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# An Institutional Perspective on Mayoral Leadership: Linking Leadership Style to Formal Structure

*Craig M. Wheeland*

The factors that influence effective mayoral leadership are still not well understood. There is continuing debate in the academic literature over theories of mayoral leadership,<sup>1</sup> and many communities debate ways to change their form of government to influence how their mayor provides leadership. In this essay, I use James March and Johann Olsen's institutionalist theory of politics to guide my interpretation of how the formal structure of municipal government can influence mayoral leadership style.<sup>2</sup> I refine James Svara's two models of mayoral leadership—the executive mayor and the facilitative mayor—to describe the styles supported by the formal rules found in the charters or statutes used in the forty largest cities in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Three facilitative mayor subtypes (council leader, community leader, and partial executive) and four executive mayor subtypes (strong leader, constrained leader, legislative leader, and weak leader) can be identified and ranked according to the formal resources available to support their efforts. These findings have implications for the practice of city politics and for the development of a theory of mayoral leadership.

## **An Institutional Theory of Mayoral Leadership**

March and Olsen suggest that “political institutions define the framework within which politics takes place.”<sup>4</sup> They argue that rules are the means by which an institution affects behavior. Rules are the “routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms, and technologies around which activity is constructed.”<sup>5</sup> Rules also include the “beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate, and contradict those roles and routines.”<sup>6</sup> They explain that rules “define relationships among roles in terms of what an incumbent of one role owes to incumbents of other roles.”<sup>7</sup> They argue that the “logic of appropriateness associated with obligatory action”

shapes how individuals follow the rules supported by the political institutions in which they work.<sup>8</sup> In other words, an official shapes his or her action by defining the situation, determining his or her role, assessing the appropriateness of different actions in the situation, and carrying out the most appropriate one.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, discretion exists in using rules, because they are not monolithic and may be contradictory and ambiguous, so conformity to as well as deviation from rules can occur in a political institution. They conclude that trust, “a confidence that appropriate behavior can be expected most of the time,” supports the network of rules and rule-bound relations.<sup>10</sup> Deviation from the rules (violating the “logic of appropriateness”) undermines trust among officials and potentially erodes support for the political institution as well.

Research on mayoral leadership recognizes the contextual relevance of the municipal institution, although the relative weight given to institutional features varies among scholars. Svvara has developed a theory of mayoral leadership that emphasizes the formal institutions of government.<sup>11</sup> He argues theories of mayoral leadership should begin with “the form of government in which the mayor’s office is located,” because the form of city government defines the basic “roles and types of leadership” to be offered by the mayor.<sup>12</sup> He suggests that the two main forms of city government (strong mayor–council and council–manager) establish the formal preconditions for mayoral leadership styles—an executive-style leader and a facilitative-style leader, respectively. He argues that a mayor increases the chances of being successful if he or she adopts a leadership style compatible with the form of city government in which the mayor serves.

The implication here is clear: using a particular form of government creates a set of institutions whose formal rules can structure behavior in the ways March and Olsen suggest. Although it is possible for a mayor to use a leadership style different from the one supported by the formal rules, doing so may violate the logic of appropriateness and potentially erode the trust that supports the formal institutions in the city’s political system.

Svvara based his model of the executive mayor on mayors in forms of government marked by the principle of separation of powers, as in a strong mayor–council city. This principle is the foundation for a conflict pattern of interaction among officials, especially elected officials, who have incentive to compete with one another to accomplish their agendas. Svvara suggests that “by establishing direction, forging coalitions, galvanizing the bureaucracy—in general by managing and resolving conflict in all dimensions of the governmental process—the Executive Mayor becomes the driving force in this form of government.”<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the successful executive mayor draws power from formal and informal sources to become the dominant actor in city government.

Svvara’s facilitative mayor model is based on governmental forms marked by the unification-of-powers principle, such as the council–manager city, in which the city council has the legislative and executive powers of government.

This principle is the foundation for a cooperative pattern of interaction among elected and appointed officials (the city manager being an example of the latter). The facilitative mayor has ample authority to act as the “guiding force in city government who helps insure that all other officials are performing as well as possible and that all are moving in the right direction.”<sup>14</sup> Like the executive mayor, the facilitative mayor can act as a “policy initiator,” helping to set the agenda and develop policies to address problems facing the community.<sup>15</sup> However, the facilitative mayor need not pyramid resources to be successful. Instead, he or she “accomplishes objectives through enhancing the efforts of others. . . . Rather than seeking power as the way to accomplish tasks, the facilitative mayor seeks to empower others.”<sup>16</sup>

The research presented here builds on Svvara’s work in two ways. First, since the particular formal powers of a mayor can vary within each form of government, it is possible to refine Svvara’s models by identifying subtypes of executive and facilitative mayors. Second, it is possible to link other formal institutional features, such as full-time status of the mayor and design of the electoral system, to Svvara’s theory to develop a more complete institutionalist perspective on mayoral leadership.

