

EMBODYING POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION:  
THE WORLD OF THE POLITICAL APPOINTEE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

DENISE MCCRAY-MCCALL

Bachelor of Science in Social Work

Central State University

June 1974

Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Xavier University

June 1977

submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN URBAN STUDIES AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

at the

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

November 2007

UMI Number: 3295030

### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

**UMI**<sup>®</sup>

---

UMI Microform 3295030

Copyright 2008 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

©Copyright by Denise Valetta McCray-McCall 2007

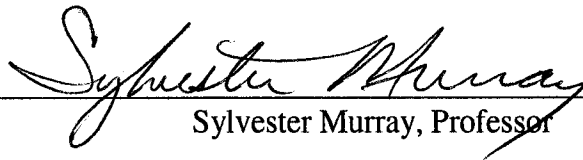
This dissertation has been approved  
for the Department of Urban Studies  
and the College of Graduate Studies by



---

Dissertation Chairperson, Camilla Stivers, Ph.D.

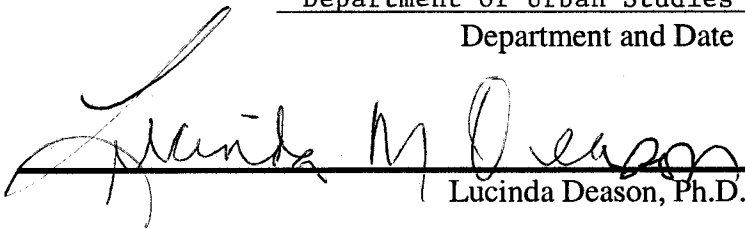
~~Department of Urban Studies November 26, 2007~~  
Department and Date



---

Sylvester Murray, Professor

~~Department of Urban Studies November 26, 2007~~  
Department and Date



---

Lucinda Deason, Ph.D.

~~Department of Urban Studies November 26, 2007~~  
Department and Date

## DEDICATION

First and foremost I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for whom I give all praise and glory for bringing me through.

To my son Evan Bradley McCray, God has a great and divine plan for your life. Always remember to put Him first in **all** that you do. Aspire to be the best while striving for excellence. I am blessed that God gave me a son, I love you with all my heart, and I truly believe in you. God has ordained a promising future for you. Just trust, believe, and allow Him to direct your paths. (If I can do it, you can too!!)

To my spouse, Robert Clifford McCall, Jr., through the trying times I thank you for your patience, love, and support.....It is **finally** over!!!

To my parents John and Margaret Maddox with all my love, I thank God for blessing me with two loving parents that have supported me through all of my endeavors and who were able to witness the completion of this journey.

To my siblings Byron, Antonia, and Aaron, I love you all so much! Thanks for the encouragement and the financial support (smile) when it was needed. I could not have asked for a better family.

To my nieces (Precious, Courtland, Imani) and nephews (Lavell and Iyah), Auntie Niece loves you and appreciates the love and inspiration that you have given. This journey is proof that if you just believe, you can achieve.

To Mom (JoAnne) McCall, Robbie and Michael, I love you all and thank you for encouraging me on to the end.

And in memory of Dr. Larry H. Terry for without his support I would have not been able to fulfill my dream of receiving my Ph.D. at the Levin College of Urban Affairs.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank the following individuals for their support and encouragement during the writing of my dissertation and completion of my coursework:

### **My Committee**

Dr. Camille Stivers, Committee Chair  
Professor Sylvester Murray  
Dr. Lucinda Deason

### **My Family**

Mr. Evan Bradley McCray	Mr. Robert Clifford McCall, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Maddox, Jr.	Mrs. Catherine JoAnne McCall
Mr. Byron Maddox	Ms. Antonia Love
Mr. Aaron Maddox	Miss Courtland Taylor Love
Master Lavell Chandler Love	Miss Imani Haley Maddox
Miss Precious Holley	Mrs. Ollie Branch
Mrs. Viola Jackson	Mr. Lovell Love

### **My Professors**

Dr. Camille Stivers  
Professor Sylvester Murray  
Dr. Lucinda Deason  
Dr. Jennifer Alexander  
Dr. Larry H. Terry  
Dr. Nancy Meyer – Emerick  
Dr. Larry Keller  
Dr. Steven Coombs  
Dr. Vera Vogelsang – Coombs  
Dr. Michael Spicer  
Dr. William Bowen  
Dean Mark Rosentraub

## **My Mentors**

Professor Sylvester Murray – what an awesome man! Sy has been my surrogate father, guardian angel, academic advisor, and the consummate professional in the field of Public Administration. There was no limit to the support and encouragement Sy gave while guiding me through my academic pursuits. There were so many times when I would knock at a door and it just would not open. I thank you Sy for opening so many doors for me. Because of your support, I owe many of my successes to you.

Dr. Camille Stivers – a scholar in the field of Public Administration that always told me that I “was a sleeper”. Cam believed in me even when I felt like giving up and encouraged me to continue on. She also showed me a new way of developing a “road map” to success in Public Administration. Cam, I thank you for being that beacon of hope and guiding me to the light at the end of a long journey.

Ms. Frances Hunter – another angel that God sent to look out for me. Fran helps so many and gives of herself unselfishly. I thank you Fran for your commitment to the students and for being there for me.

Dr. Lucinda Deason – words cannot express my appreciation for your support and your encouragement. I can NEVER repay you for all you have done for me. I will always regard you as my dear sister and my dear friend.

### **My Support Group of Family**

Mrs. Katie Dixon (Auntie)  
Ms. Khia Dixon (KiKi)  
Ms. Tonia Oglesby  
Ms. Liz Smith  
Ms. Delaryce Lewis

Ms. Fedelma Dixon (Sister Fedel)  
Mr. Nathaniel Gray (Dear Brother)  
Ms. Yvonne Pointer  
Bishop Eugene W. Ward, Jr.  
Mr. Charles Brown

### **Those that traveled the road with me**

Dr. Heather Burton  
Dr. Ovella Roulette McIntyre  
Mr. Roosevelt Adams  
Mr. Ronald Woodford

Ms. Marie Haynes, Esq.  
Dr. Betty Pinkney, Esq.  
Dr. Walter Amprey  
Ms. Diane Bell – McKoy

### **Special Thanks**

Bishop Lincoln Haughton and my Cleveland Church of Christ Family  
Mayor Frank G. Jackson  
Ms. Carol Haslett  
Mr. Howlie Davis

Former Congressman Louis Stokes  
Ms. Cecelia Huffman White  
Ms. Valerie Wilson

Ms. Debra Winston

And, thanks to all of the participants who gave their permission to be interviewed for this research project. Their contribution toward this innovative study will provide additional knowledge to the field of Public Administration.



EMBODYING POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION:  
THE WORLD OF THE POLITICAL APPOINTEE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT  
DENISE MCCRAY-MCCALL

**ABSTRACT**

Political appointees are faced with a plethora of issues daily. The appointee faces the challenges of performing their job according to the mission and goals of the organization, handling the concerns of constituents, while also maintaining certain ethical standards. Issues relating to tension between politics (political values and democracy) and administration (bureaucracy and organizational values) are of great importance. This study sought to explore whether the conceptual tensions between politics and administration were felt by political appointees in municipal governments.

The major research questions for this study were: (a) How much political influence is placed on political appointees in municipal government, (b) How they experience the tensions between politics and administration in practice, and (c) What ways these tensions influence how they make decisions as well as the results of those decisions.

A phenomenological approach was used. Data were collected in in-depth, open-ended interviews with former political appointees who worked in the municipal governments of Detroit, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; and Baltimore, Maryland. The data were analyzed to identify patterns and themes that emerge to develop an interpretation. The results document the many ways in which appointees experience tension in practice. The tension that is experienced is a creative tension that spurs appointees to innovative approaches to balancing conflicting demands. This study

is important in bringing to life the realities of a key theoretical framework in public administration.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Political Appointee’s Responsibilities.....	1
Tension between Political Appointees and Politicians.....	2
Tension between Political Appointees and Career Civil Servants.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Focus of Study.....	6
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
The Politics Administration Dichotomy.....	9
Accountability.....	19
Legitimacy.....	23
Bureaucracy.....	26
Political Influence.....	31
III. METHODOLOGY.....	36
Research Approach.....	36
Techniques of Investigation and Analysis.....	39
Study Population.....	42
Ethical Considerations.....	43
IV. INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS.....	44

Introduction.....	44
Politics-Administration Dichotomy.....	46
Creative Tension .....	47
Political Tension between the Mayor and City Council .....	47
Political Tension from Special Interests .....	49
No Tension.....	51
Bureaucracy .....	52
Operating within a Bureaucracy .....	52
Factors that Facilitate Effective Performance.....	54
Barriers to Effective Performance .....	56
Influencing Policy Change.....	58
Political Influence .....	61
Handling Tough Problems .....	62
Special Interests and Political Influence .....	63
Balancing Special Interests Influence .....	65
Balancing Special Interest Influence and Professionalism .....	67
Accountability (Life in the Fishbowl).....	72
Political and Administrative Accountability.....	72
Ethical Concerns .....	74
Conclusion .....	77
V. CONCLUSION.....	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	81
APPENDICES .....	86
A. Permission Letters.....	87
B. Questions.....	89

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Gender and Ethnicity of the Respondents .....	45
II. Number of Mayors the Respondents Served.....	46

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Tension Experienced by Appointed Agency Heads in Municipal Government.....	74

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Political Appointee's Responsibilities**

Political appointees who head municipal agencies are faced with a plethora of issues daily, ranging from how to handle the concerns of a particular constituency to whether their tenure, as an appointee, will last until the end of their expected term. In general, they work at a crucial interface between bureaucratic and democratic values: efficiency, order, and results on one hand; accountability and responsiveness to the public on the other. The appointee faces the challenges of performing his or her job according to the mission and goals of the organization while satisfying stakeholders and maintaining ethical standards. The appointee is responsible for maintaining an internal sense of order, providing a shield against external threats from outside special interests, as well as addressing problems of constituents. These responsibilities can consume the most proficient professionals in that they are held accountable to the appointing authority and the public for the execution of their duties. The appointee must also make sure that the appointing authority's policies and agendas are carried out, while operating on behalf of the public interest. Often, the appointee may want to maintain a position of neutrality by not taking sides in order to avoid making a controversial decision. However, this may

prove to be difficult given the public's reliance upon the appointed administrator to act and respond regardless of the circumstances or how controversial the position.

Issues relating to tension between politics (political values and democracy) and administration (bureaucracy and organizational values) are of great importance. There is a conceptual tension in the literature and this conceptual tension is turned into a practical tension in government particularly for the practicing political appointee. The role of the appointee is especially significant because, as one who is politically answerable to an elected official and also responsible for the accomplishment of administrative objectives, the appointee must address and balance both sets of key values as perhaps no other people working in government are called upon to do.

### **Tension between Political Appointees and Politicians**

Elected officials have traditionally used political appointments as a way of rewarding loyal citizens for their support. This practice began during the late 1820s when Andrew Jackson was elected president. Prior to President Andrew Jackson's election, government was run by an elite group of individuals who were members of a gentry class. During this era, known as Government by Gentlemen, nepotism was common, with positions being filled by educated, wealthy, white male landowners (Mosher, 1982). In his effort to reform government, Jackson instituted what has come to be known as the spoils system. He felt that government could and should be run by ordinary people. Awarding jobs based on political loyalty would ensure him political strength while in office and would ensure the rotation of public employees (Rosenbloom, 1998). In Jackson's day, prior to the establishment of the civil service, virtually every government official was politically appointed. Once the civil service came into being,



government employees were now divided between those appointed on the basis of merit (civil servants or career employees) and those appointed for political loyalty. Although civil servants are still numerically predominant, within the last twenty years we have seen an increase in the number of political appointments in the bureaucracy, particularly at the state and national levels. Persons selected politically are generally responsive to the wishes of the elected official who appointed them, with the more powerful appointees occupying the top-level positions within the bureaucracy.

The rigors of the position, however, may deter potential political appointees from pursuing this type of position. It was reported that appointees during the Carter and Reagan administrations worked up to sixty hours or more per week causing a significant amount of stress with insufficient pay compared to the private sector (Brauer, 1988). The tenure of a political appointee is often short depending on the length of the term of the elected official or his or her satisfaction with the appointee's performance. Political appointees realize when they take a position that it may be for a short time and therefore, may adapt accordingly by not becoming too comfortable in the position and by developing contacts within the private sector that could serve as future employers. Appointees also realize that when the appointing authority is no longer in their elected position, the new administration may and will bring in employees who will be loyal and fulfill the new agenda. The ability of political appointees to perform may be hampered by limitations placed on them from political influence. Some appointees have the authority to make decisions and take action in directions they deem most appropriate. However, often the direction taken may stem from commitment to the appointing authority and pressures from outside influences. Because of performance measures set

by the appointing authority, it is felt that political appointees often find themselves becoming ineffective due to their inability to focus on addressing a particular problem without having to yield to political input. Performance may be measured by the appointing authority according to the constituency's response to the action taken, thus reflecting the tension between administrative and political considerations.

### **Tension between Political Appointees and Career Civil Servants**

The appointee, when selected, not only enters into a work environment that may be unfamiliar but is also placed in charge of employees who may outrank him or her by the number of years they have been employed by the agency. These career civil servants are protected by civil service laws and typically have become very comfortable with the work environment. Civil servants know how the agency operates and are used to operating in a certain way. The appointee may view certain behavior on the part of career employees as problematic and a deterrent to effective and efficient operation of the agency. Unfortunately, due to the protection afforded by civil service laws, the agency head inherits problems that may have been allowed to persist for years and is often unable to make personnel changes. The result is tension between career employees and their politically appointed boss. Career bureaucrats often view appointees as amateurs without skills. Frank Sherwood, Professor Emeritus of Public Administration at Florida State University, stated that,

it has to be recognized that the bureaucratic villains of today are often not members of the permanent bureaucracy. They are transitory representatives of the party in power. They often shoulder institutional burdens for which they have little competence or commitment. (1997)

Civil servants often view appointees as sources of change in the bureaucratic system and, "by definition the term 'bureaucratic behavior' seems to denote caution and opposition to

change” (Heclo, 1977, p. 143). Some civil servants may be opposed to change while others may be willing to embrace the opportunity to be innovative in their approach to government. However, there is a certain level of trust that must exist between the appointee and employees. “Building confidence brings predictability, even from strange opponents; with trust comes loyalty, especially from people depending on each other’s efforts” (Heclo, p. 158). The appointee must be able to trust that career employees will perform their duties in an effective and efficient manner. The employees must believe that the appointee will be the type of bureaucratic leader who will be fair and make appropriate decisions that will benefit the agency as a whole. Unfortunately, this mutual trust may require a concerted effort to achieve.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The definition of tension, as it applies to this study, is the strained relationship between conflicting sets of values, one that is either permanent or very difficult to reconcile. The deepest tension in the practice of Public Administration is between politics and administration. It has been stated by some theorists that the two sides cannot coexist without conflict and therefore must be separated in practice. Woodrow Wilson (1887) stated, “The field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics” (p. 209). Others state that the issues involving politics and administration cannot be resolved and that the focus should be on balancing them in practice (Waldo, 1984). It is known that tension and pressure exist between the two sets of values, and literature in the field is permeated with various views of the conflict. This ongoing debate continues and is unlikely ever to be fully resolved, since it has a strong normative component. Most of the literature; however, is theoretical rather than

empirical. There is little documentation of the specifics of the tension at any level of government.

