A form for all cities: The influence of local government form on civic participation

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A form for all cities: The influence of local government form on civic participation

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Public Policy from The College of William and Mary

by

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Chapter One: Opposing trends of engagement: Catch 22

Despite the best efforts of government officials to emphasize citizen involvement in the local political scene, public polling indicates that overall, citizens of United States’ cities are no more participatory today than they were in previous years (Roper). Since the midpoint of the 20th century, fewer citizens participate in politically affiliated groups and vote and even fewer participate in meetings that center around local government issues (Putnam 46). Although citizens are less engaged than at the height of civic participation, “active support and engagement of citizens has become increasingly critical for solving public problems” (Borut and Hoene 7). Donald J. Borut and Christopher Hoene, researchers for the National League of Cities (NLC), refer to these opposing trends as “a kind of ‘Catch 22 dilemma’.” Attempts to engage community members are written into local policies and city goals while also incorporated into various city activities, yet cities’ inhabitants do not always seize these opportunities. It is apparent that some disconnect exists between officials’ intended focus on engagement and the actual environment within these cities.

There is a general lack in knowledge about which methods of engagement are utilized across United States’ municipalities. Without a record of the mechanisms used to engage the public, political scientists find it very difficult to prescribe one method of engagement over another or even determine what qualifies a more-engaged city over a less-engaged one. Some theorists have attempted to classify acts of engagement by various components such as the method of the act itself, the actors initiating engagement, and by the motivation of those actors. These theories of engagement are discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Two sorts through political scientists’ classifications and mapping of acts of engagement. As the theory stands now, many classifications exist but no single model stands out over another. In this first half of this chapter, the classifications of engagement are picked apart and recombined to separate acts of engagements into two main groups that remain as the focus of this research project: acts of information exchange and acts of information processing. These classifications
provide a method to observe the growing number of engagement practices used by local governments. With a comprehensive method in hand, this research project investigates when and why certain acts of engagement are used over others, and gives rise to the study’s primary research question: **What factors influence the type of engagement practices utilized by different local governments?**

The second half of Chapter Two presents the types of officials who serve each municipality. This logic makes intuitive sense, as public officials are the initiators of engagement efforts within their city and therefore, political actors are observed as a potential independent variable affecting why various engagement practices are used over others. The research projects some predicted relationship: First, elected public officials (i.e. mayors, members of city council) more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community members. And at the same time, appointed public officials (and in particular, city managers) more often use acts of **information processing** than acts of information exchange to engage community members.

The mix of elected and appointed officials differs in each of the forms of local government, meaning some forms rely more on the efforts of elected officials to engage the public and some rely more on appointed officials to fill that need. Thus, form of government should also be held constant to test for these differences. In municipal government, mayors and their councils are generally elected during a scheduled city election. Depending on the locality, the mayor may appoint certain political officials to committees, which oversee specific departments or tasks. If these appointments exclude the position of a city manager, the locality is referred to as a **mayor-council form** of government. But if the mayor and council have the authority to appoint or hire a city manager, the locality is considered to be governed by the **council-manager form**. This form, which emerged around the early 1900s as a result of the spoils system, encourages an environment in which a politically detached official focuses on the tasks of administration and implementation of government policies while an elected board
focuses on setting a policy agenda and evaluating its implementation. Instead of providing a prediction based on political actor, government form was used to as the independent variable. The first two of the three hypotheses describe the predicted relationship:

**Hypothesis 1:** *Cities under the mayor-council form more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community members.*

**Hypothesis 2:** *Cities under the council-manager form more often use acts of information processing than acts of information exchange to engage community members.*

Specifically, I test the acts of citizen engagement present in cities governed by the council-manager form against those in the cities’ mayor-council counterparts. The form of government most likely affects a community’s overall environment of engagement and determine the mix of acts of information exchange and acts of information processing. Based on information presented in Chapter Two and following the logic of the first two hypotheses, the overall investigation of this research project makes a prediction about cities that govern under the council-manager form:

**Hypothesis 3:** *Local governments hosting the council-manager form are more likely to engage citizens in acts of information processing than their mayor-council counterparts.*

Hypothesis 3 ties together the suppositions made in the first two hypotheses, prompting a look at the independent variable, the form of government (determined by the cities’ actors of engagement) and its effect on the dependent variable, the different acts of engagement available to citizens.

Currently, there is a lack of comprehensive data exploring these questions within the context of local governance. Existing studies tend to draw on examples of successful engagement or failed attempts. These studies are described in Chapter Three. With a more comprehensive look into the interactions of the three elements of civic engagement, observers of engagement might find it possible to spot patterns across localities.
To guide this investigation, I developed the **civic engagement assessment (CEA)**. The CEA is more of an evaluation or assessment tool than a questionnaire, and it is designed to keep track of the various acts of engagement noticed at the local level to search for trends across a wide group of cities. The CEA is based off on information collected from both the theory presented in Chapter Two and the review of alternative approaches to research questions about local government engagement in Chapter Three. In this study, the CEA is applies to thirty United States cities with populations between 100,000 and 250,000, which serve as case studies. Fifteen cities host the mayor-council form and fifteen host the council-manager form. Each city in the study was randomly selected from over 200 United States cities matching this and other criteria explained in Chapter Four.

The CEA measures each city’s efforts to engage the public and is further described towards the end of Chapter Four. To date, no official agency or private group has attempted to measure or calculate instances of engagement in such a comprehensive manner. The scale aims to provide a snapshot of civic engagement within each locality based on literature posted on the city’s website. Factors taken into account include, but are not limited to: the city’s calendar of events, general accessibility of government-related information, the availability of public meetings and minutes or videos of public meetings, the existence of citizen-oriented bodies, and the overall use of the language of engagement in strategic goals and comprehensive plans. These elements of engagement are divided into three categories: overall focus on engagement, acts of information exchange, and acts of information processing. Ideally, more cases will be assessed in the future, providing more insight into the patterns of engagement, however cases must be analyzed within a small window of time, as information collected is only relevant while the acts of engagement are still occurring. The major limitation of this study is that local government practices are constantly altered and what holds true one month may not carry over to the next. In this case, the data was collected over a two-month period for all cities. As more information is collected, it cannot simply be added to the existing
dataset. Instead, cities must be redrawn and assessed within a specific time period. The results from this study are therefore time-sensitive and only reflect the information collected on the cities at the time the data was compiled.

Though the cases are not presented individually, a chart containing aggregate data is presented in Appendices A through C, and relevant trends and observations are presented through qualitative analysis of individual cases as well as statistical analysis to search for correlations. These observations are found in Chapter Five. The qualitative results present overall trends collected from the assessments while the tests for correlations pertain more specifically to the hypotheses. Findings related to the topic and frequency of engagement are discussed in great detail and supported by analyses run in the statistics programs SPSS and Stata. From these observations, a response to the three initial theses is presented in Chapter Five with concluding remarks in Chapter Six.

The findings presented in this research project add to the limited base of knowledge of an element of local government that has existed since its inception - citizen engagement. And while the overall task of engagement inherently rests on the shoulders of public officials, administrators and community organizers, other factors have been found that contribute to the overall environment of engagement. Local government remains “the place where citizens feel the strongest desire to be heard” and therefore, all attempts to engage citizens at this level deserve careful study in an attempt to categorize the plethora of acts (McGrath). Empirical evidence produced by this study’s investigation sheds light on when and why certain acts of engagement are used over others.
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Chapter Two: Defining engagement

Background: The modern emergence of civic engagement

Over the last two decades, the National League of Cities has observed a growing emphasis has been placed on civic engagement practices that increase participation in government (Borut and Hoene). Civic engagement can encompass an extensive group of activities, but many political commentators and observers of civic activity refer to Michael Carpini’s definition of the term. He describes civic engagement as the “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern” (Carpini). This citation is used across many sources from academic centers devoted to civic engagement to city websites. Promoters of civic engagement call on average citizens to address upcoming community issues by meeting with other community members, participating in discussions, and determining appropriate actions to take concerning the matter. “Virtually all political scientists today advocate—even if in varying degree and for various ends-participation in politics because it is ‘democratic’” (Winthrop 151). Carpini’s definition inherently ties engagement to participation as a means to an end.

Public officials are responsible for providing reasons for their decisions and in return, citizens respond to their justifications. “Rather than reliance on indirect representation mediated by others such as subject-matter experts, elected officials, or bureaucracies,” citizens want to offer their own opinions (Roberts 323). Participation substantiates the rulings and decisions of policymakers and policy administrators. When unchecked by external input, decisions by these officials carry less weight and are more likely to face future dissent from citizens.

Thus, participation serves as a “reason-giving process,” as coined by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Frank Thompson in their book Why Deliberative Democracy? The practice justifies new policies that are continuously being generated and those policies’ subsequent enforcement (Gutmann and Thompson 100). Participation in government has been legitimized throughout the history of democratic theory, but civic engagement surfaced as a more recent approach encouraging the general public to tend to community concerns beyond the expected act of
voting.

This would prove a difficult task as many forms of participation significantly dropped over the period from 1960 to 2000 (Putnam 45). But as apathy plagued the American civic scene, one form of participation actually did increase. The number of individuals who volunteered to help charitable causes has actually risen in recent years. From 2002 to 2006, the country saw an increase of six million people who volunteered their time for charity (Civic Health Index). Civic leaders saw an opportunity. In “Citizens at the Center: A New Approach to Engagement,” Cynthia Gibson writes, “The focus on making ‘civic engagement’ rather than ‘service,’ a cultural ethos is deliberate and based on a perception that service already is an important and significant ethic in the United States” (Gibson 5). Those encouraging civic engagement practices saw an opportunity to transition a new volunteer-focused class into becoming more civically oriented participatory members of society. Initiators of engagement encourage otherwise disengaged individuals to voice their opinions and contribute to collective action regarding community issues.

To summarize, civic engagement as a practice has always hypothetically existed. The same is true of participation. But a gradual decline in overall, government-related activity has presented a need for a new approach. Across the board, individuals, groups, and large organizations appear to include citizens in government beyond normal expectations. Local leaders engage the general public and in many cases redirect the energy surrounding America’s willingness to volunteer and serve towards action more civic in nature. Local governments, service organizations, nonprofits, consultants, and even larger corporations have expanded the opportunities for ordinary citizens to participate and interact with other political actors. The methods of engagement are diverse and serve different purposes.
Section I: Classifying the acts of civic engagement

Local leaders and democratic entrepreneurs use various mechanisms to inform and involve citizens. Researchers have attempted to classify these acts of engagement by using various dimensions, spectrums, and maps. But methods of civic engagement fall under the heading of two kinds of acts, as described by Carolyn Lukensmeyer and Lars Hasselblad Torres: (1) acts of information exchange, which focuses on the transfer of information from citizen to official or vice-versa, and (2) acts of information processing, which usually involves deliberation amongst political actors (7). The first category provides a one-directional sharing of information with instances of informing, consulting, or advocating. The second category includes collaborating, empowering, and deliberating.

There is little doubt amongst theorists that the second category is the richer of the two forms. Lukensmeyer and Torres argue, “To simply inform and to consult are ‘thin,’ frequently pro forma techniques of participation that often fail to meet the public’s expectations for involvement” (9). However, for the purposes of this research project, information exchange is still a method of engagement. This method simply lacks some communal effort to address a problem. Still, work must be done in the first category to generate interest and a feeling of personal involvement in actions of the second category. Thus, although they are categorized differently, actions of the different methods are linked, occur together, and contribute to the overall process of engagement. Classification of this sort is useful when observing engagement projects as observations can be made regarding the conditions under which certain methods are used over others and determining which political actors employ which strategy.
Figure 1: Public involvement spectrum in local governance (Lukensmeyer and Torres 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exchanges with citizens</th>
<th>Citizen engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inform</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consult</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.</td>
<td>Receive and respond to resident comments, requests, and complaints. Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Include/incorporate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaborate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work directly with citizens throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered by staff.</td>
<td>Partner with citizens in each aspect of the decision, including identification of issues, development of alternatives, choice of the preferred solution, and implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empower</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place final decision-making authority or problem-solving responsibility in the hands of citizens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Provide/enforce**      | **Consult**       |
| Provide services and enforce laws and regulations with courtesy, attentiveness, helpfulness, and responsiveness to citizens. | Receive and respond to citizen requests and complaints. Obtain public feedback on quality of or satisfaction with services. |
| **Include/co-produce**   | **Collaborate**   |
| Involve citizens in deciding which services to evaluate and in assessment of results. Involve citizens as volunteers and in production of services. | Partner with citizens in determining service priorities and taking actions to achieve objectives, e.g., crime watch. Partner in services with non-governmental organizations. |
| **Empower**              |                   |
| Place final responsibility for meeting a community need in the hands of citizens or facilitate and accept citizen initiatives. |

Janet Denhardt and James Svara might remind the classifier to be careful. “Rather than viewing citizen engagement as a shift across a single continuum from low to high, it can be viewed as a combination of dimensions that stress different kinds of involvement” (22). Denhardt and Svara are careful to not prioritize one category over another. They argue instead that all acts of engagement fall across four dimensions: (1) generating shared information, (2) delivering services, (3) organizing, and (4) deliberating. While some actions are fully encompassed by a single dimension, others fall between two or even three at one time. For example, as activities aimed at outreach and awareness would singularly fall in the “generating shared information” dimension, service assessment simultaneously stands between “generating
shared information” and “delivering services” dimensions. The “delivering services” dimension stands out against the other three dimensions. Service usually refers to governmental institutions providing some amenity or stream of goods, which is unrelated to the end product, participation. However, the dimension is still relevant because citizens are frequently encouraged to participate by reacting to some delivery of a service or a policy regarding a service. The classifications are helpful in mapping an overlapping and intertwined environment of engagement, but alone are not distinct enough to access potential trends in civic engagement.

Denhardt and Svara are not the only commentators to categorize engagement on a two-dimensional scale. Mark D. Robbins, Bill Simonsen, and Barry Feldman in “Citizens and Resource Allocation,” use two continuums against one another. The first is “more and less representative,” and the second continuum is “more and less information” (567). Robbins, Simonsen, and Feldman attempt to classify the same kinds of acts as Denhardt and Svara by placing them in one of four quadrants, which are based on the intersection of the two continuums. Quadrant I is described as more representative and having less information. Quadrant II is less representative with less information. Quadrant III contains activities with less representativeness and more information. Finally, Quadrant IV describes acts of a more representative nature with more information. Unlike Denhardt and Svara’s dimensions, this system measures the level of engagement rather than simply categorizing the form.

A weakness of this form of mapping is that as each quadrant categorizes an act, some positive or negative connotation of the engagement follows. Robbins, Simonsen, and Feldman explain that techniques that fall into Quadrant II (less information, less representative) do not provide much for decision makers. “These techniques include public hearings, clip out surveys, come one, come all (COCA) forums, the outcome of votes, among others.” This measure disregards the informal effects of these activities, such as the building of relationships, the sharing of new ideas, and active discussion.
Many models attempt to capture and classify the types of civic engagement and their multi-faceted effects, but the dichotomous nature of Lukensmeyer and Torres’ model appears to most succinctly encompass other authors’ ideas. Still, these categories require further breakdown, perhaps within the dimensions of the two previously mentioned classification tools.

