

CHAPTER 1 MANAGING AMERICAN CITIES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

INTRODUCTION: AMERICAN CITIES CONTINUE TO CHANGE AND EVOLVE

The eighth edition of *Managing Urban America* finds city governments changing and evolving, just as they have been doing since the first edition of this textbook appeared over thirty-seven years ago. More than a decade and one-half into the twenty-first century, cities face many of the same challenges they have confronted since the so-called urban crisis of the 1960s: *managing* conflict through politics; *adapting* to environmental influences such as population shifts and changing citizen tastes and preferences; *incorporating* new groups into governing structures; *balancing* own-source funds with intergovernmental revenues; *responding* to federal and state mandates; *negotiating* with other local governments; *delivering* a myriad of local goods and services to the populace; and *seeking* approaches to managing cities that are efficient, effective, equitable, and responsive.

But urban managers at the beginning of the new century are also confronting new issues and challenges. Unlike the situation in the 1960s, cities now operate largely in an intergovernmental milieu best described as “fend for yourself” federalism.¹ Outside of government economic stimulus programs, the federal government today is less likely to offer financial help to local governments to balance budgets or deliver goods and services. Increasingly, city executives must be innovative and entrepreneurial to find ways to do more with less. Such productivity enhancement requires broad new approaches to running urban America that emphasize *results*, *performance*, and *accountability* in the day-to-day management of human and fiscal resources, information and technology (IT), and services. Among the new phrases added to the vernacular of urban management since the early 1990s, “reinventing government” (REGO) and the “New Public Management” (NPM) have been used as managerial strategies by municipal officials to augment traditional administrative processes to enhance municipal productivity.

Changes in technology have brought other new challenges to twenty-first-century cities. Major transformations have occurred since the 1960s in management information systems (MIS) and geographic information systems (GIS). In many American cities, these two systems—operating either individually or in an integrated framework—result in more efficient payroll and bill processing, dispatching of emergency personnel, and/or infrastructure repair. Personal computers have changed forever the nature of day-to-day work at

the local level. Computer hardware and software, for example, allow for more efficient and effective financial administration, computer-based testing in human resources (HR) departments, reliable and efficient storage and transfer of data, and enhanced communication with the public.

The technology of the Internet has transformed the modern city into a global community. In addition to the official web pages that most cities maintain, a wealth of governmental, social, economic, business, demographic, and cultural information about almost any city can be retrieved from other Internet sources. This information is available not only to a city's own residents but also to anyone in the world, twenty-four hours a day. Indeed, today technology links every city to every other city on the globe; all that is needed to secure or exchange information is access to the World Wide Web. The Internet also allows for e-government—electronic government. The “electronic village”² allows city employees to communicate with each other and citizens to contact their city's political and administrative officials via e-mail. The impact of the Internet on city management is still in its infancy. Local officials are expending much effort to harness and *manage* the power of this technology!

This opening chapter, which is divided into five parts, provides a context for understanding the remaining chapters in *Managing Urban America*. First, we discuss how and why American cities have changed since the 1960s, focusing primarily on financial, social, and demographic changes. Second, we offer an analysis of how cities have responded to these changes by improving their management capacity. The third section of the chapter, in essence, places the entire topic of urban management within the framework of systems analysis: after introducing and explaining the basic concepts of systems theory—which suggests that city officials make public policies in response to environmental stimuli—we focus on the impact of citizen participation and e-government as examples of significant environmental factors that impinge on the management of modern cities. In section four, we argue that “good management” skills alone are simply not enough to equip the contemporary city executive with the know-how to be successful; an effective city executive also needs to understand the nature of community values, bureaucratic inertia, politics, and leadership. The chapter concludes with an overview of the book's organization.

HOW AND WHY AMERICAN CITIES HAVE CHANGED

City governments today grapple with a host of pressures and conflicts. Even in smaller communities, urban managers must constantly respond to the demands of the groups, institutions, and governmental entities that constitute the external world of the urban polity. These political pressures do not materialize out of thin air: competing and conflicting demands on urban government emerge from the racial, ethnic, social, economic, and governmental diversity that is so characteristic of contemporary urban America. To perform effectively, an urban manager must comprehend and come to terms with the often turbulent environment created by these outside forces. Learning to negotiate, to bargain, to

persuade, and to compromise may thus be as crucial to a manager's success as is the exercise of traditional administrative skills. In this section, we study the economic and social milieu in which urban managers must operate.

THE STATE OF AMERICAN CITIES: FISCAL AFFAIRS

In the midst of President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier" and President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" in the 1960s, practitioners and students of urban politics alike assumed that city governments would continue to grow, if not prosper. After all, state and local government payrolls were expanding enormously during the 1960s—and they continued to do so during the 1970s—much faster than those at the federal level. Cities were doing more than ever, responding to new needs and demands. Keith Mulrooney, a former city manager of Claremont, California, describes his activities in the late 1960s:

Confronting antiwar demonstrators, holding council meetings in Chicano houses, sitting with hippies in a park discussing last week's narcotics bust, bargaining against a labor pro, or contracting with the Black Students Union to conduct reading improvement programs for low achieving black school children.³

These challenges of city management in the 1960s represented a significant departure from the issues faced in previous eras, such as building city infrastructures and developing a science of administration that would allow government employees to manage cities efficiently. "The shift in . . . priorities . . . [was] from the physically oriented to the human oriented."⁴

Along with these new problems came lots of federal dollars and a sharp increase in municipal employment and programs. Between 1960 and 1980, for example, the number of federal grant-in-aid programs grew from 132 to well over 500, and there was a corresponding growth in funding, from \$7 billion to \$91.5 billion.⁵ In some communities, local officials developed new programs solely to draw federal dollars; further expansion seemed inevitable. A 1979 report from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), for instance, suggested that the inevitability of growth was so widely accepted that it functioned as fact.⁶ This pervasive view of local government called for growth in every imaginable area: urban populations would grow, budgets would expand, federal grants would increase, municipal jobs would multiply, and benefits would rise as cities were forced to undertake an ever-longer list of responsibilities.

But things do change. Due to an ailing economy in the late 1970s, federal aid to cities began to shrink under the Jimmy Carter administration. Then came the "Reagan Revolution," which brought major reductions in federal domestic spending, including additional cuts in financial assistance to state and local governments (see Chapter 2). In 1978, cities had received almost 16 percent of their revenue from federal sources; by FY 1990–1991 the figure was 3.6 percent.⁷ In 2012, the nation's municipalities and towns received about 5 percent of their total *general revenue* from the federal government.⁸

As holding the line—and, yes, retrenchment—became the order of the day in the 1970s, cities showed more resilience than pessimists thought they would. Cuts were made, budgets were balanced, and taxes were raised in a number of communities. Cities learned to manage with less and emerged from this period of fiscal crisis stronger and more independent than ever. To the extent that they did so, a great deal of credit must go to the tough-minded city officials who made hard choices. Also, state governments proved to be thoughtful parents of their legal offspring, providing much-needed relief, both programmatically and fiscally.

Fiscal conditions improved for many cities in the 1990s, thanks in large part to record growth in the nation's economy under the Bill Clinton administration. By the late 1990s, some cities had escaped the fiscal morass they had experienced just a decade or so previously. For example, in a report, titled *The State of the Cities 1998*, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) noted, "Driven by a robust national economy, cities are fiscally and economically the strongest they've been in a decade."⁹ The report went on to note that the number of jobs was growing and unemployment was falling in central cities. Cities were improving as places to live; many downtowns experienced a renaissance as centers of tourism, sports, entertainment, and the arts. Crime continued to decline, and home ownership in central cities was on the rise. Similar good news was reported in 1997 in the National League of Cities' *The State of America's Cities: The Thirteenth Annual Opinion Survey of Municipal Elected Officials*.¹⁰ America's elected municipal officials reported steady improvements in city finances and local economies. The overall assessment of the state of American cities was "more positive and optimistic than it has been in quite some time." Then the prosperity bubble burst.

The new millennium brought the Al-Qaeda backed terrorist attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001. In addition, the George W. Bush administration's War on Terrorism resulted in significant American involvement in protracted, and costly, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Then, the economy collapsed. Starting in late 2007, a global financial meltdown began, producing in the United States the so-called Great Recession.¹¹ As newly elected Barack Obama assumed the presidency in January 2009, he inherited a deeply troubled national economy. Before leaving office, President George W. Bush had asked Congress to pass the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act; in October 2008, lawmakers provided up to 700 billion dollars to bolster the U.S. financial system. Quickly after entering office, President Obama asked Congress to pass a similar bill to stimulate the national economy. Once again, Congress responded quickly. In February 2009, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided almost 800 billion dollars to expand unemployment benefits; fund federal tax cuts; and provide additional money for social, education, health care, and infrastructure programs.