One facet of the question the literature fails to address is how this tension is actually experienced and understood by practicing political appointees. The political appointee is one who has been selected by an elected official to serve as an agency head or director of a department within government and works at the behest of the appointing authority. The appointee is also a bureaucrat because he or she works in a bureaucratic organization. This dissertation explores challenges experienced by political appointees in strong mayoral municipal governments as they attempt to address both political and bureaucratic values. These challenges are explored by asking the following research questions. First, how much political influence is placed on the political appointees in municipal government? Second, what types of tensions and pressures are experienced in practice? Third, what ways these tensions influence how they make decisions as well as the results of those decisions?

### **Focus of Study**

This study begins the process of documenting the ways in which bureaucratic and political values influence how political appointees in strong mayoral municipal governments perform their duties and how they deal practically with the tension between politics and administration. This study interviewed political appointees in four municipal governments: municipal governments that are similar in size, demographics, and government structure. In-depth interviews were conducted with former (serving within the last five years), rather than active political appointees (at least three from each city), in order to allow interviewees freely to respond to questions that addressed the tension

between politics and administration. Interview data was clustered according to broad themes within each question. The results were interpreted in order to shed light on some of the actualities of the tension between politics and administration as these appointees experienced it. Given the relative lack of such research in the literature, this project can reasonably be expected to shed new light and raise new questions about the role of the politically appointed agency head in strong mayor municipal governments.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the following review, I deal with four themes that impinge on the issue of politics and administration on the municipal level. The first is the politics-administration dichotomy. This is important because there are many scholars who have debated the question about whether politics should be allowed to intervene when administrators are making decisions, and the field has been defined by those tensions that exist between politics and administration. The second theme is accountability and legitimacy. When decisions are made by the appointee, to whom does he or she feel accountable? The political side would state that the administrator is accountable to the citizens and is bound by the Constitution to act on behalf of the public's interest. The administrative side would argue that the appointee is accountable to the appointing authority and the goals that have been set by the organization. The third theme is bureaucracy and the red tape that is associated with bureaucratic organizations. How does the appointee perform his or her duties when the organization may have rules in place that impede progress and performance? Fourth, what are the effects of political influence and special interests on the appointee when making decisions in municipal government? Each theme is important

because each has an effect on how the agency head performs and the tensions that exist when administrators attempt to balance between politics and administration.

### **The Politics Administration Dichotomy**

In order to gain a clear perspective on the importance of this study, we must take a historical look at the literature in public administration on the varied views between the relationship of politics and administration. In 1787, the Founding Fathers of our nation deliberated over several issues that eventually resulted in the development of the Constitution of the United States. Two groups of individuals, known as the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists, engaged in dialogues and writings that led to the expression of their views on the protection of individual rights, the purpose of government, and how government should be structured. According to Earle's (1937) introduction, the Federalists were men with wide experiences in politics, government, law, business, and political theory. In terms of the dichotomy the Federalists were in favor of a rational and effective government administration that governed for the people. The tension between politics and administration would be resolved by giving the people a well functioning government. The Federalists, particularly Hamilton, believed that ordinary folk want results from government, not participation in it.

The Federalists wanted to safeguard against factions of citizens who were united in some self interest adverse to the rights of other citizens. They believed that government should be run by the educated elite; therefore, there was no room for influence from the common man. The Federalists felt that the average man had very strong opinions and passions that disqualified him from sharing in governance. Federalist Alexander Hamilton was most suspicious of democracy and believed that

government should be made strong enough to protect its interests without outside (political) influence from the common people. In Federalist No. 31 he stated:

But in the sciences of morals and politics men are found far less tractable. To a certain degree it is right and useful, that this should be the case. Caution and investigation are necessary armour against error and imposition. But this untractableness may be carried too far, and may degenerate into obstinacy, perverseness or disingenuity (Hamilton, 1787, p. 189).

Hamilton believed that people wanted government to run well and, therefore, did not want to participate much in government. He stated, "I believe it may be laid down as a general rule that their confidence in and obedience to a government will commonly be proportioned to the goodness or badness of its administration" (Hamilton, 1787, p. 166).

In addition, Hamilton believed that government should have the power within itself to accomplish all of the tasks that it is responsible for and that government should be entrusted to execute those duties and act on behalf of the public good without outside (political) control. He called this power "energy."

The Anti-Federalists tended to draw support from less elite elements of society. They were protectors of agricultural interests and were fearful of the strong national government emerging under the Federalists. The Anti-Federalists had concerns similar to those of the middle class and were more "middle of the road citizens" with relatively greater confidence in the people. Their belief was in a more democratic government and in the people's good qualities, including the ability to weight the facts and make decisions (pertaining to governance) on what is right. Anti-Federalists believed that government must be responsive to the people and that people should have a say in the decision-making process. The Anti-Federalists wanted a government where the people were allowed to share in making the laws. They believed that if people were represented



by a class of men who were superior to them, one would become masters and the other would become slaves. One of the writers of the Anti-Federalist Papers states:

Where the people are free there can be no great contrast or distinction among *honest* citizens *in* or *out* of office. In proportion as the people lose their freedom, every gradation of distinction, between the *Governors* and the *governed* obtains, until the former become *masters*, and the latter become *slaves*. (A Farmer, 1788, p. 7)

The Anti-Federalist also believed that people were self-interested; however, they believed that people could learn how to become good citizens. They believed that it was the responsibility of the people to guard their rights and examine government and its processes, which would allow them to “form a proper judgment” (Federal Farmer, 1787, p. 63). It was stated,

Men who wish the people of this country to determine for themselves, and deliberately to fit the government to their situations, must feel some degree of indignation at those attempts to hurry the adoption of a system, and to shut the door against examination. (Federal Farmer, 1787, p. 63)

The Federalists and the Anti-Federalists were the first in our history to debate the politics-administration dichotomy although they did not think of it in these terms. The Federalists stated that government administration should fulfill the public interest by functioning effectively. They believed that the political views of ordinary citizens should not interfere with government; the common man did not have the intellect to make decisions on behalf of the people. Therefore the Federalists tended to resolve the politics- administration tension by arguing the importance of the governing ability of the elite. Political values would be satisfied by effective administration. The Anti-Federalists believed in somewhat more democracy and a government administration more directly accountable to citizens. They believed that government should justify its actions to the public and that connections between citizens and government were important.

Woodrow Wilson (1887) was one of the first to urge fundamental reforms in the American system of government. In his essay, "The Study of Administration," Wilson defined public administration as "government in action and a detailed systematic execution of public law." His belief was that government should run like a business in an efficient manner and without political influences. This practice would allow politicians to make policy and hold the administrators accountable for policy implementation. Wilson received inspiration from German theorist Hegel, who viewed bureaucrats as guardians over the public interest. Wilson stated that, "administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the task for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices" (W. Wilson, p. 210). In analyzing Wilson's article, it was apparent that he subscribed to what became the traditional managerial approach to government, which maximizes effectiveness, efficiency, and economy. His prescriptive theories on government also stressed a class of public servants that would be independent of political control or influence. He strongly believed that politics or political influence should not manipulate bureaucracy.

Goodnow (1900/1997) also expressed the importance of government reform; however, his opinions on the relationship between politics and administration were that they were two separate functions of government. He stated:

These definitions, it will be noticed, both lay stress upon the fact that politics has to do with the guiding or influencing of governmental policy, while administration has to do with the execution of that policy. It is these two functions which it is here desired to differentiate, and for which the words 'politics' and 'administration' have been chosen. (p. 28)

Although Goodnow expressed that there should be a separation between politics and administration, he also believed that there must be a relationship between the two. Like

Wilson, he viewed the separation of powers systems devised by the Framers as problematic because it made concerted action difficult and fragmented responsibility. Thus both Goodnow and Wilson dealt with the politics-administrative tension by separating the two.

Frederick Taylor, in the 1900s, developed the theory known as Scientific Management to achieve efficiency in the workplace. He believed that there should be systematic steps for job implementation and that there was only one way to perform any task. Taylor's system included an organizational hierarchy with top-level management that delegated responsibilities and ensured that the work was done properly. His views provided strong ammunition for the view that effective government required privileging administrative over political values.

White (1926/1997) defined public administration as "the management of men and materials in the accomplishment of the purposes of the state" (p. 45). White, like other theorists influenced by Frederick Taylor, focused on efficiency as the basis for his argument and believed that the objective of the administrator was to operate in a most efficient manner with the resources given. He noted that public administration was the execution of public business and the goal of administrative activity was to operate in the most economic and expeditious manner (White).

Although these and other theorists advocated against the merging of politics and administration, there were many critics of this view, particularly after World War II. With a changing society it was questioned whether government should be run like a business in order to be efficient. Theorists such as Herring (1936/1997) believed that politics and administration could not be separated. He stated:

Thus law is not administered in a vacuum, but in an environment composed of all those who have interest in the application or the nonenforcement of the statute. The official is surrounded by webs of interests – and a web often dominated by an unpredictable spider. . . . . The administrator is one strand in a complicated mesh of forces, political, social, and economic. (p.79)

Herring indicated that bureaucrats suffer from the criticisms of interest groups and therefore it is the job of the bureaucrat to ethically define the public interest. He believed that bureaucrats had to develop a working relationship with special interest groups so that their concerns could be efficiently addressed.

Paul Appleby, in his essay “Government is Different,” discussed how the operations of government differ from the private sector. He argued that government differs in the attitudes of the personnel, the public-private partnerships, and the character of government. Appleby (1945/1997) stated,

In broad terms the governmental function and attitude have at least three complementary aspects that go to differentiate government from all other institutions and activities: breadth of scope, impact, and consideration; public accountability; political character. (p. 125)

Appleby (1945/1997) indicated that the press, special interest groups, and the public have an effect when an administrator comes into government. Every detail of one administrator’s life, including his or her personality and actions is affected. He stated:

Government is different because it must take into account all of the desires, needs, actions, thoughts, and sentiments of 140,000,000 people. Government is different because government is politics. (p. 126)

Appleby’s (1945/1997) work promoted the view that it is impossible to separate administration from politics. In the private sector, decisions are made based upon profit, what is happening within the market place, and what is best for the company. There is no room for establishing relationships or attachments with outside interests unless they have

a direct impact on the profit margin. In government, the administrator has to take into account the effect his decisions will have on the constituency as well as how he or she will be perceived by the media. Media perception can and does affect the opinions of citizens; it can also affect the way in which the administrator operates.

Post-war era theorists like Appleby showed that efficiency and the one best way method do not speak to the root of the politics-administration tension in practice and how it may be addressed. Efficiency is important, but in order for an administrator to be efficient and effective he or she may find himself or herself having to enlist the support of outsiders in order to get the job done. Long (1949) said it best:

It is clear that the American system of politics does not generate enough power at any focal point of leadership to provide the conditions for an even partially successful divorce of politics from administration. Subordinates cannot depend on the formal chain of command to deliver enough political power to permit them to do their jobs. Accordingly they must supplement the resources available through the hierarchy with those they can muster on their own, or accept the consequences in frustration – a course itself not without danger. (p. 258)

Waldo (1984) argued that the politics-administration dichotomy has not been and cannot be resolved. He believed that the two contributed to shaping and executing policy. The literature in the field had assumed that democracy could be reconciled with efficiency. Waldo argued that the two would inevitably exist in tension with one another in virtually all administrative situations. In particular, he criticized the notion of reformers like Wilson and Goodnow, who stated that the tension could be resolved by a scientific and business-like administration that produced results. The results might be legitimate enough to the reader of corporate business; however, not so in government.

Theorists' views on the dichotomy have had an impact on the evolution of government reform as the result of changes in society. Over time, certain practices

within government reflected the trends and thoughts of a particular era. For example, the era from 1789 through 1829 was regarded as government by “gentlemen.” During this period, the elite influenced government and nepotism was wide spread. Positions within public personnel administration were held and limited to educated, wealthy white males (Mosher, 1982). From 1829 through 1883, government was associated with the “common man.” As stated before, this era was associated with President Andrew Jackson and the spoils system where administrative positions were held by ordinary citizens on the theory that government could be done by almost anybody. During this period, democracy in administration reached its high-water mark. However, during that time there was also a decline of efficiency, ethics, and performance, and the Jackson and later administrations were plagued with wide spread scandals and corruption (Rosenbloom, 1998). Reformers called for a system where public employees would be selected based upon merit. This would be accomplished through an open competitive examination that might be taken by anyone with the appropriate qualifications. In 1883, the Civil Service (Pendleton) Act was passed and eliminated political patronage, as it was known during the Jackson era, depoliticized public service, and made competency a requirement for holding government positions. The Pendleton Act created the Civil Service Commission for public employees, a bipartisan commission that established guidelines and laws for hiring federal employees. During the late 1880s through the early 1900s, state and local governments adopted these hiring practices and began to reform according to the commission’s guidelines, in order to do away with urban political machines (Cayer, 1998). Political neutrality and a system of merit were seen as a way of separating politics from administration, keeping government efficient, and giving the

impression of good government. The civil service system was designed to promote neutrality and expertise in administration, along the lines recommended by Wilson, Goodnow, and other reformers.

The Hatch Act of 1939 was designed to prohibit specific political activities by federal employees. The Act of 1940 extended to include state and local employees and employees of federally funded programs. The importance of this legislation was not only to prohibit certain types of political activity but also to protect employees from pressures to involuntarily engage in political activity. The 1939 Act was revised in 1993 at the urging of federal employee unions on the basis that it was too restrictive. The 1993 bill was signed into law by President Bill Clinton; it allowed federal employees to participate in most aspects of electoral politics like any other citizen (Milakovich & Gordon, 2001). However, the revisions do not apply to Senior Executives, Administrative Law Judges, several law enforcement positions, and positions of security or national intelligence.

Recent developments in government reform, in the 1990s, have given an indication that government should return to the spirit of the founders and adopt a more conservative view of government. For example, the reinventing movement that advocates an “entrepreneurial” approach to government has the citizen as a “customer” of government. The goal was to run government as efficiently, effectively, and economically as possible. In addition, the “new public management” promotes performance, efficiency, competition, and the contracting out of government services (Milakovich & Gordon, 2001). Both reforms advocate removing politics from government and government being run like a business with the end result being efficiency to receive maximum results.

Rosenbloom (1993) discussed the “perdurability” of the politics-administration dichotomy. He states that it became institutionalized in civil service, in politics, and was paramount to the science of administration as being most efficient. Rosenbloom stated that even after Herbert Simon shattered the Orthodox public administration paradigm, dichotomy thinking continued to exist. He states that even administrative reforms such as reinventing and rebuilding involve separation of powers and the exercise of administrative discretion despite their business rhetoric.

It is apparent that the controversy over whether political neutrality should be exercised by the administrator is an issue that will remain in constant debate. However, it appears that even Wilson may have revised his thinking. By 1890, Wilson began to realize that administrative questions might also be political ones (Martin, 1988). According to Martin, “Wilson’s lectures began to emphasize the interactions between law, politics, and administration, with administration serving to organize effectively the adjustment of the machinery of government to historical conditions, to liberty” (p. 634). Rosenbloom (1993) said it best in stating that, because of history, we have become cautious and afraid to mention the word “politics” administratively. It has been ingrained into our psyche as something negative rather than a positive tool that can be used effectively if used wisely. Just as Wilson may have revised his thinking in public administration, we must remember that theory is a tool that may be used as a framework; however, practice is what we actually do. We may be able to characterize or interpret a situation, but theory develops out of practice (Rosenbloom).

