

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

CHANGES IN CITY ELECTIONS AFTER A SWITCH IN FORM OF GOVERNMENT

JAMES M. GARDNER
SPRING 2019

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees
in Political Science, History and Medieval Studies
with honors in Political Science

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Michael Berkman, PhD
Professor of Political Science
Thesis Supervisor

Gretchen Casper, PhD
Associate Professor of Political Science
Honors Advisor

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

Elections at the municipal level historically have the lowest levels of voter turnout in America. Citizen participation in local and specifically city elections is critical because city governments have the greatest impact on the daily lives of citizens. This participation varies by the type of city government. In this research I look at what happens to elections when city governments change from one type of government to another. Most extant research into the relationship between government type and election or participation has been cross-sectional and restricted to voter turnout. I look more comprehensively at how changes in city government form do or do not change elections. I use newspaper articles about elections over multiple years along with voter turnout data from eight medium-sized cities that changed their form of government from 1993 to the present. I explore variables such as attention to the candidate, attention to issues, election competitiveness, policy types, focus of the office and voter turnout. Aside from voter turnout, my findings do not indicate clear patterns that allow a change in form of government to predict changes in elections. However, my findings suggest that switching to a mayor-council form increases voter turnout. In addition, my findings also confirm previous research that switching to a council-manager system decreases voter turnout. This conclusion has the utmost significance because cities are increasingly adopting the council-manager system despite its impediment to the cornerstone of citizen participation in government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	5
The Types of City Government Structure	5
The Relationship between Form of Government and Voter Turnout	7
Changes in the Elections with a Switch in Government	12
Changes in the Form of City Government: An unexplored Realm	16
Chapter 3 Theory and Hypotheses	18
Chapter 4 Methodology	24
City government structure	24
Data Sources: Newspaper Analysis	26
Focus of Office, Policy Issue and Candidate mentions	28
Policy Types	30
Voter turnout and Competitiveness	32
City Profiles: Adopting a Mayor-Council system	35
<i>Colorado Springs, CO</i>	35
<i>Oakland, CA</i>	35
<i>Richmond, VA</i>	36
<i>Spokane, WA</i>	37
<i>St. Petersburg, FL</i>	38
Adopting a Council-Manager	39
<i>Cedar Rapids, IA</i>	39
<i>El Paso, TX</i>	40
<i>Topeka, KS</i>	40
Chapter 5 Findings	42
Hypothesis 1 and 2	42
Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4	45
Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6	52
Hypothesis 7, Hypothesis 8 and Hypothesis 9	56
Chapter 6 Conclusions, Limitations and Further Study	60

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....67

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Issue Mention Descriptions	29
Table 2: Candidate Centered Mentions.....	29
Table 3: Types of Polices.....	31
Table 4: Office Focus of Article (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)*	42
Table 5: Office Focus of Article (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council).....	43
Table 6: Issue and Candidate Focus (Cities that adopt Council-Manager).....	46
Table 7: Issue and Candidate Focus (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council)	49
Table 8: Policy Type (Cities that adopt Council-Manager).....	52
Table 9: Policy Type (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council).....	54
Table 10: Turnout and Competitiveness (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)	56
Table 11: Voter Turnout and Competitiveness (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council).....	58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the guidance of my thesis advisor, Dr. Michael Berkman. Dr. Berkman provided me with exceptional direction, knowledge and patience as I worked through this project from its early development stages to the final outcome. I am extremely appreciative for his time in providing contributions and suggestions along every step of the project. In short, without Dr. Berkman's assistance, this project would not be here today.

I am also indebted to Dr. Gretchen Casper and Dr. Marie Hojnacki for their help through the progression of this project. Dr. Casper provided me with invaluable advice on beginning the research process, selecting a topic that I was passionate about, establishing a research method and analyzing the literature. I also would like to thank Dr. Casper for serving as my faculty reader. Dr. Hojnacki provided excellent assistance as I conducted my project; her feedback and contributions to the drafting and editing processes were vital to the completion of my project. With that being said, any of the remaining errors are mine alone.

I cannot express enough how thankful I am for my family. I would like to thank my parents, Mike and April Gardner for their support throughout my entire collegiate career. They gave (and continue to provide) indispensable caring, understanding and love throughout my entire life. I am also grateful for the heartfelt messages of encouragement from my grandmother, Jeanie Laurrell. Lastly, I would like to thank my grandfather, Jim Laurrell, for all of the rides to and from Penn State and for all the meals we shared together.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Every citizen in the United States lives under a form of local government that varies from township, borough, town, county, special district or city. Regardless of the type of the local government, municipalities have the greatest impact on citizens because local officials implement decisions on ubiquitous areas of daily life, such as emergency response, housing codes, schools, taxes, utilities and roads. These services require an active citizen participation in government to ensure their most efficient and fair distribution. However, local elections receive the lowest levels of voter turnout compared to other American elections and it continues to plummet across the country (Maciag, 2014). As this unfortunate pattern continues, Americans are increasingly moving into cities: over half of the population lives in a form of local government and Americans are specifically concentrated in cities (US Cities, 2015). These trends suggest a paradox that Americans are increasingly willing to live in cities but do not want to participate in city politics. My research particularly examines participation in the city classification of local government.

Cities reflect the citizens that inhabit them: just as the ideas and types of people change, so do the traits of the city's government. Policy makers broadly characterize these traits into three major forms of city government: mayor-council, council-manager and commission form. The council-manager form is the most popular in the United States (Forms of Municipal Government, 2016). We know from existing literature that participation varies across different forms of government. In some, participation is higher yet other forms are associated with lower

levels of participation. Perhaps the best mechanism to understand the decreasing levels of participation in city elections lies in the differences in the elections across forms of city government. These differences include the importance of the office (such as mayor or councilmember), whether there is attention to individual candidates or issues, the importance to policies to the election (policies that benefit the city as a whole or concentrated benefits on certain districts), the election's competitiveness and voter turnout. Despite these integral parts of city politics, the existing body of literature does not explore their relationship with voting when a city switches its form of government. This presents the question: how does a change in a city's form of government change these characteristics of a city's subsequent elections? Answering this question offers insight into why participation varies across types of city government.

The literature does not devote adequate attention to the changes in a city before and after it switches its form of government. While past studies determined that the mayor-council form of government has higher levels of voter turnout compared to the council-manager and commission, no scholarship within the last twenty years explored longitudinal changes in a city's voter turnout before and after it switched its form of government. Even more striking, the literature does not explore the changes in different features of a city's elections that could account for changes in voter turnout. These changes in elections are important to consider because they can potentially impact the future of the city. For example, a focus on a type of policy could unfairly benefit certain parts of city, a focus on one issue topic could neglect others or lack of attention to candidates could increase the chance of corruption. My study begins where the current literature left off: it seeks to explain the changes in a city's voter turnout after it switches its government form by examining variables in the city's elections under the old and new forms of government. This provides a better opportunity to understand possible trends in cities across the United States.

To answer my research question, I begin with a description of each form of city government followed by analyzing the current literature on the relationship between a city's form of government and voter turnout. The literature provides little insight on city elections as applicable to a change in form of government. I supplement this deficiency by analyzing election research at the national and state level. I present six hypotheses on changes that I suspect will arise when a city changes its form of government and give a rationale for each. My methodology section outlines the research design and data collection of my study: I examine eight medium-sized American cities that switched their form of government from no earlier than 1990. Local newspapers serve as the main source of data for my study along with each city's election results. My findings corroborate earlier studies that a mayor-council form of government has higher levels of voter turnout than a council-manager form. My study also fills the gap in the literature on longitudinal analysis across the same city: switching to a mayor-council form of government increases turnout. However, my findings do not provide conclusive results on how a change in government form changes subsequent elections. My findings do not suggest any major trends across cities regarding a form of government's favor to a certain issue topic, office or type of policy. In addition, my findings are inconclusive regarding a certain form creating more competitive elections or inciting a candidate-centered election.

The main contribution of this paper to the body of scholarship on local government is the possibilities it creates for future study. Although my research does not present conclusive findings across cities, my paper illustrates that a change in form of government alters a city's future elections. Each city has its own unique set of variables that change when it adopts a new form of government. My study begins new scholarship on the relationship between a change in form of government and a change in the city's elections because each city demonstrated some

degree of change. My study allows future scholars to employ my research methods on other possible variables that change with a city's change in form of government to determine what causes voter turnout to increase in a mayor-council form.

A final contribution of my paper substantiates previous literature that the council-manager form of government impedes voter turnout in cities: switching to a council-manager from either a mayor-council or commission form decreases voter turnout. My study also contributes a new addition to the literature that switching to a mayor-council system increases voter turnout. These findings are significant for the local policy maker because it provides elements for local officials to consider as they deliberate a change in their city's form of government. Policymakers should expect to see a drop in voter turnout once they switch to a council-manager system of government. This finding is tremendously significant because the most popular form of city government also has negative impact on voter turnout. Clearly, a further understanding of this relationship is a necessity for preserving and promoting the hallmarks of democracy at the local level.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Types of City Government Structure

The literature has a significant gap in examining the relationship between voter turnout and a city's form of government. The majority of studies use cross-sectional analysis to compare forms of government and voter turnout across different cities. This inadequate method does not examine how a change in form of government impacts voter turnout over time. Rather, this method can only reveal which form of government has higher rates of voter turnout.

Longitudinal analysis is required to substantiate the claim that one form of government is better at promoting or impeding voter turnout because it illustrates changes as a result of a switch in government form. The literature fails to address how a switch in form of government creates changes in elections that influence voter turnout. These possible changes include the importance of the office and the candidates, the competitiveness of the elections and the types of issues raised in campaigns. These variables are important to examine because they are significant factors in elections that motivate citizens to vote. Since these factors are liable to change with a switch in form of government, it is imperative to examine these variables to explain changes in voter turnout. The beginning of this section describes the most common forms of city government today. Subsequently, it analyzes significant studies that provide information on the relationship between city government and voter turnout. Then, this review examines electoral

factors that influence voter turnout and how they might impact a city election. The conclusion summarizes the major gaps in the current literature that necessitate this study.

When citizens think of city government, they often think of the mayor. In a similar manner to the president on the federal level, the mayor is the face of the city: he or she controls the day to day operations of the city, is completely independent of the city council and has budgetary authority for the city (Forms of Municipal Government, 2016). City charters refer to this as the mayor-council form of government and it reflects the separation of powers found at the national level (Frederickson and Johnson, 2001). However, American cities have a greater diversity in the structure of their governments. Many cities operate under forms that originated in the Progressive reform movement of the early 20th century (Frederickson, Wood and Logan, 2001, 6). These forms include the council-manager and commission form of government. The council-manager form places the administrative powers of the city in the hands of the council while the mayor, who is chosen from among the council-members, serves as a figurehead for the city to preside over meetings and ceremonial events (Frederickson Wood and Logan, 2001, 6). The council appoints a city manager to control the day to day operations of the city. This system reflects after a parliamentary system of government (Frederickson and Johnson 2001, 873). The commission form resembles corporate structure: a board of commissioners run all aspects of the government (DeSantis and Renner 2002, 96). Another form, the representative town-hall reflects the colonial town-hall meeting and is still used sparsely in New England.

The council-manager form of government exhibited almost uninterrupted growth in popularity since its introduction in the early 20th century and had a significant increase in use during the 1950s (Bridges, 1997). Today, it remains the most popular form of government: the International City/Council Management Association (ICMA) estimates that 55% of cities employ

this form government compared to 34% of cities using a mayor-council and 1% of cities using the commission form (Forms of Municipal Government, 2016). However, recent trends suggest that large cities are increasingly abandoning the council-manager system in favor for the mayor-council (Svara and Watson, 2010, 8). This is most likely due to the unique circumstances that large cities face: more government employees serving a larger population and a wider pool of resources. This dichotomy between large and small cities demonstrates the necessity to study trends in large city's form of government separate from smaller cities.