Section II: Categorizing the actors of engagement

Public officials and administrators are inherently responsible for the task of engagement at the local level. Although this group is the most common among engagement initiators, many other political actors, who are neither elected nor appointed, emerge in order to confront some issue or injustice. Though there is some interaction between these groups, this research project only investigates the efforts initiated by local political leaders. Apolitical leaders and other democratic entrepreneurs are not included. Furthermore, the types of engagement and actors of engagement discussed in this research project are limited to those within local government, rather than expanding this to the state and federal levels.

Local leaders attempting to engage citizens within a community can be classified into two distinct categories: (a) elected leaders and (b) local administrators. The elected leader group includes mayors, city council members, commissioners, and school board members that are elected by the general public. The local administrators group is comprised of city managers, occasionally school board members, police chiefs, fire chiefs, and all additional appointed positions. “When they decide to engage the public, leaders usually seek to address immediate political perils,” but they may also be motivated by the opportunity to promote citizenship, gather information, or generate supportive “buy-in” (Leighninger 12). Buy-in refers to individual support from those affected by some policy. Usually, individuals must recognize some personal stake in the matter or make a connection between themselves and the issue through some experience.

Much diversity exists within the two subsets of local leaders. Timing and representation of elections for city council members and mayors can differ. In addition, different positions have
been historically responsible for administration. One position in particular, the city manager, is not appointed to every local government. There are few cases of local government that guarantee a strict dichotomy separating elected and appointed officials.

In some forms of municipal government, mayors and their councils are elected separately during a scheduled city election. Officials may be elected at-large or by district or with a combination of both (Krebs and Pelissero 172). A mayor may be elected separately from the city council, hold a paid, full-time position, have administrative or budgetary authority, and even appoint individuals to positions that oversee city departments (Forms of Municipal Government 2010). But if the mayor has no authority to appoint an individual to the position of city manager, the locality is referred to as a mayor-council form of government.

But in a locality governed by the council-manager form, the authority to appoint or hire a city manager falls with the council or mayor. This form, which emerged around the early 1900s as a result of the spoils system encourages an environment in which a politically detached official focuses on the tasks of administration and implementation of government policies while an elected board focuses on setting and ruling on the policy agenda.

Section IIA: Appointed officials

A city manager provides professional counsel and works to “strengthen the quality of urban government through professional management” (Stillman 12). In 2000, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) recorded that a majority of all cities use a city manager. This is true for every brackets of the population category. Sixty-three percent of American cities with populations over 25,000 and 57 percent of cities with populations from 10,000 to 25,000 have adopted what is called a Council-Manager form (Fahim). “An average of 63 US local units per year…adopted the Council-Manager form of government between 1984 and 2000” (Fahim). This shift in government form is seen as a reaction to one-sided city politics in the early 1900s. An appointed, a political third-party manager would break up the sustained
authority of certain parties or interests, which can stay in power and govern for very long periods of time (Adrian and Fine 83). The city manager would shift the implementation of policymaking from the whims of political actors to a hired professional specifically trained for government work.

Richard J. Stillman II, the editor of the Public Administration Review, commented on the manager’s role in the council-manager form. He explains that “engendering popular support and public acceptance for the plan and hence creating the very occupational role a manager performs in a community” is the first task for any new manager (14). Subsequent tasks include revamping formal government structure and working with internal conflicts. Although organization and efficiency are important values for city managers, public approval is the top priority for newly appointed managers. According to Stillman, citizen input is a sign of establishment.

Mike McGrath, author of the article “The New Laboratories of Democracy” confirms this undertaking as truly worthy of attention. He writes, “Local government is the place where citizens feel the strongest desire to be heard” (4). McGrath notes that city managers are often viewed as “community builders.”

The terminology is a key element of what is known as the Local Government Business Model (LGBM). LGBM defines the elements of “public sector service delivery.” Like competitive business models, LGBM is a marketing and process management-based model that city officials consult to improve organizational problems. The model is presented by LG Improvement and Development (formerly the IDeA), an independent group, which supports innovation in local government.

The model was intended to favor efficiency and to separate administration from politics. But “managers cannot totally embrace either role of professional or politician” (McGrath 20). LGBM ensures that a balance is struck, and the model has developed into a strategy for overall approval and support. This model now includes the elements previously noted like public
meetings, online forums, and extensive communication efforts. City managers adopt this tactic to gain credibility and also as a means of protection from criticism that could potentially lead to dismissal of duty.

Section IIB: Elected officials

As indicated earlier, city council is the most common form of representation in local government. Voters chose fellow neighbors to represent them as municipal decisions are made. In some cases, the members of council serve more as commissioners, each official takes on some specific part of municipal affairs, such as emergency services, finance, or public works. Much diversity exists as to how these officials are elected.

In at-large elections, council members are elected to be impartial towards all neighborhoods or areas of the municipality. Members look at problems facing the community as an entirety. In addition, better-qualified individuals are thought to get elected because the candidate pool is not limited by geography. According to the National League of Cities’ estimate in 2010, approximately 64 percent of municipalities elect representatives using solely an at-large election (National League of Cities 2010). This form is particularly popular in small, affluent areas.

An alternative to at-large elections is district-based elections. This is more common for cities with a population of over 200,000, and approximately 14 percent of municipalities use district elections (National League of Cities 2010). There are bound to be differences in these officials’ approaches to engagement. District elections may react slightly more favorably towards minority interests, depending on the composition of the district represented. Councilmen and women who represent a specific district may be more responsive or appear more responsive to concerns (Krebs and Pelissero 180).

The remaining 21 percent of municipalities combine the two methods with some representatives elected by district and some elected at-large (National League of Cities 2010).
This is fairly common in the South and Central parts of the United States. “The advantage of the mixed system is that city councils include member who will look out for the general interest of the city as well as those who will represent the particular needs of their districts” (Krebs and Pelissero 172). It is evident that process of election could affect the responsiveness or engagement techniques of elected officials. These variations make it difficult to make definitive conclusions about elected versus appointed officials.

In an ideal study, all political actors would operate entirely separate from one another. However, local government is no stranger to collaboration and partnership and sometime even accidental overlap. The engagement environment of any one particular municipality can be shaped as much by the type of engagement as the mix of actors who initiate the engagement.

Section III: Determining why any method of engagement is used over another

An interesting element of engagement theory is the motivation behind the acts. The force exists completely separate from measurement. Matt Leighninger highlights five motivations for engagement. They are: (1) to create “buy-in” when proposals are unpopular, (2) to break a tie, (3) to advocate for some cause, (4) to highlight an issue centered around issues of race and diversity, and (5) to react to a structural shift, whether economic or political in nature (Leighninger 8). Cheryl Simrell King would classify each of these motivations as instrumental reasons for engagement (52). Instrumental engagement refers to an action that aims for approval of a particular policy. Denhardt and Svara agree; “from an instrumental or ‘smart’ perspective, we should work to increase citizen involvement because local governments cannot solve community problems alone. In other words, involvement is a means to an end” (7).

By contrast, normative reasons for engagement describe the motivation that participation is important for its own sake, regardless of the result. A public official must simply go through the motions of engagement of citizens because it is the “right” thing to do;
engagement is the end rather than a means to an end. If engagement is motivated by the normative democratic value of participation, success is determined by the transparency and level of collaboration of a community. “The focus is on how the act of participation creates citizenship rather than the achievement of particular short term policy objectives' outcomes” (Denhardt and Svara 7). Both instrumental and normative reasons motivate engagement. The theories of Leighninger, King, and Denhardt and Svara avoid identifying (and for that matter, classifying) the methods of engagement in terms of motivations.

This research project attempts to link acts of engagement and the motivations behind engagement. By tying together the actors of engagement with individual acts (as classified by the theories listed above), each act corresponds to a certain motivation. As supported by the literature surrounding the responsibilities and duties of elected and appointed officials, this research study makes the assumption that acts initiated by elected officials align most often with instrumental motivations while acts initiated by appointed officials align more with normative reasons.
Chapter Three: Alternative approaches to studying civic engagement

While theory provides a context to engagement, individual and collective data provide a more accurate representation of the current state of engagement within individual local governments. However these snapshots of engagement are limited in scope, as most political scientists use only a few cases to present their application of theory.

R. Robert Huckfeldt conducted research in 1979 that used “aggregate census tract data to show social context of political activity” (579). Though not specifying that he was looking at examples of one-direction information exchange versus a deliberative, information processing, he categorized these as importantly distinct actions. He notes, “Political activity seldom occurs in individual isolation; as a result, the social context is an important determinant of the extent to which individuals participate in politics” (579). Huckfeldt looked at the responses of mature adults, aged 25 and older in Buffalo, NY who had at least 12 years of school. His investigation provided several measurements of these activities, mostly through survey data of residents in Buffalo. However, this study only covered one case.

Samuel J. Best and Brian S. Krueger took on an extraordinary number of cases by looking at Internet political participation, however they did not break down information they collected to each individual case (183). They merely investigated the opportunities for local government engagement available to citizens online. The scope of this survey needs to be significantly limited so that each case has data specific to the city.

The Center for Research & Innovation at the National League of Cities (NLC) finds a happy medium. NLC collects data on governance and civic engagement in cities across the United States through surveys, studies, and interviews. The Center aims to improve city management by assisting city leaders mainly by sharing successful city practices. The Center’s programs also help officials “evaluate activities, plan comprehensively for the future, set goals, and measure progress” (National League of Cities 2012). Topics studied include finance, economic development, housing & community development, and Infrastructure among others.
The information provided on their website and in reports they distribute is designed for both elected and managerial officials and does not make a distinction regarding government form.

The data collected by the Center for Research and Innovation is aggregate information and is not specific to local government. Understanding that this data is limited in its application to my research question, the studies are still quite relevant and useful when designing an independent project. I referenced one particular study quite frequently while developing the plan for my investigation. In June of 2009, the NLC mailed the “State of America’s Cities” survey to individuals in 1,748 United States cities (Borut and Hoene 3). These individuals included municipal officials, citizens in the cities, and to those who work to inform and assist those engaging in democratic governance. They received 313 responses, a response rate of approximately 18 percent. NLC was primarily interested in seeing trends in cross tabulations. To make more specific conclusions, they separated answers into two categories: public officials and city residents. They posed questions about the frequency of engagement, types of engagement, topics of engagement, and various subjective assessments regarding satisfaction and perceived value. Though the questions painted a portrait of the engagement environment, all responses are to a certain extent subjective, as different individuals are exposed to different instances of engagement. Another limitation of the NLC report is that it did not categorize responses by individual city or by form of government.

However, the report did make one particularly unsettling point. The NLC determined that “the answers to the survey from elected and non-elected municipal officials do not vary significantly” (Borut and Hoene 3). Though this conclusion does not directly contradict the hypotheses suggested in Chapter One, it indicates that whether or not an official is either elected or appointed has no bearing on the engagement observed at the local level. However, this study explores the idea that different forms, which are bound to have different mixes officials, determine the types of engagement, so the study inherently questions the outcomes of this study. The survey became integral to building a new study testing similar engagement
activities as many of the questions from it were used in the creation of the Civic Engagement Assessment.

Questions posed to survey respondents included broad inquiries such as, “How frequently are public engagement processes used?” with answer choices of “often,” “sometimes,” “occasionally,” and “rarely.” Of government officials who took the survey, 60 percent reported that their municipalities use public engagement processes “often” and 21 percent report public engagement processes are used “sometimes” (Borut and Hoene 11). They survey also asked how regularly specific elements of engagement were utilized such as having an accessible website, using online forums, having neighborhood structures for community engagement, or having town hall meetings for citizens to provide input to officials. Next, respondents were questioned as to how likely it is that their city “set up some form of deliberative process to engage the public in addressing” a particular issue. The issues with the most “very likely” or “likely” responses were zoning or land use, downtown development, neighborhood planning, and budgets. While questions regarding frequency, form, and topic of engagement were relevant to the scope of this study, the questions about satisfaction and value of engagement had a tendency to be idiosyncratic and did not deliver as much quantitative data as earlier questions. For example, 95 percent of respondents reported that their public officials value public engagement (Borut and Hoene iii). The questions are superficial in mapping the environment of engagement in a particular city.

The most useful questions were posed in the section about types of engagement, as the survey listed forms of engagement that I had not previously considered. Interestingly, the questions asking respondents what types of engagement were regularly used produced answers with high rates of affirmative answers. Fourteen percent of respondents reported that their city used interactive forums, and a striking 67 percent reported a regular use of special deliberative methods like town hall meetings (Borut and Hoene 11). Other regularly used types of engagement included: “accessible city hall website, including email addresses for all city
officials” (92 percent), “council agendas and proposed executive actions published on-line well in advance and comments invites” (86 percent); “staff and funding assigned for facilitating public engagement” (51 percent); “neighborhood structures in place for community engagement” (44 percent); “a specific plan for public engagement in your city” (28 percent). Ascertain that biases of public officials and city dwellers affected the responses, I found it necessary to create a more objective method. In order for cities to be measured alongside one another without partiality, a more unbiased approach for observing modes and trends of engagement would have to be created. It is also important to separate cases by form of local government to search for cross tabulations between form of type, frequency, and even topic of engagement.

This survey was of vital importance because of the magnitude of subjects surveyed and the relevant questions having to do with local government engagement. The NLC study provides a view that though does not directly oppose my thesis but indicated that no real different exists between the types of officials and their actions in local government. This provides context to my investigation. And unlike many other studies investigating public engagement, it has a wide range of cases. While also looking at these variables and similarly draw a wide range of cases, this research project measures them quite differently.
Chapter Four: Addressing the hypothesis

While many questions have been raised regarding local engagement, no attempt has been made to categorize participation on a large scale. Individual case studies and questionnaires have helped outline the patterns of behavior for localities, but overall, trends regarding these acts of engagement remain unobserved. The overall goal of this research project is to provide a method for researchers to use to outline the scene of engagement within some local entity. In this chapter, the method employed to collect information on acts and actors of engagement in the two forms of government are explained. Also outlined are the tests used to investigate the relationship between the form of government and acts of engagement used in each city.

Section I: Research design

The goal of this research is to assemble information in three principal categories of acts of engagement. These areas include: (1) the efforts of a city to engage the public in information-exchanging exercises, (2) the efforts of a city to engage the public in deliberative practices warranting information exchange, and (3) the overall emphasis placed on engagement by a city. Instead of attempting to distribute an elite survey, like researchers at the National League of Cities, this evaluation relies on data collected from a city’s documents on its website and categorizes it by participation categories. This eliminates the potential for subjective responses from public officials and those living in the city.

In addition to these observations, basic demographic information was collected. These questions provide information that helps clarify the context of each case. So in addition to identifying the independent variable as either appointed or elected official, population size and geographic location are notated.

