

THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN CITY MANAGERS IN TEXAS  
IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY AND  
THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

by

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Debra Brooks Feazelle (1957 - 2010).

She was a first generation woman city manager in Texas  
and a first rate friend and public servant.

She was always there for us with her spunk, her spirit, her success, and her sincerity.

Her many sisters and brothers in public management miss her greatly.

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This research is totally dependent on a group of city managers interviewed for this study. Their willingness to share their knowledge speaks to the noble profession of public management. Their courage in taking the risk to trust me with their experiences

and revelations speaks to their own personal dedication to public service. To each and every one of them, I am grateful and humbled by their contribution to this effort.

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The main tasks of this body of work are to record history, explore a personal side of public administration, and inspire others to pursue a career in public management or the academic field of public administration. Ultimately, it is hoped that this work will make a small contribution to discontinuing the practice of ignoring and under utilizing half of society's resources based on the fact that their gender is female.

June 15, 2011

## ABSTRACT

# THE EMERGENCE OF WOMEN CITY MANAGERS IN TEXAS IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY AND THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

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The first generation of women city managers in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early 21<sup>st</sup> Century have one thing in common: all were initially mentored and promoted by men. Like survivors of a Texas tornado that huddle in the closet and then peek out to see what is left of the world around them, these few women who became the first generation of assistant or city managers began to look around for other women who had also done so. Even though there were just a few, they began to mentor each other. I would propose that an enlightened public administration theory is what these women in public management have created through their experiences and actions. This enlightened theory acknowledges there is and always will be differences between males and females; those differences are true assets to organizations and society; those assets have equal power and value; the combination of these differences makes a new and more complete level of public service; and therefore, a new and more complete approach to public administration. As women play a larger role in public management by

gaining a seat at the decision-making table, they are also acquiring formal power. This new power is not a redistribution of a limited amount of power and does not take away power from men. Rather, is an expansion of power taken to a new level of participation, contribution and inclusion, all for the betterment of public administration and the society it serves in the 21st Century.

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## CHAPTER 1

### PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND WOMEN CITY MANAGERS

#### 1.1 Introduction

The academic field of public administration has entered the 21st Century with renewed and energized exploration. The inquiry is moving along a continuum that is considering the history of public administration, while at the same time is seeking new information and questioning the future of public administration. A neglected area of research and knowledge in public administration is the emergence of women city managers who entered the profession in the late 20th Century. The breakthrough of women into public management may be the single most influential catalyst to change public administration in the 21st Century. Women brought a new and expanded lens with which to view and practice public management. The unique lens of the female perspective of public management provides a rich enhancement to the study and evolution of public administration into the 21st Century. As scholars and administrators wonder what to make of women and their entry into city management, the same issues can be applied to the perspectives of racial/ethnic minorities. Because of this expanded lens, women brought a higher level of inclusion into the management and leadership of public organizations, actions which rippled out into the community. This impacted local

government organizational culture, as well as the organization's interaction with the community.

## 1.2 Why Research Women City Managers?

Women city managers have created a legacy worthy of documentation and study. Only the trailblazing first women can tell us how they broke through the barriers, and through understanding their experiences, we can continue to pave the way for future generations of women and minorities entering the field of city management. The experiences of the first women city managers are a part of public administration history. Though a certain amount of literature exists regarding women city managers, documentation of their direct voices and experiences is lacking in academic literature. As with any academic endeavor, the seeking of knowledge from those who have gone before is an important part of knowledge construction, and the experiences of those who walked a particular public administration path is important.

## 1.3 The Culture of Women City Managers

This study offers a lens into the lives of some of the first women to serve as city managers in Texas. These women dealt daily with complex issues of governing, while simultaneously coping with obstacles of advancing in a male dominated profession. Their experiences and insights provide institutional knowledge for the public administration field.

This study provides a unique look at the private culture of women public leaders. Few non-elected public officials are more subjected to public exposure than city managers; they work, live, and play in a "fish bowl." There is, however, a more private

side of city management which is shared only with trusted professional colleagues. It is this personal glimpse that this project provides.

#### 1.4 The Importance of the First Woman City Manager at a City

Women city managers are still a fairly new phenomenon. Fortunately, the second generation of women city managers will not have to face the same seemingly insurmountable obstacles as their predecessors. No longer is the public so quick to ask "Can a woman manage?", "Will women managers be too emotional?", "Will women managers be able to handle police issues, fire personnel, and public works projects?". As ridiculous as these questions sound, they are actual comments heard by some of the first women city managers. Because they had to address such concerns and prove themselves capable, the first women city managers more often than not worked harder and longer hours than their male counterparts. Furthermore, the majority of first generation female city managers were also wives and mothers during a time when men provided little, if any, domestic support. A fortunate few were exceptions, and had more support from their spouses. Those insights are shared in future chapters.

When the first woman city manager arrives at a city, the city organization itself changes. Any new city manager will make changes to the organization they lead; however, the additional dynamic of the first woman city manager fosters in an additional element of change. There is the "fear of the unknown" among staff due to the arrival of any new city manager, no matter what the gender; and there is an additional "fear of the unknown" if the new city manager is the first woman city manager for that organization.

## 1.5 New Paths Made by the First Women City Managers

Any first woman city manager in a municipality will forge a new path. The first women to do this, over the last two or three decades, were unique in a number of ways. First, they faced, sometimes daily, naysayers who questioned their ability to lead. Stories and experiences abound of sabotage attempts from female staff, of sexual advances and harassment, of traveling with male staff and elected officials and the unique situations that must be dealt with in that type of setting, and of being the only woman in the room in nearly all meetings and discussions. There were erroneous assumptions that they were the secretary rather than the manager, which reveals differences in attitudes and demeanor toward women in a professional setting. It was not unusual for the first women city managers to attend a meeting, at first being perceived as clerical staff, and subsequently being mostly ignored. Then, upon being revealed as the city manager, being treated totally different and receiving respect and acknowledgement as an active participant in the meeting.

Second, the first women city managers had no female manager mentors, and very often had no male city manager mentors, either. Sometimes women were fortunate enough to have a man willing to provide mentoring and assistance, but never was there another woman who could help guide the way and provide insight to the particular issues that she, as a female, would face. This first generation of women managers had to figure it out for themselves, all the while without confirmation from someone who had already been there that they were doing it "the right way."

Third, the first women city managers had to actually teach many men how to deal with and talk to women managers in meetings. Even as recent as the past 10 or 20 years,

it was rare that men with power and status knew how to be in a meeting with a woman who had power and status. This forced the women managers to find ways to successfully handle these situations.

## 1.6 Framing the Study

This research is framed by theories of the glass ceiling, power and the production of power elites, and public administration. The glass ceiling is identified as the invisible barrier that prohibits women (and minorities) from advancing in organizations. It represents the obstacles and blockages that keep the supervisory and management ranks of organization composed by white males. Theories of power and the production of power elites are important because within those theoretical frameworks lie the mechanism by which power is obtained. The practical field of public administration, or public management, represents the actual setting in which power is modified and the glass ceiling is broken. Specifically, the study of the first women city managers examines how certain women broke through the glass ceiling and entered the ranks of the power elites, thus impacting the management of public organizations.

## 1.7 Key Events for Women in Public Administration

An addendum to this body of work is a listing of key events for women in public administration. The genesis of this list is borrowed from *Introducing Public Administration*, Fifth Edition, by Shafritz, Russell, and Borick (2007). The inside covers of this text lists key events in public administration; however, more events related to women in public administration will enrich the listing and help reveal the significant contributions that women have also made to public administration. A sampling follows.

1890 - The Territory of Wyoming allowed women to vote

1900 - Utah, Colorado, Idaho joined Wyoming Territory in allowing women to vote

1916 - Jeannette Rankin elected as first woman in U. S. House of Representatives

1920 – Nineteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution established Women’s Right to Vote

1920 - Rose Tyler Barrett (Warrenton, Oregon) was first woman city manager in the United States (Read & Witlieb, 1992, p. 39)

1919-1928 – Mary Parker Follett’s writings and lectures on organization management

1948 – Willie J. Brockman, first woman city manager in Texas (Beaumont, Texas 1948-59) (Blodgett, 2008, pp. 66-67).

When Beaumont's assistant city clerk Willie J. Brockman was asked to move to the city manager's office on a temporary basis while a replacement city manager was sought, she made history as the first woman city manager in Texas. After a time, the city's department heads convinced the city council to hire her as the city manager. She served in this capacity for eleven years, bringing stability to the organization, bringing the city budget into the black, and successfully managing water and sewer system expansions, street improvements, and other capital projects. On January 20, 1949, the *Houston Post* newspaper reported Beaumont Mayor Otho Plummer as saying, "The fact that Mrs. Brockman is a woman is now completely removed from the picture," (Blodgett, 67).

## 1.8 Summary

Chapter 1 presents the research question and an overview of the theoretical framework used to address that question. Chapter 2 addresses the theoretical framework,

utilizing the theories of the glass ceiling and the production of power elites, and how these theories relate to first generation women city managers in Texas. The gap between theory and practice in public administration literature is also examined. Chapter 3 outlines the research approach and methodology utilized for this study, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Chapter 4 identifies the research setting and what the statistics say about the government structure of cities in Texas and its city managers, as well as providing information on other relevant city management studies. Chapter 5 returns to the qualitative research findings. These findings are based on interviews, documents, conversations, and observations, utilizing both case study and ethnology methods of research. The chapter is organized around their personal life and background. Chapter 6 examines the career preparation of the study participants. Chapter 7 reflects their career once they become city managers. Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation with a summation of the research findings and the impact of women city managers in Texas and their influence on the study of public administration.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

A theory is a set of concepts that define or explain some phenomenon. In this study, I consider the first pioneering women city managers as a phenomenon. Two theoretical frameworks are applied to this research: (1) the theory of the glass ceiling (U. S. Department of Labor 1991) and (2) the theory of the production of power elites (Clegg 2006). Each of these approaches are used to analyze the ascent of the first women city managers in an organization. These theories will be connected to the research and woven together to create a framework to explore and explain how women came to occupy the city manager's chair and what their experiences were in that leadership position. There will be a particular focus on how these theories intersect and converge, ultimately advancing knowledge of how the glass ceiling can be broken. This study of public administration is not just about gender, but rather is about inclusionary power and evolving organizations. What is happening in public management today will be tied back into a new theoretical representation that reflects a blending of inclusionary power and the evolving management of public organizations.

## 2.2 The Purpose and Practice of Public Administration Theory

This academic study is based on practical public administration. Practitioners of public administration may at times question the benefit of theory to the everyday aspects of their jobs. The examination of experiences of women city managers helps to bridge a gap between the academic and the practitioner viewpoints by adding the direct knowledge and experience of women practitioners to academic institutional knowledge. It is beneficial to consider the importance of theory to both the practitioner and the academic in public administration.

Denhardt (2008) addresses this separation between theory and practice by urging a cooperation of efforts by both practitioners and theorists. He suggests that this may enhance new approaches to theory building. He relates that the work of other theorists would be more meaningful to his work if he could "personally engage their theories and make them meaningful in terms of my own experience," (191). He cites a problem with theory being useful for guidance to practitioners as they carry out their work in public organizations, and points out that "the works of classic theorists do not seem to comprehend or explain the experiences of practitioners," (191).

Within public administration literature, we fail to find one definition or interpretation of public administration theory, yet there is some agreement on key points: (1) the history of public administration theory development is woven throughout the history of humankind, although *formal* public administration theory is more recent; (2) most authors provide a definition of theory for their own particular research and publication, depending on the focus of their work at the time; (3) there is no one theory that applies to all aspects of public administration; and (4) theory is useful and has a

purpose in the study and practice of public administration. Public administration scholars have accomplished considerable work documenting and discussing public administration from the past. What public administration scholars seem to struggle with today is defining what is happening right now and what we can expect out of public administration theory in the future.

A repeated theme in theory discussion is that there is no one theory that applies to the subject of public administration. Scholars discuss a variety of theories, identifying them as “...a loosely knit community of many approaches in...analysis” that contain components of diverse thoughts, themes, explanations, and perspectives (Gortner 2007, 7). Theories can be organized in various ways, identifying categories and levels (12), as well as timeframes and eras. Shafritz (2005) groups classics of organizational theory into schools of thought, such as classical, neoclassical, human resource, structural, economics, power and politics, organizational culture, reform, and environments. Sabatier (2007) even professes the “need for better theories” as he discusses the public policy process (3).

Stillman (1991) discusses at length the issue of the lack of public administration theory, citing schools of thought of one best way, dualism, and pluralism, with no concrete definition of public administration theory. Frederickson and Smith's (2003) entire book puts forth different public administration theories, including political control of bureaucracy, bureaucratic politics, public institutional theory, public management, postmodern, decision, rational choice, and governance. This fact is a testament to the complexity of the public administration field of study. Denhardt's (2008) focus is on the public organization itself. His section on building theories of public organization discusses the many choices that theorists have. He points out that “...although a

comprehensive and integrated theory of public organization has not yet been developed, a number of very important themes appropriate to that study have been explored in great detail,” (11) and that now, perhaps those themes can be brought together for an integrated public administration theory. Because of the complex nature of public administration, scholars over the decades have suggested a number of theories to explain the processes that go on in administering public services and governance.

According to Denhardt (2008), theory moves “beyond a simple observation of facts or a blind adherence to certain values to provide more general interpretations” (9). Harmon (1986) discusses theory as being “...formal, more rigorous and...consistent,” (58). He also acknowledges the gap between academic and practitioner as to the utilization of theory applications in public administration and organizational theory. He explains theory as moving “...from being the guide *for* practice into becoming the explicator *of* practice,” and makes the point that over time, the functional meaning of “theory” moved from being a conviction of religion toward that of an idea and intellectual thought in public administration literature (59).

*A theory is an explanation, that is, it is an attempt to explain a segment of experience in the world. The particular thing that a theory explains is called the phenomenon of interest...” and consists of “...a set of concepts and the relationships that tie them together into an explanation of the phenomenon of interest. (Hatch 2006).*

Over all, one could say that efforts toward the development of public administration theory, as well as all theories, include the gathering of information, the processing of information, the interpretation of information and the drawing of conclusions. Often, this process produces new ways to view the object of study, new interpretations of information, and perhaps new discoveries of previously unrevealed insights.

Is there a purpose of theory to both the academic and the practitioner? Denhardt (2008) purports that the purpose of public administration theory "...is to provide a more coherent and integrated understanding of our world" (9). It is useful to study the formal theories in the field of public administration (as well as all practical fields of study) because they are more developed and thought out than just the general discussion of issues related to the practice of public management. Luther Gulick writes that the "theory of organization...has to do with the structure of co-ordination imposed upon the work-division units of an enterprise" (Gulick, 1937, as cited in: (Shafritz 2004, 90). He concluded that people working together had the best results when a division of labor was identified, coordinated, and organized for efficiency. Gulick was not just conducting research and reporting, he was looking for a better way.

Harmon (1986) further clarifies the purpose of theory:

*For convenience, we shall define a theory as any intellectual construct that enables someone to make sense of a situation or a problem. A practical theory, then, is one that either illuminates possibilities for action that would not otherwise be apparent or stimulates greater understanding of what the person has already been doing," (61) ...." ...a way of learning in order to make possible further action...a means for understanding our past actions (63).*

Perhaps in reality, we have four types of theorists: (1) the "historian theorists" who study the past (through previously documented events) and write about it, perhaps bringing about a different organization of the data; (2) the "reporting theorists" who study what they currently observe at the time and write about it, perhaps framing it in some categorical manner; (3) the "interpretative theorists" who take history and reporting one step further and attach more in-depth and perhaps new interpretations of meanings to the work; and (4) the "futurist theorists" who look at what was, what is, what should be, and predict what they think will take place in the future.

This study examines both theory and practice and as they relate to power in public organizations, focusing on women city managers. This perspective relates to all four types of theorists listed above: (1) a historical account is presented which tells the story of the journeys of the first women city managers; (2) a reporting account takes place with current interviews, observations, and categorization of findings; (3) an interpretative account takes that history and reporting and attaches interpretation and meaning; and (4) finally, the futurist account makes a prediction to the extent possible as to what women in city management means to the future of public administration. As a basis, I begin with an overview of the glass ceiling and gender issues in public organizations, and with power and the production of power elites. These topics are intertwined in the literature and in our public institutions. They are also intertwined in this dissertation.

### 2.3 The Glass Ceiling, Gender, and Women in Public Administration

Discussion of women in public administration is found in literature relating to the glass ceiling, gender studies, feminist theories, and public administration. The term "glass ceiling" was popularized in a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article describing the invisible barriers that women confront as they approach the top of the corporate hierarchy (U. S. Glass Ceiling Commission 1995). The term was made an official societal phenomenon with the creation of the Glass Ceiling Commission (1991-1996). Their "Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative" defined the glass ceiling as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions," (U. S. Department of Labor 1991). This definition does not address gender alone, but also includes anyone who might fall victim to "attitudinal or organizational bias."

To explore the glass ceiling theory, interviewees were asked what obstacles associated with the glass ceiling they expected to encounter after becoming a city manager. Then, they were asked what obstacles they actually experienced as new city managers. The history of experiencing such obstacles at various stages of their careers conditioned them to expect continuing obstacles after becoming a city manager. This research explores whether that expectation was accurate.

### *2.3.1 Gender as an Organizational Component*

The arrival of the first woman city manager at a city signals change. The fact that the new city manager is a woman may be considered an aspect of gender reform (Connell 2006), with underlying concerns of gender and organizational power (846), thus making gender equity an organizational culture component (847). Newman (1994) also ties the existence of the glass ceiling to the organization and argues that the character of organizations in which individuals face the glass ceiling may be an important factor to investigate (Miller, Kerr and Reid 1999, 219). Bell (2007), as well, places the glass ceiling as an organizational component and argues that the glass ceiling must be dismantled and removed from organizations. She contends that the focus on breaking through the glass ceiling implies that women who do not do so are failures. Rather, it is upper management's responsibility to dismantle the barriers such as the "old-boys" network, perceptions of women's leadership styles; personnel systems that disadvantage advancing women, and sexual discrimination and harassment that tend to remove women from organizations. She suggests that women managers can assist with this dismantling and that "A few women in power, coupled with men in power who also support gender equity and see value in diversity, may make significant progress," (pp. 284-285). Public

management today should include both women and men in power who support gender equity and value diversity. Women city managers can contribute to the dismantling of outdated government systems that perpetuate discrimination and harassment, especially when the woman city manager has had direct experience with discrimination and harassment. They recognize it easily because they experienced it, something that white male city managers did not have to learn to recognize.

Stivers' (2004) points out that there is "virtually no published theoretical work from a feminist perspective in the field of public administration" (p. 477). She covers four areas in public administration theory which might relate to feminist theory, including the question of administrative knowledge; the model of the ideal public servant; the nature of administrative discretion; and the dimensions of the administrative state. Stivers concludes her article urging academics to use feminist theory as a creative source in developing a new theory of public administration. Her comments indicate that current public administration theories do not adequately incorporate all the perspectives that exist in practical public administration. She, like several other scholars, relates a sense that there is "something missing" from public administration theory development.

### *2.3.2 Gender and Power in Public Organizations*

Kanter (2005, originally 1979) paints an accurate portrait of the power of women in private sector organizations in her "Women Managers Experience Special Power Failures" vignette (pp. 346-347). Women who rise to management positions can be essentially sabotaged by resentful females. Also, overprotective males in the positions of mayors, assistant city managers, police chiefs, and other department heads, may have good intentions that are perceived by others as a reflection of weakness on the part of the

city manager. This overprotection appears to others as an inability on the part of the manager, which undermines the power and authority of her position. To avoid this, top male officials must adjust their behavior and truly relate to the female city manager as an equal, but for better or worse, the burden falls on the woman city manager to educate the "male protectors" on this point and to insist on their compliance with ceasing the behavior. Interview questions for this research explored career track experiences with sabotage and other opposition behaviors and how interviewees dealt with these issues.

Denhardt (2008) touches on "Variations in Feminist Theory" as it applies to public administration, referring to the work of Stivers and Ferguson (173-4). He cites that critical feminism examines alternative models of public organizations, as pointed out by Ferguson (1984) and her recommendation that organizations could be "based on power defined as energy and strength, groups that are structured, not tied to the personality of a single individual, and whose structures do not permit the use of power to dominate others in the group." (p.180).

Frederickson and Smith (2003) devote a section on the feminist perspective of public administration, heavily quoting Stivers' (2000, 2002) and her discussions of the masculine and feminine traits of public service. They cite Stivers' focus on female reformers who provided social support to those in need, with "...intimate understanding of the circumstances of others, sympathy and support, advocacy, and anything but disinterested neutrality" that the masculine perspective and logic of bureaucratic neutrality" advocates (Frederickson and Smith, 2003, p. 149-150) . Additionally, they credit the feminist perspective tracing back to Mary Parker Follett (1918,1924), and her

argument that "...administrative processes are more important than hierarchy and authority," (p 149)

### *2.3.3 Power Relations and Women City Managers*

Connell's (2006) examination of ten public sector worksites in Australia reveals that there remains a gendered division of labor and it is a powerful presence in organizational life. He contends that this dynamic relates to emotions and human relations, as well as to culture and symbolism. Gender transitions in public organizations are categorized as emotional processes, embedded within the organizational culture. Power relations are confirmed to be a crucial feature of gender transition.

Connell further argues that women have problems in establishing authority and that some men do not easily take direction from women (846). This study examines how the first women managers established their authority and learned to work successfully with men who may have difficulty working with women with power.

### *2.3.4 Women City Managers and Relationship Styles*

Femininity as subordination (Ferguson, 1984) contends that certain character traits and relationship styles that are thought of as feminine are in reality learned by women not because they are biologically female, but rather because they are politically powerless and forced to learn how to cope with the world around them (p. 92). This type of real-life in real-time classroom may have taught specialized and highly developed coping and maneuvering skills to women. Ferguson's point that women have been more spectators than participants in public life (p. 95) is certainly an accurate one. I would add, however, that women have not just been spectators in the male sense of the "arm chair quarterback," but rather as keen observers of what is happening around them and in

identifying how men do or do not get things done (Godbey 2008). With this acquired knowledge through observation, women learned how to accomplish tasks by finding new and different “routes” around the roadblocks created by male methods of action. The feminine traits referenced concerning “...impression management...more responsive to other people than are men...women’s intuition...to sense other people’s needs and motivations...” (p. 95) have served women well in seeking out and creating these new pathways in public administration.

Guy (1993) argues that although women public managers have made gains, it is slow and painful. She recommends that we think “outside the box” about new leadership styles and job classifications. She recommends that public organizations and agencies be representative bureaucracies not just horizontally, but also vertically.

### *2.3.5 Why Women Want to be City Managers*

Many factors come into play when women consider making a choice to become a city manager. It is clear that women city manager hopefuls face factors beyond those faced by men, including mobility, family, gender stereotypes, illegal interview questions on the part of elected officials, sexual harassment, etc. (Hassett, 2003). Whatever the ultimate decision, the extra concerns a women city manager must face serve to make her more knowledgeable of the difficulties of such decisions and how they may impact others in the public organization . The understanding and support of family issues and major life events can move the public organization toward a more family-type atmosphere, directly impacting its organizational culture.

Several interview questions focus on the motivations in obtaining a city manager position, including exploration of the sources of ambition and drive, what the subject wanted to gain for herself, and what, on a personal level, made the risk worth taking.

### *2.3.6 How Women Become City Managers*

In a look at how women government executives make advances in their careers, Bowling, et al (2006) describe three access points as being “cracked ceilings” (fewer blockages in securing top posts), “firmer floors” (access to executive positions which spring from more solid foundations), and “weakening walls” (lateral career movements that penetrate the walls surrounding traditionally male-dominated types of agency leadership positions) (Reid, Kerr, and Miller, 2003, as cited in Bowling et al., 2006). The identification of just how women are getting to executive positions is a tremendously important aspect of research because this information must come from reality and how women find creative ways to affect change. The study of the first women city managers examines this reality and identifies career tracks, steps, and obstacles along the way.

The U. S. Glass Ceiling Commission Report (1995) discusses the aspects of male managers feeling threatened by female and minority introduction into managerial ranks. Stivers (2002) includes a comment from Page 28 of this report where one white male manager relates , "What's important is comfort, chemistry, relationships, and collaborations. That's what makes a shop work. When we find minorities and women who think like we do, we snatch them up," (C. Stivers 2002, 29), original source (U. S. Glass Ceiling Commission 1995, 28). This study examines this statement as the connection between the glass ceiling and the production of power elites. Even though the quote may relate to "shop work," it grants an acceptance of someone different, yet with

the perceived ability to fit in and work collaboratively, regardless of gender or minority status. Interviewees were asked about their mentoring experiences, who and what helped them along the way, as well as their educational, work experience, and professional networking history. Their responses provide a window to the career preparations that take place prior to women becoming city managers.

#### 2.4 Women City Managers and Management of Public Organizations

When the first woman city manager takes office at a city, the organization will experience change. It is also possible, however, that change has already begun before the new city manager arrives. When an elected body considers the hiring of a new city manager, it is not unusual that some sort of change is favored. Perhaps a major event has occurred with the previous administration and new leadership is needed to help the organization get back on track, even if that track needs to be a different one. An organization that in the past may not have seriously considered hiring a woman city manager may now be open to that consideration.

A study by Saltzstein (1986) of women mayors discovered that the presence of a woman mayor appears to be a stimulus to the employment of women in other nontraditional areas within municipal organizations. This is partly due to the fact that the mere presence of a woman mayor will raise the level of awareness of gender discrimination and job segregation. It also seems to modify the attitudes of other elected officials and staff toward women in power positions. Thus, as more women in the public administration field acquire the title of mayor, city council member, or city manager, a synergy develops that will help other women enter the field.

Recently elected females have been known to turn to executive women on staff for advice and information as they take on their newly elected duties. Staff women who willingly assist women elected officials make a contribution not only to the elected official, but also to the organization, the community, and public administration. This contribution helps women become more valuable to the public organization, as well as more valuable to the community they serve.

Women city managers may also bring a different management style to the organization. Fox and Schuhmann (2003) reported from a study of women and men city managers that women city managers were more likely to promote the democratic process in the administration of their duties; that women were more likely to communicate and include citizen participation in decision making processes; that women prefer to be in the middle of a web of interactions, rather than at the top of a hierarchy; and that the “skills and value that women managers demonstrate can only help to advance the legitimacy of government – in this case, local-level bureaucracy” (pp. 369-370). This mention of being in the “middle of a web of interactions” directly relates to the issue of public organizations, bureaucratic structures, and power dynamics.

Recent literature notes that collaborative behavior may provide an edge in city manager tenure success. Collaborative skills such as facilitating, team building, negotiating, persuasion, and bargaining can provide more employment stability (Thurmond 2009). Women city managers may have gained these skills during their career paths simply as a means of survival and finding ways to get things done without formal authority or power. When they reach the assistant manager's chair, they find these

skills can set them apart. As a city manager, the mastering of these skills may help to increase their leadership with the organization and the elected body as well.

Do women have a distinctive and different way of utilizing power? Whether one uses power over someone or something versus power to persuade through speaking or actions is an important question in feminist theory (Kolmar 2005, 52-53). Power through consensus building, rather than power through force, creates a different way of getting work done. Can women build consensus better than men, or have women developed these important skills as a survival technique that sets them apart from most men?

The management of public organizations is discussed in public administration literature. The organization's values, goals, and ethics are part of its culture, as well as its personnel system and the way it treats its employees, citizens, and others. When the first woman city manager arrives at an organization, her leadership style and her values will influence that organization, causing it to evolve into a more inclusive institution. Trice and Beyer (2005) discuss organizational change as involving "a break with the past; cultural continuity...noticeably disrupted...an inherently disequilibrating process," (383), although they distinguish their use of the term "culture change" to identify a more planned and deliberate set of actions.

According to Schein (2005), "...to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers and administrators live with them," (361). This statement not only clarifies leadership, but also stresses the strong tie between organizational culture and the leadership in place. He argues that the strong tie to organizational leadership requires that if an organization becomes dysfunctional, it is leadership's responsibility to address it. Although the elected

body sets the policy direction of the city, it is the city manager position that creates the culture of the organization, which is a dynamic in addition to the daily management of the organization. For example, if the city manager respects and values commitment to family obligations and responsibilities, the organization will have a culture that is "family friendly." This type of organizational culture can be considered an asset to employees. Likewise, if the family needs of employees are not respected by management, the organizational culture can be viewed in a negative light, and ultimately contribute to the loss of employees.

Interviewees were asked about their management styles and leadership skills, as well as how they dealt with politicians. These questions explore their concepts of management and leadership in a political environment.

Clegg (2006) argues that power is the catalyst that creates organizational change. New CEOs are often expected to create change in an organization, including the culture of the organization. In order to change organizational culture, old ways may be thrown out to make way for new ways, new power sources, and new recruits to carry out new programs (17-18). Clegg recognizes the work of Follett and the facilitative nature of the "power to," as well as Kanter's (1977) positive aspects of power (190). Clegg refers to Dahl's (1961) *Who Governs?* as still an important question for public administration and the discussion of power. Whoever governs is whoever has a seat at the table when public policy issues and questions are discussed. As women elected officials, women city managers, and other women staff members acquire those seats, policy discussions take on additional pathways and elements that were likely never considered in the past. This is

because the field of view was restricted before their entrance into the ranks of decision makers.

## 2.5 Power and the Production of Power Elites

*Power is ultimately about the choices that we make, the actions we take, the evils we tolerate, the goods we define, the privileges we bestow, the rights we claim, and the wrongs we do. (Clegg 2006, 3)*

For this study, we will focus on power as a positive influence, enabling those with power to accomplish positive things. Those individuals or groups with power are able to accomplish tasks and projects and make a difference in their world.

Even though Mary Parker Follett (2005 (originally 1926)) does not specifically discuss gender or public administration, her writings on management issues reflect themes discussed in recent years about management and leadership. Her work appears in public administration literature in the areas of organization theory. In her speech “The Giving of Orders,” she argues that workers will do a better job if they feel they are working *with* management or supervisors as opposed to working *for* a supervisor that simply gives orders without regard to the situation of the worker. This alludes to a flatter, more horizontal organization as opposed to the vertical hierarchy common at the time of her writing. The discussion of a different bureaucratic organization structure is a recurring theme in public administration literature in the early 21st Century. Of course, the giving of orders is all about power and how it is utilized by management.

Follett (1919) discusses the community as a process that does away with hierarchy; that the group working in collaboration can become a new whole, a new entity, a new community of collective thinking. Further, she emphasizes that the true leader must show the student how to relate to the life of the community (16). Follett is acknowledged by modern day scholars as being ahead of her time. Her recommendations

of "power with" rather than "power over" are discussed today, along with the term "empower others" when more modern management styles are recommended. Fox and Schuhmann (1999) argue that women are more likely than men to use a facilitative and inclusionary management style.

