Strategic Partisans: Electoral Motivations and Partisanship in Local Government Communication

Justin de Benedictis-Kessner*

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Abstract

Politicians use their communication to present a strategic version of themselves to voters. One component of this is the ideological element of communication, which leaders can employ strategically when it is most electorally advantageous and depending on the qualities of their electorate. Using press releases from cities in the U.S., I show that these patterns of strategic communication extend to local politicians. While local politicians use communication that is distinguishable by their partisan identities, politicians engage in more or less partisan communication styles according to the electoral environment. When politicians' partisanship is well-matched to the ideological leanings of their population, their communication is easily distinguished from that of the opposite party, but when they are misaligned with their constituents' ideology, they communicate in a way that is more similar to the opposite party. These findings provide evidence that the electoral connection influences politicians strategic communication in a way that threatens accountability.

*Assistant Professor, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, jdbk@hks.harvard.edu

Functioning democratic representation suggests that politicians present distinct policy positions that allow voters to make choices between potential policy options. In turn, accountability depends on the degree to which voters can hold politicians responsible for those policies once in office.[1] Both of these concepts hinge upon the availability of information provided to voters. Voters can then use such information to make informed choices at the ballot box.

Politicians themselves take an active role in providing this information to voters. A long line of research documents the ability of politicians to communicate strategically with their constituents (e.g. Fenno, 1978). Politicians have great incentive to do so if they believe that their communication may influence voters and help ensure their re-election (Mayhew, 1974). They may have even greater incentive to do so depending upon their electoral environment (Grimmer, 2013*a*). Democratic accountability relies on the ability of voters to select politicians through elections, but this process may be swayed by effective strategic communicators in certain circumstances.

Numerous researchers have studied the communication and representational styles of politicians at the national level (e.g. Grimmer, 2013*b*; Grimmer, Westwood, and Messing, 2014; Grose, Malhotra, and Van Houweling, 2015; Vavreck, 2009). Yet less attention has been paid to those politicians who serve in government at the state or local level. These local governments – cities, counties, and a host of special-purpose governments – constitute the majority of politicians, elections, and government spending in the United States. Yet we still know far less about the functioning of democratic representation and accountability in these settings, despite their importance (Trounstine, 2010). The variation of local governments in demographics, institutions, and electoral environments, however, provides an excellent opportunity to test theories of representation and accountability – phenomena central to political science (Warshaw, 2019).

[1]Indeed, in 1950 the American Political Science Association bemoaned the blurred lines between the Republican and Democratic parties, arguing that the lack of intraparty cohesion in both policy positions and voting records in Congress could lead to failures of accountability due to unclear electoral choices (Committee on Political Parties, 1950).

In this paper, I use a large-scale dataset of political communication and elections in large cities in the United States to assess partisan representation in politicians' communication. Using supervised machine-learning algorithms, I show that local politicians – despite the purportedly nonpartisan nature of local politics – use communication that is distinguishable by their partisan identities. Integrating information about the places and times that these politicians serve, I show that the alignment of these politicians with their electorate – the match between their partisanship and the partisan leanings of their electorate – corresponds with the degree to which local politicians engage in more or less partisan communication styles. When politicians are well-matched to the partisan leanings of their population, their communication is easily distinguished from that of the opposite party. In contrast, when politicians are more marginal or misaligned with their constituents' partisan leanings, they communicate in a way that is more similar to the opposite party.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I discuss previous research on representation and partisanship in local politics, and on the way that electoral motivations shape politicians' communication. Next, I introduce the local government press releases data and elections data that I use, along with my research design. I then discuss my findings and demonstrate how politicians strategically communicate in a more partisan way when they are ideologically aligned with their electorate than when they are marginal or misaligned. Finally, I briefly conclude and discuss the implications for future research on local politics, representation, and accountability.

Background

Democratic accountability relies at least partially on political elites who enact policies that are responsive to the views of their constituents. In turn, voters can punish or reward the outcomes of their leaders' policy choices. Partisanship can enable this by creating coherent brands that enable voters to easily make decisions between politicians of different parties.

Underlying this type of accountability is the assumption that there are differences between politicians from different political parties. Decades of political science research has documented that parties structure elite behavior at the national and state level. Republican legislators in both Congress and state legislatures have more conservative policy preferences than Democratic legislators (Lee, Moretti, and Butler, 2004; Shor and McCarty, 2011). Polarization between legislators from different parties in Congress has expanded in recent years (e.g. Hetherington, 2001; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2016). Such evidence suggests that partisanship does provide some distinction such that voters may easily tell the difference between politicians from opposing parties.

Most of the evidence of these partisan patterns comes from research on politicians at either the federal or state level and has ignored local politicians. This may be due to the longstanding wisdom that local-level politics is devoid of the type of partisan conflict that dominates national policy-making. According to this line of thinking, local governments primarily deal with nonpartisan issues because there is "no Republican way to pave a street and no Democratic way to lay a sewer" (Adrian, 1952, 766). Taken to their logical extension, these arguments suggest that partisanship might not structure local government policy or the behavior of local politicians.