Although the Great Recession, according to the Brookings Institution, ended with the expansion of the gross domestic product in the third quarter of 2009,¹² the lingering effects of the economic downturn continued as President Obama neared the end of his seventh year in office. And, with respect to the focus of our study here, there is no doubt that the Great

Recession has had a severe and, some would argue, permanent impact on the financial viability of American cities.¹³ For example, based on survey data gathered from 2,214 American cities by the ICMA in 2009, Gerald Miller examined the impact of the Great Recession on local governments. Managers responding to the survey cited a number of measures used across the cities to mitigate the financial crisis, including the increased use of fee-supported services and contracting out, reshaped employee health and pension benefits, limited pay increases, use of better financial management procedures, and renewed economic development efforts.¹⁴ Based on survey findings, Professor Miller concludes, "The 2007–2009 recession has created dire fiscal problems for local government managers, and from their reactions it appears that managers believe these problems point to permanent, structural budget imbalances."¹⁵ In 2011, Karen Thoreson and James Svava examined the impact the Great Recession was having on 2,116 cities and counties. They found that almost 40 percent of the responding managers said that the impact was either "significant" (30.8%) or "severe" (6.8%).¹⁶ In cities with populations greater than 100,000, more than 60 percent of the local executives said the municipality had experienced major budget problems. The authors conclude, "The [economic] crisis has prompted deep reflection on what the role of local government will be in the future. It has not been a temporary downturn followed by a return to previous conditions."¹⁷ Professors Lawrence Martin, Richard Levey, and Jenna Cawley agree with Thoreson and Svava. They assert the Great Recession has created a "New Normal" for local governments in terms of finances (fewer resources), employment (smaller workforces), and services (new ways of delivering services).¹⁸ The authors conclude: "When one considers the evidence, it is hard to imagine that local governments can return to anything approximating what existed *ex ante* the great recession."¹⁹

University of North Carolina political science professors David Ammons, Karl W. Smith, and Carl Stenberg disagree with those who contend the impact of the Great Recession on local governments has been transformational. They contend

severe economic hardship has rarely been a "game-changer" [for local governments]. Conditions triggered . . . by the Great Recession . . . are unlikely to change fundamentally the scope, quality, or delivery of services in most counties and cities or to reshape the local jurisdictional or intergovernmental landscape, despite predictions to the contrary.²⁰

While we agree with Professor Ammons and his colleagues, a discussion we return to in Chapter 11, one fact remains. The Great Recession represents the most significant economic downturn in U.S. history since the Great Depression. As such, cities cannot expect to return to economic health anytime soon, to the good old days of growth and revenue expansion of the 1960s, early 1970s, and most of the 1990s. Given the current state of the national and global economy, most cities, like the federal and state governments, face hard budgetary choices. Until the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression improves, as it surely will, municipal officials must do more with less. Now more than ever, improved municipal management is a necessity. Managing with less demands more

dedicated, competent, and politically astute municipal managers. In the broadest sense, that is what this book is all about—improving the management of city governments, from both a technical and a political perspective. In addition to their fiscal concerns, municipal executives must be sensitive to demographic and social changes in local populations. As the urban place changes, so do values, expectations, demands, and economic bases.

THE STATE OF AMERICAN CITIES: SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS

In many of America's big cities, the outward movement of people and jobs continues.²¹ These cities have not only lost productive citizens and desirable employers, but also have seen their tax bases shrink. Many of the residents who remain need special services. Poverty remains high in many inner-city neighborhoods, where employment opportunities are limited for low-skilled workers. Dependency persists, as welfare rolls remain concentrated in large central cities. So the service needs endure, but resources are often scarce.

Social and Demographic Changes

One of the major demographic trends affecting American cities is the deconcentration of the central city. U.S. cities, in fact, have been decentralizing for many years. The year 1970 marked the first time that more people lived in the suburban rings of metropolitan areas than anywhere else in the country. Suburbia, despite some valid criticisms, does offer open space, cleaner air, better schools, and, above all, a chance for home ownership. Polls show that all groups, regardless of age, class, race, or geographic location, prefer either suburban or small-town living. And the positive pull of suburbia is not the only factor involved, for, in many places, the central city exerts a negative push. As former mayor Michael R. White of Cleveland once noted, people leave to escape crime, congestion, deteriorating housing, poor services, inferior schools, and, in some cases, minority neighborhoods.²² Of course, not everyone can escape: essentially, the white and the well-to-do have dominated the outward flow, while racial minorities, the poor, the unskilled, the uneducated, and the elderly are left behind.

What are conditions like today in large cities? Two studies by the Brookings Institution highlight some of the social and demographic changes taking place in big cities and suburbs. The first study, focusing on racial change in the nation's one hundred largest cities between 1990 and 2000, finds that America's big cities continue to grow more diverse.²³ Between 1990 and 2000, for example, the one hundred largest U.S. cities lost 8.5 percent of their white residents, or 2.3 million people. In these big cities, whites now represent a minority, 44 percent of the total population; the comparable figure in 1990 was 52 percent. In eighteen cities—Anaheim, Riverside (Calif.), Milwaukee, Rochester, Sacramento, Ft. Worth, Augusta/Richmond (Va.), Philadelphia, Boston, San Diego, Mobile, Montgomery, Columbus, Norfolk (Va.), Albuquerque, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and St. Louis—whites dropped from a majority to a minority of the population. Seventy-one of the one hundred cities lost at least 2 percent of their white population during the decade; in twenty cities,

the decline of the white population was greater than 20 percent. Detroit lost the greatest number of white residents (53 percent), followed by Birmingham (40 percent), and Santa Ana, California (38 percent).

Among minority groups, the Hispanic population grew the most during the 1990s. The nation's one hundred largest cities gained 3.8 million new Hispanics (a 43 percent increase). Slightly over a million Asians (a 38 percent growth rate) moved into these cities between 1990 and 2000, while the black population grew by only 6 percent, or about 816,000 new residents. Over that decade, the Hispanic share of the population increased from 17 to 23 percent, as the black and Asian populations remained fairly stable, at 24.1 percent and 6.6 percent, respectively.

This first Brookings Institution study concludes that changes in the racial composition of big cities have social, economic, and political implications. For example, big cities experience overall population growth when all their racial and ethnic groups grow in size. In the twenty cities that grew the fastest, the white population grew by 5 percent, blacks increased by 23 percent, the Asian population enlarged by 69 percent, and the number of Hispanics rose by 72 percent. Thus, the study says, "Cities hoping to achieve real growth need to provide a living environment that is attractive to families of varying race and ethnicity."²⁴ Another of the study's implications concerns the service needs of particular groups: "Cities must consider how the structure and delivery of health care, public education and general city services should be adapted to the needs of the changing populations."²⁵ In Aurora, Colorado, for example, the Hispanic population increased by 271 percent during the 1990s—at the beginning of the decade, one of every fifteen residents was Hispanic; by its end, one in five was Hispanic.

Changing demographics also influence the wealth of the city. The Brookings Institution report notes that census estimates suggest that in 1999 the median household income for Hispanics was \$14,000 lower than that for non-Hispanic white households. A growing Hispanic population coupled with a declining white population may, therefore, create real fiscal impacts on cities. On the other hand, an overall increase in a city's population "could increase the total amount of income in cities."²⁶ Public policymakers must understand, analyze, and manage these competing effects.

Finally, a growing minority presence in big cities means that the electoral base for minority candidates is growing: these increasing numbers may result in the election of more minority mayors, city council members, and school board members. We discuss the implications of minority representation on local policy in Chapter 3.

Bruce Katz, director of the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program, prepared a second study that focuses on demographic changes in American cities. In a 2005 speech, he highlighted these recent trends in metropolitan areas:

- Suburbs grew faster than cities. Between 1990 and 2000, the one hundred largest U.S. cities grew by 8.8 percent, while their suburban populations increased by

17 percent. The faster growth in the suburbs occurred in all types of households—married with no children, married with children, other family—no children, nonfamily.

- Racial and ethnic group shares of suburban populations increased. Between 1990 and 2000, the African American share of the suburban population rose from 33 to 39 percent; the Asian population living in the suburbs increased from 51 to 55 percent; and the Hispanic population grew from 46 percent to 50 percent. The rate of change for all these minority groups was much greater in the suburbs than in the cities. Over this same decade, the black population in central cities rose by 5 percent; but the increase in the suburbs was 36.1 percent. The growth rates for Hispanics were 46.2 percent in central cities and 71.9 percent in suburbs. Finally, the Asian population grew by 37.3 percent in central cities, compared to 63.4 percent in the suburbs. About one in four (27 percent) of all suburban households are minority.
- Educational attainment varies widely across U.S. cities and by race within the cities. In the nation's one hundred largest cities, 10 percent of Hispanics, 14 percent of blacks, 37 percent of whites, and 39 percent of Asians hold bachelor's degrees.
- The *absolute number* of people living in poverty in U.S. metropolitan areas increased from 19.3 million in 1980 to 23.1 million in 1990 to 25.8 million in 2000. The poverty rate in central cities fell from 19 percent to 17 percent between 1990 and 2002, while the poverty rate in suburbs increased slightly, from 9 percent to about 9.1 percent. In fact, the number of suburban residents living in poor suburbs—measured as suburbs in which the per capita income is less than 75 percent of that for its metropolitan area—increased from 8.4 percent in 1980 to 18.1 percent in 2000.²⁷

Analysis of 2000 U.S. Census data show the demographic trends discussed above moved forward into the first decade of the twenty-first century. In her 2011 *New York Times* article, Sabrina Tavernise summarizes some of these trends.²⁸ For example, between 2000 and 2010, minorities represented 98 percent of the population growth in the largest 100 U.S. metropolitan areas. In these largest metro areas, the Asian population grew by 43 percent, Hispanics by 41 percent, blacks by 12 percent, and whites by only 1 percent. In large metropolitan areas in 2010, Hispanics represented 20 percent of the total population, up from 15 percent in 2000 and 11 percent in 1990, blacks constituted 14 percent of the population, unchanged from 2000, and Asians totaled about 6 percent of the population. In the large metro areas, the white population accounted for 57 percent of the total 2010 population, compared to 71 percent in 1990. The white population decreased in 42 out of the 100 largest metropolitan areas, with Las Vegas showing the greatest decrease—from 60 percent white in 2000 to 48 percent in 2010. New population projections by the U.S. Census Bureau show the U.S. will become a “majority minority” nation in the year 2044.²⁹

How are cities coping with problems associated with social, economic, and demographic changes? In particular, how is all this affecting their management practices?

