


January 2001

CHAPTER 10: UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICS AND POLICY OUTCOMES: DOES CLASS IDENTITY MATTER?

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Recommended Citation

HERMAN L. BOSCHKEN. "CHAPTER 10: UPPER-MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICS AND POLICY OUTCOMES: DOES CLASS IDENTITY MATTER?" *THE BREAKDOWN OF CLASS POLITICS: A DEBATE ON POST-INDUSTRIAL STRATIFICATION* (2001): 225-247.

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2 **Pre-publication copy:** This paper was published in Terry Nichols Clark and Seymour Martin Lipset (eds),
3 The Breakdown of Class Politics: A Debate on Post-Industrial Stratification (Washington DC: Woodrow
4 Wilson Press and the Johns Hopkins Press, 2001). Pre-publication copyright by author.
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8 ***CHAPTER 10: UPPER MIDDLE CLASS POLITICS AND POLICY OUTCOMES:***
9 ***DOES CLASS IDENTITY MATTER?***

10
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13
14

15 Political influence in American policymaking has been a longstanding theme in
16 urban politics. For years, Lasswell's original query about "who gets what, when and
17 how?" (1936) has inspired generations of scholars in interest group theory, community
18 power, intergovernmental relations, and public organization theory. The research
19 response has left political scientists well stocked with answers to the query, but the
20 results remain incomplete from a larger social science perspective. Aimed at discovering
21 the influence of actors engaged in the political process, most urban policy research
22 (except a few like Dahl, 1961) generally overlook the indirect influence of anonymous
23 social genre. The question raised by this book, then, may not be "does class matter?" but
24 "in what form does it matter?"

25 Typically, we assume symbolic "actors" or identities are not of organized groups,
26 and hence lack specific interest and direct political force necessary to sway public
27 policymaking. The result is that such influence on policy outcomes is not usually
28 considered. The oversight may be especially symptomatic in the study of social class.
29 This chapter examines a little acknowledged thesis about an upper middle class (UMC)
30 genre skewing a public agency's outcomes in ways that favor some interests at the
31 expense of others. The thesis argues that policy outcomes are indirectly influenced by the
32 "systemic power" (Stone, 1980) of an UMC genre apart from the influence of political
33 activities of UMC persons.

34 Given the qualitative nature of this relationship, the research offers a modest
35 empirical test which links multivariate analysis with inferential reasoning. This includes
36 developing (1) a multiple perspectives framework of policy outcomes (the dependent
37 variables), (2) a demographic profile of the UMC (the independent variable), and three
38 hypotheses linking the UMC with policy outcomes. Hypotheses are tested using controls
39 for rival theses in a regression analysis of a nationwide sample of urban transit agencies.
40

41 **Policy Outcomes From Multiple Perspectives**
42

43 Before we propose connections between an UMC and policymaking, we first must
44 ask about the meaning of "policy outcomes." In a plural society, institutional theory
45 envisions the public agency "as a going concern, taking account of relevant stakeholders,
46 attending to long-run interests, being sensitive to the operative structure of authority"
47 (Selznick, 1996, p. 272). Analyzing the agency's policy outcomes therefore involves a
48 multiple-perspectives approach. However, with differences in perspective come

1 disagreements over the benefits of outcomes, making this approach even more essential
2 to policy analysis when "political actors. . . have significantly different expectations about
3 bureaucratic performance" (Gruber, 1987, p. 142).

4 Since a determination of "goodness" in agency results varies according to the
5 interests of different stakeholders, the study measures policy results from a comparative
6 perspective involving both administration-centered and external political-centered
7 outcomes (Boschken, 1994, 1992; Bozeman, 1988). The analytical structure imparts an
8 ability to compare policymakers' priorities in choosing who gets what (Levy, Meltsner
9 and Wildavsky, 1974), and reveals patterns of policy outcomes skewed to favor some
10 stakeholders more than others. The framework therefore differs from single-norm
11 analysis found in most studies of efficiency (e.g., Downs and Larkey, 1986),
12 effectiveness (e.g., Chubb and Moe, 1990), and innovation (e.g., Clark, 1994).

13 The framework's analytical focus is on outcome skewness and consists of indices
14 (the dependent variables) representing different types of agency performance. A
15 condition of skewness exists when an agency exhibits outcome emphases and de-
16 emphases which combined form an asymmetrical pattern of performance. The key
17 assumption is that with limited resources, an agency will not and cannot emphasize all
18 legitimate outcomes. For example, when caught in a paradox, one agency might skew
19 outcomes to favor bureaucratic efficiency, while another skews outcomes to emphasize
20 social program effectiveness.

21 Possible skewed patterns in this comparative framework are composed empirically
22 of three types of agency outcomes, each fostered by different stakeholder perspectives.
23 The first and second types -- labeled outcomes of strategic organizational effectiveness
24 and outcomes of operational efficiency -- are preferred by the agency's administrative
25 constituencies located at different levels within the agency. The third perspective --
26 labeled outcomes of social-program effectiveness -- is the principal interest of non-
27 market "user" constituencies.

28 The first of these, strategic organizational effectiveness, is most often associated
29 with a senior management focused on the vitality of the organization as-a-whole. With its
30 substantial professional stake in agency prominence, this constituency promotes its
31 economic status and overall budgetary growth (Niskanen, 1971). Moreover, senior
32 management is charged "with identifying new strategies and new projects that will add to
33 the organization's overall strength" (Doig and Mitchell, 1992, p. 21). Measures of this
34 outcome fit a standard of organizational effectiveness because they show "the ability of
35 an organization to exploit its environment to obtain resources, while maintaining an
36 autonomous bargaining position" (Mindlin and Aldrich, 1975, p. 382).