Foucault (1980 p. 112) ties power to dynamics of development and change through regimes of power, and at that particular point in time establishes conceptions of truth and rationality (Clegg 2006, 10). While elite theory posits that a few individuals hold power, pluralistic elitism contends that there are multiple spheres of power. Pluralism provides a perspective that enables a more democratic decision-making process since power is shared among different groups (343-344). Elitism is not just elected officials, but also includes staff and entities outside the public organization who may have power and influence on the decision-making and policy development process of the public organization. Clegg cites Selznick's (1957) "transition from administrative management to institutional leadership" as identifying the point that elite managers are political leaders and statesmen. High government officials, including city managers in local governments, can have enormous power and influence with the governing body and the community. As Clegg points out, "contemporary pathways to the top are transforming," and that transformation will affect power structures of organizations (347).

This leads us to the focus of the production of power elites. This study relates this theory to the manner in which the first women obtained the city manager title. This power shift may indeed be a paradigm shift and a catalyst that forever modifies public organizations and public administration theory. To explore this concept, interviewees

were asked about their career track, with open-end questions which encouraged detailed accounts of their journeys.

### 2.5.1 *The Need for Study of the Production of Power Elites*

The following excerpt from the book *Power and Organizations* addresses the production of power elites and the need for further study as it relates to the progression of women in organizations. Its comments on translation from practice to theory are pertinent to this research.

*Translations from practice to theory that achieve systematicity institutionalization can become objects of analysis in their own right, creating their own truths. Theories of organizations – and theories of organization power – are just these sorts of translations. The important question, however, is not so much to identify what it is that they construct as true (on this one should, properly, be agnostic rather than faithful) but to enquire what are the functions of the truths that they posit. What is important is to analyze the machinery of truth production. Truth claims that are granted and respected perform an essential function in ordering membership and normalcy in the social contents in which they pertain, such as business schools and other organizations. They specify the conditions of existence for possibilities and impossibilities; they legitimate relations of domination and subordination. In this sense, what is (taken to be) true is a social fact, as Durkheim (1983:67) puts it. (Clegg 2006, 12)*

Clegg et al. (2006) discusses the process of elite production regarding those who gain power and obtain top corporate status. They present elites as “the missing link between studies of power and studies of democracy” (342), attributable to two things. First, to the institutional disciplinary barriers between political science, organizational sociology, and management studies which divide the focus of the study of power and democracy. Second, “the lack of an institutional perspective on elites,” referring to the responsibility of elites to take political action through interdependent political identities. They contend that elites must engage in political action that has to be shaped in acceptable forms to diverse political bodies (343). Clegg et al. are correct in this

assessment. The lack of institutional perspective is missing from the academic knowledge base of public administration literature. There are pockets of it here and there. There are statistics. The direct input from city managers themselves, however, is extremely rare. Direct input from women city managers is virtually non-existent. This study adds to that body of institutional practitioner knowledge.

Each subject interviewed for this research described her personal journey as she ventured from a city staff person with little or no formal power or authority and entered the world of the power elites of her (or another) public organization.

### *2.5.2 Women City Managers and the Production of Power Elites*

Within the production of power elites we must consider what may actually be happening in reality. We find the answer in a combination of the individual and the then-current power elite structure. First, there is something about the individual, such as productivity or work ethic, that makes her stand out and get noticed by decision makers. Second, the dynamic of the production of organizational power elites is at work when it reaches out to seize that individual and bring her into the structure of organization's power elites. This occurs when those in power (management) are considering change in organizational structure or need a replacement or addition within the ranks of management.

This process addresses the glass ceiling theory by recognizing that one does not just break through the ceiling. Instead, there is an individual below the glass ceiling pushing up, while at the same time there is a person pulling up from above the glass ceiling, reaching out to seize a hand and pull that individual through. It is a two-way effort and, in the case of the first women city managers, the individual(s) pulling the

woman through the glass ceiling was always a male. We must acknowledge that both males and females are involved when the glass ceiling is broken. The individual has prepared herself and set herself apart in some way and gets noticed by someone within the ranks of the existing power elite. That member of the power elite, such as the current city manager, recognizes potential in the individual and does, indeed, "snatch them up" into an apprentice arrangement where they are mentored and further trained beyond what the formal education, past experience, and professional networking provides. This action takes place in many promotions of individuals into management, but if the individual is a woman or minority, then they are also breaking through the glass ceiling.

As indicated in Figure 2.1, several factors contribute to an individual's breakthrough into the power elites of a public organization. In the case of most women city managers, this process occurred when they were promoted to the assistant city manager position. Formal education may be a base point and provides the necessary credentials, such as a Masters degree in Public Administration (MPA). Next, a proven track record of successful performance will alert management to an individual's competence and capabilities. The ability to accomplish tasks and successfully complete major projects reveals a knowledge and skill level that can transfer into management levels of the organization. Additionally, the individual may have skills and knowledge that address a weakness or need of the organization. Other factors that management notices are similar characteristics which blend with or compliment the organization's management philosophy, culture, stage of development, and organizational needs. A management work team "fit" is sought and traits such as trust, values, and work ethic are considered. Overall, decision maker(s) get the feeling that they can work successfully

and collaboratively with the individual. Finally, an invitation is presented to the individual. If accepted, the individual receives apprenticeship training and mentoring in order to prepare them for the next level of organizational expectations. These steps generally take place at the assistant city manager level.

As previously stated, when most of the first women city managers broke the glass ceiling, they did so as assistant city managers, not city managers. Figure 2.1 reflects this process.

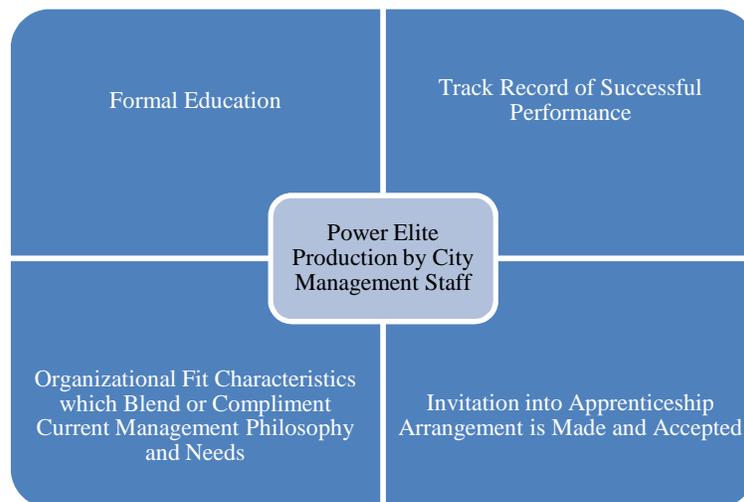


Figure 2.1 Power Elite Production by City Management Staff

Figure 2.2 addresses the process of an elected body hiring a city manager (even if the city manager is a male). Those women who were never assistant city managers may skip the process in Figure 2.1 and go straight to the process in Figure 2.2. The ingredients are the same, but the education and track record must be reflected on the resume and are part of the formal job application process. In addition to education, credentials, and documented experience, the elected body will consider whether this individual will "fit" the

organization and/or the community. As previously stated, the "snatching up" in this scenario is the actual job offer by the elected body.

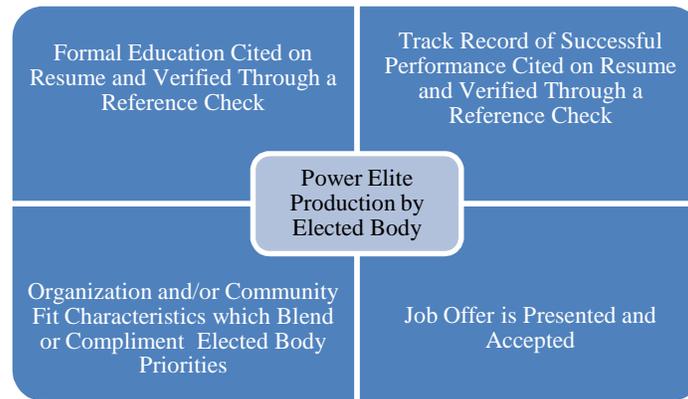


Figure 2.2 Power Elite Production by Elected Body

This study includes the career paths of both situations as women city managers journey to the city manager's chair. In the cases where the woman city manager was not first an assistant city manager, the individuals pulling them through the glass ceiling would be the elected body that hires them as city manager. The same production of power elites applies to either case, however, the power elite is the current city manager in one case (Figure 2.1), and is the elected body in the other case (Figure 2.2). The elected body may or may not consist of both males and females.

## 2.6 Women in Public Administration and Academic Writing and the Impact on Theory Development

*But I judge the movement for sexual equality to be a secular trend, not a temporary fad; and I judge it to be global, not limited to the United States, or even the West. A major societal transformation is under way, the implications and results of which can be discerned only dimly.*  
 -- Dwight Waldo (1988, p.179)

Waldo's statement has extensive implications in public administration. Government initiates change, or responds to change demands. Government can set the course for the norms of society through laws and court rulings. These changes, no matter their source, permeate our society and enter the halls of our public institutions. Waldo's insight that the quest for sexual equality will continue and cause transformation is proving to be true. This study relates that insight to the field of women in public administration. Women who contribute academic writing to public administration, along with women practitioners, will have more of an impact and influence on public administration in the future than in the past. That level of impact will depend largely on what gets published and recognized as making a contribution to the academic field of public administration. Although public administration has a rich history that is fairly well documented over the last three centuries, most of this history is documented in the last half century. The topic of women in public administration is even more recent, and there is less documentation of the topic. The voices of women in public administration, both academics and practitioners, are largely absent. This study addresses that lack of documentation.

In considering just exactly what is documented about women in public administration, as mentioned in Chapter 1's introductory remarks, I will offer the examination of an excellent public administration text. In *Introducing Public Administration* (Shafritz, Russell and Borick 2007) the inside book cover displays a listing of Key Events in Public Administration, starting in the year 1776.

There are just a few entries that specifically apply to women, the first of which is the year of 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution gave

women the right to vote. This action is quite telling about the lack of status of women in the public arena in the United States prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The second mention is in 1926, with Mary Parker Follett's calling for "power with" rather than "power over" in her writings of organization management. Third, in 1933, Francis Perkins, as Secretary of Labor, is listed as the first woman in a president's cabinet. Fourth, in 1944, J. Donald Kingsley's *Representative Bureaucracy* introduces the concept that all social groups have a right to participate in their governing institutions in proportion to their numbers in the population.

A fifth entry is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, which addresses sex discrimination in employment. Shafritz relates a fascinating tale of how this Act ended up addressing the equality of women in the workplace. He relates that Congressman Howard "Judge" Smith (1883-1976) added the word "sex" to the amendment, thinking it would be perceived as ridiculous and would, therefore, defeat the proposal. After realizing the anticipated result was in danger of not happening, Smith attempted to withdraw the amendment. The few women in Congress objected to its withdrawal and called for the vote to be a recorded vote instead of a voice vote. The men in Congress did not want to be publicly voting against women, so the measure was passed (463-464). It appears that a non-supporter of women's right, in making light of the status of women at the time, attempted to use the ploy to defeat a 'ridiculous' law and it backfired on him.

It is a key point that the few women in Congress made this huge impact. Obviously, had there been no women in Congress at the time, Smith's strategy would

have succeeded. This event helped to establish the legal foundation for the modern women's movement (463). These few Congresswomen had power that resulted in action.

This 1972 event serves as a key point, proving that women working within the political system can accomplish significant change. Women city managers, other female staff, women elected officials, and women in the academic field of public administration make contributions, however, many events are never documented for history. In fact, the importance and magnitude of these events are often down-played simply because they are accomplished by women.

Sixth, the topic of women in public administration is analyzed from the perspectives of women academic authors in public administration. A section on "A Feminist Perspective" cites authors Joan Acker, Camilla Stivers' *Gender Images in Public Administration* and *Bureau Men, Settlement Women*, and Mary E. Guy's "The Feminization of Public Administration" (*Public Management in an Interconnected World*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992, as cited on p. 297) as reliable sources on the topic (295-298). The ideas put forth discuss changing organizations due to the involvement of women, a change in organizational structure from hierarchal to less rigid, a change in the use of power from "over" to "with," and a call for more accommodation and flexibility.

As with Kanter, Halford and Leonard, and others, much of the published work is found in private sector studies. Clearly, there needs to be more academic writing and the omission of this work is discussed by Kirsch (1993) as she relates the struggles that women professors across academic fields have in getting their works written and published. She does not specifically address public administration as a field of study, but

rather presents case studies of successful women faculty and students in getting their works published. The struggles they describe, gender based difficulties in the university setting, will sound familiar to women who have struggled within public organizations to gain credibility and recognition for their work.

One reason the perspective of women in public administration is largely absent may be that scholars view such knowledge as unrelated, thereby implying that women's issues have little bearing on public administration (Hutchinson and Mann 2004). Such scholars, predominately male, do not believe that anything is different for women than for men, or they do not see the necessity of documenting the experiences of women in public administration, partly because of their lack of experience and exposure to female environmental obstacles which are also present in academia. It simply is not the world as they have experienced it. While they may not be able to understand what they do not experience themselves, they also may have had no need to observe the female environment going on around them. It is, thus, quite apparent that women public administration scholars have a job to accomplish in relating this knowledge.

Academic writing of women in public administration is often discussed in feminist theories. For example, Stivers' (2004) discusses two perspectives of feminist theories: (1) one which addresses the historical dichotomy in sex roles and the treatment of behavioral differences in men and women as attributable to society sex roles; and (2) the theory that perceived differences between men and women, whatever the source, do matter and are seen as products of males experiences and values (477). The assumption with the second theory, therefore, is that experiences and values of women are worthy in their own right and need to be included in all realms of our society. Stivers continues

with a third feminist perspective that points out that the second one above does not consider that women of different races and socioeconomic status would have different sets of experiences and value still. She challenges us to consider what a feminist perspective in public administration would look like (478). Exploring public administration's gender dilemmas is urged in order to develop a form of public administration that leads to change (2002). Such a feminist theory should "identify the small points of entry through which consideration of gender have infiltrated existing theory..." (128). Stivers argues that public administration denies life experiences and dimensions of gender. It is likely that the female aspects of life are simply not documented sufficiently. This points, once again, to the importance of women in public administration and the documentation of their experiences.

Ackers' (2006) work on gender research provides focus on the documentation of the life of women by placing gender roles in a more realistic context which includes race and class. The concept of an intersectionality of race, gender and class discussed by Ackers points to the complexity of gender research. That fact is true because women make up about half of the world, and as such, have a part to play in all aspects of human life and relationships. History and historians have largely omitted this half of our history. The massive task of "catching up" is overwhelming. Women scholars and public administrators need to join scholars like Stivers in contributing to the body of work.

Stivers (2002) argues that "an analysis of public administration through the lens of gender might begin to reshape the practice and the field" (p. 147). This is evidenced by the research conducted for this study as it relates to the management styles, motivations, and career track experiences of the first wave of women city managers.

Their voice is given merit in the documentation of this study and those voices reveal an intense caring for the public organization's employees and citizens.

A portion of the published work relating to women in management is in the private sector corporation, while others may stress both private and public sector organizations. In reviewing the issue of men and women in the corporate world, Kanter (1977) makes the point that

*...the whole thrust of this book is to present an alternative model, one that demonstrates that responses to work are a function of basic structural issues, such as the constraints imposed by roles and the effects of opportunity, power, and numbers. Attention to these issues would require organizations – not people – to change (261).*

She was talking about private sector corporations, but the same applies to the public sector. The halls of government must change to allow the inclusion of women into public administration.

It is here that I would like to present my own analysis and perspective on this issue. This author contends that academic writing of women in public administration is not just about gender and feminism. These may be aspects to consider toward the creation of a new theory of public administration, but such an approach still places gender in the margins of public administration. I argue that the discussion of women in public administration is better placed where it truly belongs, within the realm of an inclusive, enlightened, and evolving public administration. Women city managers, as well as women academics, can make significant contributions to that inclusion, enlightenment, and evolution of public administration in the practical world and public administration theory. The simple inclusion of their own experiences and voices is a good start.

## 2.7 The Need for a 21st Century Theory of Public Administration

The practice of public management in the 21st Century can be tied back into a new theoretical representation that reflects a blending of inclusionary power, sustainable public organizations, and an enlightened and evolving public administration. What, in realistic and practical terms, seems to have been developing through at least the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the slowly emerging formation of a new theory of public administration. As working career women in public administration performed daily tasks, they were making slow and incremental changes within the bureaucratic systems of which they are a part. This slower, internal change, may have accomplished as much as other public administration reforms.

### *2.7.1 Missing Links in Theory Development*

Many scholars include within their discussions of public administration the point that something is missing from theory today or that something has not come together yet as it should have by now (Denhardt 2008). "The need for new theory was implicit in the inadequacies of old theory," (J. Acker 2005, 450). Stivers (2002) challenges those who care about public administration to not deny gender dimensions, but rather to deal with them straight on (147).

Several factors contribute to this missing theory development, including (1) the lapse of time between practical action and theory development, (2) the lack of communication and contact between the academic and practitioner, and (3) the lack of inclusion of all who could contribute. The lapse of time between practical action and theory development takes place due to the fact that practical action takes place in the present, while theory development takes place after the fact. This lapse of time relates to

such items as specific daily incidents like the handling of citizen complaints or creating a new recreation program. The lapse of time also applies to major topics, issues, and trends, such as creating a new land use master plan, updating the emergency management plan, implementing a new computer system protocol, or addressing the need for sustainable government practices. While these activities and projects are taking place on a daily basis at city hall, the academic community may not take an interest in the items until later. If one of the topics catches the eye of the academic community, then, quite naturally, additional time is spent researching the topic and documenting the research into a publication. One example would be the major events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and the handling of emergency management procedures, which were widely addressed at the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Conference of 2008. While the topic is still pertinent to both academics and practitioners, meanwhile back at city hall, that subject no longer receives much attention and a new topic has taken its place. While this may not be an issue of concern with scholars, it does impact a practitioner's perception as to their own need for utilization of theory.

The lack of communication and contact between academics and practitioners adds to this gap. When an academic program does not have an active professional relationship with government managers, the trust relationship may be missing. When the relationship does not exist at all, the manager may not be as forthcoming in responding to questions or discussing topics with academics, much less aiding in providing easy access to research material, ideas, and suggestions. A way to address this gap is through the participation and partnering among academic public administration departments and government management networking organizations, in addition to the development of

personal working relationships between specific professors and researchers and public managers.

The lack of inclusion of potential contributors relates to the exclusion of the voices of women and minorities in academic writing. This exclusion is not only the actual women and minority professors, but also the research subjects themselves, such as women and minority city managers. The remedy for this is also two-fold. The academic community can encourage and support more women and minorities as professors and researchers, while the practitioner can encourage and support the employment and promotion of more women and minority management staff. Figure 2.3 reflects both the gap and suggested remedies.



Figure 2.3. Actions to Address Missing Theory Development

Many academic publications address issues related to the need for public administration theory development. Elshstain (1993) contends that we need to be able to “articulate the bases and steps in the creation of female identity, public and private...to create a mode of political thinking that helps women redescribe social reality from a vantage point that allows for, and sustains, critical reflection...to conceptualize plausible alternatives” (302). This idea of conceptualizing plausible alternatives relates to a point

made by Charlotte Bunch (1979) wherein she describes theory as enabling us "...to see immediate needs in terms of long-range goals and an overall perspective on the world" (12). Further, in addition to describing what exists today and analyzing that reality (or perception thereof), the theorist must have the vision to determine what should exist and then develop a strategy to change what is to what should be (13-14). As new or modified theories are considered in the study of public administration today, the women of public administration must be brought into current discussions. Describing what exists today in the field of women in public administration is a large part of what is missing from research and publication efforts.

### *2.7.2 Perhaps a New 21st Century Theory of Public Administration*

Perhaps an enlightened public administration theory is what women in public management have helped create through their direct experiences and actions. This public administration theory recognizes that there is and always will be differences between male and female, as well as differences among various races and cultures. This public administration theory acknowledges the fact that those differences are true assets to organizations and society; that those assets should have equal power and value; and that the combination of these differences make a new and more complete level of public service, and therefore, a new and more complete theory of public administration. The power of enlightened public administration is not a redistribution of a limited supply of power, but rather an expansion and sharing of power. It is not the hoarding of power by a few power elites, but rather a sharing and inclusive power that encourages many minds to make contributions to public administration.

The structure of traditional public administration bureaucracy is changing due to the influx of women into public administration. The typical bureaucratic hierarchy is being expanded with a merging of a webbing structure of interrelationships and issue networks to supplement the typical bureaucratic hierarchy. Those who say this is impossible are those who have not been watching women with no formal power getting things done over the last 30 years. The experiences related by the subjects interviewed for this research reveal stories of how they were able to accomplish assigned tasks with little or no authority. Their relationship and project management skills enabled them to find ways around the bureaucratic structure of their organizations. Having no formal authority to demand the actions of others, they developed relationship skills, participative management techniques, persuasion abilities, and diplomacy styles.

The public administration of the 21st Century must be one that is enlightened, inclusive, sustainable, and evolving. The evolution must address the needs of today with an eye on tomorrow and must allow and encourage the inclusion of all who can contribute. Public administration is evolving, and at a rapid pace. It is now more technological based, yet must continue to serve humanity. No one theory can apply to all of public administration partly because no city, no community, no state, no territory, no region, no nation is the same. Each area's profile, demographics, stage of development, revenue base, social needs, past, present, and future are unique. There cannot be just one theory of public administration to fit all these variables. An enlightened theory of public administration for the 21st Century must be defined and built upon inclusion, sustainability, and an evolving structure that can keep up with, and sometimes get ahead, of public demands, needs, and expectations.

Our Founding Fathers created the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights to serve as a foundation for a new nation. That foundation had to be flexible and as non-confining as possible. If we were to consider one theory of public administration, it too, would have to be based on a foundation with flexibility for different places, different issues, different people, and different times.

So what of the future of public administration? What is the future of those who are in positions of power today, and what will their impact be on public administration in the future? Clegg et al (2006) contends that power elites are in a "shrinking space."

*Who then, are the elites? They are those who are generated by dominant relations as the authorities governing various circuits of power. They control the nodal points through which legitimacy flows. Some node occupants are born; others are made; and some succeed on merit. Origins are of diminishing importance in a society of flows that are ever more fluid. (Clegg, 378-9).*

I contend that power elites previously were in a "shrinking space" but those in power in the future will be in a much larger space, with access from all directions. Our public institutions are already becoming infiltrated with those who have a right to provide contributions and influence. Only a public administration structure that embraces and encourages this inclusiveness will be sustainable and continue to evolve in enlightened and positive ways.

We may not know exactly where we are going with public administration in the future, but we do know we are going there very fast and in new ways that perhaps we cannot even imagine today. If public administration is to keep up with the demands of society, it must look further out into the future and include all the human capital and social equity it can muster. Only an inclusive, sustainable, and evolving public administration, both academic and practical, can hope to meet this challenge.

## 2.8 Summary

This research seeks the answer to the questions: (1) How did the first women city managers in Texas break through the glass ceiling and enter the ranks of the power elite to become a city manager? and (2) How will the inclusion of both academic and practitioner women in public administration impact public administration theory development?

The goals of this research are to document the emergence of the first wave of women city managers in Texas for three purposes: to create a historical record, to create a mentoring tool, and to add to the institutional knowledge of academic public administration. By considering the theories of the glass ceiling and the production of power elites, we explore the important events of the emergence of women city managers in Texas in the late 20th Century and the early 21st Century. It is hoped that those events will partially address the gap between the practical and academic impact of public administration theory development. Ultimately, it is hoped that this research will encourage an enlightened theory of public administration that represents inclusion, sustainability, and evolution of the public administration profession itself, as well as the academic pursuit of public administration theory.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This study utilizes a mixed method research approach since both qualitative and quantitative data are valuable for this topic. The information sought is not just statistical, but also focuses on the "how" and "why" in order to seek "one's story" and reveal institutional knowledge which will be important for the academic field of public administration. In addition to statistics and information regarding city managers, the setting in which the research takes place is important and requires some degree of explanation.

#### 3.2 The Research Setting and Forms of Government for Texas Cities

In addition to statistics on women city managers, there are also data to explain the setting of the research. Since the setting is cities, basic information is provided regarding how a city's size is categorized according to population groupings typical for research.

There are two types of city government in Texas: (1) general law, with populations under 5,000, and with restrictions on organizing their structure, assessing taxes, geographical growth, and rules and regulations; and (2) home rule cities, over

5,000 in population, with more freedom to address geographical growth, government structure, the assessment of taxes, and creating and enforcement laws and policies.

Within these two types of government, there are three forms of government that apply to incorporated cities and towns in Texas: (1) mayor-council, (2) city commission, and (3) council-manager. This research relates to only the council-manager form of government and must filter statistics reported in all three forms. These three forms of government are outlined below in very simple terms.

### *3.2.1 Mayor-Council Form of Government*

The mayor-council form of government has an elected, full-time paid mayor that is responsible for day-to-day operations of the city. The elected body, called the city council, are positions that do not get involved in daily operations. The members come together only when the appropriate meetings are scheduled and posted for public knowledge. Even though the mayor may hire a full-time daily administrator, there is not the title or same responsibility as the city manager position. Examples of this type of government are Houston, Pasadena, and Texas City (Blodgett 2008, 8).

### *3.2.2 City Commission Form of Government*

This form of government is not common in Texas today, and actually was the forerunner of the council-manager form of government. Under the commission form, a governing body is elected by the people and serves as both the legislative and executive branches of the city. Individual commissioners may have assigned authority over certain government functions or departments (Rice n.d.). As of the year 2008, there were no city commission municipalities in Texas (Blodgett 2008, 8).

### *3.2.3 Council-Manager Form of Government*

General law cities may adopt the city manager plan of government if a citizen petition is presented to the council and an election is held to adopt the plan. Thus, some cities under 5,000 may have a city manager (Blodgett 2008, 8-9).

Most cities with the council-manager form of government, however, are home rule cities. One provision of a home rule charter may establish the position of "city manager." This position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city government and is hired by and reports to the elected body, consisting of a mayor and city council members.

This research utilizes cities with an established position of "city manager," which is mainly home rule municipalities, but in some cases would include general law type cities.

### 3.3 Texas City Management Statistics and Their Relation to the Form of Government

The Texas Municipal League (TML) is a nonprofit organization to which all cities and towns in Texas can join. Its purpose is to serve the needs and advocate the interests of Texas cities. It contains 21 affiliate chapters for the various disciplines within city government, such as Mayors, Councilmembers and Commissioners (AMCC), City Attorneys (TCAA), City Managers (TCMA), Police Chiefs (TPCA), City Secretaries, which are also referred to as municipal clerks (TMCA), Finance Directors (GFOAT), etc. (Texas Municipal League 2010). Among its many diversified duties, it serves as the host executive office for the Texas City Management Association, maintains the website for TCMA, and publishes the annual membership directory of TCMA.

Two scenarios of reporting by TML are considered in this study. First, Scenario A is data found strictly on the TML website. For example, in 2003, TCMA reports that there were 439 cities whose city managers had TCMA memberships, with 39 (8%) of these city managers being women (Texas City Management Association 2003). This figure, although found on the TCMA website, contained no details of the statistics. Since a TCMA membership directory cannot be obtained for that year, those statistics cannot be verified and are, therefore, unreliable for this study. Such overall data can be deceiving due to the type of government structure in place and its relationship to the city manager position. The TML website provides:

- number of incorporated cities in Texas
- number of cities with TML membership
- member cities broken into population brackets

Scenario B exists when the TCMA membership directories are available. These directories allow a detailed count and analysis. For example, in 2007, TCMA reports 588 cities with 90 (15%) female managers listed (Texas City Management Association 2007-2008; 2008-2009; 2009-2010; 2010-2011). Of these 2007 figures, it is important to note, however, that only 30 of these cities with women city managers have a population over 5,000. The difference between 90 and 30 is a significant technicality to this research. TCMA membership directories contain the following inventory of information:

- Listing of city managers/city administrators in descending order by population;
- Listing of city managers/city administrators in alphabetical order by city;
- Alphabetical listing of membership profiles;

Membership profiles contain the name of the member, as well as the name of their spouse if provided by the member. The name is the only way to assess the gender of the member. If a name is questionable, a visit to the city's website may reveal a photograph or narrative biographical sketch that refers to "he" or "she."

Membership profiles also provide information on highest level of education obtained, membership in other professional organizations, and data that contributes to the calculation of years of experience, years as a city manager, and whether promoted to the city manager position or hired from outside the organization.

The distinction between general law and home rule government in its relationship to the city manager position is important because there are instances when a person is listed as the city manager, but they may not actually be a city manager. In a general law city or town, the mayor and other elected council may have administrative powers. Many of the small (under 5,000 population) cities and towns simply select the city secretary position to "run" the city, with mayoral and council members oversight. The city secretary position is a legislatively required position for each incorporated city/town in Texas, so there will always be a city secretary, but there may not always be a separate position for a city administrator (or city manager). In Texas, the city secretary position is usually filled by a woman. Therefore, the females listed as city administrators or city managers in cities and towns under 5,000 population may actually be city secretaries or other positions. These positions will not usually function in the same way as city managers in home rule cities, even though they have membership in TCMA.

Looking again at Scenario A methodology, the 2003 figure of 39 females, that data would include all cities, including general law cities with less than a 5,000

population; therefore, the 2003 figure and percentage of females is actually inflated due to inclusion of general law cities. Although the number of women city managers may have grown between 2003 and 2007, there is currently no accumulated data to determine the accurate rate of that growth.

### 3.4 The Research Sampling Population

This research has three different, but related sampling populations. First, there are ten women city managers who granted personal, face-to-face interviews. The second sampling population consists of women city managers throughout Texas. Statistical data on these individuals are compiled from membership information with the Texas City Management Association (TCMA) for the years that data is available from published membership directories, as well as from Blodgett's (2008) book on local government in Texas. The third sampling population is women city managers at the national level. For this level, statistical information was gathered from published articles and other available data from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The Texas pool remains proportionally small and the exact number is indefinite. There are two reasons for this. First, there is no consistent or standard method of obtaining or defining data for women city managers in Texas. Second, these positions are very fluid due to job tenure and relocation factors of the city management profession. The “number” therefore is a moving target.

The interviewees names are not revealed, and each one had to meet the qualifications of

- a.) being the first woman city manager at a particular city, and
- b.) the city had to be in Texas.

Texas managers were selected due to several reasons. First, I utilized my personal relationships with the interviewees to gain access to them. Second, my location in the north central area of Texas enjoys a large cluster of cities (over 130), placing potential subjects geographically nearby. Third, this research is funded by the author, and to keep expenses to a minimum, the close proximity of the interviewees was important. Although face-to-face interviews were a priority for this research, one telephone interview was conducted. This subject was valuable to the research due to her extensive large-city, multi-state knowledge and experience.