Throughout this research paper, the evaluation is referred to as a “survey,” though the primary researcher of this research project completed each assessment. The survey was not
distributed to any official or city dweller. Instead, each category of the survey has a series of questions, most of which can be answered by a “yes” or “no” response. In addition, some questions have subcategories inquiring about frequency or about topics of some of the deliberative acts of engagement. Finally, each question asks a separate sub-question “under what office does this fall?” Through these specifications, both frequency and diligence were taken into account in the construction of each category measurement, as superficial attempts to engage are not as consequential as opportunities sought with a interest in deliberative and democratic involvement from citizens. Acts of engagement are described in detail in Figure 2, which breaks up the three categories of engagement in order to measure the various dimensions of the overall civic environment.
Figure 2: Acts of engagement categories at the local level of government

**Category One: Overall focus on engagement**
- Key terms (“civic,” “engagement,” “citizen,” “participation,” etc) used
- Goals in strategic plan
- Office or separate organization committed to these efforts
- Staff/funding assigned for facilitating public engagement
- Neighborhood board for community engagement
- Written plan for public engagement

**Category Two: Information exchange (one-directional)**
- Delivery of services
- Determining values for future policy
- Sharing general information (calendar, citizen request form, stream video)
  - Subcategory: online or via survey
  - Subcategory: face-to-face or telephonic communication
- Emails to residents
- Teletown town-hall meetings*
- Resident surveys
- Newsletter
- Social networking (twitter, facebook)*
- Public access channel
- City hall website (including email addresses for city officials)
- Council agenda and proposed executive actions published online in advance*

**Category Three: Information processing within a deliberative format**
- About delivery of services
- Determining values for policy
- Focus group
- Contact with elected official (face-to-face or telephonic)
  - Neighborhood Council or other organized citizen body
- Teletown town-hall meetings*
- Focus groups
- Social networking (Twitter, Facebook)*
- "Office hours" with local officials
- Council agenda and proposed executive actions published online in advance*
- Interactive online forums

*indicates a repeated act of engagement; they are similar acts; however, the item listed in category three has some element of processing

The first category contains four main questions that help map the overall emphasis a city places on engagement. In addition to questions requiring an affirmative or negative answer, the survey tallies the number of times engagement-related language appears in documents that
are accessible on the city’s website. This is primarily measured by the use of engagement “buzz words” in strategic planning documents, press releases, comprehensive plans, work plans associated with citizen participation - specifically, city council minutes, and many other documents. The number of times engagement vernacular appears, the higher the level of focus on engagement the city receives in the subsequent evaluation. The full text of the questions in all three categories can be found in Figure 3.

The **second category** measures instances of information exchange between officials and citizens, and contains nine questions with sub-questions regarding frequency. Frequency is measured by scales increasing at each interval, such as every two weeks, once a month, once every sixth months, or once a year. This scale accompanies questions like “Does the city distribute resident surveys?” and “Does the city host non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings?” A smaller scale is used for questions such as “Does the city post to some social networking website (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)?” as these communicating acts are likely to occur with more frequency than the distribution of a survey or newsletter. The acts of engagement in this category deal with one-way communication, mostly from the city to residents. Items like meeting agendas, minutes, public access programs, and newsletters provide one-directional transfers of information from the city. Examples of resident-to-official transfer of information include resident surveys and having a citizen request form on the website. The survey leaves plenty of room for additional comments, as no two websites have the same features. Some citizen request forms are two lines, one for the message and one for contact information of the resident submitting the form. Other request forms have three or four categories so the request is sent to an individual department rather than being sorted out later. Variations like this mean “yes” or “no” responses are not enough to outline the environment of engagement for each city. The differences are therefore noted on each individual Civic Engagement Assessment and incorporated into the graphic representation of each city, described later in this chapter.
The final, **third category** looks at acts of information processing that might lead to decision-making or problem solving of some kind. These items were adapted from the National League of Cities survey, which listed many actions of local government intended to support a deliberative setting in cities in which the survey was distributed. There are some items, which are strikingly similar to items in category one. These are denoted with a star in the last two sections of Figure 2 and signify that they are repeated, but the items listed in category three have some added element of processing. For instance, teletown town-hall meetings can be listed in category one if it describes a one-sided communication technique or some automated device. Though information is shared, there is no room for interaction. If, however, residents listening in on the call were encouraged to respond or to vote by pressing numbers on their phone, it fits directly into category three. Other examples include responding to resident’s social media posts on sites like Twitter or Facebook or leaving a comments section under proposed agendas or meeting minutes. These changes truly separate acts of engagement that might otherwise appear quite similar.

Differences in the language associated with acts of engagement are most notable in these two categories. Discussion, deliberation, problem solving, and other active words are phrases that qualify certain instances of engagement to be included in category three rather than category two. Other qualifiers might include having diverse participants, hosting a productive session in which a decision is made, large numbers participate, people listen to one another and may even change their views based on discussion. While these may be true, they are tough to confirm through an online investigation of a city. This is why no attempt is made to judge or rate the successfulness of each act, merely the attempt to engage itself. Thus, the study is specifically designed to measure the opportunity and availability of resources rather than to comment on the successfulness of each instance of engagement. The specificity of the project allows for the isolation of the efforts of elected officials from those of appointed officials.
But there are other potential conclusions that can be made. One benefit of dividing these acts is that it also separates the subject matters that go along with each form of engagement. This additional information may help determine through which community issues over others public officials initiate engagement. This provides us with another research question: For which issues might a municipality set up some deliberative process to engage the public in addressing the matter? Potential topics could range from zoning and land use and downtown development to budget appropriations and social services. The study provides a powerful look into the topics associated with different forms of engagement. The full survey can be found below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA)**

**Objective:** To provide a reasonable measure of how “civically engaged” a city is based on the city’s literature posted on features on their website which include administrative information, strategic goals, and other related documents.

**City, state**

**Category One: Overall focus on engagement**

How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement,” “citizen participation,” “deliberative,” “input,” etc.)?

Circle one: 0 1-2 3-5 6-7 8+

List the documents:

- How many documents fall under the office of an elected leader?
- How many documents fall under the office of an appointed official?
- How many documents fall under another office?

What office(s)?

- Is there a written plan specific for public engagement? Y N
  Under what office does this fall?

- Is there an office or Separate organization committed to these efforts? Y N
  Is this organization made up of government officials or citizens?
  Under what office does this fall?

- Is funding assigned specifically for the facilitation of public engagement? Y N
  Under what office does this fall?
Category Two: One-directional information exchange: What instances of shared general information can be found on the city’s website (i.e. calendar, citizen request form, stream video, etc.)?

Does the city’s website host a calendar of events for the city?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city’s website have a citizen request form to submit feedback?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?
   Are citizens automatically put on this or must one opt in?

Does the city host non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings?  Y  N
   How often?  1x every 2 weeks  1x a month  1x every 6 months  1x a year
   Less than 1x a year
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city distribute resident surveys?  Y  N
   How often?  1x every 2 weeks  1x a month  1x every 6 months  1x a year
   Less than 1x a year
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city distribute a newsletter?  Y  N
   How often?  1x every 2 weeks  1x a month  1x every 6 months  1x a year
   Less than 1x a year
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city post to some social networking website (i.e. twitter, facebook, etc)?  Y  N
   How often?  Daily  4-6x a week  1-3x a week  1x every 2 wks
   1x every month  Less than 1x a month
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city have a public access channel?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Does the city website list contact information/email addresses for city officials?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Are city council agendas and proposed executive actions published online prior to the start of public meetings?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Are minutes posted online after meetings?  Y  N
   Under what office does this fall?

Category Three: Information processing in a two-dimensional exchange
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the city utilize focus groups?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What were these focus groups discussing?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under what office does this fall?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under what office does this fall?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does some form of neighborhood council or homeowners association which is overseen by the city exist?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do they meet?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under what office does this fall?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city post in response to citizen posts on social networking websites (i.e. twitter, facebook, etc)?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6x a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-3x a week</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x every 2 wks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x every month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under what office does this fall?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an opportunity for the public to comment on city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do officials then respond after citizen comments have been made?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under what office does this fall?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city host interactive online forums?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are new topics posted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1x every month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What were these online forums discussing?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under what office does this fall?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often are new topics posted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
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<td>1x every month</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under what office does this fall?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA) tests four different elements of engagement. The text in black measures incidence and frequency of engagement. Frequency is noted by the indented questions starting with “how often.” The questions in green ask the respondent to specify the office through which the act of engagement is sponsored. In the event that a public official other than a mayor, city councilperson, or a city manager initiates an act of engagement, the assessment takes that information into account. The text in blue inquires about the topic of engagement. For instance, questions about what is discussed at town hall meetings, online forums, or the names of different organizations is collected with these responses. Finally, the questions in red inquire about the degree to which an act engages citizens. Questions like “Do officials then respond after citizen comments have been made?” and “Are citizens automatically put on this (the city listserv) or must one opt in?” are in red on the CEA.

Section II: Sample

The scope of this study was limited to municipalities in the United States with populations of more than 100,000 and less than 250,000. This range was selected because it had the highest response rate of the cities selected as potential respondents for the National League of Cities 2009 survey studying municipal officials views about public engagement (Borut and Hoene 4). A similar sample of the group of cities would provide responses that could be relevantly compared against this survey’s results. Though not all responses from the survey from this group, the overall incidence of certain acts of engagement could be observed as long as they are analyzed regardless of form. Originally, forty cities (not the thirty that is noted in the introduction) were selected from a list of 276 meeting these criteria. The forty cases were drawn so that half would be cities that host the mayor-council form of government and half would host the council-manager form. The cases were drawn to evenly distribute cases according to population.
However, conclusions from the data were apparent very early on in the completion of the survey of information for each city. Upon completion of approximately twenty of the forty cases in the research study, the remaining cities in the sample were redrawn, with every other case dropped from the sample. This upholds the original sampling trend with minimum bias towards one population size over another while bringing down the number of cases to be analyzed from forty cities to thirty. The remaining ten samples completed after this resampling reinforced conclusions made in the first twenty cases and in no way altered the results. Demographics were carefully recorded for each city; the results do not affect the ultimate reporting of conclusions on acts of engagement.

The list of cities was extracted from a data table created by the U.S. Census Bureau Population Divisions entitled “Annual Estimates of Resident Population for Incorporated Places Over 100,000.” The table was modified to exclude cities with populations over 250,000. Additionally, a separate column was added to the table listing the form of government. This list was compiled from visits to official .gov websites on each of the city's homepages. The majority of cities fell under the council-manager or mayor-council form categories, however there were some exceptions. For consistency, any cities that described their forms of government as commission, commission-manager, council-administrator, mayor-president, or, in one special case, city-parish president were excluded from the sample. This made the total population from which the sample was drawn at 187 cities, 127 cities with the council-manager form and 60 cities with the mayor-council form. Of these, originally twenty council-manager and twenty mayor-council cities were selected. In order to complete the study in a timely manner, each group was reduced to fifteen. The cities are listed on the following page in Figure 4. The cities taken out of the sample are shown in green.
Figure 4: Sample for Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council-manager forms</th>
<th>Mayor-council forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irvine, CA</td>
<td>Billings, Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayetteville, NC</td>
<td>High Point, NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarillo, TX</td>
<td>St. Petersburg, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario, CA</td>
<td>Warren, MI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield, MO</td>
<td>Charleston, SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomona, CA</td>
<td>Allentown, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salinas, CA</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrance, CA</td>
<td>Hialeah, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyvale, CA</td>
<td>Boise City, ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Rapids, IA</td>
<td>Yonkers, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topeka, KS</td>
<td>Mobile City, AL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simi Valley, CA</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athens, GA*</td>
<td>Aurora, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland, TX</td>
<td>Chattanooga, TN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Mesa, CA</td>
<td>Springfield, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murfreesboro, TN</td>
<td>Pasadena, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Rock, TX</td>
<td>Bridgeport, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita Falls, TX</td>
<td>Independence, MO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwalk, CA</td>
<td>Evansville, IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandler, AZ</td>
<td>Columbus, GA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates a mislabeled form; though it labeled as a council-manager form, Athens, GA is considered a consolidated government and was therefore excluded from the sample drawn

Note: the italicized cities were taken out of the sample when the remaining twenty cases were redrawn

As the cities were investigated during the two-month period from December 15, 2011 through February 10, 2012, one Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA) was completed for each city. The city is designed to cover the three areas of engagement noted in the Figure 2 earlier in this chapter. Upon completion of the assessment, the information collected by the individual CEAs was transcribed and coded into Appendices A through C. The “yes” and “no” responses to the CEA as well as the numeric responses are coded in Appendix A through C. Category one questions are coded in Appendix A and category two and category three are coded in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. These charts allow for easy comparison by demographic information and incidence of engagement across cities. In addition, demographic
information including population density, geographic area, population, and form was collected. This information is presented in Appendix A.
Chapter Five: Results of the Civic Engagement Assessments (CEA) and implications for Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3

Results found through the application of the Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA) to thirty case studies test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. This chapter is divided into two parts; the first section provides qualitative results, which focuses on topic of engagement and frequency, and the second section presents the results of the cross-tabulations and statistical analyses performed to support the observations made in the first section. Information was gathered regarding the independent variable (form of government) and the dependent variable (the type and frequency of the acts of engagement). Additionally, topic of engagement served to informally observe trends of engagement and provide the “meat on the bones” of the “yes” and “no” responses collected. This information is presented in a qualitative format, citing several cities as examples of trends that were observed. Frequency of engagement was treated the same way. Topic and frequency of engagement were not coded in this study, but they provide a context for the binary responses collected in the CEA. The major conclusions from this research project are based on qualitative information. To give numerical value to this information, two statistics programs were used to test the hypotheses. SPSS was used to look at cross-tabulations of the independent and dependent variables, and Stata was used to test statistical correlations between various acts of engagement and government form. The information collected in this section will provide a more quantitative measure of the acts of engagement used in the U.S. cities that were assessed.

A secondary goal of this research project is to provide a method for researchers to outline the scene of engagement of any United States city. While the original CEA was not modified during the study so as to maintain the integrity of the data collected, a second draft of the assessment is presented in Chapter Six: Adjustment to the Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA) for analyses that will be conducted in the future.
Results part one: Qualitative results

Though the main focus of this research project is to collect data to analyze the three hypotheses concerning local government form and respects types of engagement used by public officials, an abundance of information was also collected concerning the subject of the acts of engagement and the frequency. This information was collected for all thirty cases in the form of the Civic Engagement Assessment. These assessments collectively afford several general trends and observations regarding the thirty cases. The majority of these observations are unspecific to the form of government, the population density, and the geographic location of each case. Rather, this section shows trends across all thirty cases or generalities of individual acts of engagement. Part one is separated into two sections of the most frequent and notable trends observed. The first section explores the inclusion of community development departments in engagement efforts, and the second section discusses the use of neighborhood organizations to engage the public, and engagement efforts specific to either the mayor-council form or the council-manager form.

Section I: Frequently used acts of engagement

Several acts of engagement were noticed quite frequently in the cases. Those acts included having a calendar, a citizen request form, contact information, and minutes and agendas from local government meetings posted on the website. Also popular were the use of listservs, surveys, and newsletters to collect or distribute information to citizens. Finally, focus groups and neighborhood groups were often used to involve citizens in a more deliberative context.

