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Do upper middle class societal influencers matter in public policy outcomes?

Susan Helene Bos Hoagland
San Jose State University

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DO UPPER MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETAL INFLUENCERS MATTER
IN PUBLIC POLICY OUTCOMES?

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Susan Helene Bos Hoagland

August 1996

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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Robert A. Hicks, Ph.D.-Chairperson

Herman L. Boschken, Ph.D.-Committee Member

Robert Pellegrini, Ph.D.-Committee Member

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

M. Lou Lewandowski

ABSTRACT

DO UPPER MIDDLE CLASS SOCIETAL INFLUENCERS MATTER IN PUBLIC POLICY OUTCOMES?

by Susan Helene Bos Hoagland

In urban politics, past research has targeted both government administrators and external influences as determinants of policy outcomes. From the external perspective, two avenues of inquiry have been prevalent, one focusing on urban preconditions (i.e., size, physical configuration, income, race) and the other on the power of political actors engaged in agency processes. Neither, however, has dealt sufficiently with the thorny issue of indirect social influences. This thesis inquires about the possibility that policy outcomes are determined in part by government administrators perceiving certain anonymous influential publics where no direct political interaction is involved. It examines this with specific reference to an anonymous upper middle class. Using regression analysis, results show a upper middle class factor to be at least as significant in explaining differences in agency outcomes as traditional rival theses.

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Do Upper Middle Class Societal Influencers
Matter in Public Policy Outcomes?

Susan Helene Bos Hoagland

San Jose State University

Footnotes

Requests for reprints should be sent to Susan H. Hoagland,
Department of Psychology, San Jose State University, San
Jose, CA 95192.

Abstract

In urban politics, past research has targeted both government administrators and external influences as determinants of policy outcomes. From the external perspective, two avenues of inquiry have been prevalent, one focusing on urban preconditions (i.e., size, physical configuration, income, race) and the other on the power of political actors engaged in agency processes. Neither, however, has dealt sufficiently with the thorny issue of indirect social influences.

This study examined the relationship between policy outcomes and government administrators perceiving certain anonymous influential publics where no direct political interaction is involved. It was hypothesized that the greater the proportion of upper middle class societal influencers in an agency's service area population, the more likely the agency would either emphasize strategic organization effectiveness or social-program effectiveness, while de-emphasizing operations efficiency. Data on income, income change, education, and professional status was collected from the 1990 census. The dependent variable, agency emphasis, was operationalized using the multiple-perspectives outcomes approach. The sample consisted of 42 agencies operating transit systems in metropolitan area of at least 500,000 population.

Using regression analysis, results show a upper middle class societal influencer factor to be at least as significant in explaining differences in agency outcomes as traditional rival themes. Given these findings, the need to incorporate the impact of anonymous influential publics on public policy outcomes is indicated.

Do Upper Middle Class Societal Influencers Matter
In Public Policy Outcomes?

The representation of different constituencies in policy outcomes is a longstanding theme in politics and administration. For years, Lasswell's (1936) original query about "Who gets what, when, and how?" has inspired generations of scholars in interest group theory, community power, intergovernmental relations, and public organization theory. These literatures left political scientists well stocked with answers to Lasswell's (1936) query, but they remain incomplete from a larger social science perspective. Aimed primarily at discovering the influence of actors engaged in the political process, they generally overlook the possibility of indirect influence of certain anonymous social actors.

Little is known about the subtle political influence of anonymous social groupings. Typically, we assume such symbolic actors are not of organized groups, and hence lack specific interest and direct political force necessary to sway public policymaking. The result is that quantitative analysis seeking the existence of such influence on policy outcomes is missing. This study examines a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the plausibility of an anonymous upper middle class (UMC) skewing policy outcomes in ways not found in the existing politics and administration

literature.

Because of difficulties in proving a substantive connection with intangible variables, the study attempts a more limited empirical test, by linking multivariate analysis with inferential reasoning. It does so by first developing from the literature (1) a multiple-perspectives framework of policy outcomes (defining the dependent variable), (2) a conceptual demographic profile of the UMC (the independent variable), and (3) a set of causal hypotheses connecting the UMC with policy outcomes. The research tests the hypotheses using controls for rival theses in a multivariate analysis on a nationwide cross sectional sample of 42 urban transit agencies. The thesis compares results with rival theses and concludes by posing an inferential model of determination.

What is meant by policy outcomes? In a plural society, policymaking must be understood from a multiple-perspectives context (Boschken, 1994; Wachs, 1985). In contrast to a pinnacle interest at-large, this context assumes there are many legitimate public demands, and one cannot judge agency results as better or worse without applying the bias of a particular perspective.

This notion is especially crucial in analyzing results when great differences exist in public demands, causing "Political actors...to have significantly

different expectations about bureaucratic performance" (Gruber, 1987, p. 142). With differences in perspective come disagreements over the goodness of results and in how agencies are perceived. In accord, this study is not interested in results per se, but in the fact that different agencies emphasize different outcomes. In analyzing why, the study defines a dependent variable called skewness in policy outcomes.

Skewness adds substantive content about the use of organizational resources to emphasize different agency performances. This differs from the single-norm analysis found in most studies of efficiency (see, for example, Downs and Larkey, 1986), effectiveness (see, for example, Chubb and Moe, 1990), and innovation (see, for example, Clark, 1994a). By comparison, the analysis of outcome skewness offers an approach based on competing normative perspectives. Two conceptual issues come of this.

First, skewness is made central by a distinction in the policy analysis literature between outputs and outcomes. Because outputs (such as per capita service levels or cost per hour of service) do not explicitly incorporate differential preferences in which to judge their goodness comparatively, outputs alone do not convey sufficient information about who gets what. Amending the deficiency, Levy, Meltsner and Wildavsky (1974) define a

"...concept of outcomes which includes a subjective element of evaluation because it involves human preferences" (p.2).

By associating results with different preferences, an outcome analysis allows for a multiple-perspectives assessment of equity in resource distribution. It also provides a means for judging accountability from both internal managerial perspectives and various external political perspectives (Gruber, 1987; Bellone & Goerl, 1992).

Second, skewness can be known without reference to cause by comparing differences among focal agencies in the outcomes they individually emphasize. For example, one agency might skew outcomes toward a standard of operational efficiency, while another skews outcomes toward a preference for bureaucratic growth. Of course, these two outcomes may not be mutually exclusive, but when they are, they raise the issue of performance paradox and the question of tradeoffs regarding whose interests are served. Defining skewness in outcomes as the dependent variable allows us to analyze this question more directly.

Given these two issues, this research adopts a comparative scheme that categorizes agency outputs according to different organizational-political perspectives. Three clusters of agency outcomes are defined. The first and second outcomes, labeled outcomes

of strategic organizational effectiveness and operational efficiency, are preferred by management constituencies located at different levels within the agency. The third outcome perspective, labeled outcomes of social program effectiveness, is the principal interest of external user constituencies.

The first of these, strategic organizational effectiveness, is most often associated with a senior management focused on survival of the organization as a whole. With its substantial professional stake in agency prominence, this constituency promotes effective enhancement of overall bureaucratic vitality (see, for example, Niskanen, 1971). Moreover, senior management is charged "...with identifying new strategies and new projects that will add to the organization's overall strength" (Doig & Mitchell, 1992, p. 21). This outcome perspective sees goodness in such results as growth in agency revenue or budgets, service use levels, and market penetration. Mindlin and Aldrich (1975) conclude these address a standard of organizational effectiveness because they measure "...the ability of an organization to exploit its environment to obtain resources, while maintaining an autonomous bargaining position" (p. 382).

The second category of outcomes deals with operational efficiency and is the domain of management charged with

controlling resources in daily matters. Operational outcomes are guided by "...efficient ways of bringing services to the public" (Doig & Mitchell, 1992, p.21). In handling production and delivery, in providing the maintenance of plant and equipment, and in decisions to replace facilities, the operational perspective measures the goodness of outcomes according to minimizing cost per unit by "...adherence to engineering standards, accounting rules..." (Doig and Mitchell, 1992, p.25).

