

This information summarizes major findings from the empirical research literature examining the effects of (1) form of government and (2) use of council districts on various measures of political and civic engagement, role emphases of elected officials and management, and the performance of city council and the city administration. While not exhaustive of the research on this topic, this summary includes most of the studies examining large numbers of cities and using statistical analysis to examine relationships among key variables. This information was compiled for the August 26, 2013 meeting of the Kansas City, Missouri Charter Review Commission.

*Studies Examining the Effect of Form of Government on Cities' Use of Public Participation Strategies*

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2010	Nelson and Wood	Impact of form of government on cities' use of citizen participation strategies. Strategies included: newsletters, other informational mailings, regular press conferences, website, government access television channel, public hearings beyond those required by law, focus groups, resident surveys, advisory referenda, citizen academies, Community Watch Programs, Community Policing Programs, town hall meetings during past year, open house meetings during the past year, citizen comment section on city council agenda, and public image campaign to portray positive image.	Group almost entirely composed of council-manager cities used more participation strategies than cities in political or adapted cities groups. As cities become more professional, administrators and staff will act upon their professional values and ethics to promote public interest by building more comprehensive citizen information, engagement, and reputational strategies.	Survey of 91 city managers (administrators) in 32 U.S. states to measure use of participation strategies

**Studies examining Effects of Form of Government on the Performance of City Council**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2002	Ihrke	Council members' perceptions of representational effectiveness; representational effectiveness was measured on a scale of 0 to 100	No difference in perceived mean effectiveness of representing interests of constituents by city council members from municipalities in New York and Wisconsin between council-manager and mayor-council cities.	Survey of city council members from New York (51 cities and 242 council members) and Wisconsin (57 cities and 179 council members) in cities greater than 10,000 in population
2002	Svara	Self-reported assessments of council members' effectiveness on a range of functions	Council members in council-manager cities rate their effectiveness higher than council members in mayor-council cities regarding such functions as establishing a vision for the city, establishing long-term goals, establishing objectives and priorities, reviewing and approving the budget, overseeing program effectiveness, and overseeing administrative performance. Elected officials' commitment to the representational function in mayor-council cities was about the same as in council-manager cities, and many elected officials, regardless of form of government, want to be activists committed to both serving as delegates and acting as governors.	Data from a 1997 survey of nearly 700 city administrators in cities over 2,500 in population and a 2001 National League of Cities survey of 664 council members from cities over 25,000 in population were combined for this study
2002	Svara	Level of conflict among city council members	Respondents from council-manager cities reported less conflict among council members than council members in mayor-council cities	Data from a 1997 survey of nearly 700 city administrators in cities over 2,500 in population and a 2001 National League of Cities survey of 664 council members from cities over 25,000 in population were combined for this study
2011	Nelson and Nollenberger	Self-assessment of levels of conflict and cooperation among city council members and between executive (mayor or city manager)	Respondents from mayor-council cities reported higher scores than council-manager cities on conflict index than the mayor-council cities where they did not. All cities where council was involved in hiring city manager reported lower conflict in decision-making process than those where mayor appoints city manager. Mayor-council cities where mayor and council jointly appoint city manager reported lower conflict.	Survey of mayors, chief administrators and at least two council members in 158 U.S. cities with populations between 50,000 and 250,000