An investigation of the use of focus groups and advisory committees within local government provided the greatest insight into the topic of engagement at the local level. Topics ranged from public safety to fair housing and occurred in many different formats, frequencies, and facilities. Allentown, PA and Sunnyvale, CA held public hearings for all citizens, which took
place separate from any official government body meeting. Sunnyvale held the meeting annually, while Allentown met twice a year for such occasions. Both cities used the meetings to establish issues for the City Council to address and often discussed budget changes from year to year. Citizen advisory committees were common, appearing in Madison, WI, Springfield, MO, Charleston, SC, and Columbus, GA. These had similar formats, but they occurred much more frequently, practically once a month in most cases. St. Petersburg, FL and Salinas, CA were the only two cases that specifically referred to these meetings as “town hall” formats, however the previously mentioned cities did host events that appear to be the same format. A more unique meeting, called a “mayor’s forum” occurred in Madison, WI and Mobile, AL. This form of the group meeting was, as indicated by the name, directed towards the executive and not as inclusionary as other focus groups seen in the cases.

Topic varied from city to city; however, there were a few standouts. Salinas holds biannual meetings about public safety, and Topeka, KS and Columbus frequently meet about transportation. However, these meetings are run by individual departments rather than specific public officials. One trend apparent across the cases was an opportunity for public comment on the budget and the strategic plan for the city. In most cases this occurred at city council meetings when the city manager or council would present the outline of the plan or budget or at least the changes to these documents each year. Chandler, AZ stood out as having individual meetings regarding the budget.

Meetings around housing issues appeared most frequently out of topics addressed besides the budget and strategic plan. Specifically, seven cases looked at just homelessness and ways to address it. These cities included Billings, MT, Amarillo, TX, St. Petersburg, Allentown, Madison, High Point, NC, and Springfield, MA. Mobile, AL meets about fair and affordable housing. Additionally, many cities have departments of community development, which meet to discuss these issues. These are not noted under the “focus group” question in the CEA because it is assumed that these are part of official government and do not engage
citizens outside of those elected or appointed. The one exception to this was Springfield, MO and the city’s Committee for Community Development. This committee involved citizens that do not already hold official positions in the city.

Community development was not only present in cities’ focus groups but also in the plans for engagement. In response to the question, “Is there a written plan specific for public engagement?,” sixteen cities did. Of those sixteen, nine cities’ plans involved the office dealing with community development or housing. This trend is noted in Appendix D as Finding One. The names of these departments or offices are listed below in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Office associated with a civic engagement plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of office or department</th>
<th>Cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Allentown, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salinas, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aurora, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus, GA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridgeport, CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development and Housing</td>
<td>St. Petersburg, FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amarillo, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midland, TX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boise, ID</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section II: Community Development Block Grant Program

Two trends discussed above were particularly prevalent in this study. First, among the plethora of topics about which focus groups were organized at the local level, homelessness or the general topic of housing was present in eleven cities, over a third of the cases. This is also included in Appendix D: Findings. Additionally, the assessment question that asked “Is there an office or separate organization committed to these efforts (civic engagement efforts)?” found many responses to include the community development department of the city. The variations on “community development” are listed above.
Plans focusing on civic engagement were often called “Citizen Participation Plans.” This commonality was too coincidental to ignore. Finally, when looking at the fourteenth case in order (alternating between council-manager city and mayor-council city), I found a reference to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Madison, Wisconsin’s documents relating to a city-wide focus group about homelessness cited HUD 40119. Upon looking at the seventeenth case, Sunnyvale, CA, the first reference to a specific Housing and Urban development initiative was discovered. The document entitled “City of Sunnyvale: FY 2010-11 Action Plan” lists policy “to encourage and engage residents to participate in planning, implementation, and evaluation of its housing and community development programs” (City of Sunnyvale 2010). The plan indicated that a template for the plan was provided by HUD and includes a list of narrative questions to be responded to upon completion of the following year’s application for the Community Development Block Grant.

Established under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program invites cities to apply to become “entitlement communities” and to apply for their “entitlement amount” each year (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) chooses recipients and determines the entitlement amount based on a national formula that is annually established by Congress. Grants are awarded to participating communities as they carry out community development activities directed at neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and the improvement of community facilities and services.

As part of a federal mandate for this grant program, expenditures must meet at least one of the three national objectives set by Congress. They must benefit low and moderate-income persons, alleviate or eliminate slum or blight conditions, or meet other community needs. And a minimum of seventy percent of the participating city’s CDBG expenditures per year must benefit low and moderate-income persons or families. These activities can include, but are not limited
to, the acquisition of real property, relocation and demolition, rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures, and construction of public facilities and improvement. Additionally, CDBG funds can pay for public services, energy conservation measures, and the assistance of profit motivated businesses to carry out economic development activities.

Citizen participation is viewed as an integral part of the CDBG Program. In order to comply with the regulations associated with the grant program, participating cities must “develop and follow a detailed plan which provides for, and encourages, citizen participation and which emphasizes participation by persons of low- or moderate-income, particularly residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, slum or blighted areas, and areas in which the grantee proposes to use CDBG funds” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). The plan must provide dates and times for local meetings along with information on records relating to the grant and the usage of funds for the grant. In addition, public hearings are to be used to receive feedback for proposed programs and projects of the grant. Though the requirements are specific to the grant, they are to continue throughout the year that funding is received.

The Center for Research and Innovation for the National League of Cities notes Housing and Community Development as an important pillar of local governance. Their website offers articles and other information (such as cases of city examples) about addressing these needs at the local level. They focus specifically on affordable housing as an important element of neighborhood and community development. And under the “resources” section of their website, they provide a practice brief about “Leveraging Funds Through Community Development Block Grants” (Lindberg). The guide gives five examples of how exemplary cities used their CDBG funding and how they were successful by leveraging other funds through various sources. No other article is currently listed addressing the CDBG program specifically, but other documents discuss neighborhood designing, planning documents, and guidance for strategic decision-making. The grant program evidentially makes an impact in the community development of
cities across the United States.

The aforementioned reference to Madison, Wisconsin's homeless document falls in the same category as these grants; however, the document did not focus specifically on civic engagement. The community in Madison seems to be mobilized by homelessness and issues of re-housing displaced individuals. They have a plan that does not specifically list “citizen participation;” however, it calls for a community assessment of the issue, a nine-member commission to oversee grant applications (it can be assumed at this point that this refers to the CDBG grant), a collaborative application and specified funding criteria, citizen comment, and public hearings on performance (City of Madison 2008). The plan also encourages groups mentioned in the plan to work with the Homeless Services Consortium. This information was also referenced on the Mayor’s blog (City of Madison 2011). Though neither the planning document nor the Mayor’s blog specifically refer to the CDBG program, it fits well with the requirements of the grant program.

As previously noted, other cities were found to have information about homelessness or focus groups associated with homelessness. Again, those cities were Billings, Amarillo, St. Petersburg, High Point, Springfield, MA and Allentown. Of those six cities (in addition to Madison), only Billings did not have a plan for civic engagement or a separate organization that oversaw efforts of civic engagement.

Though very few of the thirty case cities specifically referenced the CDBG program, the use of these grants can be assumed in many of the cases in which a community development or a housing department is involved in creating some citizen participation plan for the city. While Madison alluded to the grant, and Sunnyvale noted HUD as a contributing agency, Aurora, IL specifically notes the use of the Community Development Block Grant. The city indicates what the regulations for the grant are and how they followed them.

The city of Aurora website lists a developed system for citizen participation as decisions are made regarding the HUD grant. “Besides the formal public hearing process, throughout
each year the city gathers and processes information it receives through several means. Ward Committee meetings, Neighborhood Watch Groups, calls to city offices are a few of the methods used to collect information that helps direct the use of the CDBG funds. A citizen advisory committee known as the Block Grant Working Committee meets with staff to help determine how the CDBG funds would best serve the community” (City of Aurora). The information collected from these meetings then went into the Consolidated Plan, which provides a narrative-based analysis of the priorities and one-year action plan for the city. Once this is released, residents are given the opportunity to comment on the Consolidated Plan and those comments are submitted with the next year’s grant proposal and application.

Section III: Neighborhood groups

Twenty-one of the thirty cases in this study used some sort of neighborhood group to engage citizens on a more personal level. Some of these groups took the form of homeowners associations while others had extensive leadership and regular meetings to support the needs of their members. This section reports the individual activity of each city, as each organization (or set of organizations) was truly unique. Allentown, Pennsylvania’s organization was quite extensive with meeting times, places, and newsletters for each of the neighborhood groups. Like Allentown, most other cities’ websites have an extensive list of registered neighborhood organizations. But instead of having individual newsletters for each organization, Springfield, MO distributes one newsletter that pools from all the neighborhood groups. This newsletter is called The Front Porch seen on the following page in Figure 6.
Some cities integrate the work of these neighborhood groups into government work. Allentown’s Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 focused on ways to integrate the community within each neighborhood. One of the ways they would attempt to do this was to host block parties within each neighborhood that are open to the public. In Madison, WI, citizens of the city can log in to their account on the City of Madison website to receive neighborhood-specific information and view strategic plans for their unique neighborhoods. Boise, ID also includes information about the neighborhood in their planning documents. In Boise’s annual report they note themselves as a “city recognized by neighborhood associations” that uses grants as an incentive for neighborhood and community-wide programming.

Similarly, the Charleston, SC website indicates that the city is working to “reknit” the neighborhoods and posted events for different neighborhoods to participate with one another. And, Chandler, AZ has a “Neighborhood Programs Coordinator” who puts together these events. One of the programs established by this government worker is a Neighborhood Task Force to discuss issues in the various communities.

Along the same lines, Sunnyvale, CA’s website lists the leaders of each neighborhood group’s contact information and made many resources available for new organizations hoping to
start up. An image of Sunnyvale’s neighborhood help page is seen below in Figure 7. To assist these groups, the city even posts a “sample invitation to first meeting” (City of Sunnyvale 2012).

*Figure 7: Screenshot from Sunnyvale, CA’s website to help new neighborhood groups start up*

One city truly integrated city departments into the organization and coordination of their neighborhood groups. **Salinas, CA** has an entire program called Neighborhood Services, which was developed to assist residents in strengthening the social fabric of neighborhoods and aid city council in connecting with neighborhoods to address concerns (City of Salinas 2003). In 2007, the city of Salinas published a guide called the “Neighborhood Problem Solver” to assist neighbors as they deal with potential issues in their communities (City of Salinas).

Other cities had barely any integration. Torrance, CA and Columbus, GA only listed neighborhood groups in the context of neighborhood watch organizations. No deliberative element to the groups was seen in these cases. And even more minimally, Amarillo, TX, Ontario, CA, Warren, MI, Murfreesboro, TN, and Evansville, IN barely had any interaction at the neighborhood level. They had Homeowners Associations, but these groups were not integrated
into the cities’ websites and separate searches were necessary to find when they meet and who oversees them.

Many cities are discussed as case examples of community or neighborhood organizations on the National League of Cities' website. Though there is not as much information regarding neighborhood organizations as a topic like housing and community development, one article outlined Herndon, Virginia’s Neighborhood Resource Center (National League of Cities 2012). This program was set up by the Herndon Police Department as a neighborhood watch organization. However, since a staff was hired for the group, day-to-day operations now include activities that incorporate leadership skills and hands-on community events. Community organizations can therefore start at any level and later develop to meet the higher and broader demands of a community.

Section IV: Infrequently observed acts of engagement

Three acts of engagement were not found in any context of the study: the use of teletown town-hall meetings, the use of an automatic city listserv, and the opportunity to comment online on agendas or proposed executive documents. First, the teletown town-hall meetings are a feature of local government described by the National League of Cities. This was one act of engagement they found to be reported amongst their survey respondents “(Borut and Hoene 7). The teletown-town hall meeting is a dial-in meeting in which citizens call in to a direct line and can listen in to a public meeting run by local officials. In some cases, citizens can vote or ask to be put on a speakers list. Some meetings are merely information and would fall under category two of the CEA while other meetings utilize elements of information-processing and fall under category three. Though the National League of Cities found evidence of this local government engagement activity, it was not present in the thirty cases of this study.

Upon further research, I came across a frequent context for this activity: campaigns. Teletown town-hall meetings are conducted to spread messaging of a candidate’s campaign or
to start a discussion amongst local officials regarding election issues. The article “Four Keys to TeleCampaigning in 2012” printed by Campaign Solutions Group in San Diego encourages this act of engagement’s use to poll voters, identify voter groups, advocate for particular issues, and GOTV (get out the vote) efforts (Campaign Solutions Group). It does not seem as common for day-to-day engagement at the local level.

Second, though many cities offer some sort of listserv, choice of listservs, or online subscription to an e-newsletter, no city in this study had an automatic opt-in listserv. This would mean that citizens are automatically added to an email database once they move to a city. Upon further reflection, a voluntary opt-in clause seems much less intrusive but also less inclusive because only those wishing to be involved have access to local government information. The act should remain at the forefront of engagement conversation as more local organizations (like public schools) use automatic SMS and robo-calling to provide important information to citizens. As it stands now, citizens must elect to opt-in on their own accord.

*Figure 8: Screenshot of City of Sunnyvale, CA website of the listservs offered*
Finally, no online feature existed in the thirty cases that allowed citizens to log on and leave public comment of upcoming agendas, minutes, or new executive documents. However, two other acts of civic engagement did exist that might achieve similar goals. First, some cities did have an interactive Facebook page on which they published various documents. Citizens are allowed to submit feedback once they have become a “fan” of these organizations. Still, no format exists on the city website to directly respond to new information. Second, five of the thirty cities hosted online forums. An online forum provides some sort of question or comment for citizens to respond to online. The forum is usually monitored by some public official and relates to a topic of planning or community activity. Responses on Facebook and online forums do achieve similar goals as an online feature that allows for responses to upcoming documents; however, these elements of engagement are sporadic. They do not have any consistency and only appear when an issue is particularly salient.

Section IV: Engagement efforts specific to the council manager form

Several cities stand out amongst the rest. When considering the participation rates of the second two categories of engagement, Chandler, AZ stands above the others, scoring 100 percent participation rates in each category. No other city scores this high. Interestingly, Chandler has collaborated with the ICMA (International City/County Management Association) mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, the theory section of this paper. Chandler also received the “All American City” award. According to the official website of the award, “the All-America City Award is an honor achieved by more than 600 communities across the country…to win, each community had to make a presentation to a jury of civic experts from the public, private and nonprofit sectors listing three outstanding examples of collaborative community problem solving” (All-American City Award). The only other city that has won this award in the last three years was Fayetteville, NC in 2011, which is also a council-manager city. Fayetteville received a 70% and a 40% participation rate for participation rates respectively for information exchange and
information processing. Among other cities hosting the council-manager form, Irvine, CA, Springfield, MO, Torrance, CA and Topeka, KS score far above other cities.

