The Effect of Representational Gender on Policy Preferences in U.S. Municipalities

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The research presented here explores the effect of gender and gender consciousness on the policy preference of local elected officials. Remedying a gap in the scholarship on women in local office, I examine the attitudes of mayors and council members on a variety of urban policy issues. First positing a gender gap theory of representative attitudes, I find almost no differences in policy preferences between men and women serving in local office. As an alternative, I posit and test a gender consciousness theory of policy preferences. Using open-ended survey data, I find that possessing a gender consciousness has a significant effect on both policy priorities and policymaking, with those with a gender consciousness more likely to value and work on issues relating to education, affordable housing, and welfare, and are less likely to value economic development policies.
Introduction:

An extensive body of scholarship on women in state and national political offices has found that female elected officials express higher levels of support for women’s issues, welfare policies, and have more liberal attitudes towards policies (Dolan and Ford 1995; Thomas 1994; Thomas and Welch 1991; Welch and Thomas 1991). Despite the large number of studies of gendered attitudes, very little attention has been paid to representatives at the local level. The consensus of the limited scholarship on the attitudes of local elected officials is “gender differences tend to decline with the level of office” (Boles 2001, 69). The research presented here remedies the gap in the scholarship on the attitudes of male and female local officials and provides new evidence in the discussion of the role gender plays in political behavior. Survey data from a diverse group of leaders in U.S. cities reveals almost no basic issue differences between men and women, but significant differences in each gender’s conceptualization of their role as a leader. Using a measure of gender consciousness, I find that gender consciousness – and not gender alone – is a significant predictor of issue priorities, collaboration, and actions by municipal leaders.

Current Scholarship:

Considerable research has examined the effect of the gender representative’s attitudes (Carroll 1984, 2001; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Dolan and Ford 1995; Mattei 1998; Swers 2002; Thomas 1991, 1994, 1997; Thomas and Welch 2001; Tolleson-Rinehart 1992, 2001). In general, women are more likely to express attitudes that are pro-feminist, in favor of social and welfare politics, and supportive of women’s policies. However, the body of scholarship on the effect of gender on attitudes or actions at the local level is very limited. The narrow body of research on
At the state and national levels, female representatives generally express more liberal policy attitudes, with a high propensity to support policies relating to women, children, and social services (Carroll 1984; Dolan and Ford 1995; Mattei 1998; Thomas 1991, 1994; Thomas and Welch 2001; Tolleson-Rinehart 2001). Women legislators consider bills dealing with women, children, welfare, and education as more important than their male counterparts do (Thomas 1994, 1991) and are more likely to pursue and support policies of “…traditional concern to women, including education, health, and welfare” (Swers 2001, 217).

Moving to the local level, the minimal scholarship on the attitudes of local leaders is largely inconsistent. Consistent with research on gender and state legislators, Schumaker and Burns (1988) found that female political activists and elites revealed large differences between the genders, and Boles, in a study of Milwaukee, WI, found that “As a group, women officials were active on more and a broader range of women’s issues and placed a higher priority on them” (2001, 81). Contradictory to the scholarship at the state level, several scholars have failed to identify any significant attitudinal differences between male and female political leaders. In investigating the relationship between women in office and support for women’s issues, Flammang (1985) failed to find evidence that female elected officials held women’s issues as a priority, when compared to male elected officials’ priorities. Similarly, Mezey’s research found that male and female elected officials have similar attitudes on representation, legislation, and policy preferences (1978c, 1980). More recently, Weikart et al. (2007), identified very few
attitudinal differences between male and female leaders in city governments in the United States, although female leaders are more likely to have an open and inclusive budget process.

