

# Government Responsiveness: A Democratic Value with Negative Externalities?

Political Research Quarterly  
2014, Vol. 67(4) 758–768  
© 2014 University of Utah  
Reprints and permissions:  
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1065912914543193  
prq.sagepub.com



Marcia Grimes<sup>1</sup> and Peter Esaiasson<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

Political equality and responsiveness to citizens are both central values in democracy. Citizens strong in political resources may, however, impress their preferences upon decision makers more effectively than others, meaning that government responsiveness may possibly exacerbate inequality in policy outcomes, especially if participatory democratic arrangements are prevalent. The article studies these processes empirically, drawing on a dataset of the siting of unwanted facilities in two Swedish cities. Indicative of the tension between equality and responsiveness, we find that residents' political resources affect facility siting in the local district.

## Keywords

participatory democracy, political equality, facility siting, government responsiveness

## Introduction

Responsiveness is integral to representative democracy. To ensure citizen influence outside the electoral process, representative governments maintain channels for citizen input in between elections (Pitkin 1967). The emergence of participatory arenas that welcome and encourage citizen involvement in policy decision making exemplifies institutional innovations that aim to bridge the gap between representatives and the represented (e.g., Fung 2006; Fung and Wright 2003). To appear effectual and legitimate, such participatory arrangements must offer the opportunity for real influence, what Carole Pateman (1970, 70–71) aptly terms “meaningful participation.” From this point of view, responsiveness to citizen input on the part of politicians and public officials, especially in conjunction with participatory processes, strengthens representation and the legitimacy of the democratic system.

While both normatively compelling and essential to a Patemanian view of democratic legitimacy, however, citizen involvement and government responsiveness bring a host of complex issues to the fore, such as delimitation of the demos for a given issue, how to weigh public opinion against strategic planning or expert assessments, and how to aggregate irreconcilable preferences. Moreover, as explored in this article, government responsiveness is potentially at odds with political equality, a principle equally integral to democratic government.

Concerns about unequal participation and influence have long been a central theme in the scholarship on citizens' involvement in civic and political life. Empirical research indicates that socioeconomic resources—money, education, connections, status, and time—systematically correlate with higher rates of voter participation as well as with other forms of civic involvement (e.g., Papadopoulos and Warin 2007; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). More recently, researchers have added to these debates by exploring whether, in the context of the United States, differences in civic voluntarism have implications for representatives' policy positions (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012; Scholzman, Verba, and Brady 2012). Evidence suggests that policy positions of elected representatives, in fact, concur more strongly with the views of the higher income echelons than with individuals from the lowest income bracket or even the middle class; the rich, in sum, enjoy greater substantive representation than others (Page, Bartels, and Seawright 2013).

This article takes the exploration of the potential tension between government responsiveness and equality of political influence one step further. While existing

<sup>1</sup>University of Gothenburg, Sweden

### Corresponding Author:

Marcia Grimes, Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Box 711, 405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden.  
Email: Marcia.Grimes@pol.gu.se

research focuses on the ascriptive characteristics of citizens who are involved in various civic activities (e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), or the degree to which economic standing affects substantive representation (Page, Bartels, and Seawright 2013), we examine whether citizens' political resources shape policy outcomes in a context conducive for citizen participation. In other words, do political resources matter not only for one's own political involvement or for the congruence between one's own views and those of one's representatives but also for societal outcomes?<sup>1</sup>

More precisely, the empirical analyses explore this tension in the context of land use planning in Sweden, a country with, on the one hand, a strong tradition of egalitarianism and, on the other, extensive opportunities for citizen participation in city planning. The study examines the distribution of facilities such as homeless shelters, housing for substance abusers, criminal justice facilities, and psychiatric wards in two urban centers in Sweden. Such facilities are necessary components of societal infrastructure, but they also have negative externalities for the immediate vicinity and tend to generate local opposition (Schweitzer and Stephenson 2007, 327). Because residents comparatively stronger in political resources may be more likely to voice concerns, government responsiveness may result in the uneven distribution of such facilities.

The findings of the empirical analyses suggest that geographical areas that are comparatively strong in terms of political resources, and in particular those with higher rates of electoral participation, tend to win out in the siting of these socially undesirable facilities. In doing so, the article adds evidence, and perhaps also further cause for concern, that government responsiveness to citizen input can have negative externalities in the form of the unequal distribution of societal goods and bads.

The first section of the article surveys existing work on government responsiveness, especially as it intersects with theoretical debates on participatory governance. We then turn to review the empirical studies on the distribution of locally unwanted land uses (LULUs). The article then presents the data and measures used, and the analyses themselves. The concluding discussion considers theoretical and policy implications.

## Political Equality and Responsiveness

Political equality is a—if not the—central principle of liberal democracy (Dahl 1979, 1989). Although perfect adherence to the principle in all respects in all issues is admittedly utopic, the extent, settings, and consequences of departures from the ideal certainly warrant continual and thorough examination (Bartels 2008; Fishkin 1995). An extensive body of research spearheaded and inspired

by Sidney Verba and colleagues aims, as expressed in their most recent volume, “to listen carefully to the chorus of American political activists to determine whether it sings with an upper class accent” (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012, xviii).

The cumulative findings of these studies, as summarized in a recent volume, suggest that, in the United States context, “. . . the single best predictor of making a political contribution is family income” (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012, xxiv). Socioeconomic status (SES) correlates with propensity to vote, to participate in campaigns, and to make campaign donations, among other things. In addition, studies on the significance of economic and political resources for political participation in other settings are consistent with findings from the U.S. context, including in comparatively egalitarian societies such as the Netherlands (Bekkers 2005) and Sweden (Bäck, Teorell, and Westholm 2006; Öhrvall 2006).

