Why do Budgets Received by State Prosecutors Vary Across Districts in the United States?

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This Version: November 2, 2014

Abstract

This paper analyzes how the budget allocated to state prosecutors' offices vary across prosecutorial districts and the reasons for such variation by empirical methods, using data from Census of Prosecutors and other sources. The main results of this paper are as follows. Other factors being equal, the state prosecutor's budget increases with the crime rate in the prosecutorial district and the per-capita income of the district. State prosecutors in more politically conservative prosecutorial districts, as measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in 2000 presidential election, get smaller budgets and this decrease in the prosecutorial budget of a district with political conservatism is larger in more affluent and in more populous districts.

DePauw University Economics Working Papers Series, 2014-01

JEL Classification: K40, K41, K42, H72, H76.

Keywords: Prosecuting Attorneys, District Attorneys, State Courts, Crime, Prosecution, Litigation Process, Budget.

1 Introduction

A Public Prosecutor is a legal officer who represents the government in criminal proceedings[1]. Prosecutors are important because of two reasons. Firstly, prosecutors play a pivotal role in the criminal justice systems of the common law countries such as the United States. They are aptly called the 'gatekeepers of the criminal justice system.' Arrests alone do not deter criminals, unless they are followed most of the times by prosecutions, convictions in courts or plea bargains, and consequent punishments. Prosecutors are entrusted to ensure that justice is done. Secondly, prosecutors wield great discretionary powers. They have wide discretion, with almost no oversight, over whom to charge for a crime and the nature of those charges, when and under what circumstances to reduce or drop certain charges, whether to offer a plea bargain and the nature of plea bargain, and when to drop the charges all together. In the common law countries, the judges are supposed to be impartial. Therefore, they do not supervise the routine work of the prosecutors as long as the rules and regulations are seemingly followed. The common law prosecutors, consequently, enjoy much autonomy and discretionary power. From time to time, a few cases come to media's attention where these powers are abused by the prosecutors. [2]

Given the above mentioned importance of the prosecutors and the responsibilities and powers that the they carry, it is important to study closely and critically the factors that affect their decisions, how they allocate their resources among competing cases and programs, the amount of resources at their disposal, the political pressure they face to maintain a high conviction rate, and selfish motives, if any, which may lead to decisions and actions that are not in society's best interest. For example, too much political pressure to maintain a high win rate can lead a prosecutor to take cases with even dubious evidence, as long as chances of winning are high. If they do not get right incentives to work for society's best interest, they may take cases that are not high priority from society's viewpoint, but will bring fame to the prosecutors. This, in turn, will help them to get elected or appointed to higher political offices.

In the United States, there are two types of prosecutors, federal prosecutors and state prosecutors. The federal prosecutors prosecute the cases resulting from violations of the federal laws, while the state prosecutors handle the cases that result from violations of the state laws. Since

[1] Black's Law Dictionary, Third Edition

[2] An example is the 2006 Duke University's Lacrose players' case, which ultimately lead to the disbarment of the lead prosecutor of the case, Mike Nifong.

most criminal activities come under the jurisdiction of state laws, the state prosecutors handle a lot of more cases than the federal prosecutors. Both types of prosecutors are funded by their respective governments.

The federal prosecutors are well-funded because they get their budgets from the affluent federal government. However, the state prosecutors, despite being saddled with more cases, are funded poorly by the local governments because these governments themselves have been struggling fiscally for the last two decades or so. The state prosecutors compete for funds with other local services such as road repairs and garbage collection. Due to such poor funding, the state prosecutors sometimes are unable to take even those cases where the evidence is strong or alternatively they have to offer overly generous plea bargains. This obviously is detrimental to the efforts of keeping the crime rate low.

The existing literature on prosecutors tells us that the prosecutors allocate different amounts of resources to different cases based on the probability of winning in each case and relative importance of winning each case for society. For example, from society's point of view, it is more important to convict a guilty defendant in a murder case than in a theft case. However, the existing literature treats the budgets of the prosecutors as exogenously determined. The allocation of the budget to different competing cases itself depends on the magnitude of the available budget. If more budget is available, the prosecutor will be able to take more ambitious cases where the probability of winning is smaller, but the expected societal benefit from a conviction is greater. This paper contributes to the literature by identifying the main determinants of the prosecutorial budgets, using data from all the districts and controlling for the effects of covariates. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first and the only study to have done so.

The State prosecutors represent state governments in proceedings that result from violation of state laws. State prosecutors are usually known as District Attorneys or Public Prosecutors in many prosecutorial districts. In the United States, state prosecutors can be appointed by the state governments or elected by the local voters of a prosecutorial district. States of Alaska, Connecticut, New Jersey, and also District of Columbia have appointed state prosecutors.

The institutional process of determining budgets of prosecutors proceeds as follows. Prosecutors complete forms that the funding agencies require. The prosecutors indicate through these forms how much money they will need for the next fiscal year. These forms solicit details of all the programs run by the prosecutorial office such as program for prosecuting recidivist criminals or providing counseling to the victims. The budgets in most districts are 'zero-based,' which

means that each year the prosecutor has to justify continuation of each program. Just because a program received funding in the previous year, it does not mean that it will receive funding in the next year. Prosecutors employ accountants and keep a detailed account of expenses of their offices. After prosecutors have submitted the forms, the local government decides how much budget to allocate to the local prosecutor. In most cases, this amount is less than what the prosecutor has requested. The prosecutor, formally, does not have a say in the determination of budget beyond requesting a certain amount of budget. However, informally, prosecutors engage vigorously in lobbying and canvassing for getting higher allocation of budget.