St. Petersburg, FL scores highest among the mayor-council forms with a 100% participation rate in acts of exchange and an 80% rate in acts of processing. Madison, WI scores second highest with the same acts of exchange rate and a 60% participation rate in acts of processing. Two other standouts, though not the highest scoring cities, were Charleston, SC and Bridgeport, CT. Charleston, SC had something called the Citizen Support Center seen below in Figure 9. Bridgeport, CT hosts a citizen self-help knowledge base on the website called BConnected.

*Figure 9: Screenshot form Charleston, SC’s website of the Citizen Support Center*

The poorest performing city also happens to host the mayor-council form. Hialeah, FL had an information exchange participation rate of 30% and an information processing participation rate of 0%

Aggregately, mayor-council cities had a 65.33% participation rate in acts of information exchange and 38.67% participation rate in acts of information processing. The calculation excludes the three acts of engagement that did not show up in any of the cases: the use of teletown town-hall meetings, the use of an automatic city listserv, and the opportunity to
comment online on agendas or proposed executive documents. Cities hosting the council-manager form had a 67.33% participation rate in acts of information exchange and 48.00% participation in acts. Combined or separate, council-manager cities performed with higher participation rates. One council-manager city with 80% and 60% participation rates, Sunnyvale, CA, writes a testimony to the council-manager form on the city’s vision page on the website. It writes, “The Council-Manager form of governance has proven to be the right structure for the City of Sunnyvale. Through this structure, and through the commitment and innovation of elected and appointed leaders over time, the City has been able to attain a reputation as being responsive, efficient and customer-serving…such a reputation is difficult to build, but easy to lose unless the people of Sunnyvale and their elected and appointed leaders vigilantly demand that exceptional level of local governance” (City of Sunnyvale 2007). In Sunnyvale, CA, the city manager posts and emails updates to citizens at least twice a month.

Other council-manager cities success can be seen in the office devoted to public information and outreach. In Springfield, MO, the city manager oversees an office called the Office of Public Information and Civic Engagement. Along the same lines, Torrance’s CitiCABLE 3 is an “award-winning government access cable television channel for the city.” CitiCABLE 3 has provided quality television programming for the community since 1983. The channel provides live coverage of weekly city council meetings and the weekly news called “This Week in Torrance” (City of Torrance). It is entirely overseen by the City Manager’s office, which also oversees the rest of activity concerning community relations.

Section V: Summary of part one

Part one of the data analysis reported on some of the qualitative information collected during the assessments. Though each individual CEA contains information specific to individual cities, part one provides some insight into the evident generalities and trends found throughout the investigation. The first major finding is that budget and housing-related topics are two of the
most frequently discussed issues at local government meetings. The line of reasoning behind discussing the upcoming budget is easy to follow, but community development a bit more surprising. The numbers supporting this trend were striking. Homelessness and the overall topic of housing was discussed in local meetings for over a third of the cases. In addition, of the sixteen cities that had some plan of engagement, nine cities’ plans involved an office that worked with the cities’ community development or housing department. Without counting overlaps, thirteen of the thirty cases had a community development or housing department that was somehow involved in engaging the public.

It is easy to deduce from these findings, that mayors and city managers are not the only ones at work engaging the inhabitants of America’s cities. Other appointed or hired officials, members of the community development departments, involve the surrounding public. This can easily be explained by the grant money offered by the Community Development Block Grant as a powerful incentive to create a public participation plan, a requirement of the grant program.

A second major finding of the qualitative investigation of these cities was that neighborhood groups were tied with focus groups as the most common act of information processing seen in the thirty cases. Focus groups encompass quite a large range of activities from task forces to annual meetings to planning groups to discuss strategic goals. Neighborhood groups are more complicated in organization, and take a prolonged period of engagement to be considered successful. The second section of part to outlines compares and contrasts the neighborhood organizations. It was quite evident from the assessment that more information was needed to properly code these deliberative bodies. The observations were under consideration as the revised CEA was constructed. This information can be found in Chapter Six.

Finally, the third section of part one discusses engagement efforts specific to the council-manager form. As an investigation of Hypothesis 3 aims to verify or refute the idea that cities hosting the council-manager form have higher incidences of acts of information processing, this
section supports the idea that overall, council-manager cities have a higher incidence when both categories of engagement are combined. This idea is reconsidered in the concluding remarks of Chapter Seven. The anecdotes presented in this third section highlight council-manager cities with high levels of incidence in terms of both categories of engagement. Additionally, the position of city manager is tied directly to offices of information generation and outreach. Though this is considered information exchange, more evidence of a connection between the city’s city manager and these of offices overseeing information than between mayors and similar departments.

Results part two: Statistical analysis

Section I: Cross-tabulation results in SPSS

Both the independent variable and the binary responses to the dependent variable inquiries were coded in both SPSS and Stata. SPSS searched the multivariate research questions provided for complex relationships. Though SPSS provides no numerical information concerning statistical significance, this program allows the researcher to “eyeball” potential correlations by measuring the frequency of civic engagement activity occurring under each form of government. This cross-tabulation is [CEA question or input] * [Form]. The full results can be found in Appendix E. From these results, a small relationship is seen between form and some activities of engagement, but the relationship is by no means conclusive.

In both SPSS and Stata, each line of response was placed on a binary coding scale. If a city hosted the engagement opportunities in question for each line of the CEA, it received a “1” for that activity. For each act of engagement in which the cities did not participate, it received a “0.” However, in the SPSS cross-tabulation results presented in Appendix E, the “0” and “1” codes were replaced with labels of “yes” and “no.” Observed acts of engagement were also categorized into three groups. As you recall from Figure 2, the acts were divided into “overall focus on engagement,” acts of “one-directional information exchange,” and “information
processing.” The latter two of these categories are used to evaluate the three hypotheses. A similar coding system was used for the independent variable. Local government form was also coded as either a “0” or a “1.” Those cities operating under the council-manager form were coded as a “0,” and a “1” represent a city under mayor-council form. In the SPSS data presented in Appendix E, the forms are once again labeled rather than delineated as a binary number.

Section IA: Independent and dependent variables’ measurement of Hypotheses 1 and 2)

The primary goal of this research project is to test the three hypotheses introduced at the beginning of this thesis paper. For Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, the answers to each Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA) were coded as either acts of information exchange or acts of information processing. The answers to the first four inquiries on the CEA were left out of this analysis because they did not differentiate acts of exchange or processing, rather they judged the overall emphasis on engagement. The incidence alone of each act (coded as either a “yes” or a “no”) is listed in Figure 10 and Figure 11 on pages 54 and 55. “The same process was used to evaluate Hypothesis 3.

The analysis listed is limited in its conclusions because frequency is not weighed into each event occurring. Only a binary response was noted. So with questions such as “does the city utilize focus groups?” and “are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials?” that have a frequency element added to it are not fully described. The chart merely indicates whether or not the act of engagement was seen to have occurred at all. The first chart provided, Figure 10, responds to acts of information exchange, while the second chart, Figure 11, responds to acts of information processing. Combined, Figures 10 and 11 respond to Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2.

Now, three questions tested by the Civic Engagement Assessment found several acts to be entirely unobserved in the thirty cases of this study. They included: “Does the city host non-
interactive teletown town-hall meetings?, “Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings?,” and “Is there an opportunity for the public to comment on city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise?.” Those three acts were not included in the Figures 10 and 11 listed on pages 54 and 55. Additionally, no “automatic listserv” was available in any of thirty cases. Instead, citizens were required to “opt in” to the single city listserv or multiple listservs available on the website. The “automatic listserv” inquiry on the CEA was a sub-question to “Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates?,” so this did not effect the coding of the responses in the same way the previous three responses did.

Citizens in cities under the council-manager form and the mayor-council form had the opportunity to participate in each of the acts of information exchange listed on the next page in Figure 10. This means, they could have potentially reached a total of 300 incidences of acts of information exchange, as there were thirty cities. The totals at the bottom of the chart could reach 150 under each category. Cities under the council-manager form had a total of 101 incidences of acts of information exchange, and cities under the mayor-council form had a total of 98. These results appear to conclude that no form appeared to host more acts related to information exchange than another form. This is listed in Appendix D as Finding Three.

Individually, two acts of information processing had one form stand out over another. Regarding the questions, “Does the city distribute a newsletter?” and “Does the city have a public access channel?” the cities under the council-manager form actually had substantially higher incidences than their mayor-council counterparts. “Substantially higher” refers to cases were the difference is greater than 2 (there is a spread of 3 or more incidences in which the act occurred in one form over another). Still, the category as a whole was balanced out to reach similar totals between the two forms.
Table 10: Incidence of acts of information exchange

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<td>101</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates the form had *substantially more incidences of this act*

**indicates the forms had equal incidences of the act

Figure 11: Incidence of acts of information processing is similar to Figure 10, however acts of information processing are assessed instead of acts of information exchange. In addition, less acts of engagement are included. Figure 11 presents a potential of 150 incidences (compared to the 300 in Figure 10) with each form of local governance amounting to a potential of 75 incidences in total. Overall, there were 36 incidences of total acts of information processing observed in council-manager cities and only 29 incidences in mayor-council cities. More cases of information processing were observed in council-manager cities than in mayor-council cities. This conclusion is listed in Appendix D as Finding Four.

Again, two acts of information processing stood out. In regards to the questions “Does the city host interactive online forums?” and “Are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials?”, substantially higher incidences were seen in the council-manager form than the mayor-council form. This finding, combined with the overall totals, indicates that more cases of information processing were observed in council-manager cities than in mayor-council cities. Please note that this conclusion is not supported by statistical significance, as cross-tabulations and not as linear regressions.
Figures 10 and 11 were used together to respond to Hypothesis 1 and 2. Hypothesis 1 indicates that cities under the mayor-council form more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community members. Excluding the three acts of engagement that did not show up in any of the cases, mayor-council cities had a 65.33% participation rate in acts of information exchange and 38.67% participation rate in acts of information processing. These percentages directly uphold Hypothesis 1, and this finding is expressed in Finding Five in Appendix D.

The same does not hold true for Hypothesis 2, that cities under the council-manager form more often use acts of information processing than acts of information exchange to engage community members. As noted in Section IV of Chapter Five, Part one, cities hosting the council-manager form had a 67.33% participation rate in acts of information exchange and 48.00% participation in acts of information processing. Though the spread is closer against cities under the mayor-council form, council-manager cities do not rely more on acts of information processing than on acts of information exchange. In the thirty cases, cities under both forms of local governance have higher incidences of acts of information exchange than acts of information processing, disproving Hypothesis 2. This conclusion is also noted in
Appendix D, as Finding Six. It is important to note, however that the results do not directly reverse the relationship described in the hypothesis. The hypothesis is simply disproven.

As noted in Chapter Three, Borut and Hoene’s report on the survey to almost 1,750 U.S. cities could serve as a comparison to some of the aggregate data collected in this study. Much of the data matched the results of this study. For instance, when asked whether “special deliberative processes, for example ‘town hall’ meetings” were used in the city, 67% respondents answered regularly or very regularly (16). In this research study, 70% of cities were found to utilize focus groups of this nature. Though these measures are different, they show a similar result. In addition, the NLC survey reported a 14% rate for the usage of online forums. This study found 16.7% of the cases studied to utilize online forums. Once again, these measures match up. Another measure was similar, but had a bit larger spread. In the NLC report, 92% of survey respondents indicated that an “accessible city hall website, including email addresses for all city officials” was a tool regularly used to encourage engagement. In this study, an aggregate 83.3% of cities had contact information listed on the website (16).

Though some similarities were seen, other discrepancies were found. While the NLC survey reported that agendas were regularly in about 86% of the responses gathered, but there was only 67% of the cases. Additionally, respondents answered that funding was used regularly in about 51% of the respondent’s cities, but funding was only noted in about 16.7% of the cities. Though it is difficult to compare these next to each other as one study asks respondents how regularly something occurred while this research project actually calculated the incidence, the numbers to match up. No major discrepancies were noted.

Section IB: Independent and dependent variables’ measurement for Hypotheses 3

Figures 10 and 11 above also allow for an initial evaluation of Hypothesis 3 sans a measure of statistical significance. **Hypothesis 3** predicts that local governments hosting the council-manager form are more likely to engage citizens in acts of information processing than
their mayor-council counterparts. The same percentages noted in the section above labeled in “Section IA: Independent and dependent variables’ measurement of Hypotheses 1 and 2” can be reworked to test this hypothesis. Without including the two acts of information processing unobserved in this study, cities hosting the council-manager form have a 48.00% participation rate of utilizing acts of information processing while cities hosting the mayor-council system have a participation rate of 38.67%. These differences support Hypothesis 3, however an additional test observing these numbers’ statistical significance is required to truly prove the hypothesis. In summary, cities hosting the council-manager form appear to use acts of information processing to engage community members more often than their mayor-council counterparts. This is restated as Finding Seven in Appendix D: Findings.

Section IC: Additional findings

Though no hypothesis was proposed in this research study to judge the overall incidence of acts of information exchange compared to acts of information processing, these numbers were calculated. Out of the acts measured in the CEA, 60.30% of all the cities that participated in acts of information exchange. Without including non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings, the number reaches 66.33%. And overall, 30.95% of cities participated in acts of information processing listed on the CEA. Without including interactive teletown town-hall meetings and the opportunity to publicly comment on agendas and other city documents, this number climbs to 43.33%. Overall, as tested by this study’s CEA, there were more incidences of information exchange observed in the cases than incidences of information processing.

Section II: Statistical analysis in Stata

A statistical analysis in Stata provides a method for modeling and analyzing several variables, and more specifically, testing for the correlative relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable. In this research study, government form serves as the
independent variable. To this point, the dependent variable, acts of engagement have been observed. According to the findings in Figure 10 and Figure 11, four acts (two being acts of information exchange and two being acts of information processing) were found to be potentially affected by form of government, as they each had three or more higher incidences of these particular acts in the cities of one form of government over another.

The first two were if a city had a city newsletter online or otherwise (labeled “news”) and if a city had a public access channel (labeled “pubacc”). The last two were hosting online forums (labeled “onlfor”) and having an opportunity for citizens to meet face-to-face (labeled “facetime”) with elected or appointed public officials. Though the incidences were polarized to one form of government over another, a further statistical test is needed to observe correlative properties between the act of engagement and form. An r-square measure provides a coefficient of determination, or the ratio of the sum of squares explained by the model and the sum of squares around the mean. The closer the r-square reported in Stata is to 1, the more correlated the independent and dependent variables are to one another. The same is true of -1 but in the opposite direction. Again in this analysis an answer of “yes” received a “1,” and an answer of “no” received a “0” as the dependent variable responses were coded into the program.

Section IIA: Results of the correlation analysis

The r-square calculations computed from the analysis of these four acts of engagement against form presented calculations between 0.0043 and 0.0846. The r-square calculations were highest for “pubacc” and “onlfor” with 0.0844 and 0.0845, respectively. The r-square numbers are reported on the next page in Figure 12.
“News”, or having a city-wide newsletter, had the lowest r-square calculations, indicating a low chance of correlation between having the act of engagement and one particular form of government. However, the other three r-square calculations indicated higher possibilities of correlative properties. In referring back to Figures 10 and 11, cities hosting the council-manager form were more likely to result in the use of a public access station as well as hosting an online forum. As having a public access station is considered an act of information exchange, this trend provides some weight to an argument against Hypothesis 1. The observation that cities hosting the form was correlated to the outcome regarding “onlfor” or hosting online forums holds the claim made in Hypothesis 2.