More recently, explorations have begun to go beyond the input side of politics to examine the extent to which disparities in engagement also spells unequal influence. One approach to exploring this issue is to compare the policy views of those who participate extensively with those who are more politically passive. Here, the findings are somewhat mixed. Studies examining overarching policy positions find little systematic differences between groups that differ in terms of social and political resources (Bennett and Resnick 1990; Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wlezien and Soroka 2011). In contrast, analyses that focus specifically on economic issues, which may have varying implications for different income brackets, come to a quite different set of conclusions. Those in lower income brackets tend for example to be more supportive of universal health care, for example (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012, 127), and differences also exist with respect to which policy issues are seen as priorities for government action (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012, 132).

A third approach in empirical investigations of unequal representation explores whether the policy positions of elected officials concur more closely with the positions of some sectors of the electorate than others. In other words, is there evidence that higher income brackets actually enjoy greater substantive representation. This research finds that policy positions of elected representatives, in fact, do concur much more strongly with the views of the higher income echelons than with individuals from the lowest income bracket or even with the middle class; the rich enjoy greater substantive representation than others (Gilens 2012).

We take this line of inquiry into new empirical terrain both in terms of the setting and the type of policy issue examined, and in so doing demonstrate that the effects observed in previous research may exist in decision

processes with more extensive opportunities for citizen input. Advocates of participatory democracy see citizen engagement as a means to strengthen civic democracy and representation more generally (Barber 1984; Mansbridge 1980; Pateman 1970; Vigoda 2002). The tension between the principles of political equality and government responsiveness is potentially even greater, however, with the rise of institutional innovations that invite citizens into the policy process and afford more direct influence in specific political issues. If citizens with more education, higher incomes, and better connections with decision makers both participate more, and have an advantage when it comes to expressing their voices in participatory processes, it is necessary to question whether an increase in participatory governance might not reproduce or even exacerbate existing inequalities in society.

Citizen involvement in land use issues rests on solid normative footing. Christian Hunold and Iris Marion Young (1998) argue, for example, that citizens have a *prima facie* right to participate and exert influence in decisions that may expose them to health and safety risks. Hunold and Young (1998) argue that those potentially affected by the siting of a hazardous facility have an axiomatic right to a direct say in such issues (for similar reasoning, see Bradbury, Branch, and Focht 1999; Fischer 1993; Rabe 1994; Renn, Webler, and Kastenholtz 1996; Renn, Webler, and Wiedemann 1995). Irrespective of the normative merits of participatory democracy, participatory arrangements are required in all but the most minor land use decisions in Sweden. While public consultation in conjunction with land use decisions has been the practice for several decades in Sweden, it became compulsory subsequent to a reform of the Environmental Code in 2000.

Participatory decision making is, however, in no way unique to land use planning in Sweden. Numerous studies document the incremental growth in the use of citizen advisory councils, public polling, public hearings and public consultation meetings (Bishop and Davis 2002; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998; Papadopoulos and Warin 2007), as well as more involved models such as co-governance (Ackerman 2003) or empowered participatory governance (Fung 2006; Fung and Wright 2003). Evidence of inequality in responsiveness in land use issues in Sweden may, therefore, function as a warning signal that such effects exist more generally in participatory arenas.

Disparities in participation and substantive representation, combined with greater opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, would seem if anything to exacerbate the problems of unequal voices. Yet little research exists on whether participatory governance reproduces or perhaps even intensifies societal inequalities in

policy outcomes. As Dennis Thompson (2008, 509) notes with respect to the closely related area of deliberative democracy, “. . . unequal resources are likely to produce unequal participation in the deliberative forum. Apart from the studies that use ascriptive characteristics as indicators, almost no empirical work investigates how great this effect is likely to be.”

The analyses presented here examine the evidence of unequal responsiveness in the physical urban environment, that is, the distribution of LULUs, rather than tracking each step of the posited causal chain (differentiated participation and/or differentiated influence). In so doing, the study is able to detect inequality not only in substantive representation but also in policy outcomes. Unlike other policy issues, one may assume that most (though not necessarily all) individuals, irrespective of class, prefer that facilities with negative externalities not be sited in their immediate area of residence. The siting of unwanted facilities is a zero-sum game with one locality bearing a disproportionate cost in each decision, which allows for a study of unequal responsiveness in policy outcomes. Whereas policy outcomes may otherwise be products of compromise, reflecting the preferences of a number of different parties, compromise is more difficult in siting facilities. Also, in an urban setting, siting unwanted facilities is an iterative rather than one shot issue, which yields a sufficiently large number of cases and, therefore, allows for an exploration of systematic variations in government responsiveness.

## Responsiveness in Land Use Decisions

LULUs include any facility with negative externalities, whether in terms of risks posed to health and safety, or disturbances and stigmatization that may in turn affect property values (Popper 1985). In Sweden, nowhere is participation more institutionalized and widespread than in decisions that entail changes in the local physical environment, which includes the construction of all new facilities. Both the Environmental Code and the Planning and Building Code have in recent decades been amended to require authorities to arrange public consultation meetings in decisions that entail substantial changes in the local environment. These institutional arrangements arguably have introduced an expectation on decision-making officials to become more responsive to citizens' views, knowledge, and sentiments with regard to the local environment.