The Relationship between Form of Government and Voter Turnout

The most dramatic ramifications of a city's form of government are its efficiency and citizen participation. Considerable research studies the former rather than the latter: council-manager systems are more likely to be professionally managed and economically efficient (Karnig and Walter, 1983; Bridges, 1997). But knowing how and why a form of government impacts voter turnout is certainly important. A healthy democracy depends on active citizen participation in government. Unlike a national election where citizens do not experience their direct impact on election results, voting in local elections allows citizens to have a much greater impact on who is selected for office. More importantly, voting at the local level is critical for citizens since decisions made by local officials have the closest and most meaningful interactions in their daily lives. The upcoming analysis of the current literature demonstrates that while a relationship between form of government and voter turnout exists, studies do not suggest that a switch in form of government would influence voter turnout.

A consensus among the literature suggests that cities with reformed governments (council-manager) have lower voter turnout compared to mayor-council (Alford and Lee 1968; Karnig and Walter 1983; Bridges 1997). Although Alford and Lee (1968) used a cross-sectional design and Karnig and Walter (1983) used longitudinal analysis, both studies provide similar conclusions: the mayor-council form has higher rates of turnout compared to the council-manager. Additionally, Karnig and Walter (1983) found that declining voter turnout can be attributed to a city switching from mayor-council to council-manager (504). They suggest that despite the benefits of increased government efficiency, council-managers “are not systems that promote citizen participation in elections” (Karnig and Walter, 1983, 504). This finding from Karnig and Walter (1983) represents the most significant takeaway from their research because it alludes to a possible relationship between switching the form of government and voter turnout. Since Karnig and Walter (1983) had a limited data pool, this study buttresses the need for a comprehensive analysis focusing on cities changing their form of government. In addition, Karnig and Walter (1983) only examined a switch from mayor-council to council-manager; they lack an analysis on the impact of a switch to mayor-council from council-manager. Bridges’ case study methodology supports the finding that the council-manager has lower levels of voter turnout (1997, 114). Bridges (1997) shows that the method of analysis does not influence these conclusions. Despite a case-study comparison, Bridges (1997) reflected the previous study of Alford and Lee (1968) by not examining cities that changed their form of government. Rather, her study drew conclusions from cities with existing forms of government and failed to note any changes in form of government. Nonetheless, a common finding from these studies illustrate that the form of government influences voter turnout.

Although these studies began research on voter turnout and city government structure, each one has noteworthy limitations to this topic today. Since media dissemination, political views and generations change over time, these studies do not represent the patterns and trends of today's elections: Alford and Lee (1968) examined elections from the early 1960s, Karnig and Walter (1983) used data from the 1930s, 1960s and 1970s and Bridges (1997) used elections from 1946-1975. Although the results from these studies reflected voter turnout from this era, these studies fail to address current relationships of city government structure and voter turnout. For example, current trends suggest that even though large cities are abandoning the council-manager form, voter turnout is not substantially increasing (Svara and Watson 2010, 2). Additionally, Alford and Lee (1968) and Bridges (1997) never examined cities that switched their form of government. This does not provide definitive evidence that one form of government has a decreasing influence on voter turnout over another. Although Karnig and Walter (1983) included cities that switched their form of government, they lacked comprehensive voter turnout data and had a disproportionate geographic concentration of cities from the Northeast (494).

As scholars took greater interest in municipal government, many recognized the limitations of the simplistic definitions of city governments. Frederickson and Johnson (2001) found that cities of both the mayor-council and council-manager form of government incrementally adopt structural traits of each type over time and that the legal charters of cities do not reflect the structural overlap between the two (873, 882). More importantly, they created a new set of typologies for each type of city: the political city, the adapted political city, the fully political city (most closely fits the National League of Cities' description of mayor-council), the adapted administrative city and the fully administrative city (most closely fits the National League of Cities' description of council-manager). Although cumbersome to list every

characteristic for each category (and not entirely relevant to the direction of this analysis), a few are necessary to understand recent studies on voter turnout. The criteria for the political city included a mayor who serves full time with budgetary control and is elected by the people. The significant criteria for an adaptive administrative city are the presence of an appointed chief administrative officer or manager, an elected council that serves full-time and a mayor that is selected from the council (Frederickson and Johnson, 2001, 879). Based on these characteristics, the political city and the adaptive city can serve as proxies for the traditional mayor-council and council-manager form, respectively.

More recent work on the link between government structure and turnout takes issue with how earlier studies defined forms of government. For example, Wood (2002) criticized earlier studies because of their inability to include the nuances of city government structure (213). Wood (2002) used this point of contention to integrate the classifications of city government of Frederickson and Johnson (2001) rather than using the traditional typology of city government structure.

A familiarity with Frederickson and Johnson (2001) allows for a better understanding of the findings of Wood (2002). Despite accounting for more structural variances in city governments, Wood (2002) supported the earlier findings that the mayor-council form has higher rates of turnout than council-manager (228). Wood (2002)'s findings demonstrate that the structural nuances of city government may not be the driving factor in influencing turnout. This justifies my study using the traditional definitions of government form provided by the NLC because the complexities of government form do not appear to influence findings (the Methodology Section provides a detailed description of definitions and limitations). Although Wood (2002) included a myriad of the differences in the institutional elements of city

government, his findings reflect the results of the previous literature. This indicates that when examining a switch in city government structure, the institutional factors that fall under mayor-council or council-manager form may not be as important as other factors, such as the timing of the election (Wood 2002, 228). Hajnal and Lewis (2003) supported elements of previous analyses of city government structure and voter turnout. Hajnal and Lewis (2003) found corroborating evidence that the mayor-council form has higher levels of voter turnout than council-manager. However, reflecting the method of previous studies, Hajnal and Lewis (2003) only compared forms of government against each other rather than cities changing forms of government. Additionally, their study has limitations in its applicability in generalization because they only examined cities within California.

These studies illustrate a gap in the literature on the relationship between voter turnout and form of government. They conclude that form of government influences turnout because the mayor-council form has higher rates of voter turnout and that switching to a council-manager will impede voter turnout. However, they do not explain the factors of each form that causes this to occur. What factors in these systems influence voter turnout? Clearly these forms have differences that cause varying rates in voter turnout but the literature fails to adequately provide an answer to this question. Comparing a city under one form of government (as in a cross-sectional analysis) does not explain how the form of government influences turnout because there is no way to observe change. Rather, it only indicates that the form does influence turnout. Only through a longitudinal analysis on cities that change their form of government can one begin to understand how a switch in form of government changes elections and voter turnout within a city.

Changes in the Elections with a Switch in Government

Virtually no research exists on why a change in city government form impacts voter turnout. What factors does a mayor-council system provide that enables it to have a higher voter turnout compared to a council-manager? As a city switches its form of government, how does the election change to adapt to the new positions? These questions demonstrate an importance to understand the impact of a change in form of government on the electoral process, yet little research explores these topics. Media attention on an election reflects the current political climate of a city and is a crucial element of change that coincides with a change in form of government. The media attention to the election provide the public with knowledge of candidates and thus influences voter turnout, yet the literature fails to examine the impact of media attention on municipal elections before and after a change in form of government. Newspaper coverage of local elections abets in a foundational knowledge of the media's importance in municipal elections. In addition, change in form of government could also influence the competitiveness of subsequent elections. Although previous scholars studied this topic, it does not suggest a definitive relationship on election competitiveness and changes in city government structure. Lastly, the issues raised in campaign influence voter turnout and are liable to change with a switch in form of government. The literature provides miniscule analysis of the types of issues and policies raised in campaigns before and after a switch in government structure. However, studies conducted at the national and state level provide a building block to compare with the municipal level.

Scholarly research on media attention at the municipal level does not suggest a relationship between media coverage of the election and voter turnout before and after a switch in form of government. Nonetheless, the literature provide significant implications on the

relationship between media attention and local government elections. The media selectively represent the candidates and show significance in elections because they act as formidable political actors (Kelley, 1962). Additionally, local newspaper endorsements in large cities have significant influence to alter the outcomes of elections (McCleneghan and Ragland 2002, 214). Voters also have a perceived closeness to the candidates and their issue positions through the candidates' representation in the media (Hyun and Moon 2014, 699). Hyun and Moon (2014) also noted the importance of media in influencing voter's perceptions of the issues by stating that "the idea that news use not only enhances general issue consideration for candidate evaluation, but also facilitates evaluation of issue congruence, which ultimately converts to candidate choice" (700). However, Hyun and Moon (2014) did not examine news at the local level. Nevertheless, this serves as a proxy of the effect at the local level because voters are more likely to personally know their candidates at the local level than they would at the federal level. When a city switches its form of government, the media is certain to represent candidates differently because it is subject to promote its opinions of the candidates and positions onto voters. Through exposure to the media, voters adopt the media's perception of the important issues and candidates in an election. However, current literature fails to identify how local media represents these candidates before and after a switch in form of government.

In addition to representing candidates, the media has the ability to raise voter turnout through increased citizen awareness of elections, or lesson it by lack of coverage. Norman Luttbeg used voter turnout at the city-council and school board level to find that newspaper coverage of candidates causes the public to focus on the election more and increase voter turnout (1988, 888). Combined with the media's role on influencing the importance of candidates and issues, this demonstrates that local newspapers are an integral part in the municipal political

process because of their ability to raise voter turnout. Based on these findings, the local newspapers would play an even greater role in the years before and after a switch in city's form of government because, unlike the national or state level where information is widely available, the local newspapers provide the main source of citizen information for the proposed change. However, the literature has not yet assessed how the role of the media might change when a city goes from one form of government to another.

Election competitiveness has a substantial role in influencing voter turnout. For example, competitive elections increase voter turnout at the national level (Powell, 1986). Although this does not reflect elections at the municipal level, Caren (2007) found that "voters are apathetic when incumbent mayors are running for reelection and fewer turn out to vote" (43). Coupled with his findings that voter turnout is higher when there is "a strong alternative to the top two candidates," this can suggest that turnout at the local level is significantly increased when election competitiveness increases (Caren 2007, 43). Caren (2007) found that although form of government had a relationship with voter turnout, campaign factors depress voter turnout. Elections that have little competitiveness have low turnout, regardless of the government structure (Caren 2007, 43). However, cities that use a council-manager have even lower levels of voter turnout compared with mayor-council forms (Caren, 2007, 43). This is significant because earlier studies did not include this variable and it highlights the importance of campaigns in influencing voter turnout. Nevertheless, Caren (2007) did not include this variable in a longitudinal analysis studying the effect of competitive campaigns on voter turnout before and after a switch in form of government: his analysis only compared competitiveness across existing forms of government.

Changes in local political campaigns play a significant role in influencing voter turnout, more specifically, changes in the actions of candidates (Holbrook and Weinschenk, 2014, 52). However, Holbrook and Weinschenk (2014) only examined this through the lens of campaign spending, rather than the issues raised and types of redistribution policies. Research at the federal and state level provides a preliminary picture of how a change in the form of government would change the types of issues in a campaign and the focus of policies that impact voter turnout. In Paul Peterson's definitive study of federalism, he outlined the two main theories on federalism: the functional and legislative theories of redistribution, the latter being the most relevant for this study. Peterson summarized the legislative theory: "Members [of Congress] care a lot about the impact of national programs in their home territory. Presidents care more about their overall consequences for the nation" (Peterson, 1995, 43). Peterson classifies these redistributive properties as "particularistic" in which they benefit a particular constituency or "universal" in which they are diversely distributed.

Subsequently, Barrilleaux and Berkman (2003) found this legislative theory reflected at the state level: governors produce policies that are universal when they provide benefits to constituents statewide whereas legislators favor benefits directed at their respective district (Barrilleaux and Berkman 2003, 411). Using this as a proxy for city politicians, it is comparable that a mayor with a citywide constituency would favor universal policies compared to councilmen who would favor particularistic benefits for their perspective wards or districts. Despite these inquiries into the policy preferences at executives and legislators at the federal and state level, the literature provides no analysis of this on the municipal level. Thus research at the city level fails to address how these components change before and after a switch in government and their influence on voter turnout.