Prosecutors are mostly funded by the local governments such as county and city governments, even though sometimes they may also receive funding from the state and the federal governments. In the last few decades, the local and the state governments are facing severe financially constraints. This has led to budgetary cuts for the prosecutors. Enterprising prosecutors look for funding opportunities from all possible sources such as getting grants from the federal government and big corporations for special programs. However, all these fund-raising activities take away some of their time and attention from trials and plea bargaining.

The prosecutors have a great amount of discretionary power over whom to prosecute and whom not to prosecute. In particular, there is virtually no oversight for their power to determine whom not to prosecute. Their discretionary power to decide whom to prosecute can in principle be reviewed by the state attorney generals in most states. However, this rarely happens. Another interesting feature of the American criminal justice system is that most of the criminal cases end in plea bargains. Baker and Mezzetti (2001) study the various issues involved in plea bargaining. The most important factor in plea bargaining is the credible threat by the prosecutor to go to trial if the defendant does not accept the plea bargain. However, a prosecutor with a meager budget may not sound very credible in his or her threat to take the defendant to trial. Thus, even plea bargaining, both the number and the terms of pleas, is affected by the amount of resources available to the prosecutors.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review of existing research on American prosecutors. Section 3 outlines the theoretical models. Section 4 contains the discussion of empirical analysis including the results. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2 Literature Review

Even though the functioning of prosecutors is so important in understanding how the criminal justice system works, the research that has been done so far on prosecutors is scant. For the purpose of this literature review, I have categorized the existing literature on American prosecutors into three categories. One line of research, which is also the oldest, has examined the prosecutorial decisions to prosecute and allocation of resources to different cases. However, there are no agency problems or issues in these papers the prosecutor always acts in society's best interest. The second and more recent category incorporates the agency problem and then investigates how the agency problem colors the decisions of the prosecutors. The third category of the literature is written by legal scholars and published mostly in law journals. One of the recurring topics of this strand of the literature is the debate whether the extensive discretionary powers enjoyed by American prosecutors are good or bad for the society. Comparison with legal systems of other countries and abstract principles of jurisprudence are used in the debate rather than equations and figures. The suggestions for change range from adopting the civil law system of the European countries to making minor adjustments in the current common law legal system.

The first category of the literature was started by Becker (1968). Even though the paper deals with crime and optimal punishment and not prosecutors, it made people realize the usefulness of economic analysis for such issues. Landes (1971) is the pioneering paper in this strand of literature. He showed that prosecutors will devote more resources to cases where spending additional money will increase the chances of winning and to the cases which are in society's best interest to win, like cases involving heinous crimes such as murders. Rhodes (1976) proved the results of Landes (1971) with additional variables such as prosecutor's and defendant's legal strengths and court delays. This paper also provides additional insights such as an increase in the number of plea bargains when there are more court delays or when the prosecutors are burdened with more cases. So plea bargain acts as a 'market clearing device.' Forst and Brosi (1977) incorporated dynamic element in the model. Some of the defendants are recidivists. The prosecutors acting in society's best interest should devote more resources to convict these defendants and get a higher sentence for them because doing so will reduce the expected future stream of crime.

The second category of this literature incorporated agency problem and made the models more realistic. Cole (1970) is a pioneering work for this strand of literature. This paper did a

case study of King county of Seattle, Washington and showed the complex web of interconnections among the prosecutor with each of the following groups: police, judges, prison wardens, defense lawyers, and community leaders. The prosecutor's action affects and is affected by different groups who are also involved in criminal justice system in complex web of interactions. For example, when the prisons get overcrowded, the judges reduce sentences for minor crimes, the prosecutors do not prosecute minor cases, and the police do not arrest for such crimes knowing that the prosecutors will not take such cases. Glaeser et. al. (2000) showed that the federal prosecutors are more likely to take the cases of drug related offenses if the defendant has a high human capital or is sufficiently rich to hire a good defense attorney. Taking such cases where the defense attorneys are good helps to hone the trial skills of the prosecutors and the prosecutors can also make connections with lawyers of reputed law firms, which may be useful if and when they change careers. Gordon and Huber (2002) discusses in detail the incentives that the prosecutors face, their own personal agenda, and the actions they take under these incentives. They concluded that even when the voters do not know the facts of each individual case, the voters should still press for higher conviction rates from prosecutors because this will induce the prosecutors to work hard, seek the truth in each case, without unnecessarily inducing the prosecutors to try to convict innocent defendants. Boylan (2005) studied 570 federal prosecutors from 1969 to 2000 and concluded that the federal prosecutors strive to maximize the total prison sentence. Maximizing the total prison sentences leads to favorable career outcomes for US attorneys, while high conviction rates do not seem to affect the career outcomes.

The third category of literature is written mostly by legal scholars and published in legal journals. A good survey paper on this strand of literature is Misner (1996), which explains in detail the discretionary powers of prosecutors in the United States. Johnson (2001) and Saxonhouse (2001) compare and contrast the Japanese legal system with the American legal system, including the powers of the prosecutors. Another paper worth mentioning is Pizzi (1993), which refutes the call of some scholars to reduce the discretionary powers of the American prosecutors and to make these powers comparable to those wielded by the European prosecutors. This paper says that the common law and the civil law systems are very different and it is not really possible to borrow a few aspects of one system and incorporate them in the other system, while leaving other things intact. For example, the prosecutor does not have much discretionary powers in the civil law system because the judge in that system has a lot of power. The judge in civil law system actively participates in the interrogation or the cross-examination of the

defendant during the trial and can drop charges or bring additional charges at any point during the trial. Reducing the powers of common law prosecutors to the level of civil law prosecutors while not altering the powers of common law judges will create a void and hamper the smooth working of the criminal justice system.