37 The second outcome category is operational efficiency, which is the domain of
38 management charged with controlling resources in daily matters. Operational outcomes
39 are about "efficient ways of bringing services to the public" (Doig and Mitchell, 1992, p.
40 21), and represent goodness in terms of minimizing cost-per-unit by "adherence to
41 engineering standards, accounting rules..." (Doig and Mitchell, 1992, p. 25). Included in
42 this are the costs of administration, service delivery, and facilities maintenance and
43 replacement.

44 Both administration-centered outcomes differ from one another in managerial
45 function and motivation, and both are contrasted with the third outcome category of
46 social-program effectiveness. Bozeman's distinctions between "economic" and "political"

1 sources of agency legitimacy (1988) offer a way to contrast this third outcome. From an
2 extra-market perspective, social programs provide results that seldom would arise from
3 market transactions. Natural market demand fails to result because either (1) those who
4 want such outcomes do not have the means to pay, or (2) the costs and benefits of such
5 service outcomes cannot be meaningfully related to each other by a market transaction.

6 Since not all political demands are legitimate and worthy of governmental
7 response, criteria for social-program effectiveness usually are determined by legislative
8 mandates and interagency agreements. Examples of legitimated public demands range
9 from transit services provided to the handicapped under the Americans for Disabilities
10 Act to broader programs promoting economic development and mobility for the urban
11 poor.

12 By threading together the above three policy-outcome categories (henceforth called
13 Outcome I, II and III, respectively) into a multiple-perspectives framework, we make
14 possible a comparison of government policymaking according to different patterns of
15 outcome emphasis and de-emphasis. This forms the basis on which to ask why such
16 variance in skewed patterns occurs across localities.

17 18 The Upper Middle Class Thesis

19
20 UMC influence on politics has drawn a large social science following even though many
21 disagree over the existence and meaning of "class" in America. To contemporary
22 policymakers and scholars studying an UMC, this class genre exhibits certain central
23 tendencies that are distinct albeit empirically elusive. Robert Reich, for example,
24 summarizes the UMC as "the glass-tower people" -- those institutionally influential types
25 who are economically ascendant, college educated and professionally employed (in
26 Farney, 1994, p. 1). Stone (1980) theorizes about a similarly-defined "upper stratum" that
27 holds an indirect and impersonal influence on policymakers through systemic power.
28 Clark (1994a) benchmarks a compatible profile (but adds age) which aspires to a "New
29 Political Culture." Brint (1994) outlines activities of a "matrix" of "educated
30 professionals" defined by their "employment situation."

31 Over the last century, writings have reinforced a continuity in these contemporary
32 visions of an upper middle class. With regard to high and rising income, Riesman saw
33 fiscal resources taking on increased social meaning as society moved away from a
34 "scarcity psychology" toward an "abundance psychology" (1961, p. 19; 1964). Maslow
35 (1954) predicted that as basic wants are met, surplus resources free individuals to "self-
36 actualize" and pursue symbolic goals. Veblen (1948) saw as far back as the 1920s a
37 "leisure class" engaging in "conspicuous consumption."

38 A college educated UMC is seen as equally persistent, especially after WWII. As
39 the repository of institutionalism, the contemporary university setting provides a
40 particular instruction that prepares a person simultaneously in functional expertise and
41 institutional protocol (Waldo, 1948; Kerr, 1963; Scott and Hart, 1979). Nourished by this
42 conceptual knowledge of institutions and science, the UMC acquire a common language,
43 set of referent symbols, code of conduct, and awareness of institutional processes not
44 shared for the most part by non-UMC.

45 As Professionals, the UMC are characterized as society's "general staff" (Veblen,
46 1948, p. 440), whose principal role is to apply their education to continuously inventing

1 new appliances and to managing organizational resources (Whyte, 1958; Pfeffer and
2 Salancik, 1979; Brint, 1994). To accomplish these roles, they are granted titles, positions
3 and other symbols of distinction suitable for those in charge of organizational methods
4 and technologies (Veblen, 1948; Whyte, 1958; Teisman, 1961, Scott and Hart, 1979).

5 This socioeconomic profile is seen connected to the intensity with which the UMC
6 (1) exhibit "other-directedness" (Riesman, 1961) toward each other rather than emulating
7 other social groupings, and (2) seek "associational position" (Stone, 1980) by belonging
8 to an organized influential social genre (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Why should such
9 membership matter? Riesman says without aristocratic ancestry or a psychological
10 "gyroscope" to establish influential position, behavior protocol or community connection,
11 UMC persons must acquire status and approval through continuous "responsive contact"
12 with each other (1961, p. 23). All people seek social group identity, but the UMC is set
13 apart by a preoccupation with "the process of striving itself..." (p. 21).

14 Why, then, is a UMC genre not more distinct empirically? Partly, it may be that
15 striving to appear influential does not require verbal contact. Social psychology research
16 shows that individuals "interact" with others in a similar social position even when they
17 have no direct communications (Lazer, 1995; Burt, 1987). Using non-verbal cues, the
18 formation of anonymous groupings is based on the exhibition of structural equivalence in
19 socioeconomic status (SES).

20 The term defines "a measure of an individual's status, where individuals are
21 sensitive to what other individuals of similar status are doing, believing, etc." (Lazer,
22 1995, p. 4). This involves prior consensus on "prototypical characteristics abstracted
23 from the grouping" (Turner, 1985). The UMC's economic ascendancy, university
24 education and professional status are convenient for determining structural equivalence
25 because they are openly displayed without reliance on verbal communications. These
26 symbols of institutional achievement demonstrate equivalence in influential position
27 rather than material "look-a-likes."

