

**Adaptation of Models versus Variations in Form: Classifying Structures of  
City Government (2010)**

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ABSTRACT

A great deal of variability exists in American local government structures. It would be useful to analyze the differences in outcomes associated with different structures, but two factors stand in the way. First, there is no agreement about how to classify city governments. Second, many of the components used in existing classifications are inaccurately reported or missing in survey data. In this research note, a new classification system based on three easily determined components is developed and used to measure the current distribution of forms and variations in an expanded dataset that includes almost all cities over 10,000 in population.

In local government, Americans can choose among a wide range of structural features that determine form, methods of election, and assignments of responsibilities to officials. Scholars have been interested in which structures are selected among these options, how differences in structure affect the performance and outputs of local government, and how the use of structures is changing. There is disagreement, however, about which aspects of structure to emphasize and how to classify various combinations of features. In order to advance the research on the relationship between structure and the performance of city government, it is important to first assess and strengthen the model used to classify structures and improve the quality of data used in the classification. This research note examines how form of government is classified and uses an improved dataset to precisely measure variations within form for cities over 10,000 in population.

The primary structural issue in the American local government is choice of form of government (Hassett and Watson 2007). Form is the constitutional and legal basis for assigning authority and functions to officials in government and creates its overall framework. It has typically been used as dichotomous variable in research on topics such as spending and performance in city government (Hayes and Chang 1990; Nunn 1996; Morgan and Pelissero 1980; Feiock and Kim 2001; Reschenthaler and Thompson 1996; Strum and Corrigan 1998) or adoption of innovations (Kearney, Feldman and Scavo, 2000; Moon and deLeon 2001) even though it is evident that not all mayor-council and council-manager cities are identical in their characteristics. Recent spending studies differ on whether form of government is related to budget levels—MacDonald (2008) finds no difference based on form whereas Coate and Knight (2009) do—but neither takes into account the differences within forms.

A number of city government classification schemes have mixed form and other structural features or base the classification on a large number of form characteristics. These classifications have rarely been used as an independent variable in quantitative research, and there are two different questions about their usability. When the classification uses council elections and other non-form features, it would not be clear which element was being measured in the variable since it would encompass more than “form.” On the other hand, when specific aspects of form such as budgetary and appointment authority are used to classify cities, it may be difficult to obtain the data causing many missing cases, or it may be difficult to interpret the specific measures.

We seek to identify an intermediate approach that captures important variations in form without creating undue complexity or causing data acquisition problems. This requires differentiating conceptually the features that are likely to produce variation and examining how they can be measured in local government survey data. The questions examined in this

discussion are the following: what are the essential characteristics of forms, and what are the important variations within forms that should be captured in the construction of a variable on form of government? As a test of the variable, we have determined the number of cities that display each of the variations and the number that cannot be classified due to missing data. Using an enhanced dataset for all cities over 10,000 in population in the United States, the proportion of cities with each variation is calculated. Thus, this study provides baseline data that can be used to assess change. Future research can use form of government as a variable with a range of values rather than as a dichotomous variable. Better measurement of form will make possible more in-depth examination of questions that interest scholars, practitioners, and citizens. First, in what ways does form of government make a difference in the governance of communities? Second, to what extent do variations within each major form alter the impact? For example, is the key difference between cities whether they have an elected mayor or an appointed CAO rather than form per se? Choosing between forms and shaping the characteristics of a form are important issues being faced in many cities.

#### The Distinction between Models and Forms

There has been emphasis recently on the supposed “blurring” of distinctions between forms, “adaptation” or “convergence” of forms, and development of “hybrid” forms as a new phenomenon in local government (Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood 2004). Ehrenhalt (2006) views developments in cities as the “merging” of forms. In his view, an increasing number of cities “have jumbled the systems together so thoroughly that it’s impossible to put them in any category at all.” These generalizations about the mixing of models or systems run the risk of blurring the importance of form of government as a variable.

