

A Look at Proposition H, November 2005

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Summary

Prop H, or the “gun ban”, passed with nearly 58% of the vote. Although this was a pretty strong win, the victory wasn’t as strong as some recent social measures. The vote split upon San Francisco’s traditional left-right ideological lines, with the exception of much of D8, which strongly voted Yes on H. Much of this was because D8’s wealthier faction, which has voted more conservatively on past social issues, supported Prop H. D8’s turnout was very high due to outreach and GOTV activity.

Interestingly, some of the parts of San Francisco purported to be helped by Prop H (in D10) did not vote for it as highly as D8, and some did (D9). Moreover, parts of D6 also voted less strongly on H than expected. Although most of these areas voted the City’s average of around 57-60%, they still weren’t as high as portions of Noe Valley and the Castro, showing the ideological nature of this vote.

Background

Proposition H, also known as the “gun ban”, was likely the most contentious of the 2005 San Francisco measures, in what was otherwise a light year locally. H proposed to effectively ban the private ownership of handguns within city limits, with some law enforcement exceptions. Put on the ballot by Supervisor Daly, H was largely in response to growing trend of gun violence in certain San Francisco neighborhoods.

In many ways, H was seen as symbolic because of its questionable legality, recognized by many voters during the campaign. As of this writing, the ban is fighting its way through the courts. Many observers expect that it will eventually be thrown out, but that remains to be seen.

In an off-year election which was dominated by Governor Schwarzenegger’s special election, even the controversial gun ban did not receive a tremendous amount of attention. There was a small but organized group of No on H advocates, while the Yes on H supporters were quiet for most of the election. Endorsements throughout the City were split on H, with some atypical endorsements. Many of the more liberal groups went no position, like the SF Greens, and the very liberal Noe Valley Democrat Club. The Police Officers Association, obviously an interested party, voted No on H, as did the *Chronicle* and *Examiner*. Supporting the ban were the *Bay Guardian*, the Milk Club, and somewhat surprisingly Alice, who often votes more moderately than Milk. The dual Yes on H support from both major LGBT groups proved to be important.

Overall, H passed with 57.8% of the vote. There are several ways to look at this number. One, at its most basic level, is that a strong majority of San Franciscans supported the ban on

handguns, symbolic or not. In a town where many left-right issues are near 50-50 (like the recent immigrant voting measure which *lost*), 57.8% is a relatively strong win. However, this is also a town in which symbolic measures like withdrawing from Iraq (Nov 2004) passed with 63.3% of the vote, and recently more tangible but decidedly “liberal” issues passed with higher percentages than 58% (domestic partner benefits, medical marijuana, minimum wage).

What is particularly interesting, though, is how the different parts of San Francisco voted on H. Since H was put forward as a way to curb gun violence, which has been said to disproportionately hit the African-American communities in Bayview-Hunters Point (BV-HP) and the Western Addition (WA), it stands to reason that the Yes on H percentage should have been highest in these areas. Otherwise, we would expect the vote breakdown to go along standard left-right San Francisco lines.

Results¹

Figure 1 shows the precinct map of San Francisco with Yes on H results. What leaps out is the strength of the yes vote in D8, especially the Castro and Noe Valley, as well as much of the Mission and Bernal. Voting against the gun ban were the typically more conservative Marina, West of Twin Peaks, and parts of the Sunset.

District 8 had the highest turnout in this election (63%), largely due to strong GOTV efforts from the Milk and Alice Democratic clubs, in opposition to the Governor’s initiatives. Many of the voters reached by these efforts likely responded to the clubs’ slates, both of which went Yes on H. The rest of the City received the usual campaign literature and slates seen in most elections. Figure 2 is a boxplot of the district votes, with the boxes indicating the quartiles, median, and outliers. While the median of D2, D4, and D7 fell below 57.8%, so did that of D1. D3, D10, and D11 were right at the mean, establishing what I perceive is the “baseline” for this measure. Generally, D5/D8/D9 cancelled out D2/D4/D7. In all, I’m surmising that this issue was actually around a 58% yes vote, up 8% from a traditional 50-50 split – as a true measure of what San Franciscans thought.