### **Types of Mayoral Leadership**

There are twenty-six mayor-council cities, thirteen council-manager cities, and one commission city (Portland, Oregon) among the forty largest cities in the United States.<sup>17</sup> All forty mayors have the formal power to perform ceremonial activities, which gives them the opportunity to cultivate a positive image with the public. Aside from this common feature, the form of government used in each city creates rules that serve as an incentive for a leadership style. Using Svvara’s two models of mayoral leadership, the twenty-six mayor-council cities generally support an executive mayor, and the thirteen council-manager cities along with the commission city generally support a facilitative mayor. Within these two basic types of mayoral leadership, additional distinctions can be made to refine Svvara’s classification. These subtypes capture the variation in key formal institutional features affecting the ability of the mayor to perform as an executive or as a facilitator.

**Facilitative Mayor.** Interpretation of the data on the thirteen council-manager cities and one commission city presented in Table 1 suggests three types of facilitative mayor: council leader (CL), community leader (CML), and partial executive (PE). The CL (as an example, San Antonio) is defined as a mayor who is a voting member of the council and the presiding officer at council meetings. The CML (as in San Diego) is distinguished from the CL by a charter provision that empowers the mayor to present a legislative program addressing the needs of the city (that is, an annual state-of-the-city speech) or by the power to review and comment on the budget prepared by the city manager before it is submitted to the council (the “first review” power). The PE is

**Table 1. Facilitative Mayors**

<i>Formal Institutional Features</i>							
<i>City</i>	<i>Member of Council</i>	<i>Votes with Council</i>	<i>Presiding Officer</i>	<i>Proposes Legislation</i>	<i>General Veto Power</i>	<i>Prepares Budget</i>	<i>Type of Mayoral Leader</i>
Oklahoma City	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Council leader
Austin	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Council leader
San Antonio	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Council leader
Virginia Beach	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Council leader
Fort Worth	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Council leader
San Diego	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Community leader
Dallas	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Community leader
Tucson	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Community leader
Phoenix	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Community leader
Charlotte	no <sup>1</sup>	no <sup>2</sup>	yes	yes	yes	no	Partial executive
Portland	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes <sup>3</sup>	Partial executive
Long Beach	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no <sup>4</sup>	Partial executive
San Jose	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes <sup>5</sup>	Partial executive
Kansas City	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no <sup>6</sup>	Partial executive

*Notes:*

1. The mayor is not formally a member of the council primarily because of voting status and administrative prerogatives.
2. The mayor does not vote with the council except for three decision types: to break ties, on the appointment or dismissal of the city manager, and on controversial amendments to the zoning ordinance.
3. The mayor usually is the commissioner in charge of the office of finance and administration. The mayor then may appoint the city's financial officer and direct the budget process. Indeed, during the budget process all departments are brought back into the mayor's portfolio.
4. The city manager is responsible for preparing the budget and submitting it to the mayor, who then submits the budget to the council; however, the mayor may attach comments, recommendations, and amendments to the budget for the council to consider.
5. The mayor initiates the budget process. The mayor's budget director and staff work with the city manager's budget director and staff to prepare the budget. Any differences are worked out before the budget is submitted to the council. The mayor is recognized as the leader in budgetary matters, which is an understanding firmly grounded in the formal language used in the charter; therefore differences are usually resolved to reflect the mayor's priorities. Note that this is different from the first-review approach used in Kansas City and Long Beach.
6. The city manager prepares the budget and submits it to the mayor for first review. The mayor forwards the budget to the council along with a letter of transmittal in which the mayor discusses his or her recommendations and endorsements.

a facilitative mayor who has one or more powers of the executive mayor, such as veto power (Charlotte, Long Beach, and Kansas City) or the power to prepare the budget (Portland and San Jose). Of the fourteen cities with facilitative mayors, five have CLs, four have CMLs, and five have PEs.