28 For the most part, the writings talk about these SES characteristics as interlaced
29 dimensions of a core profile which empirically distinguish a UMC from non-UMC (e.g.,
30 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). At various times, other attributes have been
31 prominent as well, including religion (i.e., WASP), mobility, consumption patterns, age
32 and ethnicity. But, their lack of empirical salience over time in defining structural
33 equivalence makes them peripheral to the core profile defined here.

34 What then, is the connection of a UMC genre to policy outcomes? Stone (1980)
35 theorizes that the UMC exercises an indirect influence that "is completely impersonal and
36 deeply embedded in the social structure." (p. 981). The mere presence of the UMC genre
37 in a "diamond-shaped distribution" (p. 983) of socioeconomic status may be sufficient as
38 a systemic power to affect policy outcomes. Therefore, the proportion of UMC in an
39 agency's service population should approximate the visibility of the UMC's non-verbal
40 display of influential position. The following hypotheses associate this proportion with
41 emphases in the three different policy outcomes:

42 43 *Strategic Organizational Effectiveness (Outcome I)* 44

45 Why the UMC genre promotes emphasis on organizational vitality in public
46 agencies involves a two-step logic. First, UMC motives are defined by organizational

1 values which promote administrative processes as a way-of-life (Whyte, 1958). As "a
2 vast complex of interlocking management systems, sharing a common set of values"
3 (Scott and Hart, 1979, p. 5), organizations offer "a distinctive employment situation for
4 the majority of professionals" (Brint, 1994, p.12) and provide an arena-in-common for
5 expressing "associational position" (Stone, 1980, p. 982) and measuring structural
6 equivalence.

7 Second, public organizations in this "interlocking" allocation system represent an
8 extension of the field of business (Wilson, 1941), and play an instrumental role in a UMC
9 lifestyle. "Free markets thrive, not in splendid isolation, but in a context of large and
10 productive business and government organizations," the latter which provides
11 "effectiveness of infrastructure and public goods" (Simon, 1995, p. 404). Although
12 clouded by current anti-government sentiment of the median voter, to be against healthy
13 public organizations is inconsistent with the faith and investment the UMC has made in
14 the trappings of organizational culture: higher education, administrative protocol and
15 professional competence.

16 Hence, we deduce from these arguments:

17
18 ***H1: The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's***
19 ***service area population, the greater the emphasis an***
20 ***agency will place on performance stressing strategic***
21 ***organizational effectiveness.***

22 23 *Operational Efficiency (Outcome II)*

24
25 The UMC is painted as having subordinate concern for efficiency by virtue of the
26 group's achieved material security and fiscal abundance. While seemingly counter to
27 happenings in the Progressive Era, this pre-WWII period is characterized by Reisman's
28 "scarcity psychology" (1961) where a professional UMC had not yet replaced the robber
29 barons and other nouveau riches as influentials in American institutions. With the
30 spreading of affluence after WWII, Riesman characterizes UMC ambience as driven by
31 an "abundance psychology" where respect for the proficiency of work is subdued by a
32 "cult of effortlessness." Other works as well sketch a psychology involving a worthiness
33 in sacrificing efficiency for "higher order" symbolics. These include Clark and Goetz's
34 NPC influence on urban growth (1994); Brint's post WWII rise of the "educated
35 professional" (1994); Maslow's hierarchical pursuit of "self-actualization" (1954); and
36 Veblen's "conspicuous waste" by a "leisure class" (1948).

37 Hence, we deduce from this:

38
39 ***H2: The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's***
40 ***service area population, the more likely the agency***
41 ***will deemphasize operations efficiency in favor of***
42 ***strategic (higher order) outcomes.***

43 44 *Social-Program Effectiveness (Outcome III)*

45
46 Social program effectiveness raises a perplexing question. Why should welfare programs
47 matter to the UMC except from fiscal and employment standpoints? With few

1 exceptions, the UMC is seldom very cognizant of its "use" of or dependence on most
2 specific services like transit. Although traditional class theory might argue the UMC are
3 "social trustees" (Brint, 1994) who accept "noblesse oblige," a more plausible answer is
4 that the UMC's urban habitat serves as another non-verbal means to calculate the
5 structural equivalence of social position in interurban comparisons. Hammond, for
6 example, points to the UMC's metropolis as a "nonverbal medium for the communication
7 of moral reputation, social rank, and other significant qualities of self" (1992, p. 258).

8 Due to this, the UMC becomes more concerned about the overall quality and
9 character of the urban area which taxes support (Clark, 1994, p. 27). Urban planning
10 research shows symbolic considerations including public accouterments (prominent
11 airport, arts and entertainment, reputable schools, modern mass transit) are more
12 important than economic issues in UMC voting (Hahn and Kamieniecki 1987).
13 Gottdiener supports this connection, saying that "the urban image must be read...as an
14 outcome of a class society propelled by powerful forces of development and change"
15 (1986, p. 216). Social programs that address UMC quality of life matter because living in
16 a formidable "world class" urban area adds stature in the quest for positional influence
17 and structural equivalence.

18 Hence, we deduce from this logic:

19
20 ***H3: The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's service***
21 ***population, the more likely the agency will emphasize***
22 ***social-program effectiveness.***
23

24 The three hypotheses compose a thesis that UMC influence occurring as an
25 anonymous agent causes a skewed or asymmetrical pattern of outcomes consisting of
26 emphases on strategic organizational effectiveness (Outcome I) and social-program
27 effectiveness (Outcome III), and a deemphasis on operational efficiency (Outcome II).

