

FACTORS EXPLAINING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' PERCEPTIONS OF
CITIZEN
ENGAGEMENT IN THE MUNICIPAL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to multiple people, but most specifically to my parents. Both of you always pushed us five kids to do our best in life, athletics, and most importantly education. Your support, love, advice, and ability to push me to be my best ultimately resulted in me finishing this damn dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

Research has suggested that citizen engagement in local government decisions is important for sustaining democratic ideals. However, scholars are still working to understand how those responsible for organizing citizen engagement at the local level perceive such efforts. There has also been little work examining how citizen engagement is integrated in strategic planning processes at the municipal level of government. This study aims to address both gaps by investigating contemporary factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in strategic planning processes. Collaborative Governance Theory (CGT) focuses on creating an environment where community members can develop, debate, and negotiate ideas or concepts that impact their local communities. The theory describes what effective *institution*, *collaboration*, *leadership*, and *incentives* look like in community engagement processes. In my tristate study (Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming), I examine the practical citizen engagement efforts utilized by city managers and mayors to assess two concepts. First, how well do the engagement methods proposed by CGT explain actual strategic planning processes? Second, do municipal leaders perceive that citizen engagement processes are beneficial to the strategic planning process? Data was collected on a variety of variables drawn from the CGT model, and data related to citizen engagement in municipal strategic planning processes. Data was analyzed using ordinary least squares (OLS), as well as ordinal and binomial logistic regression analyses. Findings indicate that the presence of *institutions*, *collaboration*, and *leadership*, key variables in CGT, increase government officials'

perceptions that citizen engagement in the strategic planning process is both *beneficial* and *impacts the public policy process*. The findings also indicate that *education* and *income*, which are two key variables used to measure power and resources in the CGT model, are insignificant when measuring government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. Lastly, the findings of this study suggest that economic and education indicators (*average household income, average % with Bachelor's degree*) do not impact citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSU	Boise State University
PPA	Public Policy and Administration
CGT	Collaborative Governance Theory
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
NPM	New Public Management
NPS	New Public Service
CNCS	Corporation for National and Community Service
NCOS	National Conference on Citizenship
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
MLC	Montana League of Cities
WAM	Wyoming Association of Municipalities
AIC	Association of Idaho Cities

INTRODUCTION

For the past few decades, policy scholars have increasingly turned their attention to the role that citizen engagement plays in the functioning of representative democracies (Bryson, 2011; King & Stivers, 1998; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Putnam, 2000; Wilfred et al., 1973). Engaging citizens and communities in local government public policy and administrative decisions can be important for a representative democracy. In *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making (2012)*, Deborah Stone argues that, “public policy is about communities trying to achieve something as communities” (20). In other words, Stone argues that communities promote common values in order to achieve common outputs. In a representative democracy, it would benefit government officials to ensure they are providing opportunities for citizens to engage in their democracy, and it would benefit citizens to maximize their opportunities for engaging in government decisions (King & Stivers, 1998; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Mandarano, Meenar, & Steins, 2010).

Existing Public Policy and Administration (PPA) research on citizen engagement at the federal level of government has focused on a variety of topics such as social media (see Boyd & Ellison, 2007), environmental policy management (Wagenet & Pfeffer, 2007; Feldman, 1995; Shapiro, 2004), the Puritan era (see Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006; Tocqueville, 1835), the Progressive movement (see Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006; Holloran, Cocks, Lessoff, 2009; McGerr, 2003), and citizen engagement during the civil

rights movement (Alinsky, 1969; 1971; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). PPA scholars have also focused on citizen engagement at the state level of government by researching digital democracy techniques (see Thomas & Streib, 2003; Stowers, 1999), state budgeting processes (Crain & O’Roark, 2002; Kelly & Riverbark, 2015), and citizen engagement processes (Fung, 2015; Sonenshein, 2013). At the municipal level of government, PPA scholars have examined a variety of citizen engagement topics such as models or methods of engagement (Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003), digital democracy engagement techniques (Bonson et al., 2012; Elia, Margherita, & Taurino, 2009), and accountability or transparency of citizen engagement processes (Healey & Tordoff, 1995; Goetz & Gaventa, 2001). However, few scholars in PPA have examined citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government (see Brody, Godschalk & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003).

Building on existing citizen engagement research conducted in PPA, this dissertation examines citizen engagement in strategic planning processes at the municipal level of government, processes which Bryson (2011) argues are imperative for progressing democratic values in a positive direction. Therefore, local government officials could benefit by engaging citizens when developing and executing strategic plans. Bryson (2011) defines a strategic plan as a, “...*deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why*” (7-8). In other words, a strategic plan is a document that organizations or communities use to guide their future decisions. In addition, strategic planning is important because it, “...seems ‘to work’—in the sense of helping decision makers figure out what their organizations should be doing, how, and

why” (Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009, 173). In summary, strategic plans help set short and long-term goals that guide an organization’s or community’s actions.

Existing work has primarily focused on the differences between how citizens view citizen engagement processes compared to how government officials view these same practices (Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973). As Mohammadi et al., (2017) notes, “it is clear that there are some differences in perception of participation between people and local government” (5). In other words, there is a disconnect between citizens and local government officials’ that are involved in the same citizen engagement processes. Some scholars have argued that government officials should understand that sometimes citizens just want their perceptions heard (see Kweit & Kweit, 2007; King & Stivers, 1998), and citizens should understand that government officials want to control the power and process (Mohammadi, et al., 2017). Other scholars have argued that if both citizens and government officials work together in a process-oriented approach, such collaboration may result in an increased level of trust, additional support for policy objectives, and increased communication between citizens and government officials (Abdel-Monem, Herian, Hoppe, Pytlikzillig, and Tomkins, 2016). Ultimately, citizens and government officials’ perceptions can have long-term impacts on public policy outcomes (Goss 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973).