On the basis of the extent to which the institutional design supports facilitative leadership, the CMLs are most likely to be successful, followed by the CLs and then the PEs.<sup>18</sup> The CML may find it easier than the CL to draw attention to specific problems facing the city, offer a proposed course of action, and influence allocation of resources in the budget because these are charter-based responsibilities. The power to propose a legislative program or first-review the city manager's budget allows the mayor to provide leadership without necessarily undermining the prerogatives of the council or the city manager; indeed, it can enhance the mayor's ability to guide the policy-making process. Of course, mayors may choose to offer a state-of-the-city speech, undertake efforts to offer a legislative program, and influence budgetary priorities even if they do not have a charter-based responsibility to do so (as in the case of San Antonio). If the practice becomes routine and part of the informal set of expectations (that is, "informal" rules), then the CL can be just as successful a facilitative mayor as the CML.

The PE has greater obstacles to overcome than the CL in performing as a facilitative-style leader. The power to veto ordinances, or to initiate the budget process and prepare the budget, creates rules more appropriate for an executive style of leadership. Because the PE's role is not clearly defined as a guiding force, the PE's actions could produce tension and conflict among council members and appointed officials rather than promote cooperation and teamwork. Salary, appointment powers, reporting responsibility, and the electoral system are other formal institutional features that also can affect how these three types of facilitative mayor perform.

The mayors' salaries can influence the amount of time the official is willing and financially able to devote to duties. The salaries vary from part-time (Oklahoma City pays \$2,000 per year) to half-time (Austin pays \$35,000 per year) and full-time (San Jose pays \$87,550 per year). The full-time salaries offered in Kansas City (PE), San Diego (CML), Long Beach (PE), Portland (PE), and San Jose (PE) are for these mayors a formal incentive to spend most of their time performing their duties. Half-time mayors, as in Austin (CL), Virginia Beach (CL), Tucson (CML), and Phoenix (CML); and part-time mayors, in Oklahoma City (CL), San Antonio (CL), Fort Worth (CL), Dallas (CML), and Charlotte (PE), lack this incentive.

Appointing the members of boards, commissions, and authorities, as well as being permitted to appoint assistants to form a mayoral staff, can increase the potential of a facilitative mayor to emerge as a guiding force in city politics.<sup>19</sup> The power to appoint members of boards, commissions, and authorities enhances the mayor's status as the official with the best opportunity to establish relationships with the city's public, private, and nonprofit leadership.

The power to appoint assistants who work on policy and management topics increases the mayor's ability to influence policy and coordinate council members and the city manager.

In twelve of the fourteen cities with facilitative mayors, the mayor has at least one of the two types of appointment power. In nine of the twelve cities—Oklahoma City (CL), San Diego (CML), Tucson (CML), Phoenix (CML), Charlotte (PE), Long Beach (PE), Portland (PE), Kansas City (PE), and San Jose (PE)—the mayor has both types of appointment power. For example, San Diego's mayor has the most extensive appointment power of any facilitative mayor: she appoints members of some boards, commissions, and authorities with council approval and appoints thirty staff members, eight of whom work on policy and management topics. San Antonio (CL) and Dallas (CML) are the only two cities that permit the mayor to appoint citizens to serve on some boards, commissions, and authorities, but not to appoint assistants. Austin (CL) is the only city that permits the mayor to appoint assistants, but not members of boards and commissions. Austin's mayor appoints four staff members, two of whom work on policy and management topics. Only the mayors in Virginia Beach and Fort Worth have neither appointment power.

Having a charter-based responsibility to prepare reports and submit them to the council can also increase the potential for the facilitative mayor to emerge as a guiding force in city politics. This power to report enhances the mayor's opportunity to set the public agenda via press conferences, council meetings, and various appearances before community groups. Of course, a mayor may prepare reports and submit them to the council and to the public even if there is no official responsibility, but the seriousness with which these reports are received may be less than if the mayor routinely did so as part of his or her official duties. None of the charters in the five cities with CLs grant the mayor this power. The mayors in two of the four cities with CMLs (Tucson and Phoenix) and three of the five cities with PEs (Charlotte, Portland, and San Jose) have formal reporting responsibilities.

In twelve of fourteen cities with a facilitative mayor, two of the four features found in electoral systems—direct election and nonpartisan election—support the mayor as a guiding force in city politics. All fourteen cities permit direct election of the mayor by the voters, and in all but Tucson (CML) and Charlotte (PE) elections are nonpartisan. Direct election gives a facilitative mayor the visibility in the community and contact with voters across the city needed to build an electoral coalition that supports his or her efforts to work as a guiding force once in office. Nonpartisan election is also compatible with an effort to work as a guiding force, rather than a driving force, although there may be some undesirable effects, such as low voter turnout, a middle-class or business bias, low-quality policy debates, and a high rate of reelection for the incumbent.<sup>20</sup> The main advantage of a nonpartisan election is not having to engage voters initially as a Democrat, Republican, or other party's candidate. The opportunity exists, therefore, to create an identity that, at the very least,

appeals beyond party labels and supports a mayoral candidate's effort to build an inclusive electoral coalition.