Scholars and activists have long been interested in broader classifications that combine a number of structural features. The reform versus traditional “plans” or “models” include form

and also election features—at-large and nonpartisan elections in the reform model and district and partisan elections in the traditional model (Banfield and Wilson 1963). In empirical analysis of determinants of spending (Lineberry and Fowler 1967; Liebert 1974), each component of the model was treated as a separate variable.<sup>1</sup> Change in one component alters the degree of correspondence to the model but does not alter the other components, e.g., change from at-large to district elections changes the reformism score but does not change the form of government or the ballot type. In comparison, the “adapted” cities classifications by Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004) and Carr and Karuppusamy (2008a) include form, elections, and other characteristics to identify city types.

At one time, cities in the United States were more likely to correspond completely to one model or the other, although there has always been substantial variation in practice (Svara 1977; Maser 1985, 125).<sup>2</sup> In this sense, adaptation of models is old news. Now there is greater variety in the combinations, but it is important to maintain a clear conceptual distinction between form and the broader models. It is not helpful to use the terms interchangeably as when Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004) argue that by the 1990s “the fusion of these two *models* had resulted in the dominant modern *form* of American local government, the adapted city” (7; italics added).

In summary, despite the variety in how structures are combined, a distinction can be made between classifying cities based on models and identifying variations in form of government. How council members are elected, whether other officials are elected, membership of the mayor on the council, whether elected officials are full or part-time, support for council committees, and other structural features affect the political and administrative characteristics of a city, but they do not in themselves or in combination change the form of government.

#### Characteristics of Form

Drawing on the study of comparative city government (Mouritzen and Svara 2002), there is one major factor that differentiates the mayor-council and council-manager forms of government despite the variations in the use of other structural features: allocation of authority to officials. Analogous to the presidential/parliamentary distinction, the difference is whether authority is allocated to a single branch or to separate branches. The mayor-council form separates the authority for executive functions from the council (Banfield and Wilson 1963). The mayor in the mayor-council form is a separate and independent executive (despite variation in strength) who functions alongside a council with its own independent authority. The separate powers can lead to conflicting signals from the mayor and the council to the city administrative staff about what is expected and creates a situation in which administrators can play the mayor and council against each other, evading direct control by either (Svara, 1990; Nollenberger 2008). As Tsebelis (1995) argues about governmental structures generally, when there are two or more “veto players” whose approval is needed to secure change as in separation of powers forms, the bureaucracy is subject to less control than when there is a single veto player, as in parliamentary systems or the quasi-parliamentary council-manager form. Coate and Knight (2009) hypothesize substantially different budgetary outcomes in cities with separation of powers because the mayor and council can check each other.

The council-manager form places all governmental authority in the hands of the city council, thus eliminating separation of powers, and provides for a chief administrative officer as a “controlled executive” (Childs 1913). The form matches the characteristics of unified authority (Rohr 1986, 18-19), because the legislature can completely control the executive and is responsible for appointing and removing the city manager.<sup>3</sup>

Within this overriding difference, there is variation in specific features that may alter the performance of the government and impact the degree to which cities with different form vary in

outputs or behavior. Some variations may be closer to others across forms, e.g., all cities with CAOs or elected mayors may be more alike than cities of the same form without one of these features (Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood 2004, 100–101), or the variations may be associated only with differences within form. These possibilities have never been tested empirically in part because of failure to identify the salient variations. Classifications for cities have been developed for descriptive purposes but have not been converted into a form usable for quantitative analysis. In the next two sections, other approaches to classification are examined and then a revised approach is proposed.

### CLASSIFYING MAJOR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

A number of observers and scholars have developed new typologies for the classification of forms of city governments in the United States, arguing that the traditional forms are no longer sufficiently descriptive or have proposed classifications using form and other features as well. Before we attempt to add our own typology, it is helpful to summarize these classifications.

#### Approaches Based on Form

Bill Hansell (1999) suggested that council-manager cities be divided into the “classic” form, the “mayor (at-large) council-manager” form, and the “mayor (empowered)-council-manager.”<sup>4</sup> The analyses by DeSantis and Renner (2002) and MacManus and Bullock (2003) used these categories to re-classify council-manager cities. Additionally, each added four categories for re-classifying mayor-council cities (strong mayor with CAO, strong mayor without CAO, weak mayor with CAO, and weak mayor without CAO).