### 3.5 The Quantitative Research

The quantitative data consists of statistics on women city managers in Texas and in the United States. Sources of this data include the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Texas City Management Association (TCMA), Blodgett's (2008) publication, and city websites. None of these sources publish specific statistics regarding women managers. The Texas data collected consists of the number of women in city manager positions and their demographic profile, such as age, education level, years of government service experience, years in public service years as a city manager, career paths, membership in professional organizations, and whether hired or promoted to the city manager position.

Since quantitative data is scarce on the subject of women managers, with even less existing professional organizational statistical information, the contributions of other empirical studies is considered when possible. For instance, Fox and Schuhmann (1999) compared women and men city managers as to their decision-making styles, their motivations and mentoring relationships. Watson and Hassett (2003, 2004) studies were

also referenced, particularly their reporting of city management career paths and motivations.

Although my research does not compare men and women city managers, portions of data from other studies are included because their findings shed light on women managers and their influence on municipal management.

### 3.6 The Qualitative Research

The qualitative research consists of one-on-one interviews by the researcher. The interview data is supplemented with resumes, professional biographical profiles published in directories and on the Internet, public documents, conversations and personal observations. The identities of the interviewees are not revealed. This method is a case study approach, however, it is with an ethnographical focus. Because of the new existence of women city managers, the ethnographical focus provides more insight into the unique culture of these women. The research examines their career tracks and experiences and applies the findings to the theories of the glass ceiling and the production of power elites.

The qualitative research method for this project relates to Madriz's (2003) comments regarding the ability to gain access into the lives of women, noting that feminist researchers are "attempting to use and develop research methods geared toward facilitating forms of communication with women..." (p. 374). The blending of interview, case study, and ethnography align with recent qualitative methodologies that seek new ways to research. The principal point to be made here is that the researcher did not adhere to strict processes of one style or method to obtain knowledge. The emphasis is more attuned to the act of gaining knowledge than to a particular, strict process of gaining

knowledge. This researcher is pursuing the construct of "rich data by amassing pertinent details," (Charmaz 2003, 257).

To frame the research within a more structured context, this research explores how the first women city managers got that position in light of the fact that there are so few. Underlying assumptions are that the first women city managers: (1) broke through the glass ceiling; (2) gained acceptance into the ranks of power elites; (3) proved successful in managing and leading local government organizations; and (4) have new information to offer to public administration, with that information being historical, mentoring, and academic.

This study and its utilization of various research methods fits closely with Harding's (1991) strong objectivity and Charmaz's (2003) constructive grounded theory. Harding's (1991) strong objectivity argues that feminist standpoint epistemology needs strengthening in order to provide a "scientific account of the relationships between historically located belief and maximally objective belief" (p. 142). She contends that the use of an epistemology that brings in strong objectivity would provide an extension of current study by adding to it the examination of background beliefs (p. 149). Simply expressed, you will not get full knowledge if you do not consider all aspects of the object of study. Identifying gender differences as a scientific resource, Harding expands the field of knowledge and knowledge seeking methodologies. By examining scientific resources with strong objectivity, light is shed on the relation between an object and subject as opposed to suppressing or ignoring, or worse yet, denying the existence of the relationship. To clarify, she does not apply strong objectivity to gender study alone, but

extends it into culture and social system research (pp. 150-156). Her work recognizes the importance of multiple viewpoints.

This research seeks to clarify events that take place because of gender or in spite of it. It is not about strict feminist standpoint theory, but rather, like the encouragement of Harding, it is about more than gender and includes culture and social system research. In her discussion of grounded theory, Charmaz (2003) proposes a constructivist method as opposed to the traditional objectivist method. Her proposal provides a more flexible use of the method, referring to it as a “constructive grounded theory” which gives main focus to knowledge acquisition rather than to the data gathering process. She emphasizes seeking depth and understanding of the meanings of actions and discussions. Charmaz argues that a constructivist approach requires a relationship with those individuals studied, and that relationship includes listening to the respondent's story, feelings expressed, and experiences. Interview questions may be focused on facts, but is also aimed at the meaning of answers. She encourages the study of people in their natural settings (251).

Both of these schools of thought blend with more recent qualitative research methods and styles. The flexibility of these newer methods fits well within this research approach. The study of women city managers utilizes a trust relationship between the researcher and the subjects and focuses on knowledge acquisition more than data gathering.

### 3.7 The Qualitative Data Analysis

Each one-on-one interview is audio recorded and transcribed. An identification number is assigned to each interview to ensure anonymity. Numbers, however, have a

tendency to dehumanize research subjects, so numbers are not used as identifiers in this report of study findings. Research subjects are given fictitious names picked at random, rather than the continued use of their interview code numbers.

The questions are open-end in order to encourage all the thoughts and elaborations that the subject is willing to relate. Question categories are deliberately not grouped together in order to require the interviewee, to some extent, jump around in their thought process. This was done in the hope of capturing a wider variety of responses and topics, rather than lead the interview down a designed, orderly path. If their response to one question also provided the answer to one or more other questions, those later questions were skipped.

After transcription, the questions and answers are placed into question and answer sets (Q&A Sets) in order to search for themes, patterns, and the absence thereof. The absence of themes and patterns is just as important as their presence, and those findings are also noted in the research findings. In addition to a narrative account, various charts and tables were constructed to help identify key findings.

### 3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research

The internal validity of this research is addressed through the rigor of the statistical analysis for the quantitative segment and through the thorough documentation and integrity of the qualitative segment. The studies utilizing ICMA data are considered a strength of the research method. The manual data collection from TCMA is also a strength and can be reproduced as long as the same editions of the printed directories are available. The interviews, however, can only be reproduced exactly as they are by the maintenance of the interview tapes and transcripts. The interviews provide valuable

knowledge but as time passes, the responses to the questions might be different at a future point in time. Although the interviews might be considered less valid, this issue is mitigated through consistency in defined terms and sound record-keeping for future verification. Also, the importance of the interviews and the knowledge revealed outweigh the lack of validity. These same issues apply to the external validity of the research.

Reliability is addressed in two ways. Statistical data and processing is well documented to ensure that accuracy can be verified and the processes can be repeated with the same results. The original interview records are maintained in a secure format in order to preserve the information as that particular moment in time. The interviews are coded so as to maintain the confidentiality of the research subjects. As required by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Texas at Arlington, non-public documents are kept in locked storage areas.

### 3.9 Limitations of Research Perimeters

The sample size for this research is small in number (10 subjects), but is an adequate sampling considering that so few women city managers exist. Some of the subjects are not currently city managers due to retirement or relocation.

Another limiting factor is that the responses to the interview questions at the moment in time of the interview are somewhat fluid. As previously stated, if the same questions were asked of the same women at a future time, some of those responses would change. The career track and progression to that point in time will stay the same, but their opinions about the profession and what they like best and least, what they are most happy with and most disappointed with may indeed change over time. This limitation is

offset, however, by the valuable insights that are revealed in the interviews. The interviews themselves are important by the very fact that they capture a moment of insight at a particular point in time.

### 3.10 Participation and Responsiveness of Research Subjects

With one exception, all subjects that agreed to be interviewed provided a full interview, even if it took more than one sitting. The one exception did not finish her interview due to being called back to her office for an emergency and was never able to reschedule. The interviews were conducted at a place of their choice, such as their office, their home, or a quiet spot in a conference or meeting center. They received no compensation for the interview. They were not provided with the list of questions in advance because I wanted their first response to the question, not a more planned out response. I was attempting to get at the "heart of the matter" and relied on what first thoughts came to mind as they responded to the questions. Portions of the interviews had the potential to be emotionally charged. The most intense emotion was exhibited by subjects when they related incidents in which their personal and/or professional integrity was questioned.

### 3.11 Researcher's Perspective and Epistemology

This researcher is a retired woman city manager and was the first woman manager at a city in Texas. This perspective, which coincides with the criteria of the research subjects, provides a lens through which the research is presented. The body of work is an ethnographic study of a group of first women city managers in Texas that explores their unique culture. The data also makes a contribution of academic writing that carries a

practical experience perspective in order to make a contribution to the institutional knowledge of public administration.

It is incumbent for this researcher to document the epistemology influence of this study because of the close association of the researcher with the subjects interviewed and the topic researched. My own epistemology relates to a “model for generating knowledge from the authority of individual women’s experience,” (Kolmar 2005, 46).

The epistemology of this research project is a conscious political act on the part of this researcher and relates to the craft of writing to change the world through civic and intimate journalism (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, 458-98). The research incorporates individual perspectives and interpretation of events in order to reveal additional, and perhaps new, knowledge in the field of public administration. The publication of interview contents of women city managers falls into this definition of civic and intimate journalism which, hopefully, will be a positive influence to further opening the field of public administration to women.

I see the work as an extension of my public service career for the purpose of recording history and providing a mentoring tool to both women and men. The work is also a furtherance of the development of the paradigm and evolution of social science research through the inclusion, blending, and interpretation of academic research data with my own practical knowledge of the field.

### 3.12 Summary

The mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods utilized for this research work together to provide a rich study of women city managers for the public administration academic field and the city management profession. This study sheds

light on several aspects of the study of women managers. There is no longer the question of “whether” a woman can manage and/or lead a city organization. Now, there is an established record that women *are* doing that very thing in cities of all sizes. As these managers enter the “mainstream” of general thinking about public management, the public attitude toward leadership and gender is moving further into the accepted norm. This study establishes the fact that women managers and the work they do make a significant contribution to the evolution of public administration in the 21st Century. As previously stated, the underlying assumptions of this study are that the first women city managers: (1) broke through the glass ceiling; (2) gained acceptance into the ranks of power elites; (3) proved successful in managing and leading local government organizations; and (4) have new information to offer to public administration, with that information being historical, mentoring, and academic.

In accordance with these assumptions, this study sets the stage for the reality that public administration is not about gender, but rather about the inclusion of all who are willing, able, and allowed to contribute to the field. Public administration, whether academic or practical based, should be about improving society, about leaving our cities better than we found them, and about recognizing that all people are part of the process. The findings of this study establish the fact that the gender of a person does not equate to a plus or minus of their skills, abilities, and contributions to public administration theory or practice.

## CHAPTER 4

### WHAT THE STATISTICS REVEAL ABOUT WOMEN CITY MANAGERS

#### 4.1 Introduction

There is not a great deal of published statistical data for women city managers. Due to this lack of information, this research gathered data from other published studies. Hopefully, this dissertation will serve somewhat as a "clearing house" for currently published information on women city managers in the United States, with a particular focus on the research setting of this study, which is Texas local government.

In compiling Texas statistical data on the first women city managers in Texas, the title of this research, "the emergence of women city managers" rang true. The first recorded woman city manager in Texas took place in 1948 in Beaumont. The next one was not until 1954 in Brownfield. In 1977 to 1979, four more cities (Garland, Kirby, DeSoto, Jacinto City) introduced women city managers. Any significant influx of women city managers in Texas did not begin until the 1980s, bringing in 19, followed by 29 in the 1990s, and 36 in the first decade of the 21st Century. This "emergence" was something that I felt was true, but there was no specific compiled evidence of it until I shifted through Blodgett's (2008) great book on city management in Texas. Women in public management in Texas are indebted to him for his meticulous work.

## 4.2 City Management in the USA

Published research of city management in the United States that includes separate data on women city managers compares women to men city managers. Even though this study does not make that comparison, these published studies are valuable sources of information and are reviewed here.

### 4.2.1 *Fox and Schuhmann Studies*

Fox and Schuhmann (1999) compared women and men city managers, thus providing data for women city managers at the national level. Their study collected statistical information from a survey sample drawn from ICMA's 1996 Membership Survey. The findings from this data were published in two articles, one in 1999 and one in 2001. The following Figure 4.1 covers certain demographics of cities, with a comparison of women and men managers. Their findings indicate that women city managers were managing slightly larger cities than men city managers, with a mean city population size of 24,412 for women and a mean city population size of 20,798 for men. Along with a slightly larger city, came larger budgets and more employees. The mean annual budget women were managing was \$32,097,477, while men were managing a mean annual budget of \$24,965,441. The number of city employees, likewise, was 240 for women managers and 199 for men managers. Men had more years in both the city manager position and years in the management profession, 7.1 and 13.5 respectively. Women had a mean number of years as city manager of 6.3 and years in the management profession of 10.3. Women lived in their cities longer, 21 years as opposed to 16 years for men. Women received a mean salary of \$54,170, while men managers enjoyed a mean salary of \$60,579. The age level was about the same for both women and men at

47.9 and 47.8 respectively. Education levels differed considerably at the masters degree level, with men outpacing women at 58.1 to 35.7.

| <b><u>Demographics of Cities for Men and Women City Managers in the Fox &amp; Schuhmann Study</u></b> |                           |                         |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b><u>Demographic Item</u></b>  | <b><u>Women (246)</u></b> | <b><u>Men (278)</u></b> |
| Mean city size  | 24,412                    | 20,798                  |
| Mean annual budget  | \$32,097,477              | \$24,965,441            |
| Mean number of city employees   | 240                       | 199                     |
| Mean years in city management profession  | 10.3                      | 13.5                    |
| Mean years in current position  | 6.3                       | 7.1                     |
| Mean years lived in city  | 21                        | 16                      |
| Mean salary   | \$54,170                  | \$60,579                |
| Mean age  | 47.9                      | 47.8                    |
| Level of education  |                           |                         |
| High School   | 21.8                      | 7.9                     |
| A.A.  | 13.1                      | 7.6                     |
| B.A.  | 24.2                      | 24.5                    |
| Masters   | 35.7                      | 58.1                    |
| Doctorate   | 1.6                       | .7                      |

(Fox and Schuhmann, Gender and Local Government: A Comparison of Women and Men City Managers 1999, 234)

Figure 4.1 Demographics of Cities for Men and Women City Managers in the Fox and Schuhmann Study

Fox and Schuhmann (1999) also considered motivations for a career in public management. Figure 4.2 reflects motivations for a career in city management for both men and women. Fourteen (14%) percent of women used the term "needed a good job" while 21.3% of men used this term. Women were more likely to describe their advancement as "climbing the career ladder" (7.8%) than men (4.3%). More women than men "fell into" city management, which is indicative of the small number of opportunities for women in the field, 9.3% for women and 2.8% for men. Few women prior to this study timeframe considered a career in city management as an option because they were not used to having those options. As will be discussed later, opportunities and mentors

enable that important and new "open door" for female advancement in public organizations.

The data indicate that women tend to use the terms "help the community" (28.5%) and "work with/serve citizens" (28.5%) as primary motivational factors, but their commitment to public service (69.4%) is similar to men managers (68.1%). Although in this 1999 publication, more men used the term "make a difference" (26% for men and 19.2% for women), we will see later that the women city managers in this dissertation research, which was conducted after the turn of the century, almost unanimously said that they "...wanted to make a difference" when asked why they wanted to be a city manager.

| <b><u>Motivations for a Career in City Management</u></b>  |                    |                  |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| <b>Motivation</b>  | <b>Women (193)</b> | <b>Men (254)</b> |
| <b>Employment opportunities</b>  |                    |                  |
| Needed a good job  | 14%                | 21.3%            |
| Fell into it   | 9.3                | 2.8              |
| Climbing career ladder   | 7.8                | 4.3              |
| <b>Commitment to the field</b>   |                    |                  |
| Like/love politics   | 9.3                | 6.7              |
| Find work challenging  | 22.8               | 18.5             |
| Specific policy motivation   | 7.3                | 8.3              |
| <b>Commitment to public service</b>  |                    |                  |
| Public service   | 69.4               | 68.1             |
| Help community   | 28.5               | 15.4             |
| Make a difference  | 19.2               | 26.0             |
| Work with / serve citizens   | 28.5               | 18.5             |
| Note: Entries indicate the percentage of managers who identified that area as a primary motivation.<br>(Fox and Schuhmann, Gender and Local Government: A Comparison of Women and Men City Managers 1999, 235) |                    |                  |

Figure 4.2 Motivations for a Career in City Management

*Including more women in positions of administrative power is essential if we hope to further the ideal of representative bureaucracy.*  
(Fox and Schuhmann 2001, 381).

In 2001 Fox and Schuhmann published additional information from their earlier research, focusing on mentoring experiences of women city managers. They identified the gender of mentors, as well as the source of mentors for both women and men managers. Figure 4.3 identifies the gender of women and men city managers, and the gender of their mentors. The figure indicates that managers of both genders have a similar number of mentors (average of 9.5 for women and 9.9 for men). Of those mentors, women managers had an average of 3.2 female mentors and 6.3 male mentors, while men managers had an average of 2.7 female mentors and 7.2 male mentors. Personal mentors include family and friends, while professional mentors include supervisors, educators, and elected officials. Fox and Schuhmann note that these are small differences (386).

| <b><u>Mean Number of City Manager Mentors by Gender of City Manager and Mentor</u></b>   |                             |                           |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Mentors</b>   | <b>Women Managers (246)</b> | <b>Men Managers (278)</b> |
| <b>All mentors</b>   |                             |                           |
| Mean total of mentors  | 9.5                         | 9.9                       |
| Mean total of women mentors  | 3.2                         | 2.7                       |
| Mean total of men mentors  | 6.3                         | 7.2                       |
| <b>Personal mentors</b>  |                             |                           |
| Mean total of personal mentors   | 3.8                         | 3.7                       |
| Mean total of women personal mentors   | 1.2                         | 1.2                       |
| Mean total of men personal mentors   | 2.6                         | 2.5                       |
| <b>Professional mentors</b>  |                             |                           |
| Mean total of professional mentors   | 5.7                         | 5.9                       |
| Mean total of women professional mentors   | 2.0                         | 1.3                       |
| Mean total of men professional mentors   | 3.7                         | 4.6                       |
| NOTE: Personal mentors include family members and friends. Professional mentors include supervisors, educators (teachers or professors), and elected officials.<br>(Fox and Schuhmann 2001, 386) |                             |                           |

Figure 4.3 Mentoring of Men and Women City Managers

To explore mentoring relationships, Fox and Schuhmann identified four sources of mentors: elected officials, friends, supervisors, and educators, with a focus on mentoring relationships. Figure 4.4 identifies the sources of mentors, their gender, and the gender of the city manager. Women managers reported mentors from elected officials at 68%, with 38% of those being female and 60% being male. Mentoring from friends was reported at 81%, with 37% of those being female and 72% being male. Supervisors as mentors to women were reported as 56%, with 40% of those being female and 39% being male. Educators as mentors to women were reported at 42%, with 18%

being female and 35% being male. Educators as mentors to men were reported at 14% female and 60% male.

| <u>Sources of Mentoring for Men and Women City Managers</u> |                             |                          |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | <u>Women Managers (241)</u> | <u>Men Managers(272)</u> |
| Elected officials   | 68%                         | 69%                      |
| Female  | 38                          | 33                       |
| Male  | 60                          | 65                       |
| Friends   | 81                          | 80                       |
| Female  | 37                          | 29                       |
| Male  | 72                          | 76                       |
| Supervisors   | 56                          | 54                       |
| Female  | 40                          | 25                       |
| Male  | 39                          | 51                       |
| Educators   | 42                          | 64                       |
| Female  | 18                          | 14                       |
| Male  | 35                          | 60                       |
| (Fox and Schuhmann 2001, 387)                               |                             |                          |

Figure 4.4 Mentoring Sources for City Managers

The study revealed a noticeable difference in male educators serving as mentors to female managers (35%) as to male managers (60%). Fox and Schuhmann commented, "Although one might assume that this difference is explained by the educational variation between men and women, with men having more education and therefore more educators as mentors, this proved not to be the case," (387). Their research continued with a comparison of men and women who had graduate degrees, with the difference persisting. They reported 72% of men and 58% of women with graduate degrees had mentors who were educators, and state, "These relationships, particularly the finding concerning educational mentors, deserve further exploration,"

(388). They offer that a potential explanation may be the lack of female educators, citing 1988 public administration and public affairs graduate programs where only 24% of faculty were women, and more than 50% of students were women. They conclude that "...through their educational experience, women see fewer opportunities than men to find same-sex role models," (388).

#### 4.2.2 *Watson and Hassett Studies*

Watson and Hassett (2004) examined the career paths of city managers in America's largest council-manager cities. For their study, the term "largest cities" applies to those cities over 100,000 in population (192). Their findings report general statistics for women city managers in the year 2000. Figure 4.5 lists the percentage of women city managers in the United States, followed by a breakdown of education, tenure, percentage working for one city, and percentage that were promoted within their organization.

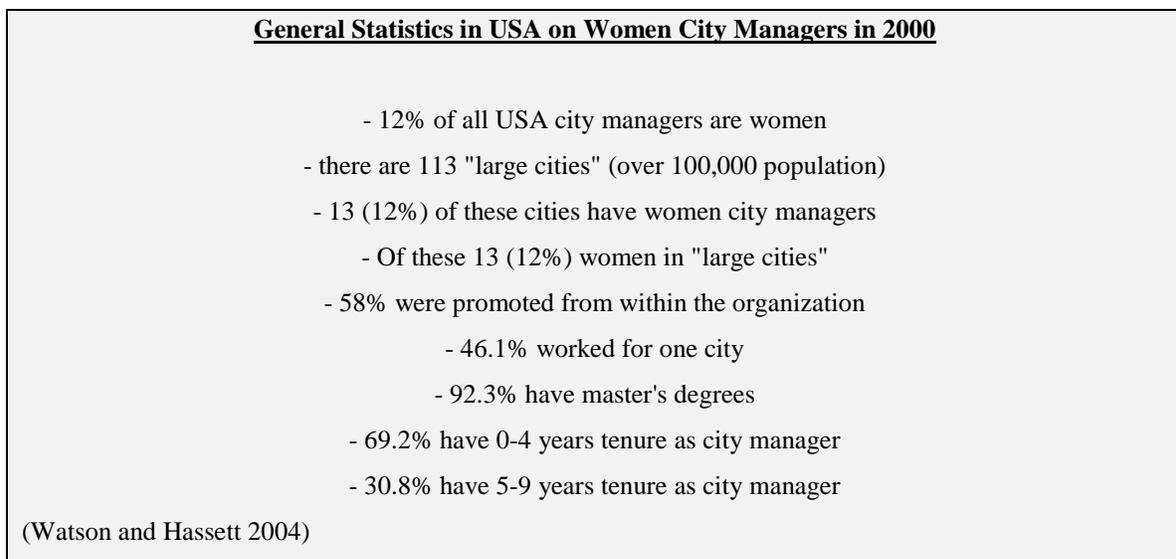


Figure 4.5 General Statistics in USA on Women City Managers in 2000

A look at the 2004 Watson and Hassett data for all large cities in the United States, and then comparing that data to similar data for Texas in 2008, provides an

interesting glimpse. Figure 4.6 reflects those findings from 2000 in one column and the same variables for Texas in 2008 in the other column.

| <b><u>USA vs Texas Women City Managers</u></b> |  |
|--|--|
| <u>US Large Cities (N=13;2004)</u>             | <u>Texas Cities (N=41; 2008)</u>         |
| - 53.8% promoted within org                    | - 56.1% promoted within org              |
| - 92.3% master's degrees                       | - 51.2% master's degrees                 |
|  | - 24% bachelor's degrees                 |
| - 69.2% have 0-4 years CM tenure               | - 56% have 0-4 years CM tenure           |
| - 30.8% have 5-9 years CM tenure               | - 32% have 5-9 years CM tenure           |
|  | - 10% have 10-15 years CM tenure         |
| (Watson and Hassett 2004)                      | (Texas City Management Association 2008) |

Figure 4.6 USA Versus Texas Women City Managers

The statistics presented for women city managers in Texas are compiled from a limited supply of available sources. There have been no specific data gathered for women city managers in Texas. The figures included in this chapter are hand-counted from Texas City Management Association (TCMA) membership directories and its website, the Texas Municipal League (TML) website, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) website, Terrell Blodgett's (2008) book on city management in Texas, and various public administration journals. The results of this study may constitute the most complete source at this point in time on women city managers in Texas.

This focus of this study is the first generation of women city managers in Texas as they began to acquire the city manager title in the 1990s and first decade of the 21st Century. Recall that for this study the term "first woman city manager" refers to the fact that the individual was the first woman city manager at a particular city. Therefore, it is

important to remember that the term "first" is not linked to a time frame, but rather is linked to an event.

The first woman city manager in Texas was Willie J. Brockman. She served as city manager in Beaumont from 1948 to 1959 (Blodgett, 2008, pp. 66-67).

#### 4.3 The Research Setting - Texas Cities

The setting of this research is embedded within the structure of cities. When discussing cities, the city population is a standard measure for identification of the size of a city. Seldom is a geographical size even mentioned. In accordance with common practice, the population rankings are used in this study when the size of cities are indicated. Figure 4.7 relates basic information about cities discussed in this research.

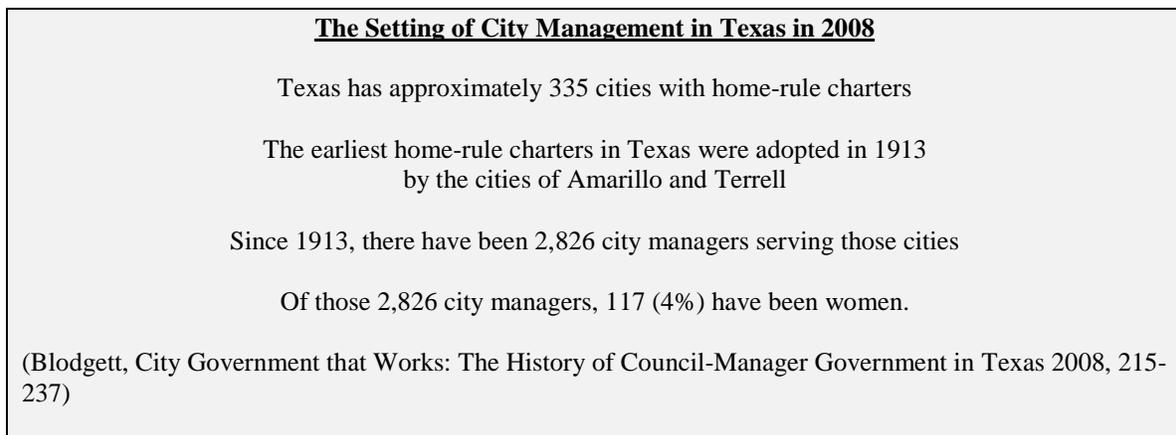


Figure 4.7 The Setting of City Management in Texas

The listing in Figure 4.7 identifying 2,826 city managers, 117 of which have been women, was compiled from listings on pages 215 - 237.

The Texas Municipal League website in 2010 indicates that it has 1,112 member cities.

Population breakdowns are provided in Figure 4.8.

| <b><u>Texas Municipal League Membership 2008-2009- 2010</u></b> |             |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Population Ranges &amp; # Member Cities (%)</b>              | <b>2008</b> | <b>2009</b> | <b>2010</b> |
| Under 5,000   | 748 (70%)   | 755 (69%)   | 763 (68.6%) |
| 5,000 - 9,999   | 136 (12%)   | 129 (12%)   | 128 (11.5%) |
| 10,000 - 24,999   | 100 (9%)    | 110 (10%)   | 111 (9.9%)  |
| 25,000 - 49,999   | 46 (4%)     | 47 (4%)     | 48 (4.3%)   |
| 50,000 - 99,999   | 28 (3%)     | 32 (3%)     | 29 (2.6%)   |
| 100,000 - Over  | 29 (2%)     | 30 (2%)     | 33 (2.9%)   |
| (Texas Municipal League 2010, 2009, 2008)                       |             |             |             |

Figure 4.8 Texas Municipal League Membership 2008-2009-2010

Note that the number of Texas cities and the number of Texas city managers will not coincide due to the different forms of government in Texas, as discussed in Chapter 3; however, the information is useful to help paint the picture of government and city management in Texas. TML lists 763 cities in Texas that are under 5,000 in population and 349 cities in Texas over 5,000 in population, which may or may not have city managers, depending on their form of government. Again, these figures do not include all Texas cities, just those that have membership with the Texas Municipal League. The Texas State Historical Association website features a Texas Almanac that indicates there are 1,208 incorporated Texas municipalities, with as few as 32 residents in Los Ybanez, and as many as 2,085,737 in Houston. The website also indicates that there are 327 municipalities in Texas with more than 5,000 population, according to 2006 State Data Center estimates (State of Texas 2010).

| <b>Texas Cities, Population Ranges, and Women City Managers 2010</b> |                               |              |               |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <u>Population Brackets</u>   | <u>#Cities within Bracket</u> | <u>#WCMs</u> | <u>% WCMs</u> |
| 1 - 4,900  | 280                           | n/a          | n/a           |
| 5,000 - 10,000   | 120                           | 8            | 6             |
| 10,001 - 20,000  | 91                            | 6            | 6.5           |
| 20,001 - 30,000  | 27                            | 4            | 15            |
| 30,001 - 40,000  | 25                            | 3            | 12            |
| 40,001 - 50,000  | 9                             | 2            | 22            |
| 50,001 - 60,000  | 9                             | 1            | 11            |
| 60,001 - 70,000  | 7                             | 1            | 14            |
| 70,001 - 80,000  | 6                             | 0            | 0             |
| 80,001 - 90,000  | 3                             | 0            | 0             |
| 90,001 - 100,000   | 3                             | 0            | 0             |
| 100,001 - 200,000  | 19                            | 2            | 10.5          |
| 200,001 - 300,000  | 6                             | 1            | 17            |
| 300,001 - 500,000  | 1                             | 0            | 0             |
| 500,001 - 1 million  | 3                             | 1            | 33            |
| Over 1 million   | 2                             | 2            | 100           |
| Total  | —                             | 31           | 9.3           |

(Texas City Management Association 2010)

Figure 4.9 Texas Cities, Population Brackets, and Women City Managers 2010

Figure 4.9 illustrates all cities in Texas that have membership in TML, indicating their population brackets, and the number of women city managers within those population brackets. The percentage of women city managers follows the number indication. This figure gives us a more complete look at the number of women city managers today in Texas, and the spread of their experience throughout the different sizes of cities.

As women began to emerge as assistant city managers in the 1980s, a small concession to the feasibility of a women being a city manager is a statement overheard by

this researcher, "...a woman assistant city manager might be able to manage a city that was smaller than..." the city in which she served as assistant city manager. Such a statement indicates the belief that a woman was not capable of managing a city the size in which she currently served. Such prejudice on the part of decision makers (elected officials and city managers) were a major factor in women having to change their city in order to move up to the city manager position. This not only is an example of prejudice against women in positions of power, but also of the under estimation of the management and leadership abilities of women in public service. This study reveals that women can manage any size city, as indicated in Figure 4.9. Note that in 2010, the two largest cities in Texas had women city managers.