Social Change and City Management

Municipalities always have provided extensive local services. Since the turmoil of the 1960s, however, city governments have found it necessary to pay special attention to human problems. This concern for the disadvantaged undoubtedly has contributed to the fiscal squeeze faced by so many large cities. As cities took on new commitments, their spending increased at unprecedented rates. Much of this new money came from the federal government, as an outgrowth of the War on Poverty, Model Cities, Head Start, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), Urban Development Action Grants, Community Development Block Grants, and other programs. In many large cities whose changing demographic and social complexion had created an unprecedented need for social services to aid the elderly, the poor, and the disadvantaged, these programs were life-savers. But, as we explain in more detail in the next chapter, as the federal government cut domestic spending in the 1980s, many of these urban programs were eliminated, reduced substantially, or delivered in new ways. Cities had to search for less traditional methods of handling urban problems. Recent literature is full of discussions about ways to hold down costs by turning to alternative sources of urban services. Many see *contracting out* to the private sector as an especially promising option. Others urge greater cooperation between the public and private sectors. As a community struggles with serious financial difficulties, the private sector may be able to provide assistance and resources that normally would not be available to local government. Managing the politics of scarcity is no easy task.

As cities hold the line and try to get by on less, they face new political pressures. As long as the municipal treasury is expanding, everyone has hopes of getting more. But as the pie shrinks, the competition among groups to keep their share grows intense. Over time, it becomes difficult to obscure who is winning and who is losing; without growth it is harder to buy off the losers.³⁰ Fiscal stress produces dissatisfaction among interest groups, service recipients, and, not least, public employees. And this means disenchantment with elected officials and their appointees that voters do not forget at the polls.³¹ Perhaps it is the fear of adverse public reaction (if not the loss of their jobs) that leads many local officials to embrace short-term solutions to their problems. For example, cutting the capital budget has been a favorite strategy—one that is now beginning to hurt. Evidence is mounting that the public infrastructure of our older cities and counties is deteriorating at an alarming rate because of deferred maintenance—inadequate expenditures for capital improvements. Another strategy, holding down personnel costs, has led many of the best-qualified and most highly motivated municipal employees to seek work elsewhere. This exodus may result in a long-term decline in management capacity.

Faced with financial constraints, urban public leadership must choose among several options: raise revenue by increasing taxes or fees, cut costs and services, and/or improve operating productivity. There is little popular support for tax-based revenue schemes, however, and although popular pressure is likely to keep costs down, the public does not want

services cut. In fact, most people want more and better services. Obviously, urban administrators have little choice, and they must increase productivity.

Beginning in the early 1990s some observers argued that productivity enhancement was not enough to “fix” the problems that plagued governments at all levels—federal, state, and local. Instead, the tough and critical problems facing modern governments require *fundamental* changes in the way cities are governed and managed. One prescription for change was offered by journalist David Osborne and former city manager Ted Gaebler. The two used the label “reinventing government” to describe their pragmatic approach to “curing” the problems of government. As the following section details, reinventing government and its academic counterpart, the NPM, stimulated an intense debate within political science about the proper role of government in contemporary society. Nearly two decades later this controversy has been largely resolved, with a resulting model of modern public management³² that integrates in a productive way the strengths of traditional administrative processes and the calls for reform.

HOW CITIES HAVE IMPROVED THEIR MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT: A PRAGMATIC RESPONSE TO FISCAL CRISIS

Osborne and Gaebler's book, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector*, made a big splash when it was released in 1992.³³ The success of the book was somewhat surprising, since the volume offered very little new in the way of management theory or practice. But, as the authors note in the preface, “We . . . are not inventing new ideas so much as *synthesizing the ideas and experiences of others*” (emphasis added).³⁴ And therein lay the success of the book. *Reinventing Government* is a classic example of being “in the right place at the right time,” as Osborne and Gaebler were able to integrate the work of numerous academic theories (ideas) in a format that was easy to read, easy to understand, and easy to believe in (who among us likes big wasteful government?).

Moreover, the underlying theme of the book—that government should “steer more and row less”—fit the post-Keynesian, neoconservative mood of the nation. The REGO (reinventing government) model offered federal, state, and local officials a managerial strategy for addressing in a practical fashion fiscal stress, retrenchment, and/or productivity enhancement. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, for example, rode the reinventing government bandwagon for eight years and, with the help of Congress, produced in 1998 the first balanced federal budget since 1969 (including a \$69 billion surplus, which was followed by a \$124 billion surplus in 1999).³⁵ Similarly, state and local officials used Osborne and Gaebler's principles of REGO to help address their fiscal woes. REGO offers a “prescription” to frontline public officials (elected, appointed, and administrative) on how to manage public resources more efficiently, effectively, and responsively in an environment defined by high citizen expectations and declining resources. It is little wonder, given the “do more with less” environment that has defined public administration

at all levels since the late 1970s, that REGO found committed followers who were willing to call for the adoption of all or some of the ten REGO principles.³⁶

What started as a cottage industry in 1992 with *Reinventing Government* quickly turned into a franchise. In 1997, Osborne and Peter Plastrik published *Banishing Bureaucracy: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government*.³⁷ Instead of ten principles, this work offers five strategies for reinvention: (1) the core strategy, which helps create clarity of purpose; (2) the consequences strategy, which focuses on creating consequences for performance; (3) the customer strategy, which puts the customer first; (4) the control strategy, which shifts control from the top and center; and (5) the culture strategy, which helps to create an entrepreneurial culture. The following year, Osborne and Victor Colón Rivera published *The Reinventing Government Workbook: Introducing Frontline Employees to Reinvention*.³⁸ This prepackaged, "canned," workbook serves as the basis for others to deliver workshops on reinventing government. Divided into four modules within which individual chapters focus on each of the ten REGO principles as presented in the original Osborne and Gaebler text, this workbook emphasizes problem-solving activities, brainteasers, and overhead material to illustrate and teach the reinventing government principles.

In our opinion, the best of the reinventing government books may be Osborne and Plastrik's 2000 publication, *The Reinventor's Fieldbook: Tools for Transforming Your Government*.³⁹ Finally, after two prescriptive texts and one workbook, they got it right. In nearly 700 pages, this book provides the "nuts-and-bolts," "lessons learned," "do's and don'ts" that government officials need to implement the broad strategies outlined in *Reinventing Government* and *Banishing Bureaucracy*. In the words of the authors, it "explains in detail the terrain you will encounter, the obstacles you will face, and the equipment and know-how (tools and competencies) you will need along the way."⁴⁰ The book provides real-world lessons of what has worked and what did not work, and why. The authors offer over seventy different "tools"—from activity-based costing to performance management to community empowerment. Finally, in 2004, Osborne, writing with Peter Hutchinson, published *The Price of Government: Getting the Results We Need in an Age of Permanent Fiscal Crisis*.⁴¹ The title of the text delivers its thesis very well.

What, then, should we make of the reinventing government movement? Certainly, and rightly so, REGO had its detractors. For example, we agree with the many state and local officials who considered both *Reinventing Government* and *Banishing Bureaucracy* to be "long on suggestions and short on steps for actual implementation."⁴² But to Osborne and Plastrik's credit, publication of *The Reinventor's Fieldbook* helped to address this criticism. *Reinventing Government* and subsequent related publications drew so much attention, stimulated so many ideas, and generated so much response that any discussion of managing modern local government would be deficient without acknowledging its influence.

For now, let us offer two general outcomes of the REGO movement. First, to assess the degree to which federal, state, and local governments have implemented its principles, the movement has stimulated significant academic research conducted in the

behavioral tradition. This research is theoretically well grounded, empirical, and representative of the best research tradition in urban politics.⁴³

The second major outcome of REGO has been its transition from the “field”—primarily the province of the practitioner—to the academy, where it was renamed and studied thoroughly and conscientiously. In other words, as public administration scholar Michael Spicer reminds us, “Reinventors do not appear to attach much importance to broad political and social ideas.”⁴⁴ Why should they? Given the day-to-day rush to manage the modern city, time for reflection is scarce. Instead, once again, according to Spicer, practitioners implementing REGO strategies in the field seem to follow a narrow “instrumental rationality” perspective, which suggests that the job of the urban manager is to achieve efficiently and effectively whatever ends or objectives he or she is called upon to pursue. Who, then, is to explore the relationship—the “fit,” if you will—between the reinventing government movement and the “idea of the state as a purposive association”?⁴⁵ The academy is where ideas, concepts, and paradigms are discussed—where, in Spicer’s words, the “history of political and social ideas” is debated. University professors are paid to ponder and write about broad political and social ideas. And this is exactly what has happened to the concept of reinventing government: it was moved to the academy and acquired a new name.

The case study offered in Policy and Practice Box 1.1 shows the intersection of two of the themes discussed thus far in this chapter—fiscal stress caused by the Great Recession and Reinventing Government.

THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT MODEL: AN ACADEMIC RESPONSE TO REGO

Osborne and Gaebler’s original groundbreaking work was published in 1992. But the *processes* associated with reinventing government—such as load shedding and/or contracting out public services (generally called “privatization”); an increased focus on organizational and individual performance and accountability; performance and expenditure-control budgeting; devolution of authority to the line level; and greater involvement of the community, neighborhood, and citizen in service delivery decisions—have been under way in earnest in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and other Western nations since the late 1970s. For example, Margaret Thatcher (first elected in 1978) and Ronald Reagan (elected in 1980) brought a post-Keynesian approach to public administration⁴⁶ and helped to introduce what has alternatively been called “civic-regarding entrepreneurship,”⁴⁷ “the post-bureaucratic paradigm,”⁴⁸ “managerialism,”⁴⁹ “neo-managerialism,”⁵⁰ “market-based public administration,”⁵¹ and “entrepreneurial government.”⁵² But it was University of London professor Christopher Hood who in 1991 coined the term, the “New Public Management” or NPM model to capture the *academic* response to reinventing government, and it is Hood’s label that the literature seems to have adopted.⁵³

Perhaps the best single text to explain the rise, institutionalization, and nature of the NPM from an academic perspective is *Public Management and Administration*, now in

Box 1.1 Policy and Practice

**REINVENTING PHOENIX CITY GOVERNMENT:
RESPONDING TO THE GREAT RECESSION**

The City of Phoenix, Arizona, is regarded as a well-run city, winning both national and international recognitions.¹ Incorporated in 1881, the city has grown from about 2,500 to more than 1.5 million residents, making it the sixth most populous city in America. Phoenix is the largest city in the United States to use the council-manager form of government, has an annual budget of over 3.5 billion dollars (in 2013), and employs about 14,500 city workers.

In 2013, according to then acting and now city manager Ed Zuercher, "Phoenix's 30 city departments . . . [were] well managed and operate[ed] at a high level of consistency." However, because of the Great Recession, the city of Phoenix faced a \$277 million deficit. City management decided "to step back from what felt comfortable and reconsider how some departments were organized from a different perspective." As such, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Dewitt in the Department of Finance approached city management and asked if he could "reinvent" his department. Dewitt noticed that some areas of operation were too lean, which was crippling the operation of the department as a whole.

To initiate the reinvention effort, a three-day workshop was held and employees were asked to discuss what they did each day and how they could perform the tasks better. In addition, the group undertook a comprehensive analysis of other finance departments across the country that were similar in size to Phoenix. According to city manager Zuercher, the reinvention results "were remarkable and led to sweeping changes in four areas."

1. *Strategic Reductions:* While some areas of the finance department were too lean, others were staff-heavy. Instead of employing the often-used management strategy of cross-the-board-reductions, Dewitt made cuts, sometimes in greater numbers than originally requested by his superiors, in those areas they were top-heavy and provided more resources to other "lean" areas. The result of the efforts was greater levels of efficiency in the use of human resources.
2. *Reclassifying Employees:* A reclassification analysis of the department showed that many changes needed to be made. For example, since the department was moving from an analog to digital data system, the positions of five existing account clerks were reclassified into two technology specialists. In fact, the reclassification effort showed that what was needed was not more staff, but individuals with the *right kind of skills in the right positions*. In total "70 positions were identified for reclassification through attrition."
3. *Restructuring the Physical Layout of the Department:* Over time as the finance department grew and took on new responsibilities, positions and functions were added in layers—"similar to a storage unit that is in need of reorganization." The department was reorganized such that staff performing similar duties, regardless of function, were housed in the same work space.
4. *Cultural Shift:* In order to secure buy-in from staff for reinvention changes, staff members were asked to submit ideas about how to make their workplace better. An intranet system was created to facilitate the submission of suggestions and a team was empowered to analyze and implement suggestions. One suggestion was to create an eProcurement system, which will be handled electronically from start to finish. The system was scheduled to go online in January of 2014.

(continued)

Box 1.1 Policy and Practice (continued)

In addition, staffing levels in the finance department were reduced from about 325 to 235 since the early days of the recession in 2009. Within the next five years, the number of employees will be "reduced to 200 as technology and position reclassifications take place through attrition."

Moreover, survey results show that the finance department's customer service ratings are at an all-time high.

In closing, city manager Zuercher notes:

Will the days of our government structure and culture ever return? No, and they should not. We must continue to find ways to maximize our resources by being efficient and creative as possible. We are a stronger city today because of the challenges we faced, the sacrifices that were made and the employees who were committed to the mission because they were part of it and believed in it.

CFO Jeff Dewitt's reinventing initiatives in the Phoenix Department of Finance were based on many of the "good government" principles outlined by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in their popular and influential book *Reinventing Government*. For example, in chapters 4 and 5 Osborne and Gaebler argue that government should be "mission-driven" and "results-oriented," respectively. Mission-driven government focuses on the overall *goals* of the organization while minimizing traditional rules and requirements that may impede agency and/or employee performance. Results-oriented government is concerned with the *outcomes* of the organization—delivering goods and services to the citizenry in an efficient and effective fashion. Through his *strategic reductions in staffing and reclassification analysis* reinventing government initiatives outlined above, CFO Dewitt used innovative budgeting and personnel practices to advance the mission (goals) and outcomes (services) of the Phoenix Finance Department. In addition, through his *cultural shift* initiative (item 4 above), CFO Dewitt followed the *participatory management* suggestions of Osborne and Gaebler outlined in chapter 9 of *Reinventing Government*. In order to empower and draw on the expertise of Finance Department employees, Dewitt asked staff members to submit ideas about how to make their workplace better. As we discuss further in Chapter 9, the most valuable asset of any organization (public, private, or nonprofit) is human resources.

1. See, for example, "City Awards & Recognitions," *City of Phoenix Website*, at <https://www.phoenix.gov/citygovernment/awards>; Alisha Ebrahimji, "3 Arizona Cities Make 2015 Best and Worst Run Cities in America List," *ABC 15: Arizona*, at <http://www.abc15.com/news/local-news/water-cooler/3-arizona-cities-make-2015-best-and-worst-run-cities-in-america-list>

SOURCE: Ed Zuercher, "Reinventing Phoenix's Departments: Starting from Square One," *Public Administration Times*, Oct. 22, 2013, at <http://patimes.org/reinventing-phoenixs-departments-starting-square/>

its fourth edition and written by Australian professor Owen Hughes.⁵⁴ While Professor Hughes places the New Public Management model in an international context—that of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—his book reads like any other traditional American public administration text and cites all of the relevant U.S.-based literature.

As Hughes explains, the NPM model is premised on market-based economic and public choice theory—or what Jeff Gill and Kenneth J. Meier label “neoconservative economics.”⁵⁵ The argument goes something like this: to make more efficient use of scarce resources, the rational person will maximize benefits and minimize costs. But market-based economic models do not always hold in governmental (generally called “bureaucratic”) settings. Rather, given the lack of a well-defined tool (such as profits) to measure organizational success, bureaucrats tend to maximize their own utility by increasing agency power, prestige, and/or budgets. As public choice theorists argue, then, better public policy outcomes derive from “a maximum role for market forces and a minimal role for government.”⁵⁶ NPM involves “a major cultural shift as the old management paradigm, which was largely process- and rules-driven, is replaced by a new paradigm, which attempts to combine modern management practices with the logic of economics, while retaining the core public service values.”⁵⁷ The New Public Management emphasizes “results, a focus on clients [citizens], outputs and outcomes; it would use management by objectives and performance management, the use of markets and market-type mechanisms instead of command-and-control style regulation, competition and choice, and devolution with a better matching of authority, responsibility, and accountability.”⁵⁸

As the NPM model came to the academy, primarily in the mid- to late-1990s, sides were taken. In fact, one could argue that three distinct camps emerged: (1) those who liked NPM, (2) those who didn’t, and (3) those who studied it empirically. Most of the discourse on the New Public Management model was normative and ideological in nature—camps 1 and 2 above.⁵⁹ During the past two decades, a number of empirical studies (produced by camp 3) focus on the incidence, correlates, and consequences of REGO/NPM at the local level.⁶⁰ Jeff Brudney, Deil Wright, and F. Ted Hebert offer additional studies focusing on state government reinvention efforts.⁶¹

Open and free dialogue is a cornerstone of democracy; the right to disagree is essential. That “camps” emerged to debate the nature of government and its administration is a testament to the professionalism and love of country possessed by those who study, maintain, and preserve the state. That public administration scholars would find a resolution to the debate was never in question; American administrative theory has made room for previous administrative reforms. As we entered the new millennium, modern public administration and management theory incorporated the positive features of the New Public Management model while also recognizing the importance of traditional management processes and rediscovering the importance of governance. As Janet and Robert Denhardt remind us, the purpose of government is to serve the people, not to steer the state.⁶² Their 2003 book *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering* played a pivotal role in offering a synthesis of the traditional public administration model and the NPM model. As such, we examine the Denhardt book in detail in Chapter 8.

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND LOCAL POLICYMAKING

SYSTEMS THEORY

Systems theory is based on the belief that policy can be considered a response by a political system to various forces and pressures produced from its environment. Known as the "open systems" framework, this conceptualization of how local policy is made is important for at least two reasons.

