

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CITY MANAGER:
NARRATIVE INSIGHT FROM LEADERS
WITHIN THE PROFESSION

by

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Be the change you want to see in the world
- Mahatma Gandhi

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world
- Nelson Mandela

I must provide the most sincere gratitude to my mother, Darlene Pugh, for all of her love and support over the years. She was a single mother that was cast out into the world at the age of twenty-one with two boys that always seemed to find their way into trouble. Tupac's song *Dear Mama* articulates this relationship in a manner that my words simply cannot. However, through all that we have endured over the years, I was able to watch firsthand how my mother always stayed in school. From the community college, to Devry, to Cal Poly Pomona, I was able to see firsthand how education correlated with better opportunities in life. By the age of 18, I faced many of the challenges that plague young African-American males such as unemployment, issues with the criminal justice system and a weak K-12 education that left me unable to compete in the 21st Century. I knew that I wanted to make something of myself, so I enrolled in community college. The journey to this point has taken me about 14 years, and since then I have accomplished many significant things that were only made possible through the enlightenment that education brings. Without my mother's guidance and mentorship, I would not be here today.

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I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my unborn daughter, Journey, and her mother Jeni, because all of the work that I do is inevitably done for them. I have big dreams for Journey, and I have no doubt that she will achieve this level of education in her life. I know that she will use her knowledge to make the world a better place than she will find it when she is born in June of this year. Lastly, I thank God for all of the blessing that have brought me to this point in life, and I ask that you continue to guide me and my family in the right direction.

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ABSTRACT

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CITY MANAGER:
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WITHIN THE PROFESSION

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The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze what is necessary to be an effective city manager. Based upon a review of the literature that is presented in Chapter 1, a semi-structured survey was developed which allowed the researcher to interview city managers about the primary aspects of managing a city. The theoretical framework of this dissertation rest on the assumption that city managers can articulate for themselves what is necessary to be an effective city manager. In addition, since these professionals operate in an inter-subjective environment, the narrative method was utilized as a mode of inquiry in order to encapsulate the diversity of perspectives and techniques that are used by city managers to fulfill their roles within the governance of the municipality. This research contributes to the public administration literature by informing us about the following: 1) the strategies used by individuals to actually become city managers; 2) the methods used by city managers to improve the effectiveness of the governing body; 3) strategies used to develop an effective executive team; 4) steps city managers are taking to adjust to the Great Recession; and, 5) how city managers stay current on the changes occurring within the profession. This dissertation also makes recommendations on the strategies

local governments can use to adjust to the political, economic and social transformations occurring in the 21st century.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In 2007, more than 3,500 (49 percent) of the 7,171 U.S. cities and towns with populations of 2,500 residents or more operated under the council-manager form of government, with an additional 370 county governments using this same structure of governance (ICMA 2007a). This equates to over 92 million Americans living in cities or counties that operate under the council-manager form of government. In this form of government, the city manager is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the municipality, which includes a diverse range of services such as public safety (police and fire), engineering (streets, water, sewer, refuse removal), land-use (economic development, planning, building, code enforcement), community services (parks, library, recreation) and each of the internal services (budgeting and finance, human resources and information technology) necessary to coordinate the management of the organizations external operations. In one way or another, on a daily basis nearly 1 in 3 Americans depends on the services provided by a governmental entity that is managed by a city manager. The simple fact that 3,500 non-elected administrators are in charge of the services that impact almost every aspect of public life for 93 million Americans makes investigation into the city management profession important. However, the basis of this investigation rests upon a monumental challenge facing the city management profession.

The challenge is the result of the retirement of approximately 78 million baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) that helped to grow the city management profession by expanding the U.S. suburbs during the 1960s and 1970s (ICMA 2007b). According to ICMA,

many city managers belong to the baby boomer generation. In 1971, 71 percent of professional city managers were age 40 or younger; 26 percent were under age 30; however, by 2006, only about 13 percent of local government managers were under age 40, and only one percent were age 30 or younger (ICMA 2007b). The city management profession is greying, and because there are only 50 million generation X'rs (people born between 1965 and 1984), the profession is facing an age bubble (Jacobson 2010). Compounding this issue, there is a lack of trained professionals ready to fill the shoes of the current city managers.

In a survey of local government succession planning, 43% of the city managers that responded to the survey reported that they are eligible to retire within the next five years, and 25% indicated that they are currently eligible for retirement (ICMA 2007c). Over the last couple of years the Great Recession has forced local governments to streamline their operations by drastically cutting back on entry-level, mid-management and assistant level positions, which is traditionally where the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next takes place. However, even if the Great Recession never took place, local government would still have this problem "because the average age of public sector workers is higher, their levels of specialization in knowledge, skills, and training are greater, and local governments access to additional resources, such as training funds, recruitment bonuses, and financial incentives is often more constrained" (Jacobson 2010, 356). Regarding relative ages, on average, 46.3 percent of government workers are forty-five years old or older, whereas in the private sector, just 31.2 percent fall in this age range (Abbey and Boyd 2002). In addition, more than 50 percent of all government jobs are in occupations that require specialized training, education, or job skills, compared with 29 percent in the private sector, which creates a situation in which federal, state, and local governments will face a great human resource challenge in the next decade as they strive to replace these retiring workers (Abbey and Boyd 2002).

Professional organizations such as ICMA and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) have acknowledged this demographic challenge, and have developed various programs to address the human resource challenge that will face the public sector over the next decade. American public administration was born out of the need to train and inform practitioners on best practices to address the myriad of challenges that our public agencies have been asked to address. The impetus for this research was born out of the need to rapidly accelerate the transmission of knowledge between city managers that are leaders within the city management profession in a manner that can effectively be used for the training of students and up-and-coming administrators that aspire to become city managers.

Over the decades academics in the field of public administration have made great strides in providing in-depth descriptions of what it is that city managers do and the issues that they face (White, 1927; Stillman, 1974; Svara, 1994; Nalbandian, 1999; Wheeland, 2000); however, there is very little literature on how city managers actually go about fulfilling these roles. The primary publication that attempts to address how a city manager goes about fulfilling the roles assigned to them is the ICMA publication of *The Effective Local Government Manager* (Newell, 1983, 1993 and 2004), which is a compilation of articles written by leading academics on the city management profession. This publication also provides information on newly emerging topics in the field such as information technology, intergovernmental relations and so forth.

However, even though this publication is a great reference for aspiring local government managers, this single publication cannot cover the complexity of the day-to-day work in which city managers engage. In addition, the city manager needs develop expertise in a variety all of operations carried out by the municipality, and learn strategies for prioritizing their learning in order to serve as an effective leader. The difference between *The Effective Local Government Manager* and this research is that by using the narrative method, the experts in the

city management profession are able to directly articulate the challenges city managers face, and are able to describe the methods used to address these challenges.

A quick survey of academic departmental websites also indicates that many of the top researchers of the city management profession, which is indicated by their contributions to one of the three editions of *The Effective Local Government Manager*, received their Ph.D.'s an average of 35 years ago. A listing of the contributors to these publications and the years in which they received their Ph.D.'s is as follows: Chester Newland (1958), Charldean Newell (1968), James Glass (1970) Richard Stillman II (1971), James Svara (1972), Joseph Cayer (1972), William Early Klay (1977), John Nalbandian (1977), Mary Ellen Guy (1981), David Ammons (1983) Raymond Cox III (1983), Craig Wheeland (1989) and David Coursey (1991). Simply stated, just like in the city management profession, there needs to be more scholars of public administration that have a primary interest in local government management to train the next generation of this nation's local government professionals. The completion of this research project will also allow the researcher to develop the foundation necessary to contribute to the teaching of local government management.

1.1 Purpose of this research

The purpose of this research is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to be an effective city manager. In order to answer this question thoroughly, a review of the literature is necessary to define what an effective city manager is, and then from there to develop an understanding of the tools city managers use to remain effective. However, based upon the literature presented in this chapter, it will be shown that the research available to adequately answer this question is limited and outdated, which is why this research seeks to fill this gap in the literature on the city management profession. During the remainder of this chapter the theoretical perspective which informs this research is presented, as well as the

methodology that is informed by a theoretical perspective that is prevalent in the field of public administration. The definition of key terms and the organization of the dissertation are then presented.

1.2 Theoretical perspective

Over the decades the literature that discusses the city management profession can be grouped into two fields: orthodox and new horizons theory. Orthodox city management theory is based upon early public administration doctrine grounded in the politics-administration dichotomy. Administrative theorist that subscribed to this doctrine include Wilson (1887), Goodnow (1901), White (1927) and Gulick (1937) whose works were all influential to the development of the field of public administration. The main premise of this theory when applied to local government is that the elected politicians are responsible for making public policy (politics), and the city manager is responsible for administering public policy in the most efficient and effective manner (administration). The council must stay out of the day-to-day affairs of managing the city, while the city manager remains a-political and is guided by the scientific managerial principles of efficiency. However, after Waldo's (1948) argument that *administration is politics*, the politics-administration dichotomy gave way to new theories underlying the field of public administration.

In *The Administrative State* (1948), Waldo challenged the notions that: 1) the central goal of administrative theory should be to develop the science of administration to maximize efficiency without taking into full consideration the political ramifications of this belief; and, 2) that administrative scholarship was itself driven by a particular philosophy of politics (Waldo 1948; Fredrickson and Smith 2003, 43). Waldo went on to argue that the political philosophy of public administration is that highly trained administrators with the appropriate levels of "discretion" (i.e. power) can create "the good life" for society. Waldo basis his assertion on the

public administration literature from Wilson (1887) up until the mid-1940s, and states that “public administration scholars have developed a vision of what the good society looks like: It is industrial, urban, centrally planned; it has no poverty, no corruption, and no extremes in wealth. Science is ideal and waste and inefficiency is the enemy. Scholars also proclaimed that a scientific analysis of the facts should decide what should be done” (Waldo 1948; Fredrickson and Smith 2003, 43-44).

Waldo argues that the reason why public agencies are inefficient in the first place is because they operate in a democratic system which favors equity, consensus, and satisfaction of particular interest in society over efficiency. The democratic aspect of public administration is what makes public organizations so inefficient because of certain requirements that affect every administrative action such as due process, public input and democratic oversight. Waldo’s argument is that democracy should take precedence over efficiency. The more important issue, according to Waldo, is that contrary to the beliefs of the politics-administration dichotomy, which argues that politics is based upon value, and administration is based upon science, both politics and administration are based upon values, and neither is based upon science. Waldo argues that administration is ultimately based upon values, because if a researcher is measuring the input and output ratios of a particular governmental program, the researcher has a choice in what inputs and outputs they wish to measure, and they also have a choice in how much importance to place upon a particular input or output. It follows that these choices are value laden because they are based upon variables that are programmed into the researcher through formalized education and professional association, in addition to informal mechanisms such as race, gender and class.

1.3 Methodology

Borins (2011) argues that Waldo was one of the first main-stream public administration theorists to use narrative analysis when he wrote a monograph about novels dealing with public administration issues published during the 1950s and 1960s, by classifying the novels based upon organizational context and themes, and then writing short reviews of these 154 novels (Borins 2011, 167; Waldo 1968). The theoretical disposition that underlies this type of analysis is that a dynamic understanding of many aspects of how society views issues related to public agencies can be gleaned from a systematic analysis of the language that is used to describe public agencies and the work that is carried out by them.

A more modern example is how the public perceives the Las Vegas Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) team after the fictional show about this department has been on TV for about a decade. This department is depicted as being staffed with the highest pedigree of competent professionals that will bring the most up-to-date techniques of scientific investigation to a case that is assigned to them. If the department was depicted in the opposite manner, this depiction would have the opposite effect upon the public's perception of the department. The characterization of a topic, issue or individual through narration has an impact upon the way in which people understand an issue, influences the weight they give to particular variables, and can ultimately influence the side in which an individual stands on an issue. That is where the problem with orthodox theory lies, because it assumes that efficiency takes precedence over many of the democratic concerns that are important in the United States such as social equity, equal treatment, inclusion in the policy making process and environmental justice which are demanded by the public, but are extremely inefficient when it comes to their implementation.

A narrative approach was used to carry out this research because it is flexible enough to capture the richness and diversity of roles that the city managers must fulfill, without going

into this research with a pre-conceived notion of how the selected city managers fulfilled their obligations. Scholars have used narratives to move beyond efforts to describe a universalized, orderly social world (orthodox theory as described in Waldo 1948) in order to put themselves in touch with “local knowledges,” or aspects of experience that are unique to specific’ context (Dodge et. al. 2005, 143-44), and in this case it is the city management profession. Narrative inquiry is a research orientation that directs attention to narratives as a way to study an aspect of society by finding meaning in the stories people use, tell, and even live. Narratives are quite suitable for understanding social events and social experiences, either from the perspective of participants or from the perspective of an analyst interpreting the individual, institutional, or societal narratives (Dodge et. al. 2005, 145).

Explanatory researchers aim to explain and predict events and behavior using laws of statistical probability to generalize causal relationships, while interpretive researchers aim to understand intention and action rather than just explaining behavior (Dodge et. al. 2005, 146). Hummel (1991) similarly argues that the stories public managers tell are a form of knowledge that is better suited to developing theories that inform practical action. The implication is that applied fields, which are supposed to help solve problems, may be better served by methodologies such as narrative inquiry that tap into narrative knowing. This interpretive study uses narratives to develop an understanding of how successful city managers go about fulfilling the roles assigned to them under new horizons city management theory.

1.4 Literature that informed the development of the research questions

The purpose of this research is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to be an effective city manager. The first part of this section seeks to define an effective city manager by presenting what the academic literature says on this topic. Based upon what the academic literature says about what is necessary to be an effective city manager, a survey

of the literature will be carried out in order to provide a better understanding of the tools that city managers use to remain effective in their capacities. This section has been broken down into six areas that cover all of the major aspects of the job of the city manager which were used to inform the development of the survey that was used to carry out the research related to this project.

When designing the questions that will be used to carry out the research for this project, the goal was to make them broad enough so that they can capture the wide spectrum of issues that city managers face, yet focused enough to provide a detailed explanation of how city managers effectively manage these challenges. This required the development of a broad set of questions that will be used to guide the interviews with the city manager. The following review of the literature is broken down into the following sections: 1) defining effective management through leadership: 2) issues related to becoming a city manager: 3) strategic planning and the city manager's role with regards to the city council: 4) building an effective management team: 5) managing local government services during the Great Recession: and, 6) staying current in a constantly changing profession.

1.4.1 Defining effective management through leadership

The effectiveness of the city manager has a direct correlation with the city manager's ability to be an effective leader within their communities. This correlation is best articulated in Svava (2004) who develops the argument that the effectiveness of the city manager is a product of the city manager's ability to continue to influence the shape of the city council's public policy making agenda, to successfully manage the organization's community relations and to orientate the organization in a manner that can effectively address the needs of the community. The effectiveness of the city manager is ultimately judged by the city council, which typically performs an annual evaluation of the city manager based upon the criteria that is articulated in

the performance evaluation depicted in Appendix C. This section will describe how the city manager's ability to be an effective leader is tied to their ability to influence the council's agenda, manage community relations and to properly orientate the organization to the community, which are all directly related to the ability of the city manager obtain successful evaluations by the city council.

The modern city manager is typically not a neutral professional administrator that is only concerned with the efficient delivery of public services as depicted in orthodox theory (Wilson 1887, Gulick 1937). Recent studies indicate that city managers are deliberate in exercising leadership in terms of shaping public policy directions for their communities. For example, a 1997 survey found that approximately 80% of the managers that participated in the survey indicated that a city manager should advocate for major changes in policies, assume leadership in shaping policies, and advocate new services in order to promote equity and fairness for low income groups and minorities (Svara 2004; Svara 1999). In addition, more than 50% of responding city managers indicated that a city manager should not remain neutral on an issue where the community is divided, because those are the times when professional administrative leadership is needed the most (Svara 2004). The city council hires the city manager to advise them based upon the manager's professional administrative experience, which even though their advice is not always followed by the council, the professional input of the city manager which is informed by the latest developments in administrative practice is extremely valuable when the community is required to work through challenging public policy issues.

In terms of the city manager's ability to influence the city council's public policy making agenda, the greatest opportunity to exert this influence take place during strategic planning sessions which seek to development and refine the short and long-term goals of the organization. Once the short and long-term goal of the organization have been agreed upon, the

city manager is responsible for developing, managing and evaluating the administrative programs that are responsible for getting the organization to reach its goals. This is a collaborative process which requires the city council to agree upon a short list of short and long-term goals, and the requires the city manager to be up-front about the organizations ability to meet those goals, and to clearly articulate the opportunity cost related to choosing one policy direction over another.

The city manager's ability to influence the public policy making agenda of the city council is directly tied to the city managers ability to influence the priorities of the council based upon the cost benefit analysis of public policy options that are made by the city manager. Once the city council's short and long-term objectives have been agreed upon, the city manager is required to develop administrative programs to implement the council's goals and objectives. Each item that appears on the published city council agenda should in one way or another be related to the city councils goals and objectives. In order for the city manager to be effective at managing the day-to-day affairs of the organization, the manager must be effective at taking a leadership role in terms of helping the council to develop goals and objectives in which the city manager can realistically execute.

The second component of effective community leadership deals with community relations, which includes the city manager's participation in community and civic affairs, and the forging of partnership between community groups and the local government to address issues that are of mutual concern (Svara 2004). By developing a high degree of interaction between the city manager and various groups within the community, the city manager can develop two major benefits. First, by actively going out into the public to inform a wide variety of community groups about the work that is being done by their organization to address issues a variety of issues of mutual concern, the city manager will receive unfiltered feedback from the groups that are directly concerned with a particular policy direction, which is helpful to the city manager in

the development, implementation and evaluation of an administrative program. Secondly, when community groups see that city manager out in the community discussion what the city is doing to address issues that they are concerned about, groups will be more likely to work with the city to address these issues of mutual concern. By going out into the community the city manager will inadvertently building a network of various groups within the community in which the city manager can draw upon when necessary to deal with many of the difficult challenges that communities will face.

The formal and informal relationships that the city manager develops while building community relations are vital to the city manager's ability to stay in tune with what is going on in the community, which is necessary for the manager to be an effective leader within the community on a wide variety of issues in the community. If the city manager does not have strong formal and informal relationships with a wide variety of diverse groups within the community, then it is difficult for the manager to exercise the type of effective leadership on issues that are too great for the municipality alone to manage, which in the 21st Century encompass almost every aspect of local government service delivery (Frederickson 1999). The larger the city the more difficult it will be for the manager to get out an speak such a diverse array of community groups, so it is a common practice for the city manager to direct this executive staff to meet with and make presentations to the groups in the community whose interest fall under the purview of a particular department head. For example, the police chief will speak with community watch groups, while the director of economic development will meet with business associations. In fact, one study indicates that the majority of city managers (57%) fulfil their community relations role by getting community input through the individual members of the city council and by directing their executive team make presentations and meet with community groups whose interest lie within the purview of their particular departments (Moritzen and Svava 2002).

The third component of effective community leadership is a by-product of how the city manager orientates the organization in relation to the treatment of its citizens. The implementation of any administrative program will have a positive or negative effect upon one particular group or another. This is true whether the city is choosing to implement an anti-gang or an economic development program in a particular neighborhood. Administrative decisions are primarily guided by the technical and legal circumstances surrounding a situation; however, the city manager has a major influence in how much citizen involvement will be sought by each department from the community during the development of administrative programs that are developed to address challenges within the community. For example, when developing programs to address a gang issue within the community, studies have shown that the police can be much more effective at dealing with the problem if they can also get members of the community to take ownership of the problem through the adoption of community policing strategies (FBI, 2009). By opening the policy making, implementation and evaluation process up to citizen input, this creates a direct line of communication between the administrators and community groups that are affected by a particular policy, and is one of the most effective tools that can be used by the city manager to ensure that the organizations policies and programs have the support of the community. Orientating the organization towards community input will mitigate the possibility of strong adverse reactions of the community towards local government, which will in turn mitigate the possibility of strong adverse reactions against the city manager, which will diminish their ability to effectively lead within the community (Svara 2004).