Two other features of electoral systems, the length of the mayor's term and term limits, vary across the fourteen cities. A mayor who serves a longer term and who can seek reelection to more than two terms has the potential to nurture relationships with voters, other public officials, and interest group leaders, all of which enables the mayor to emerge as the guiding force in city politics. Two of the five CLs (Oklahoma City and Virginia Beach), two of the four CMLs (Tucson and Phoenix), and one of the five PEs (Portland) serve four-year terms without a limit on the number of terms served. These six mayors enjoy a formal advantage over other facilitative mayors with shorter terms or who are limited to two terms.

Consideration of additional formal institutional features—salary, appointment powers, reporting responsibilities, and the electoral system—complicates the effort to rank mayors because their use varies widely. Rather than attempt to assess the myriad combinations of these features in all fifteen cities, for each type of facilitative mayor I offer a profile of one who is advantaged by these additional formal features:

- Among the CMLs, the mayor of San Diego is well positioned to be successful because he or she earns a full-time salary; serves a four-year term; and has the power to appoint members of boards, commissions, and authorities (without council approval) as well as assistants (without council approval).
- Among the CLs, the mayor of Austin is well positioned to be successful because he or she earns a half-time salary and has the power to appoint assistants (without council approval).
- Among the PEs serving in council-manager cities, the mayor of Kansas City is well positioned to be successful because he or she earns a full-time salary; serves a four-year term; has the power to appoint members of boards, commissions, and authorities (without council approval) and assistants as well (without council approval).

Fort Worth's (CL) mayor is least advantaged of the fourteen cities when considering these additional features, because he or she receives part-time pay, serves a two-year term, and does not have either formal appointment powers or formal reporting responsibility.

The complete set of formal features used in Charlotte (PE) place its mayor in the least favorable position to emerge as a guiding force. Charlotte's mayor is part-time, serves a two-year term, is elected in a partisan election, may vote with the council only in rare circumstances, has a general veto power (one of only three mayors out of the fourteen to have this power), may be "active in enforcing the law," may require members of city departments to meet with him or her for consultation and advice, and may hire "experts to examine the affairs of any department." This combination of institutional features increases the

potential for a conflict pattern to emerge between the mayor and Charlotte's other officials (council members and the city manager), in part because of the ambiguity in the rules defining the mayor's role. Following the logic of appropriateness is difficult for all PEs, but especially for Charlotte's mayor.

**Executive Mayor.** Interpretation of the data on the twenty-six mayor-council cities presented in Table 2 suggests four types of executive mayor: strong leader (SL), constrained leader (CSL), legislative leader (LL), and weak leader (WL). All twenty-six mayors have the power to propose legislation; submit reports on their government's performance; execute the law; appoint assistants (only Indianapolis requires council approval of these appointments); and appoint many, if not all, members of boards, commissions, and authorities (in some cities, without council approval). Five other formal powers that vary across the twenty-six cities are used to distinguish the four types of executive mayor: presiding at council meetings, vetoing ordinances, preparing the budget, appointing department heads, and appointing a chief administrative officer (CAO). The SL (New York, for instance) is defined as a mayor who prepares the budget, who can veto ordinances, and who appoints department heads (and in some cities a CAO) without council approval.

The CSL (as in the case of Baltimore) is distinguished from the SL by the requirement that appointment of department heads (and in some cities the CAO) must be approved by the council (in St. Louis, the mayor's power to prepare the budget is constrained by the existence of a board of estimate and apportionment). The LL is distinguished by serving as presiding officer at council meetings and having the power either to vote as a member of the council (Houston) or to vote under special circumstances such as to break a tie (El Paso and Chicago). The WL is distinguished by using boards and commissions to appoint some department heads, especially key department heads such as the police chief (Los Angeles) and fire chief (Milwaukee). Of the twenty-six cities with executive mayors, nine have SLs, twelve have CSLs, three have LLs, and two have WLs.