Instead, the divisions in both local elite-level and local voter-level preferences may correspond not with partisanship but with other characteristics such as homeownership (Hankinson, 2018; Einstein, Glick, and Palmer, 2019), race and class (Hajnal and Trounstine, 2014; Schaffner, Rhodes, and La Raja, 2020), seniority (Anzia, 2019) or membership in other groups (e.g. Anzia, 2011). The types of policies that local governments debate may therefore not be the substantive areas where we expect partisanship to be most relevant (Anzia, 2020), and politicians may therefore form coalitions in government based on apartisan dimensions of politics (Bucchianeri, 2020). The constraints on local governments may further limit the role that partisanship plays in local politics (Gerber and Hopkins, 2011).

A growing body of evidence, however, suggests that state and local politics are increas-

ingly nationalized (Abramowitz and Webster, 2016; Hopkins, 2018).[2] Partisanship – a crucial component of national politics – may shape local politics just as it structures national politics. Indeed, recent research suggests that local politicians of different parties hold different views (Einstein and Glick, 2018; Lee, Landgrave, and Bansak, 2020). Local policy is also responsive to the partisanship and ideology of local residents (Einstein and Kogan, 2015; Palus, 2010; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014). Partisan elections may be a crucial mechanism by which local politics and policy are responsive (de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw, 2016, 2020). Even without partisan elections, ideological coalitions may form in city legislators' voting patterns (Burnett, 2019). This recent work suggests that partisanship is a powerful construct that shapes not just policy but the behavior of local politicians.

On the other other, we know less about the limits and conditions of partisanship's influence in local politics. The rich theories developed to explain partisanship, ideology, and polarization in national politics may help us to understand these limits on the influence of partisanship in local politics. In particular, I highlight one such condition here: the electoral environment in which politicians act — and their alignment with their constituents. This type of ideological or partisan mismatch may play a large role in the degree to which politicians' partisanship matters.

Research on national politicians' partisanship and ideology indicates that politicians are more likely to be extreme in places where the electorate is more extreme. In Congress, more extreme representatives serve in more extreme districts, while moderate representatives serve in moderate districts (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, 2009). Following this logic, the local politicians who serve in more extreme localities may be more likely to have more extreme ideological leanings, while those who serve in moderate localities are more likely to moderate their views or their influences on policy (Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014). This may either be caused by sincere ideological positions and effective electoral selection, or strategic politicians motivated by their desire for re-election who advocate for policy that represents

[2]Though see Das et al. (2019) for evidence that this may not extend to the topics that local politicians discuss on social media.

their constituents' wishes (Mayhew, 1974). This line of reasoning implies that the influence of partisanship may be largest in more ideologically extreme locations.[3] In contrast, in places with more moderate electorates, local politicians may have less incentive to move policy in a more ideologically extreme direction. These politicians may have an incentive to instead advocate for moderate policy.

Of course, detecting the moderating role of such factors in the influence of partisanship is difficult when data on local-level policies are sparse. Other data, such as the communication output of local politicians, may be useful as both a temporally-dense and varied source of politicians' behavior. Research on national politicians suggests that they take advantage of their ability to communicate to develop a representational style that helps them cater to their electorate (Fenno, 1978; Grimmer, Messing, and Westwood, 2012). In particular, Grimmer (2013*a*) shows that politicians serving in moderate localities may choose to broadcast their non-policy efforts, such as pork-barrel appropriations, rather than focusing on partisan policy positions. The electoral alignment of politicians can structure their communication independently from their policy positions. This type of strategic communication has the potential to hinder accountability.

Though previous research has identified such patterns in the communication of national politicians, we know less about the communication of subnational politics, Those studies that have examined the communication patterns of subnational governments have argued that local politicians are adept at strategic communication. Local politicians take advantage of the bully pulpit to highlight their own positive performance (de Benedictis-Kessner, 2020).[4] This work suggests that local politicians may be strategic in the partisan aspect of their communication much as they are strategic on other dimensions.

[3]Paradoxically, this may also lead to an unfortunate inability to detect partisanship's influence on policy in places where this influence is strongest because of the lack of counterfactual comparisons under de facto one-party rule. Thus the focus of recent research in the causal inference tradition on places with close elections may have led researchers to search for effects in places where partisanship is likely to have its smallest relative effects despite having the strongest econometric leverage to detect its causal effects.

[4]Separate, some research has suggested that local politicians may also highlight pressing policy issues, such as climate change and sustainability (Boussalis, Coan, and Holman, 2018), and frame issues differentially based on their personal style and gender (Holman, 2016).

If a similar logic motivates local politicians, we might expect patterns of local political communication to correspond to the electoral environment in cities as well. This implies that politicians at the local level who serve in more aligned places — where the majority of the electorate matches their partisanship — are more likely to be partisan in their communication. Meanwhile, local politicians who are less aligned with their electorate may be less partisan in their communication.