Is it, however, reasonable, and is it even desirable to strive for equality in the distribution of LULUs? Some authors have argued, for example, that decisions related to the siting of facilities ought to build on the principle of priority, which means that a facility should be sited in a

community with a greater need for, or expected utility from, a facility (Young 1994). As an example, a community that produces more garbage is a stronger candidate for a waste facility than a community that produces less garbage (Kunreuther, Slovic, and MacGregor 1996). Technical considerations related to the physical requirements of the geographical setting may also come into play.<sup>2</sup>

Facilities providing welfare services are to a lesser extent subject to competing criteria of distribution than other types of facilities as technical considerations have almost no bearing whatsoever. While such facilities benefit all sectors of the population more or less to the same extent, districts with larger proportions of low-income populations may in fact have relatively more individuals who are directly beneficiaries of some of the social welfare services provided by the specific facilities examined. This possible effect is captured empirically with a measure of mean district income. Moreover, both cities are highly internally interconnected by public transit networks, which lessens the traction of any argument to place social welfare facilities predominantly in low-income neighborhoods. We therefore argue that in the specific type of facilities included in this study, it is reasonable to expect a fairly even distribution of facilities within a single jurisdiction (the city, in this case). More to the point, however, the distribution should not correlate systematically with measures of political resources for the local population.

The empirical investigation of equity and distributive fairness in the study of the siting of societal infrastructure is by no means uncharted territory. Evidence of what has come to be known as environmental inequities (also called environmental racism and environmental injustice) are sufficiently well documented in the United States that Congressmen John Lewis and Al Gore introduced the Environmental Justice Act into the U.S. Congress in 1992 (Ringquist and Clark 1999, 80).<sup>3</sup> Empirical research on environmental justice has documented a correlation between exposure to facilities that present risks to health and safety and demographic characteristics such as income and racial composition (Mohai and Saha 2006; Schweitzer and Stephenson 2007, 321).

Considerable disagreement and ambiguity remain, however, regarding the mechanism that accounts for inequitable exposure to environmental hazards. While some claim the existence of a racial state in the United States that institutionalizes systemic discrimination (Goldberg 2002; Kurtz 2009), others advance more diffuse mechanisms such as societal racism or classism that permeate the decisions of government and corporate actors, and a third school instead points to a process of self-selection that attracts lower income populations to areas with lower housing costs and a flight of families with the purchasing power to relocate (Schweitzer and Stephenson 2007, 323).

A final school of thought depicts a more nuanced and complex picture and sees patterns in the distribution of risks as the result of sociospatial processes including “. . . regional urban-industrial growth, rural underdevelopment, the structure of industrial production (small facilities vs large ones), proximity to transportation corridors, and racism” (Cutter and Solecki 1996, 395). Although dealing with a different type of facilities, this empirical evidence suggests a need to examine a number of additional factors which may also affect the distribution of unwanted facilities.

A few studies speak more directly to the question at hand and examine whether the strength of civil society and political activism in an area affect the siting of unwanted facilities. Both of these studies—one focusing on the placement of emergency housing in post-Katrina New Orleans, and the other examining siting of nuclear power plants, dams and airports in Japan—found that the strength of local political activism and community organizing deterred the siting of LULUs (Aldrich 2008b; Aldrich and Crook 2008; see also Go 2013). The findings in both studies were robust even under control for technical criteria, political factors (in the Japan study), income, race (in the New Orleans study), and a host of other socioeconomic factors.

Aldrich (2008a, 163) summarizes his findings as well as the theorized mechanism that explains the findings as follows:

Localities with strong civil society, both in terms of its quantity and quality, represent the biggest challenge to long-term siting plans for controversial facilities. Such localities are more expensive targets for state authorities and developers in terms of both time (contacting, negotiating with or coercing the individuals) and money (if redistribution is used).

Aldrich’s conclusions highlight that the trade-off between responsiveness and political equality may not be cost neutral, that is, that responsiveness to citizens’ demands may in many instances represent a less expensive option, particularly when expediency is of the essence, as in the provision of emergency housing in the wake of a natural disaster. Moreover, the research indicates that the distribution of undesirable facilities may not be a matter of reacting to citizen input but instead operate in an anticipatory fashion. A well-orchestrated protest can potentially delay and considerably add to the costs of the policy process, and such considerations may also influence officials’ decisions. We return to these considerations in the concluding discussion.

The aim of the analyses is to determine whether there are indications that responsiveness contributes to inequality of policy representation in the Swedish context. Qualitative evidence on public consultation in planning

and decision making in city planning in Sweden suggests that participation and effective community mobilizing varies in a way that supports the hypothesis under investigation here. A study involving participant observation at public consultation meetings carried out in conjunction with the development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the City of Gothenburg noted a very low rate of participation of residents of non-Swedish heritage. Moreover, city officials reported in an interview that mobilization and contestation were much stronger in higher income areas (Grimes, Niklasson, and Norén Bretzer 2008). The analyses below explore whether such uneven patterns might translate into an uneven distribution of unwanted facilities. Simply put, does the distribution of LULUs vary systematically with indicators of district strength in political resources? To ascertain whether such patterns exist, the analyses take into account a number of competing explanations.

First, self-interested behavior among decision makers may possibly affect the distribution of unwanted facilities and, to the extent that elected officials reside in higher income areas of a city, lead to an overestimation of the effects of measures of political resources. Decision makers' area of residence is therefore measured and controlled for.

Second, discrimination based on socially defined classifications might also lead to inequality in policy responsiveness. While discrimination is by no means absent in Sweden, empirical studies of racism in land use planning in Sweden are lacking entirely.<sup>4</sup> Discriminatory outcomes do not necessarily arise from conscious and intentionally prejudicial intentions but may still have substantively meaningful implications in the aggregate, and certainly for the individual citizen. Soss, Fording, and Schram (2008) demonstrate, for example, that welfare programs in the United States tend to treat target groups very differently from one another depending on the racial composition of the local population and that the divergent treatment concurs closely with prevailing stereotypes about the work ethics and welfare dependence of racial groups (see also Schram et al. 2009, 407). If conscious or unconscious discrimination is at work in the siting of social welfare facilities in Sweden, we might expect areas with a higher proportion of immigrants to host a larger number of facilities. The next section discusses the data used to capture these various factors.