The same statistical test was done to the remaining eleven acts of information exchange and processing. This data had r-square calculations that measured from 0 to a high of .0089. None of the r-square scores were as high as the four previously calculated. The full results can be found on the next page in Figure 13.
Figure 13: Statistical test of form against other acts of engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>r^2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listserv</td>
<td>0.0036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survey</td>
<td>0.0057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socnet</td>
<td>0.0036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
<td>0.0089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agendas</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focgrp</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socmedresp</td>
<td>0.0036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citreq</td>
<td>0.0043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The r-square scores for the variables “cal”, “agendas”, and “minutes” were all 0. This follows the logic of earlier reporting since these three acts of engagement had very high levels of participation (at least 66.6%). For the variables “agendas” and “minutes”, these acts had equal incidence rates in the cities of the two forms of government. Refer back to Figure 10 to see whether or not each act of engagement occurred in the case cities. The highest score from this second set of variables was “contact”, or whether or not a city listed contact information on the website. In this case, 13 cities under the mayor-council form and 12 cities under the council-manager form had this information on the website. The other variables had r-squares that fell between 0.0036 and .0057. In all of the cases of r-squares above 0, the spread between the council-manager form and the council-mayor form was one city. The direction of polarity was not consistently one form over another.

The analyses to search for correlations between form and the various acts of engagement do not indicate that a strong link exists between the two. Since the percentages were a bit more convincing, these findings gave rise to the idea that another variable might be interfering with the analyses.
Section IIB: Control variables

In order to isolate the effect of form on how cities engage their citizens, other variables must be held constant. In order to isolate the influence of form, two other variables were considered that might potentially influence the acts of engagement used by a city: population density and geographic location. Population density refers to the human population per unit area or unit within a set location. Density would potentially affect the acts of engagement used by a city, as cities that are more or less dense would have different properties and needs for engagement. For example, more-dense cities would most likely be older cities, limited in their ability to annex more land, and are generally more urban in nature. Since individuals are closer together, it is possible that the citizens are more aware of community issues than those in a city with a lower density. Cities with lower population density might need to utilize more acts of engagement, which bring individuals closer together. Additionally, these cities are more likely to be suburban with more affluent inhabitants that are spread apart from one another.

Since the range of population densities for the thirty case cities ranged from 10,877.6 to 887.5 persons per square mile (U.S Census Bureau). These density calculations are from 2010. To code population density as a variable, the range of approximately 10,000 persons per square mile was divided into five equal groups. The coding of these variables was different since these responses are not binary. Depending on which group they were in, the cities' population densities were coded with a number from “1” to “5.” Six cases fell in the first group, eleven in the second, five in the third, five in the fourth group, and three in the fifth group. Overall, most of the cities fell in the groups that had the smaller measures of population density. This is an important variable to note as statistical tests are run on the data set. Population density is labeled in Stata as “densgrp.”

Since population density is a key element describing geography, geographic location was also used to hold the cases constant and measure the effect of local government form. As described by Daniel Elezar, different geographic regions of the United States have different
political cultures (52-54). As Eleazar, describes, the three most prominent cultures are moralistic, individualistic, and traditional. The moralistic culture assigns value for the need of individuals to contribute to the group. Though moralistic values give rise to the topic, rather than the frequency of engagement, it is still important to consider. The moralistic culture is noted in the upper New England and upper Midwestern portions of the country as well as some of the west. Individualist culture is thought to have a slightly less involved citizenry than the other political cultures. Government is “smaller” in these areas and many individuals are cynical about government’s role. This includes the Mid-Atlantic areas. The traditional political culture sees government as a helpful entity, however government should not play a role on the social order of society. Though he does not comment on participation levels, one would not associate inclusion as a high priority of traditional culture.

The coding for this variable was determined by the categorization found in James M. McCormick and Michael Black’s “Ideology and Senate Voting on the Panama Canal Treaties,” which is based on Clausen’s study of congressional behavior (74). Like population density, five groups would describe a different variable code. A “1” describes the northeast region of the United States. A “2” indicates the Midwest region. And, “3,” “4,” and “5” describe border, southern, and western regions, respectively. Geographic location was noted in Stata as “geographic.” Testing form against the responses to the five questions provides a closer look into form’s effect on acts of engagement. The logs of the Stata statistical tests for “news,” “pubacc,” onlfor,” and “facetime” can be found in Appendix F.

Section IIC: Results of the secondary analysis

Once again, of those four analyses, “pubacc” and “onlfor” had the highest r-square calculations, but this time, the values were slightly higher with 0.1305 for having a public access channel and 0.1521 for hosting one or more online forums. The higher of the two, “pubacc”, is seen on the next page.
Like in the first set of analyses, the remaining eleven acts of engagement were also tested using this model. This makes a total of fifteen tests beyond the four originally run. These can be found in Appendix F’. The statistical tests run in Appendix F’ indicated that another variable besides form also holds predictive properties for the outcomes of CEA responses.

Population density was found to have some forecasting ability for two acts of engagement. The first was whether or not a survey was used, and the second was whether or not some type of social media was used to inform or educate citizens. The statistical tests are reprinted from Appendix F’ and shown on the next page in Figure 15 and Figure 16. The r-square value for “survey” was 0.1521 and 0.2198 for “socnet”. These greatly differ from the r-squares reported against form. The p-values reported in this analysis suggest that instead of form, population density had more of an influence on the outcome of these two acts of engagement.
Figure 15: Statistical tests of “survey” against form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>logistic survey form densgrp geographic</th>
<th>Number of obs = 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistic regression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR chi2(3) = 4.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; chi2 = 0.175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood = -13.919993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R2 = 0.1521</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| citreq | Coef. | Std. Err. | z    | P > |z| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----|-----------|---------------------|
| form   | 0.3035706 | 0.4060933 | -0.89 | 0.373 | 0.0220591 | 4.177642 |
| desgrp | 0.4459123 | 0.1799115 | -2   | 0.045 | 0.2022164 | 0.9832918 |
| geographic | 1.132111 | 0.4507893 | 0.31 | 0.755 | 0.5187443 | 2.470725 |

Figure 16: Statistical tests of “socnet” against form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>logistic socnet form densgrp geographic</th>
<th>Number of obs = 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logistic regression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR chi2(3) = 8.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob &gt; chi2 = 0.0341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood = -15.380933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R2 = 0.2198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| citreq | Coef. | Std. Err. | z    | P > |z| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|-------|-----------|------|-----|-----------|---------------------|
| form   | 0.9372138 | 1.005101 | -0.06 | 0.952 | 0.114546 | 7.668269 |
| desgrp | 0.3591734 | 0.1446702 | -2.54 | 0.011 | 0.1630991 | 0.7909639 |
| geographic | 0.9384732 | 0.3357087 | -0.18 | 0.859 | 0.465513 | 1.89196 |

To determine the direction of these predictions, cross-tabulations were run as a follow-up to the Stata statistical tests. Those were run in SPSS, much like the earlier set, as is ["Does the city distribute resident surveys?"] * [DensGrp]. These cross-tabulations are presented in Appendix G. It appears from these analyses, that the higher the population density, the less likely a city is to distribute resident surveys. Though the full list of cross-tabulations can be found in the appendix, Figure 17 also presents this information.
The social media trend seen in the Stata statistical tests was confirmed with the SPSS cross-tabulation presented in Figure 11. A similar relationship emerged. As population density increases, cities are less likely to post to some sort of social media website. The results are presented in Figure 18.

Though the hypotheses of this research project do not suggest that population density or geographic form could be the independent variable determining specific types of engagement, the analyses presented in Appendix F and F’ indicate otherwise.

Section IIB: Testing Hypothesis 3

A regression analysis was run to see the relationship between form of government (and the other two control variables) and type of engagement, either acts of information exchange or those of information processing. The log of this regression can be found in Appendix H. This statistical tests helps us understand form’s effect on each individual act of engagement either proving or disproving Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3 is built on observing the relative level of acts of information exchange versus
the level of acts of information processing. So, for each city two additional dependent variables were calculated: (1) percent participation in acts of information exchange and (2) percent participation in acts of information processing. A spread was found by subtracting the percentage of dependent variable 2 from the percentage of dependent variable 1. A positive number indicates that a higher percentage of acts of information exchange occur, and a negative number indicates that a higher percentage of acts of information processing occur. This spread ranged from -10% to 90% participation.

Using this method, all cases are measured equally against one another. In order to run the regression, the spreads were put into six groups; group one held the -10% participation rate, group two was a 0% spread (meaning the city had equal participation in acts of information exchange as information processing), group three represented the 10-20% spreads, group four the 30-40% spreads, group five had the 50-60% spreads, and group six had spreads of 70% and up. These groups were labeled as “spreadgrp” in Stata. The regression analysis is displayed below in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Multiple regression of “spreadgrp” against population density

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>oprobit spreadgrp form densgrp geographic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iteration 0: log likelihood = -45.500396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iteration 1: log likelihood = -44.432505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iteration 2: log likelihood = -44.432111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iteration 3: log likelihood = -44.432111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of obs = 30
Ordered probit regression
LR chi2(3) = 2.14
Prob > chi2 = 0.5445
Log likelihood = 44.432111
Pseudo R2 = 0.0235

| spreadgrp   | Coef.   | Std. Err. | z     | P > |z|   | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-------------|---------|-----------|-------|-----|----|---------------------|
| form        | -0.1328541 | 0.4401309 | -0.3  | 0.763 | -0.9954949 | 0.7297866 |
| desgrp      | -0.397407  | 0.1586013 | -0.25 | 0.802 | -0.3505934 | 0.2711121 |
| geographic  | -0.1764885 | 0.1533723 | -1.15 | 0.250 | -0.4770926 | 0.1241157 |
As you can see from this analysis, neither form nor the other two variable controls could account for a city providing more opportunities of information exchange or information processing. Though this does not disprove Hypothesis 3, the regression indicates that neither form nor either of this study’s controls (population density and geographic location) are good predictors of the type of engagement that would be used in a specific locality. This finding is rewritten in Appendix D as Finding Ten. Still, in referring back to the participation rates calculated in the earlier section, “Section IB: Independent and dependent variables’ measurement for Hypotheses 3”, it is evident that a small trend exists regardless of its statistical relationship. Council-manager cities utilized 48.00% of the acts of information processing tested in this study while mayor-council cities only participated in 38.67%. By these numbers, Hypothesis 3 holds, however the ordered probit regression indicates it is not a statistically significant trend.

Section III: Additional findings

To further the analysis, an additional response of the CEA was considered to test for further correlations; this question, in category one, inquires as to “How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement,” “citizen participation,” “deliberative,” “input,” etc.)?” This CEA question was tested as a cross-tabulation against both city form and population density. This question cannot be coded with a binary response of “0” or “1,” so the groups delineated in the CEA were used. If a city had 0 documents that included the key terms of engagement, the city received a “1.” If a city had 1-2 documents, it received a “2.” 3-5 documents coded as a “3” while 6-7 documents and 8 or more documents coded as a “4” and “5” respectively. The log for this data analysis can be found in Appendix I.
Though the SPSS data shows the general relationship, an ordered probit regression substantiates the effect of population density on the number of current public documents a city has that includes engagement vernacular. The analysis is shown below in Figure 20.

*Figure 20: Multiple regression of “numdoc” against population density*

```
oprobit numdoc form densgrp densgrp

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -44.69251
Iteration 1: log likelihood = -42.644519
Iteration 2: log likelihood = -42.64241
Iteration 3: log likelihood = -42.64241

Number of obs = 30
Ordered probit regression
LR chi2(3) = 4.1
Prob > chi2 = 0.2508
Log likelihood = -42.64241
Pseudo R2 = 0.0459

| spreadgrp | Coef.  | Std. Err. | z     | P > |z| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-----------|--------|-----------|-------|-----|---|---------------------|
| form      | 0.4116 | 0.4454    | 0.92  | 0.355 | -0.4614 | 1.2846 |
| desgrp    | -0.2724 | 0.1626 | -1.67 | 0.094 | -0.5913 | 0.0464 |
| geographic | -0.1358 | 0.1539 | -0.88 | 0.378 | -0.4375 | 0.1659 |
```

As you can see, the r-square value and the p value associated with “numdoc” is relatively low, however some predictive ability exists. Unlike the cases of the “socnet” and “survey”, which have a “sweet spot” with the five groups of population density ranges, this relationship is more linear. This analysis indicates that as density increases, the number of documents relating to civic engagement decrease. To provide a clearer image of the relationship, the results are charted on the next page in Figure 21 using a line graph. Following the “0 Docs” line, as population density increases, more instances of having no documents that relate to engagement occur. Following the same logic, the “6-7 Docs” and the “8+ Docs” line decreases, indicating that as density increases less instances of having these high number of documents relating to engagement occur. This chart more clearly demonstrates that as density increases in the study’s cases, the number of documents relating to civic engagement decrease. This finding is
The initial regressions combined with the second set and the supporting SPSS cross-tabulations come together to indicate that population density had a higher number of strong statistical correlations with various acts of engagement. Though no conclusion can be made across the board of the two categories of engagement, it is evident that population density has a significant effect on certain acts of engagement. Most notably affecting whether or not a survey or some form of social media was used as well as the number of documents concerning engagement and civic participation on record with a city.

Section IV: Summary of part two

My analysis took on three main parts. The first part was a simple descriptive study of
variations in the dependent variables, holding form constant. From this, it was apparent that neither form of local governance hosted a significantly higher number of acts of information exchange, however it did appear that cities hosting the council-manager form had a higher number of acts of information processing. Upon further analysis, the evaluation of each city’s participation rate in the two categories of engagement indicated that elected public officials do rely more often on acts of information exchange than information processing to engage community members. This supports the claim made in Hypothesis 1. However, all cities in the study had higher incidences of acts of information exchange than information processing, adding to the argument against Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 was upheld as cities hosting the council-manager form where found to use acts of information processing to engage community members more often than their mayor-council counterparts. Though all three of these conclusions can be ascertained from the cross-tabulation data, they are not held to a standard of statistical significance.

The second part of the analysis applied statistical tests to the data to search for potential correlations. This evaluation indicated that although in this study, more cities hosting the council-manager form use acts of information processing to engage community members than their mayor-council counterparts, the data was not strong enough to find form to always correlate with one act of engagement over another. But with further investigation and an expansion of the study to also consider geography as an independent variable, several unique cases did appear to have correlative properties.

The first applied to form. The statistical test indicated that a city hosting the council-manager form was correlated to having a public access channel and having one or more online forums. The second two relationships were similar, but they looked at population density instead of city form. Those cities that fell in the population density range of about 1,075 to 1,275 persons per square mile were statistically proven to indicate a higher incidence of using a resident survey. This group is the “sweet spot” of population density in relation to the use of
surveys. The same relationship existed between this population density group and the use of social networking as a means of communicating information one-directionally to citizens. This is the third relationship. The final relationship was more complicated, however, this showed a clearer relationship between population density and the act of engagement than the previous two. The full analysis tested the number of documents that dealt with civic engagement compared to the population density of a city. In this case, the population density indicated that as density increases, the number of documents relating to civic engagement decrease.

