data are available on municipal officials outside of the data we gather in the survey. However, based on the officials' titles, which we collect for all officials emailed, we can identify mayors in the sampling frame. The results in Table A4 indicate that mayors in municipalities without city managers, meaning these mayors were the chief executive in charge of their municipality's daily operations, were more likely to respond to our survey request than members of the main legislative body (e.g., city

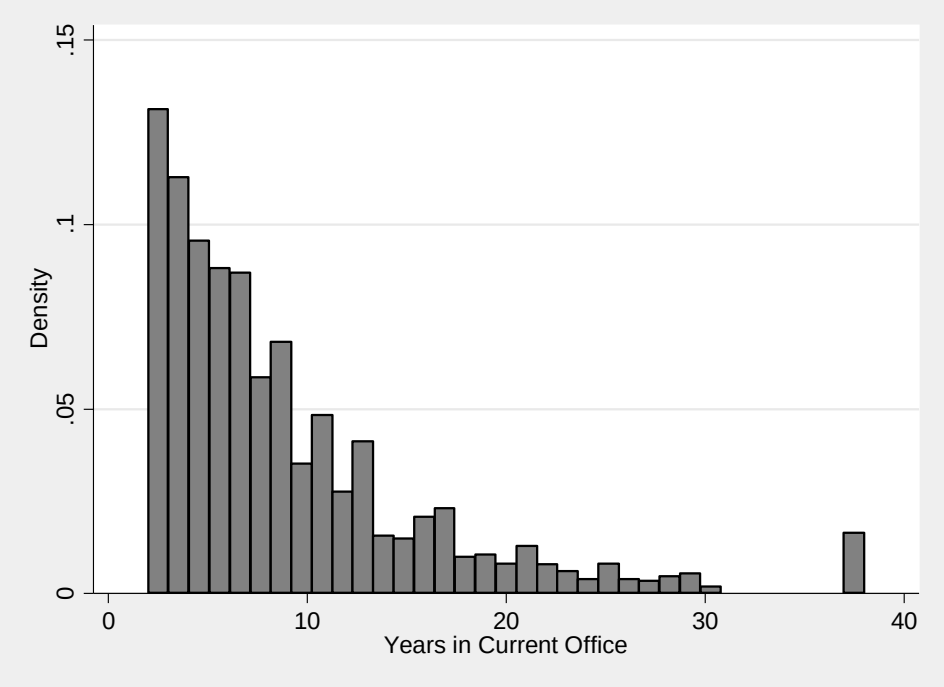
council). On the other hand, mayors in cities with city managers, meaning these mayors were a member of the governing legislative body and not the chief executive of the municipality, responded at similar rates as the other legislators in their municipalities. Finally, we are also able to identify officials' gender as it is indicated in the list we used from the for-profit organization that gathers elected officials' contact information. For those gathered from municipal websites, we identified officials' gender based on their first name. Female officials were more likely to respond, though this difference is substantively small.

Table A4: Descriptive Statistics of Officials Emailed and Respondents

		Officials Emailed	Respondents
% Mayors			
In cities without City Managers	Mean	13.4%	18.0%
	95% C.I.	(12.9%, 13.9%)	(16.1%, 19.9%)
In cities with City Managers	Mean	11.2%	12.7%
	95% C.I.	(10.7%, 11.7%)	(11.0%, 14.3%)
% Female	Mean	28.3%	31.5%
	95% C.I.	(27.8%, 28.7%)	(29.9%, 33.0%)

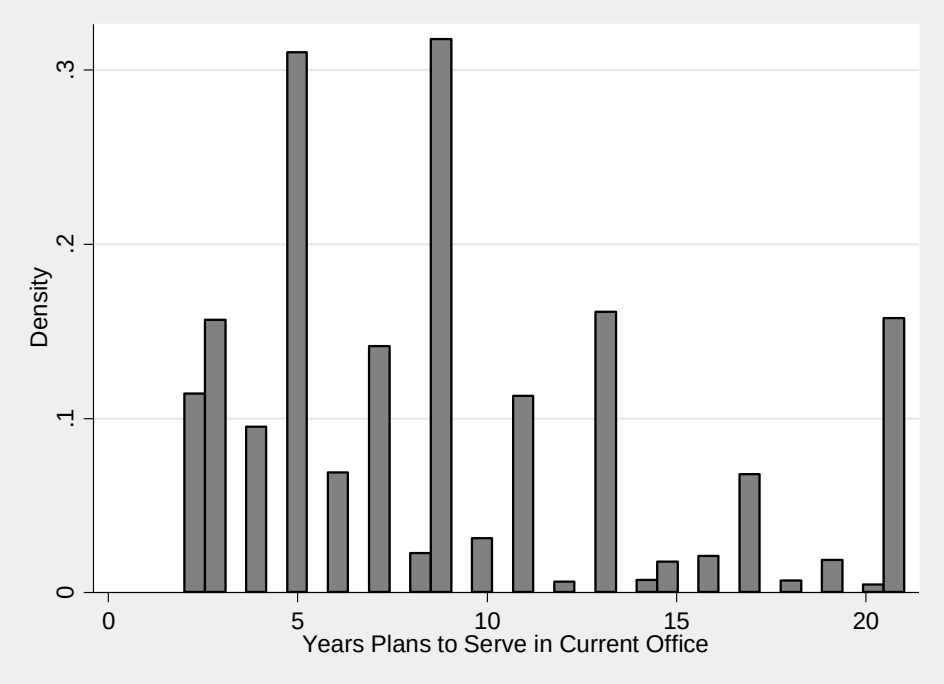
Finally, to illustrate that our sample of officials are diverse in terms of other politically important variables, we provide some descriptive statistics on the sample in tables A5 and A6 and figures A4 – A5. These data are from responses in the survey and show that our sample of officials vary significantly in terms of their partisan identity, self-placed ideology, term limits, partisan status of elections, electoral vulnerability, tenure, views on representation, static ambition, and progressive ambition.