In preparing a brief historical outline of the politics-administration dichotomy in public administration I was unable to find, despite a lengthy search, any relevant



empirical research that addresses the tension in practice between politics and administration in the United States on the municipal level. Historically, most of the focus was related to our federal government system (e.g., Hecl, 1977) with the exception of the political machine and corruption in Tammany Hall of New York (LaCerra, 1997). The tensions that exist within municipal government are real, very important, and must be examined and understood.

### **Accountability**

In any government structure, accountability is important. There sometimes exists a very limited public view that leads employees to be reactive rather than proactive. The public and employees want to know who is to blame when something goes wrong or where the buck stops. They also want to know that if there is a problem they can receive a quick response and a quick resolution. Many have argued that responsiveness and accountability to the public is required in the actions of administrators. Citizens want to be able to voice their opinions to a professional and let him or her know how they feel about any decision that is being made on their behalf. Administrators have the right to exercise political power in policymaking and have the right to participate in political dialogue (Terry, 1998). We cannot have government run by novices because modern society is complex and continues to grow (W. Wilson, 1887). Professionalism is important in determining one's ability to make decisions; however, the use of discretion when making decisions is at the core of the argument, specifically, how much discretion should be allowed and where is the accountability?

When a political appointment is made, the person selected generally is one who comes from outside government and brings energy not often seen in career executives.

Prior background and experiences are different between the two (Lewis, 2005).

“Careerists are more likely to have public management experience. Many generic management skills are difficult to transfer from the private sector due to the important differences between the two work environments” (Lewis, p. 6). In Wilson’s (1887) essay, he discussed the importance of experts in government and mentions how schools would be founded specifically for studying public administration. His essay provided the framework for professionalism, which presumably gives one the ability to use discretion wisely. A professional is one who has specialized skills and scholarly knowledge that goes along with the work.

They are also able to apply new insights to differentiate among alternative solutions. In their role in guiding decisions-makers to formulate policy, they are distinguished from technicians, who have the expertise to carry out already decided policies, to handle day-to-day problems and to apply existing knowledge to them. (Petshek, 1973, p. 261)

Unfortunately, professionalism may not be enough to ensure administrative wisdom.

Accountability is at the core of the debate concerning discretion between Friedrich (1971/1997) and Finer (1941). They argue over the amount of discretion that public administrators should be allowed to use. Finer believed that administrators should be directly and narrowly responsible to elected officials:

the servants of the public are not to decide their course; they are responsible to the elected representatives of the public, and these are to determine the course of action of the public servants to the most minute degree that is technically feasible. (p. 336)

Finer argued that administrative discretion must be governed by external controls.

Without these sanctions, there will be abuse of power, failure to carry out responsibilities in a responsible manner, and failure to do what is required. He also stated that technical expertise on the part of the administrator was not enough to give him or her authority to

make policy. Finer believed that administrators are not supposed to have the same level of discretion as elected officials. He stated that professionalism, responsibility to the public, and efficiency are factors for sound administrative operations; however, administrators still require public and political control and needed direction (Finer).

Friedrich (1940) rejected the hierarchical conception of administrative responsibility advocated by Finer. He argued that public administrators should be trusted and discretion should be guided by political expertise and the will of the people. Administration is very technical. He stated, “the responsible administrator is one who is responsive to these two dominant factors; technical knowledge and popular sentiment” (p. 12). Friedrich believed that administrative responsibility is assured internally through professionalism. Administrators are answerable to others in their profession who know whether or not they are they are competent in their performance. They are externally accountable when they anticipate public reaction to a proposed action and build this into their judgment. Professional expertise and popular sentiment represent the two faces of the politics-administration dichotomy.

This issue can be traced as far back as the Framers of the Constitution. Both sides had different views on accountability and responsiveness. In order to understand why there are such differing opinions, we must first understand the roots of professionalism. In Public Administration, those practicing in the field are bound by the Constitution, and historically this document has served as our rulebook on how we ought to operate. Early concepts of professionalism talked about how organizations should work, including formal roles and practices like technical expertise and scientific knowledge, as with Woodrow Wilson and Frederick Taylor (Shafritz & Hyde, 1997). However, over time

professionalism took on a different meaning. Professional associations came into being with the American Society of Public Administration, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and the National Academy of Public Administration to reflect the desire of the field to be professional. The professional is not only scholarly but also displays certain behaviors in practice. Many of the associations have developed codes of ethics and standards for operating as a public official. These codes of ethics give recommended standards of behavior to ensure professionalism.

In most professional fields, governments have accepted, without much question or knowledge, the academic definition of content and the academic criteria of qualification and merit. Most governments, like other employers, rely heavily upon credentials; possession of the sheepskin from an accredited institution is enough. (Mosher, 1982, p. 139)

It is felt that when you speak of professionalism in practice, you include not only technical expertise but also accountability, responsibility, and responsiveness. “The responsible bureaucrat is a proactive agent, one who causes things to happen, in charge of his or her own conduct, trustworthy, capable of moral judgment, reliable, and politically answerable to boot” (Stivers, 1994, p. 365). Accountability is a big problem for the “professional” because traditional accountability is to the profession and not to the line boss or the general public.

Professional knowledge and its application in practice are said to be so specialized that no outsider is qualified to judge the competence of an individual practitioner or the profession as a whole. Professionals reserve the right to assess what work they are qualified to do as well as the right to police themselves. (Stivers, 1993, p. 44)

Again, we see the tension between technical expertise and political accountability.

This debate on accountability and responsibility is one that continues to bear on how the appointee should use discretion in decision-making. This debate is also at the

heart of other issues that remind us of tension among conflicting values in practice. Although discourse on issues of professionalism, administrative discretion, and politics must continue, the tension cannot be resolved. Therefore, we find ourselves with political appointees faced with values determined by stakeholders that clash with administrative mandates in practice. Some, in public administration, argue that we must have more flexibility in the rules and regulations; however, others believe that there is the need for laws that place constraints on power. We must find common ground between the two schools of thought that will enable us to move forward and develop new ideas that will adapt to the changes in today's society, hence the need to study the dynamics of the tension in actual administrative practice.

### **Legitimacy**

In the field of public administration we face many challenges; one is the legitimate role of the profession. In the Blacksburg Manifesto, a group of colleagues from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute came together to reevaluate public administration after realizing that there needed to be new dialogue about American public administration. They believed that although public administration had centuries of accomplishments, it had fallen on hard times. According to Wamsley et al. (1988),

The manifesto's analysis says the reason for the denigration of bureaucracy in the 1980's does not lie simply in the lack of organizational and managerial skills on the part of public administrators, though there is room for improvement – but in public perceptions about the role of government. (p. 293)

The purpose of the manifesto was to “reconceptualize bureaucracy as The Public Administration” and to discuss what form of government is effective in the real world. The manifesto states there is a problem with governing a modern republic that has a

commitment to freedom and justice but has the complexities of capitalism and state intervention. Our country's commitment to freedom creates pressure for equity, but capitalism creates additional pressure for a vigorous economy and social differentiation.

The writers of the manifesto wanted to refocus and initiate more dialogue on changes in the field. They believed that it is a challenge to redefine equity and justice in a system with socioeconomic differentiation as a catalyst of capitalist commitment. However, we must meet that challenge by changing our political dialogue to reflect the importance of public administration and the public administrator's involvement in the governance of the republic. In other words, we have to build a legitimacy argument.

Our country was founded on certain principles and philosophies that were developed by a group of elite men. Although these men developed the principles that formed our nation's Constitution, they also institutionalized the form of government that exists today as well as many of its practices. These practices reflect the tension between political and administrative values. Rohr (1986) noted clearly that if the administrative state is compatible with constitutional principles, a statement should be made on how administrative institutions can sustain these principles. He stated:

The administrative state must not forfeit its administrative character in order to achieve constitutional legitimacy.... The role of Public Administration is to fulfill the objective of the oath of office: to uphold the Constitution of the United States. This means that administrators should use their discretionary power in order to maintain the constitutional balance of powers in support of individual rights. (p. 181)

The problem we face is the "refounding of the field, one grounded in its true foundation: pragmatism" (McSwite, 1997, p. 19). McSwite described Men of Reason as the actual men who have held and continue to hold elite positions in our institutions. These men, including the Framers of our Constitution, especially the Federalists, had to

ensure that their place in society would not be threatened, and that place was one that controlled power and authority. Therefore, our system of government and policies on distributive justice and equality were formed to give stability to their position in society. Although power and authority are generally seen as one, the two may be entwined. “Authority is linked inextricably to legitimacy; power may or may not be linked to such a concept. One can have power (get another person to act in accord with your will rather than his or her own) by sheer force and still lack authority” (Wamsley et al., 1990, p. 145).

Waldo believed that, in Public Administration, there was a weakness along with arrogance on the part of other disciplines that associated themselves with Public Administration. He believed that Public Administration, unlike natural science, is based upon what should or must be done and involves values as well as consideration of others. His belief was that administrators were not neutral and that they should be committed to good management and social equity values. He is notable for assuring that legitimate practice entails both administrative and political considerations.

It is felt that Public Administration continues to look for its proper place. I believe that because we are so confused about whether Public Administration should be a subset of Political Science or a part of another behavioral science, we are confused in practice as well. Scholars in the field are split on the issue. We must be able to take meaningful action in Public Administration. The complexities of our society will not allow us to limit the scope of the discipline nor will it allow us to eliminate the association between theory and practice. One way to move forward is to study the dynamics of politics and administration in actual practice.

## **Bureaucracy**

German theorist Max Weber wrote an essay that described the components of a well-structured bureaucracy. Weber's essay titled "Bureaucracy," which was translated into English in 1946 and describes a structured system that includes a division of labor, hierarchy, formal rules and procedures, a system of maintaining files and records, and professionalization. Weber (1958) stated, "The pure type of bureaucratic official is appointed by a superior authority" (p. 200). The appointment is to ensure that the mission and goals of the elected officials are fulfilled. The appointee is not only loyal to the appointing authority but must have the intellect, training, and display professional standards. Weber stated:

The official who is not elected but appointed by a chief normally functions more exactly, from a technical point of view, because, all other circumstances being equal it is more likely that purely functional points of consideration and qualities will determine his selection and career. (p. 201)

The word "bureaucracy" by definition is, "a body of non-elective government officials, an administrative policy making group; government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority; a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation" (Webster, 1972, p. 112). Weber (1958) believed that bureaucracy was the most efficient and rational system of order and in this respect was superior to any other form of organization. The official who holds a position within the bureaucracy should be trained according to the chosen vocation and generally enjoy a certain amount of social esteem that comes with the position. Weber stated that in public bureaucracies the position is generally held for life (as with civil service employees). Weber believed that the career official was bound by obedience to the elected official. The official is compensated



through salary, and generally is set with his career within the hierarchy. Weber's philosophy required officials to conform by being well disciplined, rigid, methodical, and impersonal; however, those expectations of conformity may not be suitable in all situations. Weber also believed that the career official was inferior to the politician because the politician has earned his position through political struggle. He stated:

In all circumstances, the designation of officials by means of an election among the governed modifies the strictness of hierarchical subordination. In principle, an official who is elected has an autonomous position opposite the superordinate official. The elected official does not derive his position 'from above' but 'from below' or at least not from a superior authority of the official hierarchy but from powerful party men ('bosses'), who also determine his future career. (Weber, p. 201)

Merton (1940/1997) was critical of Weber's concept of bureaucracy and believed that bureaucracy inevitably has dysfunctions that lead to inefficiency. Merton stated that the training and skills that were appropriate in the past might not be appropriate under changing conditions. Merton in addition stated, "In general, one adopts measures in keeping with one's past training and under new conditions which are not recognized as significantly different, the very soundness of this training may lead to the adoption of wrong procedures" (Merton, p. 102). Merton stated that while professional behavior and conformity may result in desired outcomes, extreme measures of this process could lead to the "displacement of goals," causing the official to be ineffective by confusing means with ends.

Reactions to the concept of "bureaucracy" have shaped public administration by changing the way we do business. The New Public Administration evolved as a concept for tempering the bureaucracy. Frederickson (1971/1997) argued that New Public Administration's commitment to social equity confirms that the field has not dealt with the theoretical implications of involvement in politics. Frederickson stated that, "A

commitment to social equity not only involves the pursuit of change but attempts to find organizational and political forms which exhibit a capacity for continued flexibility or routinized change” (p. 330). New Public Administration has redefined how appointees should operate in a bureaucratic organization. Under this new procedure, administrators are expected to be professional as well as proactive. Traditional bureaucracy advocates stability through rigid processes and conformity, while the New Public Administration searches for changeable structures, flexibility, and experiments with modified bureaucratic organizational forms. Thus the New Public Administration represents an assertion of political values vis à vis administrative values.

The reinvention movement is also a reaction to the concept of “bureaucracy” but of a different sort. Osborne and Gabler (1992/1997) argued that, in order to achieve true efficiency in the delivery of services, public administrators needed to be free from the bureaucratic constraints of traditional government. Osborne and Gabler indicated that government is constantly changing. “The kind of governments that developed during the industrial era, with their sluggish, centralized bureaucracies, their preoccupation with rules and regulations, and their hierarchical chains of command, no longer work very well” (Osborne & Gabler, p. 529). The reinvention movement defined ways that governments can resolve the obstacles and challenges relating to issues of efficiency and effectiveness through entrepreneurial government. The authors believed that the traditional bureaucratic model worked; however, it has since become obsolete, and the model developed during the industrial era has failed to meet the changing needs of our society.

New Public Administration and reinvention brought forth an era of reform in government and public administration, however, problems concerning efficiency and effectiveness continue to exist. Although bureaucratic leaders may be technically skilled in their areas of expertise and new concepts have evolved, there is still the question of the effectiveness of our democratic leadership. Bureaucratic leadership, as it applies to decision making, power, and policymaking, is viewed by the public as being of particular concern. "Public bureaucracies are perceived as wielding too much power" (Terry, 1995, p. 4). Critics feel that public administrators have accumulated enormous amounts of power and have become unaccountable and unresponsive to the public. Although, in theory, political appointees should always be in total control of their respective area, they often have low levels of influence in bureaucratic decision making while representatives of special interest groups have high levels of influence (Stehr, 1997). The function of the public servant is to interpret policy, report to the appointing authority, and answer the needs of the constituency. Bureaucracy has been guilty of delivering inadequate service. The system has been plagued with inefficient and ineffective areas of operation creating feelings of hostility and mistrust.

Bureaucracy is a part of administration that includes looking for the right answers. It also includes professionalism, technical expertise, efficiency, effectiveness, and being result oriented. Wilson (1887) viewed the administrator as an efficient and faithful wielder of power and states of the position that, "large powers and unhampered discretion seem to be the indispensable conditions of responsibility" (p. 213). Wilson may have been correct in his view; however, the tension in the field of public administration reflects the unresolved (perhaps unresolvable) question of how one must answer to the

public interest while maintaining effective governance. Political appointees often face great dilemmas concerning bureaucratic discretion in policy implementation.

Discretionary acts can be justifiable only to the extent that they are compatible both with the goals of the appointing authority and with good management. The individual viewed as being the most obedient public servant is usually viewed as a superlative bureaucrat.

Gawthrop (1997) stated,

For public administrators who must operate in this convoluted system of democratic values and who must, at the same time recognize the intrinsic values of bureaucracy and its canons of management, the art of pretense, the methods of playing a role-indeed, of wearing a mask-become virtual prerequisites for a successful career. (p. 206)

Bureaucratic discretion is necessary if government is to respond to the needs of society. However, it may be problematic in terms of shared values and beliefs concerning institutional roles and competence (West, 1984).