On the basis of the extent to which the institutional design supports exercising executive-style leadership, SLs are more likely to succeed than the other mayoral types, especially WLs.<sup>21</sup> The SLs' appointment powers give them formal control over the executive branch, which can help them emerge as the driving force in city government. As presiding officer of the council, an LL may find it easier to influence the council's agenda and development of policy in comparison to the other types of executive mayor, especially if the LL also has veto power (El Paso and Chicago). Yet all three LLs, like CSLs, appoint department heads with council approval, which potentially reduces their control over the executive branch. The WLs face the greatest institutional obstacles to becoming the driving force in part because boards and commissions are given direct authority over some department heads. Therefore, the rank order of mayors from highest to lowest is (1) SLs, (2) LLs with a veto power, (3) CSLs, (4) LLs who lack a veto power (Houston), and (5) WLs. Two other formal

institutional features—salary and the electoral system—may also affect whether any of these subtypes of executive mayor emerges as the driving force in city politics.

In twenty-five of the twenty-six cities with executive mayors, the mayor earns a full-time salary, ranging from \$75,000 in Nashville to \$170,000 in Chicago. The full-time status of these twenty-five mayors gives them the formal incentive to devote the time needed to emerge as the driving force in their cities. This is not the case for El Paso's mayor, an LL who earns a half-time salary.

All twenty-six mayors are directly elected by the voters and all but two serve a four-year term; the mayors in Houston and El Paso serve two-year terms. The same rationale supporting direct election of a facilitative mayor holds for election of an executive mayor. Direct election bestows on them the visibility in the community and the contact with all voters across the city needed to build an electoral coalition that supports his or her effort to emerge, in this case, as a driving force.

Two other electoral features vary across the twenty-six cities: term limits and partisan elections. Mayors in fourteen cities have term limits, which is a disadvantage in comparison to the other mayors who can extend their influence over a longer period of time. Mayors in eleven of the fourteen cities are limited to two terms: New York (SL), Philadelphia (SL), New Orleans (SL), Denver (SL), Atlanta (CSL), Jacksonville (CSL), Albuquerque (CSL), Oakland (CSL), San Francisco (CSL), Washington (CSL), and Los Angeles (WL). The mayors of Nashville (SL) and Houston (LL) are limited to three terms, and the mayor of El Paso (LL) is limited to four terms. Houston and El Paso's mayors serve two-year terms, so they are limited to a maximum of six and eight years, respectively. Partisan elections are used in only seven cities: two have SLs (Philadelphia and New York) and five have CSLs (Baltimore, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Washington). These seven mayors can use the political party as a means to contest an election, shape a legislative program, and organize government so that they become the driving force in governing the city.

Consideration of the mayor's salary and the design of the electoral system suggests how to refine the ranking of executive mayors. The mayors serving in Baltimore, Indianapolis, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh (all CSLs) are advantaged by these other formal features, because they earn a full-time salary, serve a four-year term without term limits, and are elected in a partisan election. If one discounts the impact of being limited to two four-year terms, then the mayors of New York (SL), Philadelphia (SL), and Washington (CSL) could be added to this list of advantaged mayors. The mayor of Los Angeles, already disadvantaged by being a WL, also is disadvantaged by the use of nonpartisan elections and term limits. El Paso's mayor is most disadvantaged by these other formal features, because the mayor is an LL who earns a half-time salary, serves a two-year term with a four-term limit, and is elected in a nonpartisan election.

**Table 2. Executive Mayors**

City	Formal Institutional Features							Type of Mayorial Leader
	Presiding Officer	General Veto Power	Prepares Budget	Appoints Department Heads Without Council	Appoints CAO Without Council	Appoints CAO Without Council	Type of Mayorial Leader	
Philadelphia	no	yes	yes	yes <sup>1</sup>	yes	yes	Strong leader	
New York	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Strong leader	
Nashville	no	yes	yes	yes <sup>2</sup>	n/a	n/a	Strong leader	
Boston	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Strong leader	
Detroit	no	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	Strong leader	
New Orleans	no	yes	yes	yes <sup>3</sup>	yes	yes	Strong leader	
Denver	no	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	Strong leader	
Columbus	no	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	Strong leader	
Cleveland	no	yes	yes	yes	n/a	n/a	Strong leader	
Memphis	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	Constrained leader	
Atlanta	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	Constrained leader	
Jacksonville	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	Constrained leader	
Seattle	no	yes	yes	no <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	Constrained leader	
Pittsburgh	no	yes	yes	no	n/a	n/a	Constrained leader	
Baltimore	no	yes	yes <sup>5</sup>	no	n/a	n/a	Constrained leader	
Indianapolis	no	yes	yes	no	n/a	n/a	Constrained leader	
St. Louis	no	yes	yes <sup>6</sup>	yes	n/a	n/a	Constrained leader	
Albuquerque	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	Constrained leader	
Oakland	no	yes <sup>7</sup>	yes <sup>8</sup>	no	no	no	Constrained leader	
San Francisco	no	yes	yes	no <sup>9</sup>	no	no	Constrained leader	
Washington	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	Constrained leader	
El Paso	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	Legislative leader	
Houston	yes	no	yes	no	yes	yes	Legislative leader	