The relative dearth in scholarship and the conflicting findings in the literature on gender differences among public officeholders at the local level suggest that the causal link between gender and attitudes of local leaders may be underdeveloped. Specifically, two possible theories can explain gender differences: the gender gap and gender consciousness. One possible source for gender differences among leaders is that the gender gap that is present in the general population also exists among leaders. The gender gap theory, fully articulated below, argues that women and men have consistent differences in policy stances, with women expressing higher levels of support for compassion policies and men expressing more support for military and economic policies. A second possible source for a gender difference is that women in public office have a gender consciousness, where, for women, their gender serves as a method by which they view power relationships in the world. While scholarship has examined both theories in the general population and assumed the application of the theories to leaders, there have been few explicit tests of the application of a gender gap or a gender consciousness among leaders. Remedying the gap, the research presented here outlining how each theory might apply to leaders. Using survey data, I test whether policy attitudes of local officials vary with gender, and are thus an expression of the gender gap among leaders, or are the result of a gender consciousness, which only some local elected officials may possess.

The Gender Gap:

One possible reason to expect that gender can affect the actions of representatives is that female leaders, like women in the general population, may hold policy preferences that are
distinct from their male counterparts. Extensive scholarship demonstrates that women in the general population express different policy preferences, typically supporting social services more and economic and military issues less than men (Andersen 1999; Shapiro and Mahajan 1986). Women also demonstrate significant and long-standing preferences for women’s issues (Renfrew 1994; Gilens 1988; Conover 1988a; Carroll 1988; Rossi 1983). Women are also less persuaded by the virtues of a free market and competition than men (Gidengil 1995).

When it comes to local issues, women are more concerned with social policies (like welfare and crime) and less concerned with economics (such as development) (Sapiro 1983; Schumaker and Burns 1988; Burns and Schumaker 1987). Schumaker and Burns (1988) demonstrate that women were much more likely to oppose large-scale development and much more likely to support social service provisions by the local government. Women may also be less likely to support economic development policies, as Shapiro (1983), Schumaker and Burns (1988), Burns and Schumaker (1987) and Gidengil (1995) have found that women are less likely to support issues relating to economics. If women in public office are representative of the female population as a whole, the gender gap research suggests that women in public office may have baseline policy preferences that are different from their male counterparts. If a gender gap exists at the representational level, female office holders will express distinct issue and policy preferences, especially on policies relating to welfare, domestic violence, and policing.

**Group Consciousness:**

Another possible source of gender differences in leaders is that women are more likely to possess a gender consciousness. Generally, group consciousness is seen as a psychological phenomenon whereby members of a specific group use their membership in the group to inform their attitudes and actions. Conover (Conover 1988b) posits that the relationship between group
membership to politics is dependent on a specific schema, whereby the entry of social groups into the political thought process depends on the salience and clarity of group cues in the political arena. The process by which groups affect political thinking depends on whether the group is an in-group or an out-group, and the evaluation of fairness or sympathy. In-groups elicit sympathy, whereas out-groups are not necessarily affected by evaluations of affective fairness or sympathy (Conover 1988b). Conover’s theory suggests that, while group consciousness is not the sole determinant of issue preference, it “…naturally leads people to feel sympathy towards their in-group and thus it strongly contributes to the development of pro-group issue preferences” (Conover 1988b, 62).

Can gender be a base for group consciousness? Wilcox (1997) and Gurin (1985) suggest that that women can only possess a gender consciousness if they demonstrate: 1) collective orientation, or everyone in the group desires to change rank; 2) discontent, or general group dissatisfaction with their relative power; 3) legitimacy of disparity, or “a belief that this disadvantage stems from social discrimination and not from personal failings of group members” (Wilcox 1997, 73-74); and 4) identification, or shared values and interests among the group (Gurin 1985; Wilcox 1997). Others have argued that gender consciousness includes an identification with other group members, a positive affect towards them, and an understanding of interdependence, or the “recognition that one’s relation to the political world is shaped in important ways by the physical fact of one’s sex” (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992, 14).