¹ As usual, I am fully cognizant of the ecological fallacy in my results, in using precincts to speak for individual voters. It’s the hand we’re dealt.

Figure 1: Precinct map of Yes on H, 2005

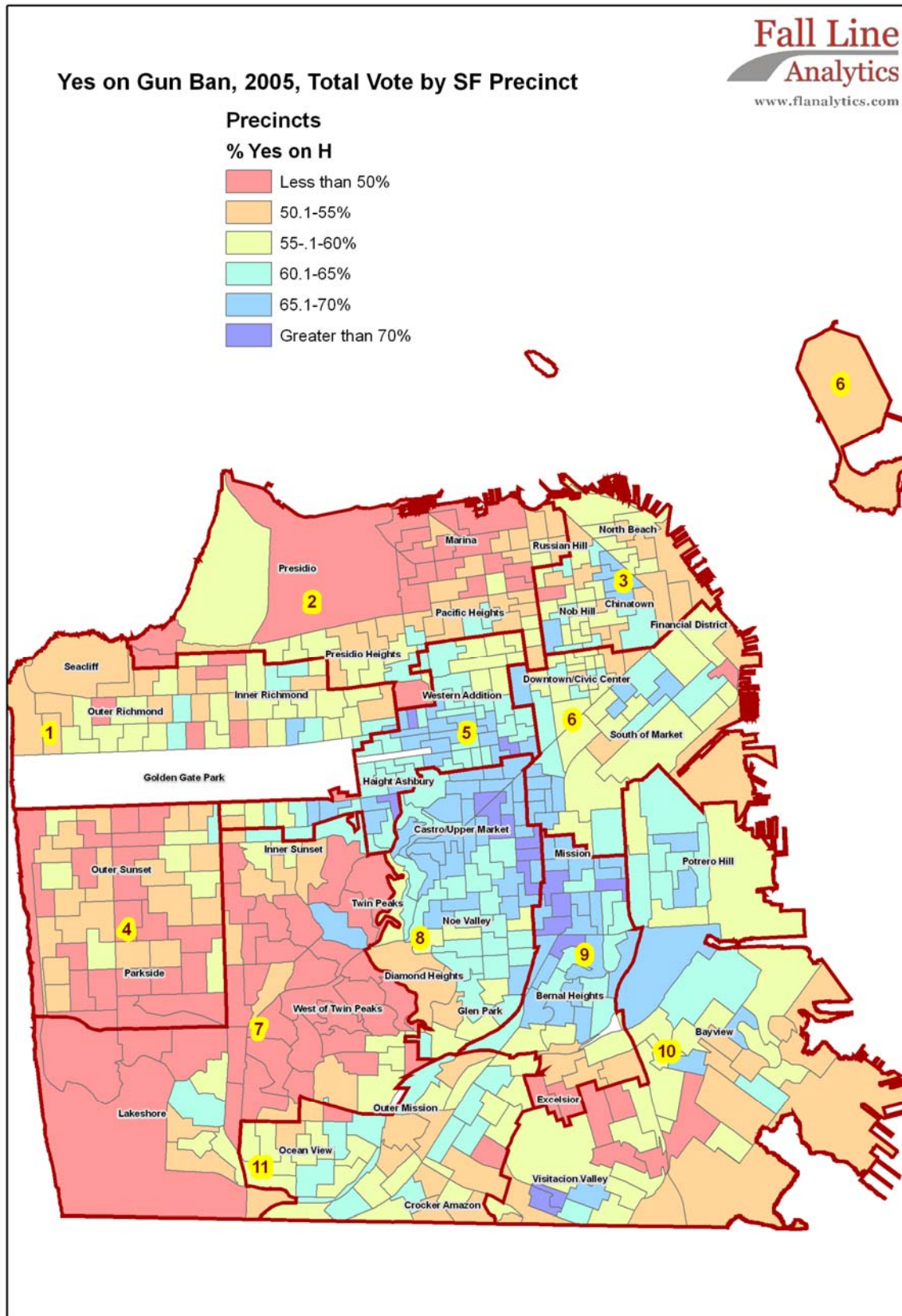
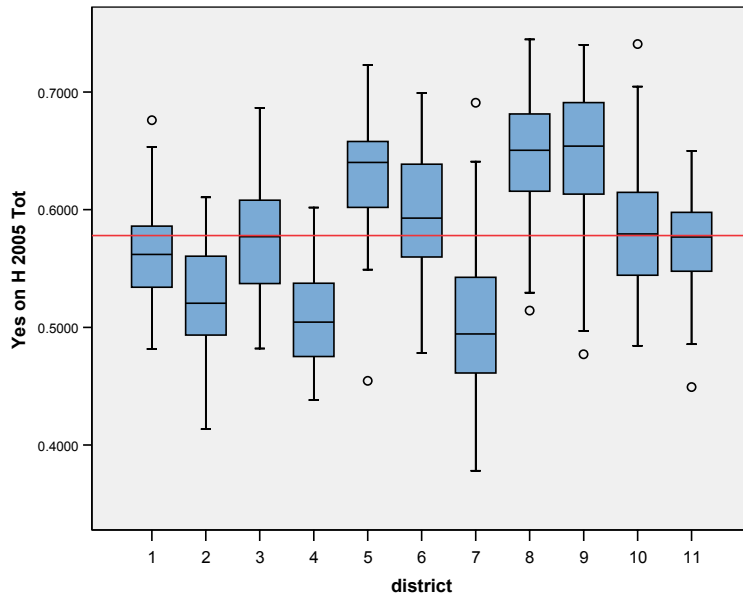