**Studies Examining Effect of Form of Government on Voter Turnout**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
1968	Alford and Lee	Percentage of voters turning out in municipal elections	Cities with mayor-council governments had significantly higher voter turnout than council-manager governments  Study controlled for effects of education, ethnic diversity, and percentage of foreign born, and community factors like stability-mobility and age of community	Voter turnout data in municipal elections in 676 cities above 25,000 in population (80 percent of the nation's 729 cities) in 1962. The missing cities tended disproportionately to be partisan, mayor-council and Eastern, all characteristics noted as being associated with high voting turnout.
1983	Karnig and Walter	Percentage of voters turning out in municipal elections	Cities with council-manager governments have lower voter turnout	Voter turnout data from in municipal elections in 310 cities in the 1930s, 1962, and 1975
1997	Bridges	Percentage of voters turning out in municipal elections	Council-manager cities had lower voter turnout than mayor-council cities  Study included controls for proportion of population who were foreign born, minority, and less educated	Case study of election returns of seven big-city reform cities (council-manager) in the southwest and three big-city eastern political cities (mayor-council) from 1946 to 1975. Reformed cities included a professional manager, at-large, off-cycle, and non-partisan elections, and unity of political powers between the mayor and city council. Non-reformed cities included a strong mayor who was the chief executive officer, district, concurrent, and partisan elections, and the separation of political powers between the mayor and city council.
2001	Oliver	Self-reported data about whether or not respondent voted in municipal elections during last five years	Respondents living in council-manager cities were less likely to report voting; study also controlled for education, age, income, length of residence, marital status, home ownership, race (Black), sex (female) and city-level characteristics of affluence (median household income) and racial composition (percentage Black); controlled regional effects with a dummy variable of South.	Data from the follow-up interview portion of 2,500 participants in the 1990 American Citizen Participation Study from 800 cities and U.S. Census
2002	Wood	Percent of voters turning out in municipal elections	Direct election of the mayor, expansion of mayoral executive authority, separation of political power between the mayor and council, and/or full-time status of the mayor and council are likely contributors to higher voter turnout in city elections. Mayor-council cities had highest voter turnout, and council-manager cities had lowest turnout.	1998 survey of 57 American cities with a population between 25,000 and 1,000,000 designed to learn more about the structural characteristics and metamorphosis of government structure

**Studies Examining Effect of Form of Government on the Civic and Community Engagement of Residents (Forms other than Voting)**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2001	Oliver	Self-reported data about whether or not in last year residents contacted public officials, attended local meetings, attended meetings of civic organizations, and informally engaged in community activities	There was no difference in the likelihood that residents reported contacting public officials, attending local government meetings, attending meetings of civic organizations or informally engaging in community activities between residents in council-manager and mayor-council cities; study also controlled for education, age, income, length of residence, marital status, home ownership, race (Black), sex (female) and city-level characteristics of affluence (median household income) and racial composition (percentage Black); controlled regional effects with a dummy variable of South.	Data from the follow-up interview portion of 2,500 participants in the 1990 American Citizen Participation Study from 800 cities and U.S. Census
2009	Kelleher and Lowery	Self-reported data about whether the respondent is registered to vote and has volunteered with a neighborhood or civic group in previous 12 months	People living in council-manager cities were more likely to report registering to vote, but form of government had no effect on the likelihood that respondents reported volunteering in civic organizations.	Telephone survey in 2002 of a sample of residents in 25 U.S. cities in which a Knight Ridder newspaper was located; 7,500 respondents included in the analysis; 500-800 from each city

**Studies Examining the Effect of Form of Government on the Time Allocation and Role Emphases of Mayors and City Managers**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
1987	Newell and Ammons	Percentage of time devoted to the following three role categories: management, policy, and political roles	<p>All four groups of city officials reported spending more time on management than on policy or politics</p> <p>City managers spend significantly more of their time on both the management role (50.8%) and the policy role (32.2%) than do mayors (44.2% and 25.6%, respectively), who spend twice as much time on the political role (32.2 % compared to 17% for the city managers).</p>	1985 survey of 839 chief executives and principal assistants (i.e., city managers, mayors, assistant managers, and mayoral assistants) in the 418 U.S. cities larger than 50,000 in 1980; analysis based on 527 responses
2012	Eskridge	<p>Time allocated among political, policy, administration, management, and mission activities. Management activities: changing management practices or reorganizing city government; hiring decisions about department heads; and hiring decisions about employees below department heads. Mission activities: determining the purpose and services of municipal government; developing strategies of future development of municipality; and setting long-term fiscal priorities for municipality. Policy activities: developing annual goals and objectives for municipal programs; budget process; identifying current issues that require attention by the municipal government; and developing solutions to current issues. Administration activities: evaluation of accomplishment of specific programs; resolving citizen complaints about services; and implementing programs/delivering services.</p>	<p>City managers in council-manager cities reported spending more of their time on management activities than did their counterparts in mayor-council cities. City managers in council-manager cities reported spending less time on political activities than did the mayor-council city managers. There was no difference between the forms of government in time devoted to policy activities. City managers in mayor-council cities reported lower involvement in policy, administration, and management activities but not in mission.</p>	<p>Survey of chief administrative officers for 266 cities from the 2,975 U.S. municipalities with populations between 10,000 and 250,000, according to ICMA 2010 list of municipalities. 171 (64.3%) were council-manager, and 95 (35.7%) were mayor-council. Consistent with population (62% council-manager and 38% mayor-council).</p>