Other researchers have shied away from either attributing a group consciousness to women, or to assigning any of the necessary components to women. While women display characteristics that are associated with minority groups (such as lack of power, self-loathing and a denial of group identification), many of the components of traditional definitions of minority
groups, including social distances and frequency of interaction, cannot apply to women’s experience as a minority group (Dahlerup 1988; Hacker 1951). Simone de Beauvoir (1948) suggested that women and men have a similar relationship to Hegel’s slave and master, but that the bond that women have with men is deep, permanent, and day-to-day. Gurin (1985) echoes the sentiment that women may not form group consciousness because they are socialized with men (as siblings or classmates) and “cleavage and conflict rarely develop between groups that share such fundamental values” (145).

Research involving the application of theories of gender consciousness to women in public office is limited. Wolbrecht (2000) posits that “As a result of personal experiences, female elites may be predisposed to personal and professional issues specific to women, sympathetic to the needs of women vis-à-vis public policy, and cognizant of the unique ways in which government action impinges on women’s lives” (214). Others suggest that women in public office are distinctly able (and thus, men are unable) to represent women (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992; Phillips 1995). However, the relationship between gender consciousness and representational behavior at the local level has not been articulated in the literature. If gender consciousness is what drives the relationship between gender and attitudes, then we may only observe differences in attitudes among leaders who have an elevated gender consciousness. As such, if gender consciousness is driving gendered differences in representational behavior, I will not find a direct relationship between gender and policy preferences. Instead, I will find that those women who possess a gender consciousness will prefer policies that help members of their group, including welfare, domestic violence, health, and education policies.

**Research Methods:**

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Data on the attitudes of urban representatives were collected through an email survey administered to mayors and city council members in 300 U.S. cities in early spring 2009. The cities in the sample were randomly selected from the United States’ Census listing of municipalities. The cities were from forty-two of the fifty states, with cities in California (28 cities), Texas (19 cities), and Illinois (18 cities) representing a large portion of the cities. The cities range in size from 6,599 to 1,953,631, with an average population of just under 43,000.

Designed to solicit information about policies and practices that city leaders deal with on a day-to-day basis, the survey questions are based on past research, including Diamond’s *Sex Roles in the State House* (1977), Thomas’ *How Women Legislate* (1994; see also Thomas 1991), and Hardy-Fanta et al (2005), as well as scholarship on group membership (Wong 1998; Conover 1988a, 1988b) with adjustments made to accommodate for the level of office, the responsibilities of city leaders, and the interactions of small groups of individuals. The general goal of the survey was to evaluate whether male and female mayors and city council members have similar or divergent attitudes towards the importance of a variety of policies, whether they vary in their experience in office, and to gather some basic background data on the representatives. Contact information for the representatives was gathered through each city websites and central listing services, such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Of the 300 cities, I was able to locate contact information for 216 mayors and 1101 city council members.ii

Overall, there were 149 (11%) respondents to the survey that chose to opt out and an additional 233 (17.7%) surveys were undeliverable, due to an incorrect or invalid email address. Taking the bounce back and opt-out rates into effect, the overall response rate is 38.4%, 39.5% for city council members, and 35% for mayors. While low, these response rates are in line for
surveys of public officials, especially when communication with the respondents is done entirely online (Weikart et al. 2007).

Of the 357 responses received, 97 (or 27%) were from female leaders and 260 were from male leaders. Of the mayoral respondents, 25% were female and 75% were male, while among the city council members that filled out the survey, 41% were female and 59% were male. Both rates for women are far above the Center for American Women in Politics figure that 16.9% of mayors of cities with more than 30,000 residents are female.

Leaders were asked to identify the city that they represent, which was linked to data from the U.S. Census, including socioeconomic and demographic data. Female and male respondents represent similar sized cities (53,163 for men and 57,004 for women); equally diverse populations; and cities with similar poverty rates (10.7% poverty in cities with male representatives, compared to 11.2% for female representatives). No gender differences exist in the rate of families with public assistance, the median age of the population, or in the crime rate; men and women are evenly dispersed among the census regions. Women represent towns with slightly higher levels of education. Leaders were asked to self identify political affiliations and ideology; female representatives are more likely to identify as Democrats and are more liberal.