Another issue of concern is the attitude of the politically appointed agency head and the extent to which politics determines how he or she defines and performs tasks. The power of the attitude of appointees can explain how they evaluate and behave in their job. According to Wilson (1989), “our behavior toward an object will be influenced not only by our evaluation of it but by the rewards and penalties associated with alternative courses of action” (p. 51). The culture of the organization will cause any appointee to develop a particular pattern of thinking on how tasks should be performed. “Because the behavior of a professional is not entirely shaped by organizational incentives, the way such a person defines his or her task may reflect more the standards of the external reference group than the preferences of the internal management” (p. 60) again shows the politics-administration dichotomy. Incentives may cause one to perform duties according

to the rewards associated. However, historical patterns of penalties associated with decision making may cause the political appointee, after time, to display attitudes that are only concerned with completing the tasks in as little time as possible without any regard for efficiency.

The historical mindset of how bureaucracies perform and how professionals function has to be examined so that the associations can be favorable. With the appointee, tension is encountered (as we will see) between political accountability, being a manager of a bureaucratic organization, and having to make it work. We must dispel the notion of ineffective practices and change the way of thinking regarding how administrators should be allowed to do business. Although controls are in place to protect the public administrator from sources that may impede his/her ability to perform, we also see that bureaucratic barriers and outside influences can be a deterrent to the administrator who wants to be effective and efficient.

### **Political Influence**

While the appointee is responsible to the appointing authority, he or she must also be responsive to constituents. Citizens want to rely on political appointees to do what is right in an expeditious manner; as mentioned, outside influences may be a deterrent to effectiveness as administratively defined, particularly when a career administrator has to ensure that the wishes of the appointee are fulfilled. In a strong mayoral form of government, appointees are subject to considerable political influence. Yet, “The *public interest* is the standard that guides the administrator in executing the law. This is the verbal symbol designed to introduce unity, order, and objectivity into administration” (Herring, 1936/1997, p. 78). Citizens of the United States are guaranteed certain rights

and privileges under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They expect to play a role in government and expect their voices to be heard; however, the relationship between public opinion and administration can be problematic. Wilson (1887) stated it best when he identifies how tension can result when the administrator is answerable to the appointing authority and the public:

To whom is official trustworthiness to be disclosed, and by whom is it rewarded? Is the official to look to the public for his meed of praise and his push of promotion, or only to his superior in office? Are the people to be called in to settle administrative discipline as they are called in to settle constitutional principles? These questions evidently find their root in what undoubtedly the fundamental problem of this whole study. That problem is: What part shall public opinion take in the conduct of administration? The right answer seems to be, that public opinion shall play the part of authoritative critic (p. 214).

In the article “Citizenship Ethics in Public Administration”, various ideas about citizenship are discussed. “Citizenship fundamentally connotes a formal relationship between the individual and the state, one that grants the individual important civil and political rights” (Stivers, 1994, p. 435). Citizenship as a practice “has been marked by four key attributes: the exercise of decisive judgment on public matters, devotion to public good, education or development, and community” (p. 437). Citizen participation is an important part of our political process. The ability to participate in community forums and exercise the right to express opinions on political matters is a part of the notion of the public good. Every citizen has the right to be informed on matters that affect his or her life, their community, and play an active role in governance.

Because citizens have the right to participate in government, special interests develop and because of special interests, implementing public policy may not be a simple task. “One of the central premises of democracy is that those in positions of power

should be accountable to and ultimately controlled by the people” (Hecló, 1977, p. 3). The public and other political elites may expect and demand implementation that is flexible, creative, and responsive to changing needs (Meier, 1987, p. 53). On the other hand, political appointees may feel that the implementation process requires strict adherence to the law and must follow those practices that are procedural according to their area of responsibility. The public is in need of quick, decisive actions and, because of pressure from “issue networks,” appointees are often forced to render decisions that are more political in nature. Therefore, there is tension between politics and bureaucracy. Issue networks, or webs of influence, are groupings of individuals with commitment, shared knowledge, and common interest that attempt to influence policy (Hecló). A prime example of how special interest or issue networks can exert pressure is that of Tammany Hall, a society in New York that came into power during the 1800s. Tammany Hall aimed to maintain control of city government by ensuring the votes of certain politicians seeking office in turn for patronage jobs from those elected officials (LaCerra, 1997).

To date a method of resolving the tension between the state and outside pressures has not manifested itself. However, Herring (1936/1997) stated it best when discussing the relationship between the state and public interests:

The solution of the liberal democratic state must lie in establishing a networking relationship between the bureaucrats and the special interests – a relationship that will enable the former to carry out the purpose of the state and the latter to realize their own ends. (pp. 78–79)

As mentioned, maintaining an internal sense of order, providing a shield against external threats, balancing tension, and resolving problems of the constituency are the responsibility of the appointed official. This allows the elected official to avoid having to

confront controversy through passing on this task to the appointee (Cook, 1998). This daunting task could cause the most proficient administrator to find reason to elude responsibilities and attempt to get by until he or she completes his/her tenure or is replaced.

The appointee, particularly in municipal government, may not maintain his or her position for the entire term of the elected official. “The political appointee, therefore, does not stride in the door of the government organization as the powerful proconsul of an emperor but more like a tentative and lonely ambassador appointed to a beleaguered foreign outpost” (Wamsley et al., 1990, p. 136). Many political appointees often return to their former positions after their tenure of service within the bureaucracy. Those appointees have been labeled “in and outers” because they are available on a temporary basis as needed by the administration (Mosher, 1982). Because appointees are viewed as “passing through” it is sometimes difficult to determine if, during their tenure, a positive contribution was made to the administration.

The dilemma of whether or not political influence should be allowed to intervene remains at the forefront of the minds of administrators and scholars of the field. The reluctance of administrators or appointees to participate in partisan politics stems from the desire to restrict political activities and avoid the possible conflict of the public not receiving fair and impartial treatment (Fry & Nigro, 1998). Kelly (1998) stated in her essay on the subject of democratic polity that citizens look for guidance on decisions from leaders who share their same views. However, appointees may struggle with separating personal values while searching for a common ground made by external



demands. American political interests should be based on theory and on real life experiences.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Approach**

In documenting how political appointees experience the tension between bureaucratic and political values, the phenomenological approach was employed. The phenomenological method is used when one wants to explore and/or understand human experiences from the point of view of the research subjects. This method allowed me to obtain information about the ways in which political appointees experience the interface between politics and administration. According to van Manen (1990):

Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. Phenomenology asks, “What is this or that kind of experience like?” It differs from almost every other science in that it attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it. (p. 9)

The purpose of the research was to learn how appointees experience politics and administration and to develop a clear understanding of the meaning and significance of their experiences as political appointees in strong mayoral forms of government. van Manen mentions in the above quote that phenomenology aims to “gain insightful

descriptions”. Phenomenology explores the depth and core of our life world to uncover and describe the meaning of the lived experience for the subjects themselves.

Phenomenological research expresses the meanings and feelings of lived experiences while taking into account the sociocultural aspect of being a part of that experience. “The human being is a person who signifies-who gives and derives meaning to and from the “things” of the world. In other words, the “things” of the world are meaningfully experienced, and on that basis these “things” are then approached and dealt with” (van Manen, 1990, p. 14). In living these experiences, theory (or meaning) is the result of reflection and enlightenment and not the opposite. “Human life needs knowledge, reflection, and thought to make itself knowable to itself, including its complex and untimely mysterious nature” (p. 17).

When describing this research approach, we must look at what it means to “gain insightful descriptions.” Phenomenological research raises awareness of situations that occur in our lives that may seem trivial but in actuality have depth and meaning. The fullest understanding of this approach comes from actually doing it. It can not be used to prove anything or objectively describe a state of affairs. Phenomenology differs from natural science in that it is a human science that explicates the meaning of the lived experiences in the human world. It does not generalize beyond the situation in question nor does it claim to solve problems. “Phenomenological questions are meaningful questions. They ask for the meaning and significance of certain phenomena” (van Manen, 1990, p. 23). In other words, it is about the meaning and significance of certain phenomena for the people experiencing those phenomena.

The difference between phenomenological description and other kinds is that it names something and, in the interpretation, gives an account of it. It recognizes relationships and patterns connecting parts together making them whole. It also elucidates or makes clear the lived experience and enhances our understanding. This approach is retrospective; it asks subjects to reflect on what they have experienced. Phenomenological description is different from journalism, biographic description, personal opinion, and other types of descriptions in that it “is collected by (the) lived experience and recollects (the) lived experience-and is validated by (the) lived experience and it validates (the) lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 27).

Another difference in phenomenological research is that, while gaining insightful descriptions, it does so “without (prior) taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting.” Scientific research is generally classified by the rigor involved in conducting the research.

Human science operates with its own criteria for precision, exactness, and rigor. In the quantitative sciences, precision and exactness are usually seen to be indications of refinement of measurement and perfection of research design. In contrast, human science strives for precision and exactness by aiming for interpretive descriptions that exact fullness and completeness of detail, and that explore to a degree of perfection the fundamental nature of the notion being addressed in the text. (van Manen, 1990, p. 17)

In quantitative circles, research that is rigorous and contains hard data is thought to be exact and more accurate in measure. “A strong and rigorous human science text distinguishes itself by its courage and resolve to stand up for the uniqueness and significance of the notion to which it has dedicated itself” (van Manen, 1990, p. 18). Both research approaches are concerned with rigor, but in phenomenology the rigor

comes together as the result of the richness of the details that are elicited from the participants.

### **Techniques of Investigation and Analysis**

Methodology is a theory that states what method one should follow and why. Techniques are a set of procedures that one can follow to work out a method. Procedures are rules related to the research. In phenomenology, there is no prescribed method but there is tradition along with a body of knowledge and insights that focuses on the lived experience. “Perhaps the best answer to the question of what is involved in a hermeneutic phenomenological human science research method is ‘scholarship’!” (van Manen, 1990, p. 29). Therefore, in phenomenology we describe a type of experience, interpret an experience, and analyze the experience; and through scholarship human science research is pursued. van Manen stated that this technique of investigation is the interplay among six research activities:

1. turning to a phenomenon that we are interested in and committed to;
2. investigating an experience as it is lived;
3. reflecting on that lived experience;
4. writing and rewriting so that through conversation, questioning, and inquiry, what is being discussed can be seen and therefore better understood;
5. the researcher has a strong relationship with the question or phenomenon so that an attitude of scientific disinterestedness is not adopted; and
6. balancing the research by looking at the parts and the whole or looking at how each part contributes to the total picture.

This technique of investigation employed interviews that were conducted with former political appointees. Each participant was asked to describe and reflect on his or

her experiences. Data was collected through individual face-to-face interviews. “But why do we collect the ‘data’ of other people’s experiences? We gather other people’s experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves” (van Manen, 1990, p. 62). The questions asked focused on (a) how the person experienced working as a political appointee, (b) how the appointee was or was not influenced by politics or administration when making decisions and using discretion, (c) the direct influence the appointee may or may not have had in affecting policy; (d) ethical concerns, and (e) the feelings the appointee had toward the position and the ability to perform assigned duties. The specific questions posed can be found in Appendix B.

Subjects were not asked to theorize, generalize, or come up with causal explanations. “Phenomenological themes are not objects or generalizations; metaphorically speaking they are more like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes” (van Manen, 1990, p. 90). Subjects were asked to focus on what pathway led them to the appointed position. They were asked to tell a story and describe the events, challenges, and opportunities of being an administrator. In addition, the subjects were asked how politics played a part. It must be understood that the actual account of what happened is not important. “It is important to realize that it is not of great concern whether a certain experience actually happened in exactly that way” (p. 65). The experience of the subject and the meaning or significance they derived from it is what really counts. The interviews were tape-recorded with the interviewee’s permission. The tapes were transcribed after each interview was completed.

The raw data were analyzed in order to identify themes and patterns that reflect on the tension. “Phenomenological themes may be understood as the *structures of experience*. So that when we analyze a phenomenon, we are trying to determine what the themes are, the experiential structures that makes up that experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 79). Themes were identified in each subject’s comments. The results revealed actualities of the tension between politics and administration as lived by the appointee. When working from others’ experiences, you develop a deeper meaning. “The point of phenomenological research is to ‘borrow’ other peoples experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience” (p. 62).

What is a theme? “Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning of point.... Theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand. Theme describes an aspect of the structure of lived experience” (van Manen, 1990, p. 87). In the interpretation of the data, it is important to understand the point of the story and to seek meaning. The selective reading approach is the one that was used to uncover the common themes that related to the issue of politics and administration. With this approach, a text is read or listened to several times to ascertain what phrases are important and prominent about the phenomenon being described. It was then decided which themes were so prominent and/or reoccurring that they could not be eliminated while also looking at the literature to see parallels between subjects’ comments and central concerns in scholarly accounts. The central themes were listed with examples of each. The themes that emerged were clustered through commonality of descriptions, repetition of statements, or what was said over and over. The clustering gave the ability

to discover what aspects of politics and administration the stories reveal as well as what can be learned by the experiences that are described. To ensure validity of the research a summary of the interview was mailed to the subjects. They were asked to review the summary for accuracy of the statements that were made during the interview. The subjects were asked to return the summary within one week and to say whether they agreed that the written statements captured their experiences as a political appointee in a meaningful way and were consistent as described during the interview. In order to make sure that the interview questions asked were ones that would actually shed light on what it is like to be in a politically appointed position; a pretest was conducted on two local former political appointees in Cleveland, Ohio.

In Public Administration, despite the literature, we have not touched upon the actual ways in which people in government experience the tension between politics and administration. We know what it is like in theory, but we need to know the experience. Therefore the subjects were asked to tell a story in detail of what it was like and what happened as events occurred. The significance of this research is that it sheds new light and raises new questions about the role of the politically appointed agency head in strong mayoral municipal governments.

### **Study Population**

The study population consisted of former political appointees from strong mayoral municipal governments who ended their service no longer than five years ago. I made every effort to interview appointees who were responsible for a large employee base such as former Directors of Public Safety, Public Service, and Community Development. The four cities selected were large major metropolitan cities in the United



States with populations of over 400,000. At least three participants were interviewed from each city. The cities selected were chosen for their comparability in size, demographics, and government structure. I was fortunate to have contact with knowledgeable persons who assisted me in gaining entrée into these cities.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Prior to beginning the study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. To avoid any ethical dilemmas, former rather than currently serving political appointees were interviewed. A consent form was signed by each participant, along with a statement of purpose. Participants were informed that the document and the information gathered would not contain the names, addresses, or any personal information that may identify the participant. They were also told that the data would be reported in aggregate form.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will present my interpretation of interview comments made by appointed agency heads. These comments are clustered according to four major themes, all of which relate to the research interest in how the research subjects experience the tension between politics and administration. The four areas are: (a) politics-administration dichotomy, (b) bureaucracy, (c) political influence, and (d) accountability. In the United States, there are two forms of municipal government that include the mayor/city council structure and the city management structure. The mayor/city council encompasses a strong mayor who serves as the chief executive of the city with city council serving as the legislative body. In this form of government, the mayor makes all executive decisions and departmental appointments. The second municipal government structure is the weak mayor/city management form of government where the city manager, who is selected by city council, runs the city and makes all departmental appointments. In this form of city government the mayor is primarily a political figure head and may also be a member of city council.