Section V: Limitations of the analyses

There were two major limitations as this study was conducted. The first limitation of this study lies in the fleeting relevance of the information collected. The state of the websites of each city is constantly altered and updated with some cities even adding whole e-government platforms to revamp their websites. In this case, the data was collected over a two-month period for all cities. Though major changes will not necessarily take place, all information should be time-stamped so as to indicate the time-sensitive nature of the results. The second major limitation is the number of cases used to run the regressions. In many statistical analyses, 100 or more cases are required to define statistical significance. Since only 30 sets of data were collected for this study, and only 15 cases apply to each of the major forms of government, the regressions run in this analysis must be considered carefully. Though figures of causality may indicate a relationship, and at times a strong relationship, measure of correlative properties are more compelling and more appropriate for the data collected.
Chapter Six: Adjustment to the Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA)

A secondary goal of this research project is to provide a method for researchers to outline the environment of engagement for any United States city. While the original CEA was not modified during the study to maintain the integrity of the data collected, a second draft, an updated version, of the assessment was created. This new assessment can be read in its full text at the conclusion of this chapter.

The most notable contributors to the new assessment were the acts of engagement that showed no signs of participation in any case of the study. The majority of these observations were noted in section IV of part one of Chapter Five. In reaction to these observation, several questions were removed from the Civic Engagement Assessment. The main questions removed included: “Does the city host non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings?;” “Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings?;” “Is there an opportunity for the public to comment of city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise?;” and “Is there an opportunity for the public to comment of city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise?.” Additionally, the sub-question under “Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates?” that asks, “Are citizens automatically put on this or must one opt in?” has also been taken out. Though there were very few examples of online forums, this question remained in the assessment because online features are still developing and may still grow in number in the future.

Another sub-question that was removed was taken out in some cases and stayed in others. In many cases the sub-question “Under what office does this fall?” does not apply or is very difficult to deduce from the information provided on the city’s website. Thus, an updated assessment is presented, which gets rid of the question in many cases. The first three questions in category two which ask about a calendar, a citizen request form, and a listserv do not look for a specific office with which the act is associated. It is simply too difficult to deduce
which office is responsible and having the reporter of the information speculate may include some form of bias.

The new CEA also rephrases this question. For example the first question in category one inquires about the number of documents with engagement phrasing on a city’s website now asks, “What other offices (if any) are responsible for each of these documents?.” But in the majority of cases, either the question was entirely removed or basically remained as it stood in the original CEA.

Another act of engagement (present in category one) that has low numbers of participation amongst the cases: funding for civic engagement activities. Only five of the thirty cases (Chandler, AZ, Boise, ID, Madison, WI, Springfield, MO and Fayetteville, NC) showed signs of using some sort of funding to provide opportunities of engagement. While funding is not necessarily required for an act of engagement to be successful, it does show a commitment from the public administration end. In Boise, for example, a request was granted for $30,000 to be used towards a citizen survey and various focus groups throughout the year. And in Chandler, the city invested in a Neighborhood Programs Coordinator position that would focus on bringing together communities of different neighborhoods. Though they were infrequent, examples of funding were substantial in the cases where it was present and this question actually remained in the updated version.

On the subject of neighborhoods, the questions highlighting the existence of neighborhood groups was changed to accommodate for the difference amongst many existing organizations. In addition to the question in category three, which asks, whether or not any form of neighborhood group, organization, or council exists and the frequency at which they meet, two sub-questions inquire as to whether the neighborhoods meet individually, separately, or both. This clarification is helpful in determining if individual neighborhoods have successful meetings or if they are successful together. The latter of these two is the ideal organization of
such groups. The individual meetings tend to skew the data created because one neighborhood could throw off the reporting on how often individual neighborhoods meet.

Another similar change was made to clarify the question “Does the city distribute a newsletter?”. The reporting on this question incorporated all types of city-wide newsletters, department-specific newsletters, e-newsletters, and in some cases, mass listservs. For instance, Allentown, PA and St. Petersburg, FL received a “yes” response to this question for their print newsletters “It’s Happening in Allentown” and “St. Petersburg Shines.” But Boise, ID has a newsletter specifically for updates from the mayor called “Porch Talk with the Mayor.” Other cities have e-newsletters or have email listservs that include a consistent report for citizens. Torrance, CA and Cedar Rapids, IA were two of these cities, but Allentown, PA also fell into the category. The fact of the matter is that cities could have had either and received a “yes,” but the question doesn’t account for a city having both types of newsletters. To remedy this, two sub-questions clarify, so like the distinction for neighborhood groups, the question about newsletters separates into print form, online, or both.

Figure 22: Revised Civic Engagement Assessment (CEA)

Revised Civic Engagement Assessment

**Objective:** To provide a reasonable measure of how “civically engaged” a city is based on the city’s literature posted on their website which includes administrative information, strategic goals, and other related documents

**City, state**

**Category One: Overall focus on engagement**

How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement”, “citizen participation”, “deliberative”, “input”, etc.)?

Circle one: 0 1-2 3-5 6-7 8+

*Please list the documents:*

*What other office(s), if any, are responsible for each of these documents?*

*Is there a written plan specific for public engagement?*  Y N

*Under what office does this fall, if any?*

*Is there an office or Separate organization committed to these efforts?*  Y N
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is funding assigned specifically for the facilitation of public engagement?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under what office does this fall?</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**Category Two: One-directional information exchange:** What instances of shared general information can be found on the city's website (i.e. calendar, citizen request form, stream video, etc.)?

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city's website host a calendar of events for the city?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city's website have a citizen request form to submit feedback?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a single listserv or are there many broken up into different categories?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city distribute resident surveys?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a month</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a year</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the topics of the surveys and under what office does the survey fall?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city distribute a newsletter?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1x every 2 weeks</td>
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<td>1x a month</td>
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<tr>
<td>1x every 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>1x a year</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the newsletter in print form?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there an e-newsletter that is published or emailed over an online listserv?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under what office(s) does this fall?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city post to some social networking website (i.e. twitter, facebook, etc)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4-6x a week</td>
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<td>1x every month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 1x a month</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city have a public access channel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city website list contact information/email addresses for city officials?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are city council agendas and proposed executive actions published online prior to the start of public meetings?</td>
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<td>For what date is the most recent agenda posted?</td>
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<td>One month from now</td>
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<tr>
<td>One week from now</td>
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<td>From last week</td>
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<td>From last month</td>
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<td>From 2-5 months ago</td>
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<tr>
<td>From 6 or more months ago</td>
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<td>Are minutes posted online after meetings?</td>
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**Category Three: Information processing in a two-dimensional exchange**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Does the city utilize focus groups?</td>
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</table>
How often? 1x every 2 weeks 1x a month 1x every 6 months 1x a year
Less than 1x a year

What do these focus groups discuss?

What office(s) organize the focus groups?

Does some form of neighborhood council or homeowners association, which is somehow integrated into the city, exist? Y N

How often do they meet? 1x every 2 weeks 1x a month 1x every 6 months 1x a year Less than 1x a year

What is the organization called?

Do the neighborhoods have individual meetings regularly? Y N

Do the neighborhood meet as a large group regularly? Y N

Does the city post in response to citizen posts on social networking websites (i.e. twitter, facebook, etc)? Y N

How often? Daily 4-6x a week 1-3x a week 1x every 2 wks 1x every month Less than 1x a month

Does the city host interactive online forums? Y N

How often are new topics posted? 1x every week 1x every 2 weeks 1x every month 1x every 6 months 1x a year

What is discussed at each of these online forums?

What office(s) organize the forums?

Are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials? Y N

How often are new topics posted? 1x every week 1x every 2 weeks 1x every month 1x every 6 months 1x a year

Which public official(s) meet with citizens?
Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Using the three hypotheses introduced at the start of the paper, this research project compiles a controlled amount of information about the way local government officials engage citizens in United States cities. To frame the discussion, the current state of theory surrounding local and general engagement practices was presented. Three areas were discussed: acts of engagement, actors or initiators of engagement, and motivations behind engagement. An awareness of these three elements of the scene of public participation in local government allowed for the construction of the Civic Engagement Assessment, which quantified and qualified the environment of engagement in thirty United States cities randomly selected from a population of cities hosting the council manager or mayor council form with populations between 100,000 and 250,000.

Information gathered helped define the relationship between the two forms of government sampled and the opportunities of civic engagement that are provided to citizens of each city. These findings were rewritten in Appendix D: Findings and also summarized in this chapter. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 compare individual forms incidence of using acts of information exchange compared to using acts information processing. Hypothesis 1 comments on mayor council forms, and hypothesis 2 focuses on council manager forms. Through general calculations on the binary responses on the CEA, Hypothesis 1 was upheld; cities under the mayor-council form more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community by 65.33% over 38.67%. This discovery immediately supports Hypothesis 1: cities under the mayor-council form more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community members. Hypothesis 2 did not have such similar results. Neither form of government had more acts relating to information exchange than acts of information processing. Hypothesis 2, cities under the council-manager form more often use acts of information processing than acts of information exchange to engage community members, was not upheld.
Hypothesis 3 focused more on a comparison between the two forms rather than the two types of engagement. Hypothesis 3 states, *Local governments hosting the council-manager form are more likely to engage citizens in acts of information processing than their mayor-council counterparts.* Though this hypothesis relates to findings found while investigating the first two hypotheses, Hypothesis 3 is not contingent on them being proven.

Considered as percentages, cities hosting the council-manager form have a 67.33% participation rate in acts of information exchange and those hosting the mayor-council form have a 65.33% participation rate. However in terms of acts of information processing, council-manager cities have a 48.00% participation rate while mayor-council cities have a 38.67%. Though these numbers are convincing, a statistical test was conducted to see if the third relationship held and if form correlated to the types of engagement used on the local level.

To test for individual correlations, an r-square analysis was run for each act of engagement in the second and third categories of the CEA. In only two instances was form of government proven to have a substantial relationship with an act of engagement. The model indicated that a city hosting the council-manager form was statistically more likely to have a public access channel and hosting one or more online forums over mayor-council forms.

While searching for apparent trends between form and acts of engagement, another variable appeared to have a relationship with several elements of engagement at the local level. The variable was population density, one of the two controls used against form of government. Two relationships were found. First, the higher the population density, the less likely a city is to distribute resident surveys. And second, as population density increases, cities are less likely to post to some sort of social media website. These findings are written as Finding Eight and Finding Nine in Appendix D. The r-square values of these statistical tests were a bit higher than many of the others, so a curiosity of population density’s powers of prediction led to an complete statistical tests of the CEA question that looked for how many documents containing engagement vernacular could be found in official city documents. Again, population density
appeared to determine that as density increases, the number of documents relating to civic engagement decrease. A clear graphic representation of the tests can be found in Figure 21 in Chapter Five. Population density in addition to form had a relevant impact on the acts of engagement utilized at the local level.

The above conclusions directly relate to the three hypotheses, however they do not get to the root of the initial research question: What factors influence the type of engagement practices utilized by different local governments? Yes, an initiator of engagement is a contributing factor, but they are also motivated beyond whether they are appointed or elected. A layer is added when certain actors corresponds to certain acts of engagement. In some cases, a motivation is implied. In Chapter Two, the theory section of this paper, acts initiated by elected officials appeared to align most often with instrumental motivations while acts initiated by appointed officials align more with normative reasons. For reference, Leighninger write that instrumental motivations include reasons for engagement such as to create “buy in”, to highlight an issue around race or some other controversial topic, and to react to a structural shift. Normative motivations were instances of engaging for the sake of engagement. Though this research project did not aim to tie a motivation to an actors in the same way that it tried to link actors to acts of engagement, this trend seemed to be sustained with information gathered about a specific topic of engagement, housing policy.

Though mayors and city managers were not the initiators of these instances of engagement, the actors are still considered appointed officials, as members of community development officers are rarely, if ever, elected. Motivated by grant money offered by the Community Development Block Grant, city officials put together public participation plans. As earlier noted, thirteen of the thirty cases had a community development or housing department that was somehow involved in engaging the public. This did not include repeats when a city both had overlaps of the community development department having a newsletter, hosting a focus group, and generating a public participation plan. Of those thirteen, eight cities were cities
hosting the mayor council form. In the specific case of participation plans and focus groups created because of the HUD grant incentive, appointed officials utilize sheer normative reasons for engagement. In no way are these initiations aimed to create buy in or react to a structural shift. They are important for the sake of the engagement that occurs, regardless of the result. The Community Development Block Grants only require that participation is initiated, not that the participation was successful. One could make the argument that these acts were initiated for the instrumental motivation to “advocate for some cause” (Leighninger 8), but without the grant incentive, the actions would not take place. They are motivated solely to satisfy the citizen participation requirement, in adherence to the grants specifications.

As this project’s hypotheses focused primarily on linking the actors of engagement with acts of engagement, no statistical data was collected on these motivations. Though this limited the scope of the research project in its investigation of the motivations of these political actors, instrumental and normative motivations are constant drivers in the execution of the observed acts of engagement. This finding speaks to the original assumptions made in Chapter Two and provides a link between acts and actors of engagement previously ignored.

In sum, this research project adds to a limited knowledge base of what acts of engagement are and are not utilized across localities to involve citizens in government. These insights report specific trends to expect depending on the local government form of a city in question as well as the city’s population density. The local level of government provides a unique opportunity for citizens to voice their opinions and to see their ideas influence various city functions. But, these opinions are unheard without work done by successful initiators of engagement. The qualitative and quantitative evidence produced by this investigation increases the understanding of the scene of engagement in the United States municipality and clarifies the current environment of engagement. It also provides an instrument for further investigation into the acts of engagement initiated at the local level. By studying the activity at the local level, public officials are more aware of which acts of engagement have been tried and which have
been avoided. This awareness allows appointed and elected officials to make informed and
deliberate decisions about engagement as they plan and program for their cities and avoid the
Catch 22 disconnect of local government engagement.
### Appendix A: Demographic information and category one responses to the CEA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
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<th>Geographic</th>
<th>PopGrp</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>NumDoc</th>
<th>EngPlan</th>
<th>SepOrg</th>
<th>Fund</th>
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## Appendix B: Category two responses to the CEA

### Responses to the Civic Engagement Assessment (Category Two)

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### Appendix C: Category three responses to the CEA

#### Responses to the Civic Engagement Assessment (Category Three)

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Appendix D: Findings

Finding One: Of the sixteen cities that had some form of plan, nine cities’ plans involved an office that worked with the cities’ community development or housing department.

Finding Two: Homelessness or the overall topic of housing was present in the focus group meetings of eleven cities.

Finding Three: No form of government appeared to host significantly more acts related to information exchange than another form.

Finding Four: A higher incidence of acts of information processing was observed in council-manager cities than in mayor-council cities.