The Findings:

Gender and Issue Priorities: Preliminary Findings

Does gender have a direct effect on the policy preferences of male and female representatives in cities? If these mayors and city council members are representative of the general population in their policy preferences, and men and women display no differences in
preference for government provision of welfare, development, and health and human services, I should find a direct effect of gender on policy preferences.

Policy preferences are measured through two sets of questions. For a basic measure of policy preferences, I asked respondents to evaluate the importance of affordable housing, culture and arts, domestic violence, economic development, education, health and human services, infrastructure and transportation, public safety, public works, and welfare services.\textsuperscript{vii} Next, in order to understand if preferences resulted in actions, leaders were asked, “How often do you propose legislation relating to each issue?”\textsuperscript{viii}

Very few differences emerge between men and women in policy priorities. Issues that were within the traditional realm of city responsibilities, such as transportation and infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and public works, were considered important. The city leaders, regardless of the representative’s gender, considered issues that relate to redistribution, including affordable housing, welfare, health and human services, and domestic violence, as less important.

Insert Table 1 here

The single significant difference is that women consider the issue of affordable housing more important than their male counterparts. Overall, men and women have very similar policy priorities, with welfare policies as the least important and public safety as the most important of issues for both genders. Preliminary differences between men and women emerge when the respondents answered whether the leader had “ever worked with other council members on any of these issues.” A similar lack of gender difference (displayed in Columns Four and Five of Table 1) is evident in the frequency of proposing legislation on an issue. Leaders indicated that issues that fall under traditional government activities (such as transportation, infrastructure,
public works, and public safety) are those that the leaders acted upon most frequently. Leaders also indicated that they worked often on issues of economic development. The least frequently worked on issues are welfare, domestic violence (which both averaged between “Never” and “Rarely”) and education.

**Explorations of Gender Consciousness at the Local Level:**

After an examination of the general policy priorities and actions of leaders in my sample, I look next at manifestations of gender consciousness in the respondents through several questions that focused on attitudes towards representation. These questions include if the respondent believed that certain groups are underrepresented in their city, and whether they feel like they “represent specific groups in office, beyond their electoral constituencies.” If the mayor or city council member answered yes to either of these questions, I asked the representative to identify (verbatim) which groups they felt met these criteria. Finally, I asked the representatives to tell me, verbatim, why they felt a responsibility to represent the group that they had identified. I chose to examine group identification through an open process because open-ended responses to group membership questions have been shown to produces a more precise method of ascertaining group membership (Wong 1998). ix

These questions were designed to investigate whether gender has an effect on which groups are represented, as well as to examine whether any form of group or gender consciousness existed among the representatives. First, when I look at the representative’s responses to the general questions about under-representation and responsibility to represent certain groups, men and women are equally as likely to say that they believe certain groups are underrepresented. Specifically, 55% of women said that they believed that some groups were underrepresented in their city, compared to 63% of men. However, female representatives are
more likely to indicate a responsibility to represent certain groups outside their electoral constituency. When asked if they felt that they had a responsibility to represent a specific group, 71% of women said yes, compared to 57% of men.

The respondents were also asked to identify which groups, for each of these questions, they felt were underrepresented or that they had a responsibility to represent.

Insert Figure 1 here

As Figure 1 shows, significant differences emerge between the groups women and men view as underrepresented and feel a responsibility to represent. Specifically, women are much more likely to say children or young people (22% of women compared to 13% of men) and women (14% of women compared to 2% of men) are underrepresented, and that they feel a responsibility to represent poor or low-income people (40% of women versus 27% of men) and women (10% of women and 4% of men). Among the male respondents, men are slightly more likely to think that businesses are less likely to be represented. These results begin to demonstrate that women leaders feel some form of group consciousness, where they understand part of their leadership responsibility to be representative of certain groups.