Figure 2: Boxplot of yes on H vote by district. The red line is the total yes vote, and the boxes represent quartiles, median (the black line), and outliers. For instance, the high outlier in D7 is Laguna Honda.



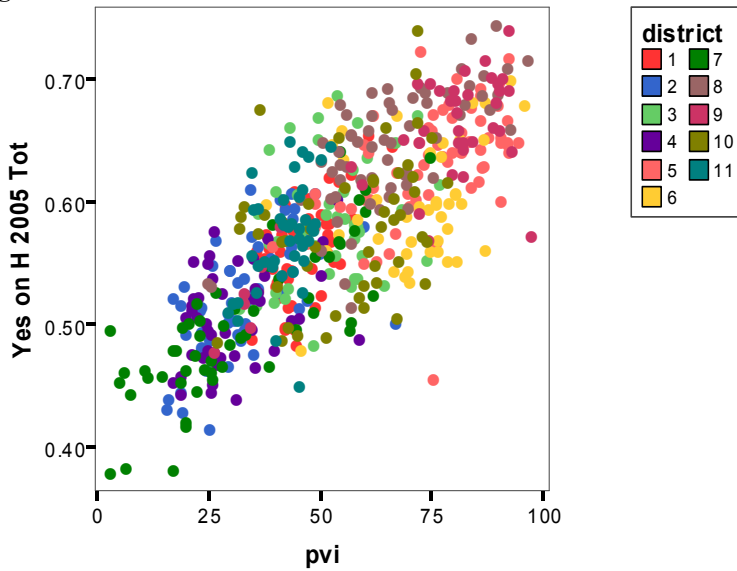
Detailed Analyses

A correlation with Rich DeLeon's PVI (Figure 3) shows that this election pretty much broke along left-right lines, taking into account the elevated baseline associated with this issue. The R^2 shows a good correlation: (0.61). As a reminder, higher PVI values represent more 'liberal' precincts based on several years' worth of election results. Unexpectedly below the trendline are some D6 precincts and several in D10.