Data and Research Design

In this section I describe the communications and elections data and the research design that I use to test these theoretical questions.

First, I use data on municipal press releases ranging from 1989 to 2017 in 50 of the largest cities in the United States, which I display in Figure 1.[5] These press releases are gathered from the websites of each individual city, where they are generally posted in some sort of municipal press release archive.[6] I use these press releases as a measure of the general style of communication released by the local government in each city under each mayoral administration.[7] Together, these data encompass 111,892 press releases in these cities, which I display within each city in Figure 2, with the date along the horizontal axis, the city along the vertical axis, and each individual press release plotted as a black point.[8]

I combine these communications data with data on the leaders of these same cities. These elections data contain the names and partisan identities of the mayors in power at

[5]Many of these press releases are reprinted in local newspapers either partially or wholesale (Franklin, 2008, 1986; Turk and Franklin, 1987), especially in an age of declining local media resources (Martin and McCrain, 2019; Peterson, 2020; Rubado and Jennings, 2020).

[6]For more details on the data collection process of these press releases, see de Benedictis-Kessner (2020).

[7]While in many cities, the press releases are not written directly by a mayor or her staff, they reflect general priorities and an expressed agenda that filters down from the city leaders regardless of specific authorship. This means that my measurement of communication styles is a potentially noisy estimate of the politicians' own "true" communication style that they might engage in were they not communicating via the apparatus of the city press office. This potential for noise in measurement implies that the results presented here may be conservative estimates of how strategic politicians are in their own unfiltered communication.

[8]In Albuquerque and Omaha, dates were unavailable for all press releases, which unfortunately means that I cannot display them in this plot or use them in the main analyses of this paper.

Figure 1: Large cities in press releases dataset.

various times. These data primarily come from de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw (2016), though I have augmented them with more recent mayoral elections in targeted cities in my communications data for which they were missing. I plot the elections in Figure 2 as vertical lines, the color of which corresponds to the winner of that election in each city. I use these data to determine the partisan control of the mayoral office during each time period in the press releases data, and aggregate the text data within each mayoral term to measure that mayoral administration's communication style.

Finally, I use a number of different measures of a city's electoral environment to encapsulate the marginality of a given mayoral administration. First, I follow others in the study of representation and use the share of the vote for the Democratic candidate (Barack Obama) in the 2008 presidential election (e.g. Einstein and Kogan, 2015; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014). Second, I use survey-based estimates of the ideology of a city's population