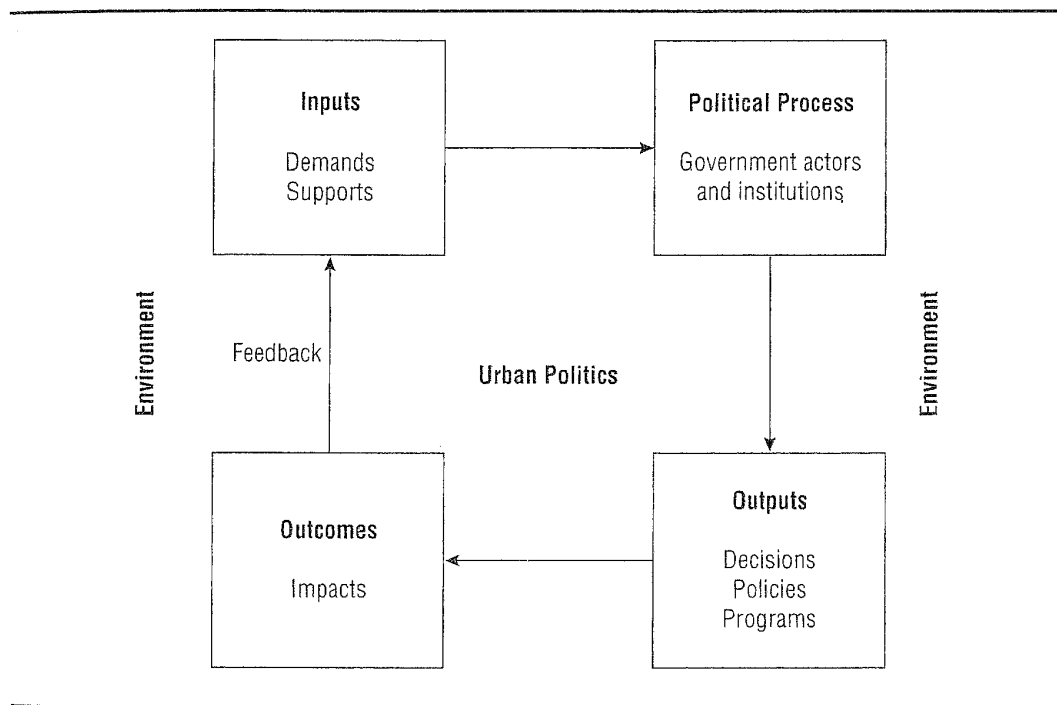
First, while not terribly sophisticated, it is an intuitive, instructive, and useful paradigm (model) for understanding what, in reality, is often an extremely complex process. That is, in the case of some public policies, it would take great effort and time to reconstruct the path from "idea, demand, issue, or concern" to actual passage and implementation.⁶³ In fact, it might be impossible to capture the full dynamics of the process, since the participation of some individuals or groups in the deliberations might not be known, by omission or by choice. In order to understand complex phenomena, therefore, models or abstractions of reality are required. And these models need to be straightforward and understandable if they are to help at all in penetrating the central mysteries of the policymaking process.

Second, systems analysis is important because it requires us to see the big picture and understand how parts of the system are interrelated. It is not enough to know, for example, that a university town has passed a new ordinance prohibiting "block parties" (gatherings of hundreds of students, at which alcoholic beverages are often consumed until the wee hours of the morning). Such a policy was probably adopted in response to pressures from a number of local groups, including nonpartying neighborhood residents and the local police department. In short, the policies that a city government passes, as well as those that its officials choose not to pass, are responses to a host of supports and demands placed on the local political system. A change in one system component usually triggers a change in another part of the system.

Political scientist David Easton, in a series of influential books published in the 1950s and 1960s, applied systems theory—which was originally developed in the natural sciences—to politics.⁶⁴ His open (or natural) systems framework demonstrated how local environments shape the policy process and how authoritative decision makers such as city council members, mayors, city managers, and local bureaucrats respond to these environmental inputs by making local policies.

As the systems model presented in Figure 1.1 shows, the urban political system is comprised of several key features.⁶⁵ Underpinning all these features, of course, is the *environment* that surrounds the city government. Environmental factors such as the economy, technology, interest groups, intergovernmental relations, natural and man-made disasters, neighborhood groups, the media, and others can impact the policy process at any place in the system. Most often, these environmental stimuli serve as inputs to the system, usually as supports and demands. But it is important to remember that environmental factors such as representatives of neighborhood associations can be sitting in the city council chambers as the council formulates and votes on municipal policies. Also, citizens may

Figure 1.1 Urban Political Systems Model



SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from John P. Pelissero, "The Political Environment of Cities in the Twenty-first Century," in John P. Pelissero, ed., *Cities, Politics, and Policy: A Comparative Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2003), p. 4.

carry signs of protest or support outside of city hall, or local builders may lobby council members for changes in a policy immediately after a new ordinance has been passed (the outputs box in the model) or after the policy has been in place for several months (the outcomes box in the model). In short, environmental factors play a pivotal role in shaping the policy process.

Inputs from the environment are transmitted to the political system, where authoritative action takes place. In this stage of the policy process, official policymakers such as the city manager and council members interact to formulate policy. If there is sufficient support for a policy, the council passes an ordinance. This output, in the words of David Easton, represents the "authoritative allocation of values."⁶⁶ In terms of the example cited above, the college town's new policy states that block parties will no longer be allowed, under penalty of law. Since such policies have impacts, individuals and the community then have the opportunity to "consume" the outputs and offer assessments of the outcomes of governmental policies. This feedback loop is critical, since it produces vital information that permits the political system to modify, correct, and/or do away with defective policies.

Just as the thermostat in your house allows for changes in temperature, the feedback loop allows policymakers to change policies to fit the political climate of the community. In a democracy, we expect and demand that political systems will be open and responsive.

As noted by Easton, political inputs drawn from the environment are fed into the political system. These inputs come in two forms: *demands*, which emanate from individuals and groups, and *supports*, which arise out of city conditions and resources. The individuals and groups making demands on city government might include the following examples:

- Individual local citizens or visitors may write letters to or contact city officials to express their concern about an issue or to ask for some type of government action.
- Various organized interest groups, which are not uncommon in cities—especially in medium to large cities—will often represent the business or corporate sector (such as real estate developers, the local Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Association), neighborhoods, labor groups, environmentalists, racial and ethnic groups, and so on. In the United States, interest groups are recognized as powerful participants in the policy process, and public policy is often viewed as the output of bargaining and compromising among interest groups and government officials.
- Political parties represent another group that may make demands on city government. As we learn in Chapter 3, the urban reform movement diminished the impact of political parties in many cities in America by prohibiting local candidates from running under party labels, requiring, instead, the practice of nonpartisan elections. Nevertheless, in most large cities, political parties are flourishing, and even in those cities that use nonpartisan ballots, political parties remain active, playing the role of “informal” brokers.
- Finally, the media—the so-called Fourth Estate—is another powerful player in local politics. Many a politician and/or city regime has suffered or prospered at the hands of the mighty media. In a democracy, a free and open press is considered essential, for the print and electronic media serve as watchdogs of the public interest. Newspapers, political talk shows, and evening newscasts reach and influence millions of citizens in urban America.

Supports, according to Easton, represent the second broad type of input into the political system. Supports come from the environment in two varieties, as *active* and *latent* components. Active support—such as voting in city elections, obeying local laws, paying taxes and utility fees—is critical to the functioning of local government. The withdrawal of active support for city government decision makers and institutions can erode the stability of a local political system.

The second type of supports from the environment is latent in nature. Four types of latent environmental subsystems are present in cities: physical, political culture, socioeconomic, and intergovernmental.

- The latent physical support subsystem includes the local climate, geography, and the built environment. Climate and geography affect the types and range of

services a city must offer; for example, Oklahoma City, unlike Chicago, has little use for snow removal equipment but must have alarm systems in place to warn of approaching tornadoes. Roads, bridges, subways, public buildings, wastewater treatment facilities, and so on are all part of the built environment, which defines the city infrastructure. Since the early part of the twentieth century, cities have used zoning to regulate land use and thus have significantly affected what the built environment in a city can and will look like.

- As we note later in this chapter, it is important that urban executives understand the political culture of the cities they manage. This concept, while slippery and hard to measure, captures the attitudes and expectations of a citizenry about the proper role and scope of government in a community. James Q. Wilson and Edward C. Banfield gave us the often-maligned “ethos theory,” arguing that cities had two fundamental political value systems—public-regarding and private-regarding—each associated with different ethnic and income groups in cities. One ethos could dominate politics in a city, or the two value systems could be competing for dominance.⁶⁷ Although research on this theory was subjected to much criticism and found little empirical verification, it still presents a useful dichotomy of competing cultures in cities. For example, a number of large cities in the United States assess a local income tax that is often used to supplement welfare benefits to city residents, but the political cultures of some other cities in America would not support such a tax.
- Of the four latent subsystems, the socioeconomic situation is probably the most recognizable. Common sense tells us, for example, that if a city’s economic base is declining, tax revenues will also probably decline. Cities with dependent and elderly populations have a different economic base and very different service needs than do cities with thriving business districts, sports arenas, fully utilized convention facilities, and populations of young, highly educated professionals living in posh apartments and townhouses in the central city. Clearly, the demographic, social, and economic features of a city have a profound impact on local policies, politics, and management.
- The final latent subsystem is defined by the relationships among and between governmental units. As we see in Chapter 2, cities operate within a complex system of intergovernmental relations. Not only must they rely on the federal and state governments for financial support, but they must also bargain, negotiate, and compromise with other local governments within large metropolitan areas.