28 Rival Theses

29
30
31 Implying that class does not matter, research on urban policy outcomes seldom
32 includes a UMC genre as an independent determinant (e.g., Pagano and Bowman, 1995;
33 Feiock and West, 1993). If represented at all, the UMC is treated either (1) as issue-
34 defined political actors directly involved (e.g. political entrepreneurs, interest groups), or
35 (2) as demographic variables randomized with others describing the agency's surrounding
36 social and physical environment. Hence, a central question is: does the UMC genre
37 operate independently of variables used in past research? To examine the UMC thesis in
38 this context, four rival theses are incorporated in the model.

39 The most central is the "political actor" thesis, which targets the direct influence of
40 high-status individuals and interest groups (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995; Clark
41 and Ferguson, 1983; Lowi, 1969), community conflict and power structure (Stone, 1989;
42 Peterson, 1981), political competition and entrepreneurship of elected officials (Clark and
43 Goetz, 1994; Doig and Hargrove, 1987; Feiock and Clingermayer, 1986), and
44 intergovernmental exchange (Boschken, 1997; Shepsle and Bonchek, 1997; Agranoff and
45 McGuire, 1993).

46 While predicted outcomes vary by type of actor investigated, the common
47 denominator for all is direct use of political power as the causal agent of policy outcomes.

1 For example, when the locus of power lies outside the agency (i.e., in Mayors, dominant
2 community group, or interagency network), the agency will be less likely to emphasize
3 its bureaucratic prominence (Outcome I). The thesis is a central rival because it argues
4 that since UMC persons are politically more active than others (Verba, Schlozman and
5 Brady, 1995), UMC influence is most likely to be from individuals and not an
6 anonymous source.

7 Other rival theses speak of urban structure determinants describing physical form
8 and general social makeup of a city as preconditions in policymaking. Although not
9 involving identifiable actors, urban structure presents agencies with "non-negotiable"
10 opportunities and limitations on policymaking. What these preconditions predict as
11 policy outcomes, however, varies by rival thesis.

12 One is the "underclass" thesis (Clark, 1994a; Lineberry, 1977) which argues policy
13 outcomes are distributed according to class distinctions typically measured by race or
14 ethnicity. Describing a "double standard," the thesis assumes a zero-sum allocation where
15 "them that has, gets" (Lineberry, 1977, p. 61). For government, this is likely to result in
16 white preferences for lower taxes and reduced spending on programs that benefit the
17 city's underclass. Focused on the powerlessness of lower classes, the thesis
18 operationalizes the underclass determinant as a politically-passive precondition of
19 poverty demographics.

20 A second urban structure rival is the "resource-availability" thesis which has two
21 components - native wealth of the urban area and intergovernmental funding
22 opportunities (Dye, 1992, pp. 315-316; Schneider, 1989; Clark and Ferguson, 1983). The
23 thesis holds that public agencies spend money to emphasize Outcomes I and III according
24 to the level of economic resources made available from local tax receipts or
25 intergovernmental sources.

26 The third structural rival is the "urban spatial form" thesis (Cervero, 1991; Timms,
27 1971; Burgess and Bogue, 1967). It argues that physical configuration of urban activities
28 determines the level and proficiency of public expenditures. Contrasting configurations
29 range along a scale between a monocentric pattern of urban activity (center-peripheral) to
30 a polycentric (sprawl) pattern. The thesis holds that a monocentric pattern facilitates
31 emphases on organizational effectiveness (Outcome I) and operational efficiencies
32 (Outcome II) because high densities allow an agency to achieve deeper market
33 penetration, more concentrated use, and economies of scale.

34 35 Methodology

36
37 The research was designed to test the hypotheses with data from standard nationwide
38 reporting systems. It employed a cross-sectional sample of 42 urban transit agencies
39 operating transit systems in larger metropolitan areas (i.e., with at least 500,000
40 population). They were identified from the FTA's directory of transit agencies (UMTA,
41 1988). These agencies were selected because most are statutory public enterprises which
42 pursue multiple policy outcomes and because transit is a visible infrastructure component
43 of the urban environment. Data are specific to each transit agency and the population
44 within its jurisdiction, and are from the U.S. Census and the annual Section 15 reporting
45 system compiled by USDOT's Federal Transportation Administration (FTA). Section 15

1 reporting is mandated for federal funding and contains uniform self-reported data on
2 agency finances, costs and service levels.

3 As components of outcome skewness, three continuum-scaled dependent variables
4 operationalize the agency performances contained in the policy outcomes framework.
5 Each variable is an indice consisting of multiple measures commonly used in transit and
6 is calculated from FTA data (see note to Table 1 for detail). Since any one year is subject
7 to unrepresentative distortions, five years of data (1987-1991) were averaged for
8 individual measures. This procedure, however, does not eliminate the possibility that the
9 averages are atypical of longer time frames.

10 Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the three outcome indices are
11 provided in Table 1. The indices have significant associations, indicating the skewness
12 pattern is composed of interrelated components. The two inversely (negative) related
13 associations represent tradeoffs by the industry as-a-whole in emphasizing different
14 performance outcomes. The most significant tradeoff is between strategic organizational
15 effectiveness and operations efficiency ($r = -.56$). While an agency could try to
16 emphasize strategic organizational effectiveness (Outcome I) by striving to be efficient
17 (Outcome II), the correlations show a tradeoff as the industry-wide rule. The other
18 tradeoff is between social program effectiveness and operations efficiency ($r = -.38$).
19 Together, they give basis to asking whether the UMC genre matters in explaining this
20 pattern.