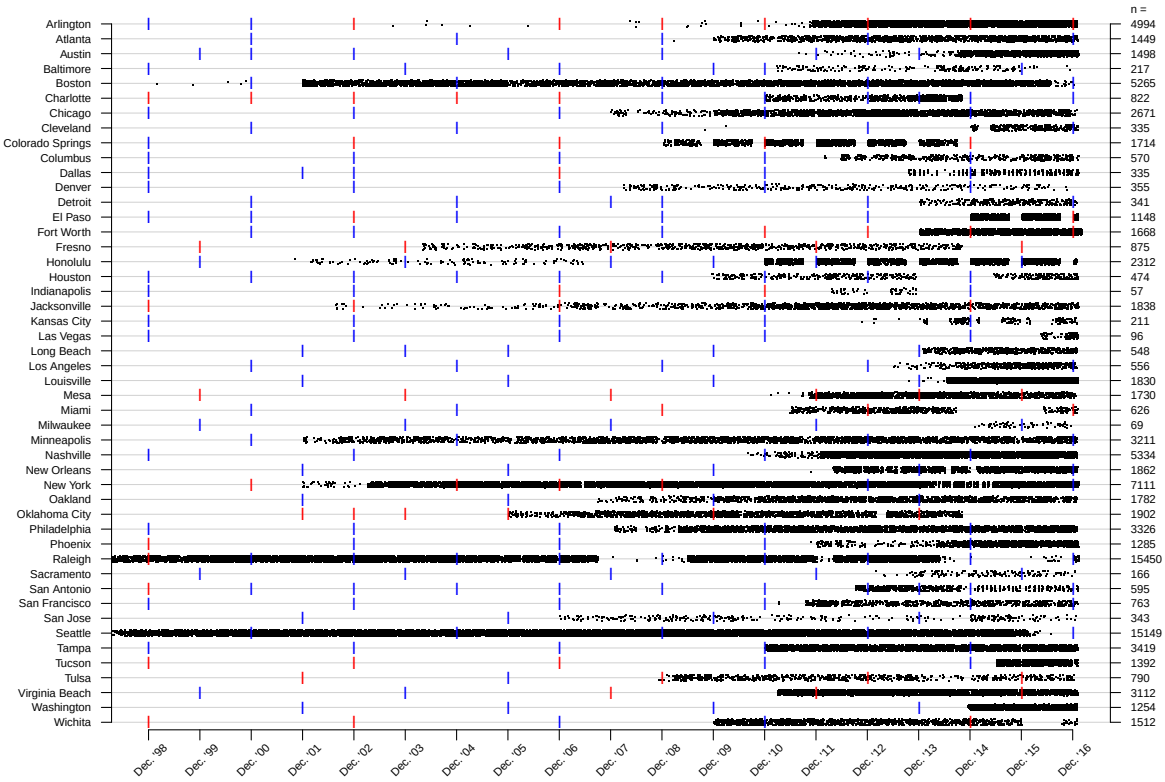

Figure 2: Press releases data and elections in large cities over time. Each press release is represented by a single black point, while elections are represented by vertical lines, the color of which corresponds to the partisan identity of the winner of the election (with Democrats represented by blue lines and Republicans by red lines).

from a multilevel regression and post-stratification approach (Lax and Phillips, 2009; Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2013) as produced by Tausanovitch and Warshaw (2014). Both of these measures capture the degree to which each mayoral administration is either aligned (representatives partisanship matching the partisanship or ideology of their constituents) or misaligned (leaders in cities with a larger share of the constituents who do not match their partisanship or ideological leanings).

In order to leverage these data to examine questions about partisanship and communication styles, I use a combination of empirical techniques. First, I use a number of preprocessing techniques to reduce the amount of noise in the text data. I remove common stopwords (such as articles, conjunctions, or prepositions) in the data, substitute the placeholder word "cityname" for the proper noun corresponding to each city's name (D'Orazio

et al., 2014), and eliminate all non-alphanumeric characters. I also "stem" all words in the press releases, which combines different tenses or singular/plural forms of the same words into one word stem (Porter, 1980).[9] I then combine the text of all press releases issued during each mayor's term into one meta-document for each mayoral administration. I then discard the press releases documents for any mayoral administration with fewer than 10 press releases during that mayoral term to reduce the impact of measurement error resulting from fewer words upon which to estimate mayoral communication patterns. This results in a condensed dataset of press releases from 141 mayoral administrations in 48 cities. I use each of these mayoral administrations as the unit of observation for the analyses that follow.

Using these processed data, I harness several supervised machine learning algorithmic approaches for classification and repeated k-fold cross-validation. Though each method differs slightly in its specifics, the overall goal of these methods is, first, to divide the set of all units (the words used in a mayoral administration's collection of press releases) into k folds, or groups, then train a classification model to predict the partisanship of the mayor on $k-1$ folds of the data, then test that method of classification on the held-out kth fold of the data, and repeat this process k times such that each fold of data is used once as a test set.[10] I then repeat this process over n simulations, in which the units in each of the k folds are chosen at random each time. Through this series of repeated k-fold cross-validations, all of these classification methods produce an overall classification accuracy (i.e. across all units and all simulations, how often does the algorithm correctly predict the partisanship of mayors from their press releases) and an individual unit-level classification accuracy (i.e. throughout each of the n simulations, how often is that unit correctly predicted). I use the former (overall algorithm-level cross-validation accuracy) to evaluate and compare various

[9] While these pre-processing techniques are common in text analysis research, but introduce potential additional "researcher degrees of freedom" into my analyses, so I replicate the main analyses in the paper without stemming of words in the Appendix.

[10] Note that there are large imbalances between the two classes in the press releases data – there are more Democratic mayoral administrations than Republican ones, Classification methods trained on imbalanced-class data are notoriously noisy in their predictive ability. I therefore downsample the majority class (Democratic mayoral administrations) when forming each training set and training the classification algorithms.

methods of classification. I use the latter – that is, the ease with which each mayoral administration's press releases are classified as belonging to their party – as my primary dependent variable of interest.

The methods for classification that I employ here are, necessarily, a subset of potential supervised learning techniques. Though many classification algorithms – including linear regression, for instance – perform well at prediction of binary labels such as partisanship, the high-dimensional nature of text analysis introduces several issues for traditional prediction. As such I use two algorithms that are particularly well-suited to the task of classification in a sparse high-dimensional space: logistic regression and support vector machines (SVM). Both methods use counts of words used in press releases, irrespective of their order within documents, as predictors of partisanship.

Results

As a first look at the partisan differences in communication patterns in local politics, I display the most common terms in the corpus of press releases under mayors of different parties in Figure 3. In the left panel, I display the count of the top ten most common words under Democratic mayors, and in the right panel I display the ten most common words in press releases under Republican mayors. Among mayors of both political parties, the most common word – by far – is the name of the city in which the press release is issued. In addition, many of these most frequent words are common under both Democratic and Republican mayors.