Although a city may not have the financial abilities to redistribute wealth across to its citizens, the work of Peterson (1995) and Barrilleaux and Berkman (2003) provide a guide for analyzing the types of policies at the city level. A city can enact policies that reflect the universal redistribution definition provided by Peterson (1995) because city polices can widely benefit the city on a diverse level, such as public services, efficiency of government, schools and economic development. Other city polices reflect Peterson (1995)'s definition of particularistic where benefactors of the policy are concentrated in a certain area of the city, such as neighborhood revitalization programs, infrastructure and downtown development. These types of polices (diverse and concentrated benefits) illustrate crucial importance for a local government because they dictate the attention of the campaigning process to appeal to either a broad range or select group of voters.

Changes in the Form of City Government: An unexplored Realm

What do these findings indicate about voter turnout in city elections? Any comprehensive study examining elections in cities should not overlook the plethora of factors that influence voter turnout. Also, the literature shows that multiple election years from the same city must be used to draw conclusions on the impact of a change in city government on a city's subsequent elections. The previous literature on city government structure and voter turnout indicate the mayor-council form has higher rates over voter turnout compared to council-manager systems. With the exception of the limited study by Karnig and Walter (1983), the previous literature lacks longitudinal analysis of city government structure and voter turnout. Even though Karnig and Walter (1983) concluded that cites that adopt a council-manager form of government

decrease their voter turnout, the limitations of their study and the outdated election results call for a new analysis comparing election results within the same cities before and after they made a switch in their form of government. In addition, it calls for an analysis of cities that switch to a mayor-council from a council-manager. The current literature provides little definitive evidence suggesting that one form of government actually decreases voter turnout does not exist.

Additionally, a majority of these studies did not differentiate cities based on populations, with the exception of Bridges (1997), Frederickson and Johnson (2001) and Caren (2007). Thus, the literature overlooks the vast unaccounted discrepancies when comparing cities with hundreds of thousands of citizens to only a few thousand. For example, Oliver (2000) found that increasing city size has negative impacts on voter turnout (370). However, Kelleher and Lowery (2009) found that as cities increase in population size, citizens are more likely to register to vote (83). Although these findings differ (Kelleher and Lowery (2009) attribute differences in the measure of voter participation as a source for this discrepancy), these studies show an important facet when examining voter turnout in American cities: cities with varying populations are exceedingly different from one another (2009, 89). To account for these differences caused by population, researchers must study cities with similar populations. As a general trend, these studies fail to examine what changes in a city once it switches its form of government that impact voter turnout. Examining changes in the candidate focus of campaigns, the impact of media attention on candidates, election competitiveness, types of issues raised in campaigns and the topics of issues provide crucial understanding on how a change in form of government influences voter turnout.

Chapter 3

Theory and Hypotheses

The previous section illustrated the gap in research on the changes in city forms of government in context to elections. The literature's narrow focus on this topic only includes voter turnout. However, once a city switches its form of government there are a multitude of observable changes in city elections. In addition to changes in voter turnout, city elections are likely to experience a change in the importance of elected positions, the attention to candidates, election competitiveness, issue topics raised in campaigns and policy types.

In a switch to a mayor-council form, the primary focus of the campaigns would shift toward a single position because of the prominence of the office. The title of mayor and the figurative representation of the city would galvanize the importance of a single position rather than indistinguishable council seats. I hypothesize this to be different from a council-manager system because there are more candidates vying for a council seat and the office has less significance than an elected executive because the appointed mayor only has symbolic power. In addition, the multiple council seats diminishes the importance of a single seat. I expect that there would be little change in the focus of position in a commission form switching to a council-manager form because both forms legislate via a body of policymakers. I would expect that when a commission form changes to a council-manager form there would be no emphasis on a single position because both systems lack an elected executive.

H1: A switch to a mayor-council from a council-manager form of government would shift the campaign focus to a single office.

H2: A switch from a commission to a council-manager form will have no change in the emphasis on offices.

The attention to candidate centered topics (such as campaigning, personal history and experience) would also change in switching government form. I expect attention to candidates to be much stronger in a mayor-council system because the voters can see more of the candidates. I hypothesize this because media attention would be divided between only two major candidates (as governed by the two major political parties) for mayor, which would give citizens the ability see more examples of their personalities in the media instead of multiple candidates for council. With a larger degree of attention to the candidates under a mayor-council, I expect that the media attention would focus more on the candidates rather than campaign issues because the winner would become the “face” of the city. Unlike a mayor, whose actions and reputation are on constant display when representing the city, the local newspapers would be less concerned in a council-manager system with the specific candidate for council because they are only a small role representing the city. A council-manager system also has an unelected city manager position. Since voters do not have direct control over this position, I expect that a newspaper would be less inclined to focus on the candidate because they fill only an administrative role. In addition, a switch to a council-manager system abolishes the “check” of an executive branch used in the mayor-council system. Without this check on the council’s powers, I would expect that the media would devote less attention to the candidates’ personal history and more to their issue positions to serve as an unofficial check on the council’s power. Thus with a change to a council-manager system from a mayor-council, I hypothesize that the media would be more concerned with how that person would vote on the issues rather than the candidate’s personal history. I hypothesize that a switch to a council-manager from a commissioner form would

result in little change in the amount of attention to candidates: I suspect both forms would have more attention to issues because neither form has a prominent executive position such as an elected mayor.

H3: A switch to a mayor-council form will result in an increase in candidate-centered elections.

I would expect the nature of campaigning would change with a switch to a mayor-council system. I expect that there would be a change in the issue topics used by campaigns because of the way the mayor and council positions represent the city. I would expect that because there are more campaigns in a council-manager system, the issue topics raised by each campaign would be different. For example, a mayor is likely to address issues that would benefit the city as a whole, such as generating revenue and first responder protection. I would expect that candidates for mayor in a mayor-council system would focus their attention to economic issues because budgetary control fulfills the defining characteristics of the mayor's responsibilities in that system. In contrast, a councilmember representing a specific district would focus on issues that benefit that district, such as revitalizing neighborhoods and creating recreational areas. Coinciding with the types of issue topics brought forth in campaigns, the types of policies would change with a form of government as well. I expect the types of policies would follow the legislative theory of federalism described by Peterson (1995): a council-manager system with councilmen who control all aspects of the city (as a reflection of Congress) would focus policies in a concentrated manner to focus on specific wards or districts within a city that they represent. A mayor with budgetary control and who has a city-wide constituency would focus policies diversely, or benefits would be distributed widely across the city constituents. In contrast, I hypothesize that when a city switches to a council-manager form there will be a decrease in

attention to polices that widely benefit the city. I suspect that a switch from a commission to a council-manager form would also decrease attention to polices that widely benefit the city because each commissioner has responsibility for a certain aspect of the city rather than a certain district or ward. However, I suspect that the issue topics would remain constant when a commission form switches to a council-manager form because both forms do not have an elected executive with a specific control of economic issues.

H4: A change to a mayor-council system will increase attention to economic issues.

H5: A change to a mayor-council system will increase attention to policies that widely benefit the city.

H6: A change to a council-manager from a commission form will decrease attention to polices that have diverse benefits for the city.

In a similar vein as the attention to candidates, past literature indicates that the form of government influences the competitiveness of the elections. When comparing forms of government across cities, Caren (2007) found that the council-manager system has the lowest levels of election competitiveness. I expect that competitiveness will increase when there is a switch to a mayor-council form of government because candidates desire the office of mayor more than a councilman. Also, securing the position of mayor guarantees the highest office in the city. This contrasts the uncertainty of a candidate not getting appointed to the mayor once they are elected into the council. Thus, candidates would be more likely to compete for the position of mayor. A switch to a council-manager system would have the opposite effect: a decrease in election competitiveness because all positions have equal worth. Finally, I hypothesize that a

switch to a council-manager from a commission form would have similar levels of competition before and after the switch because both lack the prominent elected executive position.

H7: A switch to a mayor-council form of government will increase the competitiveness of the election.

In addition to these above mentioned changes in local elections, extent research suggests a mayor-council form has higher voter turnout than a council-manager. Alford and Lee (1968), Bridges (1997) and Wood (2002) all found that in a cross-sectional analysis, the mayor-council form of government has the highest levels of turnout. Despite using data far removed from the present day, Karnig and Walter (1983) found that a switch to a council-manager form decreases voter turnout. Based on these findings, I speculate that switching to a mayor-council form will have the opposite effect on voter turnout: a mayor-council city will experience an increase in turnout compared to its prior elections held under a council-manager. Drawing on the rationale used by Wood (2002), citizens are more likely to vote when they are able to hold a single person accountable in government (220). Naturally, when power is dispersed across various members of council, it becomes difficult for citizens to see their vote as a direct influencer of change and thus downplays their perceived importance to vote. I suspect that a switch from a commission to a council-manager form will have a similar decrease in voter turnout. Since the commissioners have responsibilities for each section of government, I suspect that voters could still hold them accountable to their respective departments. I suspect that this would be similar to a mayor-council form switching to a council-manager: voters would be unable to see the impact of their vote on influencing the policies of the commissioners. Therefore, I suspect that voters would lose this perception of accountability under a council-manager system and voter turnout would decrease when a commission form switches to a council-manager.

H8: A switch to a mayor-council form of government will increase voter turnout.

H9: A switch to a council-manager from a commission form will decrease voter turnout.

To summarize, a change in a city's form of government would cause many changes in local elections in addition to voter turnout. I expect that once a city switches to a mayor-council system, the election will have more attention to candidates and economic issues as well as an increase in election competitiveness. With a switch to a council-manager system, I expect issues to drive elections. I also expect that the types of policies will change as well. An election under a mayor-council system will focus more on widely distributed policies compared to the emphasis on concentrated policies under a council-manager. Lastly, I suspect that a change from a commission form to a council-manager form would have little change to the electoral process except for a decrease in policies that widely benefit the city and a decrease in voter turnout. Although previous literature does not study these facets in great detail in context with a change in a city's form of government, I believe that the rationale behind these hypotheses provides a solid reasoning. Nonetheless, this makes this study unique because it compares these traits before and after a change in government structure.

Chapter 4

Methodology

I had a two-step process for my case selection. First, a city had to be larger than 100,000 residents but fewer than 1,000,000 and have a change in form of government after 1990. I created these population parameters to compare similar cities for two reasons: smaller cities often are not as fastidious in maintaining election data or do not have the financial resources to do so. Also, medium-sized cities differ from small cities given their political, economic and social influence as well as the complexities of their machinery of government and media output (Svara and Watson, 2010). I used population parameters based on the closest US Census figures to the year of the switch in form of government. This provided me with ten cities that had changed: Fresno, CA, Hartford CT, Spokane, WA, Oakland CA, Richmond VA, St. Petersburg, FL, Colorado Springs CO, Cedar Rapids IA, El Paso TX and Topeka, KS. After I found these cities, I further selected cases based on available voter turnout data. This excluded Fresno and Hartford from being included in this analysis. The following subsections detail the method used for data collection and definitions used for each of my variables.

City government structure

I used the definitions of each form of government as provided by the National League of Cities (Forms of Municipal Government, 2016). They are as follows:

Mayor-Council: “Mayor is elected separately from the council, is often full-time and paid, with significant administrative and budgetary authority. Depending on

the municipal charter, the mayor could have weak or strong powers. Council is elected and maintains legislative powers. Some cities appoint a professional manager who maintains limited administrative authority.”

Council-Manager: “City council oversees the general administration, makes policy, sets budget. Council appoints a professional city manager to carry out day-to-day administrative operations. Often the mayor is chosen from among the council on a rotating basis.”