**Studies Examining the Effects of District Council Elections on Voter Turnout and Council Members' Perceptions of Role**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
1983	Karnig and Walter	Percentage of voters turning out in municipal elections	Turnout in council-manager cities depressed by fewer council members, no party cue due to nonpartisan elections, and professional management made it possible to avoid major conflict and policy debates.	Voter turnout data from in municipal elections in 310 cities in the 1930s, 1962, and 1975
1984	Heilig and Mundt	Impact of reform change on council representational roles and policy outcomes	All 11 councils made more constituent contacts and acted more as aggressive ombudsmen after change to district elections.	11 cities that changed from at-large to district elections

**Studies Examining the Effects of District Council Elections on Voter Turnout and Council Members' Perceptions of Role (cont'd)**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
1988	Welch and Bledsoe	Percentage of voter turnout in municipal elections and engagement	District council elections eliminate the Republican bias of at-large electoral systems and enhance the power of neighborhood groups, low-income persons, and minorities. When councils were elected by district, blacks had a higher sense of political efficacy.	National sample of 975 city council members in 218 communities of more than 50,000 and less than 1 million population in 42 states
1997	Bridges	Percent of voters turning out in municipal elections	<p>Cities with partisan ballots and at-large elections of council members have lower turnout in elections</p> <p>Analysis aggregates several institutions into a single measure called a "reformed" government. Reformed cities included a professional manager, at-large, off-cycle, and non-partisan elections, and unity of political powers between the mayor and city council. Non-reformed cities included a strong mayor who was the chief executive officer, district, concurrent, and partisan elections, and the separation of political powers between the mayor and city council</p>	Case study of election returns of seven large council-manager cities in the southwest and three large eastern mayor-council cities from 1946 to 1975

**Studies Examining the Effects of Form of Government on Perceptions of the Quality of Public Services**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2012	Eskridge	1) per capita general fund expenditures; 2) % total working time devoted by CAO to management-related activities; 3) percentage of total working time devoted by CAO to policy-related activities; 4) % total working time devoted by CAO to politically related activities; 5) CAO's perceived overall quality of services offered by municipality; 6) % total involvement for CAO vs. council in 92 mission activities; 7) % of total involvement for CAO vs. council in policy activities; 8) % total involvement for CAO vs. council in administrative activities; 9) % total involvement for CAO verses council in management activities.	City managers in mayor-council cities viewed service quality more favorably than those in council-manager cities.	Survey of chief administrative officers for 266 cities from the 2,975 U.S. municipalities with populations between 10,000 and 250,000, according to ICMA 2010 list of municipalities. 171 (64.3%) were council-manager, and 95 (35.7%) were mayor-council. Consistent with population (62% council-manager and 38% mayor-council).
2002	Ihrke	City council members' perceptions of service delivery effectiveness;	Council members from council-manager cities in New York reported statistically higher service delivery effectiveness scores than did council members from the state's mayor-council cities.	Surveys of city council members from New York (51 cities and 242 council members) and Wisconsin (57 cities and 179 council members) in cities greater than 10,000 population
2008	Wood and Fan	Percentage of respondents to citizen satisfaction survey who place the quality of city services in the top category	Residents from administrative cities (closely resembling council-manager form) were more likely to rate the quality of city services in the top category than were residents in adapted cities.	Surveys of resident satisfaction with city services from 74 U.S. cities in 30 states