## Data and Measures

Siting of the types of LULUs included in this study is almost entirely the responsibility of municipal governments in Sweden. Municipal offices identify the need for new facilities, suggest possible sites, arrange public consultation, and make the final decision regarding permits and approval. Following appeals from affected individuals,

administrative courts may overturn specific decisions, but the responsibility to find a location for the facility in question remains with the local government. Private or non-governmental actors may then operate the facility but do not play a central role in the planning and decision-making process. The precise siting process varies depending on the type of facility, and to some extent from municipality to municipality, but high-level bureaucrats play a key role in the process, assessing possible sites, conducting public consultation meetings, and selecting the most suitable site. Municipal politicians in the planning and building committee make the final decision and grant permits. To facilitate the generalizability of findings, we study two similar but independent siting contexts, Gothenburg and Malmö, the second and third largest urban areas in Sweden with approximately 500,000 and 250,000 inhabitants, respectively.

Our unit of analysis is urban district, and the analyses explore variations, random or systematic, in the number of LULUs in each district (the dependent variable). To identify comparable urban districts in the two cities, we took the official zoning scheme of Malmö as our point of departure. Malmö is divided into 134 administrative districts (*delområden*), which are fairly internally homogeneous with regard to type of building infrastructure (apartment buildings, small houses, significant institutions such as hospitals and schools, industries and workplaces, recreational areas, or sparsely populated semi-rural districts). A full thirty of the districts in Malmö are, however, outside the urban area and have fewer than fifty residents, and the city of Malmö, therefore, does not publish demographic statistics for these districts. The Malmö models, therefore, include a dummy variable for these districts. Table 1 provides key descriptive statistics for the districts.

Corresponding zoning districts in Gothenburg (*primärområden*) are larger in size and more heterogeneous with regard to type of building infrastructure. To make for comparable cases, we divided each of ninety-four *primärområden* in Gothenburg into smaller and more homogeneous geographical units that resemble more closely the pre-defined districts in Malmö. Reflecting Gothenburg's larger size, this process generated 189 districts (as compared with the 134 districts in Malmö). While comparable, the data from the two cities are not identical in structure and, therefore, analyzed separately.

LULUs in this study include five types of facilities: substance abuse treatment centers, homeless shelters, refugee centers, criminal justice facilities, and mental health facilities. All of these facilities were deemed to generate at least some negative externalities for individuals living in a particular geographical area. Although the negative externalities are much less severe than those

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Districts in Gothenburg and Malmö.

	Gothenburg	Malmö
Mean population <sup>a</sup>	2,428	2,755
Average size	1.08 km <sup>2</sup>	0.53 km <sup>2</sup>
Electoral participation (2002 municipal elections)	74.1%	72.7%

<sup>a</sup>For Malmö, this statistic builds on the 104 districts considered residential. Twenty-nine additional districts have a population of fifty residents or fewer.

associated with facilities emitting pollutants or posing risks of potentially catastrophic accidents, they are nonetheless contentious. One of few studies that examine such facilities finds that affordable housing can in fact, in some cases, have a detrimental effect on property values in the U.S. context (Nguyen 2005). An op-ed piece by the head of Gothenburg's municipal executive board (approximately equivalent to a city mayor) in the main regional daily newspaper in Gothenburg further confirms that such facilities can generate considerable controversy. The piece admonishes the residents of Gothenburg for obstructing plans to build homeless shelters, citing that three hundred appeals had been filed against five of eight planned shelters (Johansson 2007).

To identify relevant facilities, we started with a list of facilitates granted building permits in Gothenburg from 1997 to 2007 and registered a total of eighty-seven facilities in Gothenburg. For Malmö, we used a different approach. By searching the official home page of Malmö city, and through telephone interviews with city administrators, we created a list of all such facilities that were functioning at the time of the investigation or that had been recently closed down. We then investigated each facility and undertook telephone interviews with administrators to establish whether the facility was sited during the period 1997–2007 and, of course, its precise geographical location. This process generated a total of thirty relevant facilities in Malmö.

Our main independent variables capture the protest potential of each urban district with three different indicators. First, the analyses use a measure of political involvement of district residents, measured as electoral turnout as a percentage of district residents in 2002 municipal elections. Following Aldrich and Crook (2008), we treat electoral turnout as an indicator of political activism and overall protest potential. Second, we also treat the established socioeconomic indicators income and education, measured as mean income in the local district and percent residents with post-secondary school education, as political resources. Demographic data are from 1998, that is, the beginning of the period for which LULU localization is mapped.

**Table 2.** Type and Number of Social Services and Welfare Facilities in Two Urban Districts.

	Gothenburg		Malmö	
	Total	Maximum number in any area	Total	Maximum number in any area
Substance abuse treatment center	39	4	17	4
Homeless shelter	16	2	13	2
Refugee center	1	1	1	1
Criminal justice facility	5	1	5	1
Mental health facility	26	3	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>

The models include two controls. To determine whether any sort of social classification models similar to those described by Joe Soss and colleagues (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2008) bias decision making in these two urban settings, we include a measure of the percentage of residents born outside of Europe. To capture whether decision makers' self-interest may influence decisions, we control for whether any key decision maker resides in the district. Decision makers in this case include politicians in one of the following offices: heads of the municipal council and executive boards, the director and vice-director of the Local Housing and Building Committee, and the director and manager of the City Planning Office.