In order to provide a concept of city size, Figure 4.10 lists 2010 data for the larger cities in Texas, their population counts, and their city managers. As indicated, three out of the six larger cities in Texas have women city managers. Dallas and San Antonio have women city managers that are the second woman city manager for that city. Note that Houston is not listed, even though its population is over two million. It is a home-rule city with a strong mayoral form of government. The elected mayor, currently a woman (Annise Parker), serves as the chief executive/administrative officer of the city.

| <b><u>Texas Cities with Highest Populations and Their City Managers 2010</u></b> |
|--|
| San Antonio - 1.3 million - Sheryl Sculley                                       |
| Dallas - 1.2 million - Mary Suhm   |
| Austin - 710 k - Marc Anthony Ott  |
| Fort Worth - 687k - Dale Fisseler  |
| El Paso - 592k - Joyce Wilson  |
| Arlington - 367k - James Holgersson  |
| (Texas City Management Association 2010)   |

Figure 4.10 Largest Cities in Texas & Their City Managers 2010

Figure 4.11 provides a breakdown of Texas cities with women city managers from 2007 to 2011, per the membership directories of the Texas City Management

Association. Each directory covers an overlapping year span, beginning with the 2007-2008 directory, through the 2010-2011 directory (published in 2010). The number of cities with at least 5000 in population are shown, followed by the number of, and then the percentage of, women city managers. The number of women city managers in Texas hover around the 10% mark, including a high of 11.9% in 2008-2009, and a low of 9.3% in 2010-2011.

| <b>Texas Cities and Women City Managers 2007-2010</b> |                              |           |        |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| TCMA<br>Directory                                     | Cities with 5000+ Population | Women CMs | % WCMs |
| 2007-2008   | 320                          | 34        | 10.625 |
| 2008-2009   | 326                          | 39        | 11.963 |
| 2009-2010   | 328                          | 38        | 11.585 |
| 2010-2011   | 332                          | 31        | 9.337  |

(Texas City Management Association 2007-20008; 2008-2009; 2009-2010; 2010-2011)

Figure 4.11 Texas Cities with Women City Managers 2007-2010

Overall, figures reveal that women public managers in Texas work within a wide range of population brackets, whether as assistant/deputy city managers or as city managers. To further illustrate this fact, Figure 4.12 reflects the experience levels of women within this study. The figure lists population ranges and the number of cities in Texas within these population ranges. Next, the career tracks of the women managers in this study are indicated. For example, one women in this study has served in a city of 5000-10,000 population range. Her service is part of her career track, which can be either as city manager or at the assistant/deputy level. Finally, examples of cities within this population range are listed; however, the examples of cities listed do not necessarily coincide with the specific cities in which women in this study worked.

| <b>Experience Spread of Women City Managers in this Study</b>                           |                   |                                 |  |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Population Range  | # Cities in Texas | # WCMs this Study Career Tracks | Examples of Cities in this Population Range        |
| 0-4,999   | 280               | n/a                             | Dublin, Glen Rose, Jacksboro, Springtown           |
| 5,000-10,000  | 120               | 1                               | *Everman, Highland Park, *Joshua, *Kirby           |
| 10,001-20,000   | 91                | 4                               | Addison,*Bellaire, *Dickinson, Palestine, *Tomball |
| 20,001-30,000   | 27                | 2                               | *Colleyville,*Greenville, *Saginaw, *Southlake     |
| 30,001-40,000   | 25                | 5                               | *Farmers Branch,*Rockwall, *LaPorte,*Burleson      |
| 40,001-50,000   | 9                 | 1                               | *Bedford, Cedar Hill, *Haltom City,*Wylie          |
| 50,001-60,000   | 9                 | 2                               | Eules, Galveston, Grapevine, *Rowlett              |
| 60,001-70,000   | 7                 | 1                               | Flower Mound, Mansfield, North Richland Hills      |
| 70,001-80,000   | 6                 | 1                               | Bryan, League City, Longview, Missouri City        |
| 80,001-90,000   | 3                 | 1                               | Allen, Pearland, Sugar Land                        |
| 90,001-100,000  | 3                 | 0                               | College Station, Odessa, San Angelo                |
| ~~~   |                   |                                 |  |
| 100,001-200,000   | 19                | 2                               | Denton, Grand Prairie, *Killeen, *Midland          |
| 200,001-300,000   | 6                 | 1                               | Corpus Christi, Garland, Irving,* Lubbock, Plano   |
| 300,001-500,000   | 1                 | 0                               | Arlington  |
| 500,001-1 million   | 3                 | 1                               | *Austin, *El Paso, Fort Worth                      |
| Over 1 million  | 2                 | 0                               | *Dallas, *San Antonio                              |
| ~~~   |                   |                                 |  |
| *Have/had a woman city manager.   |                   |                                 |  |
| Source for #Cities and Sample Cities in Texas: (Texas City Management Association 2010) |                   |                                 |  |
| Source for statistics for women city managers in this study: (Women 2010)               |                   |                                 |  |

Figure 4.12 Experience Spread of Women City Managers in this Study

4.4 Summary

The lack of published statistical data for women city managers is evident. The information harvested from Texas membership directories, websites, and other documentation, as well as the gathering of published data on women city managers at the national level, will make some level of contribution on our understanding of the emergence of women city managers around the turn of the century. Clearly, more research and further analysis is overdue.

One thing is clear from the statistics in Texas: That the emergence of women city managers in Texas did not start in earnest until 1980 and is still proceeding at a snail's pace. Hopefully, this identified and documented slow emergence will gather speed and move us toward an understanding of the contributions of women a city managers.

CHAPTER 5  
PERSONAL LIFE AND BACKGROUND

*Only gradually did historians learn from sociologists, demographers, and economists to see families as social institutions in which variations could be related to socioeconomic pressures, cultural conflicts, and political transformations.*

*(Coontz, 2000)*

### 5.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have provided information on this research itself, outlining the purpose of the research, along with its theoretical framework, setting, and methodology. We now turn our attention to the study participants and their contributions to this work. This chapter allows us to consider the study subjects as individual human beings. A pseudonym is assigned to each one, with their personal profile composed of education level, age when becoming a city manager, and that city's population size. Next, elements of their childhoods are examined by looking at their childhood family structure (birth year, marital status of parents, childhood geography and mobility, and sources of drive and ambition). Last, their personal adult lives are revealed through their adult family structure and home support systems, as well as their basic philosophy about getting along in life. After this chapter, we will consider the careers and city management experiences of these women.

In addition to assigning an identity to the study participants, consideration is given as to whether certain elements of their childhood influenced their future as successful women managers who broke through the glass ceiling. In the interest of seeking new knowledge, childhood factors relating to family structure, mobility, and early life experiences are explored.

The study of family, as pointed out by Coontz (2000), has an "enormous debt to other disciplines" such as sociology and anthropology, as well as to historians (283). She further offers that the study of youth as a biological, chronological, or psychological category can also be studied as a constructed relationship to the family and other social institutions, such as "...schools, courts, police, political institutions, public space, adults, and younger children," (293). Numerous studies exist on family and childhood as related to poverty and single-parent families (Fields and Smith 1998, Biblarz and Gottainer 2000, Ermisch and Francesconi 2001, Francesconi, Jenkins and Siedler 2005, Bandy and Wilhelm 2008). There are studies relating to childhoods that involved experience violence and abuse, either as direct victims or witnesses (James 1994, Edleson 1999, Hurt, et al. 2001, Rivett, Howarth and Harold 2006) that demonstrate the influence poverty and violence in early life has on education, early child-bearing, early marriage, and other life attainment factors.

This particular study sample of women city managers is small in number, and may be considered by some as an unrepresented group [(Snow and Anderson 1993, Maltz 1994, Stacey 1998, Marks 2000) as cited in (Coontz 2000, 293)], but the information sought and revealed is important nonetheless because it offers insight into this unique group of women pathfinders. The early life experiences of the first generation of women

city managers can help us all better understand how and why some women chose to enter male dominated careers. As we consider the barriers of the glass ceiling and how these women traversed through it, the information revealed may also apply to private sector corporations, but most certainly is important for our public institutions if we are to move ever closer to representative bureaucracy. The discovery of this information, through personal interviews, if then documented for further research and consideration, offers up potentially new information for theory development. It also offers up information for institutional knowledge, not only for academic purposes, but also for public organizations to consider if they are to address the removal of glass ceiling barriers.

Iacovou (2002) contends that living arrangements are linked to economic well-being, with poverty more common among certain household types like lone-parent households, and that living arrangements impact transitions from childhood (dependence on family) to adulthood (independence of oneself). Household transitions can involve economic or residential movement, transitioning from the family of origin to the creation of one's own family (41). Although Iacovou acknowledges that transitions occur and vary according to cultures, customs, and regions, that study provides no linkage to the careers or achievements of those children in their adult lives. This research of women managers does consider early life and provides the later career experiences, thus does seek to consider possible connections.

Coontz (2000) points out that social locations may be where families and individuals fashion their strategies and meanings [(Lamphere, et al. 1993, 4) as cited in (Coontz 2000, 292)]. These social borders are constantly redrawn through processes that involve people in shifting identities, conflicts, and alliances [(Rosaldo 1989, 207) as cited

in (Coontz 2000, 292)]. Changing social borders impact values and these values may emerge with incremental and quantitative changes that may produce something qualitatively new (292). It is the "something qualitatively new" which is sought out by the study of the first woman city manager at a city. For instance, since these women were the first women city managers at their particular cities, research regarding the foundations of their lives may hold keys to their ability to be the first to break through the glass ceiling and establish power within public organizations.

## 5.2 Assigning an Identity to the Women of this Study

The eleven women participating in this study remain anonymous. It is necessary, however, to assign an alias to each so they can be discussed on an individual basis. Figure 5.1 is the Chart of Study Subjects and Their Pseudonyms which reflects the eleven women, their assigned names, education level, age when they began their tenure as the first woman city manager at a city, and the population of that city.

| Pseudonym | Education | Age as 1st WCM | City Population Size |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------------|
| Alice     | Masters   | 42             | 54,000               |
| Becky     | Masters+  | 41             | 27,000               |
| Connie    | Masters   | 35             | 5,000                |
| Della     | Masters   | 46             | 33,000               |
| Eva       | Masters   | 41             | 27,000               |
| Frances   | Masters   | 38             | 18,000               |
| Grace     | Bachelors | 59             | 11,000               |
| Helen     | Bachelors | 37             | 40,000               |
| Irene     | Masters+  | 40             | 760,000              |
| Joanne    | Masters   | 37             | 14,000               |
| Kathy     | Masters   | 47             | 25,000               |

Masters+ indicates multiple master's degrees or degrees beyond master's level.

Figure 5.1 Chart of Study Subjects and Their Pseudonyms

All of the subjects earned higher education degrees. Two of the subjects have bachelor's degrees, nine have master's degrees, and two have multiple master's degrees or degrees beyond master's level. Four women were in their 30s, six were in their 40s, and one was in her late 50s when they first became city managers. Population size of the cities they served as city managers range from a low of 5,000 to a high of 760,000. Details such as education, age when becoming a city manager, and city population size help provide a backdrop for further discussion.

### 5.3 Childhood Family Structure

Family structure has been identified by economists as one of the most important institutions in a market economy [(Knight 1935, Becker 1981) as cited in (Ermisch and Francesconi 2001)]. There has been considerable research regarding childhood family

structure. The impact on children of marital instability and other household behaviors has been studied [(Becker, Landes and Michael 1977, Browning 1992) as cited in (Ermisch and Francesconi 2001)]. Literature regarding childhood family structure and the later achievement and success of children has been examined in Europe and the United States (Biblarz and Gottainer 2000, Ermisch and Francesconi 2001, Francesconi, Jenkins and Siedler 2005). These studies focus on early family disruption resulting in a single-parent household, whether through death, divorce, or other circumstances. The economic disadvantages and future education attainment and achievement of children raised in one parent households have been examined. Their findings are discussed later in this chapter.

Additionally, the study of childhood well-being as linked to family structure, poverty, and geographical region is examined by Fields and Smith (1998). The academic status of children was linked to the educational level of their mothers, family income, and geographical regions in the United States. Their findings were that the children of college educated mothers, with family income at 300% or more above poverty level, and living in the West and Northeast are more likely to be academically on track. Their research concludes that while they are able to measure the current academic status of children, a longitudinal analysis of child well-being in transition to adulthood is needed (24).

As part of the inquiry into whether the research subjects of this study of women city managers had similar pathways, their early childhood demographics are considered. Data is provided for their year of birth and marital status of parents. Regional geography

and mobility during childhood is explored as to whether it relates to career mobility in adult life.

Sources of drive and ambition are revealed as parental support, marital status of parents, and the awareness of one or more strong females within their family. Stories of strong female figures emerged as part of their family history and appeared to serve a role-modeling function for the women in this study. Such examination may hold clues to life decisions and choices regarding adulthood careers, locations, achievements, success, and family structures.

### *5.3.1 Generational Overview*

To explore whether their career influence was a generational issue, the year of birth was examined. Of the eleven women in this study, three were born in the 1940s, four were born in the 1950s, three were born in the 1960s, and one was born in the 1970s. This spread of generations brings to mind a series of waves hitting the shore, rather than just one age group as a "new generation" of women city managers. Figure 5.4 lists the year of birth, marital status of parents, and childhood geography. As will be discussed later, whether there was parental support or not, these managers found ways to succeed. Childhood geography and career mobility is considered in the next section.

| Childhood Family Structure of Study Participants |                |                     |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Year Born  | Parents Status | Childhood Geography |
| 1946   | Divorced       | DFW TX              |
| 1948   | Divorced       | DFW, TX             |
| 1949   | Not reported   | Outside TX          |
| 1953   | Married        | DFW, TX             |
| 1953   | Divorced       | Austin area, TX     |
| 1957   | Married        | Military/Outside TX |
| 1959   | Married        | Military Family     |
| 1962   | Divorced       | DFW, TX             |
| 1964   | Married        | West TX             |
| 1969   | Divorced       | DFW, TX             |
| 1972   | Divorced       | DFW, TX             |

Figure 5.2 Childhood Family Structure of Study Participants

### 5.3.2 Childhood Regional Mobility and Adult Mobility Decisions

The city management profession is often a mobile profession. An individual's willingness to relocate to accept a management position will impact her career (Markham, et al. 1983, DeSantis and Newell 1996, Hassett 2004). Early life mobility may influence a person's decisions about mobility in adult life. The subject of mobility will be discussed in later chapters, however, mobility in the childhood of study participants are reviewed here. Watson and Hassett (2003) observed that over 64% of "long serving" city managers (serving twenty years or more at the same city) grew up in the state in which they have their careers (74). Markham (1983) noted that "...women who saw themselves as primary providers were just as willing to move as similarly situated men," (1146).

Both interstate mobility and intrastate mobility are examined in this study. Interstate mobility is revealed in three women with childhoods outside of Texas and/or childhoods within a career military family. All three have worked for governments in multiple states. One additional woman, raised in Texas, has worked for one or more governments outside Texas, as well as multiple governments within Texas.

Intrastate mobility is revealed in the remaining six women raised within Texas and experiencing their careers inside Texas. Although they have not relocated to other states, they have made relocations within Texas. Of those six, two were raised and had careers in the DFW area; however, they worked for multiple governments within the DFW area, which required relocation of their personal residences.

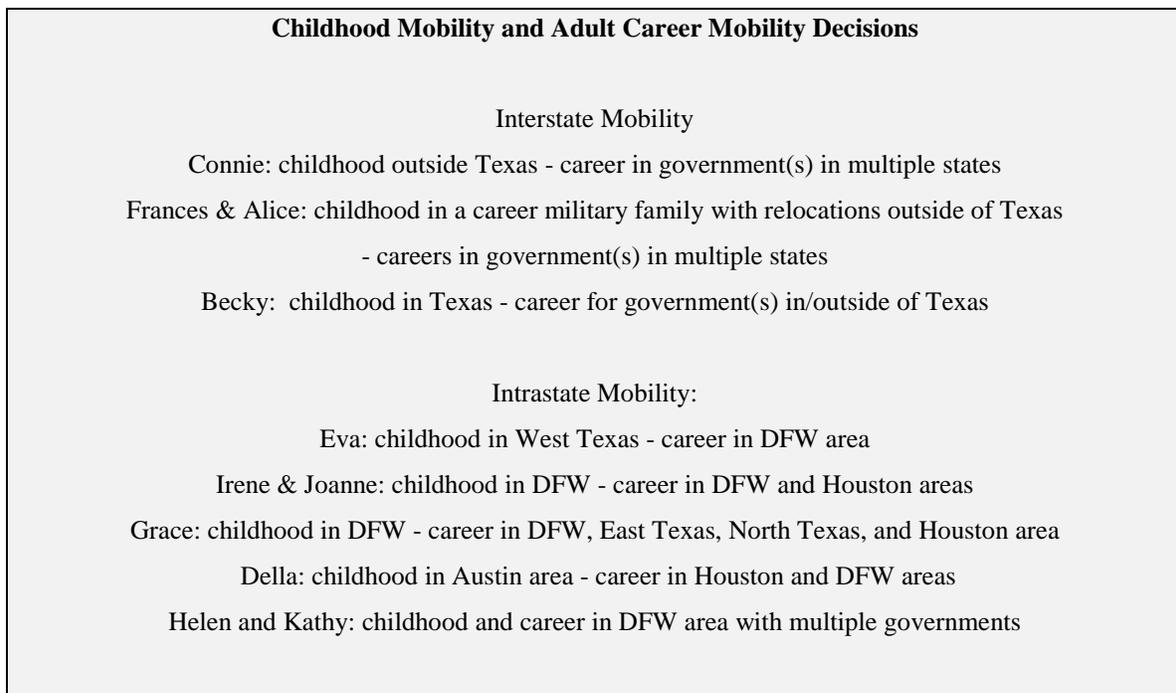


Figure 5.3 Childhood Mobility and Adult Career Mobility Decisions

As Figure 5.3 reflects, three women with childhoods involving interstate mobility have continued that interstate mobility in their careers. Also, six women with childhoods in Texas have kept their career relocations within Texas. Additionally, one woman raised

in Texas did extend her career into one or more other states. Clearly, career mobility is common in city management and in the case of these women, it was mandatory to their career advancement. If their childhood included interstate mobility, their public service careers were likely to also include interstate mobility.

### *5.3.3 Sources of Drive and Ambition and Motivation Theories*

Each of the participants in this study accomplished something that was not the normal custom in public management. Since their accomplishment was not considered as the usual situation for the professional field of city management, they faced uncharted territory and pathways that other women had not yet experienced at these organizations. The successful journey through this new ground required extra determination, drive, ambition, and personal motivation. Theories of motivation seek to explore the internal need(s) that drive us to action, and certain motivation theories which may relate to these study participants.

Personal drive and ambition is addressed within motivational theories. For purposes of this study, four motivational theories are discussed, drive reduction theory, incentive theory, acquired needs theory, and cognitive evaluation theory, Hull (1943, 1952) identifies drive reduction theory and argues that internal states of tension and biological needs impact certain behaviors that drive us to actions which will calm these tensions and enable us to maintain homeostasis (a state of physiological equilibrium). Somewhat opposite to drive theory, is incentive theory (Killeen 1982) which holds that we are motivated by external rewards. While drive theory explains what may push us to action, incentive theory explains what may pull us to action. Acquired needs theory (McClelland 1961) holds that needs are acquired by our life experiences, such as the need

for achievement, affiliation (relationships with people), and power and control (New World Encyclopedia 2008). Cognitive evaluation theory (Deci and Ryan 2000) holds that we have two motivation systems acting at the same time: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated people perform for their own satisfaction derived from achievement, responsibility, competence, and performing tasks. Extrinsic people are driven to action by extrinsic influences such as pay, promotion, working conditions, and one's environment, which are controlled by others. These theories, sometimes in combination, relate to the sources of drive and ambition expressed by study participants.

This research seeks to discover if there is something in unique about these women which had an impact on their success in breaking through the glass ceiling. With this inquiry, I did not seek a great bonfire, but rather a tiny spark. The most important source in finding this spark is the woman herself because it lies within what she, herself, attributes as her own source of drive and ambition. When asked for their sources of drive and ambition, each woman responded quickly and with ease. They knew what or who motivated them. They cited parents, strong females in their family history, childhood memories, and/or witnessing their mothers having to deal with divorce and economic difficulty. Four typical scenarios emerged, cited directly by the study participants; however, multiple scenarios applied to each of the subjects.

A. Four subjects had parents who were supportive and set no limits on their future possibilities. Two of those four were raised within a two parent, career military family of high achievers. The third subject cited a family within the legal field, raised primarily by her mother after her parents divorced. The fourth woman came from a family of high achievers with an upbringing by an independent, divorced mother.

B. Three subjects had parents who were indifferent as to the subject's future, exhibiting neither support and encouragement nor discouragement. In these cases, however, the women had gone to work for government or quasi-government entities shortly after high school and were encouraged and mentored by one or more senior members of those organizations. Of those three, one had divorced parents and was raised by her mother.

C. Eight subjects reported the presence of a strong mother or grandmother. Of those eight, five had divorced parents.

D. Six of the eleven subjects had parents who divorced during their childhood. Each cited their source of drive and ambition as a "defining moment" early in their life when they witnessed their mother abandoned and left financially destitute by divorce. In each instance, the women vowed to themselves that they would find a way to have a future of independence and the ability to financially provide for themselves.

| <b>Sources of Drive and Ambition of Study Participants</b> |                       |                         |                                |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Year Born</u>   | <u>Parents Status</u> | <u>Parental Support</u> | <u>Strong Female in Family</u> |
| 1946   | Divorced              | Neutral                 | Grandmother                    |
| 1948   | Divorced              | Supportive              | Mother                         |
| 1949   | ---                   | ---                     | ---                            |
| 1953   | Married               | Neutral                 | ---                            |
| 1953   | Divorced              | Supportive              | Mother                         |
| 1957   | Married               | Supportive              | Mother and Grandmother         |
| 1959   | Married               | Supportive              | Mother                         |
| 1962   | Divorced              | Supportive Mother       | Mother                         |
| 1964   | Married               | Supportive              | Grandmother                    |
| 1969   | Divorced              | Neutral                 | ---                            |
| 1972   | Divorced              | Supportive              | Mother and Grandmother         |

Figure 5.4 Sources of Drive and Ambition of Study Participants

Figure 5.4 reflects the year of birth, marital status of parents, parental support expressed, and the presence of strong female figures in the family structure or history.

The year of birth places the generations in which these women experienced childhood. As indicated, they were raised in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The early decades offered few opportunities for women in the business world. Even though some opportunities were beginning to appear in the late 1970s and 1980s, it was normal for obstacles to prevail when women attempted to succeed in business, education, and single parent family structures.

Three scenarios were present in the majority of this study's participants: (1) seven had supportive parents; (2) six of the women had divorced parents; and (3) eight women cited one or more strong female figures in their family. These three scenarios directly related to motivational factors these women applied to their lives and careers. Due to this fact, these scenarios merit further attention and are discussed below.

#### *5.3.3.1 Supportive Parents*

Supportive parents, whether married or divorced, can have a major impact on the future success of their children. Those seven study participants with supportive parents cited that their parents led them to believe they could chose whatever life career they desired; there were no limits. Likewise, the women gave no thought to not having the support of their parents; they merely presumed their parents would be there for them. They felt free to pursue their own choice of careers. In these cases, cognitive evaluation theory, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, can be at work, with its focus on self-fulfillment.

Little is said in previously cited research about that impact on childhood success in adulthood; however, one non-academic source is worth mentioning. A "Business

Insider.com" article by Alyson Shontell, posted on November 4, 2010, lists seven traits common in twenty-five self-made teenage millionaires. All twenty-five teenagers had a family that emotionally supported them and did not question their ambitions or doubt their ability to succeed. The teenage millionaires admitted to actions like putting in hard work, being relentless in their endeavors, and sacrificing their childhood to attend to their business interests, all of which had an impact on their success. Additionally, they admitted being told by non-family members – namely teachers and friends -- that they would not be successful. The article states, "There's no motivation like being told you can't do something," (Shontell 2010). Supportive parents and being told by others that they could not do what they set out to do certainly played as motivation factors to the interviewed women city managers as well. Even those women with supportive parents experienced negative encouragement during their career tracks.

#### *5.3.3.2 The Influence of Witnessing a Mother in Emotional Loss and Economic Distress*

Six of the eleven women interviewed for this study experienced their mother's destitution by divorce. These women witnessed their mother's economic distress and decline after their parents' divorce. Such intense emotional events made a big impact on these participants and were cited as a source of their drive and ambition.

These moments can be referred to as a "Scarlet O'Hara Moment" because they mirror that character's resolve for survival. Such moments are an awakening of the acceptance of a personal commitment and responsibility for one's own self survival. In the scene from the movie of "Gone with the Wind" Scarlet is hungry and exhausted. She walks out into a plowed field, stripped bare from the ravages of war. She sees one lone green leaf sticking up out of the dirt, pulls it up to find a rotting radish. Famished, she

takes a dirt-covered bite and then looks up at the darkening, cloudy sky and utters the following:

*"As God is my witness, as God is my witness they're not going to lick me. I'm going to live through this and when it's all over, I'll never be hungry again. No, nor any of my folk. If I have to lie, steal, cheat or kill. As God is my witness, I'll never be hungry again." (Mitchell 1939).*

Much like the pledge made by Scarlett O'Hara, at a moment in their own childhoods, these future female city managers proclaimed they would find a way to be independent and forge a path to self survival. Their experiences with childhood poverty established the source of their drive and ambition, created their motivations to not have a life with this kind of vulnerability, which directed them toward a future where they would be strong and self-sufficient.

Such life moments might plant the seed for drive reduction theory, to return life to a state of normality, pushing us to take actions to ensure our self survival. One might also consider acquired needs theory which applies our life experiences as establishing the need for achievement, affiliations, and power and control.

To elaborate on previously mentioned studies of family, we can consider the Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) study, which included three models. First, the family structure model, which found that the achievements of children from widowed mothers were about the same as from two (biological) parent households, while the achievements of children from divorced single mother families are substantially lower. Their parental fitness model revealed that widowed and divorced single mothers had about the same values and levels of physical health and related behavior, psychological well-being, and social behavior. Their marital conflict model indicated that no psychological differences were observed in children of divorced parents who were witness to parental conflict and

thus will have lower achievements. A difference they did observe, however, was in the general support of society for widows which was not there for divorced women. This was manifested in employment or occupational status and financial situations due to the fact that widows occupy an advantaged socio-economic position in the social structure (544-545). Their study did not seek to identify motivational factors for these children and their adult successes.

Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) studied the British Household Panel Survey (1991-1995) and found that disadvantaged outcomes are associated with single parent family structure and that those unfavorable outcomes are linked to early life family disruption (child's age 0 to 5). They considered educational attainment, economic inactivity, early childbearing, distress, and smoking in children of a single parent household. Their study, like the others mentioned, did not seek to find motivational factors for those children who did experience attainment success in their adult lives.

Bandy and Wilhelm (2008) examined the impact of family structure and income during stages of childhood and the young adult's prosocial behavior relating to charitable giving and volunteering. Their findings suggest that increased family instability and low income during one's childhood will result in less charitable giving and volunteering in adulthood (1-2).

*"With divorce, stress is on the custodial parent (usually the mother) because of the trauma of the disintegrated relationship and the need to shoulder all of the economic and parenting responsibility for the children. In addition to the effects children experience via the parent's stress, they directly experience the trauma of divorce through their own emotional upheaval," (6).*

Bandy and Wilhelm, however, do take a look at ways in which positive associations might result from the divorce of parents, such as (1) the child taking on more

responsibility for household chores (thus leading to increased helpfulness), (2) an increase in a child's ability to understand the perspective of others who experience hardship, and (3) the child getting stress relief from their parents' divorce if the home is more peaceful with one parent absent (8).

The literature discussed has a focus on children of one-parent families, which several of these study participants experienced; however, other participants of this study were raised in two-parent households.

Returning to the study of women city managers, four of their stories follow. Eva's story, set in the early 1970s, discusses her mother's distress, but also reveals some assistance from her father and grandfather. *My mom had never worked a day in her life. She had no skills. She had a high school diploma. She had to go to family and church members to help support us while she went to school at night and learned shorthand and typing. When the church gave her her first secretarial job, we had nothing. I mean we barely had a roof over our heads, and the roof leaked. We cooked on a hot plate ... I started working when I was 13 at my dad's store. I would go after school and summers and learned how to do bookkeeping from my granddad, and sales, cleaning, sweeping. I really owe that to the fact that my mom was a single mom and had a really tough life.*

Joanne's story, set in the late 1970s. *My parents divorced when I was 10. On my 13th birthday I made my mom take me down to (the hospital) and ended up getting to be a candy striper there and then I also split my time between (the hospital) and (a nonprofit organization). I ended up going to work for (the nonprofit) ...mom would always take me down to work with her because she worked down in that area ..and there was one day that she took me to work and forgot to get me. There were some security issues, probably*

*some abandonment issues...it was a situation where you don't have any control over what's happening to you and making sure that you're taken care of. We lived in Section 8 housing, not well off, I didn't get to do any of the things that my friends got to do in high school...you eat beans and cornbread because you don't have enough money to buy food...wearing clothes forever because you don't have money to go buy new clothes... I think it makes you a very different person...a stronger person. Joanne continues, turning the negatives of her early life into positive attributes as a public servant, ...as a public servant, that helps to serve you well, to have that perspective.*

Della's story, set in the late 1950s, cites her "defining moment" where personal drive and ambition were established. *I was five when my parents divorced. I was the oldest. My mother and my dad handled that very well. They really never allowed their issues to spill over to us. Mother didn't have a lot of money. She was a professional but she was a woman professional and she had a lot of issues just breaking through those barriers ...because I was the oldest...I ended up taking a lot of responsibility, early.*

Kathy's story, set in the early 1960s. *I was 15 when my parents divorced. I was the youngest child and the only one at home. My mother just shut down in every way. She became a skeleton and, I truly believe she was dying. My father never allowed her to work outside the home because it would reflect on his ability to be the provider for the family. She had always been an excellent homemaker and suddenly she didn't care about the home or anything else. I had to step in and become the parent and try to take care of her and the household duties, but without money. Finally, my uncle (my dad's brother) showed up one day and demanded that she report for work at his business the next week.*

*She did. That saved her life. It took years for her to recover from the emotional and economic devastation. Really, she never did.*

#### *5.3.3.3 The Influence of Strong Women in the Family*

Eight of the eleven members of this study cited strong women in their family. Many told stories of their mothers or grandmothers showing strength in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s when women were restricted from life opportunities, such as access to education and careers, the denial of credit and loans, and low pay in most jobs. Whether widowed or divorced, their mothers and grandmothers struggled with survival after the loss of a husband. Grandmothers with an unusual career or circumstance also inspired drive and ambition in the study group. Such stories of inspiration might provide motivation through incentive theory (for external rewards) or cognitive evaluation theory (whether intrinsic to perform for your own satisfaction or extrinsic to perform for external influences such as pay). A sampling of the participants' responses regarding their source of drive and ambition follows.