All the above papers assume that prosecutors budgets are exogenously determined. My paper contributes to the above literature by shedding more light on the factors that determine the magnitudes of prosecutorial budgets, using data from all the prosecutorial districts and controlling for the effects of relevant covariates.

3 Empirical Analysis

The empirical analysis in this paper consists of running regressions with the prosecutorial budget as the dependent variable and relevant demographic and economic variables as the independent variables. Since crime is an endogenous variable, the estimates from Ordinary Least Squares will not be consistent. Therefore, I have used Two Stage Least Squares (2SLS) and Limited Information Maximum Likelihood (LIML) to get consistent estimates. The estimates from these equations are given in Table 10 and the elasticities based on these regressions are given in Table 11. Using these regression techniques necessitates the availability of valid instrument for the endogenous variables. I have discussed this in detail in subsection 3.2. The regression techniques 2SLS and LIML give similar results in large data. That is, they are asymptotically equivalent. Two stage least squares is easier to explain and compute, but LIML has the advantage of being invariant to scaling of variables. The word 'limited' in LIML alludes to the fact that we are only estimating one equation instead of the whole system of equation. Limited Information Maximum Likelihood is equivalent to Two Stage Least Squares, while Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) is equivalent to Three Stage Least Squares (3SLS) where we use the information about the relationship among the errors of different equations to get a more efficient estimate. Since I have only one equation in my analysis and not a full system of equations, 2SLS and LIML is the best I can do. For further information about LIML and FIML, please see Greene (2012), pages 367-371.

I have done robustness check by running regressions using the logarithm of variables, by dividing the prosecutorial districts first into large population and small population groups and then into rich and poor districts. I have used both the 2SLS and LIML for these regressions.

Then I run 2SLS and LIML for using logarithm of the prosecutorial budget and the logarithm

of the independent variables. Taking the log of variables improves the symmetry and reduces the range, but it is a more restrictive model. The elasticity in this model is always constant. Since it is a not a good idea to use a more restrictive model unless there are good theoretical justifications, I did not use log-log model for my main regressions, but only for robustness check.

In order to do the empirical analysis, I have created a dataset by combining data from different publicly available datasets. Please see Appendix A for the details of the sources of dataset, description of these sources, and the definition of the variables used in this paper. The main source of data is Census of Prosecutors (2001). I augmented this data with economic and demographic variables taken from sources such as Uniform Crime Report of the FBI, the US Bureau of Census, and the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University.

All the data except from the Census of Prosecutors were available at the level of state counties. I aggregated these to the level of state prosecutorial district that may consist of one or more counties. None of the variables except the prosecutorial budget is scaled. The prosecutorial budget is in thousands of dollars.

3.1 Description of Data

I created a dataset that I constructed by combining data from various sources. The core of the data for this study comes from the *Census of Prosecutors, 2001* which was conducted by the *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. This is the first and only survey of its kind that obtained information from the offices of all the prosecutors across the United States. Earlier surveys and subsequent surveys did not cover all the districts. DeFrances (2001), DeFrances (2002), and DeFrances (2003) have described this data in detail. I have augmented this data with key demographic and economic data about the prosecutorial districts that I have taken from various sources such as the Bureau of Census and Uniform Crime Report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Appendix A at the end of the paper provides the details of sources of data and definitions of different variables used in the empirical analysis.

Prosecutorial budgets vary much across districts. The median prosecutorial budget was 320,000 while the average budget was 2,087,007. This indicates a positively skewed distribution. Also, the coefficient of variation was 5.53, which is quite high. Coefficient of variation is a better measure of dispersion when comparing two or more different variables. It is calculated by dividing the standard deviation with the mean and multiplying it by 100. The only variable

that has a higher coefficient of variable is crime. Its coefficient of variation is 5.90.

«TABLES 1A and 1B HERE»

Detailed descriptive statistics for all the quantitative variables used in the regressions are given in Table 1A. Table 1B describes the categorical variables such as whether or not a district belongs to a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), whether or not the prosecutor is elected or appointed, and whether or not he takes civil cases.

«TABLE 2 HERE»

Table 2 provides tenth, twenty-fifth (the first quartile), fiftieth (the median), seventy-fifth (third quartile), and ninetieth percentiles of all the quantitative variables used in regressions. Percentiles are useful in giving us clues about the shape of the variables. As we can clearly see from these percentiles, most of the variables are right-skewed. In other words, most variables have a few observations that are very large. These observations are the large metropolitan cities such as New York City and Chicago.

«TABLE 3 HERE»

Table 3 provides the frequency distribution table of the number of years the current prosecutor has been in the office. As we can see from this table, a majority of prosecutors are either new or have less than ten years of tenure. Only a few prosecutors have been in office beyond twenty years. There is even one prosecutor who remained in office for forty years. In most of the prosecutorial districts, the prosecutors are elected. Therefore, remaining in office for twenty years or more is quite a feat.

«TABLE 4 HERE»

Table 4 provides the frequency distribution of the prosecutorial budget in various districts, which is the topic of this paper. We can immediately see a wide variation. About 400 districts have a budget of less than one hundred thousand dollars, while about 10 districts have a budget of over ten million dollars. Thus, the data is fairly right-skewed.

«TABLE 5 HERE »

Table 5 provides the frequency distribution table of the population variable. As we can see from this table, the population is highly right skewed. There are a few districts with large populations, while rest of the districts have small or medium populations.

«TABLE 6 HERE»

In Table 6 we can see the large variation in the prosecutorial budget, which is the topic of the paper. About 400 districts have prosecutorial budgets that are less than $100,000, while there are 10 districts that have prosecutorial budgets of more than $ 10,000,000.