## Analyses and Results

Tables 2 and 3 together suggest that the number of facilities varies considerably among the districts in the two cities examined, with the largest proportion having no facilities and the densest districts hosting nine and six facilities in Gothenburg and Malmö, respectively. As Table 3 reports, the distribution in the number of Table 3 shows, the number of facilities per district is not normal but rather highly skewed and a large majority of districts (70 and 78 percent in Gothenburg and Malmö, respectively) have no facilities. To avoid inefficient and biased estimates, we therefore deem linear models to be inappropriate and instead use negative binomial regression.

The patterns evinced in the two cities are quite similar. Looking first at the baseline models (Table 4, models 1 and 3) in which the number of LULUs is regressed on socioeconomic indicators and electoral turnout, electoral participation emerges as a meaningful predictor in both cities. Districts with a record of greater political involvement

**Table 3.** Count of Facilities in Different Urban Districts in Gothenburg and Malmö.

Count of facilities in area	Gothenburg		Malmö	
	Number of areas	% Areas with each count	Number of areas	% Areas with each count
0	133	70	104	78
1	28	15	16	12
2	13	7	6	4.5
3	5	3	5	3.7
4	4	2		
5	3	1.5	2	1.5
6	3	1.5	1	0.8
9	1	0.5		

seem, in other words, to be somewhat spared from undesirable facilities in their immediate proximity, even when district mean income and education are taken into account. Income levels in 1998 have no association in either city with the likelihood of additional LULUs in a district. If electoral participation is excluded from the models, however, income attains a significant negative relationship with LULU counts in Malmö, and also a negative but insignificant ( $p = .19$ ) effect in Gothenburg.

A finding in both cities that runs directly counter to theoretical expectation is the positive association between levels of education and numbers of unwanted facilities. This association exists even in bivariate analyses and, therefore, cannot be dismissed as a figment of multicollinearity. We subjected this finding to subsequent analyses to determine whether it may be capturing omitted variables. The first suspect is the average age of district residents and, in particular, the percentage of residents between the ages of sixty-five and sixty-nine. Although seemingly improbable, this demographic varies considerably among districts. Age correlates strongly with educational attainment, and age is, based on anecdotal evidence, a strong predictor of propensity to become involved in land use planning issues. Controlling for the proportion of residents in this age range renders the effect of the education estimate insignificant in Malmö and weakens it in Gothenburg. The education estimates may, therefore, be capturing the effect of the size of the elderly population.

We also examine whether the education effect could perhaps instead depend on political sympathies, and more specifically the proportion of residents voting for a left leaning party (Social Democrats, Left Party, or Greens). Left sympathizers may be less inclined to protest social welfare facilities, and also may have higher educational attainment under control for income. This control did not, however, affect the education estimate and also had no independent effect on LULU counts. Neither of the controls (percent elderly or party sympathy) notably changed the estimate for electoral participation.

Neither of the two cities evinces any pattern of self-interested behavior on the part of decision makers with respect to siting social welfare facilities. Only in Gothenburg (model 1) did the estimate even approach established standards of statistical significance ( $p = .31$ ), but the estimate is positive rather than negative, suggesting that areas in which key decision makers reside tend if anything to have a higher likelihood of hosting LULUs than other districts. The percentage of residents born outside of Europe varies between 1 and just around 40 percent in both cities, but this variation has no relationship with the distribution of LULUs. The size of the immigrant population does not correlate significantly with the number of LULUs in Gothenburg regardless of the model specification but does show a positive, and statistically significant, relationship with LULU counts in Malmö if electoral participation is excluded from the model.

How strong are the effects of electoral participation? The percent change estimates indicate that a one percentage point decrease in turnout is associated with an increased predicted number of LULUs by 4.4 and 7.0 in the two cities, respectively. Figures 1 and 2 show the predicted probability of having zero LULUs given different levels of electoral probability and reveal that a district with the lowest levels of electoral participation has approximately a 50 percent chance of having no contentious facilities, while districts with upward toward 90 percent voting show between an 80 to 90 percent chance of having no such facilities.

As a further indication of the strength of this effect, we can compare it with Aldrich and Crook's (2008) results from New Orleans. The coefficient for voter turnout on numbers of emergency housing units in that study (also building on negative binomial regression) is on par with the effects observed in Malmö and Gothenburg. The egalitarian political culture of Scandinavia does not, it seems, necessarily translate to equal consideration and influence in all situations and policy issues. Moreover, officials must by necessity prioritize expediency in the siting of emergency housing, which is not the case in the empirical context examined here.

To ensure that the results were not driven by a single type of facility, various constructions of the dependent variable were tested. In the Gothenburg case, the estimate for electoral participation loses statistical significance when either psychiatric care facilities or substance abuse centers are excluded from the LULUs measure. Similarly, the estimate for electoral participation becomes insignificant ( $p = .15$ ) if the count of homeless shelters is excluded. All other findings remain the same. The model becomes more sensitive to noise with a narrower measure of the distribution of LULUs. Further research would be required to determine whether the model changes are due to methodological factors or whether these types of facilities, in fact, are less contentious. As a second form of

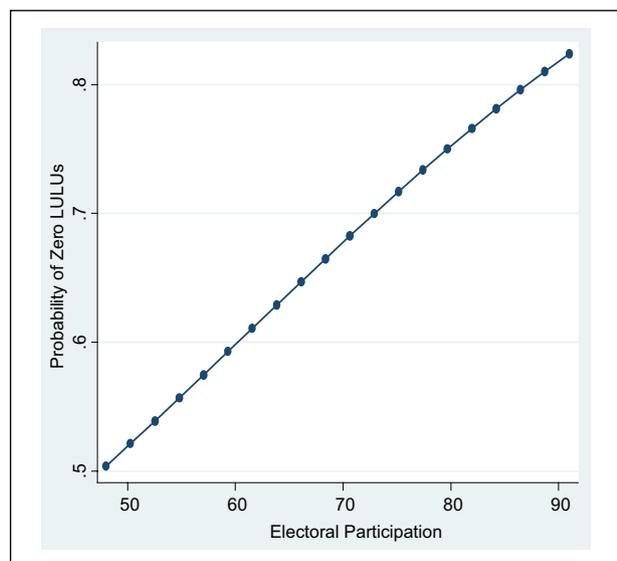
**Table 4.** Factors Related to Number of LULUs by Urban District in Gothenburg and Malmö (Negative Binomial Regression).