Finding Five: Cities under the mayor-council form more often rely on acts of information exchange than acts of information processing to engage community by 65.33% over 38.67%, **upholding** but not proving **Hypothesis 1**.

Finding Six: Cities under both forms of local governance have higher incidences of acts of information exchange than acts of information processing, **arguing against** **Hypothesis 2**.

Finding Seven: Cities hosting the council-manager form appear to use acts of information processing to engage community members more often than their mayor-council counterparts, **upholding Hypothesis 3**.

Finding Eight: The higher the population density, the less likely a city is to distribute resident surveys.

Finding Nine: As population density increases, cities are less likely to post to some sort of social media website.

Finding Ten: Though not reversing or disproving Finding Seven, **neither form of government nor either of this study's controls (population density and geographic location) are statistically significant indicators of the type of engagement primarily used in local government.**
Finding Eleven: As density increases, the number of documents relating to civic engagement decrease.
Appendix E: CEA questions cross-tabulated with form of government

**Is there a written plan specific for public engagement? * Form Crosstabulation**

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**Is there an office or Separate organization committed to these efforts? * Form Crosstabulation**

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**Is funding assigned specifically for the facilitation of public engagement? * Form Crosstabulation**

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<td>council-manager</td>
<td>mayor-council</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city’s website have a citizen request form to submit feedback?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates? * Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>council-manager</td>
<td>mayor-council</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Does the city host non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the city host non-interactive teletown town-hall meetings?</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>

### Does the city distribute resident surveys? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the city distribute resident surveys?</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Does the city distribute a newsletter? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the city distribute a newsletter?</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Does the city post to some social networking website (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the city posted to social networking website?</th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Does the city have a public access channel? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has a public access channel?</th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Does the city website list contact information/email addresses for city officials? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List contact information/email addresses for city officials?</th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are city council agendas and proposed executive actions published online prior to the start of public meetings? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are city council agendas and proposed executive actions published online prior to the start of public meetings?</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Are minutes posted online after meetings? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are minutes posted online after meetings?</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does the city utilize focus groups? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Council-Manager</th>
<th>Mayor-Council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does the city utilize focus groups?</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>council-manager</th>
<th>mayor-council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings?</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Does some form of neighborhood council or homeowners association which is overseen by the city exist? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>council-manager</th>
<th>mayor-council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does some form of neighborhood council or homeowners association which is overseen by the city exist?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Does the city post in response to citizen posts on social networking websites (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>council-manager</th>
<th>mayor-council</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the city post in response to citizen posts on social networking websites (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is there an opportunity for the public to comment on city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>council-manager</td>
<td>mayor-council</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an opportunity for no the public to comment on city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Does the city host interactive online forums? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>council-manager</td>
<td>mayor-council</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the city host interactive yes online forums?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials? * Form Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Form</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>council-manager</td>
<td>mayor-council</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are opportunities scheduled yes for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Analysis of various acts of engagement against form, density, and geographic location

.logistic news form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 1.52
Prob > chi2 = 0.6781
Log likelihood = -17.566785
Pseudo R2 = 0.0414

| news | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | z    | P>|z|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|------|------------|-----------|------|------|----------------------|
| form | 2.542686   | 2.397124  | 0.99 | 0.322| .4007008 16.13486  |
| densgrp | .9182549 | .3067861  | -0.26| 0.799| .4770671 1.76745  |
| geographic | 1.0027 | .3197489  | 0.01 | 0.993| .5367016 1.873307 |

.logistic pubacc form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 6.24
Prob > chi2 = 0.1004
Log likelihood = -17.405735
Pseudo R2 = 0.1521

| pubacc | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | z    | P>|z|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|------------|-----------|------|------|----------------------|
| form | 9.710772   | 10.24313  | 2.16 | 0.031| 1.228536 76.75731 |
| densgrp | .9200733 | .3101143  | -0.25| 0.805| .4752494 1.781243 |
| geographic | .5728784 | .2049565  | -1.56| 0.119| .2841393 1.155031 |

.logistic onlfor form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 3.53
Prob > chi2 = 0.3173
Log likelihood = -11.753449
Pseudo R2 = 0.1305

| onlfor | Odds Ratio | Std. Err. | z    | P>|z|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|------------|-----------|------|------|----------------------|
| form | 3.638971   | 4.500405  | 1.04 | 0.296| .322312 41.08475  |
| densgrp | .5948652 | .3084212  | -1.00| 0.316| .2153248 1.643399 |
| geographic | 1.296645 | .6617513  | 0.51 | 0.611| .4768751 3.525635 |
Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         30
LR chi2(3)      =       2.17
Prob > chi2     =     0.5372
Log likelihood = -15.211524                       Pseudo R2       =     0.0667

|          | Odds Ratio   | Std. Err. |      z  |    P>|z| | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|----------|--------------|-----------|---------|--------|----------------------|
| face-time| 2.490088     | 2.6119    | 0.87    | 0.384  | 0.3186936            | 19.45611 |
| densgrp  | 1.066284     | 0.3963993 | 0.17    | 0.863  | 0.5145557            | 2.2096   |
| geographic| 1.273703    | 0.4943435 | 0.62    | 0.533  | 0.5952565            | 2.725414 |
Appendix F': Analysis of various acts of engagement against form, density, and geographic location (continued)

. logistic cal form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                              Number of obs =  3
LR chi2(0) =  0.00
Prob > chi2 =    
Log likelihood = -1.9095425                Pseudo R2 =  0.0000

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
cal | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic listserv form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                              Number of obs =  30
LR chi2(3) =  0.42
Prob > chi2 =  0.9351
Log likelihood = -19.502414                Pseudo R2 =  0.0108

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
listserv | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
form |   .9050414   .7762871 -0.12   0.907     .1684852    4.861555
densgrp |   1.129533   .3580934     0.38   0.701     .6067984    2.102585
geographic |   .9044839   .2772612 -0.33   0.743     .4959899    1.649411
------------------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic survey form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                              Number of obs =  30
LR chi2(3) =  4.96
Prob > chi2 =  0.1750
Log likelihood = -13.819993                Pseudo R2 =  0.1521

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
survey | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
survey |   .3035706   .4060933 -0.89   0.373     .0220591    4.177642
densgrp |   .4459123   .1799115 -2.00   0.045     .2022164    0.9832918
geographic |   1.132111   .4507893     0.31   0.755     .5187443    2.470725
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
. logistic socnet form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         30
LR chi2(3)      =       8.67
Prob > chi2     =     0.0341
Log likelihood = -15.380933    Pseudo R2       =     0.2198

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
socnet | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+--------------------------------------------------------
   form |   .9372138   1.005101 -0.06   0.952      .114546    7.668269
 densgrp |   .3591734   .1446702 2.54   0.011     .1630991    .7909639
g eographic |   .9384732   .3357087 -0.18   0.859      .465513    1.89196
------------------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic contact form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         30
LR chi2(3)      =       0.66
Prob > chi2     =     0.8832
Log likelihood = -13.188197    Pseudo R2       =     0.0243

------------------------------------------------------------------
contact | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
----------+-------------------------------------------------...
   form |   .4202246   .5328647 -0.68   0.494      .035004    5.044816
 densgrp |   .8144461   .3289278 -0.51   0.611     .3690543    1.797357
g eographic |   1.172301   .4729717  0.39   0.694      .5316389    2.585005

------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic agendas form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         30
LR chi2(3)      =       0.93
Prob > chi2     =     0.8172
Log likelihood = -18.628349    Pseudo R2       =     0.0245

------------------------------------------------------------------
agendas | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
----------+-------------------------------------------------...
   form |   .9283631   .8541692 0.08   0.936     .1529479    5.634978
 densgrp |   .7371237   .2357041 -0.95   0.340     .3938751    1.379502
g eographic |   .9387502   .2937771 -0.20   0.840      .5083594    1.733521

------------------------------------------------------------------

. logistic minutes form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression                               Number of obs   =         30
LR chi2(3)      =       1.80
Prob > chi2     =     0.6139
Log likelihood = -10.877839    Pseudo R2       =     0.0766

------------------------------------------------------------------
minutes | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
----------+-------------------------------------------------...
   form |   .3740524   .5938306 -0.62   0.536     .0166571    8.399743
 densgrp |   .6144436   .2833034 -1.06   0.288     .2465839    1.516171
g eographic |   1.397308   .6480209  0.72   0.471      .5630351    3.467757

------------------------------------------------------------------
. logistic focgrp form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 0.58
Prob > chi2 = 0.9000
Log likelihood = -18.033673 Pseudo R2 = 0.0159

| focgrp | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------------------|
| form   |   .5820373   .5589832       -0.56  0.573     .0886063    3.823287 |
| densgrp|   .8242785   .2695486       -0.59  0.555     .4342315    1.564684 |
| geographic | 1.078605   .3470489       0.24  0.814     .5740929    2.026481 |

. logistic neighbor form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 1.46
Prob > chi2 = 0.6908
Log likelihood = -17.59443 Pseudo R2 = 0.0399

| neighbor | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval] |
|----------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------------------|
| form     |   .8028241   .7781382       -0.23  0.821     .1201136    5.365974 |
| densgrp  |   .9061129   .3046901       -0.29  0.769     .4687667    1.751491 |
| geographic | 1.401124   .4537453       1.04  0.298     .7427114    2.643217 |

. logistic socmedresp form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 1.60
Prob > chi2 = 0.6603
Log likelihood = -18.916673 Pseudo R2 = 0.0405

| socmedresp | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval] |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------------------|
| form        |   .9251634   .7930638       -0.09  0.928     .1724074    4.964563 |
| densgrp     |   .7213877   .2412537       -0.98  0.329     .3745428    1.389428 |
| geographic  |   .8142395   .2740553       0.58  0.541     .4209749    1.574882 |

. logistic citreq form densgrp geographic

Logistic regression
Number of obs = 30
LR chi2(3) = 2.03
Prob > chi2 = 0.5667
Log likelihood = -17.312229 Pseudo R2 = 0.0553

| citreq | Odds Ratio   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval] |
|--------|--------------|------------------|------------|--------|--------------------------|
| form   |   2.104659   1.898527       0.82  0.409     .3592095    12.3315 |
| densgrp | 1.480571    .5389142       1.08  0.281     .725437    3.021752 |
| geographic | 0.814295   .2740553      -0.61  0.541     .4209749    1.574882 |
Appendix G: CEA questions cross-tabulated with population density of government

Is there a written plan specific for public engagement? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th></th>
<th>DensGrp</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a written plan specific for public engagement?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there an office or Separate organization committed to these efforts? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th></th>
<th>DensGrp</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there an office or Separate organization committed to these efforts?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>2</td>
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Is funding assigned specifically for the facilitation of public engagement? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Does the city’s website host a calendar of events for the city? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Does the city’s website have a citizen request form to submit feedback? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Is a listserv made available to citizens to receive city updates? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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Does the city host non-interactive tele-town town-hall meetings? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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Does the city distribute resident surveys? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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Does the city distribute a newsletter? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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<td>5</td>
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### Does the city post to some social networking website (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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### Does the city have a public access channel? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Does the city website list contact information/email addresses for city officials? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
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### Are city council agendas and proposed executive actions published online prior to the start of public meetings? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Are minutes posted online after meetings? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Does the city utilize focus groups? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Does the city host interactive teletown town-hall meetings? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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<td>Total</td>
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### Does some form of neighborhood council or homeowners association which is overseen by the city exist? *

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Does the city post in response to citizen posts on social networking websites (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc)? *

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### Is there an opportunity for the public to comment on city council agendas or executive documents online or otherwise? *

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<td>3</td>
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### Does the city host interactive online forums? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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### Are opportunities scheduled for citizens to speak face-to-face with city officials? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

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</table>
Appendix H: Analysis for the spread between the two types of engagement against form, density, and geographic location

```
 Appendix H: Analysis for the spread between the two types of engagement against form, density, and geographic location

 . oprobit spreadgrp form densgrp geographic
 Iteration 0:  log likelihood = -45.500396
 Iteration 1:  log likelihood = -44.432505
 Iteration 2:  log likelihood = -44.432111
 Iteration 3:  log likelihood = -44.432111

 Ordered probit regression               Number of obs =        30
 LR chi2(3) =       2.14
 Prob > chi2 =  0.5445
 Log likelihood = -44.432111         Pseudo R2 =  0.0235

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
 spreadgrp |      Coef.   Std. Err.      z    P>|z|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
     form |  -.1328541   .4401309  -0.30  0.763    -.9954949    .7297866
     densgrp |  -.0397407   .1586013  -0.25  0.802    -.3505934    .2711121
    geographic |  -.1764885   .1533723  -1.15  0.250    -.4770926    .1241157
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
      /cut1 |  -2.351385    .7981541  -3.00  0.003    -.7870315    2.676912
     /cut2 |  -1.936572    .7626145  -2.55  0.010    -.4418749    1.568427
     /cut3 |  -1.036428    .7354095  -1.40  0.161    -.2957947    1.122928
     /cut4 |  -.0262556    .7265469  -0.03  0.977    -.1474432    .1949319
     /cut5 |   1.11256     .7688563   1.45  0.146    -.3943703    2.629503
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```
Appendix I: Crosstabulation and ordered probit regression of number of documents against population density

How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement”, “citizen participation”, “deliberative”, “input”, etc.)? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement”, “citizen participation”, “deliberative”, “input”, etc.)?</td>
<td>0 documents</td>
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<td>1-2 documents</td>
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<td>3-5 documents</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6-7 documents</td>
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<td>8+ documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement”, “citizen participation”, “deliberative”, “input”, etc.)? * DensGrp Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Count</th>
<th>DensGrp</th>
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<td>How many formal city documents include engagement vernacular with key terms (i.e. “civic engagement”, “citizen participation”, “deliberative”, “input”, etc.)?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
. oprobit numdoc form densgrp geographic

Iteration 0: log likelihood = -44.69251
Iteration 1: log likelihood = -42.644519
Iteration 2: log likelihood = -42.64241
Iteration 3: log likelihood = -42.64241

Ordered probit regression

Number of obs = 30

LR chi2(3) = 4.10
Prob > chi2 = 0.2508

Log likelihood = -42.64241
Pseudo R2 = 0.0459

---------------------------------------------------------
numdoc | Coef. Std. Err. z P>|z| [95% Conf. Interval]
---------|--------------------------
form | 0.4116085 .4454327 0.92 0.355 -.4614236 1.284641
densgrp | -.2724168 .162683 -1.67 0.094 -.5912697 .046436
geographic | -.1358455 .1539589 -0.88 0.378 -.4375993 .1659084
---------|--------------------------
/cut1 | -1.879562 .7725385 -3.39371 -.3654147
/cut2 | -1.05771 .7337258 -2.495786 .3803664
/cut3 | -.0659439 .7356949 -1.507879 1.375992
/cut4 | .6399011 .764392 -.8582796 2.138082

Effect of Density on Quantity of Documentation
WORKS CITED


King, Cheryl Simrell. “Citizen Engagement and Sustainability” in “Connected Communities: Local Governments as a Partner in Citizen Engagement and Community Building”. 2010.