«TABLE 7 HERE»

Table 7 shows the frequency tables of the per-capita income of the prosecutorial districts. As we can see, most districts in the year 2000 have per-capita income between $15,000 and $20,000.

«TABLE 8 HERE»

Table 8 provides the aggregate number of 'index crimes' in each prosecutorial district across the United States. Please see Appendix A for a detailed definition of this variable. The number of index crimes in each prosecutorial district across the United States varies substantially, as we can see from this table.

«TABLE 9 HERE»

Table 9 provides the number of prosecutorial districts in each state. This number varies from 1 in Alaska, District of Columbia, and Rhodes Island to 155 in Texas. States with larger areas and larger population tend to have more prosecutorial districts. A few states where each prosecutorial district consists of only one county also have a larger number prosecutorial districts than those states where the prosecutorial districts consist mostly of two or more districts.

3.2 Endogeneity Issues

The crime rate of a district is very likely to be endogenous as it is indeed the very variable that the prosecutorial budget is supposed to decrease. A higher crime rate results in a larger budget, while a larger budget is more likely to result in lower crime rate. The latter happens because a larger prosecutorial budget results in a larger number of prosecutions of criminals in that district. This, in turn, firstly, reduces the supply of criminals in society, especially due to

incarceration of criminals and harsher punishment for recidivists and secondly, it discourages would-be criminals.

The implication of the crime rate being endogenous is that the OLS estimates will not be consistent. We need at least one valid instrument to enable us to run 2SLS regressions. I have used the percentage of males in a district between 16 to 24 years, the percentage of the population in a district that is employed, percentage of males in a district with no schooling, and percentage of houses in a district that are unoccupied in a district.

These instruments turn out to be strong. A rule of thumb is that if at the first stage regression the F statistic is more than 10, then instruments are likely to be strong. The F statistic for the first stage regression of crime rate is more than 100. The Anderson Canonical Test for weak instruments also shows beyond doubt that these instruments are strong and there is no under-identification of the endogenous variable (crime rate). Since I have more instruments than the number of endogenous variables, I also conducted a test for overidentifying restrictions (Sargan-Hansen test). The null hypothesis that the instruments are valid cannot be rejected at any plausible level of significance because of high p-values. So, while the null hypothesis that the instruments are valid can never be accepted as is true for any other null hypothesis, but at least this test conclusively showed that the data cannot be used to show the invalidity of the instruments.

3.3 Results

Table 10 shows the result of regressions that include all the districts in our dataset. The dependent variable in all these regressions is the prosecutorial budget and it is in the unit of thousands of dollars. Column (1) provides the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimates, while columns (2) and (3) provide respectively the the Two stage least squares (2SLS) and the Limited Information Maximum Likelihood (LIML) estimates. The OLS estimates in column (1) are unlikely to be consistent but are provided for comparison. All regressions control for state fixed effects. Monthly median rent for each prosecutorial district is also included in each regression to control for the cost of living in each district.

By looking carefully at columns (2) and (3) one can see that the prosecutorial budget decreases with the increase in percentage of votes won by President Bush in November 2000 elections. On the one hand, more conservative districts prefer being strict toward crime, and will thus fund the prosecutors well. On the other hand, the more conservative districts like lower taxes and

smaller bureaucracies. Due to this reason, the prosecutors are likely to get smaller budgets in more conservative districts. Thus, it was not clear *a priori* what will be the net result of these opposing effects. Columns (2) and (3) of Table 10 show that the net result is negative and the prosecutorial budget will decline with increase in the level of political conservatism. We can see from these columns that the appointed prosecutors get more budget, other things remaining the same including controlling the state fixed effects and the per-capita income. This suggests that the prosecutors, who are nominated by the state governments, are also otherwise politically savvy, which enables them to get larger budgets.

We also see from the regression that the budget increases with the total area of a district. This is because a more spread out geographical area requires more money to work effectively. The prosecutorial budget also increases with crime and the per-capita income of a district. The latter measures the affluence of a district. The prosecutorial budget decreases with the term of office, measured in years, of the prosecutor. So districts where prosecutorial election (or nomination) happens more often are more likely to get larger prosecutorial budgets, after controlling for other variables. The LIML regression gives the lowest R^2 0.46, out of the three regressions. The 2SLS regression has an R^2 of 0.54.

«TABLE 10 HERE»

Table 11 provides the elasticities for all the independent variables regressions in Table 10 at their mean value. The p-value of variables in different regressions is also provided next to the elasticities. We can see that the elasticity of budget with respect to per-capita income is 1.201. This means a percent increase in per-capita income will result in 1.201% increase in prosecutorial budget. A percent increase in percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 will result in a decrease of 0.163% in the prosecutorial budget. One percent increase in 'Index Crimes' will result in 0.684 percent increase in the prosecutorial budget.

«TABLE 11 HERE»

3.4 Robustness Check

Different types of districts may display different relationships among the variables. Similarly, it is important to use other specifications to see if the regression results are similar. In order to do robustness check, I have divided all the prosecutorial districts into large population and small

population districts and then into richer and poorer districts. I used the median values instead of averages of population and per-capita income to make these categorizations to avoid extreme values affecting the division of data. Then, I have used a log-log regression model to see that the results are similar.

Table 12 provides us with the results of the regressions when the full sample is divided into two parts: large population and small population districts. We can see that some of the variables such as per-capita income, index crimes, and political conservatism (as measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 president election) that were significant in the regressions in Table 10 are still significant for large population districts and even have larger corresponding coefficients compared to regressions with all the districts. However, for smaller population districts, while index crimes and per-capita income are still significant, politician conservatism, as measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 president election, is not. This probably is due to the fact that some absolutely bare minimum amount is needed to run a prosecutorial office effectively. A smaller population district cannot reduce an already small prosecutorial budget on ideological grounds, if it has to remain functioning properly.