This dissertation examines government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement in the municipal strategic planning process. A primary reason for conducting this study is to better understand government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement. Collaborative Governance Theory (CGT) provides a theoretical model

describing effective citizen engagement. This dissertation examines government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the municipal strategic planning process to understand the extent to which engagement processes incorporate CGT principles. This work may also fill a gap in public policy and administration scholarship, in that few studies have specifically examined municipal government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process.

A small amount of work addresses citizen perceptions of citizen engagement processes (Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973). Other work argues for the theoretical importance of citizen engagement but does not offer much empirical evidence for how it works in practice, particularly at the local level of government (Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009; Bryson & Roering, 1989; Barzelay & Campbell, 2003; Wheeland, 2003, Giraudeau, 2008). Additional citizen engagement studies have primarily focused on more densely populated states and municipalities (Brody, Godschalk & Burby, 2003; Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wheeland, 2003; Wilfred et al., 1973), resulting in the necessity for additional research in large rural states (Bryson, personal communication, 2015). As a result, this study fulfills a unique gap in the PPA and citizen engagement literature by examining three states in the Inter-Mountain West with rural municipalities.

The research question this project aims to answer is: *What factors explain government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in municipal strategic planning processes?* The study focuses on these factors in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, three states within the Inter-Mountain West (Blake, 2002). From a broader perspective, it is

important to study these three states because they primarily consist of widely separated urban areas and rural municipalities that are under-populated, and often lack staffing and financial resources for conducting extensive collaborative governance and citizen engagement processes. Examining these municipalities might provide insight into the successes and limitations citizen engagement processes encounter in these settings. Furthermore, in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming municipalities are primarily *manager-council* or *mayor-council* structures of government. Measuring the impact that managers and mayors have in designing and supporting citizen engagement processes for strategic planning is important if we are to understand the potential for limitations of citizen engagement. Many small municipalities lack necessary resources and staff, therefore leaving design and implementation of citizen engagement processes under the supervision of mayors and managers. As a result, surveying municipal officials directly involved in the citizen engagement processes provides useful information concerning citizen engagement methods, and factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. Understanding these unique aspects about Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming might provide insight into citizen engagement in other, similarly rural and under-resourced environments. As a result, the survey design used here tried to capture engagement problems municipal officials frequently encounter in rural municipalities.

I introduce this study by briefly discussing the evolution of scholarly arguments in favor of citizen engagement as a central part of representative democracy. PPA scholarship has increasingly come to embrace citizen engagement as an important democratic practice. However, there is a lack of research that examines government

officials' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level of government (Abdel-Monem, Herian, Hoppe, Pytlikzillig, and Tomkins, 2016). Next, I review literature related to strategic planning and citizen engagement (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Bryson, 2011; Hendrick, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). Scholars have used CGT normatively to prescribe a process for citizen engagement (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011); this project, on the other hand, examines which CGT processes municipalities actually employ to engage citizens in their local government strategic planning processes.

Below, I discuss the key variables and approaches that scholars have applied in a variety of practical and theoretical CGT processes (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011). Furthermore, I operationalize these variables along with variables developed from the strategic planning and citizen engagement literature to measure factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

This study uses a wide variety of survey measures to create and assess key CGT-based variables: *institution*, *collaboration*, *leadership*, and *incentives*, and measures their impact on government officials' perceptions of whether or not *citizen engagement is beneficial* and/or *impactful on policy outcomes* in the strategic planning process. The findings indicate that more frequent use of CGT-based techniques is associated with increased belief that citizen engagement is beneficial and impacts policy in strategic planning at the municipal government level. The findings also indicate average *education*

levels and average *household income*, two key variables often correlated with citizen engagement are not statistically significant in this study. Furthermore, *government structure* is included to see if different types of local *government structure* impact government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, but *government structure* was also found to be insignificant.

CHAPTER ONE: CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT, OFFICIALS' PERCEPTIONS & THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

I introduce this chapter by briefly discussing arguments in favor of citizen engagement as a central component of representative democracy. Then, I review the literature that analyzes government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and how other studies have measured officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. Next, I argue that strategic planning is important for communities and municipal level public policy decisions, and that CGT provides a useful framework for designing and analyzing citizen engagement processes at the local level. Scholars have yet to use CGT to examine decision makers' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level, and specifically not in relation to the strategic planning process. There is also little research that has been published on these processes in the three states examined in this study. This dissertation aims to fill these gaps in the literature.

Citizen Engagement and Representative Democracy

The philosophical starting point for this study rests upon the normative stance that citizen engagement in decision making processes leads to a stronger, more representative, and better functioning democracy. Scholars have continually researched the role of citizen engagement and the meaning of democracy during the Puritan era (see Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006; Tocqueville, 1835), the Revolutionary War (Bailyn, 2017), the Progressive Era (see Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006; Holloran, Cocks, Lessoff, 2009; McGerr, 2003), the civil rights movement in the 1960's (Alinsky, 1969; 1971; Pressman

& Wildavsky, 1973), the new public management movement from 1980-present (Boyte, 1980; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), and contemporary movements toward collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Daley, 2009; Reed, 2008; Putnam, 2000).

It was during the Progressive era that average middle-class citizens advocated for government reform and a more engaged citizenry. An example of citizen engagement impacting outcomes was the transformation of the municipal government structures, which replaced mayors with city managers (Holloran, Cocks, Lessoff, 2009, 80). City manager positions first originated in Europe and the idea transitioned to the United States in the early 1900's. Progressive reformers advocated for the city manager position to ensure professional management of cities as well as to increase citizen engagement at the municipal level of government (Holloran, Cocks, & Lessoff, 2009, 80). While city administration was professionalized by the widespread adoption of the council-manager form of government, the hope for an increase of citizen engagement was not realized. Citizens realized the position was too removed from citizen engagement processes, resulting in government officials' not properly understanding citizen perceptions (Holloran, Cocks, Lessoff, 2009).