Effective city managers must also require that their administrative staff is able to provide the highest level of public services to the community. The primary thing that the city manager can do to ensure the highest levels of service is provided is to develop an executive team that is composed of the best administrators in their respective professions in which the city manager was able to hire. The day-to-day administrative decisions that are made by the city

manager and their executive staff typically only impact the internal operations of the organization. However, it is not uncommon for a seemingly routine internal decision to develop into an external issue, especially if the internal decision actually effects, or is perceived to effect an outside group. For example, an investigation of police brutality that leads to the subsequent dismissal of a politically connected officer may stir lots of controversy in the community, especially if there are racial undertones to the incident. An effective city manager know that internal decision can easily become external problems, so they must demand the highest level of professionalism from their employees, which starts from the city manager continuing their own professional develop to the city manager hiring executive staff that serve as role models for the rest of the staff to follow, because what goes on in the executive room ultimately impacts front-line service delivery.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of the city manager has to be judged in the context of their ability to lead within the community. The manager's ability to lead can be understood in the context of their ability to shape the agenda of the city council, to build community relations and to orientate the organization towards the community. Each one of these overarching concepts of effective leadership within the community is necessary for the effectiveness of the city manager. The following section will explore the academic literature related to the city management profession to see what the literature says about how city managers actually go about fulfilling these roles. Then a set of research questions will be developed based upon the review of the literature that will guide the discussions with the city managers about what tools to they use to fulfill the multitude of requirements necessary for them to remain effective.

1.4.2 Issues related to becoming a city manager

Based upon the Bureau of Labor Statistics, out of the 5.59 million local government employees in the United States, there are only about 20,000 individuals that are classified as

chief executive officers (of which 3,500 are city managers), which is about 0.35% of those in local government (BLS 2010). This makes the achievement of chief executive officer in a local government a remarkable feat by any standard, which makes this an extremely important question to include in this research. Over the decades academics have developed lots of explanatory data about the city management profession, which helps to inform the development of, and context for, the interpretive data that will be collected for this research. This section includes information about the demographic profile of the city management profession and issues related to getting appointed to the position of city manager.

1.4.2.1 Profiles of the city management profession

One of the first profiles of the typical city manager was articulated in White (1927) when he provided an analysis of the first 375 city managers in the United States, and described them as:

The majority being between 35 to 38...with engineers comprising 51.6% of the profession and business men comprising 14.5%...the city manager needs to be the jack of all trades...he has an above average salary...and serves an average term of 2 years, 2 months and 9 days (White 1927, 128-31)

Following the tradition of generalizing about the characteristics of the typical city manager in the United States, Schillinger (1985) describes the typical city manager as follows:

He is a white male getting ready for his forty-third birthday. He has a bachelor's degree, worked for a while, and then went back to school to get an advanced degree. He is married and a member of the Democratic Party. He has been in his current position for about four and one-half years, but

has been in the profession just over nine. He took a break between his first and second manager jobs (Schillinger 1985, 188).

Green (1989) also provides a description of the demographics of the city management profession by reporting that:

Managers have gotten younger, from an average of 43 years old to 41 years old. The number of women has increased from one percent in 1971 to five percent by 1984. The percentage of married managers decreased and there were only marginal shifts in the racial composition of managers found. Only about one percent of the total population of city managers found in 1984 was Black. (Green 1989, 33)

Since these studies were published 85, 27 and 23 years ago respectively, the primary change has been the aging of the profession and the increase in the length of tenure that city managers enjoy. However, in terms of the racial and gender demographics, there has only been modest change, especially when compared to the overall demographics of the country. For example, African Americans account for 1.3 percent of city management profession even though they account for approximately 13% of the U.S. population (Moore, 2002); Hispanics account for 2 percent of the city management profession even though they account for approximately 16% of the U.S. population (Benavidez, 2006); and females account for 11 percent of the city management profession even though they are approximately 51% of the U.S. population (Fox and Schuman, 2001). These numbers still indicate that middle aged white males still account for 85.7 percent of those employed in the city management profession, even though they account for about 36 percent of the United States population (US Census 2010).

The rapid demographic shifts that are occurring in the United States are bringing the importance of diversifying the city management profession to the forefront. These issues have been debated since the 1970s (Herbert 1974), and more recently have been articulated in Alonzi and Moore (2007) and in Benavides (2006), who describe how community demographics both impact the demand for minority city managers, with minority city manager's having a higher probability of being appointed to the position in communities with large minority populations. However, in communities with small minority populations, there is a small probability that a minority city manager will be appointed to the position of city manager.

1.4.2.2 Getting appointed to the position of city manager

The appointment of a city manager is the most important job of the city council, because "the chief executive and close subordinates set the tone of the administration, define its values and project its image" (Ammons and Glass 1989, 3). Although the city manager is hired and fired by the city council, there is no-one else in the municipal organization, not even elected officials, who have greater influence over the so many aspects of the day-to-day operations of the municipality. Since the appointment of the city manager is such an important aspect in the governance of the municipality, the recruitment process to fill a vacant city manager position tends to be lengthy, complicated and expensive because it is a common practice for councils to contract the recruitment of the city manager to national recruitment firms that specialize public sector executive recruitment.

City management is considered a profession in and of itself, thus city managers are all assumed to carry several common characteristics that distinguish them from other professions. The characteristics that make up a professional body are as follows: 1) Members of a profession have similar – if not identical – perceptions, values and experiences: 2) the job requirements at one site for any member in the profession are similar to the job requirements at

another site for another member of the profession: and, 3) the members of the profession govern themselves according to their own standards and ethics (Guy, 1985). Since the city manager is the most influential person within the municipal organization, and is considered part of a professional group that shares a set of professional characteristics, then for the purposes of this research, it is imperative that we look further at the variables that differentiate city managers from one another, in addition to what variables influence the hiring and firing of the manager. I have grouped these individual characteristics under the headings of technical skills and ability, education, professional skills and personality traits.

1.4.2.3 Technical Skills and Ability

Technical skills and ability can be measured through administrative and technical knowledge, educational attainment and work experience. The professional city manager is considered to be a general expert in the overall operation of the municipal organization. Technical skills are viewed as essential for the effective and efficient management of the municipal organization (Moore 2002). Adrian (1988) suggests that city managers sit alone at the pinnacle of municipal executive power, and they must be equipped with the skills to carry out their duties. If one were to go back to the height of orthodox administrative theory, the acronym POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting) developed by Luther Gulick (1937) articulates the multitude of skills that effective public managers must have. In addition, the current new horizons model of city management has made city management even more complicated than it was under orthodox theory.

In 1980, ICMA carried out a study that asked local government managers what functional skills they found to be most important to their professional capacities to manage, and then followed up with the question of what skills do city managers feel will be most important to them in the future. The findings of this survey indicated that for city managers, the traditional

skills of budgeting and finance, management and control of programs, personnel and labor relations, and planning and evaluations would be the most important skills they needed in 1980, as well as in 2000 (ICMA 1980). The city managers were then required to identify six skill areas which they felt had the greatest continuity over the 20-year period, the order of the findings were as follows: 1) human relations and resources; 2) brokering and negotiating; 3) budgeting and finance; 4) planning and evaluation; 5) assisting elected officials; and, 6) public relations (ICMA 1980).

These findings indicate that city managers felt that the traditional administrative skills that have always been important to the success of their careers will remain important to the city management profession for some time to come. This research solidifies the notion that city managers need to acquire core generalist administrative skills prior to an appointment to the city manager position; however, because of the demographic transformations occurring and the elimination of many of the traditional training positions because of the Great Recession, new models of effective learning will need to be developed that can equip the new generation with the skills necessary to effectively lead this nations local governments. The next section will describe the typical ways in which someone can prepare themselves to become a city manager.

1.4.2.4 Gaining the qualifications

Every city management position that is advertised today has some sort of educational requirement that candidates must meet in order to be seriously considered for the job. College degrees earned indicate a level of ability and are indicative of a professional's ability to perform and complete a variety of task (Moore 2002, 34). That is why it is no surprise that a majority of local government managers have bachelor's and master's degrees, with the majority being in the field of public administration (Watson and Hasset 2004, 194; Renner 2001, 38). It has been reported that executive search firms seek out candidates with master of public administration

(MPA) degrees because that is considered the minimum qualification for city management positions, and it was also found that most top candidates possess some type of graduate degree (Watson and Hasset 2004). By the turn of the twenty-first century, sixty-three percent of all city managers held at least a master's degree, with most being in public administration, urban planning or public policy (Watson and Hassett 2004, 194). It was also found that sixty-nine percent of long-serving city managers had graduate degrees (Watson and Hassett 2004, 194).

City managers have one essential characteristic in common, they are professionally-trained administrators who are accountable to lay legislatures and they exercise administrative expertise (Zeigler, et. al. 1985, 1). A high level of educational attainment is one of many components necessary for the competent and effective city manager. Many of the most pressing issues that cities face during the 21st century cannot be solved by one single organization, so city managers must become adept at working with other governmental organizations at the federal, state and local levels (Frederickson 1999). Higher levels of education prepare city managers to operate at the level necessary to deal with the types of inter-jurisdictional issues that will remain pressing issues during the 21st century. However, educational attainment must be complemented with professional experience in order to prepare an individual to manage the complexities that come with being a city manager.

1.4.2.5 Professional experience

Professional work experience is one of the primary factors that are taken into consideration when an applicant applies for, and is subsequently appointed to a city manager position. The previous titles held by a candidate for city manager is a strong indicator of a candidate's ability to perform as a city manager in the future (Moore 2002, 36). It is common for city manager advertisements to require applicants to have already served as city managers in

organizations of similar size, or to have managed departments that were comparable in size to the municipality that is hiring. When seeking out a city manager position, recruiters are typically more interested in the type of experience that a candidate has rather than the length of time someone has been in a particular position.

Moore (2002, 36) found that a short tenure in a relevant position can be viewed as superior to a long tenure in a less relevant position. The ladder climber model articulates that individuals that aspire to city management positions realize that they cannot spend more than four or five years in each city because it may take as many as seven or eight steps to reach the top of the organization (Watson and Hassett 2004, 195). Instead of staying in a lower ranking position for a longer time, ladder climbers tend to stay in more influential positions for smaller time frames, and use that experience to obtain access to city manager positions.

1.4.2.6 Personality traits

Along with education and work experience, personality traits play a large role in determining the appointment of a city manager. Personality traits include soft skills such as management style, leadership capability, organizational fit, and character. There is a wide range of academic literature on specifically what traits are necessary to be an effective manager (Fielder and Garcia 1987; Hershey and Blanchard 1988); however, for the purposes of this dissertation, we can look at a survey that was done in 1989 to analyze the leadership styles of city managers in California. In this study the city managers were provided a list of 18 management values and were asked to rank each one of them in order of importance. The list included terms like rationality, idealism, accountability, practicability, and administrative leadership. The results of this study showed that the city managers most often cited administrative leadership as the most valuable skill that is necessary (Schilling, 1989).

Administrative leadership is a function of the city managers personality traits, and in order for a manager to be successful, their personality traits have to be in line with that of the community.

In conclusion, a survey of the literature on advancing to the position of city manager tells us that there are educational and professional requirements that must be met prior to even being considered for a city manager position. After the educational requirements of candidates have been met, many administrators that aspire to become city managers are still required to move to different regions several times within their career in order to obtain the professional skills necessary to become city managers. In addition to the educational and professional requirements, aspiring managers also need to have a particular set of personality traits that are necessary to effectively manage a community.

From the literature that was presented about advancing to the position of city manager, it can be argued that rising to this position is no easy feat. One of the purposes of this research is to analyze how the participants of this research actually went about navigating each one of the obstacle they had to overcome in order to become a city manager. As mentioned earlier, only 0.35% of those in local government are classified as chief executive officers, so not everyone that goes on to obtain an MPA, gain the professional experience, and have the right kind of personality traits will go on to become a city manager. It is important to understand the myriad of issues involved in rising to the position of city manager so that up-and-coming administrators that aspire to become city managers can develop viable strategies, informed by the academic literature, to achieve their aspirations.

1.4.3 Strategic planning and the city council

One of the most important roles that a city manager plays in the governance of the municipality is that of helping the policy making body think through the implications of its policies. The city manager is in the best possible position to effectively strengthen the policy-

making capabilities of the governing body by using the administrative expertise at their disposal to maximize organizational strategic thinking, which in turn guides decision making (Wheeland 2004, 59). By reviewing the concept of strategic planning, we can better understand how this tool can be used by the city manager to not only improve the effectiveness of the entire organization, but to also keep the relationship between the city manager and the governing body healthy and productive. In addition, strategic planning is a means that is used by city managers to gain consensus on the council, chart a direction for the municipal administration based upon council consensus, and is then used by the city council to review the performance of the city manager, which can determine if the city manager will keep his or her job or not.

Strategic planning developed in the private sector during the 1970s, and because of its success, the concept was picked up by the public sector during the 1980s (Denhardt 1985, 174). The dictionary definition of strategy indicates that it is the art of deploying forces “so as to impose upon the enemy the place, time and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself” (Cannon 1968). This definition of strategy suggests that actions taken today be designed to enable an organization to face the future on our own terms, not on those imposed from the outside (Denhardt 1985, 174). The goal of strategic planning is to help members of the organization match their objectives and capabilities with the anticipated demands of the environment so as to produce a plan of action that will assure that their objectives are achieved (Denhardt 1985, 174-5).

The purpose of municipal strategic planning is to articulate a method in which all of the resources available to the municipality can be deployed in a manner that can strategically take the community in the direction that it desires. The primary difference between traditional planning and strategic planning is that traditional planning establishes goals and objectives for performance over a period of time; however, strategic planning is just as concerned with the specific steps that need to be taken to achieve those goals. Strategic planning takes the future

into account, but in such a way as to improve decision making in the present which will have an impact upon the future (Denhardt 1985, 175).

What separates strategic planning from many other managerial techniques that work in the private sector, but not the public sector, is that strategic planning takes into consideration the political environment of public management. Many other management techniques fail “because they ignore, try to circumvent, or even try to counter the political nature of life in public and nonprofit organizations” (Bryson 1995, 10). Strategic planning is a leadership and management innovation that is likely to persist because, unlike many other recent innovations, “it accepts and builds on the nature of political decision making” (Bryson 1995, 20). As opposed to the rational planning model, the political decision making model begins with issues, which involve conflict, not consensus (Byson 1995, 11). Strategic planning seeks to improve on raw political decision-making by helping to ensure that issues are raised and resolved in ways that benefit the organization, its key stakeholders and society (Bryson 1995, 20). The primary benefits of strategic planning is that it forces decision makers to think critically about how best to marshal their limited resources to address the most pressing issue in the community.

During times of uncertainty, such as in the current economic environment, public organizations need to embark upon serious strategic planning programs, because strategic planning is the only way to mitigate the negative effects of an unknown environment. Strategic planning is also a participatory process that can be used to bring various constituencies in the community together to focus and work through issues of mutual concern. For example, a strategic planning process should not only include elected officials and city staff, but should also include other constituencies within the community that also have a stake in the outcome, such as unions, neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, civic associations and so forth (Denhardt 1985, 176). This process can be used to bring together groups and constituencies in

the community, and can also be used by city leaders to allow the public to get a better understanding of the complexities of running a government.

The overall goal of a strategic plan is to plan for the future, which means that the plan will have the greatest impact if it receives a wide degree of input from multitude of constituencies in the community. The strategic plan should be structured to address four primary concerns: 1) the mission or objectives of the organization: 2) an assessment of the environment in terms of opportunities and constraints: 3) an examination of the organizations existing strengths and weaknesses; and, 4) the values, interest, and aspirations of those important to the organizations future (Denhardt 1985, 177). After analyzing the position of the organization according to these criteria, a set of strategic alternatives or competing scenarios can be developed for the community. Once the community decides on a particular alternative, then a strategic plan can be developed that list the incremental steps that need to be taken to move the community in that direction. In conclusion, I have presented what the literature says about strategic planning in local government, and how it can be used as a tool by municipal executives to translate the policy goals of the city council into strong administrative programs.

1.4.4 Developing an executive team

When building the right executive team, managers need to ensure that their candidates have three non-negotiable criteria for long-terms success: attitude, aptitude and alignment (Allenbaugh, 2002, 151). Hiring people with great attitudes is absolutely necessary to maintain an organizational environment that supports a high level of customer service, teamwork and a higher level of performance. Hiring for attitude is a practice that many major corporations, such as Nordstrom's, Southwest and Apple practice as a way to improve the effectiveness of their organizations. Executives from these firms articulate their strategies in the following manner: "We are more interested in how candidates fit into the Nordstrom culture and their commitment

to customer service than what is on their resume....Southwest Airlines hires for attitude and trains for skill...at Apple Computers, we really hire great people and create an environment where people can make mistakes and grow” (Allenbaugh, 2002, 152). The goal of these organizations is to hire people with great attitude, and then train these employees to meet their full potential through a series of systematic training and coaching. This is the opposite of what is practiced in most public sector agencies, where years of experience are valued more than attitude.

The second most important quality that a candidate must have is aptitude, because without the ability to perform the functions assigned; having a great attitude is simply not enough in a team environment. Aptitude is of critical importance because team members need to be able to pull their own weight. When the city manager hires department heads, the manager needs to be sure that their potential recruits have the core talents that are necessary to carry out the functions of the position. As Allenbaugh (2002, 155) describes it, professional athletic coaches search the country for the best talent available, and when they are looking at potential prospects, they screen their prospects by using these three questions: 1) does the athlete (recruit) demonstrate the core talent to do the job well: 2) is the athlete (recruit) a team player: and, 3) will the athlete (recruit) bring added value to the team? If the prospective recruit can score high on these questions, then they will be recruited. Effective city managers also view their recruits through this lens, because they know that a talented team is absolutely necessary for the success of the city manager and for the entire organization.

The third characteristic that a potential candidate must have is alignment with the goals of the organization, “which requires a match between the individual and the organizational mission, vision, and values...because when these elements align, you can tap into the passion of people to create and sustain long-term performance and results” (Allenbaugh, 2002, 155).

There are various methods that city managers use to assess their applicants for alignment, such as background and reference checks, personality profile test and panel interviews.

In conclusion, in order to build the best management team, a manager should hire for “attitude, aptitude and alignment” (Allenbaugh, 2002). If the city manager is able to develop a management team of people with these characteristics, they will be able to unleash the full potential of the leaders within their organization. With these characteristics in mind, city managers should develop a management style that incorporates the following: 1) hire talented individuals: 2) empower them by setting goals and objectives, and then allow them to be flexible and creative in the methods they use to meet those objects: and, 3) develop mentorship and training programs so that staff will continue to reach new heights within their respective fields. The next section discusses what the literature says about managing the municipality during the Great Recession.

1.4.5 Managing during the Great Recession

The Great Recession has impacted almost every aspect of local government service delivery in one way or another, from the cutting back of supplies, to massive layoffs, every organization has been affected. A question about how the Great Recession has impacted service delivery is an all-encompassing question that addresses core managerial issues such as budgeting and finance, strategic planning, human resources, organizational development and a myriad of other issues. This is the topic of the decade, so including this question into the research serves a double purpose. First, it is a question that encompasses every aspect of local government service delivery by showing how various aspects of governmental operations are connected, which is a major challenge that city managers all across this nation are dealing with. Secondly, this is an evolving field in the academic literature, and it is important for academics to keep abreast of the evolving trends in the city management profession. I will now present what

the academic literature says about this evolving issue and line of research which has been classified as cutback management.