21
22
23 TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE
24
25

26 As the independent variable, the UMC genre is operationalized by a factor consisting of
27 four discriminant SES components. Choice of a factor fits the thesis that policy outcomes
28 are influenced by the whole UMC profile and not individual components. It is supported
29 statistically by a principal components analysis which determined a single factor
30 (eigenvalue of 3.14, accounting for 80 percent of the four-component variance). The four
31 components were operationalized using 1990 Census data corresponding to agency
32 jurisdictions. The components are (1) High Income (percent of households with 1989
33 income above \$75,000 -- a figure more than twice the national mean), (2) Income Change
34 (percent change in household income 1989 over 1979, which captures upward economic
35 mobility), (3) College Education (percent of individuals with four or more years of higher
36 education), and (4) Professional Status (percentage of individuals having careers in
37 professional or managerial positions).

38 Control variables were included in regressions to represent rival theses. For the
39 political actor thesis, past research includes numerous variables. As an alternative to
40 arbitrary selection among actor-specific variables, a surrogate strategy was chosen which
41 held the potential for estimating direct power for most types of political actors. However,
42 the imprecise nature of surrogates may lead to underestimates of political power relative
43 to the more specific UMC factor. To reduce the potential effect of random measurement
44 error in assessing the political actor thesis, the strategy called for two surrogate forms.

45 In the first, agencies were assumed to be influenced by powerful political
46 entrepreneurs when operating in a partisan arena of limited competition. Pressman (1972)

1 characterized prerequisites of mayoral power that include strong one-party dominance.
2 Feiock and Clingermayer (1986) found that strong political entrepreneurs emerge when
3 elections persistently reflect a dominant party. Consistent with this research, the political
4 actor thesis is represented in part by a variable called party dominance.

5 It is measured by a three-point scale dummied from 1988 and 1992 presidential
6 election results. The scale was determined by whether a party won both elections and by
7 how much. For example, a condition of dominance required that a party win both
8 elections by more than 55 percent. The variable is not a perfect surrogate because
9 although political entrepreneurs seldom emerge as strong political actors when inter-party
10 competition is high, the dominance of one party enables but does not assure the
11 emergence of strong entrepreneurs (Grimshaw, 1996). Hence, the dummy variable should
12 be read as less likely/more likely to involve a powerful political entrepreneur.

13 For the second form, most uses of political power were assumed to be channeled
14 through an intergovernmental (IG) process (Boschken, 1997; Agrnoff and McGuire,
15 1993; Schneider, 1989). "In the public realm, federalism and separation of powers imply
16 a plurality of targets for political activity" (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995, p. 7),
17 where politicians, bureaucrats and interest groups interact to couple their individual
18 preferences with focal-agency policy making. Hence, the thesis is represented by IG
19 surrogates measuring a focal agency's fiscal and statutory autonomy in an
20 intergovernmental arena.

21 Effects of IG autonomy on policy should be inverse to political actor power because
22 the greater (the focal agency's autonomy, the higher the barrier of access for external
23 actors (Feiock and West, 1993; Sharp, 1991). A restated political actor thesis, for
24 example, predicts that when the focal agency holds high IG autonomy, it will extend its
25 political reach and regional prominence (Benson, 1975, p. 232; Niskanen, 1971).

26 Three IG variables are used as proxies of political actor power. The first, called
27 revenue autonomy, is the percent of agency revenues generated from user fees or
28 dedicated sources (e.g., a permanent transit tax). Both sources provide high budgetary
29 discretion to the agency. The second, called capital autonomy, is the percent of an
30 agency's capital funding sourced in a like manner and not dependent on annual legislation
31 or IG negotiation. The third, called IG interaction, operationalizes Niskanen's
32 "bureaucratic autonomy" (1971). It is the product of two measures: scope (number of IG
33 actors involved in focal-agency policymaking) and intensity (percent of those having veto
34 authority over focal-agency policymaking). Data for the first two IG variables are from
35 FTA Section 15 reports. The third is from a survey of transit agency officials and
36 records.

37 Three controls were included to represent the urban structure theses. Using 1990
38 Census data extracted for transit district populations, they are race ("percent white
39 persons" in the population), average income (1989 mean household income), and cross
40 commuting (percent of workers commuting between a residence and a work place neither
41 of which is located in the urban core). Cross commuting reflects variance from a center-
42 peripheral pattern of urban activities.

43 Table 2 reports descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables. The UMC
44 factor is significantly intercorrelated with average income and marginally associated with
45 cross commuting (collinearity diagnostics for the models show a condition index of 39).
46 The UMC's association with average income is probably due to the high income

1 component of the UMC factor. The UMC's association with cross commuting is probably
2 due to most UMC living in suburbs, greater proportions of which are found in
3 nonparametric urban areas (Cervero, 1991). Except for average income and cross
4 commuting which are associated ($r = .57$), none of the other controls are intercorrelated at
5 the .01 level. Collinearity is examined further in the discussion section.

6
7
8 TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE
9

10
11 Results

12
13 Table 3 reports results of OLS regressions for the three UMC hypotheses. Each
14 model, identified as Outcome I, II and III, includes the UMC factor and seven control
15 variables. Regression statistics support Hypothesis 1 which argues a UMC genre
16 encourages emphasis on strategic organizational effectiveness. The UMC factor is the
17 most significant variable in the model (signif $t = .005$), and is in the predicted direction
18 (beta = .81, $t = 3.0$). IG revenue autonomy is also significant (signif $t = .02$), but three
19 others are, at best, only near significance -- party dominance, intergovernmental
20 interaction and average income (signif $t = .17, .13$ and $.11$, respectively).