Both management inspired outcomes differ from each other in functional purpose and motivational focus, and both are contrasted with the third outcome of social program effectiveness. Bozeman's (1988) distinctions between economic and political sources of agency legitimacy offer a way to see this third outcome in contrast with the first two. From the perspective of extra-market or political-arena constituencies, social programs provide results that would not arise from natural market demands because either (1) those who want such outputs do not have the means to pay, or (2) the costs and benefits of such outputs cannot be meaningfully related to each other by a market transaction. Hence, in dealing with either redistribution issues or externalities, criteria for social program effectiveness often must be determined by legislative mandates and interagency agreements. An

example is the increased transit services provided to the handicapped under the Americans for Disabilities Act.

Consistent with a multiple-perspectives approach, one could also include a fourth outcome perspective coming from the vantage of external resource contributors (i.e., organized labor, agency taxpayers). Different from that of external users, this perspective promotes a quid-pro-quo outcome for constituencies holding specific operational resources needed by the agency that could be either withheld or redirected to other organizations if reciprocity in sharing the productivity wealth is not forthcoming (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979). This outcome perspective was not considered here because previous work (Boschken, 1992) showed that variance in the category's outcomes was accounted for by urban size alone (i.e., urban size accounted for more than 80% of the variance). For example, the bigger the agency, the higher the hourly wage of union workers.

By putting together the above performance categories (henceforth called Outcome I, Outcome II and Outcome III, respectively) into a multiple-perspectives framework, it is possible to make comparison of policy outcomes with normative neutrality and according to how they are skewed to represent some organizational constituencies more than others. As a definition, then, a condition of skewness

exists when an agency exhibits a pattern of emphasis (relative to others in the same service area) in outcome perspectives.

Hypotheses about the upper middle class as a determinant of outcome skewness are drawn from a large, interdisciplinary and mostly anecdotal literature. Moreover, because variations of a UMC profile exist, forging a single identity makes some oversimplification unavoidable. On these shortcomings, one must wonder: Does a consistent set of UMC demographic characteristics stand out sufficiently to have a policy influence demonstratively separate from other demographic factors? Are there central tendencies in this anonymous grouping that give meaning for policymaking or is the UMC thesis just a straw man?

Social scientists disagree on answers, but many see a UMC profile that is distinct albeit empirically elusive. Even more powerful is the persistence and frequency with which certain characteristics recur in writings over the course of a century. These long-standing central tendencies pervade the contemporary thoughts of both policymakers and scholars. Reich (1994), for example, recently summarized the UMC as the glass-tower people, those institutionally influential persons who are economically ascendant, college educated and professionally

employed (cited in Farney, p. 1). Clark (1994b) benchmarks a similar profile (but adds age) that aspires to a New Political Culture (NPC).

Past writings reinforce historical continuity in this contemporary vision. With regard to high and rising income, Riesman (1961; 1964) saw fiscal resources taking on social meaning as society moved away from a scarcity psychology toward an abundance psychology. Maslow (1954) predicted that as basic wants are met, surplus resources free individuals to self-actualize and pursue symbolic goods. Veblen (1948) saw a leisure class engaging in conspicuous consumption.

Regarding the UMC as college educated, the contemporary university setting provides a particular instruction that prepares a person simultaneously in functional expertise and institutional protocol. If advancements in science and technology are understood to be the intellectual roots of modernization and abundance (Hartz, 1955; Waldo, 1948; Scott & Hart, 1979), the university has been the repository of that progressive knowledge (Kerr, 1963). Nourished by this knowledge, the UMC acquire a common language, set of symbols, and awareness of institutional processes not shared for the most part by non-UMC.

Thirdly, as professionals, Veblen (1948) characterized the UMC as society's General Staff. Other scholars define the UMC role as being in control of the coordination of organizational resources (Whyte, 1958; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979; Daft, 1995). To manage, they are equipped with titles, positions and other symbols of distinction suitable for those in charge of organizational methods and technologies (Veblen, 1948; Whyte, 1958; Riesman, 1961).

According to the Census (Bureau of the Census, 1993), these historically persistent characteristics indicate the UMC constitute only a minor proportion of today's population. If one subscribed to a median-voter model of citizen preferences (Miranda & Walzer, 1994; Dye, 1992, Chapter 12; Downs, 1957), one might conclude that such small numbers could not have much political influence on policymaking. Susman (1984) in *culture as history*, counters that this small demographic identity has been disproportionately influential across the century in scripting American ways of living and thinking. He sees the upper middle class as the ideal for the culture, made visible by media and education serving as a "...means to help all move toward the ideal" (Susman, 1984, p. xxii).

The three characteristics seem to spring from assumptions about the UMC's status-forming motives.

Specifically, they are said to originate in the intensity with which UMC persons (1) exhibit other-directedness (Riesman, 1961) toward each other rather than in emulating other social groupings, and (2) pursue the need for belonging to some organized influential human aggregate (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). For sure, most persons exhibit these psychological qualities, but the added need to feel recognized as a member by influential peers seems to place special emphasis on these UMC identifying characteristics.

Why should this be? Riesman (1961) argues that without aristocratic ancestry or a psychological gyroscope to establish influential status position, behavior protocol or community connection, the UMC instead focus on each other's approval through continuous responsive contact. One gains stature with people by acceptance into a particular social group, but what sets the UMC apart and what matters to them the most is "The process of striving itself..." (Riesman, 1961, p. 21). Becoming influential seems to matter most in exhibiting UMC stature.

If true, why then is a UMC identity not more distinct empirically? Part of the answer may be that preoccupation with influential status does not require verbal contact. Social psychology research shows that individuals interact with other individuals in a similar

social position even when there are no direct communications (Lazer, 1995; Burt, 1987). In lieu of verbal contact, the formation of anonymous groupings is based on the expenditure of time and resources to acquire and exhibit a structural equivalence in the social structure.

The term defines "...a measure of an individual's status, where individuals are sensitive to what other individuals of similar status are doing, believing, etc." (Lazer, 1995, p. 4). This involves prior consensus on discriminating categories which Turner (1985) argues are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the grouping. The characteristics of high income, university education and professional status are convenient for determining structural equivalence because they can be openly displayed without verbal communications. Through the use of degrees, titles, organizational position, compensation level, and strategic affiliations, these symbols of institutional achievement demonstrate influential position rather than simply material look-a-likes.

For the most part, the literature talks about these three characteristics as interlaced dimensions of a core profile. At various times, other attributes have been prominent in the literature as well, including religion, mobility, consumption patterns, age and ethnicity. But,

they do not hold up over time and are seen as more incidental and peripheral to the three defining influential positions. The White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), for example, popularized earlier in the century holds little meaning today in UMC characterizations.

In designing hypotheses about UMC influence on skewing policy outcomes, a perplexing question arises. Why should an urban agency's outcomes matter to the UMC except from a fiscal standpoint? After all, UMC are not reliant on and seldom use most public services except perhaps education, fire, and police. Most would find limited value in using public transit and welfare services. For individual urban services, this is true, but the UMC are interested in public services that contribute to the overall character of their metropolitan area. UMC persons may seldom ride a bus, but can still appreciate modern and attractive transit systems for what they contribute to the vitality and status of a world class city. Hence, those services that visibly improve the urban landscape should matter to UMC seeking positional status in structural equivalence.

Using the three outcomes described earlier as the dependent variables, the following hypotheses address how the UMC skew agency outcomes by causing different outcome perspectives to be emphasized. First,

Outcome I, Strategic Organizational Effectiveness.

Here, the literature offers a two step logic for the UMC to want prominent public organizations. First, the professional aspect of the UMC lifestyle is a derivative of organizational values which promote administrative environments as a way-of-life (Whyte, 1958; Scott & Hart, 1979). In seeking structural equivalence, the UMC are distinguished by their professional ambiance in "...a vast complex of interlocking management systems, sharing a common set of values...which provide order and stability in our national life" (Scott & Hart, 1979, p. 5). Some writings cast a UMC as institutional creatures seeking enlarged social and economic scope for organizations which employ modern knowledge based techniques to acquire and allocate society's resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979; Benson, 1975; Halberstam, 1972; Riesman, 1961, p. 20; Veblen, 1948).