Bozeman (2010) provides an analysis of the literature on cutback management that developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s to see if this literature will be helpful for public organizations that are downsizing because of the Great Recession. Bozeman's conclusion is that "the generic decline literature has great value for (scholarly work on) public administration even if it has limited value for (the practice of) public administration (Bozeman 2010, 561) He offers the following prescription for re-directing the modern cutback literature so that it will be more relevant in the future by "focusing not on strategies for mitigating decline but rather on the role of decline in organizational life cycles and its implications for devising resilient, long-term managerial strategies (Bozeman 2010, 561).

Anderson (2011) also looks at the cutback management literature from the late 1970s and early 1980s and came to the conclusion that this literature may not be of much help to local governments today (Anderson 2011, 225). The problem with this literature is that it primarily discusses what jurisdictions did to cut cost during that era, and does not discuss the opportunity cost or ramifications for these courses of action. For example, after the near financial collapse of New York City in 1975, there were many articles written about the dire financial positions of municipalities in the United States (Levine 1978; Lewis 1984; Eggers 1993). The main goal of these studies was to discuss the varying programs that municipal governments could no-longer afford to operate as a result of financial strain, but as Levine (1978) states "...organizations cannot be cutback by merely reversing the sequence of activity and resource allocation by which their parts were originally assembled...control and analytical tools are needed" (p.317). Levine is stating that there is a need to develop new frameworks for asking the right questions, because that is the only way to get the right answers.

The mere cutting back of existing services is not enough, because over time populations increase, and although revenues decline, the need to provide basic services to maintain the health, safety and general welfare of the community remains. Managers need to rethink the methods in which existing administrative programs are carried out if they are no longer financially sustainable, and become open to finding more financially sustainable administrative structures. The main benefit of the literature from the 1970s is that it starts to take inventory of the cost cutting measures that were taken by municipalities around the country to bring their expenditures in line with diminishing revenues, which is what many organizations have, or are starting to do as a result of the Great Recession. However, as Bozeman (2010) pointed out, modern studies still need to be carried out to help organizations currently struggling to develop long-term sustainable administrative models that will allow them to be more resilient during the economic cycles.

During the 1980s, private sector organizations responded to the introduction of global competition by reorganizing and reinventing themselves (Anderson 2011, 225), and the public sector followed suite in the 1990s by going through the reinventing movement (Osborne and Gaebler 1993). The reorganizing movement was focused on the streamlining of internal operating processes by providing administrators with more administrative discretion through the development of performance based management systems. This was completely different from the literature of the 1970s, which talked about cutting back services, not changing the method in which services were delivered. The reinventing movement of the 1990s espoused giving more “choice and voice” to citizens, and advocated that the government “steer, not row,” by streamlining the bureaucracy, contracting out more services, and providing administrators with a wider latitude of administrative discretion through the use of a more flexible budget (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). In addition, decision makers would be able to monitor and hold administrators accountable through the use of a performance based management system.

The reinventing government and new public management (NPM) movement developed during a time of great economic expansion in the United States, and it was only when the Great Recession started in 2008, did governments across the country start to take a look at strategically reducing the size and scope of their operations. Now some of the lessons learned from the reinventing government and NPM movements have been extremely helpful in helping governments to reduce their cost through the use of contracting out various operations, providing administrators with a wider range of discretion, and the development of performance based management systems; however, the current financial crisis is forcing governments to not only question the provision of some core services like in the 1970s, but it is also forcing government leaders to reconsider the manner in which they deliver public services. The current economic environment presents new opportunities as well as challenges to local governments that are struggling all over this nation, and since the revival and further development of the cutback management literature can be used to help local governments through these difficult times, it was imperative that this research included a question about how the Great Recession is impacting local government operations.

In conclusion, over the last couple of years the literature on cutback management has resurfaced, but it needs to be refocused by directing future research on finding more sustainable administrative structures that will be able to sustain the economic cycles. This issue is extremely relevant to many cities around the nation that are still in the depths of the Great Recession, and are struggling to provide the basic services necessary to maintain the basic health, safety and general welfare of the communities that they serve. The literature on this topic has been presented; however, through narrative interpretation this research will go into some municipal organizations to obtain a better understanding of how organizations are adjusting to the economic downturn, and more importantly, how managers are deciding on what

services to cut, what employees to lay off, and the steps managers are taking to carry out these downsizing strategies.

1.4.6 Staying current on the evolving field

The purpose of this section is to describe and articulate the methods that city managers use to stay current of the constantly evolving field of city management. Most of the professional development that is done by city managers is associated with the professional city manager networks, so much of this research will be focused on the concept of the professional network, and how the professional city manager networks have developed over the decades. Professional associations are typically developed to support a professional network, and with regards to the city management profession, the primary professional association is ICMA.

Analyzing professional occupational groups as a social network has a long tradition in the sociology of work and occupations, and the sociology of knowledge (Galaskiewicz 1985). The resource that is controlled by the professionals that form a network is the specialized knowledge that they hold, and it is widely assumed that informal networks among professionals are the means whereby information is filtered throughout the professional community so that all members of the community have equal and free access to this resource (Galaskiewicz 1985, 639). A lot of sociological research has been done on the development, maintenance and power of networks as an extension of elite power in society (Mills 1956, Sonquist and Koenig 1975, Moore 1979). Out of this research, Sonquist and Koenig (1975) describes how the influence of being in a network socializes its members in the following manner: being a member of a network of individuals in the business world outside of one's "home" company provides common life experiences, common views of reality, definitions of what is right and wrong, and opportunities to validate one's beliefs about social and economic issues and the goals that one ought to pursue with respect to them (Sonquist and Koenig 1975, 199). DiMaggio and Powell

(1983) argue that professional and trade associations are another vehicle for the definition and promulgation of normative rules about professional behavior.

With regards to the city management profession, ICMA started from meager beginnings, and was successful in working to shape the professional norms of the city management profession through the development of a code of ethics and training programs for its members. According to Stillman (1974, pg. 30), the first city manager of Dayton, Ohio, Henry Waite, recognized the need for a professional association for city managers that would be modeled after an existing professional engineering association. Mr. Waite sent an invitation to all 31 city managers from around the country in 1914, and 8 of the 17 initial respondents were eventually able to make it to the first city manager meeting in Springfield, Ohio.

The purpose of this association would be to discuss and distribute information relevant to the city management profession. In 1919, the city managers association began distributing *The City Manager Bulletin*, which served as an important link between the members of this newly emerging profession, by listed job openings and current professional news. A sample copy from May 1923 has articles on elements of budget making, separate and combined sewers, information on a municipal ice plant, advice on citizen advisory committees, a rating form for policemen and organizational charting (Stillman 1974, 31). From the early days of the city managers association, the goal of this association has always been to improve the professional capacities of each one of its members through personal discussions, consultation and through educating its members on a wide variety of topics that are integral to the success of city managers.

Today ICMA, and the regional state city managers associations that are affiliated with ICMA, continue to serve the same functions, which is to support the professional capabilities of its members. Over the decades these organizations have become more sophisticated, and their membership has grown, but the core mission has not changed. City managers must keep up

with the rapid political, social and economic transformation that are constantly occurring in the cities they manage, these professionals are required to constantly develop their skills so that they can effectively lead their organizations, who are in supposed to be able to guide their communities through the constantly changing environment. It is important for city managers to do all they can to continue to develop their skills, and because the professional city manager associations are the primary conduits that are used by city managers to meet this goal, it was imperative that a question on this issue was included in the survey instrument.

1.5 Research Questions

I have just provided a review of what the academic literature says about various aspects related to being an effective city manager. This literature review was wide ranging, and covered a variety of topic which are all equally important the success of being an effective city manager. Therefore, based upon the review of the literature that was just covered, six open-ended semi-structured interview questions have been developed for the city managers that will participate in this research. These six questions cover a wide range of topics related to being an effective city manager, and when all of the answers to these questions have been combined, this research will be able to answer the primary question that the research seeks to answer, which is: how does one effectively manage a city? The individual questions that will be asked as part of this research are as follows:

1. How did you become city manager?
2. How does the city manager assist the city council in its policy-making capacity?
3. How does the city manager coordinate a successful strategic planning process?
4. How does the city manager develop and maintain a strong executive team?

5. How does the city manager lead the organization through the Great Recession?
6. How does the city manager stay up-to-date on the profession?

1.6 Significance of this study:

This research is significant on a number of levels. First, this research will add to our understanding about how some of the most highly rated city managers go about fulfilling their roles within their organizations. Secondly, because of the coming exodus of the Baby-boomer generation from the labor force, there will be a tremendous need for the up-and-coming administrators to be trained in the art and science of city management; however, there will not be enough opportunities to gain this experience over a protracted period of on-the-job training. The narrative method is one of the most effective methods of transferring the knowledge from the baby boomer generation to the next generation of local government leaders. Third, the demographic trends of academia mirror the trends in local government, and most of the leading public administration theorist that specialize in local government related issues have had their Ph.D.'s for an average of 35 years, which indicates that there is room for a younger generation of academics to address this topic. This study can be developed into training materials that can be used to teach MPA level course in local government management.

In terms of the limitations of this study, the findings derived from this study will not be universally applicable. Based upon the data gathered from this research, a series of more focused quantitative studies can be developed and carried out to gain broader insights and universally applicable generalizations about some of the topics covered in this research.

1.7 Definition of key terms

City Manager - The city manager is the administrative official that is appointed by the city council to manager the day-to-day affairs of the municipal administration. The primary

responsibilities of the city manager include: 1) supervision of the day-to-day operations of all city departments and staff: 2) Oversight of all hiring, firing, discipline and suspensions of administrative staff: 3) preparation, monitoring, and execution of the city's budget: and, 4) serves as the main technical advisor to the city council on all governmental operations. This is not an exhaustive list, but it covers the majority of the duties assigned to the city manager.

City Council - The council is the community's legislative and policymaking body. Power is centralized in the elected council, which, for example, approves the budget and determines the tax rate. The council also focuses on the community's goals, major projects, and such long-term considerations as community growth, land use development, capital improvement and financing, and strategic planning. The council hires a professional manager to implement the administrative responsibilities related to these goals and supervises the city manager's performance.

Council-Manager form of Government - combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager or administrator. All power and authority to set policy rests with an elected governing body, which includes a mayor or chairperson and members of the council, commission, or board. The governing body in turn hires a nonpartisan manager who has very broad authority to run the organization. Born out of the U.S. progressive reform movement at the turn of the 20th century, the council-manager system was designed to combat corruption and unethical activity in local government by promoting effective management within a transparent, responsive, and accountable structure.

Politics-administration dichotomy – The concept that elected government officials, who are accountable to the voters, create and approve public policy, and then competent, politically neutral bureaucrats implement the public policy. This dichotomy was originally developed by Woodrow Wilson (1887), and was used as the basis of orthodox public administration theory until the Simon-Waldo debate of 1946 to 1948. The council-manager form of government was originally based upon this dichotomy, where the the city council is in charge of creating and approving public policy, while they collectively hire a professional city manager to manager the day-to-day affairs of the municipal government.

Progressive Era - The Progressive Era in the United States was a period of social activism and political reform that flourished from the 1890s to the 1920s. One main goal of the Progressive movement was purification of government, as Progressives tried to eliminate corruption by exposing and undercutting political machines and bosses. Many (but not all) Progressives supported prohibition in order to destroy the political power of local bosses based in saloons. At the same time, women's suffrage was promoted to bring a "purer" female vote into the arena. A second theme was achieving efficiency in every sector by identifying old ways that needed modernizing, and emphasizing scientific, medical and engineering solutions

Political Machine - A political organization that controls enough votes to maintain political and administrative control of its community. The rapid growth of cities in the 19th century created huge problems for city governments, which were often poorly organized and unable to provide services. Enterprising politicians were able to win support by offering favours, including patronage jobs and housing, in exchange for votes. Though machines often helped to restructure city governments to the benefit of their constituents, they just as often resulted in poorer service (when jobs were doled out as political rewards), corruption (when contracts or

concessions were awarded in return for kickbacks), and aggravation of racial or ethnic hostilities (when the machine did not reflect the city's diversity). Reforms, suburban flight, and a more mobile population with fewer ties to city neighborhoods have weakened machine politics. Famous machines include those of William Magear Tweed (New York), James Michael Curley (Boston), Thomas Pendergast (Kansas City, Mo.), and Richard J. Daley (Chicago)

Great Recession – The economic downturn that officially started in December 2007 and officially ended in July 2009. One of the primary causes of this recession was the lending practices which lead to an overheated housing market. Since the start of the recession the United States has lost approximately 8.8 million jobs, and of those, since the recovery started back in 2009 only 1.18 million jobs have been created as of February 2012 (Zuckerman, 2012).

1.8 Organization of the study

This study is composed of five chapters whose goal is to answer the primary question that this dissertation seeks to answer, which is what is required to effectively manage a city. Chapter 1 introduced this topic, has provided a review of the relevant literature associated with this study, has introduced the theoretical frameworks and the methodology associated with this research. A literature review has also been provided which was used as a basis for the development of the semi-structured open-ended questions that were developed to carry out this research.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on the two theories of city management that have dominated the 20th century, which are orthodox and new horizons city management theory. A review of this literature is important because it guides the intellectual basis in which

the city management profession is based upon, and must be covered by any serious research on the city management profession.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion on the narrative method research that was used to carry out the research for this dissertation, and then articulates the steps that were taken to recruit, interview and record the data that was gathered as part of this research. This chapter also includes information on the steps that were taken to protect the participants of this research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the interviews that were carried out as part of this research in a narrative format. This chapter also presents a summary of the research findings. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the research findings, makes recommendations based upon the research findings and list some of the contributions that this research makes to the understanding of the city management profession.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE CITY MANAGER LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature that has informed the city management profession over the last century. The first part of this literature review will describe the structure of governance that prevailed in the United States for the first 100 years, the party-boss system, and why the ineffectiveness of this governance structure lead to calls for a better system of governance. The second part of this literature review will describe the early city management literature and the orthodox city management theory that informed the practice of the first generations of city managers. The third section of this literature review will describe the more recent new horizons theory of city management and how it prescribes an expanded role for the city manager. An understanding of how the city management profession has evolved, and the theories that inform the practice of city management are important for understanding the role in which the city manager plays in the governance of the municipality.

2.1 A dichotomy as a response to boss politics

The politics-administrative dichotomy states that elected government officials, who are accountable to the voters, create and approve public policy (politics), and then competent, politically neutral bureaucrats implement the public policy (administration). This dichotomy was originally developed by Woodrow Wilson (1887), and was used as the basis of orthodox public administration theory. Orthodox city management theory is based upon the writings of early American public administration theorist such as Wilson (1887), Goodnow (1900) and Taylor

(1911). The central tenets of orthodox theory is that there is a distinct line between politics and administration, and that through the politics-administration dichotomy, administrators will be able to adopt methods of scientific management to improve the delivery of public services. The only caveat is that administrators do not meddle in the public policy making affairs of elected representatives, and elected representatives do not interfere in the day-to-day administrative affairs of the municipality.

In Woodrow Wilson's (1887) *The Study of Administration*, the first formal articulation of the politics-administration dichotomy is developed as a means to wrestle the day-to-day administrative affairs of the municipality from the corruption inherent in the party-boss system of governance that dominated state and local government for 100 years of this nation. Wilson argued that through the development of the dichotomy, the capacity of administrative operations could be strengthened because administrative decisions could be based upon the principles of scientific management, not political patronage. With regards to local government, the dichotomy was integral to improving administrative structures so that they could deal with the rapid urbanization that was taking place during this time in U.S. history (Stillman 1974).

During the 1880s, on the one hand, party-boss politics dominated state and local governments throughout the nation. While on the other, the scientific management movement was also taking root, and was the driving force behind rapidly expanding companies such as the Erie Railroad Company, Standard Oil, General Electric and many other famous companies that in one form or another still exist today. Public administration theorists saw the productivity of the private sector and were looking for ways to incorporate this economy and efficiency into the delivery of public services (Stillman 1974). The intellectual impetus of American public administration was to incorporate the efficient administrative practices of the private sector into the inefficient administrative practices of the public sector, which at this point in history was a

challenge that required the creation of a new theoretical framework – the politics-administration dichotomy.

The party-boss system of governance is based upon keeping the party boss in power, and in order for the boss to remain in power; they are required to continually buy favor and votes. In this type of governance structure, all municipal employment and contracts are based upon political patronage, not merit (Otrogorsky 1910, 229). This is where politics interferes with administration, and why Wilson (1887) articulated the need for the politics-administration dichotomy. Goodnow (1887) describes municipal governance under the party boss system as being “monopolized by persons of inferior intelligence and character, incapable of rendering to the community services of the highest value” (Goodnow 1887, 7). The rift between the inability of municipal governments to manage the pressing issues of their day, and the vast successes of American private industry during this era, served as a rallying cry for reforms in this nations municipal structures of governance. This rift was one of the many issues which galvanized the Progressive reform movement which lasted from approximately 1880 to 1920.

The tremendous social transformations that were taking place within the United States during the Progressive Era included rapid urbanization, the popularity of big business, the scientific management movement and the development of the field of American public administration. These transformative ideas gave the progressive reform leaders the tools and intellectual support necessary to demand improved methods of municipal governance (Stillman, 1974, 8). The progressive reformers looked towards big business for answers to America’s municipal administrative challenges, and “frequently compared the citizens of the community to stockholders of a firm, the city council to the corporation’s board of directors, and the city manager was often likened to the corporation manager (Stillman 1974, 8). The council-manager model of local government is based upon the corporate model of business whose primary goal is economy and efficiency, not political patronage.

Scientific management is a managerial theory that advocates for a highly centralized, hierarchical division of labor where management is constantly using scientific methods to uncover ways to bring down the cost of production (Taylor 1911). During the late 1880s till the 1930s, the primary task of municipal government was to develop the roads, sewers, water systems, streetlights, sidewalks, parks, refuse removal programs, and many other public services where the application of scientific management principles could dramatically improve administrative efficiencies. The creation of the municipal manager position encapsulates this thinking, because it centralizes the management of the administrative aspect of governance into one single manager that is able to use scientific management principles to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. Now that a discussion of the political, economic and social forces that conspired to create the environment in which the professional city manager could be born, this review of the literature will turn to the birth of the city management profession.

2.2 The birth of the city management profession

In 1908, Staunton, Virginia became the first city in the United States to hire a professional city manager. Prior to the appointment of the first city manager, every department head, such as the superintendent of streets, the police chief and so forth, reported directly to committees that were composed of the members of the city council. These committees, which could range from 5 to 10 individuals, were in theory in charge of managing the day-to-day operations of the respective departments under their purview, and they hired department heads to advise the committees on their actions. The department heads were required to obtain approval prior to all major decisions, which made the efficient management of any department difficult, let alone the management of an entire city. This method of governance was ineffective

at solving the most basic problems in Staunton, which created an environment that was conducive to experimenting with a new form of governance.

In 1954, the City of Staunton published a book that provides great detail on all of the issues surrounding the appointment of the first city manager, and states that the inability of the municipal government to solve the problem of muddy roads forced the city to take a proactive step to hire a professional manager. Prior to the appointment of the city manager, street work was performed under the direction of the superintendent of streets, which in turn reported to the council's street committee (Staunton 1954). "Money was available and was appropriated for street maintenance, but no one knew how the money was spent because no records were kept, and because it was common practice for the city to pay high construction contract cost for inferior work, the funds that were appropriated for street work did not go nearly as far as it should have, let alone begin to solve the infrastructural problems of the city" (Staunton 1954, 9).