Commission: “Voters elect individual commissioners to a small governing board. Each commissioner is responsible for one specific aspect, such as fire, police, public works, health, finance. One commissioner is designated as chairman or mayor, who presides over meetings. The commission has both legislative and executive functions.”

Based on these definitions, I classified three cities as having adopted a council-manager form of government and five cities as having adopted the mayor-council form. Although Frederickson and Johnson (2001) developed a complex classification of city government form based on more than the role of the mayor, I did not opt for their definitions given time and data restraints. The classifications of cities provided by Frederickson and Johnson (2001) have significantly more validity because they encompass a greater degree of variance in the nuances of city government. This is especially true for mayor-council cities where the role of the mayor is often shared with a city manager. Despite this limitation, the broad categorizations from the NLC suffice for this study because the focus is on changes in elections rather than the form itself. The NLC definitions of form of government also have limitations in reliability. As cities adopt

changes in form of government, but not a complete switch in overall form, the measure's consistency across time is jeopardized. However, for the purpose of this study, the NLC definitions are adequate because they provide the most significant characteristics of form of government.

Data Sources: Newspaper Analysis

I needed data that illustrated the focus of a city's election. However, there is no known dataset measuring election focus on candidates, issues raised in a campaign or to the degree to which the office was a focus of the election. Instead, I read newspaper articles as an information source and coded their contents. I used this method because newspapers capture a city's attention to these variables through article mentions. Newspapers expose citizens to the election and therefore represent the exposure that voters have on election topics. Specifically I tracked mentions of each elected office, candidate and issues raised during the campaign. Mentions in newspapers accurately represent attention to these topics because newspapers print the interests of citizens to solicit readership. Although the newspaper I gathered data from varied with every city, I entered the following search terms when conducting a NewsBank database search: the name of the city followed by MAYOR, MAYOR ELECTION, COUNCIL, COUNCIL ELECTION, MAYOR COUNCIL, COUNCIL MANAGER, STRONG MAYOR. I used these terms because they provided a wide ranging scope to account for all representations of city government elections.

These terms have limitations (especially MAYOR and COUNCIL) to reliability and validity because they discovered articles not relevant to the election. These terms jeopardized

validity because articles that are not relevant to the election appeared in the pool of articles found by these search terms. For example, these terms discovered any article referencing a new policy or action by the official regardless if it was relevant to the election. Because of this reason, articles found by these search terms do not always accurately reflect the topics as they relate to the election. As an attempt to uphold the validity of these search terms, I filtered out articles that were not related to any election based on my discretion after analyzing their contents.

Unfortunately, this method also compromises the reliability of the articles because I did not have an established method to filter out irrelevant articles other than my discretion. Newspapers varied in their coverage of the election: some began covering candidates upwards of seven months prior to the election and others waited until the immediate weeks before an election. This prevented me from creating a replicative system of filtering articles based on a window of time surrounding the election. Therefore, these search terms cannot ensure consistency for future researchers to examine the same set of articles. The Conclusions section addresses the limitations that this compromise to reliability and validity has on the results of this study.

Another difficulty arose because these search terms cannot include all newspaper articles filed under different headlines. For example, a newspaper could headline the article with the candidate's first or last name, which could exclude the article from appearing relevant to the search terms. With this limitation in mind, this study can only be assumed to analyze a sample of articles for each city because these terms could not find every article with the subject of the candidate, issue or form of government. I examined the available newspaper articles during the year the switch went into effect and two years prior and two years after a change in form of government (with the exception of the three years after for Cedar Rapids and Richmond, which did not have comparable local elections in only two years). I selected a total of a five year

window because it provided a manageable amount of articles that encapsulated the state of local elections before and after a switch in form of government. I included all articles published by the newspaper excluding the letters to the editor because they did not have to undergo the same level of integrity as a column published by a writer for the newspaper.

Focus of Office, Policy Issue and Candidate mentions

I classified the focus of elected position for each relevant article based on the subject of the article: mayor, council or city manager. To measure this variable, each value is the proportion of the times the paper mentioned the office out of the entire number of office mentions. This is best to reflect the definitions of the form of government provided by the National League of Cities. I defined the independent variable of issues in each article based on the criteria listed in Table 1. I used these categories because they accounted for all issues that were discussed in each city's election cycles. I operationalized candidate centered mentions on the criteria listed in Table 2. I included information about campaigning in the candidate category because each campaign is highly individualized and reflects the personality of the candidate. In addition, campaigning does not fall into a specific issue that can be traced back to a reflective policy in local government. I used these definitions to achieve a proportion of mentions for each issue. For each city, I totaled the number of mentions for each issue and candidate and divided the number of mentions by the total number mentions for both candidate and issues in each city's newspaper. Table 1 provides the descriptions for each issue based on the subject of the article. Table 2 provides the descriptions for each candidate mention based on the subject of the article.

Table 1: Issue Mention Descriptions

Issue	Description
Infrastructure	Roads, bridges, sidewalks
Community development	Parks, playgrounds, neighborhood programs, social programs, community centers, youth activities
Urban Planning	Zoning, new buildings, razing, expansion, levees, city codes, housing programs
Public Services	Water services, fire department, libraries, trash disposal, transportation, utilities (recycling, leaves removal, etc.)
Crime	Police, crime rate, crime reduction programs
Schools	Funding, busing, appointment of school officials
Social Issues	Race relations, women's issues, gender
Economic development	Taxes, job growth, city finances, new businesses, downtown revitalization, budgets, poverty programs
Government efficiency	Transparency, responsiveness, hiring/firing city officials, inter government cooperation, corruption, government structure, salaries, labor contracts, government operations, city managements, disputes

Table 2: Candidate Centered Mentions

Candidate Reference	Description
Campaigning	Announcements/withdraws, polling, staff, time spent, interviews, petitions, endorsements, public opinion, political attacks/criticism
Campaign Finance	Money on hand, amount raised, campaign contributions
Scandals	Ethics violations, personal affairs, resignations
Past Experience	Work in government
Personal Histories	Character traits, education, family, career, community involvement, residency

Many articles are not one dimensional in the topics they report on. For example, articles frequently addressed candidate centered topics and policy issues. This created challenges for the reliability of classifying each article based on a single topic because of the difficulty of assigning one category per article. Rather than including the number of articles devoted to each topic, I

totaled the number of times each article mentioned the topic. This criteria for classifying topic mentions is reliable because it prevents mentions from being excluded in the dataset. The individualized circumstances for each city created challenges for validity because of the difficulty of placing high-profile issues in narrow categories. For example, a major election topic in Oakland, CA during the years of my study was the creation of a new stadium for a Major League Baseball team. While this falls into many potential categories, it is at the will of the researcher to assign it to any given issue. To account for this, I classified this based on the topic that I felt was the closest representation to an issue category (in the case of Oakland, I classified the MLB stadium as economic development because of the tax revenue that candidates campaigned on). This facet of my research design is the greatest challenge to reliability and validity because these issues are hardest for another researcher to replicate because of the multiple benefits such grandiose projects can bring to a city.

Policy Types

Policy types fall into two distinct categories according to Peterson (1995): universalistic and particularistic. Universalistic policies are those that provide diverse benefits across the city and particularistic policies benefit a concentrated area of the city. Although Peterson (1995) viewed these categories strictly under the redistribution of wealth, I expanded these categories to include all policies in local government. I did this because local governments have less wealth to redistribute than at the federal level and many of these monies come from state and federal grants. Since newspaper articles did not always provide the source for funds from these policies, I could not discern if the city, state or federal monies funded each policy. Rather, I opted for an

analysis of the newspaper's representation of each policy type and the category the issue fell under. Table 3 illustrates how I assigned each issue as a policy that benefits citizens across the city or if the policy benefited concentrated areas of the city (the types of policies reflect the same issues found in Table 1).

Table 3: Types of Policies

Policy	Category
Infrastructure	Concentrated
Community Development	Concentrated
Urban Planning	Concentrated
Government Efficiency	Diverse
Public Services	Diverse
Crime	Diverse
Schools	Diverse
Social Issues	Diverse
Economic Development	Diverse

Some issues present challenges to the label of diverse or concentrated benefits. For example, downtown revitalization benefits the city as a whole because it generates revenue for the entire city. However, downtown revitalization concentrates benefits because a specific neighborhood would not have the same increase in fund allocations as the downtown district. On the opposite end of the spectrum, infrastructure benefits specific areas of the city because of road repair in certain neighborhoods or districts. However, all citizens benefit from maintained roads and sidewalks. Based on these pitfalls, my categorizations of concentrated and diverse policy benefits have similar problems with reliability and validity as the issue definitions. Since researchers could categorize these measures differently, the reliability of the measure does not carry across efficiently. Again, the individuality of the cities and the types of issues causes this

problem. The overlaps between policies that have diverse benefits and policies with concentrated benefits risks the validity of the measure because each issue does not fall into an unambiguous category. However, I decided on this method because bolstering the validity of the measure would require each issue mention to be viewed on an individualized basis and would not allow for comparable categorizations.

I based the measure for each type of policy on the proportions of mentions for each issue topic excluding all categories for personality. I totaled all of the mentions for policies that provide diverse benefits and all of the total mentions for policies that have concentrated benefits for each city and then divided each category by the total number of mentions.

Voter turnout and Competitiveness

Unfortunately for a researcher in the field of local government, a nationwide dataset consisting of data about voter turnout and election competitiveness does not exist. Rather, city clerks, county election boards or secretaries of state maintain election data. Along with this difficulty, another challenge this study faced was measuring voter turnout so that it is comparable across cities. Cities vary the times that they conduct their elections throughout the year, the number of positions up for election, and the office up for election (mayor, at large councilmembers, etc.). I used city council districts as the source of voter turnout because this office type remained constant across the majority of my cities and it provides comparable results across cities. However, difficulties arose in comparing cities because each city varied on the number of districts that conducted elections in a given year. Thus, I averaged the voter turnout for all of the council districts in the years before and after the change in government.

Two cities differed from my standard calculation of voter turnout because the changes in council election could not be compared to election results after the switch in government. Both Cedar Rapids and Spokane changed their districting during their switch in government forms. Prior to switching to a mayor-council form, Spokane's council consisted of six positions who represented the city at-large; however in 1999, council districts were created to better represent the city (Floyd, 1999). This greatly inflated voter turnout because each voter had the option to vote for three council members rather than one in a district election. To compensate for this, I divided the total three year average by three because of the three votes for each citizen casted in the election. Cedar Rapids followed a similar pattern: it had four commissioners elected at-large. Again, each citizen had four votes rather than the single vote in the district election system for council members once the city adopted the council-manager system. To make these values comparable, I divided the total average for the commission form of government by four to represent the one person-one vote style of district elections.

I used voter turnout from three elections prior to the switch in form of government and elections years after the change in form of government. I excluded the year the change occurred because depending on the city, it either coincided or contradicted the normal election. This made the values in voter turnout difficult to compare since some cities held local elections in the midst of the transitional period. I selected three elections prior and three elections after because this provided ample time for each council district to have had an election. Since this measures only the votes cast, it does not have limitations in its validity because it measures the total number of citizens that voted, not the percentage who turned out. The formula used for this variable does not compromise its reliability because it is consistent across time, however it is limited because of the small number of electoral years used for this study.

I used margin of victory as a measure of election competitiveness. For each district, I used the following formula where MV is margin of victory, A is the proportion of votes received by the winning candidate and B is the proportion of votes received by the losing candidate (I used the same formula for districts with multiple candidates by subtracting the winning candidates' proportion of votes with the second place candidate's proportion).

$$MV = A - B$$

I averaged the margin of victory for all districts in one election cycle and then averaged that value with the total number of election years to get an average margin of victory for the years before and after a switch in form of government. I present margin of victory on a scale from 0 to 1 where 1 is an unopposed election. If margin of victory is close to zero, the margin of victory is smaller and the election is more competitive. These measures have reliability because they produce consistent results for margin of victory and only require the number of votes for each candidate. Margin of victory accurately represents competitiveness because it reflects the proportion of votes won by the candidate. A smaller margin of victory indicates that candidates received more equal amounts of votes and therefore the election was more competitive. In contrast, a larger margin of victory illustrates that candidates did not receive similar amounts of votes and demonstrates that the election heavily favored one candidate over the other.