«TABLE 12 HERE»

Similarly, Table 13 provides the regressions results for the richer and poorer districts separately. The number of index crimes, the per-capita income, and political conservatism are all significant for the richer districts. Moreover, the magnitudes of coefficients of all these three variables is larger when compared to the corresponding coefficients of regressions run over all the districts. In poorer districts, while the number of index crimes and per-capita income are still significant, but political conservatism is not. This again shows that the more affluent districts, similar to the larger population districts, have a greater capacity for variation in prosecutorial budgets due to various demographic or economic reasons. However, the poorer prosecutorial districts, similar to the smaller population districts, that already have smaller budgets cannot afford to have much variations in prosecutorial budgets, if they still want their local prosecutors to function effectively.

«TABLE 13 HERE»

Lastly, Table 14 provides the log-log model where I have taken the logarithm of both the dependent variable and the independent variables before running the regressions. The coefficients

in this regression are elasticities. Therefore, a separate table for elasticities is not necessary. All the major results of this paper also hold in the log-log model.

«TABLE 14 HERE»

4 Conclusion

Prosecutorial budget is an important determinant of the society's ability to fight crime. This paper examines why the budgets of the state prosecutors vary so much across the United States. Previous studies have treated the prosecutorial budget as exogenously determined while examining the allocation of it to different uses. This paper contributes to the literature by examining the factors that determine these budgets.

The empirical analysis brought to light some results which were expected such as the prosecutorial budget increases with the crime rate and the per-capita income of the prosecutorial district as well as some surprising results such as that other things remaining the same, the prosecutorial budgets decrease with the increase in political conservatism, as measured by the percentage of votes President Bush won in November 2000 election. This is surprising because more conservative districts would prefer a tougher stance on crime and consequently provide larger budgets to prosecutors. However, more conservative voters also tend to prefer lower taxes and smaller governments and this preference seems to have dominated the desire to be tougher on crime.

Further study with more data of this important topic is needed. Recently the data from the next round of prosecutorial census in 2007 has become available after a delay of many years. Incorporating data from another year will enable me to control for the fixed effects of not just individual states but also of individual prosecutorial districts. This is what I plan to do in the near future.

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5 Appendix A: Data

The variables used in the empirical analysis are defined as follows.

1. **The Census of Prosecutors, 2001:** The data from this census is available at the following URL: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/psc01.htm. It is the first time that *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, the statistical arm of Department of Justice covered all the prosecutorial districts in their survey. Earlier survey included only randomly selected districts. The unit of aggregation from the variables taken from this source is Prosecutorial district. A prosecutorial district may consist of two or more state counties. However, most prosecutorial districts consist of only one county. The variables that I obtained from this data for this paper are listed below:

   a) **Prosecutorial Budget:** The annual budget that prosecutors get mostly from the local governments such as county and municipal governments.

   b) **Composition of Districts:** Each prosecutorial district consists of one or more of state counties. The Census of Prosecutors, 2001 contains this composition of prosecutorial districts in terms of state counties. I have used this information to merge variables taken from different datasets that were at different levels of aggregation.

   c) **Appointed or Not:** A binary variable which indicates whether the prosecutor was appointed or elected. It is 1 for districts where the prosecutors are appointed, 0 otherwise. Prosecutors in all the districts in Alaska, Connecticut, New Jersey, and District of Columbia are appointed by their respective state Attorney Generals.

   d) **Years in Office:** The number of years the current prosecutor has been in office.

   e) **Term of Office:** It is the number of years a prosecutor will hold the office after being elected or appointed before the next election or reappointment.

2. **Uniform Crime Report, 2001:** The uniform crime report is made by Federal Bureau of Investigation to measure the level of crime across different parts of the United States. It provides data about certain serious crimes reported to different law enforcement agencies across the counties such as police or sheriff departments. These serious crimes include murders, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies, motor vehicle thefts, and arsons. This report for the year 2001 can be obtained from the following URL: http:

//www.fbi.gov/ucr/01cius.htm. This data was available at the level of counties of states. I aggregated this data to the prosecutorial district level.

a) **Index Crimes:** I have constructed a variable called aggregate index crime by summing all these crimes for every county within each prosecutorial district.

3. **Census Data of Year 2000:** Data can be downloaded from individual tables available at the following URL: http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html. All of the data that I got from this source was available at the county level of aggregation. So I aggregated this data to the prosecutorial district level.

a) **Housing Density:** The number of housing units in a prosecutorial district divided by the total land area of that district.

b) **Males with No Schooling:** Number of males with no schooling in a prosecutorial district.

c) **Males between Ages of 15 and 24:** Number of males between the ages of 15 and 24 in a prosecutorial district.

d) **Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** A binary variable which is 1 for prosecutorial districts that lie in metropolitan statistical area, 0 otherwise.

e) **Monthly Median Rent:** The median monthly rent of housing units in a prosecutorial district.

f) **Number of People who are Employed:** Number of people who are employed in a prosecutorial district.

g) **Number of Houses that are Occupied:** Number of housing units that are occupied in a prosecutorial district.

h) **Per-capita Income:** Per-capita income of a prosecutorial district.

i) **Population:** Population of a prosecutorial district.

j) **Population Density:** Population of a prosecutorial district divided by the total land area (excluding the water area) of that district.

k) **Rural Population:** Number of people who live in rural areas in a prosecutorial district.

l) **Total Area:** The total area of a prosecutorial district.