Prior to the appointment of the first city manager, Staunton contracted out all of their engineering projects. However, because the city was dependent on the private sector for all engineering related projects, it was common for all of the contractors to submit bids that were much higher than the actual cost of completing the project, which in turn dramatically increased the cost of providing basic infrastructure for the city (Staunton 1954). Under Staunton's system of contracting out street paving and maintenance to private companies, the city was able to pave about one block per year, while the rest of the city streets were turning into mud, which in turn increased the public's anger at the ineptness of the city government's ability to manage these basic functions (Staunton 1954). The community's anger was articulated in the continuous complaints that were lodged at the city council meetings about the poor condition of the city's infrastructure. In addition, the city's finances were in worse shape than the streets, because although the city generated approximately \$160,000 in annual revenue, it was forced to borrow money to meet its operating deficits, which totaled \$578,000, which was more than

3.5 times the city's annual revenue (Staunton 1954, 10). These were some of the crucial issues that lead to the hiring of the nation's first city manager, Charles E. Ashburner, who was appointed city manager of Staunton on April 2, 1908.

Mr. Ashburner was not your typical man. He was the son of a British officer that was born in Bombay India in 1870, was then educated in England, France and Germany, and received his engineering degree from the University of Heidelberg (Staunton 1954). Prior to becoming the city manager of Staunton, Mr. Ashburner worked for the Staunton division of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad for several years. Sometime during his term with the railroad, Mr. Ashburner advised the city that the \$4,000 bid that they received for a construction project was too high, and advised the city council on how the project could be completed for \$737, and the job actually got done for \$725 (Staunton 1954).

During Mr. Ashburner's term as city manager, he quickly realized that contractors were robbing the city by submitting bids that were much higher than the actual cost of construction, so as a response to this problem, Mr. Ashburner expanded the scope of the engineering division so that they could construct all of the city's infrastructure. This radically improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the city's construction program, because for example, the city was quoted \$486 by a private contractor for the completion of one project; however the city was able to get it done for \$209.28. In Staunton, no streets were paved during the 4 years prior to Mr. Ashburner's appointment; however, 3 years after Mr. Ashburner's appointment, a total of 28,730 feet of asphalt streets were paved, 14,084 feet of sidewalk was laid and 4,925 feet of curbing was constructed, in addition to the installation of 15,149 feet of water lines and 14,201 feet of sewer lines (Staunton 1954, 25). These accomplishments were greater than what anyone could have imagined, especially since all of these improvements were done within the confines of the city's existing revenues.

The tremendous accomplishments made by Mr. Ashburner became the envy of municipal governments all across the country, and because of his accomplishment, Mr. Ashburner would go on to lead three more cities, and would become the first president of the City Managers Association in 1914. However, the true test of the council-manager form of government would come when it was adopted by Dayton, Ohio, which was experiencing tremendous growth at that time. In 1910, the population of Dayton was approximately 115,577, and grew to 153,559 in a 10 year period, which was a growth rate of 30-percent between 1910 and 1920 (US Census 1990). The challenges that Dayton faced because of rapid industrialization and population growth were monumental and are articulated in Toulmin (1917).

Herry Toulmin's (1917) *The City Manager: A New Profession*, was one of the first publications about the newly created city management profession. Toulmin was also a progressive reformer, and articulated that "city government is experiencing a revolution...which seeks a truer, finer, less wasteful and more efficient method of local government...and it is profoundly believed that a vast part of the city's business must be run by a man experienced in municipal administration" (Toulmin 1917, 1-2). Toulmin was a strong supporter of the newly created position of the city manager, and in this publication he described the poor condition that the City of Dayton, Ohio was in prior to the appointment of its first city manager in 1913. The financial issues that were faced by the city were great, and derived from the gross mismanagement of funds which required the city to spend approximately 47% of its tax revenues on bond and interest payments (Toulmin 1917, 11). If these interest payments on bonds were for infrastructure such as streets, roads, lighting, gas and other public investments, city leaders may have been able to defend their investments; however, many of these expenditures were for the day-to-day operation of the city, which continued to put the city in a worse financial position.

In 1919, Chestor Rightor published *The City Manager in Dayton*, which was a comparative analysis of the operations of the City of Dayton from the last 4 years of the mayor-council plan (1909-1913), and the first four years of the commission-manager plan (1914-1917). The difference between these governing structures is that under the mayor-council plan, an elected politician is the administrative head of the municipality, and under the council-manager plan, a non-political professionally trained administrator is appointed administrative head of the municipality, i.e. a city manager. Dayton was a hot spot for research on the newly developing profession of the city manager because Dayton was the first major city in the United States to adopt the council-manager form of government. Dayton became one of the primary cities in the United States where municipal government reformers looked to see how the newly created council-manager form of government could work in their respective communities. Dayton had also been a poster-child for bad municipal government, and if it was possible for a city manager to turn around the operations of Dayton, then a professional city manager could easily improve the municipal operations of any other city within the United States.

Rightor describes how with the “centralization of control for the entire government came the spirit of cooperation among the component branches...the police while working their beats would also report street light outages and broken curbs...which saved the city thousands of dollars each year” (Rightor 1919, 108). The concept of integrating all community resources to solve community issues is not new. The concept of community policing is based upon the premise of creating the conditions in a community that will mitigate the potential for crimes to happen before they occur (US Department of Justice 2009), which is exactly what these officers were doing almost 100 years ago. The appointment of a city manager was able to dramatically improve municipal operations because of the centralization of control and the application of scientific managerial principles to every aspect of municipal operations. However, there were

many politicians and community leaders that would not relinquish their power over municipal operations without a fight.

In 1927, Leonard White published *The City Manager*. To carry out the research for this publication White traveled around the country, from the east to west coast, interviewing newly appointed city managers that had just been appointed after the adoption of the council-manager form of government by their respective communities. During the interviews with many of these newly appointed city managers, there are harrowing tales of managers drawing the lines in the sand of where the boundaries of politics and administration exist. White is able to capture the essence of the challenges inherent in trying to professionalize a municipal organization from one that was ruled by the party-boss system, to one that is managed by professionals. Many of these city managers received death threats, and as a matter of fact, the first city manager of Fort Worth, Texas, E.O. Carr, had 40 crosses burned throughout the city in one night because he would not hire one of the members of the Klu Klux Klan (White 1927, 117). There is probably more to this story, but this provides a bit of insight into the type of individuals city managers were dealing with when they sought to professionalize municipalities throughout this nation.

This publication documents the struggles that were faced by many of this nation's first generation of municipal managers as they sought to improve the delivery of public services within their respective municipal organizations. The statement by White describes the state of local government in the United States during this era, and why the municipal manager was seen as the answer to solving the administrative failures that plagued local government in the United States during the early 20th century:

Low standards of municipal accomplishment, waste and misapplication of public funds, lack of vision with regard to the city's future and lack of energy in pursuing even the most limited objectives, government by political machines for the purpose of maintaining the strength and controlling power of the machine rather than by

independent officials for the good of the community, jealousy and ill will between communities even where cooperation was essential, concealment of the real condition of public business rather than frank recognition of the right of the public to know the fact of public affairs – all cooperated in varying degree to produce discontent, distrust, and suspicion of the mayor and council, or the commission, in most of the 375 cities which have adopted the council-manager plan.

*White 1927, ix

In summary, orthodox city management theory is based upon the writings of early American public administration theorist who advocated for an end to the corrupt party-boss systems that dominated state and local governments. The politics-administration dichotomy was developed as a way to get politicians from interfering in the day-to-day administrative affairs of municipal operations. The council-manager form of government is based upon the politics-administration dichotomy, where the mayor and council make policy decisions, then leave the implementation of policies to the city manager. In orthodox theory, all administrative responsibility is centralized in the city manager so that she or he can use the principals of scientific management to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of every aspect of municipal operations.

2.3 New horizons city management theory

Since the early 1900s, the roles of the city manager and the administrative theories that inform the field of public administration have evolved. The term new horizon was introduced by Stillman (1982), and has been used by Wheeland (2000) to define the evolving role of the city manager. New horizon's theory signifies that city managers are being asked to fill roles that they have not traditionally been required to fill. New horizons theory, as opposed to orthodox theory, rejects the notion of the politics-administration dichotomy, and argues that city managers should

be community leaders, which traditionally is the role played by elected officials. In addition, new horizons theory states that city managers should manage in a complementary fashion, which requires city managers to not only be the leader of the administration, but to also become a community leader that brings together various factions within the community to deal with issues of mutual concern.

Svara (1994) discusses how the politics-administration dichotomy actually plays out in his study of various municipalities over the years. Svara argues that a clean separation between politics and administration does not exist, and depending on the municipal environment and its history, either the politicians will infringe upon the day-to-day operations of administering the municipality, or the city manager will have an undue influence upon public-policy making in the city; however, the norm is a little of both in most organizations (Svara, 1994). Svara recommends that in order to manage this inherent conflict that exist between politically elected officials and administrators, elected officials and senior administrative staff should participate in annual strategic planning sessions, where elected officials can articulate the major goals they want obtained throughout the year, and senior administrative staff can articulate in an open and honest manner the feasibility of each task. This allows for both politicians and administrators to work together in setting the cities strategic priorities, which is different from the traditional roles depicted for politicians and administrators by the politics-administration dichotomy.

In Wheeland (2000), he compares the roles that city managers were expected to play within their communities based upon the orthodox model of public administration, and the more modern new horizons role that city managers are expected to play. Orthodox city management theory “featured a council-centered, hierarchically based model of responsibility that also relied on the dichotomy between politics and administration, where city managers were supposed to be insulated, even isolated, from the value conflict and partisan character of the political process” (Wheeland 2000, 257). City managers were supposed to focus their efforts on

administering municipal organizations, and should leave policy making (politics) to the mayor and council. The central tenet of orthodox theory is the politics-administration dichotomy that was originally articulated by Wilson (1887); however, as Svara (1994) has shown, this dichotomy does not realistically exist in the governance of the municipality.

Nalbandian (1999) also provides a discussion on the evolving role of the city manager. Nalbandian contends that since the 1980s, the role of the city manager has evolved to include such diverse roles as: 1) community building; 2) facilitating participation; 3) improving community representation and partnerships; 4) less adherence to the council-manager plan based upon the politics-administration dichotomy; and, 5) that the administrative roles of city managers have become more process oriented. The additional roles that the city manager is required to play based upon new horizon theory has dramatically increased the complexity of the city manager position, and this complexity will become more clear once the attributes of new horizons theory is further articulated.

Community building essentially involves developing political capacity, which can be defined as the ability to make collective decisions amidst diverse and conflicting interest (Nalbandian, 1999, 189). The modern city manager needs to have the ability to bring diverse constituencies to the decision making table so that decisions can be made that not only respect, but actually help to develop a collective sense of ownership and responsibility within the community. There are many difficulties involved in community building; however, it is necessary in order for effective governance that is accountable to, and works for, all sections of a diverse and democratic society. This has traditionally been the job of the elected mayor or members of the city council, not the city manager. In order to accomplish this goal, the city manager will be required to be out in the community reaching out to various constituencies, which may create a problem because the city manager can become a non-elected administrative figure that is deciding public policy questions of who gets what in the community, simply through the

selection of what organizations are approached when addressing issues such as homelessness, economic development and so forth. Traditionally, the city manager has left this task to elected officials.

The facilitative role of the city manager means improving opportunities for citizen participation and representation with regards to governmental decision making so that the city can be more effective at solving complex issues that develop within diverse urban environments. The facilitative role of the city manager also includes the need to build and maintain internal and external partnerships to help effectively deal with community issues that are too dynamic and complex for any one department or organization to manage. The facilitative role of the city manager is usually played out by using a strategic planning framework, with the council on an annual basis when developing the budget, or with departments and community groups to address complex issues such as housing, poverty, economic development and so forth. This is also an area that was traditionally left to elected officials, but again, has been shifted to the city manager.

The process oriented role of the city manager refers to the management of internal municipal operations. Nalbandian (1999) describes the complexity of these issues as it relates to technological advances, because almost every municipal task, from policing, land-use, and internal communication, requires an increasingly specialized and knowledgeable workforce, which in turn requires more complex and sophisticated teamwork to carry out the myriad of task that municipal government. With regards to the city manager, "today they cannot mandate changes because, more than before, they do not command the technical knowledge to fully understand what they are asking for...the city manager cannot tell the public works director that the council favors a proposed development that requires a cheaper sewer line for the developer, especially if the city engineer says that the downstream capacity won't handle the additional load of wastewater" (Nalbandian, 1999, 193). This has forced city managers to reduce their

reliance on hierarchy, and requires the manager to be more of a facilitative manager than ever before. This transformation has also been reflected in the necessary skills sets of the city manager, with early city managers being mostly engineers and, modern city managers being equipped with the generalist master of public administration degree.

According to Wheeland (2000), new horizon city managers operate based upon a complementary model of governance that is based upon “establishing effective council-manager-community partnerships that depend on open and frequent communication to clarify expectations and secure shared understanding about how each can contribute to good governance” (Wheeland 2000, 260). Complementary governance focuses on the various actors in the governance process working with one another to improve the delivery of public services within a community, and is more accepting of a blurring of the lines between the political role of elected officials and the administrative role of administrators. The new horizon approach to city management is extremely complex and hard to define because unlike the orthodox role assigned to city managers, there does not exist a ‘one best way’ to manage a city. The new horizons approach requires talented, multi-dimensional professionals with the skill and patience to facilitate, not dictate, municipal operations in an effective and efficient manner.

2.4 Orthodox vs. new horizons theory

The primary difference between the orthodox and new horizons theories of city management have to do with the acceptance and rejection of the politics-administration dichotomy. During the initial years of the city management profession, state and local governments were run by the machine-politics, which meant that every aspect of municipal decision making was about keeping the party in power. This required that municipal employment and contracts were awarded based upon political patronage, not merit. Luckily, there were many Progressive reformers that were able to advocate against this form of

government that was failing to deal with the administrative complexities brought about by the rapid urbanization of America's cities during the Progressive era.

Academics such as Goodnow (1887), Fairlie (1901) and White (1927) wrote about the poor conditions of municipal government in the United States and offered a solution – the need to eradicate the spoils system so that municipalities could develop the administrative capacities necessary to manage the growth of America's urban areas. The council-manager form of government was the product of these early reformers of municipal government, and the product of this form of government was to centralize administrative accountability into the newly created municipal manager position. This new council-manager form of government dramatically improved the effectiveness and efficiency of municipal government in the United States (Staunton 1954; Toulmin 1917; Rightor 1919).

New horizons city management theory is a reflection of the evolution of American society and of administrative theory. Instead of trying to maintain a clear separation between politics and administration, administrators and elected officials find themselves working together to develop strategic plans and long range goals for the overall good of their respective communities. City managers have also been required to take more pro-active positions of leadership within their respective communities. This is contrary to the administrative roles espoused by the orthodox approach. The new horizon approach makes the job of the city manager exponentially more complex, but this level of skill and commitment is required to successfully manage municipal organizations in the 21st Century.

The research questions in which this dissertation seeks to answer will contribute to an understanding about what is necessary to successfully manage a city in the 21st Century. Many of the challenges that city managers face with during this century require the same level of managerial skill as the issues that challenged municipalities during the early 20th Century. This dissertation first seeks to understand how individuals that have made it to the city manager

position have been able to rise above their peers to get appointed this position. Secondly, this dissertation analyses how city managers carry out the strategic planning process within their organizations. From the early days of the city management profession, the city manager has been required to clearly define the needs and aspirations of the city council and develop strong administrative programs to solve the community's challenges.

In addition, this dissertation will uncover how city managers are dealing with challenges brought on by the Great Recession, because again, just as Mr. Ashburner was able to solve the challenges of the day in Staunton, the city managers that participate in this research may have answers to the challenges of today. This dissertation will also uncover how city managers use their professional networks and organizations to help them coordinate and manage the challenges that face city managers. Since the time that Mr. Ashburner became the first president of the City Managers Association in 1914 to the present day, the need for city managers to share experiences and learn from one another has not diminished. The chapter that follows will describe the methodology that was used to carry out this research.

Table 2.1 Comparison of orthodox and new horizons theory

Orthodox City Management Theory	New Horizons City Management Theory
Developed as a response to the party-boss system of governance;	Rejects the politics-administration dichotomy;
Based upon the politics-administration dichotomy;	Manager seen as a partner in the policy making process;
Scientific management can be used to find the one-best-way to carry out a particular task;	Managers required to find solutions to community problems in a manner that respects the diversity of perspectives shared in the community;
Efficiency is the ultimate value of orthodox theory;	City manager assumes the role as a community facilitator.
The city manager limits their interference in public policy making.	

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative method which allows the findings from interviews to educate an audience about the “social events and social experiences, either from the perspective of participants, or from the perspective of an analyst interpreting the individual” (Dodge et. al. 2005, 145). Thus, by interviewing city managers for this research, I applied narrative inquiry as a technique for interpreting and present the findings of this study. Social science research utilizes narrative inquiry extensively, and the technique is emerging quickly in public administration and public policy studies (Dodge et. al. 2005, 144). Unlike surveys, which must be analyzed using quantitative techniques such as statistics, narratives allow researchers to “explore issues such as personal identity, life-course development, and the cultural and historical worlds of narrators” (Dodge et. al. 2005, 143), all of which are critical elements to the understanding of the various roles played by city manager in the governance of the municipality.

According to Dodge, et. al., narratives have at least five distinguishing characteristics (2005, 145):

1. They are accounts of characters and selective events occurring over time, with a beginning, middle and an end.
2. They are retrospective interpretations of sequential events from a certain point of view.
3. They focus on human intention and action – those of the narrator and others.
4. They are part of the process of constructing identity (the self in relation to others).

5. They are coauthored by narrator and audience.

Narrative inquiry is a research tool that will allow each of the city managers that participate in this research to not only contribute to creating and telling the story about various aspects of the city management profession, but it is also a flexible enough methodology to capture the wide range of diversity methodologies used by the city managers to address the issues and challenges each of them face.

3.1 Data collection

The collection of data for this research project was carried out by conducting face-to-face and over the phone interviews with 10 city managers. Although face-to-face is the preferred method for conducting interviews, I utilized telephone interviews as a secondary interview option because of the cost and time constraints associated with this research. Weiss (1994) also expresses his preference for carrying out face-to-face interviews, but also states that “telephone interviewing is the next best thing” (1994, 59). I utilized both options to maximize the number of city managers that were able to participate in this research. Interviews are one of the most important methods for collecting information about an issue (Yin 2003, 89). The interviews can be highly structured, semi-structured or open-ended (Willis 2007, 245). A semi-structured interview method was utilized for this research.

The semi-structured interview method was extremely beneficial because of the open-ended nature which allowed the researcher to focus in on a wide variety of key topics as they arose during the interviews. The interview questions served as a guide for the conversations rather than as a structured set of queries. To get the most out of the time allotted for each interview, the researcher pursued a constant line of inquiry that allowed the interview to flow smoothly instead of in a rigid fashion (Yin 2003, 89). This research method was extremely

valuable when interviewing the city managers because the stories told by each manager were different in a variety of ways, and a less flexible method of inquiry would have made it impossible to capture the richness and diversity of the experiences of each city manager. In addition, open-ended questions allow for a greater degree of investigation and follow-up to questions while maintaining the flow of a conversation. This level of flexibility is not possible with the use of a closed ended survey instrument.

Each interview lasted between 45 minutes to one hour. The time allotted for each interview was dependent on the city manager's availability. Each city manager was provided the list of questions that would guide the conversation and was required to sign a consent form prior to each interview. The questionnaire and consent form are attached as Appendix A. Prior to each interview the researcher also did the following: 1) performed a Google search on the city manager to reveal their professional backgrounds, newspaper articles in which they were included and professional affiliations: 2) researched local newspapers for articles about issues related to the municipality: 3) reviewed the budget for the current fiscal year: and, 4) reviewed the city council minutes for two or three council meetings preceding the interview. This background research allowed the researcher to hone in on issues that were of particular importance to each city manager that participated in this research project. This background research also signaled to each city manager that homework was done, which in turn got the city managers to open up and speak more freely about the issues they faced.