City Profiles: Adopting a Mayor-Council system

Colorado Springs, CO

After voters approved the measure in 2010, Colorado Springs finalized their switch to a mayor-council system from a council-manager system in 2011. Under the council-manager system, the mayor served as a member of council and the council controlled the budget and the city utilities (Our Government, 2017). Along with the ceremonial role of the mayor, the city also had a city manager appointed by council to run the day to day operations of government (Our Government, 2017). Under the mayor-council form, the mayor is separate from the council and has the power to draft the city's budget and appointment of city officials (Our Government, 2017).

I used voter turnout data from the 2005, 2007, 2009, 2013, 2015 and 2017 municipal election years and retrieved it from the Colorado Springs City Clerk's office. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* provided newspaper articles for the years 2009 to 2013.

Oakland, CA

Oakland finalized a switch from the council-manager to a mayor-council system in 2004 after voters approved of the measure in 1998. Prior to this, Oakland operated under a hybrid council-manager system since 1931 (Mullin, 2010, 122). For example, citizens directly elected the mayor yet he served as a member of council and lacked veto or administrative power to run the day to day operations of the city (Mullin 2010, 122). The responsibility to run the government and draft the budget resided in the city manager appointed by the council (Mullin,

2010, 122). Through a series of charter amendments, Oakland's mayor gradually gained more power before the adoption of the mayor-council system in 1998. Upon the urging of Mayor Jerry Brown, the mayor's office of Oakland had the power to appoint department heads and appoint the city administrator (Mullin, 2010, 133). However, there is a limitation to the case of Oakland. In its charter it may be considered a transformation to mayor-council, yet it has considerable nuances in government structure that are not accounted for in the NLC definition of mayor-council.

I used 2004 as the date of the switch in government since this was the finalized year of the change. I used the 1998, 2000 and 2002 municipal elections prior to the switch and the 2006, 2008 and 2010 elections after. These data came from the California Elections Data Archives. I collected newspaper articles from the *Oakland Tribune* from the years 2002-2006.

Richmond, VA

Richmond experienced multiple changes in its form of government. Although operating under a council-manager system since 1948, Richmond had an entirely at-large process of electing councilmembers (Wikstrom, 2010, 81). The mayor was appointed by the members of council. Beginning in 1977, under ruling by the U.S. Department of Justice, Richmond began a ward system of electing members of council (Wikstrom, 2010, 81). In 2003, Richmond adopted the mayor-council form of government which went into effect in 2004. After 2004, the elected mayor is responsible for the operations of the city government, has appointment power of the city manager and the ability to veto the budget proposed by council. However, the mayor and council have shared responsibilities in creating the budget (Wikstrom, 2010, 91). In addition, the

council retained some influence in the executive branch with the power to appoint a vice mayor from among themselves. Similar to Oakland, Richmond is noteworthy to consider the limitations of the definitions provided by the NLC because it has characteristics of mayor-council and council-manager despite its charter status as a mayor-council system.

I used the elections for 1998 and 2002 for the years prior to the switch (the 2000 election data were unavailable) and the 2004, 2006 and 2008 elections after the switch. The City of Richmond Voter Registration and Elections provided these data. Although Richmond did not implement the change in government until 2004, I used the 2004 municipal election to begin after the switch because the election occurred after the city officially switched. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* provided the newspaper articles for the years spanning 2001 to 2006.

Spokane, WA

Spokane had a council-manager form of government from 1960 until voters adopted a change to the mayor-council form in 1999. A string of economic downturns, a botched revitalization project of the River Park Square shopping center and lackluster performances by the city manager preceded the switch in form of government (Hassett, 2010, 54-55). The mayor-council system was formally put into effect in 2001. This new system gave voters unseen powers to elect a mayor separate from the council who had control of areas such as budgetary control and appointment of the city manager (Hassett, 2010, 58).

Since the formal switch in government was not finalized until 2001, I used this as the year for the government switch. Thus, voter turnout data came from the 1995, 1997, 1999 elections prior and the 2003, 2005 and 2007 elections after the switch. These data came from the

Spokane County elections archive. The *Spokesman Review* provided the newspaper sources for the years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

St. Petersburg, FL

After having a council-manager form of government since 1931, St. Petersburg adopted the mayor-council form in 1993 (Benton, Menzel and Paulson, 2010, 26). Under the council-manager form, St. Petersburg had a nine member council with eight council districts and the mayor served as an at large representative for the city (Benton et al., 2010, 26). In addition to the council, the city manager ran the day to day operations of the city and functioned as a chief administrative officer (Benton et al., 2010, 26). In March of 1993, St. Petersburg began operations under a mayor-council form of government that gave the mayor (now elected separately from council) the power to appoint/fire officials, draft the budget and run the day to day operations of the city (Benton et al., 2010, 37). Although the city retained the position of a city manager the mayor has full power to control this position through appointment (Benton et al., 2010, 36).

I used election data from the years 1987, 1989, 1991 prior to the switch in form of government and the years 1995, 1997 and 1999 for the election cycles after. The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections provides this data, however it did not provide candidate names or vote share. Thus, this study does not include St. Petersburg in the analysis of margin of victory. The *Tampa Bay Times* is the source for the city's issue focus and candidate personality for the years 1991-1995.

Adopting a Council-Manager

Cedar Rapids, IA

Prior to voters approving a council-manager system in 2005, Cedar Rapids operated under commission form of government. In this system, four commissioners each held a unique duty to the city's government: finance, safety, streets and parks (Our Form of Government, 2018). With the adoption of the council-manager form in 2006, the mayor and council serve as one governing body responsible for creating legislation, drafting a budget and appointing the city manager (Our Form of Government, 2018). However, the mayor is an elected at-large position along with three council positions (Our Form of Government, 2018). The city manager carries out the day to day operations of the city and appoints the department heads. Thus Cedar Rapids demonstrates traits from both the mayor-council and council-manager, yet the amalgamation of the roles of mayor and council as a single governing body place it in the category of a council-manager form.

Since Cedar Rapids uses odd year election cycles, I used the elections from 1999, 2001 and 2003 prior to the switch and 2007, 2009 and 2011 after the switch. These data came from the Linn County Election Services. The *Cedar Rapids Gazette* provided newspaper articles from the years 2003-2007.

El Paso, TX

El Paso finalized a change to the council-manager form from a mayor-council system in 2004. Under the old mayor-council system, the mayor appointed a chief administrative officer who had the power over certain areas of government, such as the fire and police departments, and the city clerk (Terry, 2010, 232). Although these duties fall into the traditional responsibilities of the mayor, the mayor had indirect control over these agencies with his power to appoint the CAO (Terry, 2010, 232). As a council-manager city, El Paso's mayor serves as the presiding member of council where he shares the council's power to appoint officials and propose legislation (Powers of the Mayor, 2019). Although mostly a ceremonial role, the mayor retains his power to veto. The council appoints a city manager to carry out the day to day operations of the government and draft the budget (City Form of Government, 2019).

I used data from the 1999, 2001 and 2003 election years prior to the switch and the 2005, 2007 and 2009 elections after the switch. These data came from the El Paso County Elections Office. The *El Paso Times* provided newspaper articles for the years 2002-2006.

Topeka, KS

Topeka has a long history of switching its form of government; prior to 1984 it operated under a commission form but faced many referendums for its abandonment (Battaglio Jr, 2010, 246). Beginning in 1985, Topeka operated under the mayor-council form where the mayor and his appointed city administrator served as a separate executive branch from the council (Battaglio Jr, 2010, 146). The council had the responsibility of creating policy. After adopting the council-manager system in 2005, the mayor was no longer directly elected by citizens. He

serves as a council member and is appointed by the council to serve as a figurehead for the city (Topeka Municipal Code, 2016). The council appointed city manager has the power to draft the budget and run the day to day operations of the city (Topeka Municipal Code, 2016).

I used the election years of 1999 and 2001 for the years prior due to the absence of data for the 2003 election and the elections from the years 2007, 2009 and 2011. These data came from the Shawnee County Commissioner of Elections. I used newspapers from the *Topeka Capital Journal* from the years 2003 to 2007.

Chapter 5

Findings

Hypothesis 1 and 2

My first hypothesis is a switch from a council-manager to a mayor-council form of government would shift the campaign focus to a single elected position. Table 4 presents the data for this hypothesis in the cities that switched to a council-manager system. The “Before” column for each city represents data prior to the switch in government and the “After” column represents data for after the switch in government. The data for each office are a proportion out of the total office mentions in that city’s newspaper.

Table 4: Office Focus of Article (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)*

	Cedar Rapids		El Paso		Topeka	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Mayor	0.45	0.51	0.76	0.40	0.65	0.09
Council	0.48	0.49	0.22	0.60	0.35	0.73
City Manager	0.07	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.18
Total Office Mentions	29	61	46	42	23	11

* *Commissioners in Cedar Rapids fall into the Council Category*

These cities provide a degree of support for my hypothesis. In both El Paso and Topeka, the mayor dominated mentions under a mayor-council system. The office of the mayor lost a large degree of focus in media attention in Topeka and El Paso once they switched to a council-manager system. The role of mayor in Topeka suggests substantial proof for my hypothesis: the

office of mayor lost over half of its former proportion of mentions. Although El Paso supports my hypothesis, the significant proportion of mentions to the mayor suggests that attention to a single position is still valued by the newspaper and therefore, the city as a whole. This is significant because despite the council-manager form's emphasis on legislating without an executive, the prominence of a single executive still resonates in citizen's attentions. In both cities, the council gained significantly more news coverage after a switch to a mayor council and followed the pattern that I expected. Cedar Rapids does not follow the trend of the other cities and supports my hypothesis regarding switching from a commission to a council-manager form: the mentions of the mayor and commissioners remained constant. This is most likely because of the similarities between the commission form and council-manager since both do not have a directly elected mayor's office. All of these cities demonstrate the value of attention to elected positions rather than administrators because of the miniscule mentions of the city manager. Clearly, the newspaper only values offices that citizens have control over. Table 5 presents the data for cities that switched to a mayor-council system in the same style as Table 4.

Table 5: Office Focus of Article (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council)

	Colorado Springs		Oakland		Richmond		Spokane		St. Petersburg	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Mayor	0.40	0.67	0.55	0.29	0.00	0.40	0.42	0.44	0.23	0.67
Council	0.40	0.33	0.45	0.71	0.94	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.77	0.33
City Manager	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Office Mentions	20	43	9	17	16	54	12	27	13	6

All but one of the cities that switched from a council-manager to a mayor-council did the focus of the mayor's office increase. However, these results do not give substantial support for my hypothesis because they illustrate a significant focus still on the council. For example, Richmond and Spokane the focus of the mayor increased, but the council still had over half of

the newspaper's attention. Only in Colorado Springs and St. Petersburg did the newspaper illustrate the trend I expected: the mayor would significantly increase in the media's attention and the council would subsequently fall after a switch to a mayor-council. Oakland demonstrates a direct contradiction to my hypothesis: the mayor's office lost a significant amount of the media's attention. In Oakland, the council still occupied nearly three quarters of all of the media's attention after a switch to a mayor-council. Although a striking reversal in the trend, the nuances of Oakland's government could possibly explain this discrepancy. Prior to the switch, the mayor already had direct election from the citizens yet he sat on the council. Additionally, the power of the mayor gradually increased over time and it was only a formal charter amendment that solidified these changes that had already existed in the city's government. Although not definitively suggested by the data, Oakland's case could be a consequence of the limitation from using the definition from the NLC rather than the definitions of Frederickson and Johnson (2001).