Chicago	yes	yes	yes	no	no	Legislative leader
Milwaukee	no	yes	yes	no <sup>10</sup>	n/a	Weak leader
Los Angeles	no	yes	yes	no <sup>11</sup>	no	Weak leader

Notes:

1. The mayor appoints the managing director, director of finance, and the city representative without council approval. Other department heads, such as the police commissioner, the fire commissioner, and the recreation commissioner, are appointed by the managing director with the approval of the mayor. By custom, mayors traditionally have exerted control over these appointments.
2. Only the director of finance and the director of law require council approval.
3. The CAO appoints department heads with the mayor's approval.
4. Most appointments require the council's approval.
5. The board of estimate, which consists of the mayor, the council president, the comptroller, the city solicitor, and the director of public works, establishes fiscal policy, so the mayor's power is constrained formally. However, because the mayor appoints the director of public works and the city solicitor, he controls three of the five votes; therefore the budget reflects the mayor's priorities.
6. The board of estimate and apportionment, which consists of the mayor, the comptroller (an elected official), and the council president, prepares the annual budget and submits it to council, so the mayor's budget authority is constrained.
7. Because Measure X, which passed in November 1998, was not clear on how the mayor's new veto power would work, the mayor, city council, and city attorney agreed to follow these procedures: (1) the mayor has no input on resolutions, so a simple majority rules; (2) for an ordinance, the mayor may vote to break a tie; on a five-to-three vote, the mayor has the option of sending the bill back to the council and demanding a six-to-two vote in order to pass.
8. The mayor is "responsible for the submission of an annual budget to the council which shall be prepared by the City Manager under the direction of the Mayor and Council." At the time of the budget submission, the mayor submits a "general statement of the conditions of the affairs of the city, the goals of the administration, and recommendations of such measures as he may deem expedient and proper to accomplish such goals."
9. The mayor appoints and removes a controller with council approval. With the mayor's approval, the city administrator appoints the heads of four departments: administrative services, public works, solid waste, and public guardian and administration. The heads of other departments are appointed by the mayor according to this procedure: boards or commissions, such as the fire commission and the police commission, submit a list of at least three qualified applicants to the mayor, and if the mayor rejects this list, then the board or commission submits another list.
10. The mayor appoints with council approval the commissioners of public works, health, building inspection, city development, and others as well. The major exceptions are the chiefs of police and fire, who are appointed by the fire and police commission. The mayor appoints the members of the fire and police commission, with the council's approval, to staggered five-year terms.
11. In addition to the CAO, the mayor appoints (with council approval) the purchasing agent, treasurer, city clerk, and the director of planning. The mayor appoints with council approval the boards of commissioners that control these departments: airports, harbors, libraries, pensions, recreation and parks, water and power, animal regulation, personnel, fire, police, building and safety city planning, municipal courts, public utilities and transportation, social services, and traffic. Board members serve five-year staggered terms. The mayor, with council approval, appoints a chief administrative officer for each of these departments, except for the chief of police. The mayor appoints, with council approval, the chief of police from a list of qualified candidates prepared by the board of police commissioners.

## Implications of This Research for Practice

For those reform-minded political leaders and their supporters who think formal institutional features are preventing their mayor from offering the kind of leadership needed in their city (either the executive or the facilitative style), this research offers two options.

Option one is to change the institutional design to use the strongest version of mayoral leadership appropriate to the form of government and adopt one or more of the other institutional features that enhance the mayor's formal position, such as a full-time salary. For example, in November 1995 San Francisco voters approved Measure E, which altered the city charter by giving the mayor more control over appointing and removing the city administrator and department heads as well as increasing the mayor's influence in the budget process.<sup>22</sup> These changes made San Francisco's mayor a constrained leader rather than a weak leader.