This leads to the observation that, although H did well throughout the City, it did better in parts of the City less affected by the recent increase in gun violence: BV/HP and WA. With the possible exception of the Mission, which voted quite high for H, it is difficult to conclude the very high Yes on H precincts have similar crime issues than some of the aforementioned areas.²

² Much of the 'idea' of what communities are more hit by crime comes from the media and political figures. This may or may not be reality, but it is the perception of the voters that matters in these types of elections. Good zip code crime data is difficult to find; most crime data are by county. The SFPD crime mapping feature is awkward for this kind of work. Thus, since much of the rhetoric of gun violence and San Francisco crime falls to D5 and D10, that's where I focus my research.

Figure 3: Correlation of Rich DeLeon’s PVI vs. Yes on H



I examined several OLS regression models to try to see which demographic variables (aggregated into precincts) affected the Yes on H outcome. Table 1 is a set of results for one of the models. This was a stepwise model, so the model ‘played around’ to find the combination of variables with the most explanatory power, while keeping the coefficients statistically significant. The residual plot is in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Set of OLS regression model results.

ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.396	7	.199	76.789	.000(a)
	Residual	1.457	561	.003		
	Total	2.854	568			

a Predictors: (Constant), p_hisp, lgbt8, p_own_hu, lgbt4_8, p_t_50, Income/Mean, p_api

b Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Model Summary(b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.706(a)	.498	.491	.0505574

a Predictors: (Constant), dis_8, p_own_hu, p_hisp, lgbt4_8, p_t_50, Income/Mean, p_api, lgbt8

b Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.669	.012		54.316	.000
	Income/Mean ³	-.054	.008	-.285	-6.420	.000
	Over Age 50	-.082	.028	-.108	-2.965	.003
	Strong LGBT pop	.087	.009	.326	10.084	.000
	Medium LGBT pop	.030	.007	.138	4.218	.000
	p_own_hu (own)	-.067	.012	-.248	-5.612	.000
	p_api (Asian)	-.045	.017	-.120	-2.623	.009
	p_hisp	.115	.019	.216	6.037	.000

a Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

This shows that precincts with people of higher income, older voters, Asian voters, and high homeowner percentage did not favor H as strongly, while precincts with high LGBT and Latino population did. However, these may as well be proxies for the Castro and Mission⁴. Interestingly, variables removed from the model included younger voters and blacks. Younger voters usually correlate strongly to more liberal issues, while many of the precincts with higher gun violence fall in heavily African-American portions of the City. It's a bit surprising neither of these variables were significant.

Other models I ran show a slight positive correlation with D9 and D8 dummy variables when I included them, as well as precincts with higher numbers of people with college and postgraduate degrees, but no reliable model had an R² much higher than 0.5.