For example, prior to the interviews the researcher was aware of any recent employee layoffs, organizational restructures, disputes with labor unions, major law suits and basically what kind of press they were getting. This knowledge allowed the researcher too follow-up with the city managers on issues of this nature, which greatly expanded the depth and range of each interview that was carried out. The researcher was successful in having each city manager

articulate how they go about fulfilling the various roles assigned to them within the governance of their respective communities.

3.2 Recruitment and IRB approval

Each participant of this research was recruited through the use of e-mail. Each recruitment e-mail included a short description of the purpose of this study, the interview questions and the approved IRB consent form. Also attached to the recruitment e-mail was a link to a website that was developed for the specific purpose of providing city managers more information about the purpose of this research. Each city manager was provided the opportunity to remain anonymous and/or to have their interviews recorded or not. Three chose not to be recorded. For the city managers that chose not to be recorded, the researcher was able to take diligent notes during the interviews, and developed a transcript within two hours of the interview from memory and notes. Each city manager was provided a copy of their transcript, and was then provided 30 days to respond back if they had any issues with their transcript. The researcher obtained approval for this research from the University of Texas Arlington's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

3.3 Description of participants

The city managers that are presented in this research are leaders within the city management profession and have all attained some type of professional feat that most city managers simply will not. Either the city managers have been presidents of the national or their state city manager associations, sit on the board of a city manager association, have managed one organization for over 20 years or have achieved a special designation because of their successes as a city manager. These city managers have a total of 208 years of city management experience combined, which allowed the researcher to build a profile of how some

of the most successful city managers go about performing the art and science of city management.

One of the participants of this research was a past president of ICMA, two of the participants were past presidents of TCMA, and one of the participants is the current president of the CCMA. Being elected president to the national and/or state city managers association is one of the greatest indicators that a manager is a leader within the profession. Another indicator that a manager is a leader in the field of city management is that they have been appointed to the board of a state city managers association, or that they have been inducted into the National Academy of Public Administration. In addition, included in the pool of participants are a few city managers that have been in the profession for over 20 years, and have been able to have long and successful tenures in some of the most highly regarded and sought after communities in the United States. Below is a list of the participants of this research.

Table 3.1 List of participants and professional experience

Respondent Number	Identification	Years as City / County Manager	Cities Managed	Indicator as a leader in the profession
Respondent # 1	Jim Holgersson	30	Arlington TX	30 years as a City Manager
Respondent # 2	Jack Lam	22	Rancho Cucamonga, CA	Managed one city for 22 years
Respondent # 3	Rickey Childers	11	Lancaster, TX	President of TCMA in 2006

Table 3.1 Continued

Respondent # 4	Ray Patchett	20	Carlsbad, CA	Managed one city for 22 years
Respondent # 5	Leon Churchill	13	Tracy, CA	Member of National Academy of Public Administration
Respondent # 6	Mike Perez	23	McAllen, TX	President of TCMA 2009
Respondent # 7	Brent McFall	32	Westminster, CO.	30+ years as City Manager
Respondent # 8	Mike Parness	32	Napa, CA	On Board of CCMF
Respondent # 9	William Buchanan	20	Sedgwick County, KS	President of ICMA 2006
Respondent # 10	Wade McKinney	25	Atascadero, CA	Current President of CCMF

3.4 Data Analysis

After each interview was carried out, the interviews were transcribed, word for word, and were then e-mailed back to each city manager. The city managers had 30 days to respond to the e-mail and indicate if they wanted any part of the transcript to be edited. After each of the transcripts was reviewed by the city managers, the transcripts were broken down and organized

by research theme which corresponds to the questions that were developed as a review of the literature presented in Chapter 1. A master transcript was then created for each one of the six research themes, which organized the ten responses to each one of the questions that were asked as part of this research. Once the master transcripts were created, major underlying themes started to emerge from the transcripts. The themes that started to emerge were then coded, and were then used to develop the narratives that are presented in Chapter 4. After coding the transcripts, it was necessary to reduce the amount of themes that emerged from the research. The themes that are adequately addressed in the existing literature were left out of the presentation of the research findings, while the findings that are not adequately addressed in the literature are presented in Chapter 4.

3.5 Why the narrative method is appropriate for this research

In 1991, *The Stories Managers Tell: Why they are as Valid as Science* was published in one of the leading journals in the field of public administration (Hummel 1991). The purpose of this article was to serve as a response to some in the field of public administration that were critical of the sheer volume of qualitative work that was being produced by academics and students alike (McCurdy and Cleary 1984; Perry and Kraemer 1986; Stallings 1986; Stallings and Ferris 1988). Hummel's contention was that in order for the work of scholars in public administration to remain relevant to the practitioners in the field, scholars needed to produce the kind of scholarship that practitioners in the field would find useful, and based upon the research, managers simply do not have the time to go over long reports prior to making decisions, but instead rely on personal communication from the people closest to them, which are the people in their executive teams.

Research has shown that managers in the private sector "favor verbal channels; face-to-face contact and the telephone, and to a lesser extent direct observation as means of

supplementing (and often replacing) formal sources of information” (Hummel 1991, 32: Mintzberg 1975, 3). In Kanter (1977) it was found that managers spend half their time in face-to-face communication, concluding that the manager’s ability to win acceptance and to communicate was often more important than their substantive knowledge of their business (Kanter 1977; Hummel 1991, 32). In addition, it was also found that personal sources exceeded impersonal sources in perceived importance for providing information by 71% to 29% (Mintzberg 1975, 4: Hummel 1991, 32).

Research on public sector managers also indicates that senior executives of public agencies prefer personal communication over scientific reports when making decisions, and concluded that “early utilization research suggest that government decision makers make little direct use of this [policy analysis] research (Lester and Wildes 1990). What this research tells us is that the primary method of communication used by managers to learn about an issue is through personal interaction, either in person or facilitated through technology, and since the goal of this research was to obtain first-hand knowledge about the inner-most thoughts of city managers about issues directly related to their success, it was necessary to obtain credibility and legitimacy through the use of the manager’s preferred method of communication, which is one-on-one conversation either in person or facilitated through technology.

When seeking specialized knowledge, it is wise to prepare for the interaction by doing background research; however, it is unwise to narrowly pre-define the knowledge sought from a source unless it is already specifically known what is needed from that source. For example, a student knows that they are taking a class to obtain a passing grade, but until that student goes through the entire course, there is no way for the student to know about the material that the instructor will be presenting, even if the student goes through the syllabus prior to the course. The instructor is the gatekeeper of a specialized knowledge, and the only way for a student to access that knowledge is to sit back, listen and take notes while the instructor presents the

material through verbal, written and visual communications. With regards to this research, the researcher is the student and the city managers are the instructors. By forming a hypothesis about each of the topics that will be discussed during the interviews, a researcher is required to develop and act upon a preconceived notion of what the city management profession is all about, which is akin to putting the cart before the horse. The basis of this dissertation is that city managers have a clear understanding about what variables and issues are real (ontology), and what are the best methods to obtain the information necessary to make decisions (epistemology) based upon their own personal experiences.

Qualitative studies are inter-subjective in nature, as opposed to the objective nature of quantitative studies. Public sector managers operate in a world that is inter-subjective because each issue within the community will be seen by the various constituencies within the community based upon their particular vantage point, i.e. developer, environmentalist, homeless, minority groups and the like. In order to be an effective manager, input needs be obtained from all factions within the community, whether they are the elected officials, the chamber of commerce, community groups and so forth. This means that there are multiple realities that exist within the community at once, which is different from the positivist approach that is based upon the premise that there is one single reality that can be found through scientific investigation.

The American system of governance is based upon the acceptance of an inter-subjective society, which is why there are elections, courts based upon the theory of rigorous debate, due process and freedom of speech, which are mechanism that allow various factions within the community to voice their opinions on an issue. It is imperative for the success of public sector managers to find ways to encourage various constituencies within the community to help define community issues and to work together to develop solutions to those challenges. In order for public administration scholarship to be relevant to the executive practitioner,

knowledge and theories need to be produced that take into account the inter-subjective world that public organizations operate in, so that scholarship can be produced which can support managers as they navigate the complexities of the real world environment, which is inter-subjective, not objective. This is why this research was carried out using a methodology that can encapsulate the intricacies of the worlds that city managers must operate in.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THIS STUDY

The goal of this dissertation is to provide a detailed description of how the city manager can be an effective leader within their respective communities. As the literature review provided in Chapter 1 has demonstrated, the effectiveness of the city manager is a product of the city manager's ability to exercise leadership in key areas related to influencing the city council's policy-making capacity by effectively managing the community relations of the organization, and by orientating the organization towards receiving meaningful input from residents during the policy-making process. Six questions were then developed so that the research could gain an in-depth understanding of how the city manager fulfills the wide variety of roles that are required for the city manager to exercise leadership and to be effective. Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature which explored the political, economic and social transformations which lead to the development of the city management profession during the early 20th century, and a discussion about the theories that have guided the profession over the last century. Chapter 3 provided a discussion of the theory and the methodology used to inform and carry out this research.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the results of this study. The data collected through the face-to-face and phone interviews is presented using narrative analysis. The results of this research are presented under the following headings and sub-headings:

1. How did you become a city manager?
 - a. *Influence to enter public service;*
 - b. *Impact of mentorship;*
 - c. *Risk Taking.*

2. How does the city manager assist the city council in its policy-making capacity?
 - a. *Know your council and shape recommendations accordingly;*
 - b. *Keeping the council informed;*
3. How does the city manager coordinate a successful strategic planning process?
 - a. *Building on that common thread;*
 - b. *Orientating the organization towards the community;*
 - c. *The Manager's Roadmap.*
4. How does the city manager develop and maintain a strong executive team?
 - a. *Attitude and Fit;*
 - b. *Recruiting Strategies;*
 - c. *Facilitate, not dictate.*
5. How does the city manager lead the organization through the Great Recession?
 - a. *Developing a strategy;*
 - b. *Administrative sustainability.*
6. How does the city manager stay up-to-date on the profession?
 - a. *Staying in tune with the community;*
 - b. *City manager associations;*
 - c. *Speaking with other managers.*

4.1 How did you become a city manager?

Before someone can become effective at managing a city, they must first become a city manager. This is not an easy task. Of the 5.9 million people that work in local government in the United States, only 0.35% (20,000) are classified as chief executive officers (BLS 2010), and of that, only 3,500 of them are city managers. In Chapter 1 a discussion was provided that

discussed all of the issues surrounding the appointment of an individual to the position of city manager, and as mentioned, even if a person meets all of the educational, technical and personal qualifications to become a city manager, it is highly likely that they will still not rise to the position of city manager. That is why it was important to ask the individuals that participated in this research how they became city managers. This research will eventually be utilized to educate students and administrators that aspire to the position of city manager about the tools that can be utilized by them too become effective leaders within their communities. An important part of this research is to develop an understanding of the how the participants of this research were able to rise above their peers to get placed into the city manager's office. This section has been organized under the headings of influence to enter public service, mentorship and risk taking.

4.1.1 Influence to enter public service

Many of the city managers that participated in this research mentioned that they developed some kind of public service inclination at a young age, either through a family that was involved in the community (Respondents # 7 and # 9); an early childhood experience with the good that the public sector could do (Respondent # 4); a school project (Respondent # 3 and # 10); or simply being part of the baby-boomer generation (Respondents # 1 and # 2). The words of John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural address, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," resonated with the baby-boomer generation, and many set out at a young age to make a positive impact upon society. Many found municipal government as the place where they could make this impact, and because of time, many of the offspring of this generation now sit in the city manager's office. As cited by participants of this research (Respondents # 1 and # 7), no other level of government within the United States allows for one to have such a direct impact upon so many aspects of the daily lives of the citizens. Local government is where the wheels hit the road (Respondent # 1).

As Respondent # 1 describes it, the 1960s and early 1970s was a turbulent time in the United States, “the Vietnam War was raging, civil rights were evolving, there were riots in the streets, we were assassinating our leaders...Martin Luther King Jr., John and Robert Kennedy, even a right-wing guy like George Wallace.” As Respondent # 1 goes on to mention, things were crazy during those times, and “somewhere along the line in all that, I thought you know, some of us actually talked about things like revolution, the system was broken, and back then we called the government the establishment, but I came to the conclusion that in the end it is all about democracy, because democracy is a good thing; we just had the wrong leaders in the wrong places, so I came into government to try and fix things.” Respondent # 1 went into local government right out of graduate school because local government is “where you can feel it, touch it, there is nowhere to run and hide, you make decisions, you implement them and you hear about them...and the people will let you know how you are doing.”

Respondent # 2 is also a product of the 1960s baby-boomer generation; which he described as the John F. Kennedy era. Respondent # 2 describes his generation as idealistic, and mentioned that back then there was lots of influence to go into public service. In the 1961, the youth of that generation heard JFK’s call to public service and flocked to public agencies so that they could develop careers that would allow them to make positive contributions to society, while at the same time allowing them to earn a decent middle-class living. Looking back, this enthusiasm to enter public service is radically different from the ethos of the 1980s, when Ronald Regan entered the White House declaring that “government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem.” As Respondent # 2 explains it, “the trendy thing to do back then was to go into public service; to give back by helping the community. Even 40 years later, I think that to perform a valuable service to the community by solving problems is very rewarding.”

One of the multitude of lessons that can be derived from the personal stories of what influenced Respondents 1 and 2 to go into public service is that social forces and current events have an impact upon people's perception of government, and their subsequent career choices. Respondent # 1 was a social conscious youth that had major concerns about many of the social issues that were transpiring during the 1960s and early 1970s, and at some point, it occurred to him that he could make a greater difference in society if he actually got into the *establishment* instead of criticizing it from the outside. In addition, Respondent # 2 was also a product of a generation that placed a high value upon giving back to the community. Many of the city managers that participated in this research had similar stories about developing some kind of public service inclination at a young age, either through a family that was involved in the community (Respondents # 7 and # 9); an early childhood experience with the good that the public sector could do (Respondent # 4); a school project (Respondent # 3 and # 10); or simply being part of the baby-boomer generation (Respondents # 1 and # 2).

4.1.2 The Impact of Mentorship

In ancient Greece, Odysseus entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to a trusted counselor and friend. This trusted and wise friend, Mentor, reputedly became the counselor, guide, tutor, coach, sponsor, and mentor for his protégé, Telemachus (Hamilton 1942). Mentorship is the development process in many occupations: master-apprentice; physician-intern; and teacher-student, and city manager to assistant city manager. Mentorship is an important training and development tool for upward progression within organizations and within a profession (Hunt et. al. 1983). Most executives have had mentors that were vital to their success (Jennings 1971). Roche's (1979) report of the Heidrick and Struggles, Inc., study reveals that nearly two-thirds of the prominent executives in the study had mentors and that these executives received higher salaries, bonuses, and total compensation than did executives

who did not have mentors (Hunt et. al. 1983). Orth and Jacobs (1971) also found that a mentor is necessary for young businessmen to achieve success. What studies have found time-and-time again is that mentorship is vital to the success of aspiring administrators who seek to rise to a position of leadership.

The impact that mentorship can have upon an up-and-coming administrator can be tremendous. There are many direct and indirect benefits that can be obtain through mentorship; however, based upon the interviews that were carried out, I found the most profound benefit that can be received by mentees is the ability to comprehend and visualize a path of professional development that lies far outside of the norm, and is contrary to the traditional career progression for administrative personnel. As stated in Chapter 1, one of the primary requirements to become a city manager is to have generalist experience in all facets of municipal operations. However, traditional administrative structures are composed of a wide variety of specialized, highly technical positions that are coordinated by a few managerial positions that are filled by individuals that have risen up through the ranks based their knowledge of a field of specialization (Weber, 1911). The challenge is that if an administrator aspires to become a city manager, there may be 5 to 10 progressions before they are able to reach the city manager's office, which has forced ambitious administrators to become "lateral-movers," which is a term used to describe administrators that stay in one position for approximately 3 years before they move on to positions with a greater degree of authority until they reach the position of city manager (Watson and Hanssett 2004).

Administrators that can be classified as lateral movers because of their desire to become city managers only comprise a small percentage of those who enter local government. It is important for those that aspire to the position of city manager to seek out mentorship from those that have actually become city managers, because the advice provided by those that have already taken the route that is the exception rather than the rule can be tremendously

valuable. While carrying out this research each one of the participants were able to name at least one mentor that was influential to their rise to the position of city manager. By analyzing the following respondent's interviews I will demonstrate how important mentorship can be.

While Respondent # 5 was still working on his bachelor's degree in urban planning he took the initial step of making contact with a mentor who's direction would make a positive impact upon his journey towards the position of city manager. When discussing the influence that this mentor had on his professional development, Respondent # 5 states that "I knew that I wanted to shape communities in a positive way, but after I talked with a city manager, I realized that the top decision maker on community development issues is actually the city manager, not the planning director, which is when I became interested in becoming a city manager." Respondent # 5 describes the guys that mentored him and directed him towards city management as "the first generation of African American managers that came out of the 1970s Model City's Program, which evolved into community development, and in a few cases some of them made it to the city manager's office. The individuals were far into their careers, but what they were able to do is to point me in the right direction, tell me what I needed to do." The mentors told Respondent # 5 that if he wanted to be a top-notch city manager, he would need to get an MPA from one of three places in the country, and out of those three, Respondent # 5 got his degree from the University of Kansas.

One of the many lessons that can be learned from the story of Respondent # 5 is how valuable the guidance from a mentor can be. The Respondent # 5 took the initiative to go and meet one of his mentors while he was in college, and because he made that connection, the mentor was first able to focus his goals by getting him to see that if he really wanted to have a major impact upon community development, he needed to strive to become a city manager. This is not to say that city planners, community development directors and economic development directors do not have a major impact upon the development of communities,

because they do. However, the city managers job is to coordinate the work of all of these individuals to ensure the organizations community development programs are as effective as possible in solving community challenges. Respondent # 5s mentors were able to tell him this because they had already been in community development for some time, and they were providing him the advice that may have taken then years to acquire. Mentorship not only accelerated Respondent # 5s learning curve, but also had a major impact upon the route that he took to accomplish his goal of becoming a city manager.

The story that Respondent # 7 tells about a mentor that he had when he first came into the public sector demonstrates the tremendous influence that a mentor can have on the career of a mentee. As Respondent # 7 describes it, he was hired as an analyst after he completed his MPA from the University of Kansas by a city manager name Buford Watson. Buford was a leader in the city management profession, and Respondent # 7 mentions that he got his introduction to the world of city management from Buford. He states that “he knew that I wanted to become a city manager, so he would continue to let me learn about all facets of city management, and he told me that he would let me know when I was ready to manage. I worked under him for 4 years, and when I turned 27, he suggested that I apply for the manager’s position in Merriam, Kansas, which turned out to be my first city manager position.”

The mentorship that was provided to Respondent # 7 by Buford Watson rapidly accelerated his acquisition of the skills necessary to be an effective city manager. The mentorship the Respondent # 7 received from Buford Watson is what ultimately placed him in the city manager’s office at the young age of 27, and is why Respondent # 7 states that “the mentorship provide by Buford was integral to my development as a city manager, so I believe that I have an obligation to mentor new talent, which is why I have mentored at least 20 individuals that have go on to become city managers.”

4.1.3 Risk Taking

One of the primary personality traits that I found in common with each one of the city managers, but was not mentioned in the literature, is that of a risk taker. This is true in terms of those that classified themselves as conservative, or as outside of the box thinkers. Risk is defined as “a situation involving exposure to danger.” In terms of professional risk, each one of these city managers at one point or another had a permanent administrative position that carried lifetime employment, a stable salary, and a position that allowed them to become experts in their respective fields of specialization. At some point in every city managers career they must give up their personal and professional stability for a position which provides more seniority, authority and salary at the expense of relative certainty, i.e. take a risk.