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>p</i> > <i>z</i>	% Δ <sup>a</sup>	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>p</i> > <i>z</i>	% Δ <sup>a</sup>
<b>Gothenburg (N = 188)</b>						
Mean income	0 (0)	.94	0	0 (0)	.74	-0.2
Education	0.11*** (0.04)	.003	11.1	0.10*** (0.04)	.01	10.4
Electoral participation	-0.04* (0.03)	.10	-4.2	-0.05** (0.03)	.09	-4.4
Non-European				-0.01 (0.01)	.5	-0.9
Decision maker residing in area				0.6 (0.6)	.31	83.1
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.03			0.03		
Log likelihood	-188			-187		
<b>Malmö (N = 133)</b>						
	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>p</i> > <i>z</i>	% Δ <sup>a</sup>	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>p</i> > <i>z</i>	% Δ <sup>a</sup>
Mean income	-0.02 (0.02)	.24	-2.2	-0.01 (0.02)	.61	-1.2
Education	0.11*** (0.04)	.01	11.8	0.10*** (0.04)	.01	10.9
Electoral participation	-0.07*** (0.03)	.01	-6.9	-0.07** (0.03)	.02	-7.0
Non-residential area	-6.7*** (1.6)	0	-100	-5.9** (2.7)	.03	-99.7
Decision maker residing in area				-14 (889)	.99	-100
Non-European				0.01 (0.51)	.87	0.8
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	.11			.12		
Log likelihood	-99.5			-98.2		

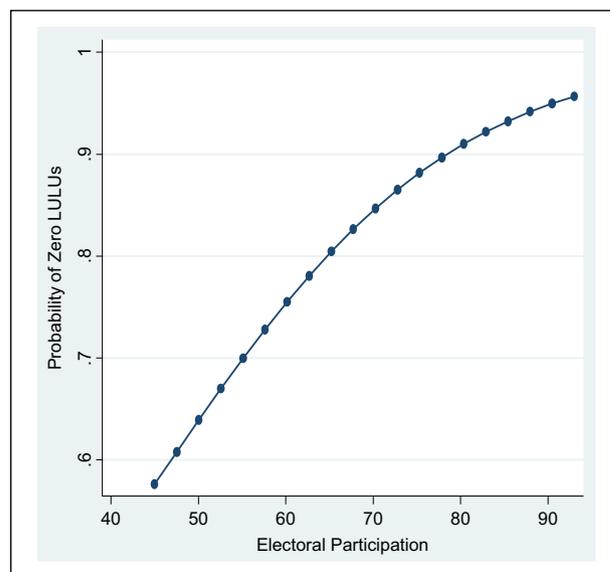
Mean income in 1998 measured in 1000 Swedish kronor; Education measured as percentage with post-secondary schooling; electoral participation measured as percentage participating in 2002 municipal elections; non-European residents capture the percentage of residents born outside of Europe; Decision makers residing in area is coded 1 if any of the following reside in a district: heads of the municipal council and executive boards, director and vice-director of the Local Housing and Building Committee, director and manager of the City Planning Office. LULU = locally unwanted land uses.

<sup>a</sup>Percentage change in expected count of LULUs for a one unit increase in the independent variable.

\**p* < .1. \*\**p* < .05. \*\*\**p* < .01.



**Figure 1.** Probability of zero LULUs by levels of electoral participation (Gothenburg). LULU = locally unwanted land uses.



**Figure 2.** Probability of zero LULUs by levels of electoral participation (Malmö). LULU = locally unwanted land uses.

robustness check, the negative binomial regression models were compared with results from zero-inflated negative binomial regression models. Negative binomial regression performed better regardless of which variables were entered as inflation variables.

It is important to note, however, that the models do not explain a great deal of the variation in the numbers of LULUs in each district. Although it does not indicate the percentage of explained variance, the pseudo- $R^2$  does suggest how well the independent variables together predict the dependent variable compared with predicting the number of LULUs as the mean for all districts. For Gothenburg, the likelihood of the model is rather low, yielding a larger log likelihood and a weaker pseudo- $R^2$ . In Malmö, the model performs somewhat better, but there as well, considerable variation in the number of LULUs in each district remains unexplained by the variables in the model.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Our study shows that political resources, and more specifically electoral turnout, may affect the spatial distribution of LULUs in two Swedish cities. While others have documented that socioeconomic resources are linked to propensity to participate in politics (Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2012) as well as to the likelihood of one's policy preferences being mirrored in the policy positions of elected representatives (Bartels 2008; Gilens 2012), our results indicate that citizen resources are linked with more favorable policy outcomes as well.

Given that the Swedish legal framework governing decision making in land use decisions require that decision makers consult with local residents, it is plausible that the results of this study arise from responsiveness in conjunction with participatory decision making. As it is highly likely that some form of public consultation has occurred in most of the siting cases included in our study, the observed effects suggest that participatory decision making has contributed to inequality in policy outcomes.