Of course, a basic comparison of the most frequent words does not encapsulate the complete picture of any potential differences between communication patterns under mayors of opposing parties. I next move to my primary empirical approach using several machine learning algorithmic approaches for classification. I first present the overall classification accuracy of different methods for predicting the political partisanship of all mayors in my

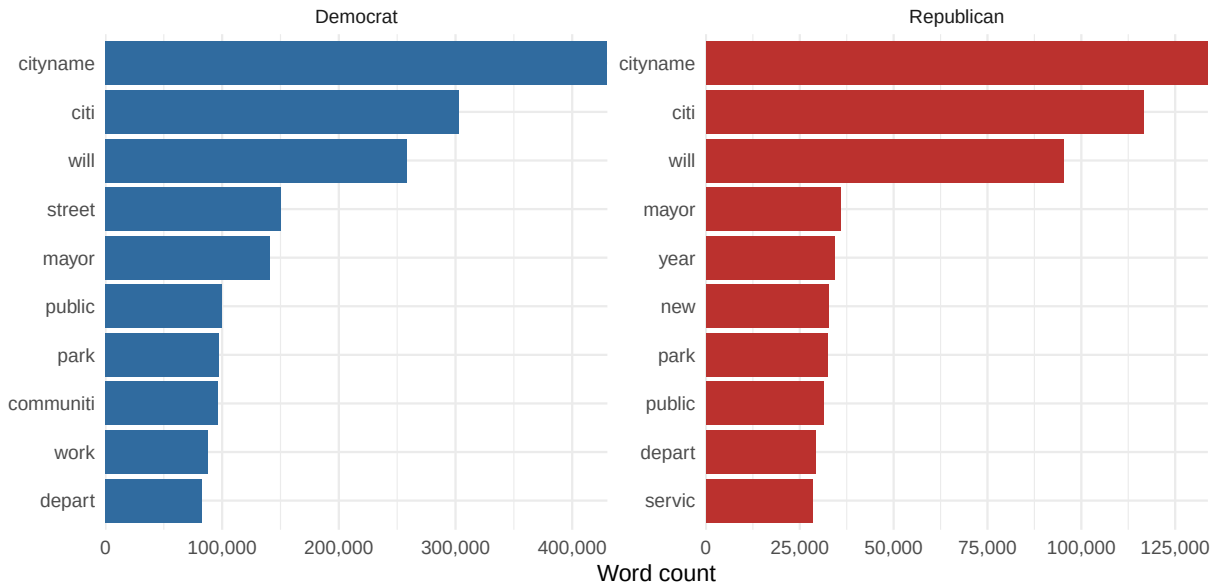

Figure 3: Most common words in press releases issued under Democratic mayors (left) and Republican mayors (right).

dataset from the words contained in their press releases, and then present results examining the classification accuracy of these methods for predicting the partisanship of individual mayors and the moderators of this individual-level accuracy.

In Tables 1 and 2 I present the overall 5-fold cross-validation classification accuracy for each of the methods for classification that I employ in the form of a confusion matrix. For each method, the rows of the tables indicate the actual partisanship of mayoral administrations, while the columns indicate the predicted partisanship of the mayoral administrations based on the text of their press releases over the course of the 5-fold cross-validations. As these tables show, the overall classification accuracy of all methods are acceptable but far from perfect: on the whole, SVM was only able to correctly predict 73.6% of mayors' partisan labels. Logistic regression performed similarly, and was only able to correctly classify 70.1%. The moderate performance of all classification methods suggests that there are not particularly consistent distinctions between language used in press releases from mayors of opposite parties. Of course, these moderate levels of accuracy could be due to other factors, such as press releases being a representation of politicians' communication patterns

that reflects their strategic motivations. Such strategic communication could lead to poor predictive accuracy despite consistent underlying patterns.

Table 1: SVM Classification Accuracy.

	Predicted Democrat	Predicted Republican
Actual Democrat	79	31
Actual Republican	9	34

Table 2: Logistic Regression Classification Accuracy.

	Predicted Democrat	Predicted Republican
Actual Democrat	76	34
Actual Republican	11	32

In order to examine whether this overall predictive accuracy belies heterogeneity in the partisan behavior of mayors, I next move to examining the classification accuracy of each individual mayoral administration's press releases. Following approaches developed in comparative politics for legislatures with relatively low degrees of party discipline (Peterson and Spirling, 2018), I use classification accuracy itself for specific units of observation as a quantity of interest in assessing the nature of partisanship. To do so, I calculate the classification accuracy of individual mayoral administrations' press releases across many repeated iterations of the 5-fold cross-validation approach using the overall most accurate classification model, SVM. Specifically, I repeat the following procedure 1000 times: I randomly sampling $k = 5$ folds of my data, train each classification model on $k - 1$ folds of the data, and assess its accuracy on the kth fold of the data. In each iteration of this procedure, each unit is either classified correctly or incorrectly when in the kth fold test segment of the data. I calculate the unit-level classification accuracy as the average probability of correct classification for each mayoral administration across all 1000 iterations. In Figure 5 I show this unit-level classification accuracy, plotted along the horizontal axis, in order from the most easily classified mayoral administration, plotted at the top of the vertical axis, with the color of each mayoral administration's individual point corresponding to their partisanship.