Overall, these findings partially support my hypothesis. In the instances that a city switched from a mayor-council to a council-manager, the mayor lost a significant focus from the newspaper. However, the results are less conclusive when a city switches to a mayor-council: the mayor did gain attention from the media, but the council retained a large degree of attention from the media. Perhaps this is because of limited number of years that I collected newspaper articles before and after a switch. Prior to the switch, the council was the main body of government in the city and thus had the most of the media's attention. The years directly following the switch could serve as transition periods where the council still dominates the political scene despite the arrival of a directly elected mayor. I only collected data two years after a switch and since the mayor gained focus after the switch; further collection of newspapers after the switch are needed

to definitively support my hypothesis that the focus of the mayor would increase as the attention to the multiple offices in council would decrease.

Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4

My next hypotheses involve if the election had a candidate centered focus and the types of issues raised in campaigns. I hypothesize that a switch to a mayor-council will increase a candidate focus rather than the issues and that a switch to a mayor-council will increase the attention to economic issues. Table 6 presents data for cities that adopted a council-manager system. The “Before” column for each city represents data prior to the switch in government and the “After” column represents data for after the switch in government. Data are presented as a proportion from the total mentions of both the issue topic and candidate. The total proportion of all issue topics and all candidate mentions are in blue. At the conclusion of the table are the total number of article mentions for both topics.

Table 6: Issue and Candidate Focus (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)

Issue Topic	Cedar Rapids		El Paso		Topeka	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Infrastructure	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.10	0.10	0.00
Community Development	0.00	0.04	0.08	0.07	0.00	0.00
Urban Planning	0.10	0.03	0.02	0.12	0.00	0.00
Government Efficiency	0.13	0.18	0.06	0.00	0.21	0.25
Public Services	0.10	0.07	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
Crime	0.09	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00
Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
Social Issues	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
Economic Development	0.16	0.21	0.29	0.15	0.24	0.25
Proportion of Issue Mentions	0.61	0.63	0.53	0.44	0.70	0.50
Candidate Mentions						
Campaigning	0.12	0.12	0.29	0.15	0.00	0.17
Campaign Finance	0.12	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.00	0.08
Scandals	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00
Past Experience	0.03	0.14	0.06	0.09	0.24	0.25
Personal History	0.12	0.05	0.04	0.18	0.06	0.00
Proportion of Candidate Mentions	0.39	0.37	0.47	0.56	0.30	0.50
Total Mentions of Issue and Candidates	38	92	49	61	33	12

Naturally I would expect to see a decrease in attention to economic issues when a city abandons the mayor-council system because the elected mayor has the most authority over the city's budget. Only in El Paso did this occur, whereas in Topeka experienced very little change. These findings do not support my hypothesis that a mayor-council system favors economic issues: in both El Paso and Topeka under a mayor-council system, economic issues did not hold even a third of issue attention. This suggests that there is no reason to expect that a mayor-council system disproportionately favors a certain issue. The findings for after the switch to a council-manager reflect this as well: there is not a dominant issue. However, some issues are more important than others, such as economic development and government efficiency.

Cedar Rapids supports my hypothesis that there would be little change in attention to economic issues when a commission form switches to a council-manager form. The number of mentions to economic issues increased in Cedar Rapids after the city switched, however it was not a large increase. Cedar Rapids illustrates that the commission form or council-manager form does not favor a certain issue: although economic development had the largest proportion of mentions, it failed to occupy a quarter of the media's attention. Cedar Rapids supports my hypothesis that there would be little change in the attention to the candidate focus after it switched to a council-manager. I suspect that this is because candidates are not as important in these systems as they are in mayor-council since one person does not have the power to run the day to day operations of the city. In addition, the diversification of power in both of these systems does not elevate the prominence of a single candidate: both systems have checks to ensure that a single person does not have a disproportionate control over the city. These findings are significant because they illustrate that a switch to a council-manager system does not dramatically alter the attention to issues or candidates compared to what they were before the switch.

This evidence from the coverage in these cities also do not support my hypothesis that a mayor-council system favors attention to candidates. In contrast, they illustrate the opposite of my hypothesis. In a mayor-council system, El Paso and Topeka had less than half of the attention to the candidate's personalities than the issues (however, El Paso is equally more proportioned between candidate and issue). After they abandoned the mayor-council system, the division between candidate and issue was even more equal. These results suggest that when switching from a mayor-council to a council-manager system, one should not expect to see a dramatic increase or decrease in the amount of attention to the issues or the candidates. These findings

suggest that the candidate is important for both forms, regardless of the amount of executive power of the office. The next section examines this hypothesis with cities that adopted a mayor-council system and Table 7 presents data in the same format as Table 6 for these cities.

Table 7: Issue and Candidate Focus (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council)

Issue Topic	Colorado Springs		Oakland		Richmond		Spokane		St. Petersburg	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Infrastructure	0.00	0.03	0.14	0.00	0.12	0.04	0.30	0.19	0.00	0.00
Community Development	0.08	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.00
Urban Planning	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.20	0.04	0.05	0.29
Government Efficiency	0.08	0.11	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.13	0.09	0.00
Public Services	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00
Crime	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.00	0.12	0.09	0.00
Schools	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.04	0.08	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Issues	0.00	0.03	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Development	0.12	0.26	0.29	0.12	0.20	0.12	0.25	0.30	0.23	0.00
Proportion of Issue Mentions	0.28	0.55	0.71	0.32	0.56	0.58	0.85	0.78	0.68	0.29
Candidate Mentions										
Campaigning	0.12	0.16	0.00	0.32	0.16	0.14	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.00
Campaign Finance	0.04	0.16	0.21	0.16	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Scandals	0.28	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.14
Past Experience	0.12	0.00	0.08	0.20	0.04	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personal History	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.17	0.10	0.21	0.23	0.57
Proportion of Candidate Mentions	0.72	0.45	0.29	0.68	0.44	0.42	0.15	0.22	0.32	0.71
Total Mentions of Issues and Candidates	25	31	14	25	25	97	20	20	22	22

Cities that switch from a council-manager to a mayor-council form do not support my hypothesis that changing to a mayor-council system would increase attention to economic issues. These findings do not illustrate any trend: two cities decreased their attention to economic issues, two increased attention and one remained constant. However, before and after the switch in government, economic issues had some of the highest proportions of media attention out of all the issues. Although this suggests that the mayor-council system favors economic issue attention, they do not suggest that there is a significant difference between the attention to economic issues in a council-manager or mayor-council form of government. A striking anomaly is St. Petersburg because it had no mentions of economic issues after its switch to a mayor-council system. I suspect this is because of the media's focus on the personal histories of candidates and the limited number of articles included in the sample. Perhaps this is because of the politics of the city: voters were more concerned with the background of the person occupying the new executive position rather than specific issues. This could explain the complete reversal of issue and personality importance before and after the switch. Nonetheless, the case of St. Petersburg warrants further exploration into the relationship between candidates and issues because my findings cannot substantiate these claims without data on voter's opinions.

The findings provide limited support for my hypothesis on an increase in attention to the candidate in a mayor-council system. Three out of the five cities that switched to a mayor-council system had an increase in the attention to the candidate's personality. Only in Oakland and St. Petersburg did the attention to the candidate's increase significantly. Colorado Springs is a notable exception to this trend: the media devoted a major proportion of its attention to the

candidate before the switch. I suspect this is because of an ongoing ethics scandal involving then councilman and appointed Mayor Lionel Rivera. Scandals in Colorado Springs had nearly a third of all the media's attention in prior to switching to a mayor-council form of government.

Removing this high proportion of media attention to scandal in Colorado Springs would bring the total proportion of personality closer to that experienced after the switch to a mayor-council system. Although these scandals do not account for the entire decrease in attention to the candidate's personality in Colorado Springs after the switch, the high mentions of scandals is important to consider when analyzing the influence of candidates.

Aside from Cedar Rapids, these findings do not provide much support for my hypotheses. Although the media devoted some of the highest proportions of attention to economic issues, there was not enough supporting evidence that switching from a mayor-council system to a council-manager system would decrease attention to economic issues or switching to a mayor-council system would increase attention to economic issues. This demonstrates that form of government does not seem to influence the type of issues raised in campaigns. In addition, these findings are inconclusive to support the hypothesis that a mayor-council form has an increase in attention to the candidates. Three cities may have increased their attention to candidates after switching to a mayor-council but the cities that abandoned mayor-council did not experience an overall decrease in attention to candidates. However, cities that switch to a council-manager devote more of a balance between issue and candidates than cities that adopt a mayor-council. In a mayor-council system, cities are more likely to have a majority focus on either the issues or the candidate.

Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6

My next hypotheses are a switch to a mayor-council form will increase the amount of attention to policies that provide diverse benefits for the city and a change to a council-manager from a commission form will decrease attention to policies that have diverse benefits for the city. Table 8 represents data for each policy type in cities that adopt a council-manager system. This table presents each issue topic as a proportion out of total issue mentions (candidate mentions are excluded from the total proportion).

Table 8: Policy Type (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)

	Cedar Rapids		El Paso		Topeka	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Concentrated Benefits						
Infrastructure	0.04	0.05	0.11	0.24	0.13	0.00
Community Development	0.00	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.00	0.00
Urban Planning	0.17	0.05	0.09	0.32	0.00	0.00
Total Concentrated Benefit Proportion	0.21	0.17	0.31	0.60	0.13	0.00
Diverse Benefits						
Government Efficiency	0.22	0.28	0.11	0.00	0.30	0.50
Public Services	0.17	0.11	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00
Crime	0.14	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00
Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00
Social Issues	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00
Economic Development	0.26	0.33	0.54	0.40	0.35	0.50
Total Diverse Benefit Proportion	0.79	0.83	0.69	0.40	0.87	1.00

I would expect that when a city abandons the mayor-council form it will decrease its attention to policies that have diverse benefits for a city. However, cities that abandon a mayor-council system do not provide support this interpretation. El Paso supports my hypothesis because it devoted more attention to policies that had diverse benefits while under a mayor-council than it did under a council-manager. I suspect this is because of the eight districts that represent each city under the new council-manager form. Cedar Rapids does not support my

hypothesis that a switch to a council-manager from a commission form would decrease attention to policies with diverse benefits, although it had little change in attention to policies with diverse benefits. I surmise that this can be attributed to the lack of specificity in the definition for council-manager system. Although a council-manager system, the mayor of Cedar Rapids sits on the council but appears separately on the ballot as a mayor. In addition, Cedar Rapids has three at-large council members who would have to advocate for issues that benefit the city as a whole. This could perhaps explain why diverse benefits dominate Cedar Rapid's attention during elections even under a council-manager system. Topeka provides an unexplained case why policies with diverse benefits continued to have a strong support after abandoning the mayor-council system. This is surprising given that Topeka's government form follows the NLC definition of council-manager the most closely. I suspect this to be a product of newspaper bias advocating for reform because of the dominance of economic development and government efficiency. Overall, these cities do not provide adequate support of my hypothesis. To illustrate this hypothesis for cities that adopt a mayor-council system, Table 9 represents the data for each policy type in the same format as Table 8.