21
22
23 TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE
24

25
26 Regression statistics do not support Hypothesis 2, regarding deemphasis in operations
27 efficiency (Outcome II). The UMC factor is unstable (signif $t = .43$), but could be
28 interpreted as UMC indifference to efficiency. Full-model significance is due instead to
29 IG fiscal variables: revenue autonomy (beta = .62, $t = 4.0$, signif = .0003) and capital
30 autonomy (beta = -.29, $t = -1.9$, signif $t = .07$).

31 Regression statistics provide strong support for Hypothesis 3, dealing with
32 emphasis on social program effectiveness. The UMC factor is significant (signif of $t =$
33 $.02$) and is in the direction predicted by the hypothesis (beta = .64, $t = 2.4$). Most controls
34 are significant or near significance as well. Race (% white) is equally significant to the
35 UMC factor (Signif of $t = .02$) and consistent with the underclass thesis. Capital
36 autonomy is significant (beta = .30, $t = 2.0$, signif $t = .05$), but contradicts the political
37 actor thesis. Average income is near significance (signif $t = .08$) but contradicts the
38 wealth thesis. Revenue autonomy and cross commuting are not significant for social
39 programs (signif $t = .16$ and $.21$, respectively).

40
41 Discussion

42
43 Along side its better known rivals, the UMC thesis appears to matter a great deal
44 and in accordance with the literature. Especially when compared with political power
45 variables, the UMC factor is more significant in explaining variance in two out of the
46 three policy outcomes composing the skewed pattern. Only for Outcome II (operations

1 efficiency) is direct use of political power more significant. Although the research did not
2 include a great number of variables subsumed under urban structure, of those considered,
3 the influence of race in de-emphasizing Outcome III (social program effectiveness) and
4 average income in de-emphasizing Outcomes I and III are the only ones of comparable
5 significance to the UMC factor.

6 Although the evidence seems to support the importance of an independent UMC
7 thesis, this conclusion might not be shared by advocates of more traditional arguments.
8 Since the UMC factor seems to be intercorrelated with some control variables (i.e.,
9 average income, and cross commuting), a question remains about whether the rival theses
10 have indirectly accounted for the influence of the UMC genre. For this to be true, two
11 conditions must exist. First, a control variable with which the UMC is statistically
12 associated must significantly affect a policy outcome. Second, that control must operate
13 as a route of UMC influence on the outcome.

14 Applying the first condition, the UMC factor is intercorrelated only with household
15 income ($r = .85$) and cross commuting ($r = .40$). Of these two, neither is significant as a
16 determinant of policy outcomes, although income is near significance for social-program
17 effectiveness. Ordinarily, one could leave the discussion with these results if it were not
18 for the possible effects of model collinearity caused by the intercorrelation of the UMC
19 factor and income. Given this, the wealth thesis would argue that the UMC is accounted
20 for in the simpler proposition that local personal income generates tax receipts for public
21 expenditures. Since UMC influence is accounted for by its association with income, the
22 desire for parsimony would side with the wealth thesis because offers the more direct
23 explanation of policymakers counting tax revenues?

24 However, the results cast doubt on average income as a route of determination for
25 the UMC for two reasons. First, even though the UMC factor has a strong bivariate
26 association with Outcome I ($r = .42$) and Outcome III ($r = .46$), average income has no
27 association with any of the performance outcomes at the .01 level. Second, in regression
28 models, average income is only very marginally significant in Outcomes I and III (signif t
29 = .11 and .08, respectively), but has a negative influence, opposite that of the wealth
30 thesis and the UMC factor.

31 The inclination, then, is to see income's significance as a fluke of collinearity. To
32 examine this issue, regressions for Outcomes I and III were rerun, first without average
33 income and then with income but without the UMC factor. When income is removed, the
34 UMC factor diminishes only slightly in significance for Outcome I from .005 in the
35 original model (see Table 2) to .009. In Outcome III, the decline in significance is
36 greater (signif t moves from .02 in the original model to .13). On the other hand, when
37 the UMC factor is removed, average income (which was near significance in the original
38 Outcome I and III models) becomes insignificant (signif. $t = .29$ and .92, respectively).
39 This leads one to suspect the UMC factor is important in explaining variance in policy
40 outcomes (especially for organizational effectiveness) with or without average income,
41 but average income is not essential when the model contains the UMC factor. Moreover,
42 as a weaker variable orbiting the UMC's influence, income's negative influence on
43 Outcomes I and III can be explained as an artifact of collinearity.

44 These results therefore leave advocates of urban structure theses hard pressed for
45 arguing against the UMC factor's independent significance. Statistics aside, though, one
46 might still expect proponents of the political actor thesis to argue UMC influence is

1 reflected in political research because its effect on policy outcomes must be associated
2 with individuals making direct use of political power. But, does the UMC genre act
3 through individuals to affect outcomes, or does it indirectly influence as an impersonal
4 anonymous agent? Could there a connection between the two?

5 A case could be made for a connection between the UMC and political
6 entrepreneurs, and could be understood in one of two ways. In the instance of direct
7 visible action, we know UMC individuals engage in political activity more than others
8 and that UMC participation is principally limited to making political contributions and
9 contacting government officials (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). This would
10 suggest the impact of elected officials on policy outcomes is mostly a UMC phenomenon
11 of direct and visible proportions.