This focus on the environmental inputs to a political system is characteristic of systems theory, which provides the context for this entire book. In the remainder of this section, we use the examples of citizen participation and e-government to further illustrate the importance of environmental influences on city politics and management.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CITY GOVERNMENT

Simply put, citizens own city government. In keeping with the concept of political culture discussed earlier, the citizenry of a city or town set the expectations for and define the proper role and scope of government in their community. The failure to meet such expectations, based on fact or fiction, may well mean the loss of community support. Research also shows that citizen participation leads to greater public perception of government responsiveness and greater tolerance for those who have opposing viewpoints⁶⁸—both of which are laudable outcomes. It is the job of the urban executive (1) to understand the nature of community values, (2) to determine the means and under what conditions to foster citizen participation, and (3) to strengthen community through civic engagement. The importance of understanding community values as one key to enlarging management capacity is discussed later in this chapter. For now, let's focus on how to foster citizen participation in the decision-making process. The case study in Policy and Practice Box 1.2 illustrates how citizen participation can lead to true citizen collaboration and civic engagement.

BOX 1.2 Policy and Practice

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE HAMPTON, VIRGINIA, BUDGETARY PROCESS

According to professors Pamela Dunning and Pamela Gibson, using social media to encourage civic engagement for some might be like "borrowing trouble and just increasing . . . [one's] workload!" This is especially the case when you are asking for citizen input in the politically charged budgetary process. But, this is exactly the opposite of what these two professors found when they studied Hampton, Virginia (population about 137,000) city manager Mary Bunting's community engagement campaign initiated to solicit greater citizen input into the city budget. The citizen engagement campaign was called "I Value" and manager Bunting put the following question to city residents:

The City can do many things, but we can't read minds. We are facing budget challenges and need your input. Please tell us what you value and together we will shape our future. I value your input. What do you value?

Using a number of civic engagement techniques, the city management was able to resolve a \$19 million shortfall in the 2011 budget, "with minimal conflict due to the dynamics of . . . [the I Value] campaign." Citizen participation mechanisms included the following:

- *Informal gatherings:* Manager Bunting ventured out from city hall and met with citizens where they lived, worked, and socialized. She held informal chats of small groups of ten to fifteen at coffee shops and libraries. She visited with groups at meetings of professional and civic organizations and at neighborhood associations. In addition, "Meet, Greet, and Get Feedback" sessions took place at shopping locations and at concerts.

BOX 1.2 Policy and Practice

- *Social Media:* The city used a host of social media to engage and inform citizens. For example, the city created an "I Value Hampton" website that informed citizens of the various methods available that they could use to provide input on the budget. These methods included calling a "311- customer call center, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and comments drop boxes located around the city." Google Maps was used to guide people to where engagement chats were going to be held and to show the location of suggestion drop boxes. Finally, an informational budget video was created by city management that provided information about the status of the budget process. The video was available for viewing on the local city television station as well as online.
- *Online Survey:* City management created an online survey for citizens to complete at their convenience. The survey provided a list of major city services and asked citizens if each service was a "want" versus a "need," if the service should be increased, maintained at current level, reduced, or eliminated; and to rate the relative importance of one service compared to others the city provided.
- *Online Chat with the City Manager:* Manager Bunting held online chats during the lunch hour and after work which allowed citizens to ask questions about the budget and receive detailed responses in real time. The chats were archived and made available on the city website.
- *Meeting Polling:* At city formal budget sessions, citizens could use "state-of-the-art keypad technology" to anonymously provide input about various services and receive instant feedback from city officials.
- *Website Information Sharing:* Information gathered from various civic engagement mechanisms was posted to the city website within twenty-four hours of the event.

In 2010, the first year of the campaign, more than 2 million positive comments about the process were received from citizens. Attendance at public budget meetings increased from the previous year by 2,900 percent. The "I Value" campaign cost only \$860 dollars for posters, information, comment cards, reusable drop boxes, and design templates. In 2011, more than one hundred citizens participated in Budget Week, which featured five formal public events that allowed citizen feedback using audience polling. Given the success in the city budget process, the "I Value" campaign strategy was also used to update the city community plan, waterways management discussion, and the five-year capital spending plan.

Speaking about the "I Value" civic engagement effort, manager Bunting said: "All of us—myself, the City Council, the larger community—felt that this outreach process put us all in a better place for understanding and making important decisions. That's a healthy thing for our community."

To be sure, American cities and towns historically have been and will continue to be the bedrocks of *direct democracy*. Like the ancient Greek city-states, the birthplace of democracy, local public leaders and citizens can meet and hash out the details of public policy. This face-to-face interaction is often far different from the more insular *representative democracy* practiced by state legislatures or the national Congress. Unlike ancient Athens, however, manager Bunting brought local civic engagement into the twenty-first century through the use of an arsenal of social media techniques, including a city website, 311-customer call centers, online surveys and chat rooms, and website information sharing. One should also be impressed that the budgeting process was the focal point of manager Bunting's civic engagement effort. Perhaps no other government issue is more contentious than the budget. Indeed, the budget is *the* supreme political document since it allocates scarce resources. While all government budgets (federal, state, or local) are open to

(continued)

BOX 1.2 Policy and Practice (continued)

public scrutiny, budgets are often hammered out largely by political elites working in executive and legislative committees.

One of the critical roles of the urban executive is to facilitate the process of citizen participation. Manager Bunting's citizen engagement effort went "above and beyond" the normal practice. As such, in October of 2012, Mary Bunting and Hampton were honored by the White House as one of thirteen Champions of Change in Local Innovation.

SOURCE: Pamela T. Dunning and Pamela A. Gibson, "Successful Collaboration in the City of Hampton, Virginia Budgetary Process," *Public Administration Times*, March 22, 2013, at <http://patimes.org/successful-collaboration-city-hampton-virginia-budgetary-process/>.

In Chapter 4, we examine closely other ways in which citizens influence city government—by voting; by joining organizations such as political parties, interest groups, and neighborhood associations; and by contacting city officials with complaints or requests for services.

E-GOVERNMENT REFLECTS TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CULTURE IN CITY GOVERNMENTS

Information technology (IT) is the engine that drives the modern city, promising increases in productivity, reduced costs, and better access to government by citizens.⁶⁹ Moreover, the IT future seems boundless in possibilities and opportunities. IT's child at the dawn of the twenty-first century is e-government, or, the "electronic village."

As explained by public administration and IT expert M. Jae Moon, e-government can be narrowly defined "as the production and delivery of government services through IT applications" and broadly defined "as any way IT is used to simplify and improve transactions between governments and other actors, such as constituents, businesses, and other governmental agencies."⁷⁰ Moon explains further that e-government includes four major internal and external components:

1. The establishment of a secure government intranet and central database for more efficient and cooperative interaction among governmental agencies
2. Web-based service delivery
3. The application of e-commerce for more efficient government transaction activities, such as procurement and contracts
4. Digital democracy for more transparent accountability of government⁷¹

The extent to which city governments have adopted these internal and external e-government components is well documented in a recent series of articles in the 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2012 editions of the *Municipal Year Book*. In 2001, John O'Looney

reported on the use of the Internet for service delivery and citizen participation in a group of about 145 cities and counties with 50,000 or more residents.⁷² In general, most cities (96 percent) report providing basic, static web pages for city and county departments. But only 54 percent allow users to search or query databases, and only 9 percent allow for e-commerce activities online. In terms of citizen participation opportunities, 68 percent of the responding cities and counties publish the e-mail addresses of all elected officials, 60 percent post e-mail addresses for professional staff, 58 percent route e-mail to the appropriate departmental staff, and two-thirds (66 percent) of the cities and counties post meeting minutes online. In contrast, less than 10 percent of the jurisdictions offer web audio or video presentations of decision-making deliberations (7 percent), allow citizens to engage with decision makers during deliberations (5 percent), or facilitate citizen-to-citizen discussions (4 percent).

The 2002 *Municipal Year Book* report on e-government was based on *The Electronic Government Survey 2000*, with a much larger sample size—about 1,500 cities and counties of the approximately 3,000 surveyed.⁷³ Findings show that most local governments have websites—86 percent of responding cities and 75 percent of counties. In 1997, the corresponding figure for cities was 40 percent; there was a 115 percent increase between 1997 and 2000. In 1997, when queried if their city had an intranet, only 12 percent of the cities responded affirmatively. In the 2000 survey, over half of the cities and counties (59 percent) reported the existence of an intranet.

Fifty-six percent of the local governments report the employment of a web manager or administrator. This position is full-time in about 25 percent of the cities and counties and is part of another position in about another 68 percent of the jurisdictions; the remaining 7 percent are contract, part-time, or volunteer personnel. Only one in ten local government officials report that they have an overall e-government strategy or master plan.

When asked about citizen satisfaction with local websites, city and county officials report satisfaction ratings among the citizenry of 65 percent stating that the website “meets expectations,” 17 percent saying that it “exceeds expectations,” and 18 percent noting that the website is “below expectations.” Few cities (11 percent) offer financial web-based transactions, but 31 percent said that they post requests for bids and/or proposals on their website.

Respondents noted that barriers to implementation of e-government include lack of expertise, insufficient financial resources, and security issues. Major impacts of e-government activities include (1) increased demands on staff, (2) reengineering processes, (3) changed staff roles, and (4) processes becoming more efficient.

In the 2003 edition of the *Municipal Year Book*, Evelina R. Moulder offers a summary of findings on “E-government: Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges” that is based on a survey of nearly 8,000 cities and counties.⁷⁴ The response rate was about 53 percent, from 4,123 cities and counties. As in previous surveys, a supermajority of cities, 74 percent, offer websites in this larger survey. The percentage rises to 88 percent of local governments

that have populations in excess of 10,000 (the threshold used in the 2000 survey outlined above), for a 4 percent increase since 2002. Also as in previous reports, topics such as barriers to e-government, changes introduced by e-government, and e-government services offered are discussed and analyzed. In our opinion, one impact of e-government is particularly noteworthy: 48 percent of the cities and counties report that the use of e-government has increased citizen contact with elected and appointed officials.