Eva relates, *It's (drive and ambition) through my mom...there's a very independent nature about how we set about doing things....even though we grew up on food stamps....it has to come from her and her influence that we could do anything that we wanted to do.*

Irene cites a long line of women in her family who were...*strong, ambitious, independent people, but women in particular...my mom and my grandmother. My grandmother actually ran a company. Her husband died when my mom was 17 and my grandmother was probably in her early 40s and she had a concrete company and she had*

*to take it over. I always think that's interesting because that was at a time when women just didn't do that.*

*Frances mentions her grandmother as being ...one of the first females that went to college in our home state and she taught school... and was postmaster in the little town. This fact served to inspire Frances to higher education and career success.*

*Della talks about her mother, not only as a source of drive and ambition, but as an inspiration to Della for her own life pursuits. Her mother is related as being ...a single mom when divorce was very uncommon. My mother relocated us back to (city) because of the university there and you could do a lot of things at very little cost because of the university. Mother did not make a lot of money...but we lived by the university and we had international students who stayed with us...mother traveled...was a professional.*

*Kathy discusses her grandmother's strength with this story. My maternal grandparents had a "tailor" shop in a little Texas town. One day - in the 1930s - my granddad just left town and disappeared. My grandmother got up the next day, made breakfast for their five children, got them off to school, went to the tailor shop, and opened it up for business. That night she went home and made supper for her children. That's the way it was for the six months he was gone. When he came back, she kept going to the shop and was a partner in the business after that.*

Such tales of family history which took place in the early and mid-20th Century served as encouragement to these women as they made their life choices. The experiences of their mothers and grandmothers having success in business ventures were uncommon in American society at that time. For instance, it was not until the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974 that credit was universally available to women in the

United States. This fact alone made financial matters difficult, whether those finances were needed for business or personal uses.

A good reference in which to frame the progress of women in the 20th Century has been outlined by Goldin (2006). She describes a "Quiet Revolution" which took place in the 20th Century, changing women's roles in employment, education, and within the family structure. She outlines Phase I as set in the late 19th Century to the 1920s, which saw the younger, independent female worker enter the labor market rather than working in households or the family business. Phase II is identified with the 1930s to 1950s, which eased the constraints on married women's work. Phase III, 1950s to the 1970s is described as the roots of the revolution which experienced soaring rates of younger women ages 25 to 44 entering the workforce. Phase IV, from the late 1970s to the present, she names "The Quiet Revolution" where women thought of their own, independent identities, a career, education, and a variety of family structures.

The stories that emerged of strong females in their families and their mothers who experienced economic devastation seemed to light a spark in their drive and ambition to seek economic security and independence. Their stories of struggles and survival are inspirational and motivational and reveal seeds of motivation for their life pursuits. Such experiences also provided these future public servants with understanding and compassion for the problems of the people they serve. The study participants felt these events served to build character and made them stronger people.

One study participant ventured outside her family structure and cited how a teacher made such an impact on her life. Although not a family member, this teacher's contribution is worth mentioning. Frances, being raised in the 1960s when career options

for females were few, specifically mentioned a high school teacher. As Frances tells the story, *You have certain teachers in school that inspire you...I was getting bored. I knew I didn't want to be a secretary so wouldn't take typing, but the teacher could also teach... bookkeeping, so she let me sit in the back of a typing class on my own and take this bookkeeping class, which is how I got interested in... accounting ...if she wouldn't have had the initiative to let me try something different, then I'd have been stuck in typing class. She let me be the editor of the newspaper....she was the teacher that was the sponsor...of something like the future business leaders of America and on the debate team.* Frances went on to start her public service career in the finance department of a city. Clearly, the fondly remembered high school teacher helped set the course for this student's life choices and opportunities.

#### *5.3.4 Summary of Childhood Information*

These study participants were influenced by the structure of their childhood families, mobility during childhood, and sources of drive and ambition which led to motivations for survival and success. The similarities of certain experiences reveal insight to the genesis of motivational behaviors that carry through to adult lives and decisions. These participants had supportive parents, neutral parents, and divorced parents. Some had inspiration from strong women in their family histories. They had a drive for self-survival from seeing their mothers in distress. They had "defining moments" that made them determined to be self-sufficient. If support was lacking in their childhood, they found it early in their careers from male mentors. The mix of experiences provide insight into what these women experienced as early life points of reference that continued to direct their life choices and goals.

#### 5.4 Adulthood Family Structures and Support Systems

Wirth (2001) discusses the reconciliation of work and family and how it relates to the gender division of time between work and family activities on a global scale. She asserts that women work longer hours than men in nearly every country, according to time-use studies. Citing a United Nations report (United Nations Development Programme 1999), she asserts that women perform on average fifty-one (51%) percent of paid and unpaid work in industrialized countries, with two-thirds of women's work on unpaid activities and one-third on paid activities. The converse is true for men (16). She states "...to quicken the pace on the road to gender equality...there will have to be a greater sharing of family responsibilities between women and men," (21).

This information is no surprise to this study's participants. The current state of the profession of city management fosters discussions among city managers and city manager hopefuls as to how various family structures can help or hinder a career in public management. While many male city managers have a "wife" at home to help with household responsibilities; such a supportive spouse is less common among female city managers. Indeed, women in the profession debate among themselves whether it is feasible to have children and a career in city management as well as the importance of a supportive spouse. Opinions are on both sides of the fence.

*With a very good education, a dose of intuition and a rigorous organization of work, a woman can attain a position of responsibility ... the problem is that women are led to believe that they have the right to three things: a career, a partner and children. In practice, it is impossible to manage the three things at the same time, and the same goes for men. (Source: Interview with a high-level Swiss woman manager, Journal de Genève, 27 February 1997). (19).*

Some of this study's participants would agree with the Swiss manager. Others would not. This study explores the experiences and opinions of women city managers

regarding their families and their support systems. Their responses are summarized and illustrated in brief in Figure 5.5.

Home support systems are critical for city managers, both male and female. Females, however, may have to get more creative in seeking assistance from a spouse, other family members, or other sources.

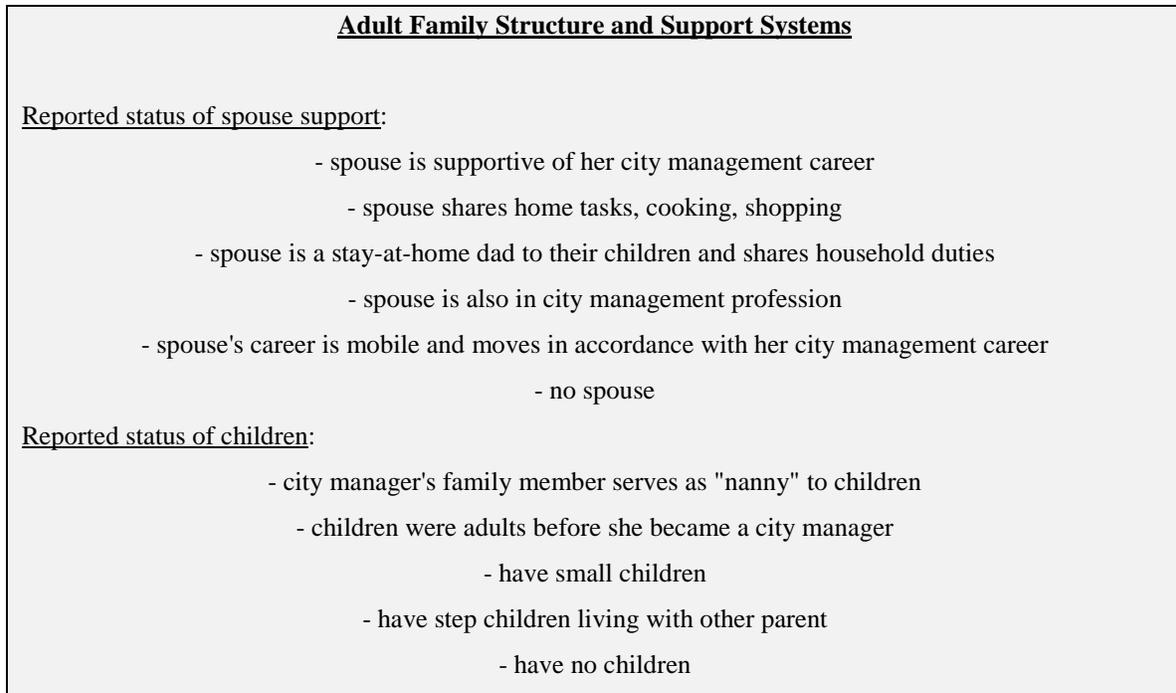


Figure 5.5 Adult Family Structure and Support Systems

Figure 5.5 reveals that there is no set pattern or solution to address the issue of household duties. All managers cite the need for their spouse to be supportive of their careers due to the long hours and high demands of the job. Spouses provide direct support services at varying levels according to their own family arrangement. Some spouses are stay-at-home dads while others are also in public service careers with long hours. Some have children; others do not. Some couples live in separate cities. Some women managers proclaim that you cannot do the job and have children. Others proclaim that you can, and they do. Overall, the family and support structures of the

women city managers are as varied as the family structure throughout modern American culture. Those who aspire to become city managers need not think there is a particular type of family structure that works for city managers. Each person must discover what works for their own particular situation, while realizing that others have management careers with a broad range of family structures and support systems.

Among this study's participants, comments vary.

Irene discussed an ongoing, lively debate with other women in the profession as to whether it is possible to have small children and a city management career. She relates...*Lots of people said I couldn't do it (city management) until I had all the babies I wanted to have and they got older...(or) that I probably should make the decision not to have children. I wanted to have both...I can't believe that you have to be this certain cookie cutter person and have this certain lifestyle to do this job...I didn't let it stop me.*

The question comes to mind as to whether elected officials are flexible enough to allow their city manager to have family time in order to meet the demands of a family structure with small children. Irene provides the following insight into support from the council and contract negotiation issues. ...*The council has been very supportive... the council has been pretty flexible with me about my schedule...I have telecommuting days in my contract for days I need to work from home due to a child's illness and that helps.*

Irene continues, making the point that such issues are not gender based, but may be generation based. A younger generation of men is also having to cope with family-friendly workplace issues. ...*I've seen men my age in this profession deal with the stigma that women do. I know a budget manager where I used to work that was in the middle of budget season and his wife was having their second child and he was made to*

*feel like he could only be gone maybe two days at the most. Even the day his child was born, he just went to the hospital long enough for the child to be born and didn't even stay and take his wife home because he felt like if he didn't come back to work he was going to be in jeopardy.*

Who does the cleaning and shopping? How is the work split up? Irene has a supportive spouse who seems to contribute half of the labor force at home. *...I have somebody that comes and cleans every two weeks.....my husband pretty much does the outside stuff....I do the inside stuff...we both do laundry...but things do go undone. We don't have a perfect house all the time..there's clutter; there's piles of laundry...my husband cooks and does most of the cooking. I do some cooking on the weekends. We do that (household shopping) together....I feel like I couldn't do it if my husband didn't take on the things that he does. My husband is a saint because he's very supportive with my career.*

When the woman city manager is married to another public servant in city management, it doubles the time demands and greatly decreases any home support. Grace, whose spouse also works in city management, made the following comments. *...I literally live out of a suitcase ...because it depends on where the weekend function is going to be....you've got two city managers doing social things and keeping up with that calendar...at some point I'm ready to live in the same house with my husband.*

Connie describes her husband as incredibly supportive of her career. His profession was "mobile" so he settled into a life of relocations as she worked in different cities.

The women in this study have no set pattern and none would suggest that there is only one type of family that works for all women city managers. There is no one formula for handling home life and work life. Likewise, there is no one opinion of whether it is possible to have a career, a spouse, and children. Those who are today's city managers experience a variety of scenarios. It is clear, however, that the long hours of the job will need to be balanced in some way with the demands of hearth and home.

On a global scale,

*Statistics show that it is easier for men to have both a family and a career. Indeed, many women forgo marriage and children to devote themselves to a career. However, this pattern seems to be more pronounced in industrialized countries than in developing countries, (Wirth 2001, 18-19).*

Women in public management mirror the findings of global studies for industrialized nations; however, findings show that other patterns are emerging as family priorities are increasing. The balance of work and family is one of the most important challenges the profession of public management faces in the 21st Century. If the profession does not give consideration to increased family priorities and flexibility, it may indeed experience a loss of worthy talent as younger generations of both genders place more importance on family life.

## 5.5 Life Philosophies

*I really believe my basic philosophy is to string together as many good moments as you can because, to me, it's all in the moment. My children have taught me this. Have you ever had that moment with your child or your grandchild where you're sitting there and they do something that's completely basic but it's the most wonderful moment of your life? Maybe your baby pats you on the face?....To me, if you string enough of those together you're going to have a good life. I'm not saying live by the moment and to heck with the higher ideas and long term commitments, but it's more about just kind of making the most of the time.*

-- Alice

All study participants were asked, "What is your basic philosophy for getting along in life?" Each woman expressed a unique personal life philosophy; there was no single common denominator among them. This personal side of the women in this study constitutes valuable knowledge for the profession. For instance, the value system of Alice, quoted at the beginning of this section, is based in people and family. This philosophy, even though very personal, will also extend into her career leadership style and management priorities. In turn, the leadership style of the city manager is a direct impact on the corporate culture of any organization she manages.

In seeking to know them as individuals, their basic philosophy about getting along in life is important in providing a glimpse of who they are, not just as city managers, but as human beings. Their revelations also provide another dimension of life and career advice for those who aspire to become city managers, what kind of managers they are toward their staff, and how they might cope with and survive the difficulties of their careers, as well as in their personal lives.

Helen strives to speak her mind and make her thoughts and opinions known to others....*Speak your mind; if you don't, people do not know what you think.*

Eva finds humor a successful coping mechanism and believes in maintaining a smile. *Smile. you can always find humor... to find the funny part, the quirky part about it, that's what I enjoy...*

Irene sees life as a series of compromises - or not - stressing the importance of having wisdom to know when to compromise. *I think you have to know when to compromise and know when you can't. That's really basic, but there's certain times when*

*you have to take a stand and stand up for yourself and there's other times, to get along and make it work, you have to compromise.*

Becky stresses maintaining focus on your own responsibilities: *My basic life philosophy is mind your own business. When I'm spending too much time minding everybody else's business, then I'm not paying enough attention to what is my business. So first of all you have to know what is your business and what is not. Focus on your life and your job.*

Women managers, like all of us, see and experience tragedy in their life. Connie is particularly sensitive to the loss of loved ones and applies that to her life philosophy. *Well, I think that life is short and we better make the most of it.*

Della is optimistic and easy going and applies these traits to the conduct of her life, believing that you should be genuine and sincere in your dealings with others. *I'm really pretty easy going and I... think people are about as happy as they choose to be...be yourself...treat people nicely and be genuine.*

Frances stresses the basics of what is important in life and carries that into her own life philosophy. *It's all in the book Everything You Need to Know You Learned in Kindergarten, (Fulghum 1988) and "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," (The Golden Rule n.d.). If you can't start with the fundamentals, you can't build on them.*

The comments above reflect what is the most valuable to these women who have forged a new pathway for others to follow. As representatives of women city managers of the future, their basic values reflect the importance of personal development. From their comments above, you can see a strong resolve for personal values and ethics, the

priority of treating others with fairness and kindness, and an urging to do the best job you can, as well as a strong work ethic and a sense of courage and pride. These are valuable tools for getting along in life, at home, work and play.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter provides personal information about the study participants and their lives and backgrounds before they became city managers. Elements of their childhood, as well as portions of their personal adult lives are examined as they relate their adult family support systems and personal life philosophies. Their comments and stories provide a glimpse of their lives as children and young individuals, while their life philosophies give us a glimpse of who they have become as adults.

Findings show that their early lives existed in the generations of the 1950s through the early 1980s. During these times, there were few opportunities for women in the business world, yet childhood experiences influenced adult decisions that led them to successful public service careers. Their transitions from childhood to adulthood were influenced by family mobility, a variety of family structures, and support or inspiration from family and others. All were motivated, through a variety of experiences, to create a self-sufficient and independent adult life with their own family structure and philosophy of life.

Findings reveal that parents often provided support for their success; however, even if there was little or no family support, support was encountered in college and/or during their early work years. Those individuals who experienced economic instability in their youth also received an understanding of the struggles of families. Those individuals who experienced interstate mobility in their childhood found themselves still

experiencing that in the adult lives. Likewise, those with intrastate mobility were also experiencing that in their adult lives.

These findings provide insight into their ability to be the first woman to break through the glass ceiling and establish power within public organizations. There is no one particular profile of characteristics for a woman city manager's early life. The specifics of their early lives provide insight into the participants as individuals. The specifics, however, do not reveal a clearly defined "road map" to public management. This is not surprising in light of the stage of evolution of women in public service during the 20th Century and the early 21st Century. Each individual had to find their way pretty much on their own except for the encouragement, support and mentoring from others whom believed these women could succeed, coupled with an inner spark of determination that they would be able to provide economically for themselves.

## CHAPTER 6

### CAREER PREPARATION OF WOMEN CITY MANAGERS

#### 6.1 Introduction

*Including more women in positions of administrative power is essential if we hope to further the ideal of representative bureaucracy. (Fox and Schuhmann 2001)*

The previous chapter covered selected areas of the personal lives of the women of this study. This chapter turns to their professional lives, exploring their career paths and charting their professional journeys and career development before they acquired the title of city manager. Aspects of their career examined in this chapter include an analysis of (1) prejudice and discrimination (manifested as obstacles and opposition) encountered along the way, (2) qualifications and preparation they developed during their career, and (3) their individual career paths. During various stages of their career development, the women also experienced certain personal epiphanies, such as a realization about why they would want to become a city manager as well as the moment of realization that they were ready to be a city manager.

#### 6.2 Prejudice and Discrimination Manifested as Obstacles and Opposition

As trailblazers -- the first generation of women pursuing public management careers within local governments -- the study subjects encountered prejudice and

discrimination along the way. Their stories describe incidents of prejudice and discrimination (exhibited as obstacles and opposition behaviors) toward them as they carried out their work responsibilities. The experiences related by the women in this study are cited accounts which took place due to their gender.

Prejudice and discrimination experienced by women and minorities is described by scholars in various ways. Bell (2007) defines discrimination as "...differential and pejorative actions that serve to limit the social, political, or economic opportunities of members of a particular group," and defines prejudice as "...irrationally based, negative attitudes about certain groups and their members." She points out that prejudice is an attitude and discrimination is a behavior based on attitude (68). Prejudice and discrimination are also put forth as discrimination through organizational structural and cultural barriers (Wirth 2001). When emotions are added to social constructs of women in leadership positions, strong feelings of resistance to change occur along with consideration of women as capable leaders (Eagly and Carli 2007).

Women in management and leadership positions have to go the extra mile and are described as having to perform extraordinarily well, effectively coping with being overlooked and ignored in meetings, contending with others taking credit for their work and ideas, and having to remain persistent in efforts to excel and the ability to persevere when being passed over for promotions (Eagly and Carli 2007, Bell 2007). Past successes may not be sufficient, however, as women in executive ranks report having to re-establish credibility with each new project they undertake (Ragins, Townsend and Mattis, 1998, as cited in Bell 2007, 285).

All of the above rings true with the women of this study who encountered discrimination and prejudice as they worked toward advancement of their public service careers. Clearly, they had to learn how to survive in spite of the negative experiences, and in the process of overcoming discrimination, they also learned how to influence others in indirect and non-threatening styles. In order to perform their job duties, these women had to build their relationship skills, learn how to deal effectively with obstructionist staff, and master skills at maneuvering outside the perimeters of "business as usual" in their organizations. If they could not get the assistance they needed for the performance of their duties, they figured out how to go around the "blockade" of opposition. They created ways to go over, around, and through obstacles to get results. This often was done while simultaneously attempting to build a positive working relationship with those same people who were trying to sabotage their efforts.

Although males who missed out on promotions might resent anyone else who got that promotion, research suggests they may exhibit even more resentment and resistance toward women (Eagly and Carli 2007, Bell 2007). Female clerical staff are more likely to assist a male who receives such a promotion and may even pitch in to help him be a success (Eagly and Carli 2007). Oddly enough, women city managers interviewed for this study cited incidents where female clerical staff showed resentment to women who are promoted and attempted to sabotage their successful entry into the ranks of management.

Furthermore, an organization's structure can be a detriment to female promotion into management ranks without anyone in the organization even realizing it. Outdated pay scales, lack of fairness in promotional procedures, lack of caring and leadership in

diversity issues, and inadequate training of management and supervisory staff can set up failure for females who attempt to advance in the bureaucracy. Literature suggests that the glass ceiling is a component of the organization itself. Bell (2007) offers that organizational barriers exist and that "...formidable institutional obstacles to women in mid- to upper-management must be dismantled," (284). In particular, sexual harassment is reported as historically more prominent toward females and may be a part of the organizational culture. Situations of prejudice against female managers are made worse when the culture and legal structure of the organization does not provide for an adequate method of dealing with such issues. Wirth (2001) states, "There appears to be growing consensus among researchers that organizational contexts (structures, organizational climate and culture) play a significant role in the perception and incidence of sexual harassment," (117).

Men may not be aware of such oppositional behaviors nor of sabotage attempts toward female managers in the organization because men do not traditionally face these experiences (Guy 1993). Referring to a woman assistant manager he had promoted, one male city manager stated: *"I never remember ... (anyone) resenting the fact that they answered to a woman."* The woman assistant manager, however, reported that there were males in the organization that resented her promotion and actively engaged in sabotage behaviors toward her. If males do not have such experiences themselves, they may not be able to identify those behaviors going on around them. This, of course, contributes to an organizational culture that appears to tolerate prejudicial behaviors. The fact that men may not recognize these behaviors is also a reason why female mentors are important (which is discussed later in this chapter under The Influence of Mentoring).

Connell (2006) examines gender relations of power and argues that problems still exist in establishing the authority of women managers, partly because there are some men who "...do not easily take direction from women," or believe that women are promoted because rules were bent (846). Eagly and Carli (2007) contend that men may view high levels of competence and authority in women as competing with them for power and authority (106).

This dissertation's ethnographical study reveals that the male resistance to female authority can be attributed to two factors: first, some men resent the authority of women (identified as "prejudice" in the literature); and second, some men are uncomfortable with that authority simply because they do not know how to relate to it. This second fact is not addressed in the literature. The women city managers interviewed acknowledged the discomfort of males in meetings and found ways to help men adjust to the presence of a woman. According to the women, it was rare that men with power and status knew how to be in a meeting with a woman who also had power and status. This forced the women to find ways to successfully handle these situations. In some respects, women had to mentor men in creating a new type of business relationship. Men learned that it was a productive business endeavor to have a woman sitting at the conference table discussion, regardless the topic.

A summary of experiences of women in this dissertation research is reflected in Figure 6.1. Prejudice from men included men who did not want to work with a female peer and exhibited negative attitudes when reporting to a woman manager. Resistance in completing work assignments and resentment of a woman receiving a promotion into management ranks were not uncommon incidents. The pathway of the first generation

of women city managers included discrimination occasionally from male city managers who did not want to consider a woman as an assistant city manager and exhibited resentment toward women assistant city managers from other cities who attended professional networking events. Females also resisted women in management ranks through negative comments and rumors, as well as through deliberate actions such as leaving women off distribution lists and failing to provide the same communication and information provided to executive level men in the organization.

### **Prejudice and Discrimination Manifested as Obstacles and Opposition**

#### **From Men ....**

- prejudice: working with men who did not want to work with a female peer
- prejudice: experiencing negative attitudes from males having to report to a woman manager
- prejudice: receiving resistance from males regarding work assignments
- prejudice: encountering males in professional organizations who exhibited resentment of females entering the ranks of assistant city managers
- prejudice: dealing with opposition from male department heads, especially those who had wanted the promotions the women received
- discrimination: experiencing opposition from male elected officials
- discrimination: being told that the organization would never have a female assistant manager

#### **From Women ....**

- prejudice: receiving verbal put-downs from female clerical staff
- prejudice: enduring rumors of affairs and accusations of career advancement through sexual favors
- discrimination: experiencing sabotage attempts from female clerical staff (through activities such as failing to pass on messages or meeting notices, being omitted from management distribution lists and directories; having their correct job title listed as something less; withholding information provided to others, and not responding to requests for task assistance)

#### **From Organizational Structure & Culture....**

- prejudice: being perceived as weak, too young, and not the usual management staff
- prejudice: being ignored and not listened to in meetings
- discrimination: receiving less pay than male peers
- discrimination: experiencing sexual harassment from males
- discrimination: being considered at a disadvantaged due to being a single female
- discrimination: being treated at a disadvantage due to being a parent or single parent

(Source: Incidents reported by participants in this dissertation research.)

Figure 6.1 Prejudice and Discrimination Manifested as Obstacles and Opposition

It was not unusual for the early working environment of public organizations to embrace the concepts that women were weak, too young, and not qualified or appropriate

for management ranks. Participants of this research encountered lower pay scales, sexual harassment, and being considered at a disadvantage because they were single or were a parent of young children. Overall, their abilities were underestimated by coworkers and those in management.

Individual incidents of prejudice and discrimination were cited by participants in this study. Connie, who set her sights early in her career to become a city manager, reports resistance from coworkers: *I was the first woman in the manager's office in (city). I had one department director who reported to me who always wore his tie with the...little pig on it (MCP for male chauvinist pig). He was very definitely not happy that he had to report to a young woman. Part of it...was my age...but the big part of it was because I was a woman. One city manager told me that when he made the departmental assignments about who was going to report to whom, he had several people say, "Well are you mad at me? You're making me report to the woman?" And earlier in my career when I first said I wanted to be a city manager, people laughed because there weren't any city managers who were women and they just thought I was joking. When I first started interviewing for professional jobs, there were a lot of questions like, "Well, do you have a husband? Do you have boyfriends? What does your boyfriend think about your applying for this kind of a job? Will you be able to travel? Will you quit if you get married?"*

Becky relates an example of being underestimated by those with decision making power: *Each job I've held... I've always been the first woman. Having not gotten the city manager job in (city), it came back later from some of our council members that they didn't think that - because I was a woman - I could be tough enough when it came to negotiating with developers and contracts. I think there's still quite a double standard.*

Grace describes encountering prejudicial attitudes and how she learned to cope with them. She adopted the attitude that she would have some control of other's perception of her abilities: *I've tried not to make that part of my thinking. Early on, my advice...to other women and minorities is -if you go into the room and you see yourself as being different than everybody else in that conference room, then you are going to project that and you are going to be looking for people to respond to you differently because you're a woman or because you are a different color or whatever. And if I'm thinking that, that's going to...inhibit me more than it is other people. If they've got a problem with it, then that's their problem; that's not my problem.*

Grace continues: *I think from a standpoint of women in general...the more of us that are out there, the more confident that those who follow us become and the more open and receptive with that...men and others become as we diversify in all ways. We bring different opinions to the table.*

Resistant males were not alone in exhibiting negative behaviors as women advanced into the ranks of management. Della relates: *Obstacles I did run into were typically from certain women in the profession, particularly the...secretaries, initially, and then other people... who felt threatened. So I try to be good to women coming up because I didn't always have that...if I am...in a position to help another woman, I will make sure I'm helpful and not a roadblock.*

The women in this study were asked if they thought other women who follow them would experience the same difficulties. They expressed the belief that the way would be easier because their presence had changed the organization. By the mere presence of women in management positions in public organizations, the social construct

of the organization changed due to their influence. One subject, however, expressed doubt about obstacles disappearing, although she did feel that more women would be encouraged to pursue city management in spite of the difficulties.

The experiences of the participants in this dissertation research relate to the points made by Bell (2007), Wirth (2001), and Eagly and Carli (2007). The working environment experienced by the first generation of women city managers will continue to change as more women in public management positions go about their daily responsibilities. Elected officials who have worked with women managers will no longer question whether a woman can do the job. Men will have worked with women managers and learned skills and behaviors that are productive. Such events change the people who work with and for these organizations, as well as the organizations themselves. These changes, in turn, produce more opportunities for women. In other words, the track records of the first women managers impact coworkers' attitudes and prejudices toward females in management positions, impact future hiring considerations and decisions, and ultimately impact the organization. Such incremental and slow changes and adjustments in the minds of people impact the working atmosphere, moving the organization toward a more diverse and inclusive culture.

When asked if they believe women in city management have made progress over the last few decades, all said yes. Progress is seen through the visibility of more women city managers and assistant city managers, the election of more women on city councils, and the fact that several large Texas cities have, or have had, women city managers (Dallas, El Paso, San Antonio, Lubbock, and Austin). All of the women commented on the first women city managers charting the pathway and opening doors for others to

follow, adding that the stigma is largely gone now because people know women can be successful public managers. It was also noted that more women's names are now listed as finalists for city manager positions (referring to newspaper and Internet newsletters that list the top few candidates for a city manager position).

### 6.3 Qualifications and Preparation for the City Manager Position

Certain aspects of public management career development have been the subject of public administration research in the past. This study identifies four factors of career development: education, work experience, networking, and mentoring. While education and experience are qualifications for the job, networking and mentoring greatly assist in preparation for the job, as well as contributing to the tenure of a city manager. Each of these factors is discussed below.

#### 6.3.1 *Essential Education*

Literature suggests that master's degrees are increasingly important for a public management career. Research shows that 27% of city managers had master's degrees in 1971, increasing to 51% in 1980 (Stillman 1971, p.3 and ICMA 1980, as cited in Barber, 1988, 696). The latest data from ICMA (2009) indicates that, out of 26% of city managers responding to their 2009 survey, approximately 39% of city managers have a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree, while about 19% have master's degrees in other areas. Prior to the 1990s, most masters degrees were in either political science or business administration, but since then, public policy and public administration have become the recommended fields for those pursuing the public management track (Barber 1988, 698). Today, a master's degree is often the minimal educational requirement for the manager position. Occasionally, however, individuals can move into the position

because of many years of experience within the city governance structure, basically those who may work their way up through the organization. Add a master's degree to those years, and a person will be considered well qualified to be considered for a management position. With or without the formal education, all individuals selected to serve as city manager have a proven track record of work performance.

The research subjects pointed out that in addition to the formal education requirement, the city manager credentialing program offered by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the certified manager program (CPM) offered by universities serve to supplement city management education. People striving to become city managers or assistant city managers often pursue those certifications and credentials. The women of this study pointed out that in the future, such designations as a credentialed manager or a certified public manager may be listed as requirements or preferences on job announcements in addition to a master's degree in public administration or public policy.

In discussing formal education in public management, participants in this dissertation research provided opinions on the importance of education providing the needed confidence and competencies, and offered suggestions for university programs.