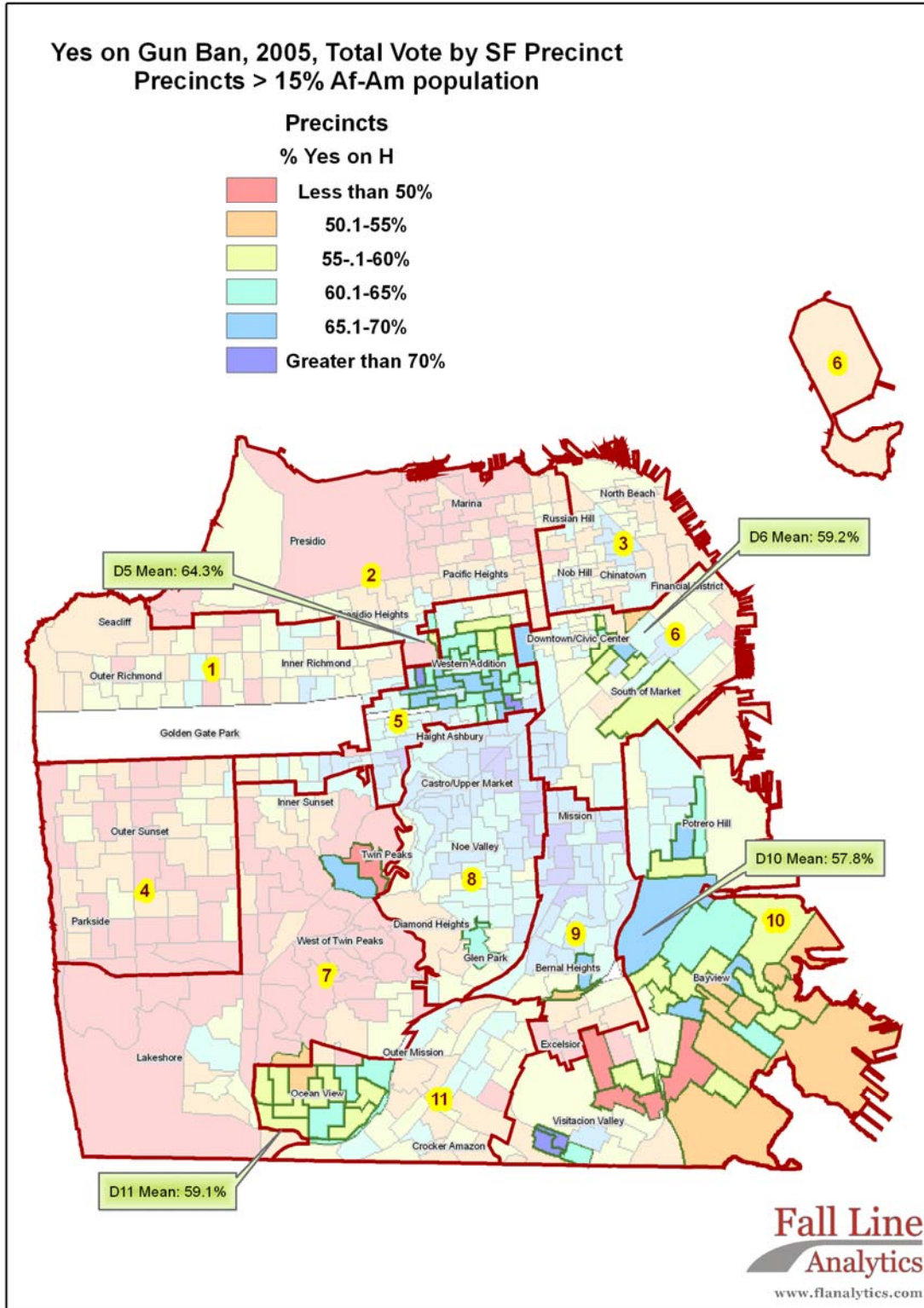
It is possible that for the first time we're seeing the new demographic in D6 start to have a slight effect. In Appendix 1, I display a boxplot of the district residuals of the above regression, which shows if the results come out as one thinks they would. While D5, as usual, is higher than the other districts, D6 – usually high – is a bit lower, with the lowest median residual value of all the districts. This simply means D6, as a whole, voted lower on Prop H than we would expect given its current demographics. Since the detailed demographic work was completed from 2000 Census data, this could indicate a significant demographic shift affecting electoral results.

I interpret all of this to mean that generally, this race fell along ideological lines well-established in San Francisco. But it is notable that the most of the strongest proponents of H did not live in the heavier crime areas. I looked a bit more closely at the vote from the more heavily African-American parts of San Francisco. Figure 4 shows a map of the precincts with the black population greater than 15%, along with the mean district values of D5 (WA), D6 (Civic Center Area/Tenderloin), D10 (BV/HP), and D11 (OMI). With the exception of the Western Addition, nestled in the most progressive part of San Francisco, all of the mean district values are the same as the overall City mean. Of course, these were still relatively strong Yes on H neighborhoods in the high-50's, but they were not near the Castro/Noe values of over 70%.

³ This is the mean of all precinct median incomes (~\$62,000) divided by that precinct's income. This is more consistent with the other variables than median income itself, as I have used in the past.