Two years later in the *2005 Municipal Year Book*, Florida State University Professor David Coursey notes that the percentage of local governments reporting that they have a website had increased from 74 percent in 2002 to 91 percent in 2004.⁷⁵ Of the reporting 3,410 cities and counties (a 43 percent response rate) that do have a website, in 51 percent of the cases an Information Technology (IT) department (31 percent) or the city/county manager's office (20 percent) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the site. Survey respondents cite three major barriers to e-government activities in their cities—lack of financial resources (64 percent), lack of technology/web staff (63 percent), and lack of technology/web expertise (43 percent). Between the 2003 and 2005 ICMA e-government surveys, not much occurred at the local level in terms of expanding services offered online. Of the nineteen services reported, with one notable exception, the percentage of services offered in the two years were “nearly, if not exactly, the same.”⁷⁶ The one exception noted above was that the percentage of cities/counties that offer citizens downloadable forms via the Internet increased from 3 percent in 2002 to 58 percent in 2004. As in previous years, the most widely offered web services were informational in nature, posting the council agenda and minutes (76 percent), listing codes and ordinances (66 percent), online communication with elected and appointed officials (66 percent), and providing employment information and applications (60 percent).

Writing in the *2012 Municipal Year Book*, Professors Donald Norris and Christopher Reddick analyze trends and innovations in e-government based on an ICMA survey mailed to 4,452 municipalities and counties in the spring of 2011.⁷⁷ A total of 1,021 cities and 305 county officials returned or completed the survey online, for a response rate of approximately 30 percent. The most often cited reasons for adopting e-government among the respondents were providing citizen access to: local government information (98 percent), local government (90 percent), elected officials (70 percent), and appointed officials (67 percent). In addition, 69 percent of the respondents said they developed e-government to save money, while 65 percent said they did so to allow for greater citizen participation in government/e-democracy.

When Norris and Reddick divided local e-government offerings into two categories (1) information and communication and (2) transaction-based services, they found that cities and counties were more likely to offer the former applications versus the latter. For example, the ten most frequently offered information and communication services and the percentage of respondents offering the service were: (1) council agenda and minutes (94 percent); (2) codes/ordinances (91 percent); (3) forms that can be downloaded for

manual completion (e.g., voter registration, building permits) (89 percent); (4) employment information/applications (88 percent); (5) communication with individual elected and appointed officials (69 percent); (6) geographic information systems (GIS) mapping / data (65 percent); (7) e-newsletters sent to residents/businesses (64 percent); (8) e-alerts (60 percent); (9) streaming video (51 percent); and (10) video on demand (45 percent).

For transaction-based services, 58 percent of the respondents said they allowed for "requests for service" such as pothole repair. Fifty-three percent of the jurisdictions allowed residents to pay their utility bills online; 50 percent accepted requests for local government records; 48 percent allowed citizens to register for the use of recreational/activities such as classes or picnic areas; and 41 percent accepted the payment of fines or fees.

About two-thirds of the governments report they have adopted at least one social medium, with 92 percent of these adopters subscribing to Facebook, 70 percent adopting Twitter, 45 percent posting on YouTube, 20 percent blogging; and 16 percent using Flickr. Twenty-seven percent of the local governments use cloud computing.

Only two barriers to adopting e-government were cited by a large percentage of respondents, lack of financial resources (67 percent) and lack of technology/web staff in the IT department (46 percent). When asked how e-government has changed local government, 87 percent of the local governments cited improved customer service, 78 percent said improved local government communication with the public, 52 percent said that it had increased efficiency of business processes, and 50 percent said e-government had increased time demands on IT staff.

While the adoption of e-government initiatives by local governments is laudatory, a caveat is in order. Slightly more than one-half (53 percent) of the respondents indicated that their e-government applications are mostly one-way communication to citizens. About one-third of the local governments (31 percent) reported that their applications and services are about half and half (i.e., one-way and two-way communications). Only about 16 percent of the jurisdictions offered mostly two-way communication. Thus, as Norris and Reddick note, "[T]here is virtually no evidence that e-government has transformed governments, changed relationships between the governments and the governed, or led to electronic democracy."⁷⁸ Ultimately, at least we would argue, the power of e-government is its use as a tool to achieve e-democracy, like city manager Bunting did in Hampton, Virginia (see Policy and Practice Box 1.2).

Finally, we note that current research is trying to determine the impact of various structural, demographic, socioeconomic, and organizational factors that influence the use and development of e-government technologies. Based on an analysis of websites among the fifty-five most populous U.S. cities, and a subsequent survey of web masters in these cities, Alfred Tat-Kei Ho, for example, offers a typology of websites according to their design.⁷⁹ Two types of website approaches emerge: administrative and nonadministrative. In turn, the nonadministrative category contained two website orientations: informational and user. Based on analysis of survey responses, the cities whose websites are in

the nonadministrative category are judged to be more open to external input and collaboration. These cities "emphasized the importance of citizen inputs and collaboration with nongovernmental organizations. Officials in these cities were also more user-oriented and believed more strongly that the web is a tool to enhance customer service for citizens."⁸⁰

Efforts to explain differences in website orientations suggest that population (size of city) and per capita income did not vary across the website orientations. But cities with larger minority populations and cities with lower average years of having a city website are less likely to have the more innovative, nonadministrative type of website. Professor Ho suggests that these findings support the "digital divide literature," which suggests that differences in socioeconomic background affect the use of the Internet and computers. And, in the case of this study, a lower socioeconomic profile leads to a more administrative-oriented city website. The "learning curve literature" is also supported by this study—that is, with time and experience, cities tend to move their websites from a more administrative orientation to a more informational and user orientation. Ho also reports that internal organizational characteristics of cities impact the decision to create websites that are more administrative or more nonadministrative in character. Cities that adopted more progressive informational and user-oriented websites were cities where non-IT departmental staff supported using the web to deliver public information and services and where sufficient funding and staffing for web development were available. Finally, research by M. Jae Moon finds that council-manager governments are more likely than mayor-council governments to have websites and to be early adopters of web technologies.⁸¹

BETTER MANAGEMENT IS NOT ENOUGH

Today's city executive must be both politician and administrator. Few, for example, would quarrel with the basic proposition that America's cities must improve their management capacity. But improving managerial skills alone will not solve all the city's problems. As the preceding discussion of systems theory suggests, we also *must* recognize the context or environment in which urban management functions. In particular, we need to be sensitive to the limits imposed on administration by such factors as the culture and values of the community, organizational inertia, the political environment, and the personal qualities of those in top leadership positions.

COMMUNITY VALUES

The technical expertise and the managerial tools for urban problem solving are available, both from the private sector and from other levels of government. Why are they not used routinely in city governments? In their early work on city politics, political scientists Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson offered the following answer:

To the extent that social evils like crime, racial hatred, and poverty are problems susceptible to solution, the obstacles in the way of their solution are mostly *political*. It is not for lack of

information that the problems remain unsolved. Nor is it because organizational arrangements are defective. Rather it is because people have differing opinions and interests, and therefore opposing ideas about what should be done.⁸² (emphasis added)

Obviously, urban managers do not grapple continuously with “big” issues such as crime, race, and poverty. Administration, planning, budgets, day-to-day service delivery—all are time-consuming aspects of urban management life. But even in these less-critical areas, urban managers often face obstacles that are essentially unrelated to their technical knowledge of the problem. Municipal budgeting is an example.⁸³ Practical analysis can show where a city needs to spend more money on infrastructure repairs to meet more severe needs and where spending is less critical, but budgeting more money to one neighborhood over another for such capital projects can lead to protracted political battles. The response of urban managers is often to allocate their budgets equally across a city’s political units (districts, wards), knowing that city council support is easier to find when every area is treated in a similar fashion.

In short, the values that the community holds dear often dictate the nature of policy, both for big (nonroutine) and small (routine) issues. This is not to suggest that community values cannot be changed, if need be—one of the many jobs of the urban executive is to adapt and institutionalize community values through his or her leadership. These core values, once articulated, adopted, and acculturated, serve to define and shape the local political culture.

INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA

As we discuss in much greater detail in Chapter 4, city workers (bureaucrats) are comfortable with routines. This fact should come as no surprise, since most of us prefer an environment in which we are not constantly forced to adapt to the vagaries of change. Rules, regulations, and established procedures accumulate as organizations mature. Organizational inertia, bureaucratic infighting, agency imperialism, goal displacement, and other forces complicate the task of enlarging the management capacity of city government. A successful city manager *must* be a student of bureaucratic politics and *must* understand organizations both as structures and as webs of human activity. (Chapter 8 discusses both organizational theory and behavior.)

THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Read any public management textbook or ask any person who has worked in both the world of government and that of corporate America—either will tell you straight out that one of the big differences between public and private management is the degree to which public managers must operate within a political environment: No matter how good the management techniques and no matter how much money is available, the solutions to most complex urban problems require political judgment.⁸⁴ Priorities must be assigned,

levels and types of taxes must be determined, and resources must be allocated. In the final analysis, these decisions involve judgments about what is best for the people. Under our form of government, these are political decisions, and no amount of improvement in management capacity can change that fact.