This research study focuses on cities with strong mayoral forms of government. The respondents were political appointees who worked in four cities: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; and Detroit, Michigan. A total of fifteen (15) interviews were conducted with the participants having the following demographics: eight (8) men, seven (7) women, two (2) Caucasians, and thirteen (13) African Americans (see Table I). Of the fifteen (15) participants there were six (6) African American women, seven (7) African American men, one (1) Caucasian female, and one (1) Caucasian male. Each respondent had more than eight years of practical work experience and the participants responses are based on their experiences as political appointees of government agencies.

**Table I. Gender and Ethnicity of the Respondents**

	Male	Female	Total
African American	7	6	13
Caucasian	1	1	2
Total	8	7	15

The respondents represent a very experienced group of practitioners in the field of public administration. Their positions included: director of a community development corporation, police commander, commissioner of sanitation, commissioner of transportation, real estate executive, budget analyst, chief operating officer, and chief of staff. One respondent worked for nine (9) consecutive mayors, one worked for four (4) consecutive mayors, one worked for three (3) consecutive mayors, and two respondents worked for two (2) consecutive mayors. This is interesting, given that political appointees usually lose their jobs when the next mayor comes in. Their ability to survive

the usual “rotation in office” may be evidence of their competence. The remaining respondents worked for one mayor; however, worked one or more terms with that mayor (see Table II).

**Table II. Number of Mayors the Respondents Served**

	Number of Respondents	Number of Mayors Worked for Consecutively
	1	9
	1	4
	1	3
	2	2
	10	1
Total	15	19

All of the respondents seemed very candid as they reflected on their experiences. They were asked several questions that led to a series of stories relating to their experiences as an appointed agency head (see Appendix B). The responses, or themes, that evolved were the result of their repetition and my clustering during the interpretive process. All appointees stated that the position they held was rewarding, challenging, and involved juggling many tasks and responsibilities, including managing time, maintaining and having public trust, and trusting instincts.

### **Politics-Administration Dichotomy**

The central theme of this dissertation is the politics-administration dichotomy. The politics-administration dichotomy is the belief that administration can remove itself from the influences of politics and operate neutrally (Koven, 1992). Woodrow Wilson is credited with developing this theory. He believed that “administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics.” Laswell (1936) defined politics as a state of conditions, which gets the most of what there is to get, and the power to distribute resources. Politically

appointed agency heads often find themselves having to make decisions that involve the bureaucracy as well as politics. The appointee has to be accountable to the political stakeholders as well as to the bureaucracy. When interviewees were asked if they experienced tension or conflict between these two values (political and administrative) in decision making, there were several sub-themes that emerged, specifically that (a) the tension was a creative one, (b) the political tension comes when the mayor and city council are at odds, (c) there is the political tension that comes from special interests, and (d) no tension.

### *Creative Tension*

The respondents commonly stated that while operating in municipal government there was tension between politics and administration, but it was a healthy or “creative tension”. For example, a respondent stated:

For some people it gets to be a personal tension and there were some times when it got to be a personal tension with me. For the overwhelming majority of the time it was not a personal tension as something that I would take home, lived with, and lost sleep over. I always tried to represent in my speech, behavior, and decisions I would say openly to public audiences (employees, council members, or neighborhood persons) that I am appointed by a mayor but I am appointed, in theory, because I have professional expertise that enables me to provide a certain service to the community.

The “creative tension” was one that spurred the appointee to find a way of getting the job done. The consensus seemed to be that there is tension but it is not the kind one loses sleep over.

### *Political Tension between the Mayor and City Council*

Tension would occur when there were conflicts between the mayor and city council or if pressure was applied from special interests as noted by one respondent:

The bureaucratic decisions would often be those where the need to advance a project or service delivery concern that somehow got log jammed (and) you would have to get in there and wrestle it loose and move it on. The political decisions probably often came with dealing with the legislative bodies, whether it is city council, state legislature, or the federal government. Special interest concerns would likely fall in one of the buckets mentioned. It is either going to be bureaucratic or political. If you were concerned with the bureaucratic there would be political fallout depending upon how significant their voices were in the community. An example of this would be of the organization that was a community advocacy group that would hold town hall meetings and invite citizens. The organization began in the southwest section of the city, but they would invite the mayor, department directors, and executives. The organization would put you on stage, and their methodology was to have various members of their leadership to put the administration on the spot. It was very confrontational, in your face, demanding an immediate response and a reaction. If you did not clear the bureaucratic path and get at the service delivery for this particular issue, they would go to the media.

The interviewees all seemed to feel that it was very important to understand the politics of the mayor so that the administration's policy agenda could be implemented; however, it was also an issue of conflict when members of the city council were at odds with the mayor and felt that the administration was self serving and not acting on behalf of the constituency. One respondent noted:

Sometimes council members have good ideas but you work on behalf of the executive branch. If the mayor's politics and the relationship with that councilperson are such that the mayor is not open to suggestion, then trying to carry out a good idea that comes from a councilmember who is at odds with the mayor gets you nowhere. That is a frustration. Sometimes you can talk to a mayor and frame an opportunity that is not just a councilperson's idea, but it is also in the best interest of the public and has political benefits. Sometimes they see it, sometimes they don't, and sometimes they just don't care.

The respondent felt tension with the idea of having to balance his loyalty to the administration as well as attempting to introduce a good idea that was presented by a council member to the administration. On the other hand, a member of the city council may have good intentions in working with the administration in developing policy that

would benefit all. Generally, mayors attempt to develop utilitarian relationships with councils that are for the good of all. “Mayors often use this type of process to establish and maintain cooperative relationships with their councils, their bureaucracy, and their political party” (Kotter & Lawrence, 1974, p. 68). However, some city council members feel that anything done by the administration is not good enough and will scrutinize any and all actions by the administration. For instance, one respondent stated,

Due to the tension between the mayor and city council, I often felt like council leadership was so focused on making the mayor look bad that they would look for any opportunity for me to make a mistake that they could capitalize on as a basis for criticizing the mayor.

#### *Political Tension from Special Interests*

Another common response was that municipal government was designed to bring the two entities, bureaucracy and politics, into play with each other. One participant gives his account of how he was making change for blacks and for women within his area, and the two objectives conflicted with each other. He stated:

I made the decision to have females in the department. The “good old boys” said that women could not fight fires. I said it is going to be and made it happen. There were not enough blacks in the upper echelons of the department so I made a decision that in order to get them in I changed the structure of the department. I made all of the persons in the position of deputy chief submit their resignation and selected an equal number of blacks and whites for the new positions.

While this appointee was accused of doing too much for blacks, another African American appointee was accused of not doing enough. He stated, “my toughest problem was dealing with Blacks. I was hurt when a black organization went to the NAACP and the city council and said that I was not doing enough for blacks.” Citizens want inclusion and want to know that their voice is being heard in government. They feel that it is their constitutional right to representation, and when they speak of representation it means to

have someone that looks like them, has their same ideals, and is able to understand and articulate their challenges.

A major responsibility of the appointee is meeting with constituency groups. Meetings with homeless advocacy groups, church leaders, and members of the business community are all encompassed in the daily life of the appointee. Each group had to be reassured that their agenda was a part of the administrator's agenda. One respondent stated, "This job has infinite variety and eminent challenges. In the morning I have to deal with basic operational issues, in the middle of the day I deal with issues relating to the poorest of the poor and the most disenfranchised, and at the end of the day I deal with the richest of the rich. That was not an unusual day for me. My issues were all over the map." Stivers (1990) stated it best when she described how public administrators have to gain an understanding and an alliance among constituency groups. Specifically she stated:

From this perspective, the public administrator as an agent of active citizenship aims to develop from his or her knowledge and experience, frameworks and situations around which citizen knowledgeability and capability can crystallize. Out of the sense of the whole unique to the administrative role grows a new form of understanding that builds bridges among the different frames of reference found among citizens, and to clarify, little by little, the acknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of life in the American administrative state. (p. 270)

The participants' responses in this section coincide with the literature stating that politics and administration both contribute to shaping and executing policy (Waldo, 1984). While the task and responsibilities of the appointed agency head are vast, it requires an ability to be flexible and adaptable to every situation. Herring (1936/1997) stated that "law was not administered in a vacuum" and it took all parties, including the administrator, to make it work. The tension comes when the appointee attempts to



balance the two entities when developing policy but realizes that the issues involving developing and implementing policy may not be so easily resolved.

### *No Tension*

There were some who indicated they did not experience any tension. One respondent stated,

I would not call it tension. I think that being a political appointee you have people responding to you at arm's length, especially those that have been in the agency for a number of years and think that they know more than anybody because this is how the agency has always run. Therefore, they are comfortable in that zone. As a politically appointed agency head, you are expected to deliver whatever the expectations are of the CEO.

Some of the respondents stated that they did not feel tension because they were not expected to be politicians. For instance one respondent noted that the only political decision he made was who he wanted to vote for or to whom he would send a personal check. The only thing his mayor expected from him was to perform his duties and to be a professional.

Even though some early theorists (Goodnow, 1900/1997; W. Wilson, 1887) may reject the notion that politics and administration should not be associated, the current consensus is that the two are intertwined (Appleby, 1945/1997; Waldo, 1984). The political appointee experiences the theoretical tension between the two concepts in his or her working life. This study has sought to describe in their own terms how political appointees experience the tension between politics and administration. As previously stated, appointees are responsible for a bureaucratic organization and they are politically accountable to the constituency. They have to make it all work. The tension is played out when there are decisions that have to be made. As noted in the literature, we have

become cautious when we use the word “politics” because it has negative implications (Rosenbloom, 1993). Waldo (1984) stated:

In other respects those that have produced our literature on public administration have adopted absolutist positions and insisted upon the moral imperatives of “the facts”; proposals for administrative change have too often hardened into “dogmas of administrative reform,” propounded with solemnity and earnestness in the name of Science. (p. 17)

Historically when you mention the word ‘politics’ it invokes negative associations; however, in practice politics is being responsive to the public interest and the development of relationships between constituencies. The tension occurs when the administrative side wants to come up with the right answers or policy and conduct business according to the rules while the political side has to justify why the policy or decision was made.

### **Bureaucracy**

The definition of a bureaucracy, according to Weber (1958), is a well-structured system that includes formal rules, a division of labor, hierarchal structure, and a system of maintaining records. Municipal government is a bureaucratic organization that may or may not allow the appointee to perform effectively. However, respondents indicated that there were some factors that assisted them with their performance. The sub-themes that evolved included; experiences with operating within a bureaucracy, factors that facilitate effective performance, barriers that impede effective performance, and opportunities to influence policy in the bureaucracy.

#### *Operating within a Bureaucracy*

When asked to describe what it was like to run a large agency in a large city, the common theme that emerged was that it was very rewarding and challenging with a

volume of tasks to perform on a daily basis. For instance, one respondent stated that, while it was challenging, it was also rewarding and an honor to serve as an appointee. It was common for appointees to work long hours and they felt that it was necessary for them to perform to a high standard. One participant stated that he learned how to “wheel and deal” to get the job done and another made a similar statement, “I knew how to deal, when it would work [when wheeling and dealing would work], and when it would not work.” Another respondent noted that, “the challenge was the delicate balance [between juggling the] responsibilities of the mayor (administration) and being a cheerleader for the city.” Time management was important in making sure that he (the mayor) was accessible to the public as well as to the executive team and other staff.” Below is a story that reflects the variety of responsibilities and challenges that the appointees experienced:

In the morning I was conducting a staff meeting and discussing a special operation. We, the City, were having a neighborhood spring cleaning and the Public Works Department was providing a supervisor to support this project. This project was a tradition with the City where different neighborhoods would have spring cleaning and the Sanitation Division would support their efforts by providing the trucks to collect the trash in the neighborhood. During the staff meeting we were discussing the things that we were going to provide (bags, rakes, etc.) when we began to hear noise coming from the Atrium of the building. One of the staff went to see what was going on and returned to report that homeless advocates were protesting in the atrium of City Hall. Approximately between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm that day, I along with other members of the Mayor’s staff were called into a meeting with the Mayor to discuss the protest. The Mayor said that the people were protesting on behalf of the homeless, because they felt that the City was not doing the right thing, and we had to have a special meeting called to listen to their issues. Later that same day, I had a developer, a very well to do developer and one of the City’s biggest, come in to meet with me because he had run into a blockage in our Site Development Section. This group is responsible for reviewing private development as it interfaces with the public right of way and trying to make sure that the public is protected (specifically the water and sewer systems in the way they are developed into the public systems). I spent roughly an hour with that developer and my staff. Because I understood a lot of the business nature of what was going on I was able to translate the

developer's frustrations to my staff. Understanding the policy and the needs of the bureaucracy, I was able to translate that to the developer and come up with a solution. Subsequent to that occurrence, I was speaking to a friend from my former job who said, "I bet you've got a cushy job down there at City Hall where you do nothing." I responded that this job has infinite variety and eminent challenge. In the morning I have to deal with basic operational issues, in the middle of the day I deal with issues relating to the poorest of the poor and the most disenfranchised, and at the end of the day I deal with the richest of the rich. That was not an unusual day for me. My issues were all over the map.

This respondent's story vividly illustrates that the head of a bureaucratic agency experiences daily the interweaving of down-to-earth technical issues ("bags and rakes") with ongoing political pressures (the homeless protest). The bureaucracy is never sealed off from the community.

#### *Factors that Facilitate Effective Performance*

Respondents stated that there were factors that aided in their performance, including having a good team of employees who collaborate and work well with each other, having a competent staff that is knowledgeable and knows how to perform tasks is very important, and matching the right skill set with the right position is also important.

Each participant was asked, as they reflected on their experiences, if there was anything that he or she would do different. The most common answer was that they would not have done anything different. However, participants learned something about themselves and their leadership skills. For example, a respondent stated, "I learned that people are incredibly resilient and will work hard for you if given the chance to share their opinion and be involved with the organization. I learned that leadership is extremely important. Also, teamwork and camaraderie can get you more than ordering people around and telling them what to do." One respondent stated that she had to learn how to trust her instincts while another stated that it was important to pick your battles.

One of the things I learned from Mayor ..... was not to roll over and give in. Stand and fight. Compromise does not always make sense. Sometimes you may have to fight and make up your mind. If someone is saying you should do this but you know that you should do that; you just have to tell them “hell no.” If it means a battle, so be it. I was late learning that. Another thing I learned was patience. Some things you do not have to get finalized that minute. Some things resolve themselves. The thing is trying to figure out what you can afford to wait on because you either decide to give up or the situation will resolve itself, and what you really need to go after.

The respondents were very aware of how they were perceived by the public, and it was mentioned that having the respect of the public was important. A respondent stated that people (citizens) will ultimately respect you for having a set of core values when you adhere to those values no matter what. It was stated:

I learned the importance of the public trusts and the need to respond and be accountable to the citizens and how valuable that relationship is and the impact it can have. The value of ethical leadership for which integrity is significant and the legacy that you leave based upon the work that you do is important. Not getting caught up in the glamour and celebrity of public office but understanding what you are there to do and the impact that you can have, the legacy that can be left if you do a good job, and the importance of public service.

During an interview, a respondent stated that it all comes back to the value of how one approaches the game. In public administration the question becomes on whose behalf are you working or who are you trying to benefit? When putting this into perspective it was commonly stated that credibility was important as well as the value of the public trust. As one respondent stated, “That legacy follows you and the impact has an effect in ways that you cannot imagine. It (being a political appointee) is a very public position and the impact is monumental so you have to have respect for the public trust.”