During the social unrest of the 1960's and 70's, local governments saw increasing demands for citizen engagement in decision making processes (Alinsky, 1969; 1971; Arnstein, 1969). Citizen engagement was exemplified by President Johnson's speech called *The Great Society*, and the program enacted as a result of his speech trickled down to municipal governments. President Johnson stressed the importance of equity and citizen engagement processes (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). To implement these new public policies, the national government required local municipalities to engage citizens

in the public policy implementation process (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). While this approach increased citizen engagement at the local level of government, it also caused conflict and difficulties when implementing public policies, as local governments were trying to include the perspectives of all actors involved (see Arnstein, 1969), without the proper citizen engagement processes in place (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973).

More recently, public administration has been informed by the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, and more specifically by the shift from “government” to “governance” (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Cooper, Bryer, and Meek (2006) describe this shift as follows: “...the process of governing should no longer be understood as the sole business of government but as involving the interaction of government, business, and the nonprofit (or nongovernmental) sectors” (Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2006, 76). In other words, governance attempts to engage citizens and stakeholder groups, businesses, and government officials, while maintaining efficient public policy outputs (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973).

Citizens thought NPM would result in increased citizen engagement and decreased corruption amongst government officials (see Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), but NPM actually made citizen engagement more difficult because determining responsibility within the service delivery network was more complex involving private-public-nonprofit organizations (Osborner & Gaebler, 1992).

Perceptions of Citizen Engagement

Public policy and administration scholars interested in PPA and government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement have primarily focused on three areas: What citizen and government officials’ perceptions mean for public policy outcomes (see

Abdel-Monem, et al., 2016; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Wang, 2001), the difference between citizens' perceptions and government officials' perceptions of the same citizen engagement process (see Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973), and why sometimes citizens just want their perspectives acknowledged instead of implemented (Kweit & Kweit, 2007). Given the limited studies investigating government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level, this is a unique opportunity to fill a gap in the literature. I begin by briefly examining each in turn to provide a better understanding of the literature already developed, and then I conclude with why this study is important for PPA in general.

The first area scholars have focused on is investigating government officials' and citizen perceptions of the engagement process, and what these perceptions mean for public policy outcomes at the municipal level of government (Abdel-Monem et al., 2016; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Wang, 2001). The studies used qualitative interviews (see Abdel-Monem et al., 2016; Kweit & Kweit, 2007) with citizens, mayors, city council members, and department heads to better understand methods and processes for citizen engagement. The key concepts measured by those studies were trust, leadership, satisfaction, and outcomes of the processes. These variables parallel the concepts employed by CGT and this study. Wang (2001) employs a quantitative survey of municipalities with populations over 50,000 citizens across the United States, and notes that citizen engagement in local government budgeting processes results in positive perceptions for government officials, and an increased ability for city leaders to fulfill public desires. Furthermore, the study's findings conclude that when government officials are involved with citizens in the engagement process, there is an increased level of trust, additional support for policy

objectives, successful implementation of policy goals, and the ability to minimize problems within the community for all members involved in the process (Abdel-Monem et al., 2016; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2001; Wang, 2001). In other words, when citizens and government officials are both involved in the citizen engagement process, this results in constructive outcomes and positive perceptions for all members involved. These studies focused on local government processes such as budgeting and disaster management, and on citizens living in cities with a population of more than 50,000 across the United States, while this study focuses instead on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the municipal strategic planning process.

The second approach scholars have used is to compare government officials' perceptions with citizens' perceptions of the same citizen engagement process (Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973). As is the case with my study, these studies measure leadership, trust, citizen engagement methods, structure of the interaction between government officials and citizens, and incentives for citizens to participate. They use two different methodological approaches for investigating the differing viewpoints of citizens and city leaders: in-depth interviews (see Goss; 1999; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017) and case study analyses (see Lowndes et al., 2001). The findings suggest that citizens and government officials' have different perceptions of the same citizen engagement processes due to their opposing roles (Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973). Additionally, these different perceptions usually lead to minor conflicts, but these conflicts can be resolved if addressed during the process (see Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001). In other words, regardless of the officials or citizens

involved or processes implemented, there are still likely to be different perspectives of the citizen engagement processes. While these studies focus on the different perceptions of citizens and government officials, they are focused on larger municipalities with more funding and resources available than states like Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming are likely to have. Additionally, the advantage this study has is testing a large set of quantitative variables at once, and the study is replicable given the design and geographical region examined.

Other studies examine the way in which citizens may value participation and the importance of being heard, as opposed to focusing solely on policy outcomes (Kweit & Kweit, 2007). Kweit & Kweit (2007) conducted a research study looking at citizen perceptions and engagement, and the impact their perceptions and engagement have on public policy outcomes after natural disasters. The variables they employ focus on general citizen engagement, social participation, perceptions of engagement, trust, and citizens understanding their opportunities for being engaged at the municipal level of government. They employ a quantitative survey of 400 respondents and use quantitative indicators to analyze the data. Their findings indicate that citizen perceptions of participation are far more important than public policy outcomes for citizens. As Kweit & Kweit (2007) note, "Participation itself may not be as important as the sense on the part of citizens that they could participate..." (420). Again, the focus was on citizen perceptions, rather than on the perceptions of government officials involved in the process.

Citizen Engagement, CGT, & Strategic Planning

Citizen engagement is the dependent variable for this study. There are multiple different definitions for citizen engagement in the literature, but the term I employ is from Macedo (2005) who defines citizen engagement as, “people participating together for deliberation and collective action within an array of interests, institutions and networks, developing civic identity, and involving people in governance processes” (as cited in Cooper, Bryer & Meek, 2006). In the context of this study, citizen engagement refers to the citizen engagement processes employed in strategic planning at the municipal level of government.

The conceptual model that undergirds this study is CGT. CGT integrates citizens in a thorough and systematic process that encourages citizens and government officials to engage in constructive dialogue (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Healey, 1995; Papadopoulos, 2010; Reed, 2008; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Sorensen & Torfing, 2011). CGT outlines key variables for measuring and understanding the engagement process (see Ansell & Gash, 2008). This study uses these variables to assess government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. In generating variables, I attempt to account for as many independent variables as possible that emerge from the CGT approach as well as a review of PPA literature focused on strategic planning (see Bryson, 2011; Bryson, 2009; Hendrick, 2003), collaborative governance (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Sorensen & Torfing, 2011), and government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement (Abdel-Monem et al., 2016; Goss, 1999; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Wang, 2001).