Table 9: Policy Type (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council)

	Colorado Springs		Oakland		Richmond		Spokane		St. Petersburg	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Concentrated Benefits										
Infrastructure	0.00	0.06	0.20	0.00	0.22	0.07	0.35	0.24	0.00	0.00
Community Development	0.28	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.33
Urban Planning	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.24	0.04	0.08	0.67
Total Concentrated Benefit Proportion	0.28	0.18	0.20	0.00	0.22	0.36	0.59	0.28	0.28	1.00
Diverse Benefits										
Government Efficiency	0.28	0.18	0.00	0.24	0.14	0.12	0.06	0.18	0.13	0.00
Public Services	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.00
Crime	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.00	0.15	0.13	0.00
Schools	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.13	0.14	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Issues	0.00	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00
Economic Development	0.44	0.46	0.40	0.37	0.36	0.22	0.29	0.39	0.33	0.00
Total Diverse Benefit Proportion	0.72	0.82	0.80	1.00	0.78	0.64	0.41	0.72	0.72	0.00

With the exception of St. Petersburg, all cities that switched to a mayor-council system provide support for my hypothesis. Policies with diverse benefits dominated the attention in the new mayor-council system because they occupied over half of all the media's attention. The decrease in policies with concentrated benefits and increase in policies with diverse benefits when switching to a mayor-council system is what I expected. Moreover, I believe that there are multiple explanations for St. Petersburg's surprising deviation from the trend. First, the sample size of articles after the switch in government form was very low (roughly 6,000 words fewer than before). Perhaps the articles sampled over-represented the types of issues favored from the previous form of government (these articles were all less than two years after the switch in government). In addition, these articles primarily focused on the candidates for office rather than the issues of the election. Given these considerations, the case of St. Petersburg may be attributed more to the limited sample size of articles rather than the form of government.

Although the findings of five of the eight cities support my hypothesis, the form of government does not seem to influence the attention to the types of issues. Cedar Rapids suggests that the structure of the council's election is a crucial factor for influencing the attention to certain policies because at-large councilmen continued to serve the public and diverse benefits dominated the attention of the media in both forms. Yet Spokane contradicts this because of their attention to policies with concentrated benefits when operating under a council-manager system with at-large representations. Thus these findings provide inconclusive support for my hypothesis: something other than a change in form of government influences the attention to policy types. Some cities follow the trend for adopting a council-manager that I expected,

however the contradicting cases of Cedar Rapids and Spokane demonstrate the need for further inquiry on the relationship between at-large elections and the attention to types of issues.

Hypothesis 7, Hypothesis 8 and Hypothesis 9

My final hypotheses involve voter turnout and the margin of victory. I hypothesize that a switch to a mayor-council form will increase both voter turnout and election competitiveness. In addition, I hypothesize that a switch to a council-manager from a commission form will have similar levels of competition but a decrease in voter turnout. Table 10 represents data for voter turnout and competitiveness in cities that adopt a council-manager system. I rounded voter turnout averages for the three election cycles to the nearest whole number.

Table 10: Turnout and Competitiveness (Cities that adopt Council-Manager)

	Cedar Rapids		El Paso		Topeka	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Voter Turnout	6,034	3,543	4,395	4,186	2,525	1,958
Competitiveness	0.45	0.33	0.26	0.20	0.20	0.26

These cities provide support for my hypothesis on voter turnout. In both El Paso and Topeka, voter turnout was higher in a mayor-council system and it declined after the cities adopted a council-manager system. These results support Karnig and Walter (1983) that switching to a council-manager from a mayor-council impedes voter turnout. Cedar Rapids also supports my hypothesis that a switching to a council-manager form would decrease voter turnout. This findings illustrates that the council-manager system does not impede voter turnout only in former mayor-council cities. Rather, even in a city previously operating in a similar

government structure (both lack an elected executive), switching to a council-manager system from a commission form decreases voter turnout. These findings illustrate that a lack of an elected executive does not demonstrate the driving force that decreased voter turnout in a council-manager system. This suggests that another structural characteristic may be an impediment to voter turnout in a council-manager system.

There does not seem to be support that a mayor-council produces more competitive elections than a council-manager system. Only in El Paso were elections more competitive in a mayor-council system and this could probably be a factor because of unique circumstances within the city of El Paso. In all three cities, elections were consistently competitive and varied slightly before and after the switch: only in Cedar Rapids did the margin of victory come close to approaching 50%. This finding is surprising because I suspected that Cedar Rapids would have very little change in election competitiveness yet the data suggest that it had the greatest amount of change. The more competitive elections in Cedar Rapids under a council-manager system demonstrate that an office with a city-wide constituency (commissioners) does not induce higher levels of election competitiveness. However, given the lack of consistency in trends for competitiveness in El Paso and Topeka, the data do not suggest a conclusive pattern on the relationship between competitiveness and form of government. This could reflect the tumultuous times during these cities history: a change in government form often serves as a crossroads for a city because of dissatisfaction with the status quo. These competitive elections demonstrate that multiple perspectives for the new direction of the city resonated with voters. Following the same format as Table 10, Table 11 represents the data for voter turnout and competitiveness in cities that adopt a mayor-council system.

Table 11: Voter Turnout and Competitiveness (Cities that adopt Mayor-Council)

	Colorado Springs		Oakland		Richmond		Spokane		St. Petersburg	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Voter Turnout	9,634	12,855	8,926	11,748	3,158	7,397	16,318	16,636	50,621	30,798
Competitiveness	0.59	0.29	0.64	0.34	0.29	0.44	0.31	0.71	n/a	n/a

These findings provide more supporting evidence for my hypothesis on voter turnout. Four out of the five cities suggest that switching from a council-manager system to a mayor-council system will increase voter turnout. This appears to support the claim by Wood (2002) that citizens can see their vote holding the mayor accountable (220). St. Petersburg is an exception to this trend because of the drastic decrease in voter turnout after the switch in government form. This is because of the 1995 election when only 16,064 voters participated in local elections (Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections, 2018). The 1995 election's 11% turnout rate was the lowest St. Petersburg had in the previous decade (Bond, 1995). This election had a dramatic impact on the voter turnout averages for St. Petersburg that explains the lower turnout rate after switching to a mayor-council. However, this aspect is striking because it was the first election after a switch in form of government. Clearly, voters were initially unresponsive to the idea of a mayor-council system, yet turnout rebounded in the 1997 election with 55,270 voters (Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections, 2018). This indicates that this election was an anomaly and not the trend in St. Petersburg regarding the form of government. Since concurrence with the national election is not a factor in St. Petersburg's off year election cycles, the 1995 election warrants further study into citizen opinion and circumstance that turnout data alone cannot explain.

These findings provide partial support for my hypothesis on election competitiveness. Two cities decreased their margin of victory (which indicates a more competitive election) and

two cities increased their margin of victory. It is difficult to present conclusions on these findings because the data do not suggest a clear trend: margin of victory decreased or increased at the almost the same rate. In Colorado Springs and Oakland, election competitiveness increased by almost double than what it had been under a mayor-council system. In contrast, election competitiveness decreased in Spokane over double than what it was and in Richmond by 15 percentage points. These results indicate that there is not a clear trend when switching from a council-manager to a mayor-council and increased election competitiveness. These cities (council-manager to mayor-council) do not suggest that a mayor-council system has higher competitiveness based on total averages: the total council-manager average for competitiveness is .46 compared to the .45 total average for mayor council. Clearly, these data show that the form of government does not serve as a factor in influencing election competitiveness and indicate that other variables influence election competitiveness.

Overall, these cities provide support for my hypothesis that voter turnout would be higher after a city switches to a mayor-council. Both the cities that abandon the mayor-council and cities that adopted the mayor-council support my hypothesis. However, these data do not provide conclusive support for my hypothesis that a mayor-council form would increase election competitiveness. The final section of this study discusses the takeaways for my study, limitations, and possibilities for future research on this topic.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, Limitations and Further Study

The findings of my study suggest that the mayor-council system has higher levels of voter turnout compared to council-manager and that switching to a council-manager negatively affects voter turnout. This reflects the findings of Karnig and Walter (1983)'s longitudinal analysis that switching to a council-manager form decreases voter turnout. My study expanded on the findings of Karnig and Walter (1983) because it included an analysis of switching from a council-manager to a mayor-council. This is significant because it illustrates that switching to a mayor-council increases voter turnout. However, my hypothesized causes for an increase in voter turnout in a mayor-council system do not suggest any trends across cities. This has varying consequences when studying local government. The most significant consequence illustrates that issues, candidate focus, office type, election competitiveness and type of policy do not favor one form of government over the other. Rather, the absence of general trends indicate that the cities I examined were highly individualized in their circumstances and varied too differently to draw conclusions on the impact that form of government had on elections. However, this does not discredit the general takeaways of my study.

My findings on switching to a council-manager provide insight on the decreasing levels of voter turnout at the local level and the increasing use of this system in US cities. Along with the cities that switched to this form from a mayor-council, Cedar Rapids illustrates that switching to a council-manager from decreases voter turnout regardless of the previous system's use (or lack of) an elected executive. These findings suggest that although an elected executive may play

a role in increasing voter turnout, it is not a necessary condition for having a higher turnout than a council-manager system. This suggests that the council-manager system may have a unique trait that differentiates it from the other forms to impede voter turnout. To expand on this finding, future researchers should use the definitions of Frederickson and Johnson (2001) to carefully analyze the changes in the traits of city government form and the impact that they have on voter turnout.

My data cannot substantiate the causal role that the council-manager plays in the decreasing voter turnout levels in cities, however my findings demonstrate that form of government should be considered when examining decreasing levels of voter turnout to provide solutions for the low levels of citizen participation at the local level. To take the results of my study a step further, future researches should ask: Why are cities adopting the council-manager system despite its negative impact on voter turnout? Clearly the council-manager form appeals to local policymakers for reasons that outweigh citizen participation in government. Future research should examine this topic to suggest conclusions on the most ideal local government system that encourages citizen participation and effectiveness of government.

My study has noteworthy limitations that need to be considered for a second analysis on my research question. The first limitation is the small sample size of cities. The small sample of cities presents problems for a generalizable conclusion for all American cities in this population range. For example, my findings on a city switching from a commission form of government to a council-manager system are based only on one city. Clearly, this does not provide a generalizable account for all US cities that fit this category. However, given the nature of this study, this problem was unavoidable: very few medium-sized cities changed their form of government since 1990. This suggests that the phenomena of a city changing its form of

government occurs to infrequently to study quantitatively. Therefore, future studies should focus more on the varying circumstances of one city to explain changes in elections before and after a switch in government form rather than examining comparatively. The data in my research indicates that too many unaccounted for variables exist to examine cities comparatively because cities did not frequently exhibit any trends in the variables. Other possible variables to explain changes in the electoral process resulting in a switch in form of government could include the financial situation of the city, demographics and other forms of media coverage (such as radio, television and social media coverage). In addition, the high attention to candidates in these cities do suggest their importance to examine them more thoroughly. For example, a close examination of each city's candidates could reveal other variables not included in this study- such as debate performances, billboard/print ads, presence on social media and appearance in television commercials. Overall, my study indicates that the highly individualized nature of city politics makes it difficult to study them comparatively to achieve trends from a change in form of government.

Another limitation to this study is the search terms used to discover articles. As a previous section alluded to, the search terms were not able to include all articles involving the city's election because of the variance of article title. The search terms could not discover articles that mentioned the candidate's name rather than the position in the headline. This would most likely have left a deficiency in the number of mentions for personality and office emphasis. I suspect that this would further illustrate the importance of candidates in a city. In addition, some cities (such as Topeka) had a very low amount of articles before and after a switch in government. This presents two limitations: the newspaper was not an adequate representation of the attention to the election because the election had such a small prevalence in the paper and a

greater breadth of search terms are needed to discover more articles. A future study could ameliorate the former limitation by considering the amount of attention to the election as a proportion of all articles in the paper. Newspapers have a limited amount of space to print articles and often cover more elections than just the city examined in this study (the Tampa Bay Times covered multiple elections in other municipalities in the Tampa Bay area than just St. Petersburg). Therefore, a proportion of election coverage from all total articles would create more comparable results (since some cities had a surplus of articles while others had only a few).