### *Barriers to Effective Performance*

Appointed agency heads often face obstacles that impede progress and performance that cause tension. Some of the barriers mentioned were the inability to get rid of ineffective employees, bureaucratic red tape, old rules, and employee apathy. It was most commonly mentioned that the unions and civil service rules were the biggest hindrance. One participant stated that, “union rules and civil service regulations favor the employee and not the employer.” The civil service system was thought of as being “the big elephant in the room.” Frustration comes from not being able to get rid of incompetent staff without the constant monitoring of staff performance. Civil servants often do not see the urgency in moving things along and the people within the bureaucracy want things to remain the status quo. “Civil service systems tend to protect inefficiency, to contribute to stasis, and to promote narrow, specialized interests that serve the agency rather than the public” (Ferman, 1985, p. 213). For instance, one respondent stated:

One of the variables is undoubtedly the vested ongoing interest of people within the bureaucracy to keep things as they are. They have fear of losing their power base or losing control over issues if they change. Another variable is the extent to which political operatives from outside the regular decision making process are allowed to come in and redirect decisions or impose their own interests.

The participants’ responses converged with the literature. That is, the literature indicates that civil servants do not necessarily have the goal of moving the process along that will result in effective and efficient operation. For example, Merton (1940/1997) argued that there is a displacement of goals by employees that may cause inefficiency. The ability to discipline or dismiss ineffective employees was mentioned as being hampered by civil service rules that involve following a procedure of excessive documentation in order to

justify any type of disciplinary action. This often leaves the agency head systematically bound to follow a procedure that has historical roots. The agency head may feel emotionally drawn to seek for other alternatives that will bring about results. “Moreover, in this case, tension is increased because of a discrepancy between ideology and fact: the governmental personnel are held to be servants of the people, but in fact they are often superordinate, and the release of tension can seldom be afforded by turning to other agencies for the necessary service” (Merton, p. 104). While it is important to maintain structure and follow rules the appointee must have the ability to perform and make policy decisions with some flexibility. It was stated that bureaucratic mandates get in the way all of the time. “Getting things done in the bureaucracy was sometimes like swimming in peanut butter.” It was also indicated that the appointee must have an understanding of the nature of the bureaucracy. For instance:

The City has an ordinance on the books that came out of the period between the 1940s and 1950s. The ordinance states that it is the responsibility of the abutting property owner to maintain sidewalks and an abutting property owner that has no sidewalk and wants one has to petition for it as well as pay for it. That rule came at a time when African Americans were beginning to experience some economic power and were moving to the suburbs. Once they moved to the suburbs they did not have sidewalks and it was not made any easier for the people. Now we are trying to make a walkable city and it is very frustrating. If a pedestrian hurts himself (on a broken sidewalk) the City gets a lawsuit. Some of the rules/ordinances that are on the books have outlived their purpose and the City is stuck. To citizens the rules, and the administration, appear to be unresponsive and unempathetic when in fact you are deadlocked. The Councilperson wants to criticize you for not being responsive to the citizen; however, you have to point out that it is their law (City Council) and you don't make the law. You have to be very creative and learn how to work around a lot of stuff or you will get frustrated.

The problem of bureaucratic red tape and inefficient operation in government agencies persists. Case in point, the results of this study show that the unions and civil service

rules cause frustration and dysfunctional practices that lead to inefficiency. The literature and the results of this study show that the bureaucracy is designed to be rational but is often confusing and chaotic instead. The appointee is a professional who looks for solutions to the problems that arise.

### *Influencing Policy Change*

Respondents mentioned that there were many antiquated rules in place that needed to be changed. The process of getting tasks done in an expeditious manner in government has always been viewed as problematic. The very nature of bureaucracy often includes the old rules and red tape that creates obstacles and barriers to getting to the solution of a problem. The barriers often occur when the municipal government agency head has to find a quick resolution to a problem. As stated by one respondent, "...bureaucracy is the greatest enemy in government because there were so many layers." The ability to be efficient is often hampered because of the many layers of government that make performing duties frustrating. Bureaucracy got in the way because often operations could not move expeditiously. Some respondents indicated that many departments operate independently and were not tied to a common goal. Another obstacle was the lack of financial resources and time and the conflicting politics between the mayor and city council.

Many of the respondents were instrumental in changing policies that were obsolete and would not permit the department to adapt to the changing times. One respondent discussed how he was able to influence the policy changes that promoted minorities and women to better positions. He shared that some constituents were angry because they felt that he was doing too much for minorities; however, they would not



openly fight against him. When he approached the mayor and asked for legislation to make the change happen, he agreed and the legislation was placed on the ballot and passed by the voters. Another respondent discussed how he was instrumental in developing a policy that specified how many seats should be in the cab of a garbage truck so that the employees could perform their duties in a safe manner. Here is a brief story of how he changed policy after a tragic situation that occurred in his department:

When I took over (the department) we had a (garbage) truck that only had two seats. The vehicle had a fiberglass cab with steel supports. One day there was a major storm. One of our trucks was trying to get away from the storm when a tree blew over and it killed an employee. It killed the employee for two reasons. First, the cab in the truck was not strong enough and second, there were only two seats in the truck. Therefore the third man had to sit on a console, which was typically named "the hump." I developed the specifications that said that there must be at least three (3) seats in the vehicles and the cab would be steel. I caught the devil getting those specifications but a found a company that would build what I wanted. I found a company that built custom trucks. I did the basic design and I sketched out what I wanted. I did not care what anyone said about the costs; I wrote the specs. As a professional, one of the things I want you to understand, as a professional you have the right in government to ask for what you think is best. If it is your department you have the responsibility to design the best possible program/piece of equipment that will do the job for the people. If you don't then you are negligent in your performance.

It was obvious to this appointee that action needed to be taken to change a policy that caused the death of an employee. As the result of the change, lives were saved and a policy was established. Shafritz and Hyde (1997) stated that the process of policy making is dependent on incremental decisions made in response to short-term political decisions. In the case of the death of the employee, the policy change was a quick decision but resulted in long-term effects that set a precedent for the safety of future employees.

Although in theory appointees are able to affect changes in policy, when asked what it was like to initiate change there were varying responses. For example, in one instance one incumbent mayor was not seeking reelection therefore the dynamics changed. In this environment the appointees found themselves having to be very cooperative with the new administration's transition team. This cooperation was necessary for several reasons. One reason could be so that the current administration would be perceived as being cooperative thus allowing the new administration to make a smooth transition. Another reason could be that the appointee wished to stay on in the current position and was being cooperative in hopes that he or she would not be replaced by the new administration.

Professionalism is deemed necessary in a bureaucratic agency because it is the behavior that guides how the bureaucracy is operated. Gargan (1998) stated,

An understanding of public administration professionalism for the 21st century is facilitated by consideration of the domains of activity which determine professional capabilities and specific historic developments that have affected the emergence of core knowledge and exemplary practices. (p. 1097)

All of the respondents credited themselves as being professional and possessing the skills, education, training, and experience needed to perform their respective duties. They also believed that they were appointed to their positions because of their reputation and their ability to perform. Wilson (1887) stated that it was important to have government run by professionals that were trained in their areas of expertise.

One appointee stated, however, that although government is a professional organization the overall business model is not the way government should operate. He agreed that applying business principles to government was not acceptable, that is:

At some point and time you recognize that no matter how much you want to do things in a more business-like manner, government is not, cannot, and should not be like business. People say that government should be run like a business but that is not true. If government is run like business, we don't need government. Business could deal with that and government would have a different purpose. This does not mean that government can not borrow some of business' best practices. Business has to understand that government has a role that business can not serve. When I became real clear that there must be a distinction, I was less frustrated and was able to keep in focus what part of bureaucracy is serving the purpose of government in terms of guarding the broader public interest.

Wilson (1887) argued that it was acceptable to borrow business practices without borrowing the intention. The statement by Woodrow Wilson concurred with this respondent's views when he discussed business practices in American public administration. Many of the appointees stated that they were able to eliminate the bureaucratic hurdles by cutting deals and knowing when and how to do so. Bureaucratic organizations can become very complicated because of rules involving discretion that must be taken into consideration, particularly those rules pertaining to civil service personnel. A lot of the appointees noted that bureaucratic mandates impeded their progress.

### **Political Influence**

The participants were asked to give their account of the toughest problem they encountered as an appointee and to also describe any political pressures felt at that time. The experiences the respondents described involved various situations that required them to make decisions about very important issues. The themes that emerged and played a role in the decisions that the respondents made were those that involved outside influence from special interests and dealing with the media. The sub-themes were related to how they handled their toughest problem as an agency head, how they handled special

interests and political influence, striking a balance between special interests influence, and balancing special interests influence and professionalism.

Citizens want to know that there is a certain amount of accessibility to the administration. A common response among appointees was that the public wants a mayor who shows interest in the community and therefore it was important for the appointee to see that the mayor participated in warm and fuzzy public appearances such as ribbon cutting ceremonies, press conferences, and meetings with community groups. "Creating and maintaining a large number of acquaintances and friendships is a time-consuming task. Mayors often use ceremonial activities to meet and befriend people" (Kotter & Lawrence, 1974, p. 75). These activities were very important because reelection time begins the day after the candidate is elected. Mayors from strong mayoral forms of government are elected into office. They must build and maintain coalitions and one of the ways this is done is by attending to special interests' concerns and activities.

### *Handling Tough Problems*

The respondents agreed that it was very important to understand and balance the politics of the mayor as well as that of the city council. However, it was also important to keep the mayor informed about any and all situations, particularly tough problems that impacted the constituency, so that plans could be developed that might be driven by the administration. Each respondent acknowledged that he or she was a public servant whose primary responsibility was to maintain the public trust. All were very aware of the importance of working for the good of the community including the delivery of quality service and addressing constituents' needs and concerns. Community groups believe that their issues are most important and feel it is the responsibility of the appointee to listen

and respond. While this occurs, the appointee must also contend with city council members who may criticize him or her for not being responsive enough. However, the appointees must realize that at the end of the day if they feel that their best was given to ensure that every action benefited the public good, their job was well done.

We can bring the public world into being through our talk because we all share the same human condition. We all 'find ourselves,' through careful attentiveness, in an actual world in a network of relationships to things people, presented with many, though not limitless possibilities. In these encounters, both conflictual and harmonious, we make possible the disclosure of meaningful content. (King & Stivers, 1998, p. 44)

One respondent stated,

If the mindset is that you are coming in and working on behalf of the public good you are going to approach issues in a way that tries to look beyond bureaucracy and looks beyond individual players that are in place. You look at what is going to render long term benefits to the public.

#### *Special Interests and Political Influence*

Appointed agency heads must interface with special interests and the pressures of the influence that may be applied by interest groups. The respondents stated, when asked, that there were occasions when political influence would intervene and that they would also put themselves in the position of the constituent.

When it came to running the organization it was agreed that they were trusted as professionals to run their respective areas, but occasionally there were exceptions. One respondent recounted how he had to make a "political decision" to dismiss the Sanitation Director because of pressure being applied from special interests. He stated that although he felt that it was not right morally to dismiss the employee the political decision was made by the Mayor and he had to follow the demands of the hierarchy (appointing authority). This was an example of how an agency head experiences the tension between

politics and administration. In this case, political neutrality was not possible. The appointee had to not only be responsive to the appointing authority but also responsive to the constituency that elected the appointing authority. Generally, the appointees were respected as professionals and were permitted to run their agencies. However, there were occasional occurrences when the mayor would intervene, particularly if there was pressure applied from outside interests. It was these types of occurrences that would raise the tension, particularly when it came to reassuring special interests that their needs would be met.

Several of the participants stated that, while listening to issues of concern, they would put themselves in the position of the constituent as a way of striking a balance. This is done while also listening and responding to councilpersons, who represent the interests of the people. One participant stated it best by saying that he would “walk a mile in somebody’s shoes,” meaning that he would try to see a situation from a different perspective. The difficulty for all appointees, particularly those who were African American, was that they felt they had to be the purest of the pure. They were very aware of their public persona. The media was watching and could always find ways to discredit an appointee, particularly if there was a situation involving a special interest.

Respondents mentioned how the unions would apply pressure to the mayor to have certain actions taken and because of campaign promises made; those actions had to be taken. Pressure also came from organizations, businesses, or a certain community.

Because their concerns are most often ignored or swept away, it should not surprise us that the most likely citizen participants are the ones who are the angriest and the most dedicated to undermining the administrator’s careful efforts. The portrayal of citizens as obstructionists, therefore, can

be directly linked to their weak assigned role in the process. (King & Stivers, 1998, p. 96)

One respondent stated of a particular constituency group, “If you did not clear the bureaucratic path and get service delivery for an issue, they (special interests) would go to the media.”

The literature states special interests and the media affect the way the administrator operates (Appleby, 1945/1997). The literature also states that is almost impossible to separate the intervention of influence by special interests. Appointees are very aware of the tenuous situation that influence from special interests places upon their professional reputation. They are also aware of the public’s perception when an issue of concern is not addressed and the impact the written and visual media has on their careers.

#### *Balancing Special Interests Influence*

A good department head in municipal government must be able to balance the political will of government with the need to deliver services to the citizens. Department heads that are unable to balance the two become ineffective and do not last in municipal government. All respondents agreed that citizens want their trash picked up; they want the streets kept clean, and expect quality service from the city. The respondents all felt that there are certain values and a certain amount of sensitivity that must be exercised. Yet it was crucial that there was an understanding of both scopes of government political and administrative. One respondent stated, “If you serve the mayor well you will serve the residents well.” Waldo’s (1984) argument against the politics-administration dichotomy coincides with this notion. He stated that it is important for public administrators to understand both entities and that the two should be treated as related

and not separate. Waldo stated, “Centrally, what is problematic here is the nature and roles of politics and administration. In essence, we can neither live with or without the distinction, realistically separate the two or find an agreed, proper joining” (p. lv).

Waldo’s assertion played out daily in the life of the politically appointed agency heads in municipal government. Appointees feel the tension of knowing that there is sometimes difficulty bringing the two entities together but also knowing that the two at some point must come together. Successful agency heads have been able to develop an accord between the two (politics and administration) when making decisions and developing policy. This enables them to operate in a more efficient and effective manner. Listed below is a brief story of how one respondent felt about having to dismiss the sanitation director because of political pressure:

When the Mayor came into office the Sanitation Director and Waste Water Treatment Director were targets of not mainstream but fringe environmental groups in the community. A big part of their political support for the Mayor during his [campaign] was that he would [in turn] fire the Director of Sanitation. It did not make any sense because the Director was really good. We were two years away from (a major event), we had a lot of things to get done and sanitation was at the heart of what had to happen for support with this event. The trash had to be picked up and the city had to be kept neat and clean. It was not about the roads or waste water. It was about sanitation. The director of sanitation was a great sanitation guy. I understood that these people did not like him but we had a job to do. The Mayor did not want to hear that and insisted that I fire the Sanitation Director. I replied that he was the Mayor and; therefore, I would do as I was told. So I went to the Sanitation Director and told him that the Mayor was making me fire him because there are some environmentalists that “want your head.” I told the Director that I did not want to fire him but the Mayor was ordering me to do it. Three months later when we were in operational confusion with the trash pick up and everything else the Mayor had to bring him back. So I had to make a political decision but it was not a moral decision. I did not think it was the right thing to do in a human way or in a leadership way, but I had to recognize that the Mayor had every right politically and legally to do it and, as much as I did not like it, I had to be a part of it.