DeSantis and Renner (2003) used the ICMA form of government survey data from 1996 whereas MacManus and Bullock (2004) used the 2001 dataset. Although they used the same names to classify the cities, some elements of the decision-points regarding how to classify

individual cities are different. The categories were based on five variables: self-identified form of government (council-manager vs. mayor-council), whether there is a chief administrative officer, method for selecting the mayor (elected at-large or selected from within council membership), whether the mayor has veto power, and who has the responsibility for formulating the budgets and appointing department heads. Cities that fit in none of the categories remained unclassified. The breakdown of cities by form of governments in these two studies is presented in Table 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Both typologies begin with the assumption that classic council-manager form has a mayor selected from council membership, rather than at-large. Additionally, both analyses left a significant number of cities unclassified. In the DeSantis and Renner typology, 22% of the mayor-council cities, and in the MacManus and Bullock article, 37% of council-manager cities and 58% of the mayor-council cities were not classified. A central problem with these approaches stems from the use of the budgeting and appointment authority variables. Both may be missing in the survey data, and the responses are frequently reported inaccurately. The survey response may indicate an interpretation of the perceived practice rather than the charter authority. For example, city council approval of department head appointments may be perceived by one observer as pro forma with the real power belonging to the mayor or by another as joint appointment by the mayor and council. Furthermore, the assignment of responsibilities to the CAO in mayor-council cities is difficult to interpret without knowing how the CAO is related to the mayor as indicated by the appointment of this official.<sup>5</sup> If a responsibility is assigned to the CAO but the CAO is controlled by the mayor, who exercises the responsibility? The difference between the two studies in the distributions of variations using similar methods of classification indicates problems with inter-rater reliability using the multiple criteria. Finally, the

classification has no ordinal dimension to it, and this limits the usefulness of their approach in developing a more nuanced measure of form of government.

#### Approaches Using Models (and Forms)

Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004) created a five-category classification—political, adapted political, conciliated, adapted administrative, and administrative cities—based on the consideration of both form of government and election practices. When applied to classifying form of government, they specify only two definitive factors—the mayor appoints and terminates the CAO with consent of council in the conciliated cities and the mayor is not a member of the council in the political and political adapted cities (Table 7.4, 108-109). The other variables—mayoral selection method, veto power, full-time status, and staff support—are stated in conditional terms, and it is possible for a city to fit more than one category. There has been no attempt to apply this framework to cities responding to a national survey on form of government. As a descriptive classification based on the traditional and reform model, it highlights the increased intermixture of the differing logics for organizing governments, but it does not focus on identifying variations within each form. The conciliated type is a complete intermixture that can be found in cities using either formal platform. Overall, the classification purports to capture gradations on a scale from political to administrative and, thus, has an implied ordinal quality.

Carr and Karuppusamy (2008a) suggest a coding revision to the adapted cities model to improve its empirical value. They start with form of government as a platform and identify the pure type of political and administrative city along with an adapted type and a conciliated type for each form. Thus, they have six categories rather than the five identified by Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood. They use a broad array of features including features not directly related to form such as council size, constituency type, and staffing policies for the mayor and council—a

total of 10 features for each category. Carr and Karuppusamy classify Michigan cities as 3% political cities, 68% adapted cities, and 29% administrative cities compared to a breakdown by form of 31% mayor-council and 69% council-manager (Carr and Karuppusamy 2008b). By form, 83% of the mayor-council cities are conciliated. Only 8% of the council-manager cities are conciliated, but over half are classified as adapted.

#### CAO Appointment in the Other Approaches

These attempts at developing typologies for forms of government or city governments are divided in their use of CAO-appointment as an indicator in developing the classifications. DeSantis and Renner do not include it. MacManus and Bullock include the power of the mayor to nominate the city manager to distinguish council-manager cities, but do not consider CAO appointment in mayor-council cities. Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood distinguish adapted political and conciliated based in part on whether there is a CAO selected by the mayor (classified as adapted political) or mayoral selection with approval of the council (classified as conciliated). Carr and Karuppusamy do not include selection of the CAO in their classification.

#### REVISED APPROACH TO CLASSIFYING FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Our approach starts with form of government distinguished by the method of allocating authority. The possibility that cities may have a “hybrid” form that includes elements of both separation of powers and integrated authority is not ruled out a priori, but in our approach there must be a blending of the constitutional principles—not simply a blending of features from the broader models. Within the forms, we propose that two dimensions be used to classify the variations building on the previous approaches. The two are conceptually linked and both represent progression from low to high.