Conflict is anything but unusual in city government. After all, one of the two basic purposes of government at all levels is to *manage conflict*. Urban administrators must be prepared to manage pressures and demands emanating from a variety of sources, some of which are internal to the municipal organization, others external to it. To survive, much less be effective, urban managers must be politically sensitive and skillful. No matter how good their administrative abilities, successful managers must learn the art of the possible—how to bargain, how to compromise, and how to negotiate what may appear to be irreconcilable conflicts among competing interests. In the broadest sense, that is what this book is all about: improving the management of city government from both a technical and a political perspective.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Finally, we must consider managers' personal characteristics. No amount of managerial knowledge can take the place of basic leadership resources such as intelligence, perseverance, adaptability, desire to excel, and humor.⁸⁵ And we might throw in intuition and luck for good measure. If this list gives the impression that good urban managers must be some sort of superpeople, that is not altogether wrong. Our cities have enormous problems. Although improving managerial skills may help to solve them, we need very special people as well. Fortunately, for us and for you, we have them.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

This book is organized in four parts. The first part, *The Environment of Urban Management*, begins, of course, with the chapter you have just read. This first chapter provides a context for all that follows, establishing the importance of financial and demographic changes, management practices and theories, and the impact of environmental influences, such as citizen participation and technology, on urban political management. Here also, the entire study is placed within the context of systems analysis and politics. Prospective managers must know what seasoned pros know—that they can be excellent administrators, but they must also understand politics and systems. Prominent among the external forces that impinge on local systems are various governmental entities—the federal, state, and other local governments. Chapter 2 places the management of American cities within the system of intergovernmental relations. In Chapter 3, we consider the political world of managers from the vantage point of local governmental structures. Research suggests that the supports received by and the demands placed on local political systems vary according to governmental structures, including forms of government, ballot types, electoral systems, home rule, and direct democracy. In order for elected and appointed local officials to gain a

proper perspective on how they can manage local political systems, they must understand these governmental structures.

The four chapters of Part Two, *Managing Conflict and Delivering Goods and Services in the Modern City*, provide detail about the two major functions that city governments perform: managing conflict and delivering goods and services. Both functions are managed through the formulation and implementation of public policies. In Chapters 4 and 5, we examine local policymaking from a macro perspective. Chapter 4 explores how local policies are made and who makes them. We generally discuss policymaking from a systems perspective and as a rational, orderly process, although alternative models are also offered. The roles and functions of official policymakers—city executives (including city managers and mayors), city council members, and local bureaucrats—are analyzed, and, since all that city officials do is ultimately for the citizenry, we build upon our discussion, presented earlier in this chapter, of citizen participation. In Chapter 5, the focus is not on policymaking in general but specifically on the developmental policies of urban planning and economic policymaking. More and more, communities have begun to realize how much their progress depends on strategic urban planning and the vitality of the local economy.

Policymaking is closely tied to another basic management function, decision making; managers, above all, are decision makers. While policymaking is usually broad in scope, decision making is more operational—more micro in nature. In order to implement a specific policy, a number of decisions may need to be made and executed. In Chapter 6, we first discuss well-known and established decision-making approaches; then we identify “tools” or decision-making aids, both simple and sophisticated, to make the decision process as systematic as possible; and, finally, we introduce the use of such analytic tools as management information systems and geographic information systems to make more effective decisions. Next, we have to ask: What does the policy process and all the decision making produce? At the local level the answer is services. Citizens demand and deserve excellence in service delivery. Chapter 7 explores the range of service functions provided at the local level and key features of urban service delivery. Services must be delivered efficiently, effectively, responsively, and equitably.

Part Three, *Internal Management Processes*, consists of three chapters devoted to the primary functions of urban appointed and elected officials: managing programs, human resources, and finances. In Chapter 8, we discuss general program management by examining four topics. First, we cover the basics required to understand the nature and meaning of modern organizational theory and behavior. In order to understand modern open systems theory, we introduce readers to the classical and behavioral schools of organization thought. Next, we focus on the concept of leadership. Above all, urban managers must be leaders. In the third section, we discuss management strategies, old and new, that emphasize the importance of managing for results. Finally, we offer caveats about the introduction of management techniques new to a city.

Nothing gets done without people, of course. In Chapter 9 we address the issue of organizing for human resource administration and consider the common personnel functions in cities. In addition, we discuss a number of personnel issues, such as equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, employee selection and the law, comparable worth, sexual harassment, managing diversity, and accommodations for disabilities. The chapter concludes with a section devoted to labor-management relations. Next, in Chapter 10, we consider the vital areas of urban finance and budgeting (operational and capital). Among the questions addressed in this context are these: Where do the funds come from to operate city programs? What are the prospects for expanding the revenue base? All managers worry about how revenue is raised and spent, and the process by which funds are allocated—the budget—looms large as well.

The last part of the book is *The Urban Future*. In Chapter 11, we assess what is good, what is problematic, and what is uncertain in the twenty-first-century city. We look closely at the job of the urban manager today and the ways in which education may help. And, once more, we consider the pervasiveness of politics in urban management. How can managers enhance their capacity to operate effectively in a thoroughly political environment? Surely, management skills are crucial, but learning the political ropes may be just as important to a manager's ultimate success. Next, we examine concerns about prescriptive management reforms. Managers must be wary of any management strategy that offers a "one best way." Managing urban America is just plain hard work. Also in this final chapter, we address the issue of administrative ethics. Urban managers absolutely must understand both the consequences of their own behavior and their responsibility to foster the values of honesty and integrity in city government. Regardless of the job they perform, city workers operate in a fish-bowl environment, where they must take care not to lose the confidence of the people they serve. Finally, we place the twenty-first-century city in the post-September 11 environment. Cities have always been vulnerable, but they have also always been resilient as well. Given the consequences of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the devastation of New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina, and the BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill, we conclude the book with a discussion of managing man-made and natural disasters.

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NOTES

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2. See Russell L. Smith, "The 'Electronic Village': Local Governments and E-Government at the Dawn of a New Millennium," *2002 Municipal Year Book* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 2002), 25–41.
3. Keith F. Mulrooney, "Prologue: Can City Managers Deal Effectively with Major Social Problems?" *Public Administration Review* 31 (January–February 1971): 6.
4. Thomas W. Fletcher, "What Is the Future for Our Cities and the City Manager?" *Public Administration Review* 31 (January–February 1971): 5.
5. George J. Gordon, *Public Administration in America*, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin's, 1992), 88–89.
6. Elizabeth K. Kellar, "Get By with Less," in *Managing with Less*, ed. Elizabeth K. Kellar (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 1979), 2.
7. For 1978, see David R. Morgan and Michael W. Hirlinger, "The Dependent City and Intergovernmental Aid: The Impact of Recent Changes," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 29 (December 1993): 256–275; for 1990–1991, see Virginia Gray and Peter Eisinger, *American States and Cities*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 338.
8. Calculated from data provided in table LGF002 "Local Government Finances by Type of Government and State: 2012 Census of Governments in U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder (Washington D.C.: 2012), at <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>. Note: To load the table, type in "Table LGF002" using Google Search and then click on "2012 Census of Governments—American FactFinder." The table will not load from the URL above.
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11. See Catherine Rampell, "Great Recession: A Brief Etymology," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2009, at <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/11/great-recession-a-brief-etymology/>
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13. This discussion draws heavily from Robert E. England and Anthony Brown, "Fiscal Stress and Cutback Management Among United States Fire Departments," *International Fire Service Journal of Leadership and Management* 8 (2014): 49–50.
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15. *Ibid.*, 36.
16. Karen Thoreson and James H. Svara, "How Local Governments Are Navigating the Fiscal Crisis: Taking Stock and Looking Forward," *2011 Municipal Year Book* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 2011), 76.
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19. *Ibid.*, 25s.
20. David N. Ammons, Karl W. Smith, and Carl W. Stenberg, "The Future of Local Government: Will Current Stress Bring Major, Permanent Changes," *State and Local Government Review* 44(1S August 2012): 72s.

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27. Bruce Katz, *State of the World's Cities: The American Experience*, Brookings Institution, February 2005, at www.brook.edu/metro/speeches/20050201_worldcities.pdf.
28. Sabrina Tavernise, "Minorities Lead Growth in Biggest Cities," *The New York Times*, August 31, 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/31/us/31census.html?_r=0
29. William H. Frey, "New Projections Point to a Majority Minority Nation in 2044," *Brookings Institution*, December 12, 2014, at <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2014/12/12-majority-minority-nation-2044-frey>
30. Kellar, "Get By with Less," 3.
31. Charles Levine, Irene Rubin, and George Wolohojian, *The Politics of Retrenchment* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981), 211.
32. In *Public Management: A Three-Dimensional Approach* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009), p. 32, public administration scholars Carolyn J. Hill and Laurence E. Lynn Jr. pose the question: "Public Management and Public Administration: A Distinction Without a Difference?" Traditionalists, of course, prefer the field be called *public administration*, while recent reformers offer a clear distinction between the two concepts and advance the term *public management* as the appropriate moniker for the discipline. We agree with Hill and Lynn that this distinction is generally not important and, like them, use the terms public administration and public management interchangeably or combine the two concepts together—public administration and management.
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34. *Ibid.*, xvii.
35. Executive Office of the President of the United States, "Citizen's Guide to the Federal Budget: Fiscal Year 2001," <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/docs/publications/usbcitizen/BUDGET-2001-CITIZENSGUIDE.pdf>.
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40. *Ibid.*, 2.
41. David Osborne and Peter Hutchinson, *The Price of Government: Getting the Results We Need in an Age of Permanent Fiscal Crisis* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).
42. Jonathan Walters, "Managing the Politics of Change," *Governing*, December 1992, 40.
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84. *Ibid.*, 121.
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