The final set of questions that relate to views of representation followed up the “Which groups do you feel a responsibility to represent” question with “Why do you feel a responsibility to represent this group?” Here, the respondents were allowed to give a verbatim response. Focusing on women that said that they represent women, two patterns emerge. Generally, these representatives either felt camaraderie with other women or were concerned that women lack political power or a voice in politics. The representatives who cited a shared background had responses that varied from “the other members of my board are all men who tend to represent men's concerns,” to “I am the only female on the council and I need to represent women’s
interests,” and “As a woman, I hope to bring a different perspective.” Representatives who were concerned with the lack of power for women had responses that includes such statements as “I don’t think that they get a voice in what happens in our city,” “they are forgotten a lot of the time” and “I think my job is to be a voice for those who may not have the resources to effectively "fight" city hall.”

The verbatim responses suggest a strong connection to the criteria for a gender consciousness. Specifically, some women are much more likely to identify women as underrepresented in their community. In addition, when asked why women are underrepresented, the female representatives claimed both that they felt a responsibility as a member of the group, and that women, as a group, suffer from systematic exclusion from city government. These are consistent with the markers of gender consciousness, including that group consciousness arises when members of the group 1) identify gender as a core element of their personage, 2) are dissatisfied with their place in society, and 3) attribute the group’s relative power position to system wide forces, not to individual forces. These results suggest that gender consciousness might provide some incentive for female leaders to hold attitudes that are different from their male counterparts. Next, I use the answers to these representation questions to generate a measure of gender consciousness, and test this measure of gender consciousness against policy preferences.

I set forth the following measure of gender consciousness. If the leader said they felt a responsibility to represent women (a natural choice for gender consciousness) or children (as children are generally considered the domain of women and child rearing is a common experience that binds women together), these leaders have a gender consciousness. As I look at the individual responses to questions about responsibility to represent underrepresented groups,
clear patterns emerge. Women are much more likely than men to say they believe they have a responsibility to represent women and children, but not all women choose this option. Indeed, while women make up the majority of those that say they have a responsibility to represent women or children, less than twenty-five percent of women indicated feeling a responsibility to represent women or children in their city. Overall, these results suggest that, while gender is an indicator of gender consciousness, it is far from a guarantee of gender consciousness.

**Preliminary Evidence of Gender Consciousness at the Local Level:**

To test whether gender or gender consciousness affects the political behavior of representatives, I used OLS regression to model the effects of gender, gender consciousness, ideology, partisanship, the number of years in office, and the position held by the individual, and the median income of the city, onto the two sets of measures that have been discussed before, including: Issue Priorities\(^{\text{x}}\) and Frequency of Working on Issues.\(^{\text{xi}}\) Ideology and partisanship are included as controls, so that I can accurately measure the effects of gender and gender consciousness, without concern that the more liberal nature of women in the sample could produce the differences. Controls for position held by the individual and the number of years in office are both included to account for any learning the individual might engage in during a longer tenure in office or whether the specific responsibilities of a type of office could affect an understanding of priorities. Finally, the median income of the city allows me to control for the potential demand for redistributive services. Theoretically, if gender alone is a driving force behind issue preferences, we should see significant effects for gender. However, if a representatives’ gender consciousness is what matters, gender should be an insignificant predictor of any issue preference and the rough measure of gender consciousness should have a
positive, significant effect on policies that matter to women, such as domestic violence, welfare, and education.

The first set of measures is the individual stated priority for a variety of issues handled by city government, including economic development, public safety, and welfare. As Table 2 shows, the gender of the representative is an insignificant measure of any policy priorities, even though these issues are clearly aligned with the issues where a gender gap has been found in the general population.

Insert Table 2 About Here

These findings suggest that gender does not dictate policy priorities. The measure of gender consciousness, however, is a positive predictor of the consideration of education, health, domestic violence, and welfare as important issues, and a negative predictor of support for economic development as an important issue. Substantively, gender consciousness has a small to moderate effect, moving a leader between half a point and 1.2 points on a ten-point scale. The party of the representative has negative and significant effect on prioritizing health, affordable housing, domestic violence, and welfare policies. As the party variable is coded so that Republican is higher on the scale, these results are consistent with general Republican attitudes on welfare policies and big government.