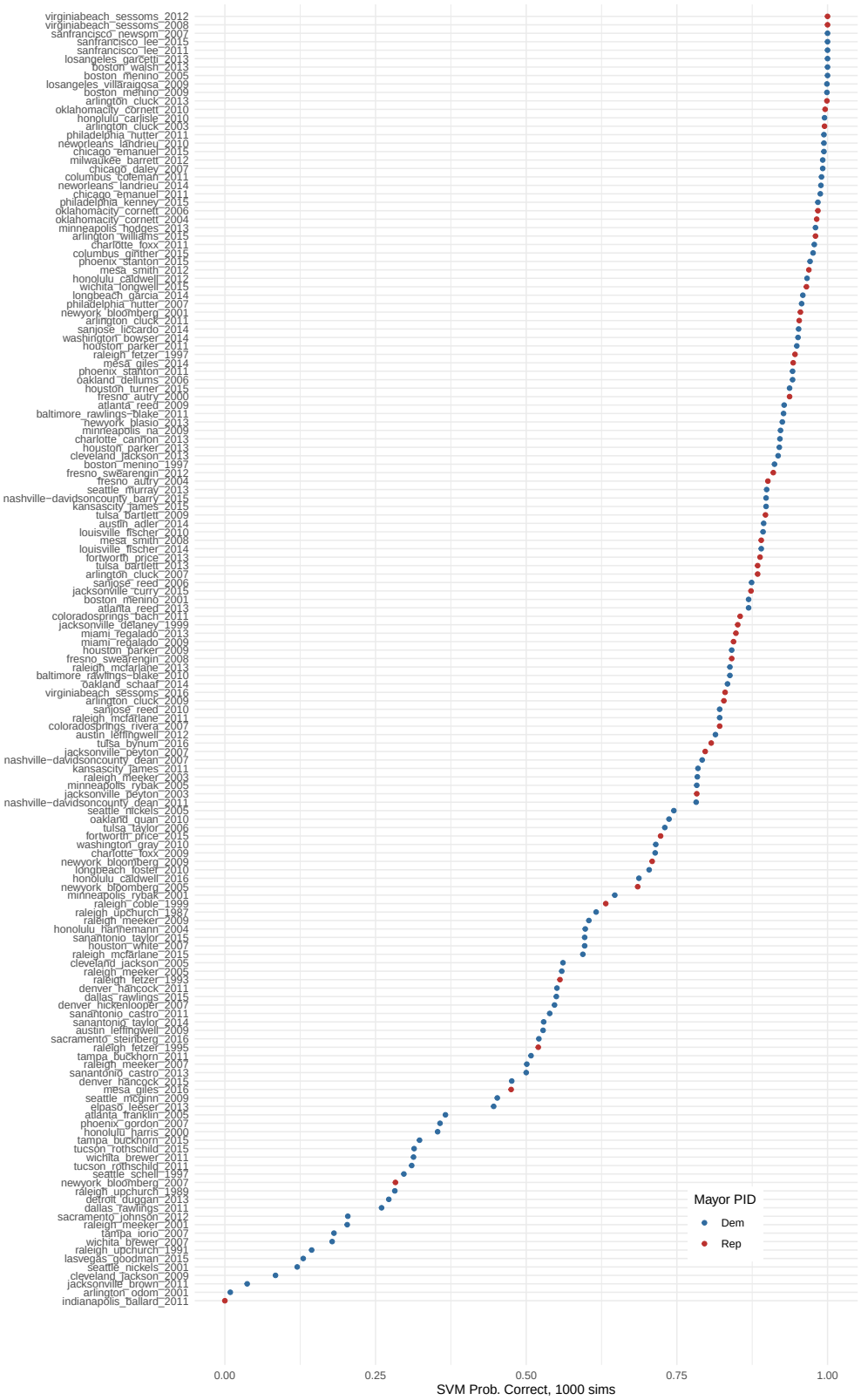

Figure 4: Unit-Level Classification Accuracy.

As Figure 5 shows, the press releases under some mayoral administrations, such as those in Virginia Beach, VA, under Mayor Will Sessoms or San Francisco, CA, under Mayor Ed Lee, are easily classified by their partisanship. Other sets of press releases are less easily classified, such as those in Arlington, TX, under Mayor Elzie Odom, or Indianapolis, IN, under Mayor Greg Ballard.

How Electoral Alignment Moderates Partisan Communication

I next examine the moderating role of the electoral environment in which local politicians operate on their classification accuracy – that is, under what electoral circumstances local political communication is more easily classified as the party of the actual mayor at the time. I use my two measures of the electorate's preferences, the Democratic presidential voteshare in 2008 and the conservatism of a city's residents (Tausanovitch and Warshaw, 2014), to assess the electoral environment's moderating role in local political communication.