Second, public organizations play an instrumental role in the UMC lifestyle by providing the infrastructure and security that augment and support a free enterprise system. "Free markets thrive, not in splendid isolation, but in a context of large and productive business and government organizations" (Simon, 1995, p. 404), the latter of which provides the effectiveness of infrastructure and public goods. To ignore the value of strong

public organizations in the American political economy is therefore inconsistent with the faith and investment the UMC have made in higher education, organizational culture and professional competence. For these two reasons, a metropolitan setting with higher proportion of UMC should offer a more conducive environment for agencies seeking to emphasize their economic growth and bureaucratic prominence. Hence,

H₁ : The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's service area population, the greater the emphasis an agency will place on performance regarding its strategic organizational effectiveness.

The literature for Outcome II, Operations Efficiency, paints the UMC as having subordinate concern for efficiency by virtue of the group's achieved material security and fiscal abundance. While this seems counter to happenings in the Progressive Era, this earlier period is characterized by Riesman's (1961) scarcity psychology where a managerial UMC has not yet replaced the robber barons as influentials in American institutions. With the spreading of affluence after World War II, Riesman (1961) characterizes UMC behavior as an abundance psychology where the UMC reflect a cult of effortlessness with respect to physical work and organized production. Indifference to efficiency is also

consistent with Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs, regarding those pursuing self-actualization.

Even during the Progressive era, though, Veblen (1948) saw a distinction in outlook separating the UMC from others according to institutional performance criteria. He noted "...a division of labour, between the business manager and the office worker on the one side and the technician and industrial worker on the other side" (p. 382). For the manual worker, Veblen (1948) said, "The final term of his habitual thinking is mechanical efficiency" (p. 337). To the managerial UMC, Veblen (1948) saw behavior following a criterion of conspicuous waste even in the production of goods: "...in special machinery and tools contrived for some particular industrial process. . . the traces of conspicuous waste. . . usually become evident on close scrutiny" (p.140).

If an abundance psychology matters in defining UMC behavior, one might expect agencies in metropolitan areas with higher UMC concentrations to be disinclined toward an efficiency perspective of performance. Hence,

H₂: The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's service area population, the more likely the agency will de-emphasize its operations efficiency.

Even though the UMC may not use most individual public

services, the literature for Outcome III, Social Program Effectiveness, leads in two possible explanatory directions regarding the UMC's expectations about effective social programs. One comes from traditional class theory in sociology, where the argument stems from ruling-class obligations toward a landed community (Nisbet, 1966). From this theory it might be argued that the UMC empathize with the plight of the casualties of Organizational America (Scott & Hart, 1979). Specifically, those who have lost as a consequence of process requirements in keeping big institutions at the center of the American political economy. This logic, however, seems less persuasive because with their cosmopolitan cognition, high geographical mobility, and status defining focus on structural equivalence, the UMC are unlikely to recognize traditional community and less likely to have a sense of noblesse oblige.

The other perspective in the literature argues that the UMC reflects a preference for status affirming public accouterments consistent with an abundance psychology lifestyle (i.e., a prominent airport hub, professional sports facilities, humanistic arts, clean surroundings, fewer homeless, nice parks, clean and safe transportation). "...as wealth increases, people grow more concerned with

lifestyle and other amenity issues in addition to classic economic concerns" (Clark, 1994b, p. 27). For example, in the social psychology of urban planning, Hammond (1992) points to programs and services that specifically contribute visible credence to the UMC's metropolis as a "...nonverbal medium for the communication of moral reputation, social rank, and other significant qualities of self" (p. 258).

As part of determining structural equivalence, the UMC may be using social programs that enhance metropolitan attractiveness to demonstrate status position in a world class competition of metropolitan areas. It is also important to note that the UMC would leave such status affirming social programs to the public sector. Rapoport (1982), for example, argues that to maintain political legitimacy in a multiple-constituency arena, publicly mandated social programs gather greater support as appropriate policy instruments.

If the UMC seek to promote government programs that obviate and extend the status of this lifestyle, agencies serving higher concentrations of the UMC should experience support for social programs that visibly improve the cityscape in a world class competition. Hence,

H₃ : The greater the proportion of UMC in an agency's service area population, the greater the emphasis an agency

will place on its social program effectiveness.

The three hypotheses combined pose the thesis that skewness exists in the form of emphases on strategic organizational effectiveness (Outcome I) and social program effectiveness (Outcome III), and a de-emphasis on operational efficiency (Outcome II).

Existing empirical research on policy outcomes in urban administration has seldom incorporated a UMC profile as an independent causal agent. If represented at all, a UMC is treated either (1) as issue specific political actors directly interacting with the agency, or (2) as individual demographic variables randomly aggregated with others in a loosely arranged set describing the agency's surrounding social and physical environment. Hence, the central question is: does the UMC factor operate independently of variables incorporated in other research? For either treatment of the UMC, variables of these other approaches are relevant in this research as controls in that it is necessary to see how much the UMC profile contributes to an explanation of outcomes relative to rival approaches.

Rival approaches are found in a variety of policy inquiries. One approach, sometimes called the political actor thesis, targets the direct influence of interest groups (Petracca, 1992; Cigler & Loomis, 1991; Lowi,

1969; Truman, 1951), community power structure (Erie, 1988; Blakely, 1989; Stone, 1989; Peterson, 1981; Banfield, 1961), and the structure of intergovernmental relations (IGR) (Agranoff & McGuire, 1993; Benson, 1975; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979). The common denominator in this approach is direct use of political power as the causal agent of policy outcomes (Lieberman, 1995, p. 437).

No attempt is made to exhaust the large number of variables consumed under this approach, but administrative theory usually views political power through an intergovernmental process. For this reason, political actors (i.e., direct influencers) are seen here as part of the institutional process, where variables measure a focal agency's fiscal and statutory autonomy in an intergovernmental structure. These variables would have an impact on policy inverse to those of political power because the greater the autonomy enjoyed by the focal agency, the higher the barrier of access for external actors. This rival approach, then, predicts that with autonomy, agency policymakers will emphasize Outcome I: strategic organizational prominence (see, for example, Benson, 1975, p. 232; Niskanen, 1971).

Three intergovernmental variables were adopted as proxies for political power. The first of these is called revenue autonomy. Revenue autonomy is achieved through

legislative acts that provide high budgetary discretion to the agency, such as a permanent transit tax. The second, political power variable utilized in research to predict agency performance emphasis is capital autonomy. Unlike revenue autonomy, capital autonomy is not dependent on frequent legislation or intergovernmental negotiations. Capital autonomy, which allows greater autonomy in acquiring capital should also encourage an emphasis in strategic effectiveness. The third, political power variable used in the political power approach is called intergovernmental relations (IGR). This variable is drawn from Niskanen's (1971) bureaucratic autonomy variable that utilizes the scope of intergovernmental actors involved in a focal agency's policymaking, and intensity, which measures those required in a focal agency's policymaking.

A second area utilized in past research to predict performance outcome emphasizes is specific to an urban focus. Here, the literature describes the physical form and general social makeup of a city as preconditions in policymaking (Green & Fleischman, 1991; Webster & Bly, 1980). Although not involving identifiable external actors, urban structure variables would be expected to present non-negotiable opportunities and limitations on skewing policy outcomes. Therefore, the research sought variables that were not significantly collineated with

urban size (since size is already controlled in the dependent variables) and that operationalized rival approaches. Three were identified.

One of these is race. Part of the literature (Clark, 1994b; Nivola, 1979; Lineberry, 1977; Clark, 1967) describes an underclass thesis which argues that policy outcomes are distributed according to class distinctions typically measured along racial or ethnic lines. Representing a double standard, metropolitan areas with more racial minorities would get less public service expenditure resulting in less prominent public agencies (Outcome I) and less emphasis on social programs (Outcome III). This variable is also included because some might see the underclass and UMC theses as the same (or the exact inverse of the other).