In addition, you may encounter an unexpected situation that you must be ready to handle. For example one respondent gave an account of her experience with AIDS and a police cruiser. She stated:

When I was hired, I was told that when I finished my assignment as a public administrator there was no subject matter that I would not feel competent to handle. I've found that to be true. The public sector, especially at the local level, presents the opportunity to touch almost every issue that arises in any environment. Once, I thought I had come upon an example where that would not be the case. When the AIDS epidemic hit, I thought that I would not have to handle any situations involving AIDS. City government was not responsible for health services. However, one day I received a call from motor vehicles that the police picked up an AIDS victim who bled all over the back seat of a police cruiser. We could not throw the car away so we had to take the car in, steam it out, completely gut out and refit the car. As the result of this incident all police and fire personnel had to receive extensive training on how to deal with such situations. This occurrence caused a change in policy. Once again, the theory proved itself out. As a public administrator you must touch so many disciplines and issues.

#### *Balancing Special Interest Influence and Professionalism*

When faced with controversy, the respondents indicated several areas of ongoing issues surfaced daily and had to be addressed. Those issues involved returning political favors, being political and being professional, navigating through the system, and remaining loyal to the appointing authority.

Respondents stated that working through tough problems with special interests involved consensus building. Reassuring all parties that their agendas were important was crucial. It was important that each group had a voice and that each voice was heard.

Respondents have expressed their feelings and experiences in several areas and how tension has manifested in those areas. The relationship between performing duties while maintaining levels of professionalism can be difficult particularly when you have to make sure that all stakeholders are satisfied. The question remains as to what happens

when politics is at the forefront of a situation and how it is addressed. We have all heard of instances where politicians have engaged in behaviors that appear to be returning one favor for another. However, how often is the appointee asked to be involved in similar activity where he or she must cooperate with the elected official or special interests to accomplish a goal? When appointees were asked about political involvement, some responded that their mayor did not want them to be political. In fact, they said that they were hired specifically to run their department and the politics was to be left to the mayor. For example, one respondent shared that the only thing he was required to do was to personally decide who he would vote for or to give a financial contribution. Other appointees were expected to engage in quid pro quo. In political circles, the concept of quid pro quo is when one engages in or does something in return for something else. It was interesting to hear how the appointees felt about their political involvement. One appointee stated, "This is the fun part for me. I have been involved in politics since 1966. I have assisted most of the African American elected officials in this area. The politics, for me, was the easiest part. Figuring out what I wanted to ask them for was the hard part." To engage in political activity was a part of the job responsibilities for some of the respondents. In fact, some of the appointees received their appointments not only because of their qualifications for the position but also because of patronage politics. The following story provides an extended example from one person's experience of how political favors work on both sides:

I actually ran two large agencies. First, I was the commissioner and at that time I had 26 years with the department. This was back in 1979, and at that time they were looking for blacks to become chiefs in major cities. So the powers that be were afraid that there would be a push for there to be a black chief in our city. Since I was the battalion chief, they thought that the push would come from me because I was very

political at the time. When you go back 20 to 25 years ago blacks did not understand the political lay of the land. So that the mayor did not get the pressure from the community, I was transferred out of the department to public works. Now we are still thinking about politics and I am sure that the political climate is the same in every big city. We (blacks) seem to get hung up on the notion of "give me this" or "I deserve this". This is the way we used to think years ago. When they sent me to public works I knew in my heart of hearts and in my head that I was not prepared at that time to be a chief. I did not have the administrative experience nor had I been in charge of a lot of people or in charge of running anything so, why would I have the dream of being the chief when I was not prepared at the time?

Therefore, the mayor said for me not to worry about anything. I should go to public works and get some experience but in the mean time they made a white man the new chief. The mayor told me to wait and five years down the road and don't worry it would be my job. Well, me being a good politician and the mayor telling me this, I said ok. I felt at that time they were doing this to me because I was black but I realized politically this was happening to me because of green (money) and not the color of my skin or the color of the white man. It was because politically he had given more. He had bought more tickets, and he had spent more money supporting the mayor at that time than I had and that was the reality of things.

So, I was put in charge of administrative services, and I didn't know what administrative services were but I applied myself. I had this big responsibility. I was in charge of everything in public works from hiring and firing to planning and training. I had the whole gamut. This is what now is called human resources. When the new mayor came into office, he had heard that I learned to be a good administrator. I learned how to wheel and deal and how to get things done because I knew that is what it is all about. In the mean time, while I was there in public works, I was contributing to the political party that was in power. In a city like ours the only way you are going to move is that you be in that political circle and contribute to it. Every so often there was a crack where someone gets into a position. For example I could bring you in because of the power and position I have. They would say that if the chief says this person is ok, and we owe the chief anyway, then it is okay. While in public works I moved up to the number 3 position and I did not have a college degree. I had an associate's degree; I was attending the University, and had all sorts of certificates. They did not care about that, the bottom line was, as a fellow, how are you. They knew that when it came to fundraising I would buy tickets plus I would sell some.

There was a political spot available in the department of transportation. The mayor, at that time needed someone who could take over transportation who was politically acceptable to everyone in the city, and that person was me. He knew that the city council would not fight me

because when each one of them was running for council, who bought their tickets? I was also qualified and I could do the job. I was a good politician of sorts. Therefore he asked if he could appoint me as his commissioner of transportation. Once again, here was a position that I knew nothing about. I told him that I knew nothing about the position and I was not an engineer. He said that I did not have to be and that my reputation as an administrator is what it is all about. I realized that I could handle these jobs but I did not know the impact that I had made. So I took on the task of being the commissioner of transportation. At that time I was in charge of streets, sidewalks, bridges, traffic, and traffic signals. I was determined to do this job.

Sometimes I felt that these appointments were a way to get me out of their hair and they would hope I would fail so that they could get rid of me. I wasn't being paranoid, but I knew how they felt. However, I was a good commissioner. I left that job in 1991 and my former employees run to say good things about me. As time went on and when the mayor was saying that I was a good administrator, there was something else lurking. The guy that was newly appointed the director of public works wanted the department of transportation under him. The new mayor had allegiance to this fellow and he had allegiance to me but, did not have any allegiance to the chief. So the mayor decided to kill two birds with one stone and make me the chief and gives the other guy transportation and everybody would be happy. When the mayor asked me what my plans were I told him that I had planned to retire and he then asked me to become chief. The mayor stated that that it was time for the other guy to go and I was promised the position. This is when I got the realization of what it takes and this is how everything works.

This appointee learned how to navigate his way through the system. A part of this navigation was learning to "wheel and deal" and learning to "get things done." It was also interesting to see how he had to "pay the piper" and purchase tickets [to a fundraiser] in support of the politician who was running for public office. Selling or purchasing the tickets was viewed as a sign of political loyalty in support of the politician. One of the characteristics a politician looks for when selecting a candidate for an appointment is loyalty.

The most important reason seems to be a desire above all else for a loyal staff which is controllable. Reminded daily of the frustrations caused by not having complete control over situations that affect his agenda items, a

mayor seems to be driven to eliminate uncertainty from as many areas as possible. In regard to a staff, this means hiring a group whose main qualifications is their *loyalty* and their reliability in executing orders. (Kotter & Lawrence, 1974, p. 83)

This respondent eventually obtained the appointment as a way of rewarding his loyalty and the elected official also kept a commitment that had been made. This does not mean that the appointee has free will to operate according to his own agenda. By obtaining a political appointment one must be loyal to the mayor in every way. One is expected to follow the requests of the elected official or be prepared to step down from the appointed position. The participants' results concur with Kotter and Lawrence (1974).

The effort of the politically appointed agency head to operate on behalf of the public good is challenged when faced with keeping political obligations to special interests. The literature states that citizen involvement in government dates back to the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Both sides differed on the amount of citizenry involvement that should be allowed; however, today citizens *expect* to play an active role in government. The public expects appointees to be responsive and expects the mayor to be accessible. Appleby (1945/1997) examined how special interests affect the appointee's action. The appointed agency head understands the importance of maintaining the public trust as well as listening and responding to issues of public concern. Although the appointee may have to solicit the support of outsiders to get the job done (Long, 1949), the tension from political influence often is the result of attempting to separate professional values while addressing external demands. Balancing the demands of the public, remaining loyal to the appointing authority, and remaining professional while navigating through what is or is not politically correct is an experience that remains at the core of the two conflicting values.

## **Accountability (Life in the Fishbowl)**

The literature defines accountability as, “any situation in which individuals who exercise power are expected to be constrained and in fact reasonably constrained by external means and to a degree by internal norms” (McKinney & Howard, 1998, p. 37). Respondents mentioned that they were always under public scrutiny. When asked, they felt that their accountability was both administrative and political. They believed that they were accountable to everyone and were committed to doing what was right.

The center of the politics-administration dichotomy is both political accountability and administrative accountability. Political accountability refers to being accountable to the citizens, and administrative accountability refers to accountability to the bureaucratic organization. These external obligations (political and administrative accountability) are sources of control that may or may not limit the amount of discretion that may be used by the appointed agency head (Finer, 1941; Friedrich, 1940).

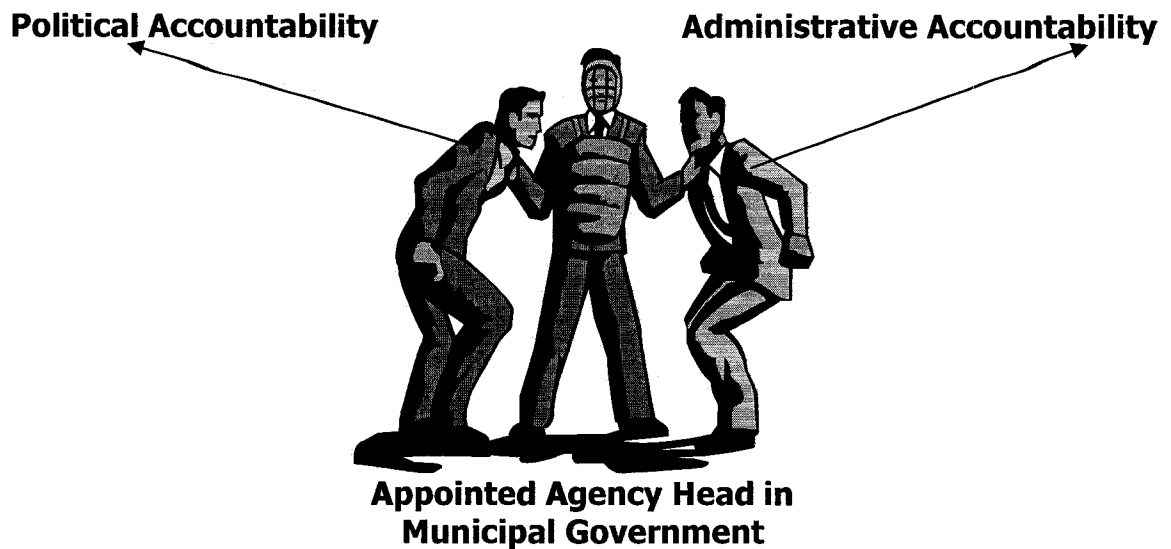
### *Political and Administrative Accountability*

Accountability in government tends to be the bipolar disorder that results in tension because of the split between the two entities; politics and administration (see Figure 1). As public servants, it was agreed by all, they were accountable to everyone specifically: the tax payers, employees, and the mayor. However, each also felt that it was most important to maintain public trust. As a professional, accountability is associated with training, expertise, and knowledge of one’s field. Each official is bound by certain standards but each official also knows the difference between right and wrong and has the capacity to act and think accordingly. An occasion may arise when a person is pushed towards doing something that feels wrong. One department head stated that

she was asked to perform a task that may have been viewed as illegal, as an example of how one may be placed in such a situation. This respondent referenced an encounter with a commissioner that would have put her in an unfavorable situation and totally accountable for the outcome. She stated:

I had one situation where the commissioner asked that I perform a task that, even if it wasn't illegal, it was so inappropriate it may have been viewed as illegal. My response to the request was to prepare the documents and, although I had signature authority, not sign them. I submitted the documents to the commissioner and told him that I was not going to sign the documents but showed him where he could sign to make his request happen. Because I had a commissioner that lacked integrity, he would not sign the document nor would he sign any other document. However, he would have had me sign them all. When I said to him that he must sign the document in order for it to happen, he then told me to figure something else out. That is what the commissioner should have stated initially when I informed him what he would have to do to expedite the situation. I was not in the position to say that I would not sign; instead, my creative way of protecting both him and me was to prepare the document for his signature.

She stated that part of accountability was commitment, and a person who is committed tends to do the right thing. A common perception of the respondents was that they were public figures. It was stated, "You are always in a fishbowl and you have to be mindful of responses and input."



**Figure 1. Tension Experienced by Appointed Agency Heads in Municipal Government**

Spicer and Terry (1993) stated clearly that administrators have every right to question any situation that may appear to be unethical:

This does not mean that administration should ignore special directives issued by elected leaders. Neither does it rule out a generally cooperative relationship between elected leaders and administrators. Rational individuals would never agree to constitutional rules that produce a runaway bureaucracy. However, the logic of a constitution does not suggest that public administrators are empowered to raise questions with elected leaders, to try to persuade them to sometimes change course and to interpret directives in a manner which permits them to limit the abuse of power by elected officials. (p. 241)

#### *Ethical Concerns*

There are certain principles and strong traits of character that will not allow a professional to operate in a manner that is unjust. Rosenbloom (1998) stated, "Today, that inner check is sometimes constitutionally required to avoid personal liability. Moreover, constitutional requirements have been augmented by a widely accepted, comprehensive code of ethics that can fruitfully inform an inner check" (p. 554). All of



the respondents indicated in some way that there was a moral compass that would not allow them to do anything that would bring embarrassment or cause them to be in a compromising situation. One respondent stated that if he had been in a situation that may have caused him to cross the line, he would have resigned. Another stated, "I was not going to look bad nor was I going to have the mayor look bad."

Having the training, education, technical expertise, and a good team to pull everything together was important in performing the appointee's required duties, however, the reputation as an administrator was important as well. Each appointee was very aware of his or her standing in the community as well as with peers. Friedrich (1940) stated in his essay that the public servant has a sense of duty and the desire to be approved by his/her peers. He also stated that there are laws and codes of ethics that public officials are bound by and accept (Friedrich). Credibility is important because of the constant scrutiny public administrators face. It is important that public administrators display core values and a commitment to public service so that they may continue to maintain the public trust.

Although all of the respondents knew that they served at the pleasure of the mayor they ultimately believed that they were accountable to the citizens. The respondents also felt a level of accountability to the employees. One respondent stated that it was important that he did not do anything that his wife or family would be ashamed to read in the newspaper. Another respondent showed how he was successful in balancing the political and administrative tension. This particular respondent had over thirty (30) years experience working in municipal government. His professional expertise allowed him to

step outside of the box and take another view. He would always think of his mother and other senior citizens when he was performing his duties. He stated:

I was accountable to the citizens, but even better than that, I was accountable to my mother. I would always think about the citizens when making decisions, particularly the seniors. For example, the recycling container that is used by the city was designed by the sanitation department. Most of the recycling containers are eighteen gallons. People have to pick up these containers and carry them curbside. The recycling containers we used in the city had wheels, rope, and a cover. I thought about my mother having to try and carry a container. I don't know if you have visited much but the residents' lots are wide and long. Can you image an eighty-year old woman trying to carry a container? So when designing my projects, I kept the lay of the land in mind and the age of the people that would be affected. I would always take into consideration the seniors. I tell everybody if my mother could not do it, we are not going to do it! I would always use my mother and her best friend as an example. My mother was an extraordinary woman. She would walk two miles a day everyday for over twenty years. My mother was still driving up until the day she passed away.