In terms of personal risk, almost every city manager interviewed was required to move their residence to a different region of the state or country in order to obtain positions that allowed them to gain the experience necessary to become a city manager. It is not uncommon for city managers to move three or four times to different regions in order to obtain the necessary experience to get their first city manager job (Respondents # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 10). The complexities of the personal risk are compounded because this not only involves them, but also involves their families. Great sacrifice which requires professional and personal risk is usually required to obtain the experience necessary to become a city manager. There are always individuals that do not fit this profile (Respondent # 7), but they are the exception rather than the rule.

4.2 How the city manager assist the city council in policy-making?

The purpose of this section is to provide an understanding of how the city manager can effectively assist the city council in its policy making capacity. This is the first section of criteria in which the city manager is judged based upon the evaluation form included on Appendix C,

and is also a function of influencing council policy-making, which is necessary to be an effective city manager. This section has been arranged in two parts, with the first section describing how the city manager needs to get to know each member of the city council and shape their city recommendations accordingly. Secondly, this section will cover the methods used by city managers to effectively communicate with each member of the city council.

4.2.1 Know your council and shape recommendations accordingly

The city manager needs to learn how each one of the members of their city council thinks, and the manager needs to accomplish this by developing both formal and informal relationships with each member of their city council. The primary objective of the city manager should be to analyze how each member of the city council analyses a wide variety of policy issues that the city manager must ultimately address. This strategy was articulated by Respondent # 1 when he states that “each member of the city council has different interest, needs and constituencies, so the city manager needs to be strategic and get to know what each member of the council is thinking about the issues of the day, and then take a Machiavellian approach on shaping recommendations that are acceptable to the members of the council as individuals and then as a governing body.”

Respondent # 2 adds to this by stating that “the city manager should take their understanding of each one of the members of the city council and transform this understanding into a policy-making strategy that builds mutual trust, confidence and respect between the city council and the city manager.” The city manager needs to shape recommendations that reflect the concerns of each member of the council, and by doing this, the manager can build confidence in the council by showing each one of them that the manager has heard each one of their concerns, because this is how the manager can build consensus on the council, which will in turn contribute to the success of the city manager (Respondent # 2). The members of the city

council gain stature in the community by showing that they can get things done, and things can only get done in the city manager is able to do their job, which means that both the city council and the city manager need to work together to develop a mutually beneficial relationship (Respondent # 2).

One of the ways in which the city manager can develop a strong relationship with each member of the council is to start that relationship from the beginning. Respondent # 6 provides insight into one of his strategies by providing each of his newly elected officials with a full orientation of city operations. Respondent # 6 goes through all of the formalities, but then he also has an informal discussion with each new member by telling them that “you will not see my face on good stories, because I will always put an elected officials face on the front cover; however, if it is a bad story, I will take the hit for you, I do not mind that.” Respondent # 6 makes it clear that the city manager needs to be content with working behind the scenes for the good of the community, and by stepping back and allowing the elected officials to take the credit for the good things that happen in the community, they will support the manager in doing what is necessary behind the scenes to keep the good publicity going.

4.2.2 Keep the Council Informed

It is extremely important for the city manager to keep the city council informed about what is going on in the city. Keeping the city council informed is one of the most basic and important things the city manager must do to remain effective. Respondent # 7 states that since there are seven members on his city council, his primary method of communication with each member of the council is through e-mail. This is a quick and easy way to respond back to their questions, because he can send out information to all seven members of his council with one click of the mouse. This is more efficient and effective than having to make seven phone calls, but if one of the members of the council calls, the manager needs to pick up that phone.

Members of the city council like to know what is going on in the city because they want to serve as a resource for the people in the community; that is why they get elected in the first place (Respondent # 7). The city manager needs to help the member of the city council fulfill their roles as resources for the community.

It is also common practice for city managers to send out a weekly update to each member of the city council on Friday afternoon or on Monday morning. The purpose of the weekly update is to let the members of the city council know what has happened in the city during the following week, what events will be occurring during the upcoming week, and also provides a forum where the city manager can address any issues as needed. The weekly update will not answer all of the questions that will be posed by the city council, but it is a method that the city manager can use to standardize the distribution of information to the council.

Respondent # 8 articulates how the city manager needs to adjust their communication style to the needs of each member of the city council as a way to maximize the effectiveness of their communications. Respondent # 8 explains it by stating that “every council member has their own needs and styles, so what works with one may not work with another. I shape my style to the needs of each council member. Some want lots of information, and some want things summarized because they don’t have time to pore over long reports.” The city manager also needs to make themselves available on a weekly basis to meet with council members, “because some will want to meet every day, and some will come in once every two months. I have had dozens of council members over 33 years, and you really need to get a handle on each one of their styles and expectations (Respondent # 8).”

Respondent # 9 describes the importance of not only keeping the entire city council informed about what is going on in the city, but also of making sure they are all provided the same amount of information about an issue. He says that he makes it a point to meet with the

members of his board several times a week, and that these visits serve two purposes. The first purpose is to personally brief them on the upcoming agenda. Secondly, and most importantly, “the purpose is to listen to the members of the board, to hear their concerns and to have those conversations about what the individuals on the board think we should be doing about various issues as they arise. Sometimes they will have good ideas, and sometime their ideas just don’t make since, but the point is that I take the time to listen.”

It is also important for the city manager to develop ground rules for how they will deal with the city council, especially when it comes to dealing with extra-ordinary request from members of the city council. The city manager needs to develop protocols that are made clear to each member of the council to protect themselves from being accused of favoring one member of the council over another. Respondent # 10 describes the method that he uses by stating that the trick is to make sure the manager is communicating with each one of their council members equally. The manager does not want any member of the council to believe that they favor any one of them over another. The manager needs to take great pains to make this clear to each member of council in every organization they go into. The manager should also make it clear that they do not take directions from an individual, but from the entire council (Respondent # 10). There are always variations, but the city manager should set these as the ground rules.

4.3 How the city manager coordinates the strategic planning process?

The coordination of the strategic planning process is a function of the city managers ability to assist the city council in its policy-making capacity, as well as a tool that the city manager can use to orientate the organization towards receiving meaningful input from the community during the policy-making process. In addition, in terms of the criteria listed in Appendix C which list the ways in which the effectiveness of the city manager can be judged,

the strategic planning process can be utilized to increase the city managers effectiveness in their capacity to effectively lead the organization's internal operations in a manner that is viewed as effective by the city council. This is also a strategy that can be utilized to allow citizens to have meaningful input in the policy-making process. This section is organized under the headings of building on that common thread and orienting the organization towards the community.

4.3.1 Building on that common thread

The strategic plan should be based upon a common thread that binds the aspirations of the various individuals of the city council. Respondent # 6 states that this common thread is not always easy to find, because people do not always articulate what they want in the same manner. This is especially true with regards to local government, where there are so many aspects to the organization that make it very difficult for any individual to reduce their aspirations down to a handful of short and long-term objectives. One of the strategies that city managers utilize is to have each of the members of the city council lists 10 of their most important priorities for the city. The manager should then have each member of the council choose their top five priorities out of all that have been listed. This is an effective way for the city manager to narrow down the top 5 priorities of the city council, which provides a basis in which to start the strategic planning process.

To make the strategic planning process as effective as possible, the city manager should develop a formalized process on an annual or semi-annual basis. The end result of this process is the development of formalized short and long-term objectives for the community that will guide the administrative programs of the organization. Respondent # 7 describes the strategic planning process in his organization by stating that they "spend seven days throughout the years working on and refining the council's goals and objectives, and once we have those

objectives, I go back to my staff and have them develop administrative programs to meet those goals and objects. This allows for everyone to be on the same track so we are not just shooting in the dark.” The strategic plan should be utilized by the city manager to create a roadmap for the work that will be done by the organization for the next year.

Through the strategic planning process, the city manager is able to exercise influence in helping to shape the council’s goals and objectives by providing analysis on the feasibility of each goal. This influence is in addition to the city managers role of chief executive officer of the municipal administration, which provides them with managerial oversight of the administrative programs that have been developed to meet the council’s goals and objectives. The strategy of an effective city manager is to use their influence to have the city council develop goals and objectives that can reasonably and effectively be completed within an agreed upon timeframe. As Respondent # 2 explains it, there should be four to five achievable goals that can reasonably be accomplished, because if the manager makes to many promises and does not deliver, then the council will lose confidence in that manager, which will in-turn get them fired. Effective city managers develop budgets that are based upon the city council’s goals and objectives, so the document the is not just about dollars and cents, but is also a policy based document that articulates the priorities of the city council as reflected in the allocation of funds governmental programs (Respondent # 8).

4.3.2 Orientating the organization towards the community

The process that is utilized to develop the strategic plan is more important than the goals and objectives that come out of this process. Effective city managers utilize the strategic planning process to obtain meaningful input from the public during the development of the strategic plan. This usually entails holding town-hall meetings where community issues are discussed, and the public has the opportunity to make comment on a wide variety of aspects

related to the strategic plan. It is important for the public to have meaningful input in the strategic planning process because this process will not only guide municipal operations for the upcoming year, but will also impact the services that are provided to the community. The city manager can use this process to allow meaningful public comment, which can in-turn get community buy-in to the strategic plan. If residents of the community feel that they have meaningful input in the policy-making process, then the local government can have a lot more support when carrying out the policies derived from the strategic planning process.

Respondent # 9 articulates how he uses the strategic planning process as a mechanism to include citizens in the policy making process. He states that “when I talk about strategic planning, I am not talking about outcomes, because they change over time. The most important aspect of strategic planning is not necessarily what you do, but how you do it. Engaging citizens early in the decision making process is very important to us.” The concept of process orientated strategic planning is a reflection of this respondent’s overall managerial style of working to orientate the organization to meet the evolving needs of the community, which is an effective strategy that can be utilized by the manager to develop relationships between the local government and a wide variety of constituencies within the community. The relationships that are developed through the strategic planning process can serve as the basis of much more meaningful relationships that are mutually beneficial for both parties.

4.3.3 The Manager’s Roadmap

A major determinate of the city manager’s success will reside in their ability to get agreement on the main points of the strategic plan from the city council, and then have their executive team develop effective and efficient strategies for carrying out the council’s goals and objectives. The city council should be regularly updated on the progress being made with regards to the strategic plan. The strategic plan will change and evolve over time; however, the

strategic plan is extremely important because it: 1) is a written document that formally articulates the main priorities of the majority of the city council; 2) provides a roadmap for the city manager to follow; 3) serves as a formalized criteria in which the city manager can be judged; 4) provides a formalized procedure that council members need to use in order to get their pet projects placed upon the agenda; and, 5) provides a framework which can be used to articulate the council's goals and objectives into specific administrative programs through the budgeting process.

If the city manager is successful at laying this foundation, then in terms of dealing with the city council and the mayor, the daily and weekly interactions with these elected officials for the fiscal year can be about more routine items such as what is on the council agenda for the upcoming meeting. This creates a dynamic where the city manager has been provided direction by the city council, and the city council knows what the city manager is doing (Respondent # 5). This also puts in place a mechanism for elected officials to place additional items on the agenda, and mitigates the potential for the city manager to be placed in a compromising position where one elected official believes that the city manager favors one of their peers because of a decision to support project A over project B (Respondent # 4).

4.4 How the city manager develops the best executive team?

The development and maintenance of a strong executive team is crucial to the success of an effective city manager. The city managers ability to develop and maintain strong administrative programs is dependent upon the ability of the executive department heads to successfully carry out and implement the various programs under their purview. With regards to the criteria listed in Appendix C that can be utilized to analyze the effectiveness of the city manager, this section addresses the manager's ability to lead the organization's internal operations in a manner that is viewed as effective by the city council, and is also a function of

the city manager's ability to ensure the organization has a positive customer services orientation towards its citizens. This section is organized under the headings of attitude and fit, recruitment strategies and facilitate not dictate.

4.4.1 Attitude and Fit

When building an executive team, effective city managers seek recruits with the right technical skills, but they also seek out individuals that also have the right attitude and fit for the organization. Respondent # 6 stated that he hires for attitude first, and everything else follows. As directors of the police, fire, community development and any other departments, departmental managers are in the middle of the city manager, their administrative staff, the public and the unions. As Respondent # 1 states, "everyone knows how to do their job better than them, so they need to be strategic, to bury their egos, to understand people; they have to respect and enjoy working with people, whether they like them or not." The complexity of the job of the department director is not just about having technical skills, because communication and people skills are even more important. The city manager needs individuals who will not only be respected and supported within the organization, but will be respected and supported within the community.

In order for a department director to be effective, they need to be supported by the organization and by the community, which is why the city manager has to make sure that the person that they place in such an important position will be a good fit. As Respondent # 3 states, "it is all about fit, because at a certain level everyone qualifies. In 1988, when I was interviewing in Phoenix for a deputy position, there were five finalist that were all well qualified, so the decision was really predicated on what is going on in that organization at that particular time, which will dictate what the organization will seeking at that point in time."

4.4.2 Recruiting Strategies

City managers have developed a variety of strategies to recruit their executive staff. The purpose of developing a rigorous recruiting strategy is to assist the city manager in thoroughly screening potential recruits so that they can increase their probability of successfully recruiting a strong member for their executive team. City managers utilize psychological profile test based upon the Myers-Briggs profile types. City managers also use the strategy of spending a day with potential recruits, and use they also use the technique of developing a series of interview panels to screen recruits for their executive teams. City managers either use all, or a series of these recruiting methods for selecting individuals to serves on their executive teams.

In terms of using the Myers-Briggs based psychological profile test, the primary goal of this recruitment tool is to gain a better understanding of the candidates learning and leadership style. The city manager's goal is to test whether the potential recruit will be compatible with the city manager's leadership style, and if they will be compatible with the rest of the executive team. The overall goal is to see if a potential candidate will be a right fit, because fit is just as important as skills. A potential candidate that has strong qualifications may have been very successful in one organization because of the composition of the personalities on the management team, but that same person may not be successful on another management team. The profile test serves as another tool that can be utilized by the city manager to ensure that they recruit the best person for their organization.

Respondent # 5 describes his executive recruitment process by stating that "we use quantitative and qualitative methods to screen candidates. There are diagnostic tools that allow us to develop a profile for each of the candidates that we are seriously considering. In addition, a person's history is the best predictor of their future, so we also do a thorough background and media check before we put them through a series of rigorous interviews." Effective city

managers will do all they possibly can to put their potential recruit through a rigorous recruiting process in order to build and maintain a strong executive team.

Another tool that is utilized by city managers to screen potential recruits for their executive team is to spend a day with the finalist for the recruitment. The day is usually spent doing various activities around the community which are outside of the office so that the city manager and the recruit can get a better feel for one another. This is also a time when the potential recruit and the city manager can discuss any issues of potential concern or of importance to the final decision of the city manager. Respondent # 4 explains the benefit of the practice by describing one experience that he had. "On one occasion I was out with one of the two finalists for police chief. I asked him if there was anything that he needed to tell me three times, and he said no. Well, I knew there was something, and it had to do with an inappropriate relationship. I wasn't the worst thing in the world, and he ended up marrying the lady, but the point is this. With the police chief, you need to have the type of relationship where they will tell you what you need to know, even if it is uncomfortable. He failed that test so he didn't get hired (Respondent # 3). This is the kind of insight that you just cannot get from the profile test and interviews.

Another tool that city managers utilize when carrying out their recruitment for executive staff is the use of a series of panel interviews to screen potential recruits. City managers can put individuals from the same field whose opinion they trust on the panel, representatives from community groups that have an interest in the services provided by a particular department, and other individuals whose opinion the city manager values. This is also a way for various constituencies in the community and organization to have a say in the recruitment of an executive staff member.

Respondent # 10 describes the process that he utilized to recruit a police chief by stating the he had just hired a new police chief by utilizing a series of interviews. He first

developed three panels. The first was of local police chiefs and of the sheriff. The second included local community leaders, and the third was composed of four department directors. After each panel asked their questions and did their evaluations, he had the panels discuss their top pick with one another. He sat back and took notes on the discussion. From there, he interviewed the top two candidates and made his selection. This is an unorthodox recruitment strategy, but requires the recruit to get through the the individuals that the recruit will need to work with first, and if the recruit can do that, then the recruit will be interviewed by the city manager. To get to the city manager in this type of recruitment process the candidate will not only have to be extremely qualified, but they will also need to be the right fit for the community.

4.4.3 Facilitate, not dictate

Once the city manager hires a department head, they are hiring someone to run a specific operation for them, whether it is the police, community development or engineering departments. The city manager does not want to be involved in the day-to-day affairs of a department, because that is why they hired the department head (Respondent # 4). The city manager's job is that of a facilitator, not a director. The city managers role is to work with the city council to narrow down the strategic goals of the council, and to then communicate those goals to the department heads who are then responsible for developing strategies to achieve those goals within the parameters (budget, goals, environmental considerations, etc.) set by the city manager. Once those administrative strategies have been articulated and developed by the department heads, the city manager's job is to hold the department heads accountable for meeting those goals.

This is why having the right people as department heads is so important to the overall success of the city manager, because the manager depends on these people to take full responsibility for the day-to-day management of their respective operations. As the facilitator,

the city manager spends most of their time working to remove the obstacles that impede the department heads from accomplishing their goals, not actually carrying out those goals. The city manager facilitates the connection between what is going on with the elected officials, and with the administrators that are carrying out the day-to-day affairs of the city (Respondent # 1).

The most effective way to manage this connection between policy making and administration is to manage through a performance based system. This allows for the city manager to articulate what they want from the directors based upon the council's directives that came out of the strategic planning process. The city manager's power to coordinate this direction is through the budgeting, strategic planning and annual employee evaluation review process. These processes can be integrated, and provide the city manager the power to develop the parameters they want their department heads to operate within. However, if using this management style, the city manager needs to provide their executive team the flexibility necessary to achieve their strategic planning goals. The city manager should meet with each member of their executive team personally at least once on a quarterly basis to keep the personal communication flowing between them and the city manager.

4.5 How the city manager leads through the Great Recession?

Managing the organization through the Great Recession is an all-encompassing challenge that is forcing city managers to operate and make changes to administrative operations in a manner that has not been required for decades. The challenges presented by the Great Recession require strong leadership by the city manager, because without strong leadership, the challenges that the current environment presents cannot be effectively solved. In terms of the criteria in which the effectiveness of the city manager can be judged, the city manager's capacity to effectively lead the organization through the Great Recession is predicated on their ability to fulfill their leadership role in the development of a strategy to

navigate through the impacts of the Great Recession, and then on the city managers ability to effectively implement an administrative plan of operation that is sustainable.

4.5.1 Developing a Strategy

When faced with a reduction in revenues, budget cuts across the board are not wise, because not all services carry the same amount of urgency. When someone picks up the phone and dials 911 they need someone to pick up the phone, but there is not the same type of urgency when someone calls the library. As Respondent # 1 articulates, "it is popular to cut employee training when the budget is down, however, when the budget is down managers are asking their employees to do more with less resources. This is when employees need more training, because a more educated workforce is a more productive workforce." In order to make strategic cuts to operations, city managers need to carry out organizational scans and rank the importance of programs in order to mitigate the impact that these cuts will have to the core strategic operations of the organization.

Respondent # 7 articulates the method that his organization went through to determine what positions were going to be cut from the organization, and how they implemented a strategic planning process to ensure their expenditures stayed in line with revenues. In the summer of 2010, his organization did a core services analysis by going through every service that is provided by their organization to determine if it the service is necessary, or in addition to the necessary services that are provided by the city. Based upon this core service analysis, the organization was able to determine that some of the things they were doing were not necessary. The city was facing a structural deficit that was forecast to get worse each year, so they used the analysis as a guide when they had to lay off 75 full time employees out of the 1,000 that are employed by the city. This was necessary to correct the structural deficit.