Figure A4: Histogram of Years Served in Current Seat



Notes: Histogram shows response to question: "How many years have you served in your current office?" Response options ranged from 1 to 29 in one year increments and "30 or more."

Figure A5: Histogram of Years Planning to Serve in Current Office



Notes: Histogram shows response to question: "How many years do you hope to serve in your current office?" Response options ranged from 1 to 19 in one year increments and "20 or more."

Table A5: Characteristics of Respondents based on Survey Questions and Responses

Q: What party do you identify with?

	%
Republican	35.3
Democrat	34.0
Independent or Unaffiliated	27.0
Other	3.7
TOTAL	100

Q: Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

	%
Very Liberal	3.6
Liberal	12.8
Somewhat Liberal	14.3
Middle of the Road	24.6
Somewhat Conservative	21.7
Conservative	20.0
Very Conservative	3.1
TOTAL	100

Q: Which of the following best describes how individuals are elected to your position?

	%
The elections are NON-PARTISAN (i.e., candidates' party DOES NOT appear on the ballot)	73.0
The elections are PARTISAN (i.e., candidates' party appear on the ballot)	27.0
TOTAL	100

Q: Are there term limits for your current office?

	%
Yes	19.3
No	80.7
TOTAL	100

Q: By how many percentage points did you win your last election for this office?

	%
below 1% point	2.3
1 to almost 5% points	7.7
5 to 15% points	18.8
More than 15% points	34.8
I ran uncontested	32.3
I lost or did not run again	4.1
TOTAL	100

Q: When it comes to important issues, elected officials should…

	%
(1) Do what their constituents want, even if it conflicts with what the elected official thinks is right.	4.0
(2)	11.4
(3)	24.1
(4)	40.5
(5) Do what they think is right, even if it conflicts with what their constituents want.	20.0
TOTAL	100

Table A6: Respondents' Progressive Ambition

		Progressive Ambition		Level Might Run (%)			
		Freq.	%	Picked at least 1	Local	State	National
Highest Ambition	1) "It is something I definitely would like to undertake in the future."	466	12.7	96.6	58.8	54.3	21.9
	2) "It is something I might undertake if the opportunity presented itself."	927	25.2	97.4	53.2	62.5	18.6
	3) "I would not rule it out forever, but I currently have no interest."	1,580	43.0	93.4	59.8	41.9	7.7
Lowest Ambition	4) "It is something I would absolutely never do."	704	19.2	36.1	32.4	3.7	0.7
	TOTAL	3,677	100	83.9	52.9	41.3	10.9

Notes: The general Progressive Ambition question asked, "Which best characterizes your attitudes toward running for a higher office in the future?" The possible responses are shown in the rows numbered 1 through 4 on left side. The Level Might Run question asked, "Check the level of government of any offices (besides your current one) that you might ever be interested in running for." The possible response options were "Local Level(e.g., city, county, school board)"; "State Level(e.g., Legislature, Governor)"; and "National Level(e.g., Congress, President)." The percent choosing each level of government tabulated by their level of progressive ambition is indicated in the columns on the right side.

Supplementary Appendix References

Butler, Daniel M., and Adam M. Dynes. 2016. “How Politicians Discount the Opinions of Constituents with Whom They Disagree.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4):975-989.

Butler, Daniel M., and Adam M. Dynes. 2017. The American Municipal Officials Survey. http://www.municipalsurvey.org/

Tausanovitch, Chris, and Christopher Warshaw. 2013. "Measuring constituent policy preferences in congress, state legislatures, and cities." *The Journal of Politics* 75(2): 330-342.