- The extent to which the mayor is distinguished from the council.

- The professional status of the CAO based on the range of elected officials to which the CAO is accountable and the CAO's autonomy in determining scope of responsibilities

Both dimensions have structural manifestations. Each dimension is briefly explored.

### Mayor and Council

In council-manager cities, one distinction between the two sets of elected officials is whether the mayor is appointed by the council or directly elected. Although the method of selection is not associated with differences in the formal powers of the mayor, it has been an important feature of the council-manager form that has been handled differently across cities and countries and subject to considerable debate. Selection from within the council was recommended in the second Model City Charter that endorsed the council-manager form, and it was long defended by traditional reformers (Childs 1965, 39-47). Some argue that direct election is a major change that alters the underlying form. Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004, 122) argue that direct election produces separation of powers type conflict. On the other hand, direct election has potential positive effects that are consistent with the form of government. It promotes greater cooperation among officials (xxxx 2009), and directly elected mayors are more likely to be visionaries who contribute to effective goal setting (Svara 2008). This provision impacts the image and role of the mayor by giving the mayor a citywide office, direct relationship with all the voters, and an implied mandate to lead. There are other provisions that can further distinguish the mayor from the council by empowering the mayor (Hansell 1999). These include setting budget priorities, expanded staff, and veto power. A key provision is a separate formal role in the appointment or and removal of the city manager.

In mayor-council cities, the mayor is distinguished from the council by virtue of heading the executive branch and being the chief executive. Some approaches to measure the power of the mayor encounter data and interpretation problems. Another measure is the extent to which

the mayor shares authority with the council to appoint the CAO—an important feature that is easier to measure than other powers. As discussed below, the method of appointment also has a clear connection to the professional status of the CAO.

### Professional status of CAO

In council-manager cities, the city manager position is defined in the charter and typically supported by state legislation, and the city manager is responsible to the council as a whole. Although city managers serve at the pleasure of the council, they determine the scope of their position and typically match or exceed the influence of elected officials (Mouritzen and Svara 2002). Directly elected mayors are viewed by managers as independent leaders as well members of the council. Some restriction of autonomy may be produced by giving the mayor a role in the selection and particularly in the removal of the city manager. Thus, the “empowered mayor” is both distinguished from the council to the greatest degree in council-manager cities, and also potentially affects the professional autonomy of the manager, even though the manager is still the chief executive. City managers may come to view the mayor as a co-equal to the council in defining their accountability.

A central coordinating administrative position may be created in a mayor-council city either formally in the charter or at the discretion of the mayor (Nelson 2002). In contrast to the legal basis of the city manager’s executive authority, the assignments to the CAO may be delegated at the will of the executive mayor (Hogan 1976; Svara 2001). The method of appointing the CAO—by the council, by the mayor with approval of the council, or by the mayor—affects the CAO’s definition of accountability and the degree of dependency on the mayor to determine the scope of the position (Svara 2001). Following Tsebelis’ (1995) logic, it is assumed that the more focused the control of the CAO by political superiors, the less

autonomy the CAO has. Of course, the absence of a CAO precludes autonomy by a single administrative leader.

In our view, a constructive approach to classifying forms of government is to use the smallest number of features and the most easily observable features to measure the essential characteristics. Although the other classifications are interesting for identifying the wide variety in the combination of specific features, these approaches are not necessarily useful in classifying cities for analytical purposes. Ideally, a typology should be based on information that is relatively easy to obtain with features that can be clearly interpreted and can be expected to have impacts on organizational performance and individual behavior.

It is possible to classify the variations in cities based on three factors: form of government, whether the mayor is elected, and who appoints the CAO. These indicate the differences in the two dimensions of the extent to which the mayor is distinguished from the council and the degree of professional autonomy for the CAO. The three factors support the identification of seven variations in form.

There are a number of variables used in other classifications that are not included in our approach. The veto power, used in all the classification approaches discussed here, does not introduce separation of powers into council-manager cities.<sup>6</sup> It does distinguish the mayor from the council, but it is not found consistently even with when mayors have been empowered in other ways. Rather than excluding mayors with “inconsistent” assignments of responsibilities (e.g., the six internally selected mayors with a veto) or distinguishing between veto-empowered mayors and those with other types of empowerment, it seems preferable to rely on direct election and role of the mayor in appointing the city manager to identify the council-manager variations. In future analysis, the effect of the veto can be examined as a separate independent variable.