In Figure 5, I plot the probability of correctly classifying each mayoral administration's press releases, along the vertical axis, with points colored according to the mayor's partisanship. In the left panel, I compare this classification accuracy to the 2008 Democratic presidential voteshare along the horizontal axis, and in the right panel, compared to the ideology of the city's population. In both panels, I plot trend lines for mayors of each party.

Similar patterns in the classification accuracy of mayoral administrations by the mayor's electoral alignment are evident in both panels. In the left panel, cities with a more Democratic-leaning electorate (towards the right of the plot) with a Democratic mayor (plotted with the blue points and line) are more easily classified by their party. Those with a Republican mayor, however, are less easily classified when the city is more Democratic. In the right panel, cities with a more conservative population (towards the right of the plot) with a Democratic mayor are less easily classified by their party, as shown with the blue line. In cities with a Republican mayor and a more conservative population, on the other hand, the press releases are more easily classified. I examine these interactive relationships between mayoral partisan-

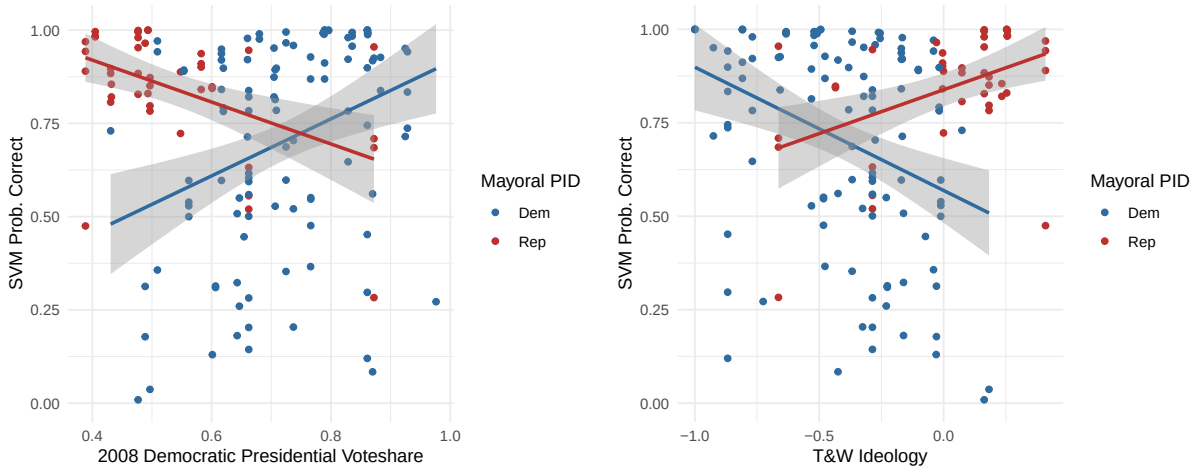

Figure 5: Unit-Level Classification Accuracy by 2008 Presidential Vote and by Tausanovitch & Warshaw Ideology Score.

ship and electorate characteristics more systematically in Appendix A, where I display tables examining the individual mayoral administration-level classification accuracy. For both local partisanship and local ideology, the communications of cities whose mayors are more aligned with their local constituencies are statistically significantly more accurately classified than the communications of cities whose mayors are less aligned.

Together, these plots show that when mayors are more aligned with the partisanship and ideology of their city's populations, their press releases are more partisan in their character. When mayors are not aligned with their city, on the other hand, their press releases are less easily classified. This suggests that local politicians' communication is more ideologically moderate when their population is more moderate, but more partisan when their city is more ideologically extreme.[11]

Conclusion

Partisan accountability rely on the distinction between political parties. Political communication is one way that politicians present themselves to voters to establish this distinction.

[11] In Appendix B I also examine the degree to which city-level overall expenditures moderate this relationship, which suggests that this relationship is also moderated by city-level policy decisions.

Politicians may make use of this form of self-presentation to strategically emphasize (or ignore) certain aspects of their platforms. In this paper, I show that cities' official press releases are distinguishable by the parties of their mayors. I also show that when the partisan leanings of a city's population are better aligned with the partisanship of their mayors, city leaders are more partisan in their communication. However, when mayors are less aligned with their constituents, local communication is less easily distinguished from communication of the opposite party.

These results further develop theories of political communication developed at the national level by applying them to the local electoral environment. In addition, the research presented here helps to resolve some theories of the distinctiveness of local politics. Some have argued that local politics and policy have little opportunity for partisan influence. Yet recent evidence suggests that partisanship can shape policy at the local level even in close electoral environments (de Benedictis-Kessner and Warshaw, 2016, 2020). At the same time, rates of re-election for local politicians are quite high across large- and medium-sized cities (de Benedictis-Kessner, 2018; Trounstine, 2011, 2012), and citizens often have trouble gathering information about the policy positions of their local leaders (Bernhard and Freeder, 2020; Crowder-Meyer, Gadarian, and Trounstine, 2020; Holman and Lay, 2020). The patterns of communication and their correspondence to the local political environments that I identify here may help to reconcile these facts. While partisanship plays a role in policymaking, politicians can strategically communicate in ways that disguise this when they are misaligned with the electorate, thus bolstering their chances at re-election despite their marginality.