The greatest problem with my search terms was the articles were not always relevant to the election. Although I filtered out as many articles that were not relevant to the election as possible, some articles not relevant to the election appear in my sample. This problem was unavoidable: by excluding terms such as MAYOR and COUNCIL, articles that had relevance to the election had the possibility of being excluded from the pool of articles (such as articles with an example headline of “Candidates for Mayor” or “Mayor Race”). However, including these terms captured articles that were not about the election (such as an example headline “Mayor Proposes Budget”). However, I do not expect this to have significantly altered the outcomes of my study. Articles that were not relevant to the election but reflected policy issues illustrate issues that were at the forefront of the attention of the newspapers. Candidates are likely to deliberate issues that are at the center of the city’s current political climate because they want to appear relevant to the attention of voters. Therefore, articles that were not about the election but represented key policies and issues are not likely to skew my results because the deliberation of these topics would not dramatically decrease once newspapers began reporting on the election. Rather, I suspect that attention to these topics would only increase because of the upcoming elections. In addition, I suspect that the focus of the officeholder in articles not relevant to the

election would not dramatically skew my results because these would be topics debated during the election. For example, if a scandal involves the current mayor outside of the election, the newspaper would not cease to publish the scandal in reference to the election. Therefore, I suspect that articles that are not relevant to the election but are included in my sample are not outliers; rather I suspect that they mirror the focus of articles during the election. With these reasons in mind, I opted to include these search terms to expand my sample of articles and filter out most articles that had no relevance to the election. Nonetheless, if I were given the opportunity to replicate this study, I would include with MAYOR and COUNCIL the terms RACE, CANDIDATE, CAMPAIGN and OPPONENT to increase the reliability of the search terms.

A future study on changes in government structure should expand the sample years for newspaper coverage and election years. My study could only use three election cycles prior to and after the switch and two years of newspaper coverage prior to and after the switch. This small selection of years limits the results of my study because it cannot capture long term effects of the change in form of government. For example, within the time frame of my study, newspapers would not likely institute dramatic changes in their coverage of elections because citizens would not have had time to fully recognize the changes that the new form of government would bring on elections. To improve my study, a future examination of this topic should expand the coverage years to analyze gradual changes that the change in government brought on future elections. In addition, the small sample of election cycles further limits this study. Three election cycles does not provide an accurate approximation of the city's long term voter turnout trends. Rather (as illustrated by the case of St. Petersburg), elections with exceptionally low turnout disproportionately skew the turnout averages in a small sample size. In a new study with an

expanded sample of newspaper coverage years and election cycles, I would expect to see changes in elections to become more pronounced because the effect of the new system of government would have more time to influence future elections.

The final significant limitation to my study lies in the definitions used to classify a city's form of government. This study could not use definitions provided by Frederickson and Johnson (2001) because of restraints on time and available data. My study illustrates two conclusions regarding this limitation: Frederickson and Johnson (2001)'s definitions of government form provide a greater avenue to examine forms of government and that these definitions are significant to use when examining switches in forms of government. For example, Oakland gradually implemented characteristics of the mayor-council form before officially adopting the entire form. The definitions of Frederickson and Johnson (2001) account for these nuances in form with different categories other than how the position of mayor is chosen. My study demonstrates that the classification of government does matter because some cities do not fit into the broad mayor-council or council-manager system. A future study would benefit from using Frederickson and Johnson (2001)'s definitions for city government on my research method.

Despite its limitations, my study is significant for local government research because it provides an analysis of the relationship between a city changing its form of government and changes in elections. As of the current literature, my study is the first to explore this task. By exploring areas of elections previously overlooked in the literature, my study creates avenues for future research on city government structure. The deficiency of definitive conclusions on elections in a city illustrate the need for future research to examine this topic more thoroughly. Local governments require citizen participation to create policies that have the best outcomes for all residents and it is egregious that researchers have not examined how changes in the form of

government influence a city's elections. Clearly the role that form of government plays in changing a city's elections is not fully understood. Complacency for the current decline in voter turnout can only be expected without an understanding of the relationship between form of government and voter turnout. My study demonstrates that scholars should be willing to consider all variables to grapple with the problem of low voter turnout at the municipal level. Although my study does not provide definitive conclusions on changes in a city's elections, the findings for my study are worthwhile for local policy makers to consider when deliberating a change in government form. My study suggests that although the changes from switching a form of government may not be accurately predicted, a change in form of government will have an unforeseen impact on the future elections.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alford, R. R., and Lee, E. C. (1968). Voting turnout in American cities. *The American Political Science Review*, 62, 796-813. Retrieved on October 11, 2017, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1953431.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A114ba495434cd2d42d75759b82373ff>

Barrilleaux, C., and Berkman, M. (2003). Do governors matter? Budgeting rules and the politics of state policymaking. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(4), 409-417.
doi:10.2307/3219802

Battaglio Jr., R.P. (2010). Topeka: Council-manager redux finding balance in the politics administration dichotomy. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 245-262). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Benton, J., Menzel, D.C., & Paulson, D. (2010). St. Petersburg: Easing into a strong-mayor government. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 25-46). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Bond, S. (1995, April 2). What a pathetic civics lesson non-voters teach. *St. Petersburg Times*, NewsBank.com. Retrieved on February 20, 2019

<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/documentview?p=AWNB&docref=news/0EB52D6350B39622>.

Bridges, A. (1997). Textbook municipal reform. *Urban Affairs Review* 33:97-117. Retrieved on December 5, 2017, from

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/107808749703300104>

Caren, N. (2007). Big city, big turnout? Electoral participation in American cities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 29, 31-46. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2007.00321.x/abstract>

City form of Government (2019). *City of El Paso*. Retrieved February 12, 2019 from <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/city-manager/form-of-government>

DeSantis, V. and Renner, T. (2002). City government structures: An attempt at clarification. *State and Local Government Review*, 34: 95-104. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0160323X0203400202>

Floyd, D. (1999, December 26). What Now?. *Spokesman-Review*, NewsBank.com. Retrieved on February 20, 2019 from <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/documentview?p=AWNB&docref=news/0EAF499937527D23>.

Forms of municipal government (2016). *National League of Cities*. Retrieved October 26, 2017 from <http://www.nlc.org/forms-of-municipal-government>

Frederickson, H. G., Wood, C. & Logan, B. (2001). How American city governments have changed: The evolution of the model city charter. *National Civic Review*, 90: 3-18.

Retrieved October 9, 2018 from

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ncr.90101>

Frederickson, H. G., and Johnson, G. A. (2001). The adapted American city: A study of institutional dynamics. *Urban Affairs Review*, 36: 872-84. Retrieved December 5, 2017 from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/10780870122185127>

Hajnal, J., and Lewis, P. (2003). Municipal institutions and voter turnout in local elections. *Urban Affairs Review*, 5, 645-667. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1078087403038005002>

Hassett, W. (2010). Spokane: Development debate sparks government decline. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 47-62). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Holbrook, T. M., and Weinschenk, A. C. (2014). Campaigns, mobilization, and turnout in mayoral elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(1), 42-55. Retrieved November 29, 2018 from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912913494018>

Hyun, K. D., and Moon, S. J. (2014). News media's role in the issue-voting process: News attention, issue proximity, and vote choice. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 91(4), 687-705. Retrieved on December 3, 2018 from doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/10.1177/1077699014550095>

- Karnig, A. and Walter, B. O. (1983). Decline in municipal voter turnout: A function of changing structure. *American Politics Quarterly*, 11:491-505. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/004478083011004006>
- Kelleher, C., and Lowery, D. (2009). Central city size, metropolitan institutions and political participation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 59-92.
doi:10.1017/S0007123408000392
- Kelley, J. (1962). Elections and the mass media, *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 27, 307-326. Retrieved on December 3, 2018 from <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol27/iss2/11>
- Luttbeg, N. R. (1988). Role of newspaper coverage and political ads in local elections. *Journalism Quarterly*, 65(4), 881-888. Retrieved December 3, 2018 from <http://ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/docview/216914818?accountid=13158>
- Maciag, M. (2014). Voter turnout plummeting in local elections. *Governing: The States and Localities*. Retrieved on October 27, 2017 from <http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-voter-turnout-municipal-elections.html>
- McCleneghan, J.S., and Ragland, R.A. (2002) Municipal elections and community media. *The Social Science Journal*, issue 2, vol. 39, 203-219. Retrieved December 1, 2018 from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0362331902001635?via%3Dihub#>
- Mullin, M. (2010). Oakland: The power of celebrity? Explaining strong-mayor charter reform. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 121-138). Washington, DC:

- Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Oliver, J. E. (2000). City size and civic involvement in metropolitan America. *The American Political Science Review*, 94, issue 2, 361-373. Retrieved September 27, 2017 from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2586017.pdf>
- Our form of government (2018). *City of Cedar Rapids*. Retrieved February 12, 2019 from http://www.cedarrapids.org/local_government/city_council/our_form_of_government/index.php
- Our government (2017). *Colorado Springs Forward*. Retrieved February 12, 2019 from www.coloradospringsforward.org/government/.
- Peterson, P. (1995). *The Price of Federalism*. New York: The Brookings Institute.
- Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections (2018). *Municipal Elections: 1979 to Present (Chronology by Year)* [Election Results]. Available from Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections. Website: <https://www.votepinellas.com/Statistics/Voter-Turnout-Statistics>
- Powers of the Mayor (2019). *City of El Paso*. Retrieved February 12, 2019 from <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/mayor/powers-and-duties-of-the-mayor>
- Powell, G. (1986). American voter turnout in comparative perspective. *The American Political Science Review*, 80(1), 17-43. Retrieved December 2, 2018 from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/american-voter-turnout-in-comparative-perspective/5A8E10796141C4C4AF5B204984E5322E>

Svara, J. and Watson, D. (2010). Introduction: Framing constitutional contests in large cities.

In Svara, J.H., & Watson, D.J. (Eds.). *More than Mayor or Manager: Campaigns to Change Form of Government in America's Large Cities* (pp. 1-22). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved November 8, 2018 from

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Terry. L. (2010). El Paso: Professionalism over politics in the shift to council-manager government. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 225-244). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Topeka Municipal Code (2016). *Code Publishing Inc.* Retrieved February 12, 2019 from <https://www.codepublishing.com/KS/Topeka/?TopekaAXA/TopekaAxA02.html&?f>

U.S. Cities are home to 62.7 percent of the U.S. population, but comprise just 3.5 percent of land area (2015). *Census.gov*. Retrieved March 18, 2019 from

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-33.html>

Wikstrom, N. (2010). Richmond: Implementation of and experience with strong-mayor form of government. In Svara, J. H., & Watson, D. J. (Eds.). *More than mayor or manager: Campaigns to change form of government in America's large cities* (pp. 81-102).

Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2019 from

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Wood, C. (2002). Voter turnout in city elections. *Urban Affairs Review*, 38, issue 2, 209-231.

Retrieved September 26, 2017, from

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/107808702237659>

ACADEMIC VITA

James M. Gardner

jgardner578@gmail.com

Education

Bachelor of Arts Political Science	Spring 2019
Bachelor of Arts History	Spring 2019
Bachelor of Arts Medieval Studies	Spring 2019
Minor: German	Spring 2019
Schreyer Honors College, Paterno Fellow, The Pennsylvania State University	

Pre-Professional Experience

- Intern at the City of Williamsport Mayor's Office. May-June 2018
In this position, I accompanied Mayor Gabriel Campana to important meetings with city officials, business representatives and non-government agencies. In addition, I completed office tasks such as typing and editing reports, answered office phone calls and prepared notes on the days' activities.

Skills

- Adept communication, writing and presentation abilities
- Competent in the use of *RStudio* statistic software
- Proficient in iMovie
- Savvy in Microsoft Excel
- Established research and critical thinking skills
- Intermediate German language skills

Awards and Activities

- John Taylor Scholarship in History April 2019
- Member Phi Beta Kappa March 2019
- Member PSU History Round Table January 2017-present
- Unit College Scouter Reserve Adult Leader for BSA Troop 12, Williamsport, PA June 2015-present
- Secretary- PSU Political Science Association April 2017- 2018
- Class of 1922 Memorial Award 2018
- Shaner Renaissance Fund 2018
- Dean's List Penn State University Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018
- Eagle Scout- BSA Troop 12 August 2014