Budget formulation and department head appointment authority are difficult to interpret because a number of elected and appointed officials may be involved in these processes. Characteristics such as how the council is elected, whether the mayor is a member of the council, and whether the mayor and the council is full- or part-time do not determine form of government. Classifications based on a larger number of indicators can produce a substantial number of missing cases when information about any one of the features is not available.

In contrast, it is relatively straightforward to determine form of government, whether the mayor is elected, and how the CAO is appointed. This information can be collected from city charters now commonly available on the web. Thus, researchers are not entirely dependent on survey responses, although surveys continue to supply most of the data used in the analysis. These features provide indicators of the distinction between the mayor and council and the professional status of the CAO.

#### DATA ISSUES AND METHODOLOGY

In our analysis, we seek to clarify major variations within each form of government in American cities. Our project began with the time consuming task of constructing a virtually complete dataset of American cities over 10,000 in population. The first stage in this research project was devoted to filling in gaps and correcting mistakes in the data for city government institutions to produce a more complete and more accurate database of cities than is currently available. The dataset for this study combines the responses from the 1996 and 2001 Form of Government (FOG) surveys of ICMA with data from the National League of Cities from 2005. By combining sources, the number of cities covered was increased from 1,848 (cities over 10,000 population responding to the 2001 FOG survey) to 3,101. This number represents 95% of the cities over 10,000 in population in the ICMA master file of cities reported in the 2006 *Municipal Year Book*, whereas the FOG respondents represented 57% of these cities.

Inaccurate reports have been reduced by comparing the sources of information. A total of 788 cities had discrepancies in their form of government in the FOG surveys and NLC files. This inconsistent information was resolved and important missing characteristics were added by checking information about the city from its website or obtaining hard copies of city charters and municipal codes. This carefully constructed comprehensive dataset provides a new complete baseline that can be used to more accurately identify past trends and changes in the future.<sup>7</sup> In our dataset, the council-manager form is used in just over half—53%—of the cities with populations of 10,000 or more. Mayor-council cities represent 37% of the cities, and of these 47% have a CAO. Eleven percent use other forms of government. In comparison, among cities with population of 10,000 or more in the 2006 ICMA Form of Government survey (Moulder 2008), the breakdown was 62% council-manager, 29% mayor-council (with 57% having a CAO), and 9% other or no information. Response bias contributes to an overrepresentation of council-manager and CAO cities in the survey data.

We have included cities with “other unclassifiable” form in the analysis but not those with a recognized minor form such as commission or town meeting. Some governments that do not use the standard titles of major or minor forms may be classified under a major form if they match the criteria used in our classification.<sup>8</sup>

## FINDINGS

The distribution of cities across the seven variations is presented in Table 2. We have chosen names for the variations within each form that suggest key roles and relationships for the mayor, council, and CAO, as well as the basic form of government.<sup>9</sup> The council (mayor)-manager variation has a mayor selected by the council, whereas the mayor-council-manager variation has a directly elected mayor. The empowered mayor-council-manager variation gives the mayor the authority to nominate the city manager to the council.

[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

In the four mayor-council variations, we distinguish the mayor and council that share authority and act jointly in appointing the CAO from the mayor-council-administrator where the CAO is appointed by the mayor with approval of the council. The mayor-administrator-council variation indicates unilateral mayoral selection. The mayor-council form lacks a CAO position. In Figure 1, the seven variations have been displayed by the size of the city.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

### Council-Manager Variations

The *council (mayor)-manager* cities with internal selection of the mayor represent over one third of the council manager cities. They are concentrated generally in smaller jurisdictions. As indicated in Figure 1, no cities over 250,000 use this method, and only 18% of the cities between 100,000-250,000 do so. In these cities, the city manager is accountable to the council as a whole in which the mayor has few distinct responsibilities other than serving as presiding officer and spokesperson for the city and is chosen from the council. These mayors have the potential to use the image of the office as a resource (Nalbandian and Negron 2008) but need to exercise caution in taking positions too far removed from the majority of the council. The *mayor-council-manager* variation represents over three-fifths of the council-manager cities. It is common in larger cities, and, even in smaller council-manager cities, directly elected mayors outnumber those selected by the council. One percent of council-manager cities have the *empowered mayor-council-manager* variation with a city manager who is nominated by the mayor and appointed by the council.