Another precondition control variable is income. Part of the literature (Dye, 1992; Peterson, 1981; Dye, 1966; Easton, 1965) argues that public agencies spend money according to the aggregate level of economic resources available to them. Since this variable represents average wealth in the population, it does not speak significantly to the proportion of UMC in that population. The income approach for skewing outcomes would be that wealthy metropolitan areas spend more on transit, causing emphases in Outcomes I and III.

The third urban structural variable used in research to predict performance outcome emphasis is cross commuting. Here, the urban planning literature describes a relationship between policy outcomes and the physical land use patterns of an urban area (Cervero, 1991; 1989). For example, it is believed that a center-peripheral pattern of activity facilitates transit agency prominence (Outcome I) and operational efficiencies (Outcome II). Heavily populated corridors (spokes) and points of critical mass allow deeper market penetration, more concentrated use, and economies of scale. Urban areas with nonparametric patterns (for example, Los Angeles and Santa Clara counties) often have agencies with extensive but little used service levels because few concentrated corridors exist to augment high loads and scale efficiencies.

Therefore, based on both empirical research and speculation about whether the UMC factor operates independently of the six variables described above as, revenue autonomy, capital autonomy, intergovernmental relations, race, income, and cross commuting the study will additionally focus on the following hypothesis:

H₄: It is hypothesized that the UMC factor will act independently of revenue autonomy, capital autonomy, intergovernmental relations, race, income, and cross

commuting and significantly increase the accuracy of predicting outcome emphases in transit agencies.

Method

Sample

The research employed a cross-sectional sample of urban transit agencies designed to test the hypotheses with data from standard nationwide reporting systems. Although research results may be partially a function of transit services and not completely generalizable to all public services, the study used transit for three reasons. First, most transit agencies are statutory public enterprises which pursue multiple policy outcomes derived from some mix of economic and political criteria (Bozeman, 1988). Second, transit is a visible and central component in the overall makeup of the urban environment, and thus should be more influenced by the UMC seeking metropolitan stature. Third, the public transit industry offers a rich source of high quality data for empirical comparison in the form of an annual reporting system compiled by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA).

The sample consists of 42 agencies (see Appendix A, Table 6) operating transit systems in metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) of at least 500,000 population during the late 1980's and early 90's. They were identified from the FTA's directory of transit agencies (UMTA, 1988),

and include two-thirds of those in the directory fitting the definition. Data are specific to each transit agency and the population within its jurisdiction.

Materials

Multiple Simultaneous Performance Indices (MSPI).

Boschken's (1992) MSPI (see Appendix A) was used to assess the performance skewness of transit agencies. In accord with the multiple outcomes approach (described earlier), performance skewness is operationalized by three continuum scaled dependent variables which measure the emphasis an agency places on each of three performance perspectives defined respectively as Outcome I: strategic organization effectiveness (senior management's focus is on the survival of the organization as-a-whole), Outcome II: operations efficiency (senior management's focus is on controlling resources in daily matters), and Outcome III: social program effectiveness (programs brought to senior management by legislative mandates and interagency agreements).

Each dependent variable was empiricized as an outcome indice by incorporating output measures consistent with the constituency norms of the respective outcome perspectives. Output measures assigned to each outcome are commonly used in transit. For example, Outcome I is operationalized by data reported on passenger miles

divided by vehicle miles while Outcome II is operationalized by data reported on operations expense divided by number of vehicle miles, and Outcome III is operationalized by passenger miles divided by the service area's square mileage.

Data for the three dependent variables are from the annual FTA (formerly UMTA) Section 15 reporting system. Since any one year of performance is subject to unrepresentative distortions, data for five years (1987 - 1991) were averaged and the means used for the individual measures. This procedure, however, does not eliminate the possibility that the five year averages are atypical of longer time frames.

Values for each output measure, within each of the three dependent variables, were determined by an economic technique called Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), using a bivariate regression to produce residuals controlling for size (Charnes, Cooper & Rhodes, 1981). The independent variable in each DEA regression was urban size because research shows little disagreement over urban size as the most significant factor in determining urban agency outputs. DEA residuals for each of the output measures within a performance perspective were then studentized to make them additive to a single indice representing a performance outcome.

As a result, MSPI scores reflect differences or tradeoffs in performance perspective. Specifically, an agency that emphasizes a strategic effectiveness performance perspective whereby the organization focuses on strategies and projects that will strengthen the organization overall, do so by trading off a clear emphasis toward operational efficiency. In turn, an agency that emphasizes an operational efficiency perspective where the focus is in bringing services to the public in the most efficient manner, does so by trading off a focus on strengthening the organization as a whole and emphasizing social program effectiveness. In contrast with the latter two management inspired focuses, a social program effectiveness emphasis arises outside the organization's inner management arena and results in tradeoffs such as a deemphasis of operational efficiency.

UMC Core Profile Consistent with the literature descriptions of a UMC core profile, the first independent variable is operationalized as a factor consisting of four discriminant demographic variables. Data for them are from the 1990 Census, using population aggregations corresponding to agency jurisdictions. They are (1) High Income, operationalized as percent of households in an agency's jurisdiction with 1989 income above \$75,000 (this figure is double the national mean), (2) Income Change,

operationalized as percent change in household income 1989 over 1979), (3) College Education, operationalized as percent of individuals in the agency's population with four or more years of higher education, and (4) Professional Status, operationalized as percentage of individuals in the agency's population having careers in professional or managerial positions.

Control Variables. Six control variables were employed to determine if the UMC profile acts independently of established approaches and to compare the significance of the UMC profile in predicting agency emphasis. The first three control variables are categorized as intergovernmental variable, and are utilized as proxies for political power. The first of these, Revenue Autonomy, is the proportion of agency revenues generated from user fees or through dedicated sources. An example of a dedicated source would be a permanent transit tax. Data for the Revenue Autonomy variable are from the FTA section 15 reports submitted to the FTA from the individual agencies. The second political power variable is Capital Autonomy. Capital Autonomy is the proportion of an agency's capital funding sourced in a like manner and not dependent upon frequent legislation or intergovernmental negotiation. Data for the Capital Autonomy variable is also from the FTA section 15 reports. The third political power variable

is Intergovernmental Relations. This variable is composed of two measures: (1) scope, which is the number of intergovernmental actors involved in the focal agency's policymaking, and (2) intensity, which is the percent of those requiring approval of focal agency policymaking. Data for these two measures are from the individual transit agency files.

The last three control variables are measures of physical form and the general social makeup of a city as preconditions in policymaking. The first of these is Race. Race is operationalized as percent white persons in the MSA population. Data for this variable were collected from the 1990 Census. The second precondition variable is Income. Income is operationalized as mean per capita income in the MSA population. Data for this variable were collected from the 1990 Census. The last control variable is Cross Commuting. Cross Commuting is operationalized as percent of workers commuting from residential origin to work locations in the metropolitan area other than the urban core. Again, data for this variable were collected from the 1990 Census.

Results

Performance Outcome Variables

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the three Outcome variables are reported in Table 1. As

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations for the
Dependent Variable of Performance Skewness

Variable	Mean	S.D.	I	II	III
Outcome I - Strategic organizational effectiveness	10.99+	2.77	-		
Outcome II - Operations efficiency	13.01	2.74	-.56**	-	
Outcome III - Social program effectiveness	12.29	2.53	.48*	-.38*	-

Note. N = 42. *p<.01, **p<.001. +The possible range of mean scores were a low of 3.00 and a high of 19.00. See Appendix A for an explanation of how the means were computed and for numerical comparisons of the means.

can be seen, all three Outcome variables show significant associations. Two of the associations are inversely related. This represents a tradeoff by the industry as-a-whole in emphasizing different performance outcomes. Specifically, Outcome I is negatively correlated with Outcome II, $r = -.56$, indicating a tradeoff of operational efficiency when strategic effectiveness is emphasized. Additionally, Outcome II is negatively related to Outcome III, $r = -.38$, indicating a tradeoff in social program effectiveness when operational efficiency is emphasized.