12 The second interpretation accepts the causal route as an indirect manifestation of
13 UMC presence but also requires involvement of direct political activity. Stone (1980)
14 implies that the UMC influences a city's politics and cultural image by its systemic
15 power. Pagano and Bowman (1995) add that elected leaders crystallize a vision for world
16 class status which "is tied to the city's image" (p. xiv). Hence, combining these
17 interpretations, elected political entrepreneurs would adopt a vision consistent with the
18 UMC, at least where one-party dominance provides an unobstructed opportunity for
19 "credit claiming" (Feiock and Clinger mayer, 1986). This argument does not hold up well
20 under the results, however. A strong correlation does not exist between the UMC and
21 party dominance ($r = .32$) and the latter is not near significance for any policy outcome.

22 Another connection could involve interest groups and concurring governmental
23 actors. This study did not consider interest group variables as UMC proxies because they
24 are distinguished by their issue-specific nature (e.g., environmentalism, handicap access,
25 abortion rights), and few could be characterized as representing the UMC qua monolithic
26 UMC (as does the UMC factor). Nevertheless, assuming that a UMC could exist as a
27 distinct, forceful and single interest group or entrepreneurial voice, two conditions
28 probably would have to prevail.

29 First, to operationalize a set of monolithic UMC interests, its membership would
30 want to act on its professional organizational norms by seeking influence through an
31 institutional intergovernmental process. In a few key instances, the process might only
32 involve direct relations with the focal agency. But, to effectively manage its influence
33 across a wide urban policy landscape, the UMC would want to capture a few agencies
34 with broad intergovernmental authority, such as the EPA, rather than numerous
35 specialized operators. Second, for these UMC "sentry" agencies to be powerful
36 intergovernmental actors in focal-agency policymaking, the transit agency would have to
37 possess limited autonomy.

38 On this scenario, analysis of the IG autonomy variables shows two results. First, in
39 a principal components analysis, the UMC factor is orthogonal to all IG variables thus
40 indicating no causal route. Second, while the UMC factor is very significant in
41 regressions, it does not show corresponding influence through the IG surrogates for
42 political-actor power (i.e., the IG variables are either less significant than the UMC factor
43 or have an effect opposite the UMC's influence). Hence, even though UMC individuals
44 certainly operate through interest groups and politicians for specific interests, Stone
45 seems to be correct: the influence of an UMC genre is "completely impersonal," and

1 manifested as "systemic power [which] is not a general form of upper strata dominance
2 through agenda control" (1980, p.989).

3 4 Inferences

5
6 Even if all rival theses are refuted, one issue remains. Although the results indicate
7 an anonymous UMC matters in skewing outcomes, they do not map how one could more
8 precisely infer the power of the upper middle class. As an old issue in urban research,
9 class power yields no easy or definitive answers. Nevertheless, pointing to
10 socioeconomic stratification, Stone (1980) sees an indirect and anonymous route
11 involving the UMC's systemic power: "Because the [UMC] are strategically advantaged,
12 their extraordinary influence is not so much exercised as it is selectively manifested in the
13 predispositions and behavior of public officials" (p. 990). But, if influence is the central
14 feature of the UMC ambiance, how does the cuing process happen based on non-verbal
15 exchange?

16 One plausible extension to Stone's sketch is a process involving the social
17 construction of UMC by policymakers. The theory "refers to the cultural
18 characterizations or popular images of persons or groups" (Schneider and Ingram, 1993,
19 p. 334), and stems from cognitive psychology (e.g., Tajfel and Turner, 1986). With
20 Stone's descriptions of political influence (1980, p. 980), social construction points to
21 policymakers designing agency outcomes to "fit" what they "anticipate" stereotype
22 "target populations" want (Schneider and Ingram, 1993).

23 To Berger and Luckmann, however, two kinds of social constructs result in policy
24 deliberations -- images derived from the "face-to-face situation" with political actors, and
25 ones from "remoter forms of interaction" where cognition of individuals or organized
26 groups is not apparent (1966, p. 30). In this latter instance, they say cognition is of
27 "anonymous" characterizations of a "category" (i.e., the UMC genre) rather than of
28 individually-known actors with which the agency interacts. "[A]nonymity may become
29 near-total with certain typifications that are not intended ever to become individualized"
30 (p. 33).

31 What remains dim is how the UMC as an impersonal abstract is reified to the point
32 it matters in policymaking. Part of the answer may lie in Stone's belief that policymakers
33 favor UMC interests over others because this genre is perceived to hold a disproportional
34 share of society's "diamond-shaped distribution of opportunities and resources" (p.982).
35 "Though they are the least numerous segment of the population, members of the upper
36 strata possess resources strategically important to public officials [in furthering careers
37 and agency growth]" (p. 984).

38 Stone contends, then, the UMC's influence on policymaking "flows more from the
39 position they occupy than from the covert action they take" (p. 984). Just perceiving
40 UMC presence and social position may be sufficient to create the unspoken influence of
41 referent power. In concert, Berger and Luckmann conclude "Power in society includes
42 the power to determine decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to
43 produce reality" (1966, p. 119).

44 This raises a final point about the impact on policymaker perceptions. The
45 powerful results for the UMC suggest it is a widely recognized genre, perhaps
46 representing a predictable set of determinant public expectations. As a constant in a

1 metropolitan milieu otherwise seen as a chaotic state, this class genre may provide a
2 stabilizing influence on those urban governments where UMC are a significant
3 proportion of the metropolitan population. The genre offers a reliable context for
4 policymaking, reducing uncertainty about political consequences for public officials
5 having to make difficult policy choices.