CGT has been presented as an effective model for engaging citizens in government processes (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011). Building from CGT, this study intends to test whether municipal leaders actually employ elements of CGT, and when designing citizen engagement processes, and what factors influence government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in their strategic planning processes. Ansell & Gash (2008) define CGT as describing how, "one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets" (544). In other words, CGT focuses on developing a consensus amongst multiple stakeholder groups and government officials that results in positively perceived outcomes for the community, government officials, and non-state actors. CGT has been applied to a variety of academic studies, ranging from solving environmental problems (see Reed, 2008; Daley, 2009), to crisis management issues (see Kettl, 2006), to a wide variety of complex public policy problems (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Nicholson-Crotty & O'Toole, 2004). The next section will discuss literature related to citizen engagement, strategic planning, government officials' perceptions, and CGT.

According to scholars in PPA, strategic planning is a collaborative process, and interaction between citizens, stakeholders, and government officials is critical for success (Bryson, 2011; Hendrick, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). In local governments, strategic planning processes are imperative for progressing community and democratic values (Arnstein, 1969; Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). In

addition, when all members of a community are engaged in the strategic planning process, there is more investment in outcomes (Bryson, 2011; Bryson & Roering, 1989; Brody, Godschalk & Burby, 2003; Hendrick, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). One problem with past research is it has primarily treated strategic planning processes as a linear process (see Boyne, 2001; Boyne & Gould-Williams, 2003), and hasn't focused on interaction, adaptation, and collaboration when examining the strategic planning process. Ultimately, scholars have yet to apply rigorous collaborative theories for studying strategic planning processes (see Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009), even though some scholars have made partial progress (Bryson & Roering, 1989; Barzelay & Campbell, 2003; Wheeland, 2003, Giraudeau, 2008).

As previously mentioned, few scholars in PPA have examined citizen engagement in the strategic planning process (Bryson, Personal Communication, October 2015). When scholars from disciplines outside of PPA have studied citizen engagement, they have found an association between the design and number of citizen engagement methods employed, and whether or not the plans will be successful and supported by the community (Arnstein, 1969; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). Furthermore, scholars have found that communities could use methods that are collaborative (see Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003), and provide the opportunity to evenly distribute power between citizens and government officials (see Arnstein, 1969) for the process to be successful. Additionally, other key concepts such as leadership, institutional support, and incentives for citizens to participate are key factors for properly and successfully engaging citizens in the strategic planning process (Arnstein, 1969; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). Arnstein's (1969)

work has been very influential, but there have also been calls to test such theoretical models empirically (Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003). In addition, Wheeland (2003) and Brody, Godschalk, & Burby (2003) focus on citizen engagement structure and methods employed in the strategic planning process, but fail to use a collaborative model to test their theories. In other words, each of the three studies that have focused on citizen engagement in the strategic planning process provide an important contribution to the field of PPA. However, the studies fail to employ a collaborative governance theoretical model (see Arnstein, 1969; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003) for testing factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process (Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009).

Due to significant overlap between variables in the CGT process and variables previously investigated in the citizen engagement and strategic planning literature, CGT may provide one useful model for testing what factors impact government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. The next section will discuss CGT in a more detailed manner.

Public Administration & Collaborative Governance Theory

I use CGT to further understand factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, and what elements of CGT municipal leaders actually employed in their practical citizen engagement processes in strategic planning throughout Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Scholars have found that CGT can be used to plan, describe, and assess meaningful citizen engagement processes

(Ansell & Gash, 2008; Daley, 2009; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Kettl, 2006; Nicholson-Crotty & O'Toole, 2004; Reed, 2008).

CGT seems to address many of the concerns that scholars of citizen engagement identified in the sections above. CGT scholars have argued that the theory may be able to address issues of accountability, transparency, representation, and complexity in designing engagement processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Daley, 2009; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Kettl, 2006; Nicholson-Crotty & O'Toole, 2004; Reed, 2008). Ansell & Gash (2008) argue that CGT was developed to respond to a failure of typical hierarchical policy development and implementation approaches, as well as accountability issues stemming from traditional government tactics. Other scholars argue that CGT was a direct result of intergovernmental cooperation during the civil rights movement, and it took 40 years for the theoretical model to appear (Agranoff & McGuire, 1998; Elazar, 1962). For contemporary scholars, CGT is one of the solutions for solving complex public problems by ensuring citizens and stakeholders are engaged using a deliberative democratic approach (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Frederickson, 1991; Kettl, 2002; Torres, 2003).

CGT is a complex interdisciplinary model of a process (see Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011), that has been used for solving environmental problems (see Reed, 2008; Daley, 2009), crisis management issues (see Kettl, 2006), and a wide variety of complex government problems (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Nicholson-Crotty & O'Toole, 2004). CGT requires a deliberative approach (see Dryzek, 2000; Booher & Innes, 2002; Bouwen & Taillieu, 2004) to be successful by aggregating the perspectives of citizens and stakeholders. Assuming that citizens and stakeholder groups are granted

equal access to proceedings and power, policy outcomes are more respected and aligned with their preferences, instead of government decisions that are created through a typical top-down method (Healey, 1996; Booher, 2004). What makes CGT successful is its deliberative democratic approach that allows citizens, stakeholders, and government actors the opportunity to interact, disagree, and develop solutions in a public setting (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Reed, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Robertson & Choi, 2010). Society is becoming increasingly complex to govern due to changing social and political policies (see Kooiman, 1993), and as a result, scholars hope that the CGT model might help more effectively address “wicked” or seemingly intractable problems (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