4. **Year 2000 Presidential Election Results:** Data about the number of votes won by different candidates in November 2000 presidential election is taken from Center of Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University. It is available over the Internet at the following URL: http://spa.american.edu/ccps/pages.php?ID=12. This data was also available at the level of counties. Therefore, I aggregated it to the prosecutorial district level.

   a) **Bush Votes:** The number of votes won by President Bush in November 2000 election. This variable measures the strength of the level of political conservatism of a district around the year 2000.

   b) **Percentage of Bush Votes:** I constructed this variable from the above variable by expressing it as a percentage of total population of the prosecutorial district. This enables comparison of political conservatism between less populous and more populous districts.

Table 1A: Basic Descriptive Statistics for Quantitative Variables

Variable	Mean	Observations	Standard Dev.	C.V.	Skewness	Min	Max
Density of Housing Units	55.18	2195	177.02	3.21	13.34	0.18	4232.61
Number of Index Crimes	463.42	2195	902.05	1.95	5.03	0.00	14445.00
Years in Office	9.25	1845	7.28	0.79	0.96	0.00	40.00
Monthly Median Rent	572.90	2195	397.93	0.69	3.36	225.00	3635.00
Number of Males with No Schooling	244.08	2195	472.32	1.94	6.52	0.00	7725.00
Percentage of Bush Votes	27.36	2193	71.08	2.60	31.53	0.41	2707.75
Per-capita Income	17663.35	2195	3458.11	0.20	1.59	5213.00	44962.00
Percentage of Employed population	45.22	2195	5.38	0.12	-0.62	20.86	64.03
Percentage of Males between 15 and 24	7.08	2195	1.75	0.25	2.84	3.70	21.15
Percentage of Houses Occupied	86.18	2195	9.42	0.11	-2.09	22.99	98.46
Percentage of Rural Population	58.98	2195	28.88	0.49	-0.06	0.00	100.00
Population	65792.27	2195	85775.07	1.30	2.38	412.00	486254.00
Term of Office	4.10	2037	0.87	0.21	1.80	1.00	10.00
Total Area of a District	1310.81	2195	1683.60	1.28	4.58	6.83	21159.85

Table 1B: Basic Descriptive Statistics for Categorical Variables

Variable	No	Yes	Total Observations
Chief Prosecutor is Appointed	2176	19	2195
Metropolitan Statistical Area	1748	447	2195

Table 2: Key Percentiles

	P 10	P 25	P 50	P 75	P 90
Density of Housing Units	2.17	7.53	19.05	42.80	109.96
Number of Index Crimes	1.00	26.00	129.00	473.00	1319.00
Years in Office	2.00	4.00	8.00	14.00	20.00
Monthly Median Rent	331.00	378.00	448.00	565.00	930.00
Number of Males with No Schooling	6.00	24.00	84.00	270.00	635.00
Percentage of Bush Votes	16.80	20.08	23.54	27.46	33.12
Per-capita Income	14213.92	15659.00	17195.00	19052.00	21568.00
Percentage of Employed population	38.04	42.11	45.85	48.94	51.33
Percentage of Males between 15 and 24	5.62	6.10	6.69	7.54	8.85
Percentage of Houses Occupied	74.62	83.01	89.01	92.45	94.45
Percentage of Rural Population	18.91	36.83	58.35	81.68	100.00
Population	5614.00	12898.00	33391.00	80732.00	172469.00
Term of Office	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Total Area of a District	389.43	512.41	743.79	1391.49	2754.34

Notes: P1 is the first percentile, P10 is tenth percentile, P25 if the twenty-fifth percentile, P50 is the fiftieth percentile, and p75 is the seventy-fifth percentile.

Table 3: Term of Office in Different Prosecutorial Districts in 2001

Term of Office in Years	Number of Districts	Percent
1	4	0.2
2	94	4.61
3	1	0.05
4	1773	87.04
5	12	0.59
6	113	5.55
8	38	2
9	1	0.05
10	1	0.05
Total	2,037	100

Table 4: Years in Office of Current Prosecutors

Years in Office	Number of Districts	Percent
0-5	617	33.44
5-10	459	24.88
10-15	365	19.78
15-20	195	10.57
20-25	136	7.37
25-30	50	2.71
30-35	18	0.98
35-40	4	0.22
40-45	1	0.05
Total	1845	100.00

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of the Population

	Population	Number of Districts
	0-50000	1378
	50000-100000	371
	100000-150000	171
	150000-200000	103
	200000-250000	63
	250000-300000	38
	300000+	71
Total		2195

Table 6: Prosecutorial Budget across Districts

Budget Amount	Number of Districts
$0 - $100000	386
$100000 - $200000	386
$200000 - $300000	265
$300000 - $400000	180
$400000 - $500000	130
$500000 - $1000000	305
$1000000 - $2000000	223
$2000000 - $3000000	71
$3000000 - $4000000	45
$4000000 - $5000000	25
$5000000 - $6000000	10
$6000000 - $7000000	15
$7000000 - $8000000	6
$8000000 - $9000000	5
$9000000 - $10000000	3
$10000000 +	10
Total	2065

Table 7: Per-capita Income in the Year 2000

Per-capita Income	Number of Districts
$0 -$5000	0
$5000-$10000	14
$10000-$15000	359
$15000-$20000	1444
$20000-$25000	306
$25000-$30000	52
$30000-$35000	12
$35000-$40000	7
$40000-$45000	1

Table 8: Number of Index crimes across Districts

Number of Index Crimes	Number of Districts
0-50	727
50- 100	238
100-150	194
150- 200	118
200-400	299
400-600	156
600-800	85
800-1000	76
1000-1200	61
1200-1400	34
1400-1600	36
1600-1800	36
1800-2000	22
2000-2200	11
2200+	102