⁴ However, controlling for these precincts using dummy variables barely increased the model R².

Figure 4: Yes on H results map with highlight precincts of Af-Am population > 15%. District means for *these precincts* included.



Finally, because I was interested in how D8 (and other non-high-crime areas) came in so high, I looked at the H results correlated with wealth (income) and homeownership. Table 2 shows the Pearson's correlation of Yes on H with income and home ownership, with and without controlling for D8 (as a dummy variable), and for precincts with a high LGBT population.

Table 2: Correlations of H and other demographics, with control variables

Var	R value		
	Normal	Controlling for D8	Controlling for LGBT
Income	-.362	-.445	-.439
Home Ownership	-.436	-.457	-.464

All values are statistically significant at 99%, with the major difference in results being income with and without the control variables. I interpret this to show that Prop H was supported strongly by the more wealthy voters in D8. Looking at the numbers, the LGBT results are quite similar to D8, though most of the wealthier parts of D8 (Upper Noe/Diamond Heights) have high LGBT populations. In recent elections, this demographic has voted more conservatively, like on homelessness issues, immigrant voting, etc. Here, they voted more liberally on the gun ban.

I also ran two simple regressions: income versus Prop H results, and the same *controlling for PVI*. Full results are displayed in Appendix 2, but I wanted to show two maps of the two models' residuals. What this displays is what precincts came in higher (red) or lower (blue) for Prop H than expected given 1) income, and 2) income controlling for PVI. The actual values are standard deviations. The income only map (Figure 5) can be thought of as the precincts off the trendline, in an income vs. Yes on H scatterplot (shown below in Figure 5).

The maps show that when looking at income only, D8 is well off the trendline where precincts voted higher than expected for Prop H. Curiously, D10 is lower than expected, as are parts of D6. D5 is also higher than expected (which in itself is expected), but the Western Addition is neutral. When controlling for PVI (Figure 6), which is, in a sense, a fairer look because it takes geographic political history into account, Upper Castro is still higher than expected, showing that despite voting a bit more conservatively in the past, they voted strongly for Prop H. Much of D10 and D6 came in lower, although other parts of SOMA did come in higher. Chinatown and parts of D11 came in high as well.

Conclusion

Summing up, these analyses show that for the most part, Prop H broke upon ideological lines, with the whole City being higher than the normal 50-50 split – about a 7% elevated baseline. But, D8, especially the wealthier parts, voted very strongly for Prop H disproportionately to the rest of the City. Meanwhile, D10 and many other high-crime afflicted areas voted the City's mean. Still relatively high at 57%-60%, but not disproportionately elevated like some observers expected.

Figure 5: Residual Map of income vs. Yes on H regression and Income vs. Yes on H scatterplot. Values are standard deviations, with positive (blue) values being precincts that voted more highly than expected. Red precincts are lower than expected. Grey precincts are within +/- 1 SD, or pretty much along the scatterplot trendline.