There are multiple models or approaches that scholars have used for developing and testing CGT (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011). Robertson & Choi (2010) measure stakeholder satisfaction of the collaborative governance process by focusing on ordinal results of three independent variables; conflict between participants, the foundation of their relationship at the start of the process, and their ability to modify their opinions for different preferences. For example, they ask participants to select if they had a “low”, “moderate”, or “high” level of conflict with other stakeholders in the process. Numerical scores are assigned to each ordinal response option, allowing researchers to examine statistical significance for responses. Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2011) have a model of CGT based on an extensive literature review. Similar to Ansell & Gash (2008), they recommend developing key concepts or variables that can be measured from a qualitative or quantitative perspective. Then they

recommend broadly defining each variable into secondary categories or concepts. For example, they define “system context” by focusing on resources stakeholders have available for participating in the process. Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2011) note “resource conditions,” and “socioeconomic” factors are important for the foundation of the CGT process. Measuring resources or socioeconomic conditions is possible by determining the average level of income or average level of education of participants in the process. One practical example is this dissertation employs *income* and *level of education* as key variables for understanding economic factors impacting government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement in the CGT process. Furthermore, Ansell & Gash (2008) review nearly 140 studies that employ collaborative governance theory as a framework for understanding factors impacting the CGT process. They find that “starting conditions,” “institutional design,” “collaborative process,” and “facilitative leadership” should be measured using qualitative or quantitative approaches. For example, Ansell & Gash (2008) note that a quantitative survey should be conducted to understand CGT from the perspective of one of the groups involved in the process. They note that a quantitative evaluation of the key variables in their model is needed, but their model could employ a case study or qualitative approach for developing a better understanding of the CGT process from an ethnographic perspective (Ansell & Gash, 2008). For this study, Dr. Ansell recommends measuring key concepts in the model by separating the variables into survey questions with ordinal response options (Christopher Ansell, Personal Communication, March 2017). One of the variables measured was titled, *incentives*. Two examples of questions we discussed to measure *incentives* were, did citizens think their perspectives would be acknowledged, and did citizens feel the process was legitimate?

While I attempted to incorporate key concepts or themes derived from varying CGT studies in the literature, the foundation for this study is based on select variables in Ansell & Gash's model (Figure 1) that I recreated based on their model.

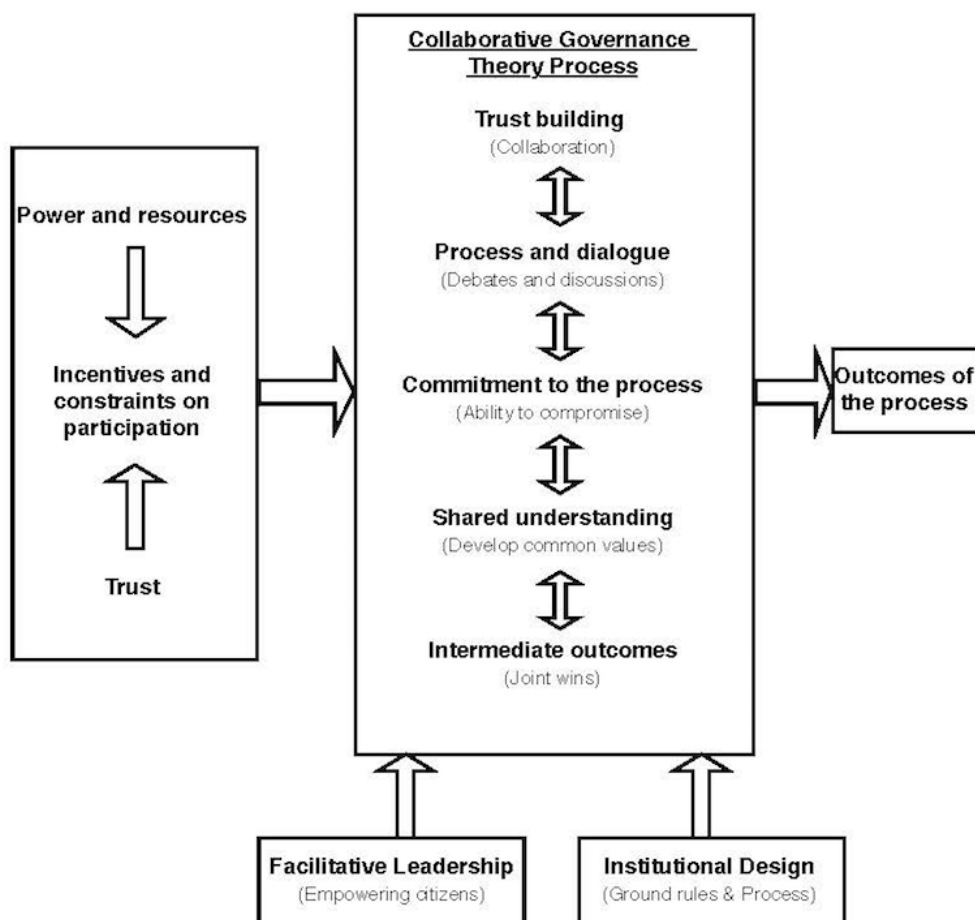


Figure 1. Ansell & Gash's (2008) Model of CGT

Citation: (Re-creation of Ansell & Gash's model from 2008)

The premise of Ansell & Gash's model is that, "agencies and stakeholders must meet together in a deliberative and multilateral process. In other words, ...the process must be collective" (Ansell & Gash, 2008, 546). The four primary variables Ansell & Gash (2008) argue are critical for understanding the collaborative governance model are, "starting conditions," "facilitative leadership," "institutional design," and "collaborative

process.” The most important variables for engaging citizens in their public policy decisions is the collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Without a collaborative process that is inclusive of all stakeholders, the premise of CGT will fail (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Silvia, 2011).

Ansell & Gash’s model is useful for this study for multiple reasons: First, their model clearly defines and incorporates variables that can be measured in a survey of local government officials. Second, the variables have some useful overlaps with variables identified by the citizen engagement and PPA literature. Third, compared to other models in the literature, Ansell & Gash’s model articulates cause and effect relationships. Several other models in the literature discuss key concepts, but in a manner that is more conducive to qualitative case studies, not quantitative studies (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Healey, 1996; Papadopoulos, 2010). As a result, Ansell & Gash’s model describes what citizen engagement, strategic planning, government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement, and collaborative decision should look like in citizen engagement processes.