The inverse associations do not mean individual agencies make the tradeoff in the same direction or that all agencies make the tradeoff. They represent the industry aggregate and embedded in them are (1) agencies which achieve two emphases within the industry indices traded off, (2) agencies which emphasize one without deemphasizing the other, (3) agencies that satisfice without any emphasis, as well as (4) agencies that make the tradeoff one way or the other.

UMC Core Profile

Principal Components Analysis. A principal components factor analysis was conducted to examine and simplify the underlying structure of the UMC core profile variables. One factor with an eigenvalue of 3.14 was extracted. Due to only one factor, a varimax rotation was not performed.

The single factor accounted for 80% of the variance for the four UMC variables.

Table 2 reports the means, standard deviations and correlations of the individual UMC core profile variables, the UMC factor, and the six control variables. As can be seen, none of the control variables are significantly associated with each other. However, Revenue Autonomy does show a significant bivariate association with Outcome II, $r = .44$.

Performance Outcomes and Predictor Variables

Table 3 reports results of the standard multiple regression utilized to evaluate the overall relationship between the performance outcomes and the UMC factor and the six control variables. A hierarchical elimination approach was not employed because the purpose of the study was to determine how salient the UMC factor was relative to the controls, and whether the results support the hypotheses under controlled conditions.

Regression statistics strongly support Hypothesis 1, dealing with outcome emphasis on strategic organization prominence. The UMC factor and the six control variables explains between 30 and 40 percent of the variance in Outcome I, and is significant ($F = 3.60$, $p = .005$). The UMC factor is by far the most significant variable in the

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for the Upper
Middle Class Demographics and Performance Emphasis

Predictor Variables	Mean	S.D.	UMC Factor	<u>Correlations</u> Dependent Variable		
				Outcome I	Outcome II	Outcome III
High income	12.09	5.64	.88**	.23	-.19	.36
Income change	81.05	18.80	.71**	.38	-.27	.47*
College ed.	25.53	5.43	.94**	.37	-.23	.36
Professional	29.80	3.28	.96**	.37	-.29	.41*
UMC factor	0.00	1.00	-	.42*	-.30	.46*
Control Variables						
Revenue	76.72	22.38	.14	-.32	.44*	-.04
Capital	26.71	18.43	.37	.08	-.17	.33
IGR	5.37	3.62	.32	.36	-.09	.26
Race	68.57	15.00	-.03	-.03	-.07	-.33
Income	33.70	6.56	.85**	.19	.23	.27
Cross Commuting	44.25	17.17	.40*	-.03	-.07	.16

Note. N = 42. *p<.01, **p<.001. IGR = Intergovernmental relations variable.

Table 3

Standard Regression Analysis for Predictors of
Performance Skewness

	<u>Dependent Variable</u>					
	<u>Outcome I</u> Strategic Org. Effectiveness		<u>Outcome II</u> Operations Efficiency		<u>Outcome III</u> Social Program Effectiveness	
<u>Predictor</u> <u>Variables</u>	Beta	t	Beta	t	Beta	t
UMC factor	0.74	2.80**	-0.20	-0.80	0.68	2.60*
<u>Control Predictor</u> <u>Variables</u>						
Revenue autonomy	-0.35	-2.30*	0.62	4.10	-0.21	-1.40
Capital autonomy	0.10	0.70	-0.29	-1.90	0.30	2.00*
IGR	0.23	1.60	-0.01	-0.10	0.10	0.70
Race	0.02	0.15	-0.02	-0.10	-0.33	-2.50*
Income	-0.46	-1.60	-0.02	-0.10	-0.51	-1.80
Cross commuting	0.02	0.10	-0.12	-0.70	0.21	1.30
R	.42		.40		.45	
ADJ R	.31		.28		.34	
F	3.60**		3.30**		4.00**	

Note. N = 42. *p<.05, **p<.01. IGR = Intergovernmental Relations variable.

model ($\beta = .74$, $t = 2.80$, $p = .008$), and is in the predicted direction. Agency policymaker actions seem to be consistent with the thesis that a UMC factor encourages strong public organizations.

Revenue autonomy is also significant ($t = -2.30$, $p = .02$), but shows a negative relationship thus contradicting the political power approach that autonomy breeds bureaucratic growth (Niskanen, 1971). However, it is consistent with part of the wealth approach (resource availability) posed by Dye (1966) in that the results suggest agencies in poor market positions (public transit competes poorly with autos) give up political autonomy when intergovernmental subsidies are available for operations. This indicates that politically conditioned subsidies may be more expedient than maintaining an autonomous but distressed organizational position.

Two other control variables are near significance. First, intergovernmental relations, and second, income. The intergovernmental relations variable shows a positive relationship with Outcome I which is consistent with the political power approach. Income, which is not significant in its bivariate association with Outcome I, shows a negative impact on it in the multivariate model. This result contradicts the wealth approach in that

organizational prominence seems to be curtailed and not extended by average wealth of the population.

Regression statistics do not support Hypothesis 2, regarding de-emphasis in operations efficiency (Outcome II). The overall model is significant, explaining about one-third of the variance ($R^2 = .40$, $F = 3.30$, $p = .009$), but the UMC factor is unstable. Model significance is mostly due to revenue autonomy (beta = .72, $t = 4.10$, $p = .0002$), indicating that efficiency is emphasized principally when the agency acts as an autonomous enterprise generating operational revenues from non-intergovernmental sources. This result is consistent with the political power approach and supports part of the economic resources approach (Cervero, 1984; Dye, 1966).

Capital autonomy is marginally significant ($t = 1.90$, $p = .07$), but exerts an influence opposite that of revenue autonomy. This suggests efficiency is emphasized the more agency policymakers are dependent on the intergovernmental process for capital. This contradicts the political power and wealth approaches, but may be a relationship unique to transportation which is a capital intensive sector characterized by high development cost demands.

Regression statistics provide strong support for Hypothesis 3, dealing with emphasis in social program

outcomes. The UMC factor and the six control variables explains between one-third and one-half of the variance ($R^2 = .45$, $p = .01$). The UMC factor is the most significant ($\beta = .68$, $t = 2.60$, $p = .01$) and is in the direction predicted by the hypothesis. It is consistent with the UMC thesis that influence stems from the anonymous group's desire for social programs that enhance world class status, and the argument that UMC influence would cause de-emphasis since the UMC do not use transit.

The control variable, race, is also important but its negative impact ($\beta = -.33$, $t = -2.50$, $p = .02$) is inconsistent with the underclass thesis. The significance of race is interesting because a white population and the UMC factor could be seen as the same variable of the underclass thesis. The multivariate results show their effects on social programs to be inverse of each other and opposite underclass thesis expectations. While urban populations with greater percent of whites diminishes an emphasis on social programs, greater presence of a UMC minority offsets that influence. From this, one might also expect communities with lower white populations but higher UMC (i.e., Atlanta, Washington, DC) would be more likely to cause emphasis in social program effectiveness. The individual case data verify this expectation. Hence, in

line with Clark's (1994b) description relating UMC to a New Political Culture (NPC), this suggests the underclass thesis is inadequate for city-by-city analysis.

Capital autonomy is also significant ($\beta = .30$, $t = 2.00$, $p < .05$), suggesting that greater autonomy in acquiring capital encourages some emphasis on social programs. As with Outcome I, this result contradicts the general notion that political power (and lack of agency autonomy) leads to greater spending. This is made more interesting by the fact that revenue autonomy is insignificant as a determinant of social programs ($t = -1.40$, $p > .05$).

For Outcome III, per capita income is marginally significant ($\beta = -.51$, $t = -1.80$, $p = .08$) and exhibits a negative influence (de-emphasis) on social programs. It indicates that wealthier metropolitan areas offer fewer social programs like transit and general welfare than poorer ones, and would therefore seem to contradict the wealth approach. Because it also has an effect opposite of the UMC factor, this suggests that average income should not be seen as a simpler surrogate for the more complex and significant UMC factor.