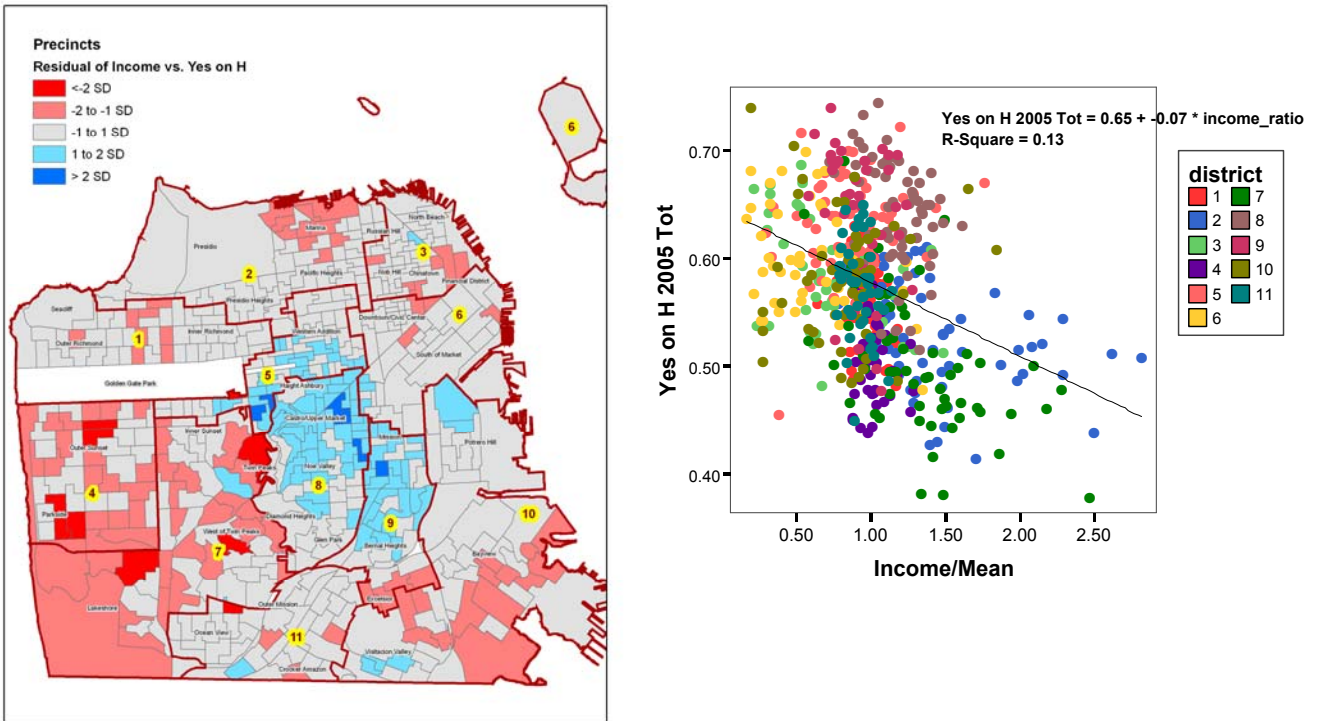
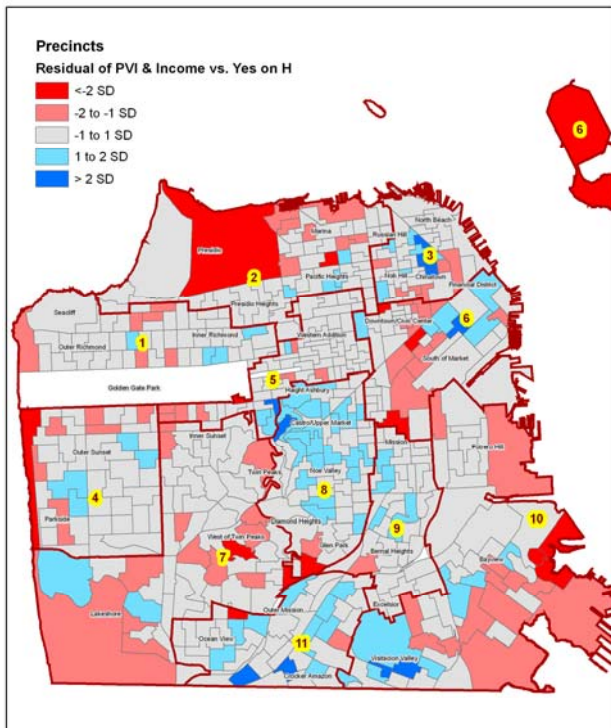


Figure 6: Residual map of Income and PVI vs. Yes on H. Much of the extreme residuals disappear when the precincts are controlled for their political views.