While CGT models vary throughout the literature, scholars do agree common concepts or themes previously discussed in this study are required for a successful collaborative process (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Healey, 1995; Papadopoulos, 2010; Reed, 2008; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Sorensen & Torfing, 2011). The above scholars also agree that CGT can be applied to almost any topic or process that requires participation of citizens, and citizens might benefit by working with key leaders in the CGT process, such as government officials.

While the previous sections discuss the benefits of CGT, we should also acknowledge critiques of Ansell & Gash's model. One critique is Ansell & Gash are too focused on the interaction between government officials and non-government representatives (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). In other words, Ansell & Gash's model is effective for narrowly defined purposes, but fails to provide equal opportunity for all participants involved in the citizen engagement processes. Another critique of Ansell & Gash is given the complexity of their model and the variety of personnel involved in the processes, it can be difficult to empirically measure different variables or outcomes of the process (Plotnikof, 2015). Furthermore, given the number of actors and perceptions involved in Ansell & Gash's collaborative process, there is a likelihood for additional conflict and a lack of preferred outcomes for all members participating in the process (Vangen & Winchester, 2013). I will return to some of these critiques in my discussion chapter, chapter five. The next chapter, chapter two will discuss the key concepts, hypotheses, and variable development as a result of citizen engagement, strategic planning, and CGT literature.

CHAPTER TWO: HYPOTHESES & KEY CONCEPTS

I introduce this chapter by discussing key variables of Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT. I focus on previous literature that both supports and departs from the key variables of their model. Despite these departures, I argue that Ansell & Gash's (2008) CGT model is the best yardstick against which to analyze the actual engagement processes used by actual municipal leaders. Next, I use the contemporary CGT, strategic planning, government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and citizen engagement literatures to tailor hypotheses for my current study. I conclude the chapter with a focus on practical citizen engagement. I argue that practical citizen engagement is instrumental to our democracy, but practical citizen engagement is very difficult to implement in successful processes, and CGT is the perfect model for testing what factors government officials employed in their strategic planning processes.

Historically, CGT has been used as a normative model for implementing citizen engagement processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008). However, I am interested in using CGT as an analytical framework to test hypotheses developed from the citizen engagement, perceptions of citizen engagement, CGT, and strategic planning literature. Previous research has suggested that CGT involves too many stakeholders, and it can be difficult to empirically measure all variables involved in the outcomes of the process (Plotnikof, 2015). However, that is why this study systematically defined variables within the CGT model, and only focused on government officials' perceptions of citizen

engagement, instead of trying to understand the perceptions of all actors involved. While Robertson and Choi (2010) used quantitative measures to examine stakeholder satisfaction of the CGT process, I will examine the perceptions of city leaders regarding elements of the CGT process. Since using CGT as an empirical model is uncommon in the literature (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011), this is a unique opportunity to test whether elements of CGT are being implemented in rural, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West.

Power & Resources

Power and resource inequities among citizens and stakeholders have consistently been found in the collaborative governance process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Gray, 1989; Short & Winter, 1999; Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987). While there is no way to guarantee equality of power and resources at the start of a collaborative governance process, officials overseeing the process should ensure citizens have equal opportunities to participate (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011). As Ansell and Gash note, “If some stakeholders do not have the capacity, organization, status, or resources to participate, or to participate on an equal footing with other stakeholders, the collaborative governance process will be prone to manipulation by stronger actors” (2008, 551). In other words, power and resource inequities in the collaborative governance process favor wealthy, powerful, and prestigious individuals or organizations. Yaffee & Wondolleck (2003) argue that certain citizens and stakeholders do not have the energy or resources to participate in the collaborative governance process. This difference in power and resources between citizens creates trust and commitment problems for the collaborative governance process (Warner, 2006). The advantage of allowing citizens and

organizations equal participation (see Fung & Wright, 2001) is policy outcomes are tailored to everyone's needs, not just top-down preferences of government officials (Healey, 1996; Beierle & Konisky, 2001).

Literature within PPA has found that select stakeholders do not have the resources, education, and technical expertise to collaboratively participate in citizen engagement processes (Campbell, 2006; Gunton & Day, 2003; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Warner, 2006; Marsh & Kaase, 1979; Yaffee & Wondolleck, 2003). Furthermore, education has been one of the most significant predictors of citizen engagement since the 1970's (Marsh & Kaase, 1979). As Putnam states, "education is one of the most important predictors—usually, in fact, the most important predictor—of many forms of social participation—from voting to associational membership..." (2000). In other words, education is an important factor when measuring citizen engagement. Additionally, lower levels of income have been shown to negatively impact citizen engagement (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970; Brady, 2004; Goodin & Dryzek, 1980; Lukes, 2009; Solt, 2008). Furthermore, research suggests that when income is more evenly distributed amongst citizens, citizen engagement processes are more likely to include stakeholders from all levels of income and evenly distribute power (Solt, 2008). As Solt (2008) finds, "...Higher levels of economic inequality tend to depress the political engagement of most citizens..." In other words, when societies have high levels of income variability, citizens with fewer resources will participate less in democracy. For purposes of this study, average *income* and average *% of bachelor's degree* are employed as independent variables to better understand individual citizens access to power and resources when

reviewing government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process.

H₁: A higher average household income is positively associated with citizen engagement.

H₂: A higher % of *bachelor's degree* is positively associated with citizen engagement.