Such strategic behavior – clear partisan communication in electorally safe environments but less obvious partisanship in competitive places – may not only bolster incumbents' reelection chances. It may also obfuscate the real policy differences between politicians from opposing parties to voters. These differences are key for voters to make informed choices in elections. Though voters can gather information on candidates from many other sources,

press releases are still one form of communication that is likely to influence voters. When this strategic communication is used by local politicians in the ways identified in this paper, it may threaten the quality of partisan accountability.

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Supplementary Appendix for "Hidden Partisans: Partisanship in Local Government Communication"

Justin de Benedictis-Kessner

January 8, 2021

A Tabular Results

Table A1: SVM Accuracy by Mayoral Party and Electorate Characteristics

	Dependent variable:	
	SVM Prob. Correct	
	(1)	(2)
2008 Democratic Presidential voteshare	0.763**	
	(0.312)	
T&W Ideology		−0.330**
		(0.131)
Republican Mayor	0.993***	0.270***
	(0.254)	(0.066)
2008 Democratic Presidential voteshare × Rep. Mayor	−1.326***	
	(0.356)	
T&W Ideology × Rep. Mayor		0.564***
		(0.154)
Constant	0.151	0.569***
	(0.229)	(0.064)
Observations	152	152
R^2	0.169	0.176
Adjusted R^2	0.152	0.159
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	
	Standard errors clustered by city.	

Table A2: LR Accuracy by Mayoral Party and Electorate Characteristics

	Dependent variable:	
	LR Prob. Correct	
	(1)	(2)
2008 Democratic Presidential voteshare	0.799**	
	(0.344)	
T&W Ideology		−0.325**
		(0.143)
Republican Mayor	1.128***	0.334***
	(0.274)	(0.072)
2008 Democratic Presidential voteshare × Rep. Mayor	−1.441***	
	(0.388)	
T&W Ideology × Rep. Mayor		0.584***
		(0.170)
Constant	0.071	0.517***
	(0.252)	(0.071)
Observations	152	152
R^2	0.210	0.204
Adjusted R^2	0.194	0.188
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	
	Standard errors clustered by city.	

B Moderation by Local Government Expenditures

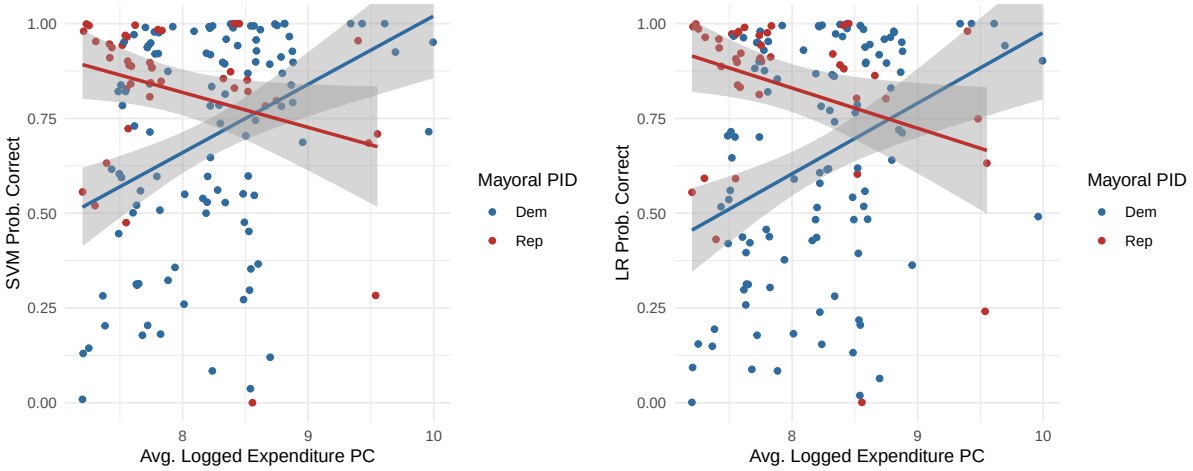

Figure A1: Unit-Level Classification Accuracy by Logged Total Expenditures per capita.

Table A3: Classification Accuracy by Mayoral Party and Local Expenditures

	Dependent variable:	
	SVM Prob. Correct	LR Prob. Correct
	(1)	(2)
Avg. Logged Expenditures PC	0.180***	0.186***
	(0.049)	(0.058)
Republican Mayor	2.338***	2.565***
	(0.556)	(0.604)
Avg. Logged Expenditures PC × Rep. Mayor	−0.272***	−0.292***
	(0.068)	(0.074)
Constant	−0.782*	−0.887*
	(0.415)	(0.483)
Observations	152	152
R^2	0.164	0.198
Adjusted R^2	0.147	0.182
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
		Standard errors clustered by city.