I look next at the effect of gender consciousness on how frequently the representatives propose actions relating to each of these issues. Here, I gender consciousness is again a significant measure of working on education, health, affordable housing, and welfare.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Gender consciousness has a moderate substantive effect, moving leaders 0.2 to 0.65 on a four-point scale. Gender alone has a negative relationship with working on education or welfare.
issues. The directionality of the gender consciousness and gender variables suggests that gender consciousness, compared to gender alone, is more consistent with general expectations derived from the literature. As with the examination of issue priorities, party has a significant and negative relationship with the frequency of work on education, health, domestic violence, and welfare policies. Being a mayor has a positive significant effect on the frequency of work on all of the issues, suggesting that holding citywide, executive office work more frequently on all issues.

**Conclusion:**

The results presented here are consistent with the limited scholarship on female representatives at the local level: gender does not seem to have an effect on policy priorities. My findings suggest that, in order to detect gender differences, one has to look not just at a representative’s gender, but, instead, at how a representative understands the relationship between gender, power, and representation. I develop a new measure of gender consciousness based on representative’s personal views of their role in the political system. I test the gender consciousness measure – as well as the direct measure of gender – against measures of policy priorities and work on issues of traditional municipal concern and find that gender consciousness (and not gender alone) produces the expected policy preferences.

Several implications arise from my findings. First, my findings suggest that women who serve at the local level may be different from women who serve at higher levels of office. Specifically, in state and national offices, the selection process may result in a larger percentage of women who possess a gender consciousness, so that gender and gender consciousness are easy proxies for each other. Further research on gender consciousness among political leaders at all levels of office could illuminate the possibility of varying levels of gender consciousness.
Additionally, I find that gender consciousness is a significant predictor of the actions and priorities of municipal leaders, even as I control for party and ideology, suggesting the consciousness is not merely a proxy for liberally minded women holding office. Finally, these results suggest that those seeking to elect female representatives at the local level who will hold attitudes that we traditionally associate with women may have to be more careful in their selection of a leader.
Works Cited:


Table 1: Policy Priorities, Policy Work, Policy Collaboration

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Table 2: Issue Priorities

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Standard errors in parentheses
+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Table 3: Frequency of Proposing Legislation on an Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public Safety</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Affordable Housing</th>
<th>Parks and Recreation</th>
<th>Domestic Violence</th>
<th>Welfare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.141</td>
<td>-0.133</td>
<td>-0.373*</td>
<td>-0.0506</td>
<td>-0.0466</td>
<td>0.0446</td>
<td>-0.0452</td>
<td>-0.225+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.133)</td>
<td>(0.135)</td>
<td>(0.151)</td>
<td>(0.141)</td>
<td>(0.150)</td>
<td>(0.152)</td>
<td>(0.135)</td>
<td>(0.123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Consciousness</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.234</td>
<td>0.649**</td>
<td>0.467*</td>
<td>0.621**</td>
<td>0.185</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.185+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.180)</td>
<td>(0.183)</td>
<td>(0.203)</td>
<td>(0.188)</td>
<td>(0.204)</td>
<td>(0.205)</td>
<td>(0.183)</td>
<td>(0.099)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>-0.0168</td>
<td>0.00780</td>
<td>-0.0732*</td>
<td>-0.0653+</td>
<td>-0.0568</td>
<td>-0.0217</td>
<td>-0.0741*</td>
<td>-0.0670*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0315)</td>
<td>(0.0322)</td>
<td>(0.0357)</td>
<td>(0.0333)</td>
<td>(0.0353)</td>
<td>(0.0362)</td>
<td>(0.0322)</td>
<td>(0.0292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>0.0777</td>
<td>0.0741</td>
<td>0.0992</td>
<td>0.0355</td>
<td>-0.0549</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.115+</td>
<td>0.0755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0659)</td>
<td>(0.0675)</td>
<td>(0.0747)</td>
<td>(0.0691)</td>
<td>(0.0740)</td>
<td>(0.0754)</td>
<td>(0.0669)</td>
<td>(0.0609)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>0.540**</td>
<td>0.606**</td>
<td>0.613**</td>
<td>0.409*</td>
<td>0.366*</td>
<td>0.550**</td>
<td>0.526**</td>
<td>0.305*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.158)</td>
<td>(0.162)</td>
<td>(0.180)</td>
<td>(0.165)</td>
<td>(0.177)</td>
<td>(0.180)</td>
<td>(0.161)</td>
<td>(0.145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income of City</td>
<td>-0.000001</td>
<td>0.0000005</td>
<td>-0.000006+</td>
<td>0.0000003</td>
<td>-0.000004</td>
<td>-0.000003</td>
<td>0.0000009</td>
<td>0.0000003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
<td>(0.000003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Office</td>
<td>0.0208+</td>
<td>0.0213+</td>
<td>0.00202</td>
<td>0.00363</td>
<td>0.00201</td>
<td>-0.00844</td>
<td>0.0266*</td>
<td>0.00797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.0110)</td>
<td>(0.0112)</td>
<td>(0.0127)</td>
<td>(0.0117)</td>
<td>(0.0126)</td>
<td>(0.0128)</td>
<td>(0.0112)</td>
<td>(0.0103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.792**</td>
<td>2.833**</td>
<td>2.289**</td>
<td>2.240**</td>
<td>2.981**</td>
<td>2.832**</td>
<td>1.392**</td>
<td>1.643**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.239)</td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
<td>(0.271)</td>
<td>(0.250)</td>
<td>(0.270)</td>
<td>(0.274)</td>
<td>(0.241)</td>
<td>(0.221)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses
+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$
Other extant scholarship has used alternate approaches in defining group consciousness; for example, Sigel and Welchel (1986) examine group consciousness as a function of individual’s attitudes towards gender roles, not as a determinant of attitudes about the women’s movement. The attitude that gender consciousness is “a process more than an object, an organizational scheme for attitudes rather than an attitude itself… thus… it is to be seen in the relationship between identification, as far as we can measure it, and various political objects” is echoed by Tolleson Reinhart (1992, 37).

Using online survey software, the invitation to the survey was sent at the beginning of February 2009, with three reminder messages that followed ten days afterwards, five days after the first reminder, and finally, three days after the second reminder.

Both men and women represent cities that are on average, over 80% white, with no statistically significant differences between the diversity of the cities represented.
Female respondents represent cities with higher rates of bachelor’s degrees (29.5% in cities with male representatives, 32.7% in cities with female representatives) and lower rates of high school or less education (26.3% for cities with male representatives, 24.3% for cities with female representatives).

Partisan Identification: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? Strong Democrat, Democrat, Weak Democrat, Independent – Leaning Democrat, Independent, Independent – Leaning Republican, Weak Republican, Republican, and Strong Republican. Male respondents scored an average of 5.33 on this nine-point scale, while female respondents scored an average of 4.23, a difference that is statistically significant to the 0.001 level.

Ideology: When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this? Men, on average, scored a 4.13 on this scale, while women scored a 3.71, a difference that is statistically significant to the 0.01 level.

These issue areas were chosen carefully from an examination of the duties of municipal government, as well as reviews of each city’s budget, which provided insight into what each city spent resources on, as well as what was reasonable to consider within the jurisdiction of municipal government.

The options for frequency of proposal of legislation included, “Once a meeting,” “Once every few months or more,” “Once a year or more,” “Rarely,” or “Never.”

Wong (1998) has shown that there are no differences in open-ended and closed-ended assessments of group affect, but that open-ended assessments produce more pronounced measures of group obligation and group salience.

As outlined before, Issue Priorities are measured on a 1 to 10 scale, with the variable scales so that higher values indicate a higher priority.

Frequency of working on issues is measured on a zero to 5 scale, with higher numbers indicating a higher frequency of working on issues.

For ease of presentation, I removed the display or discussion of several of the issues, including transportation, culture, and public works. I have no consistent expectation that gender will affect attitudes towards any of these issues, and, overall, there was very little significance across the board for these issues.