Helen holds a Master of Public Administration degree and stresses the importance of education: *You have to have education to get in the door; to get the interview. You have to have, I think, a master's degree basically.*

Connie, who has multiple higher education degrees, comments: *I think the academic credential is very helpful to give you credibility when you are looking for the job, and when you are dealing in that environment. .*

Eva holds two master's degrees and believes education is the base line. She urges university programs to make efforts to have women faculty and include practical experiences in the course work. She also suggests that universities *...make sure the female students are aligned with some female professional...(with) visits or interviews or something to...get that interaction going.*

### *6.3.2 Public Service Experience*

A variety of work experience gained as a public servant may serve a person well as they advance in their career. No matter what experience is gained through work assignments, department or special projects, or one-time events, that exposure and insight into the workings of public organizations is never wasted. No matter the assignment, it will add knowledge and experience in future decision making and management duties of any future city manager. The career paths of city managers reveal that managers can come from any department in the city - public works, engineering, library, fire, police, development, inspections, city secretary's office. Also, some careers begin in the manager's office, such as an intern assignment in the city manager's office, an administrative assistant to the city manager's office, or the position of assistant to the city manager. These direct entry positions to the city manager's office are usually associated with the pursuit or completion of a college degree in public administration.

Most of the participants in this study have earned at least a master's degree; however, they also stressed the importance of gaining practical experience before applying for a city management position.

### 6.3.3 *The Benefits of Professional Networking*

For the purpose of this study, professional networking is explained as the participation in a business social network for the purpose of gaining personal insight into a profession, gaining information about that profession and what it is like working within it, making contacts which may provide a benefit for potential future business opportunities, and creating relationships that may help supplement a career.

Networking and participation in professional organizations are often survival tools for city managers. Even though they are not job qualification requirements, they serve as attributes for tenure and success as a city manager. The women managers in this study said education, experience, mentoring relationships, and networking through participation in professional organizations were equally important in building their careers and opening the doors to the city manager's office.

Frances states: *I think it's the combination...education is good...and you've got to have the practical application...and then the professional organizations are of utmost importance.*

Helen makes the point: *I think professional associations are where you get the networking. You can hear what's happening in other places and you can learn so much from other people. It keeps you interested and invigorated. We can bolster each other. I think it's absolutely essential for people to be involved in professional associations, and if they don't they are limiting themselves. They just stay in their own little world. I don't think that's good for their organization when they are not learning, not hearing and experiencing new ideas that come from everywhere.*

Connie believes education and experience are important, but also emphasizes networking as a city manager: *The networking, I think, is just the essential of the job. Both internally and externally. I think the job of the city manager is not just making sure that the city government is efficiently operating, but is making the connections between the city government and the other institutions in the community and the other professional organizations. That's a lot of what a manager's job is, is to really be an effective connector of the city with other places. So I think all of them are important and I've certainly used them all.*

#### *6.3.4 The Influence of Mentoring*

Without exception, none of the women interviewed said they had a childhood ambition to become a city manager, and in fact, had not even known what a city manager was before they became adults. So where was the genesis of their desire to become a city manager or to even pursue a public service career? Three learned of the existence of the manager position while attending college and decided to pursue that career. The remaining eight were employed by cities or councils of governments and were encouraged by others at those organizations to think about a future as a city manager. All along the way, mentoring played a major role in their career paths.

For the purpose of this study, mentoring is defined as teaching someone about the profession and how to navigate through it. The mentor is a guide and counselor, an advisor and supporter of the person being mentored. Within the city management profession, mentoring is an important supplement to experience, education, and networking. Fox and Schuhmann (2001) borrow from Hale's (1992) description that

"...mentoring is known to influence strongly one's professional career development and upward mobility," (Hale p.89; Fox and Schuhmann p. 382).

Mentoring can be intra-organizational (within an organization) and/or inter-organizational (across organizations). Mentoring can be a formal function within a professional networking organization, such as the Texas City Management Association. Mentoring can also be informal, spanning years and different organizations. As seen in some of the statements by the women in this study, their mentoring may have started in high school, college, their first job in public service, or when they entered a work field within the city management profession itself.

The mentoring of future managers is critical to the profession. In decades past, this mentoring was done by males for the benefit of future male city managers. Although the gender dynamics have changed in the last twenty years, mentoring is still essential in the development of future managers. The first generation of women managers had only male manager mentors. Many of these were the men who actually helped them through the glass ceiling.

The lack of same-sex mentoring was yet another obstacle the first women city managers had to negotiate. This study sheds light on how the first women city managers found female mentors or coped without them. The lack of female mentors has created a void in the acquisition of relevant knowledge, advice, support, and encouragement for women in public service management. Literature suggests that not having a same sex mentor may be a detriment to progression within the field (Guy 1993, 290, Kelly, et al. 1991). Often, men managers may not be able to identify the prejudice experienced by women in public management career track positions.

Fox and Schuhmann (2001) assert that certain factors of the city management profession appear to work against the advancement of women in the profession, and that high quality mentoring experiences are an important variable in women's entry into the profession (382). Their study compared the mentoring experiences of men and women and found that in the category of professional mentors, men were more likely to rely on male mentors and women were more likely to rely on women mentors; however, the lack of number of women in high -level positions appeared to be an obstacle for women in local government administration. While men managers were more likely to have mentors who were men elected officials, supervisors, and educators, women were more likely to have women friends, supervisors, and educators as mentors (388).

Women were also less likely to have an educational mentor (386). Specifically, "...72% of men managers with a graduate degree identified an educational mentor, but only 58% of women managers with a graduate degree had an educational mentor," (387).

Same sex mentors were also considered within educational mentors. The lack of female educators (24% women faculty with 50% women students) in public administration and public affairs programs may be a contributing factor to the lack of mentors for women students. While both men and women are more reliant on same-sex mentors, women have fewer opportunities for those mentoring relationships (388). Women in public management consider it important to find women mentors because the unique experience and knowledge of a female is particularly valuable for other females aspiring to the position of city manager. A woman village manager in Illinois seems to agree, and is quoted in an article, stating, "...women are not seeing other women managers -- and it's affirming when they do," (Szymborski 1996, 13).

Frances, who was fortunate to have a female mentor, comments: *I think it's important for females to be able to have a female mentor, but I don't think they should exclude males from their pool of mentors, so that they can learn and understand different skill types...the first females didn't have the opportunities to have female mentors...and I think because of that, they missed out.*

Mentoring appeared as an important aspect of career paths of city managers when it cited in a study by Buckwalter and Parsons (2000), which examined the career paths of local government managers. Their findings conclude that having a role model or mentor was even more important than formal education, although 71% of city managers had a master's degree.

There were no women city managers to mentor others. This research indicates that these women recognized examples of strong women in their families, specifically citing strong mothers and grandmothers that were an inspiration to them. When the first generation of women city managers were entering the ranks of assistant managers, they began to look for other women assistant managers so that they could provide support for each other. These other women turned out to be mentors to the assistant manager position, while only males were mentors for the top manager position.

When asked who helped along the way, the research subjects for this study indicated the following: male managers, male assistant managers, male elected officials, and male professors. Later, when women began breaking into the management ranks of major city departments, assistant city managers, and city managers, they sought out other women as mentors. The women began to mentor each other.

The mentoring and “apprenticeship” of women public administrators, fostered originally by men, is now expanding to include both men and women in their current training of women in public service. This true partnership and inclusion is what society and public administration should be about. We must recognize, however, that it will take both women and men to take it to the next level of democratic development.

#### *6.3.5 Summary of Preparation for a City Management Position*

Figure 6.2 summarizes the formula for success identified by the women of this study, reflecting their consensus that all four factors are essential for a successful career in public management. The consensus of managers interviewed in this study indicates that education provides confidence and competencies that get you "in the door for the interview." Most city management job postings list a master's degree requirement. Experience in any department and with any project will help qualify for a city manager's job; however, experience as a manager will accumulate to help you keep that manager job over time.

**Four-part Formula for a City Management Career**

Education - provides confidence and competencies that get you in the door for the interview

+

Experience - gets you the job, gets the job done, and gives you success over time

+

Networking and participation in professional organizations - helps you survive the job, builds relationships, provides peer support, invigorates your energy, provides continuing education on ethics and current issues, provides a feeling of "a noble profession"

+

Mentoring - assistance in skill development and career advancement

=

Successfully surviving a city management career

Figure 6.2 Formula for a City Management Career

Networking helps those in the manager's office, especially assistant/deputy managers and city managers, to survive the job over time, lend peer support, contribute to knowledge of current and technical, braces ethics challenges, and provides a feeling of membership within a 'noble profession.'

The combination of these four factors creates a synergy that has proven essential for these women city managers.

#### 6.4 Career Paths

The career paths of city managers has been researched extensively (Banovetz 1971; Martin 1982; Barber 1988; Ammons 1993; DeSantis and Newell 1996; Buckwalter and Parsons 2000; Rupp, Huffman, and Moore 2000; Renner 2001; Watson and Hassett 2002; Watson and Hassett 2004; Hassett 2004).

Pathways have been examined to categorize identified routes to the city manager's chair. The career paths of managers in the nation's largest cities have been categorized

into four pathways: long servers, lateral movers, ladder climbers, and single city careerists (Watson and Hassett 2004). Long servers are defined as managers who spend most of their careers in a stable city, with those cities being usually under 30,000 in population. Ladder climbers are those who were viewed as being on the "traditional" path, moving to a larger city with each job change. Lateral movers may also move often but remain in similar size cities, with these cities generally being smaller in population. Single city careerists experience a steady progression up the ranks within one city government. According to Watson and Hassett, these managers tend to work in much larger cities that can provide opportunities for advancement (195-6).

The Watson and Hassett (2004) study found 113 council-manager cities with populations over 100,000, of which 42 were in California and 18 were in Texas. These figures reveal that 53 percent of city management jobs in cities over 100,000 are located in California and Texas (193).

Not all cities are large cities, and not all city managers want to serve in large cities. The career path trait of "moving up" to larger and larger cities is not always one's chosen path. Buckwalter and Parsons (2000) identified several reasons why managers choose to serve in smaller cities: the ability to make a positive impact on a smaller city; a closer camaraderie with the city council and the community; job satisfaction, and desiring the quality of life that a smaller city environment provides (19).

Career paths are impacted by tenure of city managers. Studies of manager turnover acknowledge the high risk, high conflict potential of the profession. Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) identified the issue of conflict between the elected body and the manager as a situation that can force the firing of competent city managers. Thurmond

(2009) identified causes and signs of conflict for the manager which raise the potential for termination of, or resignation by, the manager. Such events may create an interruption in the career path of city managers which may be a factor that contributes to their forced change of cities, or even careers.

Watson and Hassett (2004) discuss the career paths of city managers, citing these career paths as typical routes from college to an administrative assistant in a city manager's office, then assistant manager, and ultimately to a manager position in a smaller city, continuing to move to larger and larger cities (Martin 1982, 81). Later, these pathways were discovered to be more diverse. In addition to the typical path described by Martin, there are other routes that open the door to the manager's office, such as department heads, budget analysts, and senior administration assistants (Ammons 1993) and (DeSantis and Newell, *Local Government Managers' Career Paths* 1996). Barber (1988) revealed that 55% of newly appointed city managers had left a similar position in another city and 45% were promoted from within their organization. DeSantis and Newell identified two routes to a city manager position, with one being the "conventional" path of intern, administrative assistant, assistant to the city manager, and then assistant city manager, and an "alternate" path as through a departmental director / department head position. They agree with Barber in that most city managers are hired from outside the organization (79.1%) by 1996 (Watson and Hassett 2004).

The women of this study followed these pathways, but the trail was dotted with non-traditional customs and challenges. Most of these women had to traverse their own way while overcoming barriers thrown in front of them, sometimes having to change

organizations in order to advance. Other women in this study, however, had the support and benefit of a strong male mentor to help them navigate their pathway.

The findings of this study reveal how the first women got to their city management position. When they broke through the glass ceiling and entered the ranks of the power elite, it was not an accidental, spontaneous event. They spent years of preparation with formal education, work experience, relationship skill development, professional networking, and developing mentors. Their city management career started at lower levels in local governments or councils-of-government organizations.

These women started in various capacities and departments, in one or more government or council-of-government entities. While working within departments, they may not have given thought to becoming a city manager; however, along the way a mentor appeared that set them on that path. Often, however, the mentor had in mind for them to acquire an assistant city manager position, not necessarily a city manager position. At some point, however, the women themselves made a conscious decision to prepare themselves for the possibility of holding the title of city manager.

The career paths of the subjects of this study are presented in Figure 6.3. The listing includes their positions before becoming a city manager. The departments listed are the predominant areas served, even though some of the women also served in various capacities and in various departments. An "X" indicates that they served in the position listed. The indication of A/B/C/D indicates a change in organizations when this position was obtained. A change in organization will often play into the mobility factor of city management, requiring a change in residential area. An asterisk (\*) indicates that they were the first woman to serve in this capacity at their organization. This fact is

significant due to the indication of multiple firsts for these women, as well as for the organizations they served. It indicates the state of diversity in local government by the fact that a woman had not held such a position in the past. If they were the first woman in this position they are placed in a double learning cycle. First, they must learn the job. Second, they must learn how to get the job done as the first woman in the position if she experiences the obstacles and opposition behaviors previously discussed. In other words, there are two things going on here. One is the job itself. The other thing is how to function in the organization in a successful way. In each instance, the organization itself was also changing and moving toward diversification. The career path is the most important of the two, however, learning to deal with the obstacles adds another learning element to the work experience which will help them for the rest of their career. Those individuals who are in a career track but never have to function in an oppositional working atmosphere may miss out on relationship skill development and problem solving techniques.

The women of this study were generally the recipients of both kinds of learning experience. The chart reveals their career tracks, and that they generally were the first woman in those positions. Their coping skills, problem solving skills, and relationship building skills were developed along with the technical job skills. This double learning experience may have helped them to become better city managers due to the enhanced "people action" of dealing with obstacles throughout their career experiences.

As evidenced by the career paths of these women city managers, mobility among government entities is often necessary for advancement. Past research reveals that most city managers change organizations in order to advance (Paul 1981; Barber 1988;

DeSantis and Newell 1996; Watson and Hassett 2004). As Figure 6.3 reflects, the women of this study often changed organizations in order to advance within their careers. In fact, several women reported that their abilities and skills were under estimated and they were actually blocked from advancement because of attitudes toward their gender (prejudice and discrimination).

| <b>Public Service Career Paths of Research Subjects</b> |                   |                       |                 |                     |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Previous Departments<sup>^</sup></b>                 | <b>Asst to CM</b> | <b>Asst/Deputy CM</b> | <b>City Adm</b> | <b>City Manager</b> |
| Budget & Research/ <u>A</u>                             | X*/ <u>A</u>      | X*/ <u>B</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>C</u>        |
| Program Manager/ <u>A</u>                               | X*/ <u>B</u>      | X*/ <u>C</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>D</u>        |
| City Mgr Office/ <u>A</u>                               | X*/ <u>B</u>      | ---                   | X*/ <u>C</u>    | X*/ <u>D</u>        |
| Finance/ <u>A</u>                                       | ---               | X/ <u>B</u>           |                 | X*/ <u>C</u>        |
| Program Manager/ <u>A</u>                               | X*/ <u>B</u>      | X*/ <u>B</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>B</u>        |
| Legal/ <u>A</u>   | X*/ <u>A</u>      | ---                   | X*/ <u>B</u>    | X*/ <u>C</u>        |
| Purchasing/ <u>A</u>                                    | X*/ <u>A</u>      | X*/ <u>B</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>C</u>        |
| Human Resources/ <u>A</u>                               | ---               | X*/ <u>A</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>A</u>        |
| City Mgr Office/ <u>A</u>                               | X/ <u>A</u>       | X/ <u>A</u>           |                 | X*/ <u>B</u>        |
| Community Development<br>& Human Resources/ <u>A</u>    | X*/ <u>A</u>      | X*/ <u>A</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>A</u>        |
| City Secretary Office/ <u>A</u>                         | ---               | X*/ <u>A</u>          |                 | X*/ <u>B</u>        |

-----

<sup>^</sup>Previous Departments may include more departments and/or at various organizations  
 \* First woman in this position  
A/B/C/D indicates mobility to other organizations  
 City Adm - indicates administrator at a General Law city before Council-Manager city

Figure 6.3 Public Service Career Paths of Research Subjects

Clearly, the first women city managers were also the first women to serve in multiple positions at local government organizations. This chart documents, for these research subjects, some level of prior experience was necessary before entry to the city manager's office.

The "assistant to the city manager" position varies somewhat among cities. The position will be whatever the city manager needs it to be. The position may be something like "junior assistant city manager" position held by a graduate student working on a master's degree, or a graduate that is in an apprentice function on the city manager track (which may or may not have responsibility for other departments in the organization), or may be a major support office for the manager, and which is responsible for research, analysis, and assistance with policy development. No matter how it is structured or how it functions, it is a learning track for city management. Three subjects skipped the assistant to the city manager position, moving from a department right into an assistant/deputy city manager position. Assistant city managers are usually prior department heads or may come into the organization through an assistant to the city manager position. It is not uncommon to skip the assistant to the city manager position; however, it is unusual to skip the assistant manager position. Individuals who fall into this category often start their manager tenure at smaller communities.

The two women who skipped the assistant/deputy city manager position obtained a city administrator position at a different city before taking on a manager position. Both women had been told that a female would never be an assistant city manager at their then-current organizations. In order to move up, they had to move out.

#### 6.5 Why Would Anyone Want To Be a City Manager?

Many people outside of public service, as well as many people working in public service, cannot understand why anyone would want to be a city manager. The manager position is, indeed, high demand, high impact, and high risk. It is one of the few professions where you can do a good job and still get fired.

The motivation of public servants has been the subject of public administration literature for decades, and was given new emphasis with the work of James L. Perry and Lois R. Wise (1990). This work cited two decades of public confidence decline regarding public institutions at all levels, and was a response to political leaders' calling "...for a rebirth of the public service ethic," (367). Perry (1996) later defined public service motivation as "...an individual's predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions," (5).

Since 1990, research on the topic of public service motivation has revealed several motivational factors. Identification of motivational factors has been examined for utilization of human resource functions of public service, such as (1) efforts to influence public officials in their decisions about innovative actions (Perry, Kraemer, et al. 1993); (2) comparing public service motivation with private sector motivations in collective bargaining issues (Perry and Anderson 1994); (3) examining employees' resistance to change (Frederickson and Perry 1997); (4) motivations of local government managers as they adopt managerial innovation techniques (Gabris, et al. 2000); (5) ways that public managers themselves can influence aspects of work motivation (Moynihan and Pandey 2007); and (6) ways to "...harness the positive effects of public service motivation to enhance...performance," (Paarlberg, Perry and Hondeghem 2008, 268).

Fox and Schuhmann (1999) study data indicate that women tend to use the terms "help the community" and "work with citizens" as motivational factors, but their commitment to public service is similar to men managers. Although in this 1999 publication, more men used the term "make a difference," the women city managers in

this research almost unanimously said, "I wanted to make a difference" when asked why they wanted to be a city manager.

| <b><u>Motivations for a Career in City Management</u></b>  |                    |                  |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| <b>Motivation</b>  | <b>Women (193)</b> | <b>Men (254)</b> |
| <b>Employment opportunities</b>  |                    |                  |
| Needed a good job  | 14%                | 21.3%            |
| Fell into it   | 9.3                | 2.8              |
| Climbing career ladder   | 7.8                | 4.3              |
| <b>Commitment to the field</b>   |                    |                  |
| Like/love politics   | 9.3                | 6.7              |
| Find work challenging  | 22.8               | 18.5             |
| Specific policy motivation   | 7.3                | 8.3              |
| <b>Commitment to public service</b>  |                    |                  |
| Public service   | 69.4               | 68.1             |
| Help community   | 28.5               | 15.4             |
| Make a difference  | 19.2               | 26.0             |
| Work with / serve citizens   | 28.5               | 18.5             |
| Note: Entries indicate the percentage of managers who identified that area as a primary motivation.<br>(Fox and Schuhmann, Gender and Local Government: A Comparison of Women and Men City Managers 1999, 235) |                    |                  |

Figure 6.4 Motivations for a Career in City Management

Many public servants want to make an impact on their community. As they work within the organization, they realized that the higher they go within the organizational structure, the more impact they can have on what the city organization does for its community. In addition, many people want to achieve the highest rank possible within their chosen field. As seen in the responses in this research, money and benefits are never mentioned. Career advancement is mentioned, not to gain money and benefits, but rather as a way to have a larger impact on their organizations and communities. There is considerable interest today regarding the motivation of public servants. The responses

given by these women are not significantly different from the response of a firefighter, police officer, or public works director.

Motivation of public servants, including city managers, is found to be in (1) the desire to make a difference (Mann 2006), (2) the perception that the public organization they serve will benefit the citizenry it serves, (Boardman and Sundquist 2008), and (3) the job satisfaction that accompanies the perception of service to the community (Boardman and Sundquist 2008).

The International City/County Management Association provides a useful quote in their publication, "Local Government Management. It's the Career for You," which touches on the major points of attraction to the profession.

*A city manager is by definition a generalist. I enjoy being involved in different things each day, which keeps the job enjoyable for me. . . . The most interesting part of the job is finding creative ways to solve problems and to provide better service at lower cost to our citizen-customers. I enjoy working with the mayor and council and our department heads and commissions to solve problems and to make improvements to our town. I enjoy dealing with some of the hands-on, day-to-day problems, particularly when I can see that something I have been involved in has resulted in an improvement in our service delivery to the public or in the quality of life in our community. Russell W. Blake, City Manager, Pocomoke City, Maryland (ICMA 2001, 3).*

The most frequent reasons given for taking on a city manager position are "...to make a difference" and "...the variety of the work." City managers, in fact, may become somewhat addicted to the constantly changing work environment and therefore have difficulty when trying to switch to other professions less demanding. The rewards of job satisfaction are high, but so are the stakes and the risks.

The women represented in this study expressed that they are high achievers and like challenge, and that they wanted to have a positive impact on their community and

people's lives. Some saw it as a way to advance their career and increase their career options. Some wanted to instill stability in their organizations. Others wanted to improve government and emphasize ethical leadership. Most wanted to have the opportunity to look for a better way for their organizations to serve their communities.

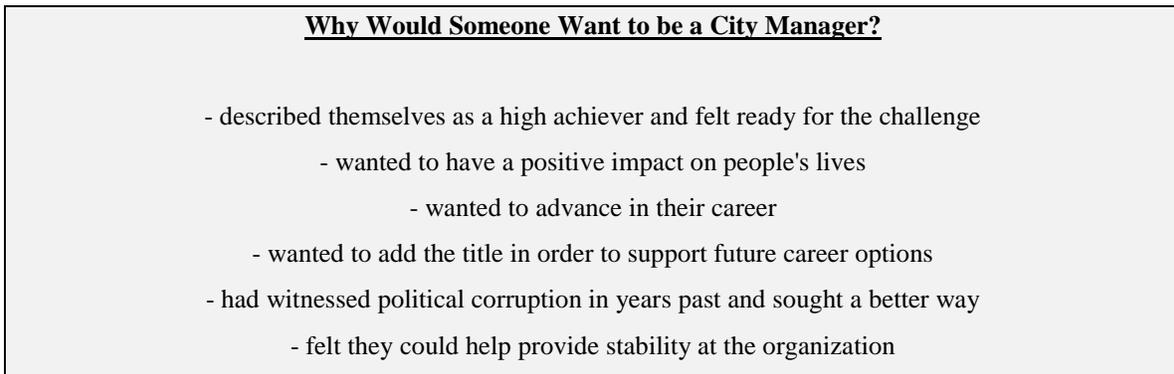


Figure 6.5 Why Would Someone Want to be a City Manager?

Additionally, the research subjects were asked what they were hoping to gain just for themselves by accepting the city manager position. Their responses give additional insight into their personal motivations. The majority cited the need to prove to themselves that they could do the job. A couple of the women stated that they wanted to be the "person in charge." One expressed the desire for increased income and opportunity. Others cited it as a life goal since college days. On a personal level, each woman seemed to want a personal validation of their skills to assure themselves they could do the job. They wanted a public validation of their skills and abilities to let others know that they, and women, could do the city manager job. Considering that few women had, this is not a small challenge at this stage of the public administration profession.

## 6.6 The Moment of Realization

City managers are often asked at what point they knew they were ready to be a city manager. Is there a moment in time when a person knows they want to be a city

manager? Is the moment when they decide they can, indeed, do this complicated and demanding job? Is it a 'defining moment' in their life? Is there a trigger of some sort that sets off this moment? Do they remember that moment? Subjects were asked to identify the point in time when they knew within themselves that they believed they could do the manager's job, and that they would, in fact, accept a city manager position if it was offered to them.

For some, it is a natural transition within their current organizations. For Alice, it was a natural transition when her manager told her of his plans to retire. She felt she had been successful at her organization up to this point. She commented, *What better organization to try. There's a level of comfort...it didn't feel like a huge risk because even if it didn't work, I've had a very good experience.*

Grace had been at her city from the start of her career and expressed, *I could either stay there and get more stale or I could do something different.* Her city manager was leaving and encouraged her to apply for the manager position because if she ever left that city, she would have the title of 'city manager,' which would offer her more career options. She decided to take the city manager job at her city in order to bring more variety to her duties and provide more options for her future in the event she needed them.

For Della, the city manager turnover in her city was a factor. Although past managers had been supportive of her, she was aware that a new manager may or may not be as supportive. Also, she had seen the organization go through the process of adjusting to a new city manager from outside the organization. When the position came open, she was considering making application for the job. She stated: *...the mayor called me...he*

said, 'We want to appoint you city manager. We'd like to offer you the job,' and I said, 'Then I'll take it.'

For others, it is a realization that they will not be afforded the opportunity at their current organizations. Irene states: *I just felt like I wanted to do it...was ready to do that, at least for a smaller community. Also, where I was working, I just didn't feel like I was going to have any opportunity to move up any further, but I felt like I was ready to take that next step...either assistant city manager in a big community or a city administrator or city manager for a small town. I felt like I was ready for the next step.*

Joanne had a similar situation as Irene's in relation to realizing there was not the opportunity to move up in her current organization. She states: *I wanted to know what my opportunities were, and I was told point blank that I had a glass ceiling, those were the words that were used, and I remember sitting there feeling like somebody had just stoned me because ...wait a minute, what year am I in...I can't believe I'm hearing this...so I knew at that point that in order to move up I had to move out...so I immediately started applying...(at other cities).*

For others, another city sought them out. For Frances, the moment was somewhat of a surprise because she had recently retired to work in a consulting capacity, but was approached by a city to come for a job interview for a manager position. She had worked at this city at the beginning of her career and many of the same people were there. She competed along with two city managers with over twenty-five years tenure in the profession. Frances states: *...I'd never been a city manager before but I told them I figured I could - after being at a city of 200,000, I could handle anything a city of 30,000 would have come up.*

Kathy had been at her organization for many years and had acquired an MPA and an assistant city manager title along the way. Although she was content, there was a sense that she felt she could do the city manager's job; however, there were no anticipated opportunities for a step up in the near future. When a city manager executive search consultant began contacting her to apply at another city, she at first was not interested. After several phone calls from the consultant, she talked to her city manager about throwing her hat in the ring for the city manager position at the other city. She states: *My city manager was such a strong mentor that he encouraged me to apply as a learning experience, reminding me that no one gets the first city they go after, so not to get my hopes up. To my surprise, I got the job. I was like the dog that caught the car.*

For some assistant city managers, it is simply the next logical step, and their city managers and other mentors encourage them to apply for that big step. Becky was encouraged by a male mentor. As an assistant city manager, she liked the social interaction with the council and community, and the wide variety of projects. These factors are even more prevalent in the city manager position, so she felt she would like it.

Eva states, *I knew when I was ready to jump into it...it was a night where I was still at work. I had gone home, tucked my kids in, and then came back to work...it was about 11:30 at night. Nobody else is there; nobody else knows what I am doing; I'm the only one working on this whole big project for this citizen group and I just thought, 'you know what - I could do this in a city and maybe get a little more recognition or a little more control over what I'm doing, because I was literally working myself down. I thought, 'I don't have to do this for somebody. I can do this for myself and on my own terms. So I said, 'I'm going to look for a job,' and told (her city manager). ..I wasn't*

*desperate, I was going to make sure it was the right job and the right fit for my family. I knew I wanted to be on the outer urban core, and a city of about 25,000 and 300 employees because I wanted to know everybody's name...that fits my criteria.*

A male city manager advised his female assistant city manager that a person would begin to know they were ready to be a city manager when they watched their own manager and began to realize that they would handle something differently. The frequency of these thoughts would increase as they got more and more ready for the transition.

As indicated above, for every city manager, there is a moment in time, often a moment of solitary thoughtfulness, an insightful and personal moment, in which they know they are ready to take that big step into the city manager position.

## 6.7 Summary

This chapter reveals the career paths of this group of women city managers. Their careers paths were the typical pathways identified by other research, however, the obstacles and challenges they encountered created a more complicated version of those pathways. Their experiences included having to experience and having to learn to cope with prejudice and discrimination (manifested as obstacles and opposition). They worked at their career development by gaining public service experience, completing their formal education, learning to network with other professionals, and having and/or developing mentors of both genders at a time when female mentors were almost non-existent. Their career path was obscured with interruptions, obstacles, and challenges which their male counterparts had not experienced. The women of this study also opened up their hearts and shared, for the benefit of others, their personal epiphanies as to their motivations

toward a career in public management, as well as revealing their own personal moment of realization that they were ready for that big step.

The women of this study were mentored to consider the pursuit of a city management position, and most of their mentors were men. Only one woman decided early in her career that she would become a city manager, with no then-current mentors encouraging her to pursue that path. The remaining women were urged on by others in their personal lives, such as family and friends, as well as professors and other professionals.

During the course of their journeys, it became the normal state for them to encounter prejudice and discrimination, so they developed skills for coping with those issues while still accomplishing tasks, completing projects and assignments, and furthering their education. They made the effort to find other women in government service who might be experiencing the same situations, and in doing so were able to develop female mentors on their same career track. Ultimately, somewhere along that journey they realized that they could, indeed, perform the duties of a city manager. These women made the decision, took the leap, accepted the risk, and became city managers.

The next chapter examines the experiences of this study's participants after they actually acquired the city manager title. Was it as they expected it to be? Would they continue to experience prejudice and discrimination as they had thus far in their careers? Did they have experiences that men city managers do not have? A few surprises are in store.

CHAPTER 7  
LIFE AS A CITY MANAGER

*You saw it and you thought, 'This is a city at its finest.'  
This is what a city can do...being able to make a  
difference... and make a good impact to people's lives.  
I went home and I said,  
'This was a good day's work.'  
-- Della*

7.1 Introduction

The women of this study became city managers as a result of an intersection of pathways that included higher education, career development, mentoring, and personal inspiration. What happens after moving into the city manager's office? They are the first woman city manager at their city, and this is their first city manager job, which can add an entirely new set of issues to address. Will they find that they were prepared enough? Will they be able to do the job? Will they make a difference in their community? Will their expectations be met? Lessons learned, surprises encountered, and expectations may have been different from what was anticipated. Their personal accounts of incidents and the stories revealed serve to open our eyes to a new era of public management, an era where the gender of the city manager is not a factor in getting the job done.