### Mayor-Council Variations

The mayor-council cities are divided among four variations. Although we presume separation of powers with the mayor-council form, in 16% of mayor-council cities, the CAO is

appointed by the council. Presumably the mayor is involved but has no separate role in selecting the CAO. Although these *mayor and council-CAO* cities are more common than those in which the mayor alone appoints the CAO, they receive little attention. Council selection of the CAO is found primarily in cities under 100,000 in population, and most often is found in cities under 25,000 in population. Although rarely discussed in the local government literature, it is common in smaller cities for the city government to be characterized not by separation of powers but the joint authority of the mayor and the council (Banfield and Wilson 1963; Lawrence and Wicker 1995, Ch. 5). CAOs appointed by the council tend to see themselves as equally accountable to the council and the mayor, and two thirds disagree that the mayor determines the scope of their duties (Svara 2001).

The most common method of selecting the CAO is appointment by the mayor with approval by the council—the *mayor-council-administrator* variation used in 21% of mayor-council cities. It is the most common variation in the largest cities and in cities under 100,000 in population. CAOs appointed by the mayor with the approval of the council tend to see themselves as equally accountable to the council and the mayor, but seven in ten agree that their duties expand or decrease as the mayor may determine (Svara 2001). Thus, there is some degree of joint accountability.

The *mayor-administrator-council* variation is found in 12% of the mayor-council cities and is the most common method of choosing the CAO in cities between 250,000 and 1 million. The CAO is selected by the mayor without council approval. CAOs appointed by the mayor tend to see themselves as accountable to the mayor and not the council, and over eight in ten agree that their duties expand or decrease as the mayor may determine (Svara 2001).

The largest subgroup of mayor-council cities (50%) have mayors who serve as chief executive officer without a CAO. This variation is found in half the cities over one million

population and a plurality of cities between 25,000 and 100,000. The mayor determines how the administration will be structured and directed.

### CONCLUSION

We propose that these seven categories be used to classify variations in the major forms of government. The categories represent a progression from low centralized political leadership and high professional autonomy to high political leadership and low professional autonomy. Using this variable in future research will determine whether variations in the two dimensions alter the differences that may be linked to form of government as a dichotomous variable.

Among the seven categories in the typology, all but two fit into the logical framework of either council-manager or mayor-council forms of government. The other two variations may not be consistent with the principles of either of the major forms of government.

In the council (mayor)-manager and mayor-council-manager variations, there is unified authority and the orientation of the top administrator is shaped by responsibility to the council—the single veto player. In the mayor-council-administrator and mayor-administrator-council variations, the orientation of the chief administrator shifts with the formal links of the CAO to the mayor and council and the authority of the mayor to determine the nature of administrative assignments. Mayor-council cities are least likely to see the effects of professional influence.

The other two variations are more problematic with regard to their correspondence to the principles that define form. A possible exception to unified authority and responsibility of the manager to the entire council is found in the empowered mayor-council-manager cities. In these 22 cities, the manager may be aligned closely enough with the mayor that accountability to the council as a whole is compromised. These cities should be monitored to determine whether empowering the mayor can alter the functioning of the city government to the extent that it is neither council-manager nor mayor-council. Still, the enhanced role of the mayor in nominating

the city manager does not necessarily make the city manager accountable to the mayor rather than the council as a whole.

The likely hybrid that combines principles of both forms is the mayor and council-administrator variation. These municipalities with a CAO appointed by the council appear to make the CAO responsible to the council as a whole. If the mayor and council exercise authority jointly rather than as separated bodies, the basic characteristic of the council-manager form is present as well. This sizable group of cities warrants closer investigation to determine if they are council-manager governments in practice if not in name.