Incentives

Citizen engagement is a voluntary form of participation in our deliberative democracy (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Reed, 2008). Since citizen engagement is voluntary, it would benefit scholars and practitioners to understand what *incentivizes* citizens to participate in a collaborative governance process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Andranovich, 1995; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray, 1989). For example, in Washington and Florida, government officials are required by law to engage citizens in a deliberative strategic planning processes (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003). Since government officials are required to engage citizens, it might help government officials to know that citizens seek trust, collaboration, knowledge, and meaningful results (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Interestingly, citizens are more willing to participate in collaborative governance if they believe success of the process depends on the collaboration with other members involved (Imperial, 2005; Yaffee & Wondolleck, 2003; Logsdon, 1991). Citizens become more interested in participating if they believe their collaboration will have a direct impact on policy outputs (Brown, 2002). For example, if citizens are invited to work directly with fellow stakeholders and government officials in deciding policy outcomes, they will be more *incentivized* to participate in the process

(Ansell & Gash, 2008). If the collaborative governance process is the exclusive form of citizen participation, stakeholders interpret this as the only opportunity to make a difference in policy outcomes (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Contemporary PPA literature notes that incentivizing citizens to participate in collaborative engagement processes is important for ensuring an engaged citizenry (Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2011; Tang, 2005; Wang, 2001). As Tang (2005) notes, “the use of incentives can effectively engage community residents, local governments, officials, and external organizations in planning and plan implementation” (3). In other words, when incentives are used effectively for engaging citizens, this can increase stakeholder and citizen engagement in a variety of local government processes. To effectively *incentivize* citizens to participate in the collaborative processes, citizens should feel they are empowered (see Kweit & Kweit, 2007), they can trust their fellow deliberators (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, 2011), they will have an impact on policy outcomes (Lowndes et al., 2011; Wang, 2001), and they are making a difference in the governance process (Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2011; Wang, 2001). Ultimately, government officials can focus on techniques that intrinsically motivate citizens (see Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2011; Tang, 2005; Wang, 2001) to be engaged in local government processes. As a result of this literature, I test the following hypothesis:

H₃: Incentivizing stakeholders is positively associated with citizen engagement.

Institution

Another key variable within the CGT process is institution. Institution “refers here to the basic protocols and ground rules for collaboration...” (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In

other words, government *institutions* develop and administer the protocols and procedures for the collaboration process. The goal is to include as many citizens and stakeholders as possible, and to develop concrete policy solutions that are beneficial for all parties (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray, 1989). Institutions design the policies and procedures for which citizens were included, if clear ground rules were established, transparency of the agenda and process, and developing a process that is fair to all citizens and government officials involved. Whereas, incentivizing citizens focuses on convincing citizens that the institution of the process is transparent, fair, and their participation is required for obtaining public policy outcomes. For example, if a municipality is developing a strategic plan, municipal officials could seek out citizens, stakeholder groups, and members of the community to *incentivize* them to participate in the process and convince them the institutional structure or design will serve the communities' interests.

For institution, it might benefit government officials to focus on developing ground rules and a transparent process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006; Busenberg, 1999; Imperial, 2005). These rules should be determined at the start of a collaborative process and agreed upon by all parties involved (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011). The reason rules should be agreed upon at the start is to ensure all members of the process feel their opinions are equally considered (Murdock, Wiessner, & Sexton, 2005). For collaborative groups working to solve problems, the rules and process are usually less hierarchical and more flexible than typical government processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006).

Contemporary PPA literature notes that trust, transparency, equal participation, and structure, which are key components of *institution* directly impact citizen engagement processes (Bannister & Connolly, 2011; Fukuyama, 1995; Kwak, Shah & Holbert, 2004; Parent, Vandebeek & Gemino, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Warren, Sulaiman, Jaafar, 2014). One of the most important components of *institution* is individuals involved must not only trust the process, but they must also learn to trust each other. As Fukuyama notes trust is, “the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of members of that community” (1995, 26). In other words, trust and transparency are vital components of the engagement process, and one that is needed for successfully engaging citizens in government processes. In addition, scholars have found that trust and transparency within the process, results in a higher likelihood of equal citizen participation (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Putnam, 1995). Ultimately, citizens involved in collaborative engagement processes should have the same opportunities to participate, and it would benefit government officials to understand that transparency, trust, and equal participation are critical components for engaging citizens in a collaborative process.

Next, due to the institutional components discussed by Ansell & Gash (2008) as well as by other scholars (see Bannister & Connolly, 2011; Fukuyama, 2005; Kwak, Shah & Holbert, 2004; Parent, Vandebeek & Gemino, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Reed, 2008; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Sorensen & Torfing, 2011; Warren, Sulaiman & Jaafar, 2014), I also examine how the local *government structures* impact government officials’ perceptions of citizen engagement. The structure of a local government whether it be manager-council, town administrator, strong mayor, or manager-commission has been

shown to impact the level of citizen engagement (Kweit & Kweit, 1981). Usually due to local or state law, municipalities are required to post information on their websites, possess a wall or area for posting public notices, or post to community advisory boards that meet to discuss policies before they reach the governing body for a final decision. Kweit & Kweit (1981) note that, “the city manager form of government, with the presence of a full-time professional administrator, is more likely to seek citizen input than other forms of government” (Cited in Franklin & Ebdon, 2005, 169). In other words, the city manager structure of government seeks citizen input compared to other structures of local governments. Additionally, these governing bodies have clear city laws or charters that dictate the institution and participatory inclusiveness of citizens and stakeholder groups.

As a result of this literature and the theoretical implications from Ansell & Gash (2008), I will test the following hypotheses:

H₄: *Council-Manager structure of government* is positively associated with citizen engagement.

H₅: *Institution* processes are positively associated with citizen engagement.

Facilitative Leadership

Leadership in the CGT process is a key variable for successfully negotiating problems and disagreements in the public policy process (Bingham & O’Leary, 2008; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Frame, Gunton, and Day, 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Reilly, 1998; Saarikoski, 2000). As Ansell & Gash (2008) note, “*leadership* is crucial for setting and maintaining clear ground rules, building trust, facilitating dialogue, and exploring mutual gains” (554). Put simply, *leadership* is one of the most critical aspects

of the collaborative governance process. While *leadership* is viewed as a role for one individual, collaborative governance fosters multiple *leadership* positions (Agranoff & McGuire, 1998; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006). While select *leadership* roles are important for the initial development process, there are also *leadership* roles during the debate and disagreements, as well as in the implementation stage (Agranoff, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006; Carlson, 2007; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011).