Table 9: Number of Prosecutorial Districts in various States

State	Number of Districts	Percent
Alaska	1	0.04
Alabama	41	1.75
Arkansas	28	1.2
Arizona	15	0.64
California	58	2.48
Colorado	22	0.94
Connecticut	13	0.56
District of Columbia	1	0.04
Delaware	1	0.04
Florida	20	0.85
Georgia	48	2.05
Hawaii	4	0.17
Iowa	99	4.23
Idaho	44	1.88
Illinois	102	4.36
Indiana	90	3.84
Kansas	105	4.49
Kentucky	56	2.39
Louisiana	41	1.75
Massachusetts	11	0.47

State	Number of Districts	Percent
Maryland	24	1.03
Maine	8	0.34
Michigan	83	3.55
Minnesota	87	3.72
Missouri	115	4.91
Mississippi	22	0.94
Montana	55	2.35
North Carolina	39	1.67
North Dakota	53	2.26
Nebraska	93	3.97
New Hampshire	10	0.43
New Jersey	21	0.9
New Mexico	14	0.6
Nevada	17	0.73
New York	62	2.65
Ohio	88	3.76
Oklahoma	27	1.15
Oregon	36	1.54
Pennsylvania	67	2.86
Rhode Island	1	0.04
South Carolina	16	0.68

State	Number of Districts	Percent
South Dakota	66	2.82
Tennessee	31	1.32
Texas	155	6.62
Utah	29	1.24
Virginia	120	5.13
Vermont	14	0.6
Washington	39	1.67
Wisconsin	71	3.03
West Virginia	55	2.35
Wyoming	23	0.98
Total	2341	100

Table 10: Regression of Prosecutorial Budgets of all the Districts

	(1) OLS	(2) 2SLS	(3) LIML
Number of Index Crimes	0.08	1.11**	1.41**
	[0.10]	[0.49]	[0.63]
Per-capita Income	0.03**	0.05***	0.06***
	[0.01]	[0.02]	[0.02]
Monthly Median Rent	-0.38***	-0.25**	-0.21
	[0.08]	[0.12]	[0.14]
Metropolian Area	-46.18	-3.93	7.98
	[70.27]	[78.09]	[85.54]
Population	0.01***	0.00	0.00
	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.01]
Percentage of Rural Population	-0.50	0.68	1.02
	[0.68]	[1.08]	[1.26]
Density of Housing Units	0.21	-0.08	-0.16
	[0.13]	[0.21]	[0.26]
Total Area of a District	0.05***	0.05***	0.05***
	[0.02]	[0.01]	[0.01]
Political Conservatism	-0.51	-4.60*	-5.76*
	[0.42]	[2.63]	[3.38]
Appointed or Not	1579.84***	1533.03**	1519.83**
	[573.40]	[702.52]	[757.70]
Years in Office	0.74	0.05	-0.15
	[2.46]	[2.87]	[3.13]
Term of Office	-21.00	-74.96*	-90.17*

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	(1) OLS	(2) 2SLS	(3) LIML
	[28.30]	[42.18]	[47.88]
Constant	103.43	-58.49	-104.13
	[274.53]	[336.27]	[373.00]
R-Square	0.68	0.54	0.46
Number of Observations	1806.00	1806.00	1806.00

Notes: Dependent Variable is the logarithm of prosecutorial budget of all districts. Political conservatism is measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 presidential election in each prosecutorial district. Robust standard errors are given in bracket. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 11: Elasticities of Different Variables at their Mean Value

Variable	Mean	OLS		2SLS		LIML	
		Elasticity	P-value	Elasticity	P-value	Elasticity	P-value
Number of Index Crimes	478.428	0.049	0.417	0.684	0.022	0.864	0.024
Per-capita Income	17826.200	0.700	0.032	1.201	0.005	1.342	0.007
Median Rent	578.843	-0.280	0.000	-0.183	0.035	-0.156	0.125
Metropolitan Area	0.219	-0.013	0.511	-0.001	0.960	0.002	0.926
Population	67724.000	1.042	0.000	0.288	0.402	0.076	0.865
Percentage of Rural Population	58.230	-0.037	0.461	0.051	0.525	0.076	0.417
Density of Housing Units	58.944	0.016	0.110	-0.006	0.715	-0.012	0.532
Total Area	1285.210	0.088	0.000	0.078	0.001	0.075	0.002
Political Conservatism	27.531	-0.018	0.230	-0.163	0.080	-0.204	0.089
Appointed or Not	0.009	0.018	0.006	0.017	0.027	0.017	0.043
Years in Office	9.195	0.009	0.762	0.001	0.987	-0.002	0.961
Term of Office	4.091	-0.110	0.456	-0.394	0.071	-0.474	0.055

Notes: All elasticities are measured at the mean of each variable. Mean of each variable is provided in the second column for convenience. Political conservatism is measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 presidential election in each prosecutorial district.