In sum, regression results are generally consistent with what the UMC literature would cause one to expect from

an UMC influence in skewing policy outcomes. Specifically, the regressions show strong positive influence of the UMC factor in emphasizing strategic organizational prominence and social programs, but no equivalent influence to de-emphasize operational efficiencies. Thus, it appears that policy outcomes appear to be skewed by the UMC profile but it does not contribute to explaining a tradeoff in the paradox between strategic and operational outcomes seen in Table 1.

Moreover, Hypothesis 4 is partially supported by the three multiple regression statistics. Specifically, when compared with the political power control variables, the UMC factor is more important in explaining variance in two out of the three performance outcomes. Only in the emphasis of Outcome II (operations efficiency) is political power in face-to-face interaction more important. In the case of physical form or urban structure, it can be seen that the three control variables of race, income, and cross commuting, rival the UMC factor for significance only in emphasizing Outcome III (social program effectiveness). Although the research did not include a great number of variables subsumed under urban structure, of those considered, the influence of race on de-emphasizing Outcome II is the only one of comparable significance to the UMC factor.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between an UMC factor and performance outcome emphasis. In addition, the purpose of the study was to determine if the UMC factor contributed independently of rival approaches in predicting performance outcome emphasis. The empirical results indicate the UMC factor is significant in predicting performance outcome emphasis, and lends empirical support to the hypotheses. In addition, the results lend support to the hypothesis that the UMC factor operate independently of the six control variables. In fact, the results appear to indicate the UMC factor as the largest determinant of skewed outcomes aside from size. But, is this convincing evidence or does reason to doubt still exist? How might the rival approaches interpret the results?

An argument put forward by the political actor approach would be that the UMC profile may be significant as a distinct demographic factor, but it also would be highly associated with political power variables. This suggests the latter as the principal route of UMC influence. Clark (1994b), for example, argues that the UMC act politically through interest groups that stress the "New Political Culture" (NPC). Therefore, the political power approach would conclude nothing is added by the UMC thesis.

But, herein lies the issue. Does the UMC qua UMC act in organized ways and directly on agencies or does the NPC somehow provide indirect influence as an anonymous agent? Since Clark (1994b) sees class politics as an inadequate approach and NPC members as fragmented into different practical issues, how does the UMC variable (which regressions show to be significant) affect policy outcomes as a political actor? The UMC study did not consider an interest group variable because most interest groups are issue specific (i.e., environmental preservation, handicap access, etc.), and few could be characterized as UMC qua monolithic UMC. In Clark's (1994b) NPC, UMC individuals are more likely to ascribe to a fragmentation of issue specific interests than to act as a singular unified interest group or monolithic voice of direct political action.

Nevertheless, assuming for the moment a UMC could exist as a distinct, forceful and single interest group, two conditions probably would have to prevail. First, to operationalize a monolithic UMC interest, its membership would want to act on its commitment to organizational legitimacy by seeking influence through an intergovernmental process. In a few key instances, this might only involve direct relations with the focal agency, but to effectively manage its influence across a wide urban

policy landscape, the UMC would want to capture a few agencies with broad intergovernmental authority (rather than numerous specialized enterprises). Second, for these UMC sentry agencies to be powerful intergovernmental actors in focal agency policymaking, the focal agency would have to possess very limited autonomy.

On this scenario, results for the intergovernmental variables as proxies for political actor power are informative. As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, they suggest two conclusions: (1) in correlations, the UMC factor is orthogonal to all three political power variables, and (2) in regressions, the UMC factor shares no consistent interaction with these control variables. In fact, although the UMC factor is a significant predictor of outcomes, the political power variables vary greatly as their impact (simultaneously positive and negative) and significance. As a result, these conditions do not appear to indicate a UMC causal route involving political actor power.

For those approaches found in an urban structure approach, several arguments have plausibility. First, a general contention shared by most in this perspective might hold that the UMC factor stands out only as an artificial contrivance of the research. The UMC's statistical significance is seen as purely incidental because the four

variables were arbitrarily selected aside from concrete theoretical consistency. Therefore, the significance of the UMC factor is really reflecting the underlying four variables constituting part of the macro urban setting rather than as an extracted profile.

Within this urban structure approach, the income or wealth approach (Dye, 1966) argues that the UMC can be understood from the simpler proposition that income in the population generates tax receipts for public expenditures. Since per capita income and the UMC factor are intercorrelated, is the UMC better understood as a simple function of policymakers counting tax revenues or is there a more complex phenomenon at work in skewing outcomes?

The statistical results cast doubt on the income approach for two reasons. First, per capita income in its bivariate association with policy outcomes shows no correlation. This alone fails to support the income approach at an urban level. Second, when included in the multivariate model, average income takes on significance for two outcomes (I and III), but has an influence opposite that of the wealth approach and the UMC factor. From this, one might conclude the UMC factor is far more stable than average income as a predictor of skewness in outcomes.

Another thesis under this approach regards an underclass (Lineberry, 1977; Clark, 1967), which could

argue the UMC factor is part of class theory and should exhibit an influence inverse to that of poor people and minorities. If true, the UMC thesis would add little to what is already accounted for by such variables as race. Here again, the regressions do not support the conclusion. Not only are the two variables orthogonal (see Table 2), but race is only significant in social programs (Outcome III) where its influence is opposite what the underclass thesis would predict.

The third variable included in the urban structure approach was cross commuting which was used as a surrogate for land use patterns. The concept here is that land use skews outcomes by either enhancing or restricting organizational outcomes (I and II). A likely corollary would be that the UMC are most prevalent in suburban areas and that these areas make up a larger proportion of metropolitan regions having a nonparametric land use pattern (Cervero, 1989). Although cross commuting and the UMC factor are significantly intercorrelated ($p = .01$), the land use surrogate in the multivariate model is not close to significance in determining any of the outcome variables.

In contrast to these urban structure approaches, the statistical results strongly support the UMC theory as an independent explanation of skewness in policy outcomes. Beneath the UMC factor are four highly intercorrelated

descriptive variables indicating that the UMC variables are more than a random mix of environmental parameters and provide more information than previous approaches offered. Even though the UMC literature may not be completely lucid, (1) the descriptions appear to hold sufficient detail to identify this particular set of UMC characteristics, and (2) statistics show the core profile to be distinct and separate from the general environmental setting.

Having found these results contrary to rival approaches, there remains larger theoretical questions: Why should an anonymous UMC stand out in comparison to other variables as a cause for skewing policy outcomes? What is being observed? One answer comes from the theory of social construction and its ability to connect the UMC's status symbols used in structural equivalence with policymakers' perceptions of an anonymous identity.

The theory of social construction "...refers to the cultural characterizations or popular images of persons or groups" (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 334), and is found in the work of cognitive social psychology (see, for example, Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Tajfel, 1978). Given the study's results, this theory poses the possibility that policymakers understand a UMC not as political actors but as an influential anonymous grouping. Clark's (1994b) NPC

for example, which speaks of an upper middle class in cultural terms, is consistent with this.

However, in applying the theory to policymaking, Lieberman (1995) asks "How does social construction in a politically relevant way occur, and who does it?" (p.440). In response, two essential aspects distinguish this route of influence from traditional theses: (1) the reification of a social construct by policymakers without significant face-to-face interaction with the grouping, and (2) the skewing of agency outcomes to correspond with policymakers' expectations of this anonymous construct. Figure 1 diagrams the argument along side rival approaches of political power and urban preconditions.

According to Berger and Luckman (1966), two kinds of constructs can result from policymaker deliberations: (1) images derived from the face-to-face situation with outsiders, and (2) ones from remoter forms of interaction where the cognition of individual actors or an organized group is not apparent. Application of social construction to policy outcomes, then, points to the possibility that policymakers design agency outcomes to fit what they anticipate, certain stereotype target populations want (Schneider and Ingram, 1993), including those that are remote to the agency.

Figure 1. Social construction of the causal texture depicting the remote interaction of the upper middle class.