There is, however, a risk in using this option. Some changes may lead to a package of formal institutional features that do not consistently support either the executive or the facilitative style of leadership. For example, giving the mayor a general veto power in a council-manager city (Charlotte, Long Beach, Kansas City) or giving the mayor control over the budget (San Jose) rather than the power of first review (Kansas City) creates rules that are inconsistent with the facilitative style. Similarly, leaving in place rules such as vesting the city manager with the power to appoint department heads inhibits the mayor from developing an executive style of leadership. This lack of consistency in the rules generates ambiguity that can inhibit an official's ability to interpret his or her role. In other words, following the logic of appropriateness is more difficult and the potential to erode trust among officials and with the public increases. As Protasel argues, "injecting the idea of the separation of powers into the council-manager system would seem to put the directly elected mayor on a collision course with both the council and the city manager. Policy-making deadlock—a continual threat in mayor-council systems—could be expected to occur periodically. . . ."<sup>23</sup>

Option two is to change the form of government to create the formal institutional incentives needed for another style of mayoral leadership (executive or facilitative) and pattern of interaction among officials (conflict or cooperation) to emerge. Several of the cities in this study have explored this option in recent decades—San Diego,<sup>24</sup> Kansas City,<sup>25</sup> Dallas,<sup>26</sup> Washington,<sup>27</sup> and Oakland<sup>28</sup>—but these efforts were not fully successful, in part because of voter opposition. Although changing the basic form of government is difficult to accomplish, it is preferable to producing a hybrid set of formal institutional features that inhibit the efforts of all city officials to follow the logic of appropriateness.

Oakland is an example of a city that first pursued option one and then moved on to option two. In 1968–69, Oakland's mayor received a part-time salary and had three secretaries and one administrative assistant, a package,

Pressman felt, that helped explain why the city manager was so dominant in that era.<sup>29</sup> By the 1990s, Oakland's mayor received a full-time salary and could appoint a number of assistants, among them a chief of staff, an assistant for media relations, an assistant for economic development, and an assistant for environmental policy. These changes established formal features that were consistent with the rules supporting a facilitative style of leadership. Yet some city officials, especially the mayors, and community leaders continued to push for changing the mayor's powers. In November 1998, Oakland's voters were asked to approve changes in the mayor's powers that would essentially establish a mayor-council form of government.<sup>30</sup> This time, by a vote of three to one, Measure X passed. The change is not permanent, however. A provision in the measure requires citizens to vote to approve it again in six years or the council-manager form will be restored.

### **Implications of This Research for Theory**

This research suggests how an institutional perspective constitutes a needed foundation for developing a theory of mayoral leadership. By beginning with an institutional perspective, we are more likely to:

- Recognize the two main models of mayoral leadership, the facilitative mayor and the executive mayor
- Develop an appreciation for each style of leadership
- Recognize the subtypes of facilitative and executive mayor
- Understand the impact other institutional features, such as salary and the design of the electoral system, have on mayoral leadership
- Understand how contextual variables (political culture, fiscal resources, economic elite activity, and interest group activity) and proximate variables (the mayor's skills, personality, vision of the job, and legislative program) combine with formal institutional features to affect a mayor's performance

Regarding this last point, the mayors of San Diego and Philadelphia have the formal institutional features needed to be successful facilitative and executive mayors, respectively; yet whether they are successful depends on the influence of the other contextual variables and proximate variables.

Finally, this analysis suggests five questions to guide future research. First, how much of an effect do the distinguishing features defining the subtypes have on mayoral performance? Second, what happens to values such as trust among city officials when the mayor chooses to act in ways that are not compatible with the type of leadership defined by the city's form of government? Third, how much of an effect do other formal institutional features, such as salary and the electoral system, have on the mayor's performance? Fourth, does governing a large city require the executive style of mayoral leadership (and therefore use of the strong mayor-council form), or can a facilitative-style

mayor (and therefore the council-manager form) successfully be used in a large city? Fifth, should a theory of mayoral leadership begin with the primacy of the formal institutional design before other contextual and proximate variables are considered?

## Conclusion

The mayors in the forty largest cities in the United States increase their chances to be successful (1) if they act in ways that are compatible with the formal institutional features defining their jobs, because doing so follows the logic of appropriateness and therefore preserves trust among officials and citizens; (2) if they have the strongest version of either type of mayoral leadership; and (3) if they are supported by other formal institutional features, such as a full-time salary. It is hoped that the conceptual framework and data presented here stimulate further research on the effects that institutions have on mayoral leadership. Although formal institutional features alone do not determine mayoral performance, an institutional perspective is the foundation needed to guide the practice of politics and to develop a complete theory of mayoral leadership.