Table 12: Regression of Prosecutorial Budget for Large Population and Small Population Districts Separately

	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
	Large Districts		Small Districts	
Number of Index Crimes	0.11	1.18**	0.01	0.06
	[0.12]	[0.49]	[0.03]	[0.08]
Per-capita Income	0.06***	0.12***	0.01***	0.01***
	[0.02]	[0.03]	[0.00]	[0.00]
Monthly Median Rent	-0.35***	-0.20	0.08	0.08
	[0.09]	[0.13]	[0.07]	[0.07]
Metropolian Area	-15.87	72.57	-44.36*	-42.93*
	[78.46]	[92.61]	[23.47]	[23.38]
Population	0.01***	0.00	0.01***	0.01***
	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]
Percentage of Rural Population	-1.15	4.79	-0.44**	-0.48***
	[1.79]	[3.45]	[0.18]	[0.18]
Density of Housing Units	0.15	-0.13	0.03	-0.01
	[0.18]	[0.23]	[0.04]	[0.06]
Total Area of a District	0.08***	0.08***	0.01	0.01
	[0.02]	[0.02]	[0.01]	[0.01]
Political Conservatism	-19.33**	-44.28***	-0.10	-0.28
	[8.23]	[14.28]	[0.14]	[0.35]
Appointed or Not	1426.11**	1226.57*		
	[580.21]	[677.36]		
Years in Office	1.62	1.80	-0.94	-0.92
	[5.16]	[6.05]	[1.26]	[1.25]

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	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
	Large Districts		Small Districts	
Term of Office	-4.45	-33.04	39.87***	35.16***
	[35.18]	[43.26]	[11.14]	[11.53]
Constant	276.59	-358.26	-228.54***	-196.78**
	[396.08]	[513.79]	[70.53]	[76.55]
R-Square	0.66	0.53	0.12	0.12
Number of Observations	928.00	928.00	877.00	878.00

Notes: The Dependent variable is the prosecutorial budget in the 'large' and the 'small' districts. Large and small districts are defined using the median population size of the prosecutorial district instead of the total area of the district. Political conservatism is measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 presidential election in each prosecutorial district. Robust standard errors are given in bracket. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 13: Regression of Prosecutorial Budget for Rich and Poor Districts Separately

	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
	Richer Districts		Poorer Districts	
Number of Index Crimes	0.12	1.37*	-0.03	0.88**
	[0.13]	[0.70]	[0.19]	[0.44]
Per-capita Income	0.04	0.09**	0.01	0.02**
	[0.03]	[0.04]	[0.01]	[0.01]
Monthly Median Rent	-0.28**	-0.05	-0.33***	-0.30***
	[0.13]	[0.22]	[0.08]	[0.11]
Metropolitan Area	9.31	144.49	57.64	-75.82
	[87.87]	[123.69]	[91.51]	[107.78]
Population	0.01***	0.00	0.01***	0.00
	[0.00]	[0.01]	[0.00]	[0.00]
Percentage of Rural Population	-0.12	1.09	-2.31***	-0.89
	[1.14]	[1.78]	[0.54]	[0.79]
Density of Housing Units	0.23	-0.10	0.18	0.24*
	[0.15]	[0.26]	[0.13]	[0.14]
Total Area of a District	0.04	0.05*	0.07***	0.06***
	[0.03]	[0.03]	[0.02]	[0.02]
Political Conservatism	-0.86	-7.75**	-0.08	-0.32
	[0.70]	[3.84]	[0.12]	[0.24]
Appointed or Not	1596.91***	1481.78**		
	[589.72]	[715.70]		
Years in Office	1.26	-0.53	1.40	1.51
	[4.49]	[5.53]	[2.06]	[2.29]
Term of Office	-59.55	-148.55**	42.58**	49.02**

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	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
	Richer Districts		Poorer Districts	
	[48.17]	[73.68]	[18.34]	[22.88]
Constant	323.43	-359.86	86.75	-154.44
	[540.34]	[745.82]	[174.59]	[182.81]
R-Square	0.68	0.51	0.59	0.48
Number of Observations	939.00	939.00	867.00	867.00

Notes: The dependent variable is the prosecutorial budget in the 'Rich' and the 'Poor' districts. The districts are divided into 'Rich' and 'Poor' categories using the median of per-capita income of prosecutorial districts. Political conservatism is measured by the percentage of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 presidential election in each prosecutorial district. Robust standard errors are given in bracket. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 14: Regression of Logarithm of Prosecutorial Budget of all the Districts

	(1) OLS	(2) 2SLS	(3) LIML
Log of Total Index Crimes	0.08***	0.30***	0.36***
	[0.02]	[0.08]	[0.11]
Log of Aggregate Income	1.39***	1.57***	1.62***
	[0.11]	[0.14]	[0.15]
Metropolian Area	0.04	0.03	0.03
	[0.04]	[0.04]	[0.04]
Log of Population	-0.43***	-0.59***	-0.66***
	[0.12]	[0.15]	[0.16]
Log of Rural Population	-0.18***	-0.13***	-0.11***
	[0.02]	[0.03]	[0.03]
Log of Density of Housing Units	0.44***	0.17	0.10
	[0.07]	[0.11]	[0.14]
Log of Total Area of a District	0.15***	0.16***	0.16***
	[0.02]	[0.02]	[0.02]
Political Conservatism	-0.58***	-0.65***	-0.67***
	[0.06]	[0.07]	[0.07]
Log of Median Rent	-0.38***	-0.40***	-0.40***
	[0.06]	[0.06]	[0.06]
Appointed or Not	0.44***	0.50***	0.51***
	[0.15]	[0.14]	[0.15]
Years in Office	0.00	0.00	0.00
	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]
Term of Office	0.05**	0.05**	0.05**

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	(1) OLS	(2) 2SLS	(3) LIML
	[0.03]	[0.03]	[0.03]
Constant	-13.93***	-14.20***	-14.30***
	[1.01]	[1.06]	[1.08]
R-Square	0.81	0.79	0.78
Number of Observations	1635.00	1588.00	1588.00

Notes: The dependent variable is the logarithm of prosecutorial budget. Political conservatism is measured by the total number of votes that President Bush won in November 2000 presidential election in each prosecutorial district. Robust standard errors are given in bracket. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.