Appendix 1: Residual plots for first OLS model

Figure 7: Residual plot for Table 1

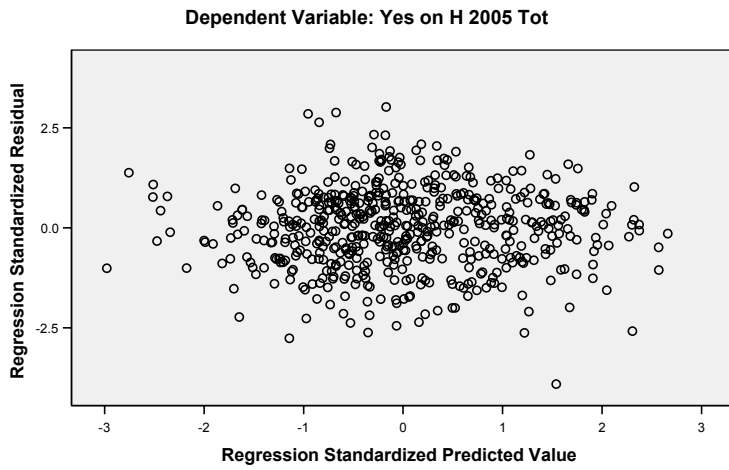
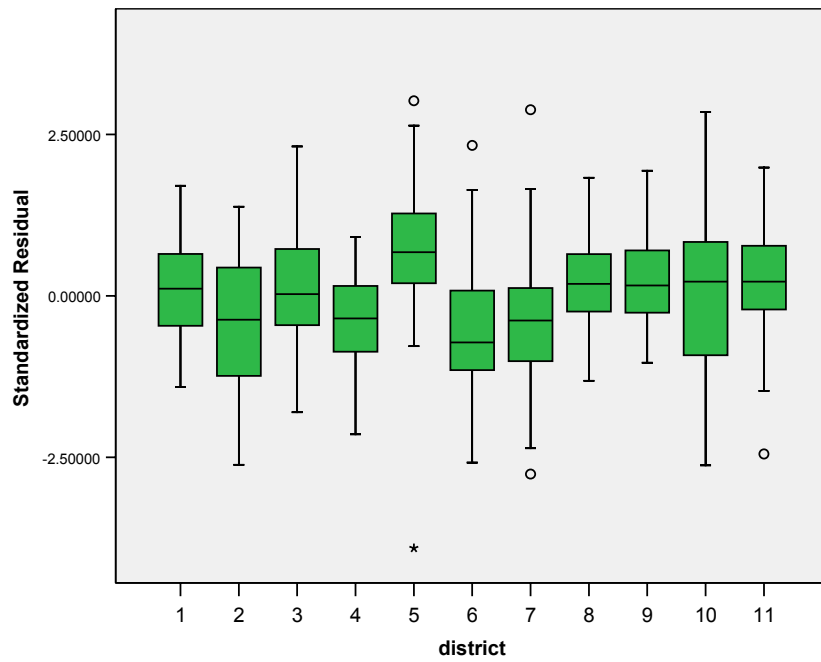


Figure 8: Residual boxplot from report's OLS model. Note the low position of D6.



Appendix 2: Results tables for Income and PVI OLS models

1) Income vs. Yes on H

Variables Entered/Removed^d

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Income ^a / Mean	.	Enter

a. All requested variables entered.

b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.362 ^a	.131	.129	.0661886

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income/Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.374	1	.374	85.480	.000 ^a
	Residual	2.488	568	.004		
	Total	2.863	569			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income/Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.646	.008		81.529	.000
	Income/Mean	-.069	.007	-.362	-9.246	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

2) Income and PVI vs. Yes on H

Variables Entered/Removed^d

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	pvi, Income/ Mean	.	Enter

- a. All requested variables entered.
b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.779 ^a	.606	.605	.0446012

- a. Predictors: (Constant), pvi, Income/Mean
b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.708	2	.854	429.247	.000 ^a
	Residual	1.108	557	.002		
	Total	2.816	559			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), pvi, Income/Mean
b. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.430	.010		43.708	.000
	Income/Mean	.005	.006	.028	.910	.363
	pvi	.003	.000	.792	26.006	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Yes on H 2005 Tot