## Notes

1. For three excellent reviews of the literature as well as three important theories of mayoral leadership, see Kotter, J. P., and Lawrence, P. *Mayors in Action*. New York: Wiley, 1974; Ferman, B. *Governing the Ungovernable City*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985; and Svava, J. H. *Official Leadership in the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
2. March, J. G., and Olsen, J. P. *Rediscovering Institutions*. New York: Free Press, 1989.
3. Svava (1990).
4. March and Olsen (1989), p. 18.
5. March and Olsen (1989), p. 22.
6. March and Olsen (1989), p. 22.
7. March and Olsen (1989), p. 23.
8. March and Olsen (1989).
9. March and Olsen (1989).
10. March and Olsen (1989), p. 38.
11. Svava, J. H. "Mayoral Leadership in Council-Manager Cities: Preconditions Versus Preconceptions." *Journal of Politics*, 1987, 49, 207–227; Svava (1990).
12. Svava (1990), p. 87.
13. Svava (1990), p. 26.
14. Svava (1990), p. 27.
15. Svava, J. H., and Associates. *Facilitative Leadership in Local Government*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994, p. 225.
16. Svava (1990), p. 87.
17. The data on mayoral powers and other formal features in the forty largest cities (1990 population) in the United States were secured from three sources: (1) charters and statutes, (2) interviews with city officials, and (3) a follow-up letter and survey asking each mayor to verify the accuracy of the information. The data are accurate as of 1998.
18. The seventh edition of the Model City Charter offers several recommendations for designing the council-manager form of government, along with a commentary explaining the reasoning supporting each one. See National Civic League. *Model City Charter*. Denver:

National Civic League Press, 1989. Numerous academics, elected officials, and professional managers worked on the seventh edition. I use the Model City Charter as one of the sources to guide my interpretation of the importance of (1) the mayor delivering a state-of-the-city speech; (2) the mayor's power to appoint citizens to boards, commissions, and authorities; (3) the mayor's power to vote as a member of the council (so no veto power); and (4) direct election of the mayor.

19. The commentary supporting the Model City Charter also suggests that (1) a mayor should be a part-time official and (2) should not have the power to appoint assistants. Any staff support needed by a mayor should be provided by the city manager, because creating an "independent staff could lead to the mayor's encroachment on the executive responsibilities of the manager." See National Civic League (1989), p. 26.

20. See Banfield, E., and Wilson, J. Q. *City Politics*. New York: Random House, 1963, pp. 151–167. See also Bledsoe, T. *Careers in City Politics*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.

21. Although the National Civic League endorsed the council-manager form in the seventh edition of the Model City Charter, it also "recognized that some cities, if properly organized, can strengthen their operations with the strong mayor and council form." See National Civic League (1989), p. 77. If a strong mayor–council form is preferred, then the National Civic League endorses allowing mayors to appoint department heads without council approval in order to prevent "provincialism and political pressures" from influencing the council in such a way as to undermine the mayor's effort to recruit personnel from other cities on the basis of professional competence. It also rejects using boards and commissions to appoint department heads, because this "dilutes" the mayor's authority and prevents him or her from acting as a "genuinely responsible executive." This argument along with other sources—including Pressman, J. L. "Preconditions for Mayoral Leadership," *American Political Science Review* 66 (June 1972): 511-524; Ferman (1985); and Svava (1990)—support my interpretation of how these two features can influence mayoral leadership.

22. See King, J. "Prop. E Would Rewrite S. F. Charter: Revision Gives More Power to Mayor, Supervisors." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 1, 1995. See also McCormick, E. "Proposition Results Seen as Call for Reform, Efficiency." *San Francisco Examiner*, Nov. 8, 1995.

23. Protasel, G. J. "Leadership in Council-Manager Cities: The Institutional Implications." In H. G. Frederickson (ed.), *Ideal and Practice in Council-Manager Government*. Washington, D.C.: International City/County Management Association, 1995.

24. Sparrow, G. W. "The Emerging Chief Executive 1971–1991: A San Diego Update." In Svava and Associates (1994).

25. Blodgett, T., and Crowley, J. C. "The Position of the Mayor in Large Council-Manager Cities." *National Civic Review*, July–Aug. 1990, 79, 332–336.

26. Reed, S. R. "Dallas Dilemma: Headstrong Bartlett Stuck in City's Weak Mayor System." *Houston Chronicle*, July 11, 1993.

27. Bonilla, H. "Close to Home: A City Manager for the District." *Washington Post*, July 16, 1995.

28. DelVecchio, R. "Uneven Voter Turnout Sank Oakland's Strong-Mayor Proposal." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 12, 1996.

29. Pressman (1972).

30. DelVecchio, R. "The Oracle of Oakland: Jerry Brown's Style Is Less Tyrannical than Visionary." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 5, 1998.