Appointees must balance the tension of being accountable to the appointing authority and to the public. Respondents stated that their success in balancing the two was assisted by having a committed team of employees. However, one respondent stated, "Since an important aspect of being an administrator is having a good management team with strong managers, it was a challenge at the city because most of the managers were "inherited" [i.e., already there]. Sometimes it was difficult because many of the people in the department had been there. It is important that you have a good team with strong managers."

Political accountability or being accountable to special interest has a direct effect on decisions. The anticipation of public reaction causes the appointee to act with caution. Special interests and the constituency have an effect on what an administrator does in government (Appleby, 1945/1997). The literature states that bureaucrats and elected officials suffer from the criticisms of special interests (Herring, 1936/1997). Appointed

department heads are criticized if a job is not done to the constituents' satisfaction and if working relationships are not developed with outside interest groups. The appointees as well as the elected official have to justify to the public all decisions made. Politically, each constituency group wants to be assured it has a voice on issues of concern and that those issues are addressed. The administration wants results, efficiency, and the right answer in resolving issues.

### **Conclusion**

The historical literature in public administration debates both sides of the politics administration dichotomy; however, there has been no significant research on how political appointees experience the tension between them in their working lives. The results of this research have indicated that being a politically appointed agency head in municipal government requires one to be able to balance political accountability and administrative accountability. Specifically, it is important to be able to develop relationships with constituencies while making sure that the appointing authority's agenda is fulfilled. The politically appointed agency head must deal with special interests, the media, and being loyal to the appointing authority while working in a complex bureaucratic organization. It is important to understand the nature of bureaucracy and how it works in order to be an effective agency head. But the issue of how to resolve the tension that exists as the result of balancing the obligations of the position will continue to be an ongoing debate.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The interviewees' comments on these concepts involving politics and administration tell us *we must continue to explore options and develop alternatives to the way we do business*. This study shows that the issue of the politics-administration dichotomy cannot be resolved and that politics is as much a part of government as governance and service delivery. Politics and political influence will always be a part of the governmental process. Political appointees will continue to feel tension when the two entities come into play; however, we now see that the tension is one that is created when politics and administration must work together. There is no way to resolve this tension because the issues that bring about the tension can not be easily resolved.

Accountability to both the political and bureaucratic side introduces a human/value component that causes tension between the two. The tension that is derived in practice by the appointee in municipal government must be studied to see why it tends to be value laden and whether the development of policy may assist in resolving some of the issues that cause tension. The discourse in public administration has demonstrated that bureaucracy has been guilty of delivering inadequate service. The system has been

plagued with inefficient and ineffective areas of operation, creating feelings of mistrust among citizens. As long as agency environmental issues and complacency are allowed to occur, bureaucracy will continue to be problematic.

This research suggests that further studies are needed to explore and examine ways of reducing the tension in practice. There must be a process that will allow professionals to perform effectively and use their expertise in their official role while also having the freedom to address changes in antiquated policies that place constraints on effective government operations. In an effort to change the mindset of civil service employees, we must develop ways to implement policy that can change historically negative environmental issues that have been allowed to persist. We need to stress the importance of citizen involvement so that citizens can play an active role in redefining the process but also respect the nature of role of the appointee when administratively he or she answers to the appointing authority. This process should be a collaborative effort in problem solving that combines the expertise and technical knowledge of the professional administrator along with citizen problem solving.

As we continue to evolve in the field of Public Administration, we must refocus and develop policies that build on a shared system of values between government and the people. New concepts and developments on how a “bureaucracy” should be run reflect that we need to change how we conduct business. New Public Administration and the reinventing movement are two reforms that attempt to achieve efficiency. With changes in dialogue and through the redefinition of our system, changes may result in a government that is inclusive of all citizens and performs efficiently according to the needs of our society. It is important that there be a clear understanding of when the

administration and political influence may or may not be an asset to the political appointee in decision making.

This dissertation shed light on how appointees deal with the tension in bureaucratic administrations in strong mayoral forms of government. Experienced political appointees may develop outside relations as a means of stability and a way of establishing essential contacts in the external environment. Political appointees who may be less committed to outside support may find it difficult to associate themselves with a particular group during critical times of decision making. This may be due, in part, to the pressures that come with that type of loyalty, which may cause some appointees to feel that they are compromising their principles and conceding to a lower ethical standard. This research increased our understanding of some of the behaviors as well as the tension experienced by the politically appointed agency head in strong mayoral forms of government. It is hoped that future studies are conducted that will continue to explore tension between politics and administration. Future studies are essential to contributing to the body of knowledge and developing new theories in the field of public administration.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A Farmer. (1788). In *Anti-Federalist Papers*. New York: Random House.
- Appleby, P. (1945/1997). Government Is Different. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 122–126). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Barzelay, M., & Armajani, B. J. (1992/1997). Breaking through Bureaucracy. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 491–513). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Borden, M. (Ed.). (1965). *The Antifederalist Papers*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
- Brauer, C. (1988, November). Lost in Transition. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 262, 74–80.
- Carroll, J. D. (1996). Introduction to Reinventing Public Administration. *Public Administration Review*, 56(3), 245–246.
- Cayer, J. N. (1998). Public Personnel and Labor Relations. In *Handbook of Public Administration* (2nd ed., pp. 321–356). New York: Marcel Dekker Press.
- Cohen, S., & Eimicke, W. B. (1998). Trends in 20th Century United States Government Ethics. Unpublished Working Paper. Columbia University.
- Cook, B. J. (1998). Politics, Political Leadership, and Public Management. *Public Administration Review*, 58(3), 225–230.
- Dubnick, M. J. (1996). Challenges to American Public Administration: Complexity, Bureaucratization, and the Culture of Distrust (Rutgers University, Symposium Address). *International Journal of Public Administration*, 19(9), 1481–1508.
- Earle, E. M. (1937). Introduction. In *The Federalist*. New York: Random House.
- Federal Farmer. (1787). In *Anti-Federalist Papers*. New York: Random House.
- Ferman, B. (1985). *Governing the Ungovernable City: Political Skill, Leadership, and the Modern Mayor*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Finer, H. (1941). Administrative Responsibility in Democratic Government. *Public Administration Review*, 1(4), 335–350.
- Frederickson, H. G. (1971/1997). Towards a New Public Administration. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 329–341). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

- Friedrich, C. J. (1940). Public Policy and the Nature of Administrative Responsibility. In *Public Policy* (pp. 3–24). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fry, B. R., & Nigro, L. G. (1998). Five Great Issues in the Profession of Public Administration. In *Handbook of Public Administration* (2nd ed.). New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.
- Gargan, J. J. (1998). The Public Administration Community and the Search for Professionalism. In J. Rabin, W. B. Hildreth & G. J. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Administration* (2nd ed.). New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc.
- Gawthrop, L. (1997). Democracy, Bureaucracy, and Hypocrisy Redux: A Search for Sympathy and Compassion. *Public Administration Review*, 57(3), 205–210.
- Goodnow, F. J. (1900/1997). Politics and Administration. In *Classics in Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 27–29). Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Hamilton, A. (1787). Federalist No. 31. In *Federalist Papers*. New York: Random House.
- Hecl, H. (1977). *Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Herring, E. P. (1936/1997). Public Administration and the Public Interest. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics in Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 76–80). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Kelly, R. M. (1998). An Inclusive Democratic Polity, Representative Bureaucracies, and the New Public Management. *Public Administration Review*, 58(3), 201–208.
- King, C. S., & Stivers, C. (1998). *Government Is Us*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kotter, J. P., & Lawrence, P. R. (1974). *Mayors in Action: Five Approaches to Urban Governance*. New York: Wiley Interscience Publication.
- Koven, S. G. (1992). Base Closings and the Politics Administration Dichotomy Revisited. *Public Administration Review*, 52(5), 426–531.
- LaCerra, C. (1997). *Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Tammany Hall of New York*. Lanham, NY: University Press of America.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1936). *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*. New York: McGraw–Hill Book Company, Inc.



- Lewis, D. E. (2005). Political Appointments, Bureau Chiefs, and Federal Management Performance [Electronic Version], from [www.www.princeton.edu/research/papers/09\\_05\\_dl.pdf](http://www.www.princeton.edu/research/papers/09_05_dl.pdf)
- Long, N. E. (1949). Power and Administration. *Public Administration Review*, 9(4), 257–264.
- Martin, D. (1988). The Fading Legacy of Woodrow Wilson. *Public Administration Review*, 48(2), 631–636.
- McKinney, J. B., & Howard, L. C. (1998). *Public Administration* (2nd ed.). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, Inc.
- McSwite, O. C. (1997). *Legitimacy in Public Administration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Meier, K. J. (1987). *Politics and the Bureaucracy: Policy Making in the Fourth Branch of Government* (2nd ed.). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.
- Merton, R. K. (1940/1997). Bureaucratic Structure and Personality. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 100–108). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Milakovich, M. E., & Gordon, G. J. (2001). *Public Administration in America* (7th ed.). Boston: Bedford.
- Mosher, F. C. (1982). *Democracy and the Public Service* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Osborne, D., & Gabler, T. (1992/1997). Reinventing Government: Introduction. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 522–537). Forth Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Petshek, K. R. (1973). *The Challenge of Urban Reform: Policies and Programs in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Rabin, J., Hildreth, W. B., & Miller, G. (1998). *Handbook of Public Administration* (2nd ed.). New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc.
- Rohr, J. A. (1986). *To Run a Constitution: The Legitimacy of the Administrative State*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Rosenbloom, D. H. (1993). Have an Administrative Rx? Don't Forget the Politics. *Public Administration Review*, 53(6), 503–507.

- Rosenbloom, D. H. (1998). *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shafritz, J. M., & Hyde, A. C. (1997). *Classics of Public Administration* (4th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Sherwood, F. P. (1997). Responding to the Decline in Public Service Professionalism. *Public Administration Review*, 57(3), 211–217.
- Simon, H. A. (1997). *Administrative Behavior* (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press.
- Spicer, M. W., & Terry, L. D. (1993). Legitimacy, History, and Logic: Public Administration and the Constitution. *Public Administration Review*, 53(3), 239–246.
- Stehr, S. D. (1997). Top Bureaucrats and the Distribution of Influence in Regan's Executive Branch. *Public Administration Review*, 57(1), 75–81.
- Stivers, C. (1990). Active Citizenship and Public Administration. In *Refounding Public Administration* (pp. 246-273). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stivers, C. (1993). *Gender Images in Public Administration: Legitimacy and the Administrative State*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stivers, C. (1994). The Listening Bureaucrat: Responsiveness in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review*, 54(4), 364–369.
- Storing, H., & Dry, M. (1985). *The Anti-Federalist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Terry, L. D. (1995). *Leadership of Public Bureaucracies: The Administrator as Conservator*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Terry, L. D. (1998). Administrative Leadership, Neo-Managerialism, and the Public Management Movement. *Public Administration Review*, 58(3), 194–198.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Waldo, D. (1984). *The Administrative State* (2nd ed.). New York: Holmes and Mier Publishers.
- Wamsley, G. L., Bacher, R. N., Goodsell, C. T., Kronenberg, P. S., Rohr, J. A., Stivers, C. M., et al. (1990). *Refounding Public Administration*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Wamsley, G. L., Goodsell, C., Rohr, J., Stivers, C., White, O., & Wolf, J. (1988). The Public Administration and the Government Process: Refocusing the American Dialogue. In *Continual History of the American Administrative State* (pp. 291–315). New York: Free Press.
- Weber, M. (1958). *Essays in Sociology*. In H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills (Eds.). New York: Oxford Press.
- Webster, M. A. (1972). *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Company.
- West, W. F. (1984). Structuring Administrative Discretion: The Pursuit of Rationality and Responsiveness. *American Journal of Political Science*, 28(4), 340–358.
- White, L. D. (1926/1997). Introduction to the Study of Public Administration. In J. Shafritz & A. Hyde (Eds.), *Classics in Public Administration* (4th ed., pp. 44–52). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Wilson, J. Q. (1989). *Bureaucracy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wilson, W. (1887). The Study of Administration. *Political Science Quarterly*, 11(2), 197–222.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**  
**PERMISSION LETTERS**

**Version 1**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As a part of a doctoral research project, interviews are being conducted in conjunction with Cleveland State University's Department of Urban Studies. During our telephone conversation it was mentioned that the purpose of the interviews is to assess to what extent bureaucratic and political values have an effect on how political appointees, in strong mayoral forms of government, perform assigned duties. You and several former government appointees have been selected to participate in this interview so that we may obtain information on the attitudes and behaviors of public administrators that may be affected by the political environment. This interview is strictly voluntary; therefore, your participation is appreciated.

The face to face interview will be brief and should require no more than forty-five (45) minutes to complete. Your name, or any other information that may easily identify you as a respondent, is not required for your participation in this survey. We value your opinion as a professional; therefore, your confidentiality and anonymity is protected and respected. If there are any questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630. You may also contact me at (216) 221-3577 or (216) 687-5261 with any questions and to confirm your participation.

This interview is strictly voluntary; therefore, your participation is appreciated. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

Denise McCray - McCall  
Ph.D. Student  
Department of Urban Studies  
Cleveland State University

## Version 2

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As I mentioned when we spoke by phone, I am interviewing former political appointees in municipal government as part of a doctoral research project in Cleveland State University's Department of Urban Studies. During our conversation I mentioned that the purpose of the research is to assess to what extent bureaucratic and political values have an effect on how political appointees, in strong mayoral forms of government, do their work. You and several other former government appointees have been asked to participate in this research so I can gain information and understanding of the attitudes and perspectives of high-level public administrators in a political environment. This interview is strictly voluntary; therefore, your participation is appreciated.

The length of the face to face interview will depend on the length of your responses. A reasonable estimate is one hour. I value your opinion as a professional; therefore, your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected and respected. If there are any questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630. You may also contact me at (216) 221-3577 or (216) 687-5261 with any questions.

I will phone you in a few days to set up a time for me to come and talk with you. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my project.

Sincerely,

Denise McCray - McCall  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Urban Studies  
Cleveland State University

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONS**

(lead questions in **BOLD**)

I am interested in what it was like to run a large agency in a large city? Can you tell me a story that really illustrates that?

**Category – Bureaucracy - What were some of the factors or things that helped you do a good job? Can you tell me a story about that?**

What were some of the bureaucratic organizational mandates?

**Were there things that kept you from doing a better job than you wanted to do?**

How did you perform your duties when the organization may have had rules in place that impede progress and performance?

**Category – Accountability - A lot of the writing in public administration stresses the issue of accountability. I’m interested in how you dealt with the need to be accountable and whom you felt accountable to? Can you describe a situation that illustrates how that worked out in practice?**

When decisions were made who were you accountable?

**Category – Political Administration Dichotomy - Many people say that being a politically appointed agency head involves a lot of tension or conflict between administration and politics. Is this a tension that you felt in your job? Can you describe a situation where these two were in conflict?**

How do you describe the tension?

In what specific ways did these values (politics and administration) influence your decisions and how did you take both values into account?

Did you ever make a decision that you saw as being “purely” political or “purely” bureaucratic?

What are some of the specific situations that you had to face in which these two sets of values were in play?



**Category - Political Influence - What would you say the toughest problem you ever had to deal with? How did you deal with it?**

What political pressures did you feel?

Should politics be allowed to intervene when administrators are making decisions?

What are the effects of political influence and special interests on the appointee when making decisions in municipal government?

**Category – (Bur., Pol. Inf., Acct.) - As you think back on your experiences, what did you learn? With hindsight, is there anything you would do differently?**

Why are these perceptions important in the field of Public Administration?

**Category – (Bur., Pol. Inf., Acct.) - Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't talked about?**