In this latter instance, Berger and Luckman (1966) argue cognitive groupings are of anonymous characterizations of a category (i.e., the upper middle class) rather than characteristics of individually known actors with which the agency interacts. Anonymity may become near total with certain typifications that are not intended by policymakers to be understood as an anonymous public interest.

As a stereotype about a particular group of people remote from the agency, social construction could inform policymakers about a political consideration apart from those brought into play by the power of political actors directly engaged in the agency process. For this reason, Lieberman (1995) says it might be more appropriate to see the causal route as political construction. "Rather than treating social constructions of group identity as though they came from outside the political system, a political construction approach asks not only how group identities arise in a political setting but also how and why they become politically relevant..." (p. 440).

Further, the influence of remote relationships on policymakers should not be evenly distributed. For one who has studied the UMC historically, Susman (1984) argues this stereotype more than any other has been quintessential in setting the American cultural ideal. In urban affairs, a

reified anonymous image of UMC is consistent with Peterson's (1981) thesis about policymakers' perception of a unitary city interest made up of above average taxpayers. Others also have named an upper middle class in analyzing case studies of policy outcomes (Hammond, 1992; Rapoport, 1982). What remains dim, however, is how a seemingly vague abstract gets reified to the point it matters in policymaking.

Part of the answer may lie in the UMC's use of networks to discover and affirm structural equivalence in its membership. According to some, societal influence is maintained through organizational networks (Ibarra & Andrews, 1993; Marsden & Lin, 1982), which provide the UMC greater resources to form an intersubjective world view of themselves (Berger & Luckman, 1966,). As "...a whole class that has come to dominate the nation's internal dialogue" (Farney, 1994, p. 1), it is enabled to more systematically broadcast an anonymous but politically relevant profile in its continuous need to affirm positional status. As a bi-product of the UMC's search for structural equivalence, "Power in society includes the power to determine decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to produce reality" (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 119). Although agencies also form social constructs of interest groups (i.e., labor unions, community activist

groups, environmentalists) and other public agencies with which they directly interact, these are realized by their organizational identities and face-to-face political contacts. By contrast, the upper middle class may be realized solely as an anonymous mental image, drawn from non-verbal UMC interaction but heard as a larger public interest above or in addition to the direct substantive demands of political actors. Consistent with what Schneider and Ingram (1993) attribute to a "...calculation when public officials anticipate the reaction of the target population" (p. 335), it has policymakers perceiving the anonymous profile as an internally consistent set of demographic discriminators and fitting policy outcomes to its disproportionately visible stereotype.

This study has produced empirical evidence of an independent causal link between a UMC factor and skewness in policy outcomes. However, while the results seem to indicate this anonymous identity matters in policymaking, they do not prove the causal route described above. Indeed, the provocative and controversial nature of social construction in policymaking (Lieberman, 1995) suggests caution in reaching major conclusions about the causal route. While it seems that social construction is the most plausible argument for why and how this relationship exists, conclusions remain speculative.

Beyond the scope of this study, further research would be needed to show how and why the political cognition exists. Specifically, this would entail looking more deeply into the social psychological origins of a UMC construct within an agency. Are we dealing with bureaucrats who are mostly UMC and aspiring to fulfill their own interests or are they the proxies for all UMC? Do bureaucratic structures and processes pose barriers to direct representation (Niskanen, 1971; Schon, 1971) that foster more reliance on anonymous identities as political considerations? What role might the media as the fourth branch of government play in bringing sufficient clarity and political significance to a UMC stereotype? Does Veblen's (1948) idea of emulation of a UMC construct by a non-UMC population serve to make the identity more politically visible, real, or powerful for policymaking?

If social construction turns out to be the most significant route of UMC political influence, the implications are large. For one, there is the issue of representational bias not accounted for by political actor power. While much of the literature offers a compelling argument for associating outcomes with direct use of power, other research points to public aspiring policymakers seeking to make policy consistent with a general public interest (Arnold, 1990; Kelman, 1987). Where do they come

by this publicness knowledge? If a remote and anonymous UMC identity matters, does it cause incongruence between what actual agency constituencies want and what they get?

Answers are hard to come by, but using political actor power alone, it is difficult to explain why policy outcomes sometimes favor agency constituencies which are relatively small in resources and influence; or why big powerful constituencies sometimes get less. To illustrate, the regressions show the UMC factor strongly affects a positive emphasis on social programs (Outcome III). Yet, if left to political actor power, many transit users (i.e., the working poor, physically challenged, the aged poor) would be left out because they either are too small or too poor to be politically active. Because world class status has value to the UMC, could a UMC profile be helping the poor by causing agency officials to view social program outcomes more favorably?

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Appendix A

For comparing agencies according to performance emphasis, the multiple simultaneous performance indices (MSPI) is a method for translating outputs to outcomes and is consistent with Levy, Meltsner and Wildavsky (1974), who argue that outputs alone do not convey implications about who gets what. The method does this by categorizing policy outcomes according to four agency performance perspectives, defined by two theory driven dimensions (i.e., unit of authority, level of functions) as shown in Table 4.

MSPI was organized in this way for two reasons, First, in inquiries into the impacts of societal influencers on policy outcomes, results needed to be broadly generalizable. This requires a generic performance framework derived from the literature on public organization theory and not from a particular sector like mass transit. Second, the observation of multiple perspectives needed to be simplified. Any agency set could have dozens of organization constituencies with which it interacts, causing the need to simultaneously employ many performance measures. Transit agencies, for example, are required by the Federal Transportation Administration to report several hundred performances annually. By consolidating the constituencies into four conceptual

Table 4

Cell Outcomes Matrix for Multiple-Perspectives in
Organizational Performance

L e v e l	Unit of Analysis		
	Organization	Vs.	Social Program
	<u>Outcome I</u>		<u>Outcome III</u>
O f	Strategic	Effectiveness in Maintaining the Organization's Strategic viability	Effectiveness in Achieving Political Social Mandates
	Vs.		
F u n c t i o n		<u>Outcome II</u>	<u>Outcome IV</u>
	Operational	Efficiency in Utilizing and Maintaining Operational Capacity	Effectiveness in Reciprocating Value to Operational Resource Providers

perspectives of shared outcomes consistent with public organization theory, the problem of seeing the forest for the trees is reduced.

In the case of transit, MSPI first joins individual performance outputs with different constituency preferences (goals) by categorizing both according to the two perspectives of Organization versus Social Program and Strategic versus Operational dimensions. This association of constituency and performance focus is shown in Table 5. The fourth emphasis is deleted because previous research (Boschken, 1992) showed its variance to be the result of size alone. To illustrate how output measures are aggregated as performance outcomes, the table shows a set of columns identifying (1) the constituencies by quadrant, (2) their primary goal regarding public transit organizations, (3) who represents their interest, (4) the agency's performance most consistent with the constituency goal, and (5) the empirical output measure used in conjunction with two others to create an outcome indice.

All output measures in the matrix (i.e., the 9 in Table 5) are assigned to one and only one outcome, and according to their conformity with MSPI's two dimensions. For example, in Outcome I (strategic organizational effectiveness), senior management is said to be focused on

Table 5

Constituency Goals and MSPI Matrix Measures for Urban Public Transit, 1987 - 1991.

<u>Outcome Quadrant</u>	<u>Direct Constituency</u>	<u>Constituency Goal</u>	<u>Fiduciary Agent</u>	<u>Primary Goal-Consistent Performance</u>	<u>DEA Components (Y/X)</u>
I	Senior Management	Domain Presence: Superior Market Share	Direct*	Market Penetration	Passenger trips/ district Population
I	Senior Management	Domain Presence: Production Acclaim	Direct*	Load Factor	Passenger miles/ Vehicle miles
I	Senior Management	Resource Acquisition	Direct*	Organization Growth	1990 Revenue/ 1980 Revenue: All Sources
II	Production Management	Minimize Transp. Cost	Direct*	Operations Efficiency	Oper. Expense/ Vehicle Mile
II	Maintenance Management	Minimize Maint. Costs	Direct*	Maintenance Efficiency	Maint. Expense/ Vehicle Hour

(Cont'd)

Table 5

Constituency Goals and MSPI Matrix Measures for Urban Public Transit, 1987--1991.