4.5.2 Administrative Restructuring

In terms of restructuring the organization to ensure that expenditures are in line with diminishing revenues, many of the city managers that have participated in their research have had to reduce the amount of employees within their organizations. Respondent # 5 has had to reduce his organization by 25% (125 employees) over the last 4 years, and has been able to mitigate the disruption to front line services by cutting many mid-level employees, offering employee severance packages and by finding new ways to provide municipal services in a more efficient manner. Respondent # 6 describes the adjustments that have been made to his organization, and the adjustments that he will make in the near future by stating that he has had to eliminate about 54 positions over the last 3 years, and they are looking for new and more cost effective ways to provide services. He describes how he will find cost savings through the consolidation of the fire departments dispatch with a neighboring jurisdiction which will save this organization approximately \$120,000 per year. In addition, the installation of smart energy systems has reduced their utility cost by 10%. These are only a couple of examples of cost saving measures, but these are examples of the types of steps city managers need to take to reduce their operating cost.

Labor costs are a significant part of the general fund, so reducing labor cost is a major goal for many city managers. Respondent # 6 describes the cost structure of hiring full time workers and why it is more cost effective to contract out. This trend will continue to accelerate over the coming years as healthcare cost continue to rise around 10 percent per year, and as the issue of unfunded public pensions continues to make news headlines. Respondent # 6 states that they already contract out the maintenance of the city's fire hydrants and the mowing of the city parks. This is a more cost effective method of service delivery because the city does not need to pay for the health insurance or pension cost of the contract employees, because "from our standpoint, contract allow us to pay a lower wage. Our minimum wage is like \$10.25

an hour to push a broom, so if we contract out we pay a lower wage and don't have to include health and pension, which are major cost for us.”

4.5.3 Administrative Sustainability

The long-term strategy of an effective city manager needs to be the development of a sustainable administrative structure that will be able to remain resilient during difficult economic times. Respondent # 9 describes how he learned some tough lessons from a previous recession, and built up the reserves of his organization which has allowed his organization to weather this recession without having to make drastic cuts. Respondent # 9 indicated that his organization will be required to reduce their expenditures by 10 to 15% by next fiscal year, so they are not only looking for ways to reduce current cost, but they are also starting to think about how to restructure operations when the economy turns back around. Respondent # 9 states that when things turn back around, they will seek to improve operational capacity through the use of technology, not by hiring new employees.

The Great Recession has required many of the participants of this research to restructure their organizations in a manner that reduces the operating cost of the organization (Respondent's # 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). City managers have carried out full organizational scans in an attempt to review every operation to determine if it is integral to the core mission of the organization. If it is, then that program stays, and if it is not, then that program should be cut (Respondent # 7). City managers have also been looking for ways to streamline their organizations by seeking to reduce the number of middle managers within their organizations by increasing the discretion of front-line employees (Respondent # 5). This transformation is usually accompanied by a reorganization of departments which includes departmental consolidation.

The goal of this strategy is to reduce labor cost by cutting out a layer of middle managers within the organization, while mitigating the disruption to service levels by keeping as

many front line workers as possible, because they are the ones who actually carrying out the core services provided by the organization. City managers have also sought to increase the amount services that can be automated and placed on-line as a method to reduce labor and organizational transaction cost. Early retirement programs have also been implemented in which the retiree positions are not re-filled, and are contracted out or are filled with part time employees. The goal is to find more cost effective ways of providing public services. If additional cuts are still necessary, then a downsizing strategy needs to be developed and implemented.

Management should list each operation in the organization and research if another public or private agency can provide the service, and if so, management should obtain quotes from the service providers. For example, Respondent # 8 described the process of having to take the drastic steps to disband the police and fire departments, and contract those services to the county. There are many functions of government where there are no alternative providers; however, each local government needs to take a strategic approach to the provision of each service by bringing all involved parties together to discuss ways in which the municipality can share responsibility for the issue; not own it (Respondent # 5), and if there is the possibility of lowering the cost of providing a service, then it is incumbent upon city managers to explore these options.

4.6 How the city manager stays up-to-date on the profession?

The primary method that city managers use to stay current on the constantly evolving field of local government management is through membership in the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), and through their state and local city manager associations. The first city manager association, ICMA, started in 1914 by a group of this nation's first generation of city managers. The purpose of this organization was to provide a forum so that

city managers could discuss issues of mutual importance, and to educate managers on the challenges and issues of the day. ICMA still fulfills this role for the city management community, and ICMA's goals are carried out through the development of conferences and the production of educational programs and materials on the wide variety of issues that are important to local government.

4.6.1 Staying in tune with the community

One of the primary tools that city managers utilize to remain effective is to stay in tune with what is going on in the community. City managers use a multitude of methods to keep up with the pulse on the community, from speaking to members of the council on a consistent basis, to reading the newspaper every day, to attending and speaking at functions held by a wide variety of groups within the community. The bigger the community, the more city managers tend to use their executive team to make connections with groups in the community. For example, the police chief might speak with community watch groups and the economic development director will meet with the local chamber of commerce, and those directors will then report back to the city manager.

Staying in tune with what is going on in the community also entails keeping up with technological changes because it has an impact upon people's perception of the organization. Technology also has the potential to bring down the cost of service delivery. Professional conferences and learning materials that are particular to the city management profession and the field of public administration are mechanisms that each one of the city managers utilized to keep up on changes occurring within the profession and the fields of public administration and management in general. Respondent # 3 articulates the benefits of utilizing the professional conferences by stating that "from an intellectual perspective, you need to get out and see what is going on. You can't just accept the status-quo of your community, or even your region, you

need to keep pushing and looking for new ideas. You can never feel that you have seen everything under the sun. You need to continually look for ways to improve yourself (Respondent # 3).”

The ICMA professional certification process is another way that city managers can utilize to develop their professional skills. Respondent # 5 states that he is currently going through the certification process now, “which has really quantified the need to continually learn about the latest advances and trends within the field, and just as organizations need to remake themselves, so do individuals.” In addition, Respondent # 5 states that he utilizes online learning, conferences, seminars, readings and conversations groups to keep his skills current, in addition to writing about the profession because it forces him to really think critically about what's on the horizon in terms of the city management profession.

4.6.2 City Manager Associations

The national, state and regional city manager associations play an important role in the coordination and facilitation of programs that support the development of the city management profession. The primary purpose of these organizations is to support the city management profession by educating their members on issues related to local government, and by providing a network for city managers to share ideas and experiences with one another so that they can learn from one another. Respondent # 8 is on the Board of the California City Managers Foundation, and describes the work done by the organization by stating that the Foundation “started as a support group for new managers by showing them what contracts look like, advising managers that were going into difficult cities and so forth. But the organization has expanded to provide training to managers and assistant managers on establishing performance measure, how to deal with councils and providing an annual conference for California managers to network (Respondent # 8).”

In addition, because of the Bell situation, the reputation of city managers has been tremendously tarnished. To address this issue, the Foundation sent advisors to Bell and developed a program called Strong Cities Strong State, which educates people about the benefits of having healthy local governments. These are only some of the benefits that city manager associations provide to city managers, and the work done by these organizations is integral to the support of the city management professional and local governments in general.

4.6.3 The benefits of speaking with other managers

Respondent # 7 discusses just how important the interaction between city managers has been to his professional development and success by stating that talking with other city manager is the primary thing he does to stay up on the profession and to get advice of a wide variety of issues. He states that “you learn just as much, if not more, from speaking with other managers.” In the Denver metropolitan area the city managers meet up once a month to discuss a wide variety of issues of mutual concern, as well as meeting with other managers informally to develop a sense of community so that they can pick up the phone if an issue arises. As an example of how city managers learn from one another, Respondent # 7 described how he contacted a neighboring city manager to see just how he handled a water issue which is a major issue in his region. He got some guidance on how to get things going in his city and was very grateful. They didn’t adopt the same techniques to solve the problem, but because of the other manager’s guidance, Respondent # 7 was able to sit down with his city engineer to chart a path forward. This type of communication between managers is extremely valuable because this type of specialized knowledge is not something that people can just pick up a book to learn about.

Every city manager interviewed was a member of ICMA and attended the annual meetings. In addition, there was just as much, if not more, participation in the state city

management associations, such as the Texas City Managers Association (TCMA) and the California City Managers Association (CCMA). The state associations served as regional associations that helped city managers deal with issues within their state, and are mechanisms that provide a regional forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge for city managers.

Additional organizations that city managers said were extremely useful were the Alliance for Innovation and the attendance of the Local Government Training Institute put on by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the Berkeley Executive Seminar for Local Government and ICMA's certification process. These are popular programs that help city managers continue to refine their skills in the midst of a constantly changing environment. Aside from these courses, city managers receive daily e-mails from ICMA, state city manager organizations, and *Governing Magazine* to name a few. City managers also read the regional newspapers and publications such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Harvard Business Review*. The primary goal is to know what is going on in the community, the state, the nation and the world, so that the manager can see changes on the horizon to ensure that their organizations can be responsive and adapt to a constantly changing environment.

Talking to other city managers is one of the most effective ways for staying current on, or being able to work through, some of the most difficult issues that city managers face. The benefits of talking with other managers is that it allows for the opportunity to just pick up the phone and speak with someone that has already faced the same challenges or issues that you are currently facing. A manager's ability to develop and tap into the network of city managers is a tremendous asset which can be invaluable to the success of any city manager. For many of the most difficult situations that city managers face, only other city managers can provide the level of advice that can help a colleague successfully navigate through the situation.

Professional networks have been found to be extremely beneficial to the professional development of many city managers, and are a by-product of the response to the difficulties

faced by city managers over the last century. As one city manager explains it, these networks also serve as psychological support systems as well (Respondent # 9). The implication of this finding is that the stories that managers tell one another are just as valuable, if not more valuable, than any lesson that can be picked up out of a textbook (Respondent's # 7,9, 10). In addition, more research should be done using the narrative method to articulate how city managers and senior level executives deal with some of the most challenging issues they face, and case studies should be developed to educate the new generations of public administration students as a method that can rapidly excel their abilities to think like public sector executives.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The goal of this research was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how a city manager effectively manages a city. Based upon an initial review of the literature, it was found that the effectiveness of the city manager is intricately linked with their ability to exercise leadership within the community. The goal of the literature presented in Chapter 1 was to develop an understanding of the wide range of topics in the governance of the municipality in which the city manager is expected to take a leadership role. As a result of this review of the literature, a set of six questions were developed. Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature that encapsulates the dominate theories that underlie and inform the city management profession. Based upon the literature reviews that were performed in both Chapters 1 and 2, Chapter 3 discusses why the narrative method was chosen to carry out this research, and then Chapter 4 presents and summarizes the findings of this research. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to discuss whether this research has accomplished its overall goal of providing a comprehensive understanding of what is necessary to effectively manage a city, to provide a discussion of the most significant findings of this study, and to articulate the contributions in which this study has made to the literature.

5.1 Has this research achieved its goal?

Based upon the initial literature review performed in Chapter 1, it was found that the effectiveness of the city manager is directly related to their ability to exercise leadership on a

wide array of issues within the community. The city managers ability to lead within the community can be broken down in the following manner. First, in order to manage a city one must become a city manager, which is a phenomenal feat in its own right. In order to become a city manager, an individual must obtain the professional and personal experience necessary to be considered for the position of city manager. Based upon the research, it was found that what was not covered in the literature, but is integral to becoming a city manager, is mentorship and risk taking which were articulated in the research findings presented in Chapter 4. .

Once an individual is appointed to the position of city manager, they must do their part to make the council as effective as possible, and this can be done through a strategic planning process accompanied by development of informal relationships with each of the members on the city council. Once the city manager has clear direction from the city council, then the city manager is able to coordinate the city's administrative programs in a manner that will achieve the goals set out by the city council. Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion on how city managers are able to manage this process.

The city manager is only as effective as their management team, so the city manager must take steps to ensure that their executive staff is fully competent. The city manager cannot afford to get involved in the day-to-day affairs of the various departments, but must shape the parameters in which they would like the departments to operate through the budgeting process. Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion on how city managers can achieve this. The Great Recession has challenged the city management profession in a way that previous generations of city manager have not been challenged since the Great Depression. City managers all around the country are currently looking for ways to reduce the cost of providing local government services, which was discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The primary mechanism that is used by city managers to keep abreast of the changes occurring in the city management profession is through the professional city management

associations, and how city managers utilize their professional networks is also discussed in great detail in Chapter 4. Based upon the extensive results that were obtained from this research, and the fact that each city manager indicated that all major areas related to managing a city were covered, the researcher is confident that the goal of this research has been achieved. What follows is an analysis and a set of recommendations that have been developed based upon the research that was carried out for this project.

5.2 Findings in relation to orthodox and new horizons theory

Based upon the findings of this research, it was confirmed that the orthodox theory of city management is not an accurate reflection of the current practices of those within the city management profession. The basis of orthodox theory is the politics-administration dichotomy, which creates a line between politics and administration. However, based upon the research findings, the city manager is expected to take a leadership role in terms of shaping the city council's goals and objectives which shape the parameters for all of the organizations activities for the fiscal year. In addition, in order to remain effective the city manager needs to shape their policy recommendations based upon what is acceptable to the members of the city council, which on many occasions might not be the most effective and efficient method of addressing a community issue. On the one hand, the city manager is hired as an expert administrative advisor to the city council; however, the powers of the city manager are subservient to that of the city council, which represent the will of those within the community. As Waldo (1948) articulated, administration is politics, because all administrative actions that are carried out by the municipality are encapsulated within the short and long-term goals of the city council, which are a product of the political, social and economic dynamics of the community.

In terms of theory, this research contributes to our understanding of how the city manager must exercise leadership in a wide variety of roles related to the new horizons city

manager. More specifically, in terms of actually becoming a city manager it was found that aspiring city managers need to seek out mentorship and take risk in order to become city managers. Secondly, in order for the city manager to maximize their support of the policy-making capacity of the city council, the city manager is closely involved with the development and refinement of the city council's goals and objectives, and is also responsible for developing the administrative programs necessary to effectively carry out those goals and objectives. What this research has found is that in order for the city manager to be successful at taking a leadership role in the development of these formalized policies and programs, the city manager has to be successful in cultivating informal relationships with each member on the city council so that they will trust in the city managers leadership. If the city manager does not have strong informal relationships with the members of the city council, then it is very difficult for the city manager to take a leadership role in the governance of the municipality, which in turn has a negative impact upon the city manager's overall effectiveness.

Based upon this research, it is not a far stretch to say that it is highly likely that a city manager will be released if they are not effective at developing strong informal relationships with each member of the city council. This topic is not covered in the existing literature, but is an issue in which further investigation is necessary because these findings are contradictory to the traditional theories of bureaucracy which places great importance on mitigating the impact of informal relationships on formal policy-making. However, this research has pointed out that the development and maintenance of the informal relationships are intimately tied to the city managers ability to lead and remain effective in the governance of the municipality.

5.3 Recommendations based upon the research findings

5.3.1 Create positive impression upon the youth

The implications of the research findings indicate that interest in public service is developed at an early age. If the city management profession, and the public service in general, is going to be able to recruit an adequate amount of the most talented individuals over the next couple of decades, then programs will need to be developed and maintained which introduce students to the public sector at a young age on up through the college years. This would include bringing middle and high school kids to the city hall, having summer internships for school age children, working with local colleges and universities to develop internship programs and having the student's work on projects related to local government. In addition, local government can start using social media as a way to recruit a new generation of workers in addition to using this medium to stay in contact with citizens. As discussed in Chapter 1, the impetus for this dissertation is the necessity to bring a new generation of young talent into local government. From the research findings, it can be inferred that by creating an interest in local government at a young age, local government can increase the pool of potential applicants to their organizations.

5.3.2 Create internal opportunities for advancement

In order to obtain the necessary skills required to effectively fulfill the role of the city manager, those that aspire to the position of city manager need to gain generalist experience in all facets of municipal operations. This experience is generally obtained through some type of position as an analyst or an assistant in the city manager's office. In order to obtain the appropriate technical skills, city managers are usually required to leave positions in organizations in which they have been successful in order to gain the necessary generalist skills that will allow them to advance to the position of city manager.

Many of the most successful companies in the United States promote from within, and are able to develop their talent by having programs where talented employees can obtain a variety of experiences by moving around to various departments within the same organization. This will not only benefit aspiring city managers, but also those who aspire to managerial positions in local government. This will also benefit the organizations that employ administrators who aspire to grow into managerial positions. Respondent # 9 developed a succession planning program in his organization modeled after private sector retainment strategies, and this program was nominated for the 2010 ICMA Strategic Leadership and Governance Award because of its foresight. In addition, internal mentoring programs should be developed to match aspiring front line workers with mid-to-senior level managers within the organization. These types of programs would allow organizations to keep some of their most talented and ambitious employees, while at the same time developing a cadre of employees qualified to assume leadership roles not only within their respective organizations, but also within organizations throughout the region and the nation. Based upon the research findings and analysis, the following recommendations have been developed as a result of the city manager responses to the aforementioned question.

5.3.3 Know your council, and shape recommendations accordingly

The implication of the research findings is that informal relations have a major impact upon the success of the governing body, and this is very important to understand because many of the traditional tools that are taught in public administration programs do not address these informal relations. In fact, the theories that inform the rules that bind bureaucratic actions try to mitigate the effect that informal relations have in all aspects of the governance process, yet this research has found that these informal relations are of critical importance. More teambuilding and leadership training courses should be provided in public administration programs, and in organizational training programs. There also needs to be more research done

on how informal relationships affect the governance process, and what mechanisms can be used by the city manager to keep informal relations healthy between the individuals on the city council and between the city manager and the city council.

5.3.4 Keep the council informed

It is imperative that the city manager makes a sincere effort to keep the city council informed. A good practice is to send out a weekly report every Friday which list the primary things that have went on with the various departments throughout the week. The manager can also include information on miscellaneous topics as they arise. In addition, some council members and mayors will want to talk on the phone and/or through e-mail at least one time per day, and some will only want to communicate once per week. It is the city manager's job to understand each elected official as an individual, and then adapt their personal communication style to the various elected officials, because the city manager works for them (Respondent # 6).

To be an effective city manager one must become adept at developing informal relationships to support the formal relationships that are necessary for the success of the city manager. The city manager needs to be conscience of this fact and develop a strategy that will allow them to develop these relationships, which is in addition to their formal responsibilities. Each council member is different, so it will be up to the manager to develop these relations in accordance with the needs of each member. However, the manager must also keep in mind that they do not want to be seen as being too close to, or favoring, one member of the council over another. This is a tightrope that the city manager must learn to walk in order to be effective. The city manager must then develop a strategy to keep each member of the city council informed, whether it is through a weekly report, weekly meeting or something of that nature. In addition, by using technology such as e-mail to keep the council informed if something major

happens in the city, such as a bank robbery that may be on the evening news, the city manager can be effective at keeping elected officials in-the-know. Elected officials like to be in-the-know, and prefer to get the information from the manager, not the newspaper.

The city manager also needs to become adept at shaping recommendations in a manner that is acceptable to all (or most) of the members of the city council. In some instances this will take considerable time and effort, and sometime this will not be possible. However, each time a recommendation is made by the city manager which is not supported by a voting block on the council, the more those individuals will feel that the manager favors the other members of the council over them. There are elections every two years, and each election has the potential to change the power structure on the council. If the city manager is viewed as being associated with a voting block that has lost their majority on the council, then it is safe to say that it is highly likely that the city manager may also be removed. The city manager should take precautions to avoid this situation. The primary strategy that can be employed by the city manager is to do as much as possible from their vantage point to mitigate conflict by strategically shaping council recommendations in a manner that is acceptable to the entire city council. This strategy may not always be possible, but it should be a goal.