## 7.2 Prejudice and Discrimination Revisited

Did these new women city managers see the same prejudice and discrimination they had experienced their entire careers up to this point? Although they expected the same treatment to continue, surprisingly, once they acquired the title of city manager, nearly all previously experienced prejudices and discrimination actions disappeared from view. If people felt that way, they did not exhibit it. The city manager position itself was respected, whether or not anyone had a personal issue with gender. This change was more than a personal achievement for the manager, it was also a benefit, making their job somewhat less difficult.

Frances offers: *I don't think gender had anything to do with my appointment in (city). They had the choice of an incumbent male. This group...nine men that hired me... wanted somebody that was energized; that had lots of fresh, new ideas, and I think...(I fit)...the bill for their criteria.*

Alice states: *(City) is a very progressive community. We have a woman municipal judge, three women on our city council, the president of the school board is female, so it's the kind of community where (gender) is just not an issue.*

Joanne: *After becoming a city manager...the council never made my gender an issue.*

Eva: *Being female, it's almost like my council wanted or thought it was better to have a female right now because the town is going through so many different growing pains... and some had expressed to me that they felt the reason they hired me... was because they felt like my approach and style, partly because I'm female, would be better suited to that and help get the town used to having an administrator. So, that's an*

*obstacle that the next person won't have to face, even if they are female. I am fortunate to have, for the most part, a fairly young council, so they're not that old school mentality about women and they've really made it work for me.*

### 7.3 The New City Manager

#### 7.3.1 Challenges of City Management

These new city managers were immediately challenged by new responsibilities. Once becoming a city manager, the full weight of responsibility for the entire organization balanced squarely on their shoulders. No longer could they enjoy a staff position, somewhat shielded by someone else as manager. No matter how effective and successful the assistant/deputy city manager is, they still do not feel the full weight of the city manager position.

Difficult situations cited most often dealt with the finance and public safety departments. Additionally, however, when situations occurred that questioned the manager's integrity, a difficult situation was made worse because it could be a threat to the manager's career and personal life. Attacks against their integrity invoked an intense emotional reaction on both a professional and personal level, and indicated a distinction between the job itself and the personal career of the individual. The personal career of a person in the city manager position extends beyond the job and is carried with them after they leave the organization, even into retirement. While handling major events of the organization will ultimately constitute an addition to the experience inventory of the city manager, an attack on integrity is viewed as personal, even if the attack is aimed at the organization itself. This reinforces evidence of the weight of responsibility city

managers feel for the reputation of the entire organization. It is an organizational responsibility, yet it is also a personal burden taken on by the top position.

Tough organizational situations often deal with scandals (or potential scandals) which usually stem from a department director level, such as a finance director or police chief. The major exception to this, however, can be an event that involves an individual police officer, because of the media attention police actions attract. Such incidents require the formulation of a strategy for the successful handling of the situation, hopefully with some sort of a positive outcome, if possible. Consideration must be given to (1) the potential impact on the organization and the community, (2) how to deal with any other criminal justice agencies and the media, and (3) giving careful attention to personnel rules and other laws relevant to the incident. City managers who are successful in handling major crises know how to garner appropriate resources for dealing with the situation at hand, know how to deal with a variety of anticipated outcomes, and know how to move the organization (and sometimes the community) beyond the incident. The ability to strategize and carry out an action plan is paramount to a successful outcome of such major issues. Even though these situations are high risk challenges, if they are brought to a reasonably successful conclusion, they can be an appreciated accomplishment.

As a new city manager, Eva had to deal with a non-responsive finance director during the budget process and had ultimately decided to terminate him the following week. He jumped in ahead of her, however, and publicly accused her of illegal actions. This added more media attention to the firing. Her strategy, therefore, changed at the last minute and took the situation into what could be termed as "crises management." For a

new, first time city manager, this is indeed a career impacting challenge. So what did she do? First and foremost, she kept doing her job just as she would have otherwise, which was to get the budget done within the legally required deadlines. Second, after checking with the city attorney in order to stay within legal guidelines, she completed the firing process as planned. Third, she addressed the media issues head on and did not avoid their questions and inquiries. Eva comments on the day that the firing took place and the media were advised of the situation: *The best thing for a really hard, hectic day is some cookie dough and a glass of wine.*

Helen had to ask for a police chief's resignation. He was a career officer within the department and was well established in the community. His inappropriate behavior was never made public; however, his leaving the organization was the most difficult situation she had ever dealt with. She developed a strategy, carried it out, and luckily, things went smoothly.

Joanne cites an issue where her personal safety was threatened by a former employee with considerable weapons training and anger management issues. The threat was intense enough that the police department watched her office and attended council meetings for a time. When personal threats are this severe, the manager's home and family are also affected.

For Irene, a difficult time was at a moment that should have been one of her best times. She had acquired her first city administrator job, which is usually a joyful occasion in one's career. Her moment, however, was marred due to a situation with her former employer. She states: *I think the toughest situation was in my previous job... when I left there...because it brought to light the feelings I had about...not being able to*

*move up there further. I guess it's been kind of shocking to me that in a large organization it seemed that I faced more -- in a larger town -- I faced more obstacles because I was female and because I had children than I have so far in this smaller community. So that's kind of interesting.*

Alice had to deal with an incident regarding a former police chief and former city manager. She states: *Our scandal was simply the catalyst for some serious organizational development initiatives. The changes we made brought about more difficult situations as the community and organization responded to a different way of doing business. Change management has been the hallmark of my administration. I've managed it very well in some ways, not so well in others. I've learned a great deal along the way. It is my hope that we have improved the corporate culture of our organization to place a higher value on things like accountability and excellence. Putting together a transition plan...set the stage for evolving the organization...*

Connie speaks in general terms. *Oh my goodness. There have been so many. I think being in (a large Texas city) at the time that I was...was really tough because the city was in financial trouble and there was an intense period there while we were trying to make sure that the books balanced and that we got a tax increase through. Every place I've been since then has been kind of tough.... You know, it's not easy work anyplace.*

As a new city manager, Kathy encountered major issues with the police department, and, as she began to address those issues, the situation grew worse for several months. She states: *After being on the job for a couple of months, it was discovered that the situation was even worse than the council thought. As the department*

*issues were addressed, the heat was turned up by the small police faction involved. Luckily, the council stayed strong with their full support behind me and staff, as we began to peel away the layers of issues to address. It was paramount that the strategy used to remedy the situation was legal, so the city attorney's office was heavily involved also. Mostly, I just did my job as I would have otherwise, not allowing the continual efforts of distraction to break me down. Also, always, I was professional, fair, polite, and courteous to everyone. And, I made sure that my continual message to the city departments, the community, and the media was positive, professional, and progressive. This major police issue had been in place at least five years and had been the reason that two former police chiefs and two former city managers had left. The other city departments and the community were tired of the turmoil and ready for it to be gone. It was just a matter of staying strong, staying on a new and positive course, and just staying put, not giving up and going away. That city was stuck in a mud hole and would still be there if a lot of people had not worked together, had courage, and stayed strong to see it through. The outcome, however, was tremendously successful, and the city has continued to blossom since that time.*

These examples of strong and forward-moving actions bode well for city managers. Problems are always on the horizon in public management and are part of the job. A public manager's strategy in dealing with them can make or break their career. The situations cited in this research show courage, knowledge of technical and legal issues, and strong, decisive leadership in action.

### 7.3.2 *Disappointments and Low Moments in City Management*

Public management positions have many high and low moments. When asked about disappointments and low moments, situations mentioned included nasty politics, losing sight of the impact of decisions on human lives, lack of support and willingness to take risks for city projects, and lack of appreciation for the effort of city employees. When asked what are the worst things about being a city manager, long hours and lack of balance between personal and professional lives were mentioned most often.

Descriptions of "lowest moments" fell into two categories. First, those moments that are strictly job related, such as having a negative experience with a personnel issue or a work project. Even though such situations are difficult, they are considered part of the job and are taken in stride. The second category included moments that questioned the integrity of the organization or the city manager. It is this second category that, even though considered part of the job, bleeds over into the manager's career ethics and personal values, and can quickly stir emotions.

Long hours and demands that take one away from family are often cited as difficulties with public management. Frances is well known for her high energy, but even she was taxed by the hours the job demands. She states: *...the hours...the time it takes - and you love what you're doing but it does... take away and drain on your family. Although I've learned and backed off from what I used to do, I've tried to learn to still have a family and to have a better balance, but it's...hard trying to get all the demands met and to be every place at every time.*

Della also alludes to the long hours of the job: *...you work very, very hard and you put in a lot of hours and councils in the past weren't always appreciative...I don't*

*expect councils to be patting you on the back, constantly praising you but every once in a while, just a recognition of the hours or...recognition that you've done a good job....* She also comments on citizens: *...there are a lot of people that make the city run and there are a lot of dedicated souls that put their heart into it and I think sometimes people don't realize how much, and how fortunate they are to have the folks they have.*

*People...expect their water to turn on, the roads to be clear, parks to be perfect. People don't realize how hard those people work sometimes and then they're always quick to criticize.*

Connie cites being disappointed "*...when mayors are risk averse.*" She describes her lowest moment: *I was in (city) and I got accused publicly of contract dealings that weren't aboveboard. I've never had my integrity questioned before. That was pretty hard on me.*

Helen speaks of her lowest moment when she was fired from her first city manager job: *The first time to get fired is pretty bad and it had been difficult for awhile. Things were hard there. Well, that should be your first sign that something is not right. You should not have to work that hard to make things go right. I got these "gut feelings" that some things were not right, but I didn't trust those feelings so much then. I've learned to trust my gut more now.*

One difficulty in managing a city is the need to prioritize service or information requests. Even though a manager may be working on a high priority item, she may have to pull off of it in order to deal with a relatively minor issue. It is a source of frustration. Eva uses humor to express the frustration felt from this type of situation: *Nobody pities me. Every now and then I would like someone to understand how much I'm pushed and*

*pulled.... (Someone will) call and want something and I'm (thinking), 'my goodness, people, I'm trying to lead a 300 person organization here...I'll get to your thing, but let me make sure the organization is still humming along.' It's my Scarlet O'Hara - please, just treat me like the princess I am - and then I go home and have to empty the dishwasher and clean out the toilet. Where is the justice in this world?...They keep me very humble at home.*

There are times when a 'lowest moment' will be a major factor in a manager leaving the city. Whether taking another government position, retiring, resigning, or being fired, these situations are often followed by a grieving process. When a city manager encounters a negative experience and leaves a city, they may not immediately seek another city management position. They may delve into a private sector job, serve as a consultant, or take a lower staff position at a different city. After a few months or years, they may return to a city manager position. These incidents are definitely a low point in professional careers, but can be overcome. City managers know that a negative ending at a city does not mean they were not doing a good job; it just means that someone wanted them gone. It is part of the career risk; however, knowing and accepting that fact does not make it any easier if it does happen.

### *7.3.3 Positive Aspects and Satisfying Moments of City Management*

The negatives of public management seem to be considerably outweighed by the positives, at least in the minds of this study's participants. When asked about the positive aspects and satisfying moments in their careers, their responses were filled with excitement and passion for their work. Their responses indicated the enjoyment of

completing capital projects, creating new or expanded service programs, meeting community needs, and building relationships in order to make things happen.

There were comments on the variety of projects and issues, and the many demands of the profession. City managers (and assistant city managers) can become somewhat addicted to experiencing such a wide variety of topics placed before them each day. It is not unusual that in a typical work day, each hour will be focused on a different topic. For instance, a morning may start with the manager or assistant visiting a street construction work site, then going to a council of government's air quality meeting at 9:00 a.m., followed by touching base with the city engineer on a pending drainage grant application, having a lunch meeting with the fire chief in order to receive a briefing on the rigging out of a new fire truck that costs half a million dollars, heading back to the office to meet with a citizen who is upset over a city policy, then having the police chief and a captain come to the manager's office to discuss a community program that is being implemented, and finally, after 5:00 p.m., taking time to preview a draft of the upcoming city council meeting (that contains numerous other topics). In addition, of course, there are countless night and weekend city meetings and community events attended on behalf of the city. The next day may bring another continuous flow of a completely different set of topics. While this is tremendously demanding, it is also very exciting and addicting.

When city managers (or assistants) leave the profession to try other careers, it is sometimes difficult for them to adjust to less variety, and they subsequently express boredom with other jobs.

Irene points out the variety of projects while managing a city: *Getting to do so many different things and getting to learn about so many different areas of expertise,*

*because there are so many different things that go into running a city that you have to be familiar with. I could never do a job that was the same thing day after day after day. This profession is definitely not like that.*

The feeling of accomplishment for completed capital projects extends beyond a public servant's duration at a particular city. Becky explains: *I can go back to (her former city) now and see projects that I worked so hard on ten years ago, and they are built and complete. Families are enjoying the nature center and parks that we built or the library we built. There's just such value in being able to see things that you know you had an integral part in.*

Becky further relates this as a fun part of her job: *You get to see the results of your work...the road is built and the park is completed...you may have worked on a master plan, but now there's a building there. You get to see the actual results and it's very rewarding. So, that's fun...the process is fun.*

Helen mentions accomplishments also: *Buildings built, roads widened, things beautified, fire stations added, services being provided, people saying 'this is great,'...just making people's lives better through public service....being the one that makes the final decision is pretty cool, too.*

Other positives of the profession were mentioned, such as the relationship with the community they serve and seeing the city organization itself progress. Connie states: *Well, I'm really happy with the changes that happen in an organization and a community where people feel, in an organization like they matter and that they're doing important work. I think it's very satisfying when people have that sense and I love it when people in*

*the community think that they're being well served by their government. And that's happened enough that it's been a really satisfying part of my career.*

*Eva states: The best thing about my job is that if any citizen walking in or any email can turn my day upside down. The best laid plans can go to hell in a hand basket, with one innocent inquiry or comment, and I have decided that I live off that. I don't like my days to be so expected and planned. That derailing is a heck of a lot of fun because you get to focus on something and get it done and then you move back to your planned world. If I have two days of totally planned world, and I did this week, it was just downright boring. It's the fun part, the unexpected part, and the fact that a citizen can walk in and talk to me and they think that is just the neatest thing in the world. The fact that I can make their day just by being accessible, is fun.*

*Frances comments: The neatest thing since I've been city manager in (city)...I've enjoyed the relationships in the community... and regionally how we can affect change by partnering; that's really been cool...I think the employee issues excite me, to be able to do things to improve employees' (work) environment...programs to boost the morale...to me that's exciting.*

*Many city managers enjoy interaction with employees. Helen states: For me, and I don't do it enough, is where I go and talk with employees. When I go and tell them good news and just ask them questions about what they're doing or make that connection with people. You try to create or maintain a positive environment. Then you see people that are happy in their job and sometimes they'll thank you about something that is happening. I enjoy trying to help employees, such as by trying to provide competitive pay and benefits, and to let them know we appreciate them.*

Grace states: *So many opportunities...this job affords...you don't get bored with this job...it's a different job every day and you don't know what's going to happen from moment to moment. It's the stuff that TV shows are written about now. It's an exciting profession.*

When asked about their most satisfying moment on the job, responses included accomplishments in their jobs. A job "well done" provides a sense of accomplishment, but is enhanced when the job makes an impact on lives. When city managers have those moments of knowing that something good has been accomplished, and that others recognize and appreciate it, a golden moment takes place.

Alice cites her most satisfying moment as: *A moment when I was really proud of staff.... This is a profession that gives you a lot of satisfying moments if you just notice them.*

Eva cites satisfaction in being approachable: *I seriously think anytime an employee...or a citizen...is willing to walk in and have a conversation with me, I'm very proud of that...I've made myself available and...I can be communicated with.*

Connie's most satisfying moment has been: *...seeing things in (city) going from people thinking it was bankrupt and poor service to an award-winning city government. That was definitely part of the reward of my career. I liked that a lot and I think some of the things that have been most rewarding have been quiet comments I've gotten on the street from citizens I don't even know, who are appreciative of the work that the city is doing...that's ...very satisfying to me.*

Della comments: *When you see employees grow and take on new challenges and you see them blossoming and reaching their potential, that is just a real joy to see, and*

*know that somewhere in their development, you had a part in that. I remember when Katrina and Rita were going on, this whole area (of Texas) was inundated. Dallas called us about four o'clock and said, 'We have got people coming in from Houston, we have no place to put them, and we need you to open a shelter by eight. Can you do it?' ...we called everybody together and by five o'clock we said, 'okay, we'll open it.' So we went to work and by 7:30 we had the shelter open and set up and then people began arriving and of course the typical way we do it, we went from 'we're opening a shelter to this is "Rita-fest" because it was the week after Oktoberfest and everybody was exhausted...but everybody came together and we made it a big fun event...and then as people started coming in, and they were exhausted, they'd been on the road for twelve hours, some had come from New Orleans to Houston...they were treated with dignity. They had a place to sleep. They had a hot meal. You saw it and you thought, "this is a city at its finest." This is what a city can do. ...being able to make a difference and make a good impact to people's lives. I went home and I said, 'This was a good day's work.'*

Satisfying moments are what public managers remember when those difficult days make them question their own wisdom for choosing such a challenging profession. Such moments, even though small, serve as emotional fuel for longevity in the profession, and end up being fond memories of public service careers.

#### 7.4 An Administrator Dealing with Politicians

The city manager position is an appointed administrative position designed to be removed from political influence in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. The council-manager form of government was founded on this principle. Public administration literature has long debated the politics-administration dichotomy, most

notably with the Simon/Waldo exchange published in 1952. Harmon (1989) points out that Simon and Waldo represented "polar extremes" in their views (437) of the role of science in the dichotomy. Simon utilizes a fact-value dichotomy epistemology and Waldo utilizes a distinction which analytically separates science and administration. In other words, Harmon explains, Waldo contends that both policy and administration should be on the value side of the equation and science should be on the "ought" side of the equation, while Simon places policy and administration on opposite sides of the equation (440).

Harmon (1989) concludes, "Realizing that the relative degree of ascendancy of these interests balances out in the long run, we should probably declare the Simon/Waldo debate a draw," (450). He points out, however, that while Waldo's body of work remained within public administration, Simon's work related to economics and organizational theory in both the public and the private sector. Simon's priority on efficiency in the 1940s and 1950s is understandable, but Harmon asserts that even organizational theorists (including systems and contingency theorists) who address Simon's core ideas may not fully agree with his conclusions, and points out Simon's "...failing to extend his views far enough or to see their broader significance," (449-450). While Simon sticks to pure science, Waldo considers common sense and value judgments.

In its most simplistic terms relating to public management, the dichotomy puts forth that public managers should not be pressured by political actions, but rather should be free to carry out their administrative duties in the most effective and efficient manner

possible. The opposing view puts forth that you cannot separate the two, and that administrators do impact and take part in political decisions of the legislative body.

City managers today are expected to provide research and analysis of issues brought before the governing body. If requested by the governing body, staff recommendations may also be provided. Ultimately, even though it is the decision of elected officials as to what policy directions to take, administrative participation is active throughout the policy process. While city managers recognize that their positions are designed to remain outside of political pressure, they also recognize that the governmental services provided may not remain outside of political influence. While party politics and engaging in direct political activities are clearly forbidden and relatively easy for city managers to avoid, the political sphere beyond party politics permeates public organizations in the services they provide to local residents.

No wonder the confusion. Those who serve in local government recognize that communities are changing, citizen expectations are changing, and legislative bodies respond to citizen expectations in a different, and a more connected, way. Public management is a mixed bag of competing interests and expectations. Service delivery to the community consists of a great variety of departments, each one with its own internal technical skills and disciplines. Public service, at any level, is not as simple as it was in the early 20th Century when Simon and Waldo defined the perimeters of discussion considered relative to that era. Their debate seems to continue unresolved. From the practitioner's viewpoint, Waldo seems to prevail.

Today, it is not only public managers who sense the change. Methods and perimeters of public service delivery do not seem to fit the 20th Century mold as scholars

present arguments and a variety of definitions for a "new public management" for the 21st Century (Kettl 2000).

So how do public managers today, who have traversed the decade before and after the turn of the century, define the limits of their role in the politics and administration processes? This research seeks the opinions of public managers and asks the question: "You are not a politician, but you deal daily with politicians. How do you handle that?" Their perspective in response to the question fell into four frameworks, three of which fell into the practitioner's understanding, and one related to the recognition of the academic dichotomy. The academic perspective is presented next, with the practitioners' perspective presented last.

#### *7.4.1 Recognition of the Academic Politics-Administration Dichotomy*

The academic politics-administration dichotomy is recognized by some of this study's respondents and their comments relate that awareness.

*Alice states: Well, number one, you have to think like a politician...so does that make you a politician? I think you have to have a healthy respect for the system and appreciate the value it brings...and if you don't have a healthy respect for their role you can never be fully effective. I bristle when people don't have a respect for the role the elected officials play in the system because I'm a true believer. I think the system, even though it may seem to be packed together with bubble gum, is a machine that works. The role of the elected official in my mind is vital. And in this city, they take that role very seriously, so there's not a situation where I have to play the dual role. The mayor handles the political side of council issues; the council members handle the political aspects of the community. But you have to understand it; you have to know where they*

*are coming from and you have to respect it, and I do. And it's sometimes a challenge with the staff who may not always fully appreciate the balance that the politics of a situation brings. I'll even go further out on this limb and say that if a city is not political, the organization will suffer for it because there has to be responsiveness to the community... it's the point where that dichotomy between administrative responsibility and political responsibility intersect. If you're not thinking about... the political ramifications of what you are about to do or what you have done, pretty soon you're going to put the council in a box and your staff in a box, and this may be part of that finesse, but I think you must consider it. You can't operate completely void of those considerations.*

Irene also related recognition of the academic dichotomy: *I think it's always a balance. We're not supposed to be political. We're supposed to be the professional manager, but sometimes you have to consider...a lot of times you have to consider the politics of the situation and the timing of it to determine what a recommendation will be. So the politics and the administration do cross over from time to time, even though in the school books it's supposed to be separate. So you just have to listen and be sensitive to some of the political needs. I think there are times when you have to encourage (council) to put the politics aside because something is too important not to; you sort of have to have the ability to listen to the politicians and wait and see what can we do to help with the politics - what are the things that are too critical to even let the politics get in the way.*

Kathy states: *Well, we live the dichotomy. We are public administrators in a political world. On the one hand, we have to stay out of politics, particularly party*

*politics. On the other hand, we have to be knowledgeable about the political arena we are working in, the political ramifications of what the city organization does, and the political environment the council operates within. We have to be sensitive, intuitive, responsive, while staying out of the political fray. It's a three-ring circus with us in the middle ring, interacting with, yet not entering those other rings. Difficult. We are not always successful, but we better always strive to be.*

The comments above relate the awareness of the academic politics-administration dichotomy, and address that issue, but still relate the need to learn how to successfully manage the political aspects of public administration in the practical sense.

#### *7.4.2 The Purely Practitioner Perspective of the Politics-Administration Dichotomy*

The remainder of the interviewees viewed the issue as three areas. First, the working relationship between the city manager and the city council; second, the working relationship between staff and the city council; and third, the belief that the city management position is, in fact, a political position. To varying degrees, they all related to all three viewpoints. For instance, Grace recognized the relationship between the manager and the council, also made the point about the relationship between staff and the council, and discussed the political aspects of the manager's position.

When respondents viewed the question as relating to the city manager and city council relationship, responses focused on getting along and being productive with the entire council. Grace makes the point that the relationship between the manager and the elected body is key to dealing with this issue on a daily basis. She states: *You start building those relationships...understand what their personal issues are because sometimes that helps you understand where they are coming from, where their*

*perspectives are on other issues...staying the professional and trying to stay out of the politics even though that can be hard if you are as opinionated as I am.*

Frances focused on relationship rules for fairness and believes in treating all council members equally: *I try not to get in the middle of the politics...if any one council member asks me for information, I provide it to every one of them. I don't show favorites to any council member. If someone wants something done that's going to take a significant amount of staff time, I bring it before the whole board and make sure that's what they want me to redirect staff's attention to. I try to make sure that they're aware of any political events coming up, that they might should be in attendance at or that I will be attending on their behalf...keeping them in the loop with that...and then to keep them apprised of any details of meetings I've had with other political leaders, locally, state, or nationally.*

Della recognized the challenges facing elected officials and expressed respect for those in public office: *Well, I respect the role and I respect the position. They were elected council and that isn't always easy...so I really do try to...be very open with them and address their concerns, and make sure that we're trying to meet their expectations. And if there are people that I don't think are dealing in a straightforward manner, I still try to deal with them in a straightforward manner, but I'm always very aware that there may be another agenda there, but I still respect their position and work with all of them because that's the way it works...that's taken a long time to learn.*

Connie related the importance of being straightforward: *Well, the most important thing, I think, is to have very straight dealings. If people...if politicians or anybody know that they can talk to you and you'll give them the straight story, and if you tell them*

*you'll do something, you'll do it, I think that's the best way to deal with people, whether they're politicians or not... but it's particularly important with politicians because you don't get into their kind of trading games that they have with... other politicians. I think honesty and trust in the relationship is the most important part.*

Helen emphasized the importance of acknowledging the motivations and priorities of elected officials and finding ways to work as an administrator toward their political and personal goals: *By building good relationships on a personal work related level, finding out what the council wants; knowing what their motivation is, what they are trying to achieve; helping them work together with the rest of the council for what they want. That's hard, but when they're all together and moving in one direction, it's exciting. When it all clicks, it works great and feels good. It's a two way street; those politicians have to be willing to tell you what it is they really want or don't want...but if they are not straight forward with you, it's hard. You have to be aware there may be hidden agendas and be able to read that kind of thing. So much of that comes from time in grade, experience, exposure to that because people are different and they have different ways of operating. Some are straight forward and what you see is what you get. Some are not going to be that way. You may not always agree with everything and may have some very heated discussions on issues, but you work through those.*

Second, the city staff's relationship with the city council was recognized. The boundaries of the relationship between staff and city council are set by the city manager. Some managers allow more interaction between staff and council than other managers do; however, if interaction is allowed, certain limits (or rules) will likely be in place to keep the process working in a productive, fair, and legal manner (such as those described

by Frances where all council members get the same information from staff). The city manager has a responsibility to protect staff from political pressures and influence, especially in keeping staff out of the political arena.

Grace had direct experience with this and points out that if there is a high profile or emotional community issue, it is important that staff (no matter how they feel personally about the issue) remain professional and not succumb to emotional interactions and behaviors around them. As her community faced a particularly public controversial issue, she offers this advice: *...as hot of a topic as it was and as emotional as that got on both sides of the issue, it was hard to have a conversation, regardless of which side you are on, without becoming emotional very quickly. I think it really does speak well to the professionalism of staff that we didn't get involved...and ultimately communities have to decide issues, whether it's...a zoning case or whatever and then we have to go on as the implementers or go someplace else if we don't want to implement...So I think the staff...is really well respected for their professionalism. Otherwise, I don't think they would be able to survive what all is going on because people would be just trying to pull them either way. That really was a saving grace.*

Third, some managers see their role as political, regardless of the fact that they are not elected. *Becky states: Well, I think we are political, all the time, we just don't have an elected office, because...and my husband, he's working in the corporate realm, says, 'Oh well you just don't have to deal with corporate politics.' I laugh and say, 'right'. First of all there's politics in every single job, so what does that mean? Well it's who knows who and who's networking with whom and...it's all about building relationships and so*

*you... learn that...to think that our jobs aren't very political or tied into day to day politics is just dingy. I mean it's not understanding at all what we're about.*

Joanne, with humor, offers: *Well, I'd say I am a politician. You have to be a politician to be in this business. You have to weigh all the different interests. I would say I'm probably a better politician than the politicians are.*

These various perspectives indicate that city managers recognize the political aspects of their jobs, and while they sometimes struggle to remain within their own administrative perimeters, they must do so within a political environment. Overall, they must not cross the political line and they also have a responsibility to see that their staff and organization stays within official administrative functions.

This is a complicated issue, with responses touching on several aspects of the politics-administration dichotomy. The responses presented above are simplified to some extent in Figure 7.1. Their responses reflect the recognition of the close link between their role as an appointed administrator and their duty to work for and with an elected governing body. Clearly, politics are part of that relationship and a city manager must have skills in working within a political environment while handling the day to day affairs of the city. While the manager herself must work within that environment, she is also responsible for keeping politics outside the daily workings of employees. While politics may be considered in the council's role of the policy process, the city manager must ensure that policies are implemented outside the political influence. Ultimately, it is a dance that a successful city manager must learn, and the dance is a little different in each community. What works for the manager in one city may not work for her in another. "Playing politics" is a term often expressed; however, the skills of

"statesmanship" are essential for survival of an administrator within a politically charged working environment.