**Studies Examining the Effects of Form of Government on the Use of Innovative Administrative Practices**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2010	Krebs and Pelissero	<p>City government's use of specific administrative practices commonly associated with "Reinventing Government"</p> <p>Operational efficiency: Approved money for customer service training of city employees; approved funds to train employees in developing better decision-making skills so they can respond more effectively to citizen complaints; and approved recommendation of programs that would make the municipal government more entrepreneurial and then included funds to carry out those programs</p> <p>Service delivery: Approved recommendation to contract out a municipal service to a third-party vendor; approved recommendation to partner with a private business or nonprofit agency to provide a program or service; and approved recommendation to fund citizen surveys to determine expectations and levels of satisfaction</p> <p>Fiscal policy: Approved recommendation of a fee increase instead of a tax increase to fund certain services; and approved recommendation for the use of enterprise funds</p>	<p>City managers are less likely to seek innovation where mayors are strong and in places that have partisan ballots to elect local officials. City managers in cities where form of government promotes conflict are less active in controversial policies than those with less conflict-prone environments.</p>	<p>1997 survey of city managers in 800 cities with populations greater than 10,000 located in all 50 states; 1,275 respondents</p>

**Studies Examining the Effects of Form of Government on the Use of Innovative Administrative Practices (cont'd)**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2012	Nelson and Svara	Adoption of e-government, reinventing government, and strategic practices	Higher innovation rates are associated with council-manager governments—both with and without an elected mayor, higher population, greater growth, lower unemployment, sunbelt location, and higher population density. Cities are less likely to innovate when there is a greater distinction between the mayor and the council and less of a professional stature for their professional administrator in their form of government. Cities with city managers, no matter how they are selected, are more innovative than cities without one. Mayor-council cities with no professional administrator are least likely to initiate innovative practices, and form of government provides the greatest explanation of the adoption of innovative practices in municipalities.	Three nationwide surveys of U.S. municipalities conducted by ICMA measuring innovative practices in three areas: reinventing government (2003), electronic government (2004), and professional practices (2006) and form and structure of municipal governments for all U.S. municipalities with populations of at least 10,000 according to the 2000 U.S. Census.
2009	Kwon, Berry, and Feiock	Timing of cities' adoptions of economic development strategies, including overall economic development, business retention, business attraction, and a plan focused on small businesses	Council-manager cities are more likely to be earlier adopters of innovation than mayor-council cities, which are more likely to be risk averse and to adopt visible programs for which they can take credit for political gains once the innovation's advantages have been well established. Leaders in mayor-council cities are more concerned with political rather than economic incentives when it comes to policy adoption. Council-manager form gives managers incentive to approach development with the long-term perspective based on the values stressed in the field of public administration.	Mail surveys conducted by the ICMA in 1999 and 2004 to determine cities' utilization of the four economic development strategies. About 80% of the sample cities in 1999 and 86% in 2004 were council-manager cities, and about 70% of them in both years have less than 50,000 population. Majority were council-manager cities with less than 50,000 in population.

**Studies Examining the Effect of Form of Government on the Use of Analysis in Decision-Making**

Year	Authors	Outcome Analyzed	Major Findings	Description/Source of Data
2012	Ha and Feiock	Reported use of cost-benefit or fiscal impact analysis prior to granting requests for development incentives	<p>50% of respondents indicated their cities always used cost-benefit or fiscal impact analysis, just under 10% indicated they never used them, about 24% indicated they applied them sometimes, and 19% indicated they usually did</p> <p>Respondents from council-manager cities were more likely to report using these two analytical techniques than respondents from mayor-council cities</p>	2004 survey of administrative officials in 274 Florida cities in 12 metropolitan areas