6 If this stabilizing phenomenon exists, further research needs to delve into the social
7 psychological origins of a UMC genre within the agency. Do bureaucratic structures and
8 processes pose barriers to direct representation and foster more reliance on anonymous
9 identities as political considerations? Is the "general public interest" derived from the
10 UMC's systemic power or from the median voter? Is this reinforced by bureaucrats who
11 are mostly UMC and aspiring to fulfill their own interests? Since living the UMC
12 lifestyle gives policymakers knowledge about nuances, Lieberman believes the causal
13 route more appropriately involves "political construction [which] asks not only how
14 group identities arise in a political setting but also how and why they become politically
15 relevant..." (1995, p. 440). In short, pursuing this line of inquiry reopens issues about the
16 role of class structure and bureaucratic decision making.

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Table 1
THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES OF PERFORMANCE SKEWNESS
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

VARIABLE	MEAN	S. D.	1	2	3
1. Outcome I	10.99	2.27	-		
2. Outcome II	13.01	2.74	-.56**	-	
3. Outcome III	12.29	2.53	.48*	-.38*	-

N = 42 TWO-TAILED SIGNIFICANCE: * = .01 ** = .001

OUTCOME I = Strategic Organizational Effectiveness
 OUTCOME II = Operations Efficiency
 OUTCOME III = Social Program Effectiveness

NOTE TO TABLE: Each outcome is an index of individual measures which meet criteria for that outcome "cell." Values for each measure are residuals of a bivariate regression controlling for size. The technique was used because (1) little disagreement is found over size as the most significant factor determining urban agency outcomes, and (2) regression residuals are more appropriate than ratio data since regression produces the best overall linear estimator of variance. Residuals for each measure within an outcome cell were then studentized to make them additive to an outcome index.

The indexes consist of the following measures along with their legitimating stakeholders:

Outcome I (administration-centered, strategic effectiveness) - market penetration (passenger trips/district population) shows domain dominance preferred by senior management; load factor (passenger miles/vehicle miles) shows user-validated service superiority preferred by senior management; and institutional growth (1990 revenue/1980 revenue, all sources) shows negative entropy preferred by senior management.

Outcome II (administration-centered, operational efficiency) - operations efficiency (operating expense/vehicle miles) shows cost control proficiency of production management; maintenance efficiency (maintenance expense/vehicle hours) shows cost control proficiency of maintenance management; and system efficiency (operations assets/vehicle revenue miles) shows use of capital proficiency of financial and engineering managements.

Outcome III (political-centered, social program effectiveness) - mobility for transit dependent (passenger miles/service area in square miles) measures access convenience to urban economic activities desired by dependent commuters (handicapped, working poor); non-commute service (off-peak vehicle miles/total vehicle miles) measures access convenience to social activities and welfare services needed by non-working handicapped, poor and elderly; and economic development contribution (annual capital investment/district population) measures economic development impact potential for the regional population.

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Table 2
UMC GENRE AND CONTROL VARIABLES
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

VARIABLE	MEAN	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. UMC FACTOR	0.00	1.00							
POLITICAL ACTOR									
2. Party Dominance	2.02	.78	.32	-					
3. Revenue Autonomy	76.72	22.38	.14	.06	-				
4. Capital Autonomy	26.70	18.43	.37	.11	.37	-			
5. IG Interaction	5.37	3.62	.32	.04	-.02	-.03	-		
URBAN STRUCTURE									
6. Race (% white)	68.57	15.00	-.03	.05	-.06	.03	-.20	-	
7. 1989 Avg. Income	33.70	6.56	.85**	.28	.24	.36	.25	.01	-
8. Cross Commuting	44.25	17.17	.40*	.15	.34	.23	.06	.13	.57**

N = 42 TWO-TAILED SIGNIFICANCE: * = .01 ** = .001

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Table 3
OLS REGRESSIONS: UPPER MIDDLE CLASS GENRE AND PERFORMANCE SKEWNESS
Urban Public Transit (42 Agencies, 1987-1991)

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	DEPENDENT VARIABLES								
	OUTCOME I			OUTCOME II			OUTCOME III		
	beta	t	signif	beta	t	signif	beta	t	signif
<hr/>									
1. UMC FACTOR	.81	3.0	.005	-.22	-0.8	.43	.64	2.4	.02
POLITICAL ACTOR									
2. Party Dominance	-.19	-1.4	.17	.06	0.4	.67	.13	1.0	.35
3. IG Revenue Autonomy	-.35	-2.4	.02	.62	4.0	.0003	-.21	-1.5	.16
4. IG Capital Autonomy	.09	0.6	.54	-.29	-1.9	.07	.30	2.0	.05
5. IG Interaction	.22	1.6	.13	-.01	-0.1	.94	.11	0.8	.45
URBAN STRUCTURE:									
6. Race (% White)	.03	0.2	.83	-.02	-0.2	.87	-.34	-2.5	.02
7. Avg. Income (1989)	-.46	-1.6	.11	-.03	-0.1	.93	-.51	-1.8	.08
8. Cross Commuting	.02	0.1	.90	-.12	-0.7	.50	.21	1.3	.21
<hr/>									
R ²	.46		.41			.46			
ADJ R ²	.33		.26			.33			
F	3.5		2.8			3.6			
SIGNIF F	.005		.02			.004			

OUTCOME I = Strategic Organizational Effectiveness

OUTCOME II = Operations Efficiency

OUTCOME III = Social Program Effectiveness