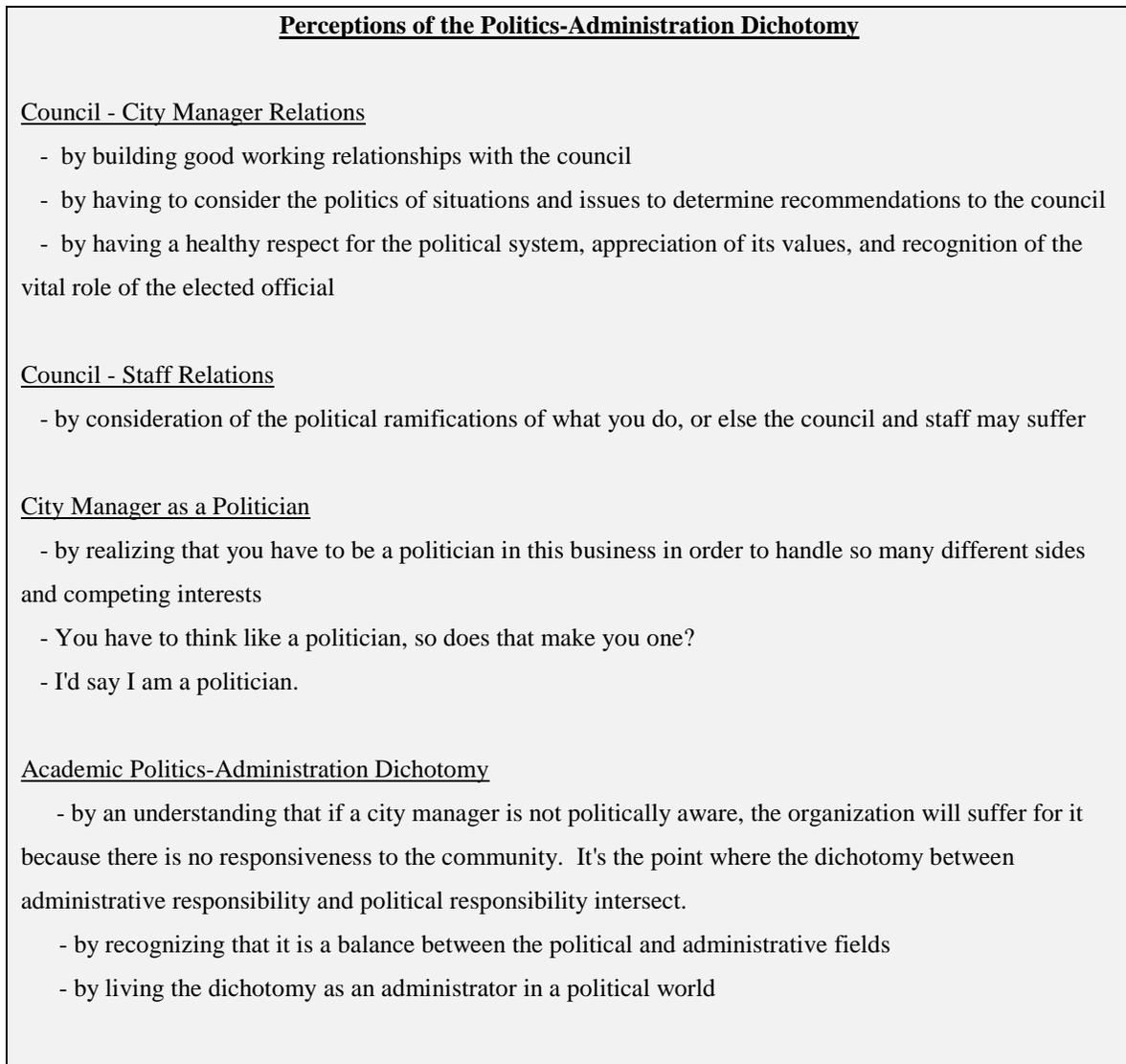


Figure 7.1 Perceptions of the Politics-Administration Dichotomy

These responses indicate that today's public management must pay attention to the political ramifications of the administrative actions of local government. This may be a higher challenge in this century because of citizens with a broader range of expectations of their local governments and enhanced options for communication with their local elected officials. Elected officials operate in this environment, thus so do city managers.

## 7.5 Legacies

Considering it all, what would these first generation women city managers want their legacy to be? What do they want to be remembered for twenty years from now? The last question explored this thoughtful response from each subject. The question relates to a core priority for their life and perhaps their life's work. The responses tell us a little more about these individuals who experienced a little different pathway to the city manager's chair.

Eva comments: *I don't think I ever want to be remembered as the first female city manager...(but rather) for... maintaining integrity in the profession and holding a higher standard.*

Helen wants to be remembered as someone who: *...can go into any situation, make it better, and get the job done; a fun, energetic person to be around.*

Joanne would like to be remembered for her mentoring of others, while Irene hopes she set an example as a female city manager that can have children and do the job of managing a city. Della hopes to be remembered as: *...someone who people enjoyed working with, that was known for doing a good job, and helped people along the way...made a difference...in people's lives in a positive way.*

Alice offers: *...with the profession, I'd like to be known as someone who was a really good city manager, whatever that definition is...ultimately I'd like the good people of (city) to think "She made a difference."*

Grace: *I would want...people to say...that I made a difference.*

Becky wants to be remembered ...*as being fair and open... inclusive...forgiving... intelligent, and that (my) legacy is in the people that I was able to help along the way and the mentoring I've been able to do, as well as in the projects that got built.*

Frances hopes people will remember her as: ...*a great city manager, a great friend, a great professional, an example to the next generation, that her community embraced the ideas that she brought and appreciated what she did in her communities...*

Connie simply states: *Well, I would like to be remembered as a faithful public servant.*

Legacy desires reflect the deep feelings of family, work family, and making a difference. The desire "to make a difference" once again appears as they think of the conclusion of their careers, just as "to make a difference" appeared in the beginning of their public service careers. The majority of public servants want an opportunity to make a contribution to society. This directly connects to the motivation of public servants at all levels of service (Perry et al, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996).

## 7.6 Summary

The sharing of experiences by the first women city managers at their cities provides insight into the field of public management at the dawn of the 21st Century. Their experiences are unique as the first women to obtain the title "city manager" at their organizations. The recording of their expedition through uncharted terrain helps provide a guide for others to reference. This study makes a contribution to that record of achievement.

As their stories reveal, they built their careers, got their education, connected to or formed networks, participated in mentoring, and took the leap to the city manager

position. Once there, the prejudice and discrimination that had been so common in their work life almost totally disappeared. As new city managers, they dealt with crises, difficulties, challenges, while finding things they liked and disliked about their jobs. They got up close and personal in the administration of their duties while working within a political environment. Most of all, they proved to themselves that they could, in fact, do the job. They made a difference.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE CONCLUSION

#### 8.1 Introduction

The voices and direct experiences of those individuals who were the first female city manager at their cities provide a lens into public administration from a unique practitioner's standpoint. This personal perspective is beneficial to the further exploration of academic theory development and, based in a practitioner setting, helps fill the gap between the practical and the academic.

The purpose of this study is three-fold. First, it seeks to document a number of cases of the historical event of the first woman city manager at a city. Second, it serves to offer mentoring guidance for other women and minorities who seek to advance in the field of public management. Third, and perhaps most important, to discover new knowledge that will benefit the academic field of public administration.

Women entered the city manager's office in Texas around the turn of the 21st Century; they left a noteworthy legacy. The journeys of these women will not be duplicated by those who follow. In hearing their voices, we learned about their childhood and family life, experiences that made an impact on their future as city managers, and how they dealt with the daily issues of governing while coping with the obstacles

encountered along the way in a male dominated profession. They shared the good, the bad, the high points and the low moments of their careers. They inspired us. Through their stories, as well as through their deeds, they have made a contribution to the study and practice of public administration. They dealt with daily challenges as city managers. They plowed through, they endured, and they survived. Their actions addressed the outdated but very real question, "Can a woman manage a city?" Their achievements clearly answer the question with a resounding "yes."

This research also addresses the gap between the public perception of local government management and the reality of it. I echo Goodsell's (2004) extraordinary work for public administration's public image, which discusses "bureaucrat-bashing" (3) and his remarks that "the thesis of this book...is that a wide gap exists between bureaucracy's reputation and its record." (4). His work brings a balanced look at public service. His findings that reveal positive aspects of public administration are no surprise to public servants. Likewise, while this research may provide few surprises to those who work in city management, it does provide valuable knowledge regarding the personal intentions and dedication of public servants, not often revealed in popular media that enjoys what Goodsell refers to as "bureaucrat bashing."

The gap between practitioner and academic institutional knowledge is also addressed by this research. If practitioners do not share information with academics, then knowledge is lost. Both practitioners and academics must be willing to be inclusive in considering the voices of others and in establishing mentoring relationships within public administration.

## 8.2 Key Findings

### 8.2.1 *"Emergence" Confirmed*

Perhaps one of the most striking findings in this study was also the most simple (once a data base was located). The emergence did not start until 1980, with that decade producing 19 first women managers in Texas, followed by 29 in the 1990s, and 36 in the first decade of the 2000s. (Recall that prior to 1980, there was one per decade in the 1940s, 1950s, and four in the late 1970s.) The statistical confirmation of the "emergence" of women city managers in Texas was extremely revealing. This researcher, as well as the women interviewed for this study, "felt" there was an "emergence" simply because of the awareness of so few women in Texas public management. This fact was confirmed, however, only after harvesting information from Blodgett's (2008) listing of cities in Texas and their city managers since adopting the council-manager form of government (215-237).

### 8.2.2 *Prejudice and Discrimination Diminished at City Manager Position*

It was surprising to the women in this study, as well as to this researcher, to discover that even though women in the city management career track encountered prejudice and discrimination all along their journey, once actually acquiring the title "city manager," that prejudice and discrimination almost completely vanished. When it did occasionally happen to them as city managers, it was a surprising reminder of their previous career development. Thus, the managers were freer than when they were in positions prior to that of the city manager to focus on their public service duties, as opposed to handling daily obstacles. Although they would have preferred to avoid the discrimination, all the women were keenly aware, however, that their years of coping

with prejudice and discrimination helped them develop relationship skills that were beneficial to them as city managers.

### *8.2.3 The Importance of Embracing Mobility*

The importance of mobility has been highlighted within this study. Mobility may be a short distance to the adjoining city or may be across the nation. The women who contributed to this study had to embrace the idea of mobility (as do men). Even if they were promoted within their current organization, with the short "shelf life" of city management positions, their decision making process had to consider the potential for a short tenure as city manager, followed by a geographical relocation to the next job. They had to be aware of this potential risk and be willing to accept it as a risk to their own personal career.

### *8.2.4 Female City Managers and City Size*

This study revealed that women city managers, indeed, can and do manage cities of any population size. As almost all of the largest cities in Texas had women city managers during the first decade of the 21st Century, cities of all sizes were awakening to the skills of women managers and offering up opportunities to more women as managers and assistant/deputy managers. Also, the examination of city population sizes that form a basis for the work experiences and career tracks for the women of this study reveals their capabilities at every population level. Clearly, the track records of the first generation of women city managers in Texas highlights the point that a society that promotes equality cannot justify not promoting women into management positions.

### *8.2.5 The Mentoring Edge*

All women interviewed stressed the importance of mentoring in their lives and career tracks, and credit their public service advancement to their mentors. They also felt the responsibility to pass along this mentoring to others. Additionally, they believed in the necessity of mentoring with both genders. Overall, mentoring helped provide the additional support, knowledge, and confidence for them to seek a city management position. Those city management candidates that have successful mentoring relationships seem to have the edge on emerging from the barrier of the glass ceiling.

### *8.2.6 Contributions to Academic Theory Applications*

The framing of this study lies within the theory of the glass ceiling and the theory of the production of power elites. Although considerable literature exists regarding the glass ceiling's existence, there is not a great deal of literature in how individuals have "broken through" that barrier. This study examined that phenomenon. The action of going beyond the glass ceiling bridges to the theory of the production of power elites. This research looks at the glass ceiling barrier, how some women worked within those constraints while preparing themselves for entry into the power elites of public management, how their breakthrough took place, and what they found on the other side. Their actions, career preparation, and new pathways took them through the process of the production of power elites.

This research revealed that two things must happen in order for women in public management to travel beyond the glass ceiling barrier and into the ranks of city management. First, an extensive career preparation must take place, including the components of education, experience, networking, and being in one or more mentoring

relationships. Last, after these components are in place, their entrance into the power elite can take place only if one thing happens: an invitation from one or more members of the power elite must be extended to the woman. If she becomes a city manager, the invitation must come from the city council that offers her this opportunity. If she becomes an assistant/deputy city manager, that invitation must come from the city manager in place.

The convergence of the glass ceiling with the production of power elites, within the realm of public management, takes place only after extensive career preparation on the part of the candidate, and an invitation from the power elite themselves. The last step cannot be forced. A person cannot push themselves through the ceiling; they must receive an extended hand to invite them in.

Although many individuals are on the city management career track, only a few get invited into management. For the first women city managers, their efforts at professional preparation was partnered with determination and persistence in pursuing that goal. For those power elites themselves who extended a hand and an invitation for them to become a city manager (or assistant/deputy city manager), they recognized something in the candidate that made them feel like there was a "fit" to the organization at the time and that the candidate would be an asset to the then current needs of the organization. Successful work performance, higher education, relationship skills, and perhaps a little luck and good timing all come into play when members of the "power elite" offer promotions or hire a new city manager.

While the manager hopeful can prepare herself through career development, can apply for positions, and can stay determined to meet that goal for herself, that goal will

not be obtained until an invitation is received from one or more members of the then currently existing power elite of the city organization.

For those individuals who live and work "below" the barrier of the glass ceiling, the action of leaving the glass ceiling barrier behind, receiving and then accepting an invitation into membership of the power elite, is truly an emergence for the woman manager; however, is also an "enlightenment" for the public organization. Perhaps this action could be called "enlightenment theory" of public management, indicating that the organization itself has come to the realization that women are assets to the organization (as opposed to a danger or threat). This enlightenment affects the individual and the organization itself. It also affects both the organization and the community into a more inclusive state. It is a renaissance of sorts for the progressive development of the city organization and the community it serves. Representative bureaucracy is enhanced and inclusionary leadership takes a step forward. Thus, the enlightenment impacts not just the female city manager, but also the public organization and the community it serves.

### 8.3 Policy Implications

This study highlighted the need for public organizations themselves to become enlightened to the presence of females in executive positions. As Bell (2007) indicates, discrimination via the glass ceiling barrier is a component of the organization itself and those factors that contribute to this barrier should be addressed.

The professional field of public management can do more for the historical recording and progression of the emergence of women into the profession. An official statistical data base would be extremely beneficial. Literary acknowledgement of the

benefits that women and minorities bring to the profession would be helpful in order to educate current and future city managers, as well as elected officials.

While academic literature has focused on comparing women to men city managers, this study focuses on women city managers themselves. They are worthy of study in their own right, particularly those women who manage a city for the first time in that city's history. Their inclusion at the conference table can broaden concepts of decision making and public policy. While representative bureaucracy may not be one hundred percent fulfilled, it is moved a step forward with the added dimension of the female lens.

#### 8.4 Study Limitations

Limitations within this research include consideration of the small number of research subjects. In light of the small number of women city managers during the era of emergence, however, any information gained has value.

Another limitation is the timing of the interview responses. The answers given by an individual one year may be different the next year. As the experiences of the study subjects continue to flow, so may their opinions and insights. Even long-tenured, seasoned city managers change their opinions about major issues over time. These study subjects are no different. Thus, the same interview questions asked two years later may reveal a different set of responses. Because of this, although the responses in this study are valid, their reliability over time is not necessarily stable. Also, with the rapidly changing demands of public service itself, the responses of individuals may be subject to variation under different circumstances.

The statistical information on women city managers is sparse; however, what was found and utilized for this study is considered valid. Overall, this study compiled sets of

data from websites, a book on city management in Texas, membership directories, and published academic studies. There were no longitudinal studies and no state or national database specifically on women in public management to rely on.

Internal validity of this research is tied to the utilization of previously published studies based in national data bases of ICMA information, all of which is considered as valid and reliable. Texas data was collected from a book on the history of city management in Texas (published by TCMA), the TCMA website and membership directories, the TML website information, and various city websites. All of this data is considered valid and reliable in that it can be reproduced as originally compiled.

## 8.5 Future Studies

This dissertation has introduced a new viewpoint regarding the research of women in public management. It considers them within their own right, not as compared to men managers. It investigates how they broke into the ranks of the power elite. It provides their personal insights. There is such a lack of specific information on women city managers, that the need for more research is readily revealed.

### *8.5.1 National Database of Women in Public Management*

Considering the lack of statistical information on women in public management, a national database would prove immensely beneficial to the further study of women in public management in the United States. As a statistical base, the creation of a national (and state by state) database of women in public management would be a foundation for longitudinal studies, a valuable tool for recording history, and a resource for further studies of women in public management.

It would be helpful if one university per state (with MPA programs having priority) would create a database for that state, and then annually report their statistics to a housing organization at the national level, such as ASPA or ICMA. Perhaps a mentoring database could also be created.

#### *8.5.2 Key Events for Women in Public Administration*

The creation of a data base of key events for women in public management would add to the already existing "Key Events in Public Administration" listed on the inside covers of Shafritz et al (2007). Such a logging of significant events for women in public management would acknowledge their contributions to public service and provide a more complete historical record of the evolution of public service.

#### *8.5.3 Women in Public Administration Academia*

Here, I echo the recommendation by Fox and Schuhmann (2001, 387-388) that academia could do more to offer mentoring experiences to female students in their MPA programs. Their suggestion that more female faculty in MPA programs would help serve this need is a sound suggestion. Also, formal mentoring programs and activities through university MPA programs might serve both practitioner and academic needs. Further study of what is in place now within these programs could help shed light on potential enhancements.

#### *8.5.4 MPA Programs and Women Graduates in Public Service*

Are female MPA graduates successfully entering and remaining in public service? This researcher noticed that in at least one MPA program (outside of Texas), female graduates were often not listed as serving in public service capacities. If MPA programs are not seeing success in their female graduates' public service careers, potential remedies

could be explored. Such remedies could include both academic and practitioner participation.

#### *8.5.5 Organizational Readiness for a Woman City Manager*

This research brought with it a dawning awareness that there may have been something that took place within the organization itself prior to the appointment of a woman city manager (or assistant/deputy city manager). It was one of those "ah ha" moments in which one wonders why this was not realized sooner. Resisting the urge to take up the investigation and extend the research within this dissertation, I gained some consolation with the decision to simply list it as a potential future study. It truly is a study within itself.

While analyzing the dissertation research material, I realized that in each case there was an unanswered question as to whether there was some event that had taken place where the decision makers (the power elites) for the first time take the position in that organization's history that a woman will be considered for the city manager job. I call this "readying the nest" for the first woman city manager. The city manager herself, if she was hired from outside the organization, may not be fully aware of a shift in thinking, but those that hired her would have that knowledge. Obviously, those elected officials would have to be interviewed in an effort to harvest this information. Also, certain key staff from that time may provide valuable information.

Such research would examine certain dynamics of the organization and/or community itself in the several months (or years) prior to this shift in thinking. Also, after a woman assistant/deputy or city manager was hired/promoted, any changes

occurring to the organization and/or the community as a result of this action would merit study.

## 8.6 The Academic and Practitioner Gap

It is hoped that the events related and the findings revealed within this research will partially address the gap between the practical and academic impact of public administration theory development, as well as contribute to an enhancement in educational programs related to public administration.

*Sustaining dialogue between practitioners and scholars improves theory and informs practice. The tumultuous history of that idea offers plenty of reasons for skepticism, but it also offers evidence that the study of public organizations and the quality of public sector governance are diminished when vigorous dialogue between the two is not sustained. (Dull 2010, 863).*

Ultimately, it is hoped that this research will encourage theory development of public administration that represents inclusion, sustainability, and evolution of the public administration profession itself, as well as the academic pursuit of public administration theory.

## 8.7 Summary

*But whatever the other ingredients, a civilization rises to greatness when something happens in human minds. (Gardner, 1990, p. 193)*

The ethnological examination of the culture of first generation women city managers in Texas provides a glimpse into the life of public service that has not been provided at any point in the past. Although there were previous woman city managers in Texas, the wave of women's entry into city management did not begin in earnest until the late 20th Century and the early 21st Century.

The goals of this research were to document the emergence of the first wave of women city managers in Texas for three purposes: to create a historical record, to create

a mentoring tool, and to add to the institutional knowledge of academic public administration. Public administration has experienced an enlightenment in public management by the emergence of the first women city managers around the turn of the 21st Century.

This study revealed that there are no simple answers to questions posed. Today's public management, whether from a practical or an academic viewpoint, is filled with complex and varying issues which intersect, overlap, and complicate efforts at simple explanation. The complexities of public management are evident within the array of services provided to citizens. The individual specialties and disciplines within city departments, the expanded expectations of citizens, the encouragement of regional cooperation among government and quasi-government entities, the complex environmental and sustainability issues, the enhanced communication venues, and the impact of rapidly changing technology set the stage and pace of public management at the forefront of "fast track" governance. It is little wonder that public management struggles to keep up. Likewise, it is little wonder that academic public administration can absorb and investigate such complex and rapidly changing infrastructures and issues. Perhaps the new infusion of women into public management ranks at this point in public administration's evolution will help foster the inclusionary and diversified leadership style that modern society seeks.

This research is a foundation on which to build a continued study of women in public management. It provides basic quantitative information which can easily be extended and enhanced. The qualitative revelations within this dissertation open a window into the personal side of public management, and perhaps for the first time, from

a woman's perspective. It is hoped that others, infinitely more qualified than myself, will pick up the torch, keep passing it along, so that women in public management and women in public administration's academic programs will contribute at a higher level of participation to enhance public service to our society.

APPENDIX A  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASPA - American Society of Public Administration

COG - Council of Governments

ICMA - International City/County Management Association

NTCMA - North Texas City Management Association

SUPA - School of Urban and Public Affairs

TCMA - Texas City Management Association

TML - Texas Municipal League

UMANT - Urban Management Assistants of North Texas

UTA - University of Texas at Arlington

## APPENDIX B

### MAPPING OF RELEVANT EVENTS FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

## MAPPING OF RELEVANT EVENTS FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

1890 - The Territory of Wyoming allowed women to vote

1900 - Utah, Colorado, Idaho joined Wyoming Territory in allowing women to vote

1916 - Jeannette Rankin elected as first woman in U. S. House of Representatives

1920 – Nineteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution established Women’s Right to Vote.

1920 - Rose Tyler Barrett (Warrenton, Oregon) was first woman city manager in the United States (Read & Witlieb, 1992, p. 39).

1919-1928 – Mary Parker Follett’s writings and lectures on organization management.

1948 – Willie J. Brockman, first woman city manager in Texas (Beaumont, Texas 1948-59) (Blodgett, 2008, pp. 66-67).

1966 - 1983 - Alva J. Geron served as city manager of Brownfield, Tx (served as assistant city manager 1956-1966) (ICMA 2008).

1977 – Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s book *Men and Women of the Corporation*.

1984 - Kathy Ferguson’s book *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*.

1984 – Geraldine A. Ferraro (New York congresswoman) selected as first female vice presidential candidate in history; Democratic Party.

1991 – The Glass Ceiling Act, enacted as Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991,

- and the publication of the U. S. Department of Labor's Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative.
- 1993 – Gesa E. Kirsch's book *Women Writing the Academy*.
- 1993 – Mary E. Guy's article "Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Backward: The Status of Women's Integration into Public Management."
- 1993 - Camilla Stivers' book *Gender Images in Public Administration*.
- 1995 - The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1995) produced the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," often referred to as the "Beijing Declaration."
- 2000 – Camilla Stivers' book *Bureau Men Settlement Women*.
- 2001 – Susan Halford & Pauline Leonard's book *Gender, Power and Organisations*.
- 2004 – Charles T. Goodsell's book, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of *The Case for Bureaucracy*.
- 2008 – Mary E. Guy, Meredith A. Newman, and Sharon H. Mastracci's book *Emotional Labor*.
- 2008 – Camilla Stivers' book *Governance in Dark Times*.
- 2008 – Sarah Palin (Governor of Alaska) selected as the first woman vice presidential candidate of the Republican Party.

APPENDIX C

FIRST GENERATION OF WOMEN CITY MANAGERS IN TEXAS (1948-2008)

FIRST GENERATION OF WOMEN CITY MANAGERS IN TEXAS (1948-2008)

| <b><u>1940s - 1950s</u></b>  | <b><u>City</u></b> | <b><u>Years Served</u></b> |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Willie J. Brockman   | Beaumont           | 1948 - 1959                |
| Eunice D. Jones  | Brownfield         | 1954 - 1966                |
| (Note: Followed by Alva J. "Jake" Geron 1966 - 1983 - this is a woman per ICMA announcement of her death.) |                    |                            |
| <b><u>1970s</u></b>  |                    |                            |
| June E. Lykes  | Garland            | 1977 - 1979                |
| Catherine Reimarts   | Kirby              | 1977 - 1979                |
| (followed by Cindy Fox 1997 - 1999; Judy Weiss 1999 - 2000; and Zina Tedford 2000 - present)               |                    |                            |
| Dorothy Talley   | DeSoto             | 1978 - 1981                |
| Joann Griggs   | Jacinto City       | 1979 -2000                 |
| <b><u>1980s</u></b>  |                    |                            |
| Brenda Tarter  | Colorado City      | 1980 - 1981; 1984 - 1990   |
| Cindy Evans  | Rusk               | 1980 - 1983                |
| (followed by Brenda Williams 1995 - 1996 and Mary O. Daly 1998 - 2000)                                     |                    |                            |
| Mildred Lipham   | Kermit             | 1980 - 1981                |
| (followed by Georgia A. Vines 2004 - 2005)   |                    |                            |
| Linda K. Gulley  | Mercedes           | 1980 - 1984                |
| Minnie Gutierrez   | Alamo              | 1981 - 1983                |
| Elizabeth Fenter   | Rockdale           | 1981-1990                  |
| (followed by Sue Foster 1992 - 2004)   |                    |                            |
| Shirley Bradley  | Azle               | 1982, 1983-1984            |
| Gloria C. Bewley   | Eagle Pass         | 1983                       |



|  |                    |                               |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ruth Hertel  | Angleton           | 1990 - 2001                   |
| Barbara Hester   | Clute              | 1991 - 2007                   |
| Sharon G. Johnson  | Gladewater         | 1991 - 2003                   |
| Judy Miller  | Ballinger          | 1991 - 1996                   |
| Ann McNabb   | Crockett           | 1991 - 1999                   |
| Natalie Flores Kelly Prim<br>(also first woman city manager at Harlingen 1993-2000)        | Mineral Wells      | 1991 - 1993                   |
| June E. Lykes<br>(followed by Connie Green 2005 - present; Lykes was also at Garland 1977) | Killeen            | 1992 - 1993                   |
| Mary Kay Moore   | Bryan              | 1992, 2001 - 2006             |
| Julie Couch  | Rockwall           | 1993 - present                |
| Natalie Flores Kelly Prim<br>(also first woman city manager at Mineral Wells 1991-1993)    | Harlingen          | 1993 - 2000                   |
| Kim Foutz  | Lampasas           | 1993 - 1996                   |
| H. Kay Godbey  | Burleson           | 1993 - 2001                   |
| Angie Warner<br>(followed by Kandi M. Waterstreet Hubert 2001 - 2003; 2005 - 2008?)        | Balch Springs      | 1993 - 2000                   |
| Susan Rash<br>(followed by Rebecca Waldman 2006 - 2008?)                                   | Alamo Heights      | 1993 - 2000                   |
| Linda Barton<br>(followed by Susan Thorpe 1997 - 2000; Beverly Queen 2006 - present)       | Bedford            | 1994 - 1997                   |
| Barbara Burns  | Cleveland          | 1994 - 1995; 1998             |
| Kandi M. Waterstreet   | Electra            | 1995 - 2000                   |
| Pam Burton   | Athens             | 1996 - present                |
| Melissa Byrne Vossmer  | Waco<br>Angleton ? | 1997 - 1998<br>____ - present |

|  |   |                |
|--|---|----------------|
| Connie Goodwin<br>(followed by Karen Philippi                          | Royce City<br>2006 - 2008 or present ?) | 1998 - 2005    |
| Marilyn Hall   | Ingleside                               | 1998 - 2000    |
| Beth Eby   | Del Rio                                 | 1998 - 1999    |
| Donna Welsh  | Trophy Club                             | 1999 - 2005    |
| Clovia English<br>(also first woman city manager at Corinth 2006-2008) | Lockhart                                | 1999 - 2006    |
| Nan Stanford   | Saginaw                                 | 1999 - present |

## **2000**

|   |                                      |                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Donna Anderson                                | Everman                              | 2000 - present   |
| Rosalie Bean                                  | Vidor                                | 2000 - 2001      |
| Deana McMullen                                | Crowley                              | 2000             |
| Kathy H. Coronado                             | Pleasanton                           | 2000 - present ? |
| Shannon Mattingly                             | Leander                              | 2001 - 2003      |
| Terry Brechtel<br>(followed by Sheryl Sculley | San Antonio<br>2005 - present)       | 2001 - 2004      |
| Betty Webb                                    | Highland Village                     | 2001 - 2003      |
| Susan Thorpe<br>(followed by Karen Philippi   | Rowlett<br>2006 - 2008 or present ?) | 2001 - 2005      |
| Debra Books Feazelle                          | La Porte                             | 2003 - 2006      |
| Karen Daly                                    | Greenville                           | 2003 - 2007      |
| Diana Palacios                                | Crystal City                         | 2003 - 2008 ?    |

|   |                           |                              |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Wendy Sturgis Smith   | Edinburg                  | 2003 - 2006                  |
| Paula Wilson  | Tulia                     | 2003 - 2005                  |
| Karen Phillippi   | Alpine<br>Royce City      | 2004 - 2005<br>2006 - 2008 ? |
| Linda Tidwell Groomer<br>(also first woman city manager at Haltom City 1990-1992)   | Farmers Branch            | 2004 - 2007                  |
| Wanda Klause  | Borger                    | 2004 - 2008 ?                |
| JoAnn Talbot  | Kaufman                   | 2004 - 2005                  |
| Joyce Wilson  | El Paso                   | 2004 - present               |
| Courtney B. Sharp   | Mount Pleasant<br>Midland | 2004-2008<br>2008 - present  |
| Brenda Samford  | Carthage                  | 2004 - present               |
| Nancy Sanchez<br>(followed by Maria Hilda Ayala 2006 - 2008 ?)                      | Elsa                      | 2005 - 2006                  |
| Connie Standridge   | Corsicana                 | 2005 - present               |
| Marilyn Sutton  | Livingston                | 2005 - present               |
| Shana Yelverton   | Southlake                 | 2005 - present               |
| LeeAnn Dumbauld   | Lubbock                   | 2005 - present               |
| Brenda Eivens   | Cedar Park                | 2005 - present               |
| Mindy Manson  | Wylie                     | 2006 - present               |
| Clovia English<br>(also first woman city manager at Lockhart 1999-2006)             | Corinth                   | 2006 - 2008                  |
| Julie M. Johnston<br>(also first woman city administrator at Oak Point 2003 - 2007) | Dickinson                 | 2007 - present               |
| Jan Belcher   | Tomball                   | 2007 - 2010                  |

|  |                            |                               |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Paulette Hartman<br>(also first woman city administrator at Copper Canyon 2004 - 2006) | Joshua                     | 2007 - present                |
| Carolyn Martin   | Mexia                      | 2007 - 2008                   |
| Vicki Mikel  | Fate                       | 2008 - present                |
| Jacqueline Lee   | Glenn Heights              | 2008 - present                |
| Jennifer Fadden  | Weatherford<br>Colleyville | 2008 - 2009<br>2009 - present |
| Jennifer E. Garver   | Uvalde                     | 2010 - present                |

Source: (Blodgett, City Government that Works: The History of Council-Manager Government in Texas 2008)

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#### Summary by Decade

|       |    |
|-------|----|
| 1940s | 1  |
| 1950s | 1  |
| 1960s | 0  |
| 1970s | 4  |
| 1980s | 19 |
| 1990s | 29 |
| 2000s | 36 |

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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Ms. Godbey is a retired city manager, serving approximately 30 years in local government. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice at Dallas Baptist University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA) at The University of Texas at Arlington. She received a Ph.D. in Public and Urban Administration at The University of Texas at Arlington in August 2011.

Her career certifications include an Advanced Texas Peace Officer and Instructor's Certification from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE), as well as a Certified Municipal Clerk certification with both Texas and International Certified Municipal Clerks' Associations.

Since retiring, she has served in various consulting capacities, such as interim city management, special projects management, mentoring and career advice, research and consultation on law enforcement issues, and government document research and issue resolution.