Three competing mechanisms potentially account for the unequal outcome. First, research documenting that policy makers share policy preferences with more affluent citizens (because of, for example, shared worldviews) suggests that unequal policy outcomes can arise from inequality in substantive and social representation. Elected representatives have policy positions more closely resembling affluent voters simply because they tend to come from the same sectors of society. This interpretation is, however, rather unlikely with respect to the findings of this study, as it is specifically political resources, and not income, that emerged as a determinant of policy outcomes.

A second possible mechanism at work in the findings is that political resources operate preemptively. Especially where participatory opportunities are extensive, decision makers may see efficiency gains from avoiding confrontation with groups known to have a greater capacity to stage protests, file appeals, and consequently delay implementation of policy decisions. Aldrich (2008b) advances this interpretation of decision makers' tendency in Japan and New Orleans to avoid communities with comparatively strong mobilization capacities, and he has a point. Extensive protests and appeals add to the costs of a decision-making process, and decision makers have good reason to limit the cost of each individual facility siting process. Aware of such costs, decision makers may avoid certain areas via anticipatory rather than responsive mechanisms. Finally, citizens that are comparatively stronger in political resources may participate to a greater extent and enjoy greater success in swaying decision makers to their favored position.

Irrespective of the mechanisms at work, however, the results of this study suggest that societal inequalities are being reproduced and that policy makers, therefore, face difficult dilemmas when making contentious decisions. Assuring a fair distribution of public goods and negative externalities may require decision makers to be selectively unresponsive or accept a degree of inefficiency in the policy process. Responsiveness has a normative value per se—a well-functioning democracy presupposes that public officials are receptive to citizen input—yet a lack of awareness on the part of decision makers will almost certainly result in the reproduction and over time exacerbation of inequalities in society. If, in contrast, the observed effects result from a desire to expedite the decision-making process, which may derive from an intent to use public resources as efficiently as possible, then decision makers instead face the dilemma of balancing equality considerations against the efficient use of tax revenues.

The observed tensions between political equality, responsiveness, and expediency warrant more research, and, in particular, under conditions of participatory decision making. Advocates of participatory decision-making procedures are also well advised to take such potential effects into account. The empirical findings presented here suggest that, while blindness is often seen as an asset in the administration of justice, perhaps a measure of deafness is needed to ensure long-term fairness in the distribution of societal goods and bads.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## Funding

Funding for this research was provided by the Swedish Research Council Formas, grant number 2006-4018-5812-31.

## Notes

1. Enns and Wlezien (2011) argue that inequality in the realm of policy outputs is inescapable because only one position can win. Granted, not all positions can be represented in each policy decision, but if differences in substantive representation become apparent in policy outcomes over time, in other words if winning and losing are not evenly distributed across social groups, then unequal representation is systematic and is arguably more significant and problematic than patterns in representatives' policy positions.
2. Much research on the siting of controversial facilities focuses on facilities that require settings that meet technical specifications. Wind power turbines require sufficiently windy conditions, nuclear waste repositories require bedrock with no contact with groundwater, waste and waste water management facilities are best placed in less densely populated areas, and so on. Such considerations are not relevant in the types of facilities examined here.
3. The bill, along with seven other pieces of legislation introduced in Congress in the early 1990s, failed to be enacted (Ringquist and Clark 1999, 80).
4. One historical study finds evidence of discrimination based on class, as city officials at the end of the nineteenth century delayed extending municipal water and waste water to poor residential areas outside the city limits to retain a degree of segregation and separation between these areas and the more affluent city center (Hallström 2005).

## References

- Ackerman, John. 2003. "Co-governance for Accountability: Beyond 'Exit' and 'Voice.'" *World Development* 32 (3): 447–63.
- Aldrich, Daniel. 2008a. "Location, Location, Location: Selecting Sites for Controversial Facilities." *The Singapore Economic Review* 53 (1): 145–72.
- Aldrich, Daniel. 2008b. *Site Fights: Divisive Facilities and Civil Society in Japan and the West*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Aldrich, Daniel, and Kevin Crook. 2008. "Strong Civil Society as a Double-Edged Sword: Siting Trailers in Post-Katrina New Orleans." *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (3): 379–89.
- Bäck, Hanna, Jan Teorell, and Anders Westholm. 2006. "Medborgarna och deltagandeparadoxen: Att förklara olika former av politiskt deltagande. [Citizens and the Paradox of Participation: Explaining Different Forms of Political Participation.]" In *Deltagandets mekanismer: Det politiska engagemangets orsaker och konsekvenser* [The Mechanisms of Participation: The Causes and Consequences of Political Involvement], edited by Peter Esaiasson and Anders Westholm, 50–67. Malmö, Sweden: Liber.
- Barber, Benjamin. 1984. *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bartels, Larry. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bekkers, René. 2005. "Participation in Voluntary Associations: Relations with Resources, Personality, and Political Values." *Political Psychology* 26 (3): 439–54.
- Bennett, Stephen, and David Resnick. 1990. "The Implications of Nonvoting for Democracy in the United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 34 (3): 771–802.
- Bishop, Patrick, and Glyn Davis. 2002. "Mapping Public Participation in Policy Choices." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 61 (1): 14–29.
- Bradbury, Judith, Kristi Branch, and Will Focht. 1999. "Trust and Public Participation in Risk Policy Issues." In *Social Trust and the Management of Risk*, edited by George Cvetkovich and Ragnar Löfstedt, 117–127. London: Earthscan.
- Cutter, Susan, and William Solecki. 1996. "Setting Environmental Justice in Space and Place: Acute and Chronic Airborne Toxic Releases in the Southeastern United States." *Urban Geography* 17 (5): 380–99.
- Dahl, Robert. 1997. "Procedural Democracy." In *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, edited by Robert Goodin and Philip Pettit, 109–127. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dahl, Robert. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. Hartford, CT: Yale University Press.
- Enns, Peter, and Christopher Wlezien. 2011. *Who Gets Represented?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Fischer, Frank. 1993. "Citizen Participation and the Democratization of Policy Expertise: From Theoretical Inquiry to Practical Cases." *Policy Sciences* 26 (3): 165–87.
- Fishkin, James. 1995. *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fung, Archon. 2006. "Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance." *Public Administration Review* 66 (s1): 66–75.
- Fung, Archon, and Erik Olin Wright. 2003. "Thinking about Empowered Participatory Governance." In *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, edited by Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, 3–42. London: Verso Press.
- Gilens, Martin. 2012. *Affluence and Influence: Economic Inequality and Political Power in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Go, Min Hee. 2013. "The Power of Participation: Explaining the Issuance of Building Permits in Post-Katrina New Orleans." Published online in *Urban Affairs Review*. doi:10.1177/1078087413476462.
- Goldberg, David. 2002. *The Racial State*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grimes, Marcia, Birgitta Niklasson, and Ylva Norén Bretzer. 2008. "National Case Study Report—Sweden: SEA Gothenburg and PM10 Gothenburg." Deliverable for EU Sixth Framework Programme project entitled Governance for Sustainability (Unpublished Manuscript).
- Hallström, Jonas. 2005. "Technology, Social Space and Environmental Justice in Swedish Cities: Water Distribution to Suburban Norrköping and Linköping, 1860–90." *Urban History* 32 (3): 413–33.