The current interest in hybrid forms is based on the presumption that most cities have moved away from the pure types. Our position is that most cities can still be differentiated by form based on the allocation of authority to officials. The cities associated with each form and the variations within the forms differ regarding formal authority, roles, and interactions of officials. In future research, it is important to examine how the forms and variations differ in process, performance, and the use of other structural features. In which areas is form the distinguishing factor, i.e., differences within form are less important than differences between forms, and in which areas do common features across forms produce greater similarity in impact? Hopefully in the research to come, this new variable measuring variations in form of government will be a useful tool.

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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> MacDonald (2008) uses form of government, district elections, and number of districts.

<sup>2</sup> Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004, 31) assert that "all but a few of the cities adopting the council-manager statutory platform between 1920 and 1960 adopted the pure or orthodox reformed administrative city model," but later they indicate that in 1939, 27 percent of council-manager cities used district elections (figure 5.2), and, in 1945, 40 percent of council-manager cities were already electing the mayor (figure 5.1).

<sup>3</sup> Local governments in Europe based on the parliamentary form typically have shared executive authority between the political leader and the top administrator (Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Still, the executive function is not separated from the legislative.

<sup>4</sup> He also suggested a "mayor (separation of powers)-council-manager" possibility.

<sup>5</sup> MacManus and Bullock apply a high standard to be a "strong" mayor with a CAO. The mayor must have a "formal role, solely or shared, in both" budget and appointment powers, whereas the mayor can have a "formal role in either or both" to be classified as a strong mayor without CAO.

<sup>6</sup> Veto power may seem to indicate separation of powers and a hybrid feature in council-manager cities (Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood (2004). However, although the veto gives the non-executive mayor extra weight in making policy decisions, it does not grant separate

executive authority. For a president, governor, or strong mayor, the veto can be used to block policy initiatives or to stop efforts by the council to control the use of executive discretion. The council-manager mayor can only use it in policy-making.

<sup>7</sup> In our dataset, 3087 cities have information on form compared to 1662 cities with population of 10,000 or more in the 2006 ICMA Form of Government survey. In our dataset, 69% of cities with other form have a CAO.

<sup>8</sup> There are 146 cities in the “other” category located in the states of Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. These states provide separate forms of municipal government for townships, villages, boroughs, and hamlets. For example, a New Jersey township can have township, council-manager, mayor-council, or commission form of government.

<sup>9</sup> The labels for the council-manager variations are a modified version of those suggested by Hansell (1999).

Table 1. Breakdown in Form of Government in Previous Typologies

	DeSantis & Renner (Data-- ICMA 1996)  Percent of each form	MacManus & Bullock (Data-ICMA 2001)  Percent of each form
Classic City Manager	37	25
Council-Manager w/ At-Large Mayor	47	38
Council Manager w/ Empowered Mayor	14	0.2
Unclassified Council Manager	2	37
Strong Mayor w/ CAO	17	3
Strong Mayor without CAO	25	17
Weak Mayor w/ CAO	16	17
Weak Mayor without CAO	19	5
Unclassified Mayor Council	22	58

Table 2. Variations in Forms of Government

	Variation	How is mayor selected in Council-Manager form?	Nominal Form	CAO?	CAO appointment	% of TOTAL cities	% of each form
1	Council (Mayor)- Manager	Appointed by council	Council- manager or other*	Yes	Council	21.0 (606)	37.2
2	Mayor-Council- Manager	Directly elected	Council- manager or other	Yes	Council	35.4 (1019)	61.5
3	Empowered mayor-council- manager	Directly elected	Council- manager or other	Yes	Mayor nominates, council approves	0.8 (22)	1.3
4	Mayor and Council-Administrator		Mayor- Council or other	Yes	Council	7.3 (212)	13.8
5	Mayor-Council-Administrator (M-C-A)		Mayor- Council or other	Yes	Mayor nominates, council approves	9.0 (259)	21.0
6	Mayor-Administrator-Council (M-A-C)		Mayor- Council or other	Yes	Mayor	5.1 (148)	13.0
7	Mayor-Council		Mayor- Council or other	No	N/A	21.3 (617)	52.2
Total						2883	

\*The classified cities include 152 municipalities in the “other” category that meet other selection criteria. Municipalities with commission, town meeting, and RTM are not included in the classification. Eight council-manager governments in which the mayor is chosen by virtue of having received the most votes in the council election are not classified.

**Figure 1. Variations in Form by Population Size**

Council-Manager < > Mayor-Council