5.3.5 Use the strategic plan to your benefit

In order to effectively articulate the city council's policies into strong administrative programs, the city manager should use a strategic planning framework that links funding for each administrative program to a council goal and objective. Strategic planning is a strong tool that can be used by city managers to improve the effectiveness of city council's policy making capacity, and can be used by the city manager to serve as a formalized document in which the city council can judge the city manager's performance.

Although strategic planning can be used to greatly improve the effectiveness of the governing body's policy making capacity, there are still many organizations that are not fully utilizing strategic planning to its full potential. For example, many organizations have a strategic plan, but they are not tying specific projects to the goals listed in the strategic plan, and they are not basing budget allocations to these goals. The purpose of the strategic plan is to articulate the steps necessary to get the organization from point A to point B, but without tying actual projects that are listed in the strategic plan to budget allocations, there will always be a disconnect between where the organization is, and where the organization wants to be in the future. More research should be done that articulates how successful public organizations have been integrating the strategic planning, budgeting and performance management processes.

5.3.6 Modernize public sector recruitment practices

The competition for talented employees will become even more competitive over the next decade because of the demographic trends discussed in Chapter 1. This research has indicated that soft (people) skills are just as important as hard (technical) skills, and that psychological profile test can be utilized to measure soft skills. By integrating the psychological profile test, along with an application process that allows candidates to demonstrate in writing how they meet the requirements for an advertised position, local governments have the potential to greatly expand the recruitment of employees from non-traditional sources such as the private sector, NGO's, universities and so forth.

The majority of public sector employment advertisements require that applicants have previous experience in the same or a similar position in order to be eligible for hire for a particular vacancy. This practice inadvertently and unwisely bars many talented individuals from entering the public sector who have the soft and core technical skills to be successful in the public sector. This hiring practice, and the job descriptions, are a product of the traditional

theories of bureaucracy developed during the early 20th century (Weber 1911); however, as society has evolved, so should public sector employment practices, which hold true for the recruitment of executives and for the recruitment of front line employees.

5.3.7 Facilitate, don't dictate

Once the city manager hires their executive staff, the city manager needs to be a facilitator, not a dictator. The city manager should hire competent department heads through a rigorous recruitment process, and then use the strategic planning and budgeting processes to shape the parameters in which the city manager wants the department to operate in based upon the use of inputs (budget), outputs (agreed upon performance measures) and the evaluation process. The success of the city manager will primarily be based upon their ability to surround themselves with people who are the best within their respective fields, which can be partially measured by previous experience and their participation and standing in professional associations. It is one thing for an administrator to rise to prominence within their respective organizations, but it is another for them to rise to prominence among their peers within the respective field of specialization. The city manager should seek executives that have accomplished both.

The city manager should also develop a comprehensive set of performance indicators for the organization, and use these indicators to obtain a measurable output ratio for the resources that are allocated to the various operations within the organization. ICMA's performance measurement program is recommended because it is a comprehensive program that can be adopted by municipalities, and allows organizations to compare themselves with comparable organizations from around the country. The comparison of performance measures is a useful tool for city managers because these comparisons have the ability to highlight inefficiencies that exist within the organization. However, city managers must remain cognizant

that performance measures are tools that can be used to measure efficiency, which in all cases does not equate to effective policy making or social equity, which should take precedence over efficiency.

5.3.8 Develop administrative sustainability plans

The implications of this research indicate that city managers have been restructuring their organizations, increasing the use of contracting out particular services, and are now starting to seriously consider combining the provisions of a variety of public services with neighboring jurisdictions. In addition, there is also an increased willingness for local governments to increase partnerships with the business and non-profit communities for the provision of services as well. More research should be done on the affect in which the Great Recession is having on distressed local governments, because some of the transformations that are occurring today can be used to predict where the future of municipal public service delivery will be 10 to 20 years from now.

Over the next decade, public sector organizational structures will become more in line with private sector organizational structures because the economic, social and political environments will continue to place pressure on politicians and senior administrators to reconfigure the current administrative model that is based upon the early 20th century model of bureaucracy (Weber 1911). The classical model of bureaucracy is proving to become untenable in many locations around the country, from the boom-and-bust economies of hyper-growth cities in the West (Las Vegas, Phoenix, Inland Empire California), to the Rustbelt cities in the mid-west (Detroit, Newark, Buffalo, Philadelphia). The implications of these impending transformations to local government organizational structures inevitably mean the loss of more middle class jobs with benefits. However, the job losses that are taking place within the local government sector are a reflection of the greater political, economic and social transformations

that are taking place within the United States with regards to middle class wages, health care and pensions, because the public sector is the last major employment sector to provide these types of benefits to all classifications of its employees. This topic is ripe for further research.

In terms of the city management profession, local governments need to develop administrative sustainability plans that look at long term socio-economic trends within their jurisdictions, regions and the nation, and outline administrative structures that can be maintained through depopulation, severe recessions and so forth. These administrative sustainability plans will take many forms in various jurisdictions around the nation based upon demographic and socio-economic trends; however, the primary goal of these plans are to develop administrative structures that can withstand the various societal trends that will be occurring over the next 20 years. For example, newly incorporated hyper-growth communities should seek lower cost contracts with the county or another agency prior to developing new police and fire departments, and should be open to hiring more employees on a contract and temporary basis.

In terms of the duplication of public services in urbanized regions in the United States, every local government should develop an inventory of services that are provided by the organization, and should evaluate whether that same service is provided by another public agency, NGO or private organization in the region. Then cost-benefit analysis should be completed to see if the contracting out, the merging of service providers, or is some other method can be developed to lower the cost of the provision of that service to the public. This is an area that is ripe with the potential for cost savings, especially in major metropolitan areas that are heavily decentralized.

5.3.9 Utilize the professional city manager networks

Each of the city managers that participated in this research indicated that they were members of ICMA, and their regional city manager networks. The primary benefits of belonging to the city manager network is the access to highly specialized knowledge about the city management profession that only experienced city managers will have. In order to maximize the potential benefits of the city management network, a city manager will need to do their part to network with other city managers to get to know them on a personal basis. In addition, the city managers organizations serve a vital function in the profession by providing educational materials and an annual conference in which the city managers can get to know one another and can expand their professional networks.

Based upon the research findings, city managers should always be involved in some type of life-long learning that will allow them to continue to develop and refresh their skills on topics that are integral the successful management of the municipality. The development of their own professional networks is of critical importance for a manager’s continuous development and maintenance of their skills. The importance of these professional networks should be incorporated into the MPA curriculum. In addition, and MPA programs should reach out to many of the professional networks in the region that are associated with local government professionals, and work with these organizations to find ways to get students and young professionals active in these organizations.

Table 5.1 Contributions to the academic literature

Contributions of this Research to the Academic Literature
Risk taking and mentorship are just as important to becoming a city manager as the traditional requirements such as education, experience and personal attributes that are discussed in the literature.

Table 5.1 continued

<p>Developing the informal relationships with the various members of council are just as important as the development of the formal relationships.</p>
<p>Successful city managers need to shape their policy recommendations in a manner that is acceptable to the majority of the members of the council;</p>
<p>Soft (people) skills are just as important as hard (technical) skills in the recruitment of executive public administrators. Psychological profile test and various interview techniques can be used to measure this.</p>
<p>Future studies on local government in the United States should focus on the development of sustainable administrative structure that will be resilient enough to withstand major impacts to depopulation or boom-and-bust business cycles in susceptible regions. Research of this nature has yet to be completed.</p>
<p>Future study by universities and local governments within various regions of the United States should investigate the prevalence of the duplication of services, and analysis should be performed to guide the reduction of service duplication.</p>
<p>The professional network is integral to the success of executive local government managers because it provides them with a support system of specialist in which they can always draw upon if they had questions about any issues related to the job or personal matters if necessary.</p>

Tying this research back into the initial problem of a human resource shortage about to befall upon local government, and the need to develop more public administration scholars that specialize in the local government profession, the research findings and the contributions of this research are significant for the following reasons. First, this research uncovered that interest in public sector employment can be developed at an early age, and has led to the

recommendation that local governments implement programs within their communities to introduce local government to the youth within their communities. Secondly, this research was successful in providing narratives on how many of this nation's most successful city managers are successful in fulfilling their obligations as city managers. These narratives, analysis and recommendations can be used to train aspiring public sector employees that are interested in becoming city managers or in becoming local government executives. Third, this research was able to articulate the methods that city managers utilize to stay abreast of the myriad of issues that are important to managing a municipal organization. In conclusion, this dissertation has contributed to our understanding about a variety of aspects of the city management profession.

5.3 Limitations of this Study

The primary limitation of this study is that the findings may not be universally applicable. This research was carried out by interviewing a few prominent city managers from a few states in the nation. However, because of the inter-subjectivity of the city management profession, this research methodology was able to touch upon a wide range of issues that are all integral to providing a complete understanding of the issues facing the city management profession, which was the goal of this dissertation.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CITY MANAGERS

1. What influenced your assent to obtaining the job of municipal manager?
2. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to the Mayor?
3. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to the Council?
4. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to the municipal administration?
 - Staff Appointments;
 - Coordination of Departments;
 - Public Safety;
 - Finance;
 - Public Works and Utilities;
 - Economic Development & Land Use
5. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to public relations and the press?
6. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to keeping up staff moral?
7. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to intergovernmental relations?
8. Describe the municipal manager's role with regards to facilitating social transformation?
9. Describe the methods used by the municipal manager to stay current on the constantly evolving field of municipal management?
10. Please describe any last thoughts that you may have, or anything of importance that I may not have covered.
11. Additional questions may be asked to follow up on responses to any of these questions.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT

The Role of the City Manager in the Governance of Municipality.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this research is to gain a better understanding of the role municipal managers' play in the governance of municipalities. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to speak with municipal managers and individuals that have specialized knowledge about municipal service delivery. This informed consent form will explain issues of confidentiality for those that chose to participate within this study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to participate in this study.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to contribute to a body of academic literature that is specifically about the role municipal managers' play in the governance of municipalities. This study seeks to interview municipal managers, representatives from the national and provincial (state) governments, lawmakers, non-governmental organizations, academics and others that have specialized knowledge about various issues surrounding municipal governance. The researcher (Malcolm Oliver) aims to use this data to develop academic and professional materials that can be used to educate current and future leaders of municipal government.

DURATION

Each semi-structured personal interview will take approximately one hour to complete in person or over the phone.

PROCEDURES

You have been asked to participate in an interview about issues related to municipal service delivery either by telephone or in person at a location of your choosing. The interviews will be audio taped, and thus will require your consent prior to an interview. After the session, the audio recordings will be transcribed, which means they will be typed exactly as they were recorded, word-for-word, by the researcher. The audio recordings will be kept along with the transcripts of the interviews for possible research in the future.

Prior to any publication of these interviews, the researcher will send all participants of this research a copy of their transcribed interview, and will give each participant **30 days** to make comments on their transcribed interview. If a participant does not respond with comments about their transcribed interview within 30 days, then the researcher will assume that the participant has no comments about their transcript. If there is anything included within the interview transcripts that a participant wishes to be removed for any reason, the researcher will edit that part of the interview from the transcripts, or will allow the participant to further clarify a statement.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study; however, you will be contributing to the growth of knowledge about managing municipal government.

COMPENSATION

No compensation is offered for participation in this study.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

You will be asked questions about various aspects of managing municipal government. The researcher recognizes that municipal government can be highly politicized at times, so every effort will be made to allow the research participants to review and comment on their interviews prior to publication. However, there are always unforeseen risks involved when discussing issues surrounding municipal government. The purpose of this research is not to highlight the shortcomings of municipal government, but rather to highlight the complexities of managing municipal government. In order to best protect the participants of this research, prior to the publication of any of the interviews conducted as part of this research, each participant will have 30 days to review and to make comment on their transcribed interviews. Should any participant feel uncomfortable at any time while participating in this research, they have the right to discontinue any or all research procedures at any time with no consequence to themselves.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES

There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study and quit at any time with no negative consequences or effect on your standing.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY

Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or quit at any time. You may quit by calling Malcolm Oliver at 909 437-6939 in the USA, or at 021 393-6321 in South Africa, or by e-mailing him at: Malcolm.oliver@mavs.uta.edu, or by contacting the faculty advisor for this project, Alejandro Rodriguez at 001 (817) 272-3357, or by e-mail at aro@uta.edu. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should *reasonably* be expected to make you change your mind about your participation in this study.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

I expect a total of 70 participants to enroll in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Each participant will have the option to conceal or to reveal their identity. If a participant chooses to conceal their identity, every attempt will be made to keep their identity concealed. A copy of all records, audio recordings and transcriptions from this study will be stored on a secured, password protected hard-drive in a secure location for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. For the participants that wish to remain anonymous, the results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway so that you will remain anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the University of Texas Arlington (UTA) Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the personnel involved in this research will have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then The University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:

Questions about this research or your rights as a research subject may be directed to Malcolm Oliver at 909 437-6939 in the USA, or at 021-393-6321 in South Africa, or Malcolm.oliver@mavs.uta.edu and/or to the faculty advisor, Alejandro Rodriguez, at 001 (817) 272-3357 or by e-mail at aro@uta.edu. You may call the Regulatory Specialists at the University of Texas Arlington's Institutional Review Board at 011 (817) 272-3723 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Malcolm K. Oliver

Date

By signing below, you confirm that you have read, or have had this document read to you, and that you have been informed about the purpose of this study, its procedures, the possible benefits and risks involved, that you have received a copy of this form. Your signature also indicates that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and that you have been told that you can ask questions about this research at any time

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

Please indicate if you are granting permission for the researcher to **identify you** as a participant.

_____ Yes _____ initial

_____ No _____ initial

Please indicate if you are granting permission for the researcher to **audio record** the interview:

_____ Yes _____ initial

_____ No _____ initial

Signature of volunteer

Date

APPENDIX C
CITY MANAGER EVALUATION FORM

SECTION I: ASSISTING COUNCIL WITH ITS POLICY-MAKING ROLE

		Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
A. Providing Information				
The City Manager provides information which is:				
	Detailed and reliable			
	Explained in a thorough manner and includes alternatives or recommendations			
	Timely			
	Helpful in preventing trivial administrative matters from being reviewed by the Council			
	Helpful and adequate to assist City Council in making sound decisions			
The City Manager:				
	Provides members of City Council with the opportunity to set long-term organizational goals and to establish the future direction of City policy			
	Keeps City Council informed, in a timely manner, of the things Council wants to know			
	Keeps City Council well informed with concise written and oral communications			
	Provides City Council members with information on an equal basis			
	Informs the City Council of administrative developments			
	Follows up in a timely manner on City Council requests for information or action			
B. Providing Advice				
The City Manager:				
	Has adequate knowledge of municipal affairs, including the City's laws and ordinances			
	Considers alternatives before making recommendations			
	Plans ahead, anticipates needs and recognizes potential problems			

	Has a good sense of timing in bringing issues to the Council for action			
Comments:				

SECTION II: INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

		Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
A. Implementation of Council Policies				
The City Manager is effective in the following areas:				
	Carrying out Council directives			
	Assigning work so that it is performed efficiently and effectively			
	Paying sufficient attention to detail to avoid error or things “slipping through the cracks”			
	Analyzing problems or issues and identify causes, reasons, and implications			
	Accurately interpreting the direction given by Council			
	Carrying out the directives of Council as a whole rather than those of any one Council member, but recognizes the concerns of the minority			
	Supporting the actions of the City Council after a decision is made			
	Assuming responsibility for staff performance			
	Providing members of City Council with periodic status reports on projects or tasks which may overlap months or years in implementation			
	Insuring that the management staff maintains normal service delivery operations as well as the flexibility to manage emergency situations			

B. Financial Management				
Are you satisfied with the City Manager’s:				
	Approach to budget preparation and review			

	Use of standard financial management procedures to meet Council's policy guidelines			
	Implementation of Council's policy regarding the expenditure of budgeted funds			
	Cost control through economical use of labor, materials and equipment			
	Information on the financial status of City government			
	Use of available funds and his ability to operate the City efficiently and effectively			
	Knowledge of financial matters			
	Information pertaining to long or short-term financing for capital projects or equipment purchases			
	Information on opportunities for federal and state grant funding			

		Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
C. Personnel Management				
The City Manager is:				
	Successful in guiding people as a team toward common objectives			
	Effective in selecting qualified and highly competent staff members			
	Effective in maintaining professional relationships with Department Directors			
	Effective in assuring that staff members make a positive impression on citizens			
The City Manager:				
	Insures that the City's personnel policies and practices are administered by City Department Directors and staff in an equitable manner			
	Develops and motivates employees so that they are increasingly effective			
	Monitors performance of employees and initiates corrective action as needed			
Comments:				

SECTION III: EXTERNAL RELATIONS

		Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
A. Citizen Relations				
The City Manager:				
	Makes a positive impression on citizens and is he respected in the City of Oviedo			
	Has appropriate visibility or identity in the community			
	Assists the Council in resolving problems at the administrative level to avoid unnecessary Council action			
	Is willing to meet with members of the community and discuss issues of concern			
	Is skillful with the news media, avoiding political positions and partisanship			
	Provides information to the public in a timely fashion on matters which will cause public reaction			
	Represents Council positions and policies accurately and effectively			
	Thinks and acts in a manner reflecting an attitude that client (Council, staff or citizens) perceptions and satisfactions are important			
	Responds completely and in a timely manner to citizen complaints			
B. Intergovernmental Relations				
The City Manager is:				
	Effective representing the City's interests in dealing with other agencies			
	Participative in enough intergovernmental activity to have an impact on behalf of the City			
	Cooperative with the county, state and federal governments			
Comments:				

SECTION IV: PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
A. Communications			
With regard to communications, the City Manager is:			
Easy to talk to and a good listener			
Thoughtful, clear and to the point			
Sensitive to the concerns of others			
Candid and forthright in discussing City business matters with members of City Council			

B. Management Style			
The City Manager			
Demonstrates interest and enthusiasm in performing his duties			
Commands respect and good performance from staff			
Shows initiative and creativity in dealing with issues, problems and unusual situations			
Is open to new ideas and suggestions for change			
Works well under pressure			
Consistently puts aside personal views and implements Council policy and direction			
Displays the ability to resolve the numerous conflicts inherent in municipal government			
Responds well to a changing world and local conditions; is adaptive			
Is accessible to City Council members			
Conforms to the high standards of the profession; follows the "ICMA Code of Ethics"			
Exhibits a commitment to continuing education in order to encourage his professional development			
Is receptive to constructive criticism and advice			

		Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
C. Job Effectiveness				
The City Manager:				
	Demonstrates interest and enthusiasm about the Council's Vision for the City			
	Gives his staff the tools necessary to provide efficient, responsive City services			
	Coordinates the implementation of City goals and objectives			
	Supports policies that will promote annexation and growth in the City of Oviedo			
	Creates a positive atmosphere for successful economic development in the City			
	Supports responsible infrastructure expansion and maintenance			
	Emphasizes the need for employee training and technological improvements			
Comments:				

SECTION V: NARRATIVE RESPONSES

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THIS PAST YEAR:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the Manager's most notable accomplishments during the past year?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the Manager's qualities were most instrumental in fulfilling the role of City Manager this past year?

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FOR COMING YEAR:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the Manager do that you would like him to continue?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there anything that the Manager does that you would like him to do differently?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In what areas should the Manager focus his attention in this coming year?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have any other general comments to share with the City Manager?

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The researcher has worked in local government as a city planner for approximately 6 years. He went back to school in order to complete this Ph.D. because he wanted to obtain a better understanding of the challenges that are facing the local level of government in the United States and in developing countries. This is the only way to develop effective responses to these challenges. The researcher's goal is to continue to research and write about the challenges facing local government and the skills local government employees need develop in order to overcome these challenges. Whether the researcher fulfills these goals through academia or in a professional capacity in local government is still unknown because of the uncertainty brought on by the current economic environment; however, the researcher does know that things will eventually turn around and that he will continue to develop into a leader in the field of local government management.