- Highton, Benjamin, and Raymond Wolfinger. 2001. "The Political Implications of Higher Turnout." *British Journal of Political Science* 31 (1): 179–223.
- Hunold, Christia, and Iris Marion Young. 1998. "Justice, Democracy, and Hazardous Siting." *Political Studies* 48 (1): 82–95.
- Johansson, Göran. 2007. "Alla överklaganden sinkar byggen för hemlösa [Appeals prevent housing projects for homeless]." *Göteborgs-Posten*, April 14, 62.
- King, Cheryl S., Kathryn M. Feltey, and Bridget O'Neill Susel. 1998. "The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration." *Public Administration Review* 58 (4): 317–26.
- Kunreuther, Howard, Paul Slovic, and Donald MacGregor. 1996. "Risk Perception and Trust: Challenges for Facility Siting." *Risk: Health, Safety and Environment* 7:109–18.
- Kurtz, Hilda E. 2009. "Acknowledging the Racial State: An Agenda for Environmental Justice Research." *Antipode* 41 (4): 684–704.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 1980. *Beyond Adversary Democracy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Mohai, Paul, and Robin Saha. 2006. "Reassessing Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in Environmental Justice Research." *Demography* 43 (2): 383–99.
- Nguyen, Mai Thi. 2005. "Does Affordable Housing Detrimentally Affect Property Values? A Review of the Literature." *Journal of Planning Literature* 20 (1): 15–26.
- Öhrvall, Rikard. 2006. "Invandrade och valdeltagande [Immigrants and Electoral Participation]." In *Valets Mekanismer [The Mechanisms of Elections]*, edited by Hanna Bäck and Mikael Gilljam, 61–78. Malmö, Sweden: Liber.
- Page, Benjamin, Larry Bartels, and Jason Seawright. 2013. "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans." *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (1): 51–73.
- Papadopoulos, Yannis, and Philippe Warin. 2007. "Are Innovative, Participatory and Deliberative Procedures in Policy Making Democratic and Effective?" *European Journal of Political Research* 46 (4): 445–72.
- Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pitkin, Hanna. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Popper, Frank. 1985. "The Environmentalist and the LULU." *Environment* 27 (2): 7–40.
- Rabe, Barry. 1994. *Beyond NIMBY: Hazardous Waste Siting in Canada and the US*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Renn, Ortwin, Thomas Webler, and Hans Kastenholz. 1996. "Procedural and Substantive Fairness in Landfill Siting: A Swiss Case Study." *Risk: Health, Safety and Environment* 7:145–68.
- Renn, Ortwin, Thomas Webler, and Peter Wiedemann, eds. 1995. *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
- Ringquist, Evan, and David Clark. 1999. "Local Risks, States' Rights, and Federal Mandates: Remediating Environmental Inequities in the U.S. Federal System." *The Journal of Federalism* 29 (2): 73–93.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Sidney Verba, and Henry Brady. 2012. *The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Schram, Sanford F., Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording, and Linda Houser. 2009. "Deciding to Discipline: Race, Choice, and Punishment at the Frontlines of Welfare Reform." *American Sociological Review* 74 (3): 398–422.
- Schweitzer, Lisa, and Max Stephenson. 2007. "Right Answers, Wrong Questions: Environmental Justice as Urban Research." *Urban Studies* 44 (2): 319–37.
- Soss, Joe, Richard Fording, and Sanford Schram. 2008. "The Color of Devolution: Race, Federalism, and the Politics of Social Control." *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (3): 536–53.
- Thompson, Dennis. 2008. "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11:497–520.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Vigoda, Eran. 2002. "From Responsiveness to Collaboration: Governance, Citizens, and the Next Generation of Public Administration." *Public Administration Review* 62 (5): 527–40.
- Wlezien, Christopher, and Stuart Soroka. 2011. "Inequality in Policy Responsiveness?" In *Who Gets Represented?*, edited by Christopher Wlezien and Peter Enns, 285–310. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Young, H. Peyton. 1994. *Equity in Theory and Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.