<u>Outcome Quadrants</u>	<u>Direct Constituency</u>	<u>Constituency Goal</u>	<u>Fiduciary Agent</u>	<u>Primary Goal-Consistent Performance</u>	<u>DEA Components (Y/X)</u>
II	Financial & Engineering	Minimize Capital Costs	Direct*	System Efficiency	Op. Assets/ Veh. Rev. Miles
III	Transit Dependent Commuters	Convenient Access to Metro Econ. Activities	FTA, State & Local Officials	Mobility for Transit- Dependent Area Sq. Mile	Passenger Miles / Service
III	Non-Working Poor	Broad Access to Social Activities & Welfare Services	FTA, State & Local	Non-Commute Services	Off-Peak Vehicle Miles Total Veh Miles
III	Regional Urban Population	Urban Revitalization & Economic Development	Local & Regional Governments	Economic Development Contribution	Annual Capital Investment / District Popul

Note: * Constituency directly represents its interest. Outcome I = Organization centered, strategic effectiveness. Outcome II = Organization centered, operations efficiency. Outcome III = Political centered, Social Program Effectiveness. MSPI = Multiple Simultaneous Performance Indices.

effectiveness), senior management is said to be focused on a strategic goal enhancing the organization's revenue growth, market presence or economic dominance. Since comparable data is not kept for all competitors in transit, market share is not a feasible measure of this performance perspective. Instead, market penetration is used as an indicator of the agency's presence, the measure being based on passenger trips. When controlled for size, it represents relative success in claiming customer support for the agency.

In Outcome III (performance emphasis on mandated social program effectiveness), an agency's regional population is known to exhibit a preference for positive spillover effects from agency expenditures. Consistent with this goal is economic development spillovers caused by the agency's annual capital investment in infrastructure related development. When controlled for size, it represents comparative commitment to achieving this politically sanctioned or mandated end.

Values for each output measure within an Outcome were calculated from a data envelopment analysis (Howard & Miller, 1993; Charnes, Cooper & Rhodes, 1981), which employs a bivariate regression to establish an industry performance frontier from which 42 agencies are compared.

The frontier is the upward boundary (envelope) established by residuals, where the independent variable of the regression acts as a control variable for subsequent analysis (in this case, regressions for the UMC construct and performance outcomes). All 9 measures in Table 5 used urban size as the independent variable, since in transit there is no disagreement about the variable as a uniform and powerful predictor of performance differences.

From this technique, a performance frontier for the industry set was estimated for each performance output, and is defined as the outer boundary (envelope) of achievable performance for the agency set. Graphing this on a scattergram, the frontier is a line parallel to the regression line that envelopes all points in the sample except influential outliers. Hence, one agency's performance relative to another is based on its deviation from this industry frontier.

Finally, values for each measure are the Data Envelope Analysis residuals where high positive values (representing performance emphasis) are near the frontier. From the three measures used in each outcome, an indice is constructed by studentizing the residuals for each measure within a quadrant and then adding them together. This was done because the additive effect is more representative

than any one measure fitting a particular performance perspective outcome. It also provides the means for including a greater variety of constituency goals consistent with each outcome's cell concept. Hence, in the examples above for Outcome I, market penetration is combined with two other measures to represent a scale of organizational effectiveness; for Outcome III, economic development is combined with two other measures to represent a scale of social program effectiveness.

The three resulting outcome indices provide the empirical basis for examining variance in the way different agencies perform. For example, an agency in the sample of 42 with a higher residual value for a quadrant index is deemed to emphasize that quadrant performance; an agency with a lower value would be deemphasizing that quadrant (Boschken, 1992). From the vantage of multiple perspectives, this allows one to empirically observe agencies according to a variance in their respective patterns of quadrant emphases. Earlier, this was defined as outcome skewness.

To illustrate, one can take the example of two contrasting cases from two of the transit agencies used in this sample. As seen in Table 6, if you look at the Southern California Rapid Transit District located in Los

Table 6

Listing of all Agencies used in the Sample and their
Index Score in each Outcome Perspective

<u>Performance Indice Scores</u>			
<u>Transit Agency</u>	<u>Outcome I Strategic Org. Effectiveness</u>	<u>Outcome II Operations Efficiency</u>	<u>Outcome III Social Program Effectiveness</u>
Phoenix	8.80	13.00	10.50
Tucson	12.30	12.50	12.50
Long Beach	11.90	12.10	13.00
Orange County	8.30	14.80	9.50
Los Angeles	6.90	18.20	16.00
Sacramento	11.30	11.60	11.50
San Diego	11.30	13.40	11.00
AC Transit	8.90	15.40	11.50
Contra Costa	12.30	12.00	11.50
Golden Gate	11.90	11.70	12.00
BART	10.60	9.60	19.00
S.F. Muni	15.90	10.90	16.50
San Mateo	13.30	12.90	13.00
Santa Clara	9.10	12.70	13.50
Denver	8.40	14.90	9.00
Washington, D.C.	16.00	6.60	18.50
(Cont'd)			

Table 6

Listing of all Agencies used in the Sample and their
Index Score in each Outcome Perspective

<u>Performance Indice Scores</u>			
<u>Transit</u> <u>Agency</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Outcome I</u> <u>Strategic Org.</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>	<u>Outcome II</u> <u>Operations</u> <u>Efficiency</u>	<u>Outcome III</u> <u>Social Program</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>
Jacksonville	11.80	12.00	12.00
Miami	9.80	10.30	12.00
Atlanta	13.50	12.90	17.00
Chicago	12.40	10.90	16.00
Indianapolis	10.90	12.50	11.00
New Orleans	12.90	14.30	12.50
Baltimore	11.10	12.90	13.50
Boston	15.50	3.00	14.00
Minneapolis	8.50	15.30	9.50
Kansas City	9.40	12.10	10.50
St Louis	6.60	16.10	8.50
Buffalo	10.80	11.10	8.50
Cincinnati	11.40	13.00	12.00
Cleveland	8.60	14.50	12.50
Columbus	10.50	12.10	11.00
Portland	10.80	15.10	13.00

(Cont'd)

Table 6

Listing of all Agencies used in the Sample and their
Index Score in each Outcome Perspective

<u>Performance Indice Scores</u>			
<u>Transit</u> <u>Agency</u> <u>Location</u>	<u>Outcome I</u> <u>Strategic Org.</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>	<u>Outcome II</u> <u>Operations</u> <u>Efficiency</u>	<u>Outcome III</u> <u>Social Program</u> <u>Effectiveness</u>
Philadelphia	16.10	16.00	13.00
Pittsburg	9.10	14.30	12.50
Dallas	12.30	14.70	7.50
Houston	8.80	16.60	9.50
San Antonio	9.50	16.50	11.50
Salt Lake City	9.40	14.70	11.00
Norfolk	10.90	12.90	10.00
Seattle	12.10	16.60	14.00
Tacoma	11.80	9.30	12.50
Milwaukee	10.00	14.80	12.50

N = 42.

Angeles versus Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority located in Washington, D.C., one can see clearly how performance emphases are being skewed. For Los Angeles, the transit agency scored a 6.90 on Outcome I, where the sample range was a high of 16.10 and a low of 6.60; scored 18.20 on Outcome II, where the range was a high of 18.20 and a low of 3.0; and scored 16.00 on Outcome III, where the range was a high of 19.00 and a low of 7.50. This indicates a skewness involving emphases on Outcome II and Outcome III and a deemphasis on Outcome I. By comparison, the Washington, D.C. transit agency scored 16.00 on Outcome I, 6.60 on Outcome II, and 18.50 on Outcome III. This shows a different pattern of skewness involving emphases on Outcome I and Outcome III, and a deemphasis on Outcome II.

The variance in patterns of performance, therefore, provides the basis of the research question: What phenomena explain why the agencies should vary in their patterns of performance skewness?