In other words, facilitative *leadership* by government officials is critical for ensuring a collaborative and fair democratic process for all citizens and stakeholder groups. For example, during a collaborative governance approach for developing a strategic plan, municipal leaders are required to set the ground rules, encourage citizens to attend meetings, and provide an overview of the process. Once the process is underway, leaders might emerge in select stakeholder groups that can work together to resolve differences. Then, once the strategic plan is designed, leaders can emerge to implement the plan and obtain results citizens pursued. Participants in the process might realize that insightful and successful collaborative *leadership* requires sufficient energy, capabilities, and resources (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Another key component is ensuring all citizens and stakeholder groups are represented equally (Ansell & Gash, 2008). As a leader in the collaborative group, poorly balancing the power between strong and weak citizens or stakeholder groups can create animosity amongst participants (Warner, 2006). While there is no *one best way* to solve this problem, Lasker & Weiss (2003) note that participants can blend the ideas of all citizens to foster ingenuity. *Leadership* is a primary factor for a successful collaborative governance process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bingham & O'Leary, 2008; Chrislip &

Larson, 1994; Frame, Gunton, and Day, 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Reilly, 1998; Saarikoski, 2000).

Contemporary PPA literature notes that *leadership* is a critical component of citizen engagement processes (Accenture, 2006; Chondroleou et al., 2005; Damodaran & Olphert, 2006; Denhardt & Campbell, 2006; Powell & Colin, 2009; Reddel & Woolcock, 2004; Sullivan et al., 2006; Walsh & Butler, 2001). There are many different demands on government officials conducting public *leadership* processes. As Liddle (2010) notes, “They must develop futuristic, imaginative and innovative scenarios, and adapt and harmonize a myriad of processes, structures, institutions, partnership and agency within turbulent, dynamic, global, national, and local regulatory frameworks” (660). In other words, government officials might want to understand that *leadership* decisions can impact a multitude of citizens and interest groups, and they must adapt to the complex *leadership* process that public policy outputs require. *Leadership* is one of the most critical components of citizen engagement processes because it provides citizens with a direction for the process, and expectations of all members involved (Liddle, 2010). In conclusion, *leadership* is a complex process that continues to evolve within citizen engagement processes, and government officials should understand that *leadership* is really an “art,” that requires constant adaptation to be effective (Grint, 2007).

For purposes of this study, facilitative *leadership* is quantified by understanding how many government leaders were involved in the process, if they oversaw discussion and negotiations between citizens and stakeholder groups, if leaders enforced the ground rules agreed to by all participants, and did they allow constructive dialogue for exploring mutual gains?

As a result of the theoretical and practical literature findings, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H₆: Facilitative *leadership* is positively associated with citizen engagement.

Collaborative Process

One of the most important factors in CGT is the collaborative process itself (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh refer to this in their model as “principled engagement,” “shared motivation,” and “capacity for joint action” (2011). While there is significant debate in the literature regarding the correct collaboration process (see Gray, 1989; Edelenbos, 2005; Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987), scholars do agree CGT is a continual process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Huxham, 2003; Imperial, 2005). Ansell & Gash (2008) identify five key components in the collaborative process, “face-to-face dialogue,” “trust building,” “commitment to the process,” “shared understanding,” and “intermediate outcomes” (558-61).

The first, face-to-face dialogue focuses on communicating in person for developing trust and removing obstacles between citizens (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bentrup, 2001; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011). Additionally, scholars note that without in person communication, the collaborative process will likely fail (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004; Warner, 2006). For example, if citizens are working together and with local government officials to develop a strategic plan, it would benefit the process for the communications to take place in person using thoughtful deliberation. Personal communication will lead to trust, and trust is one of the key foundations for collaborative governance success (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011). Trust is also one of the most difficult factors to obtain in the

collaborative governance process, but citizens gain trust as they engage in the process and develop successful policy outcomes (Alexander, Comfort, & Weiner, 1998; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Beierle & Konisky, 2000; Kweit & Kweit, 2007).

Next, the extent of commitment citizens offer for the collaborative governance process dictates whether the process fails or succeeds (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Alexander, Comfort, & Weiner, 1998; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Gunton & Day, 2003). It might be beneficial for citizens to understand that CGT is a deliberative process, and not one that will result in satisfying all parties. As Ansell & Gash (2008) note, “commitment to the collaborative process requires an up-front willingness to abide by the results of deliberation, even if they should go in the direction that a stakeholder does not fully support” (559). In other words, it might benefit citizens to understand that they are part of the process from start to finish, regardless of the outcomes. Furthermore, making long-term policy decisions with competing perspectives amongst stakeholders can be difficult. If stakeholders are committed to the process and can make compromises with other citizens, the process will likely succeed (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011).

As previously mentioned, it might benefit citizens if they understand that collaborative governance requires compromise and developing a shared understanding (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006) for effective policy outcomes. The definition of “shared understanding” has multiple meanings (see Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006), but for the purposes of this study, shared understanding means agreeing upon outputs and compromising in a collective manner. What is important in the shared understanding process is that citizens recognize the

varying perspectives of their counterparts and compromise to merge competing perspectives. Developing a shared understanding can be one of the most difficult processes for collaborative governance (see Alexander, Comfort, & Weiner, 1998; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011), but the policy outputs will ideally reflect the needs of the community, not just individuals.

The final concept Ansell & Gash (2008) refer to in their model is ‘intermediate outcomes.’ The literature suggests that collaborative governance will be successful when citizens obtain even minimal accomplishments in the collaboration process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Warner, 2006). As Ansell & Gash (2008) note, “although these intermediate outcomes may represent tangible outputs in themselves, we represent them here as critical process outcomes that are essential for building the momentum that can lead to successful collaboration” (561). In other words, even minor accomplishments among citizens will help the collaborative governance process be successful. An important role of the leader is recognizing these small accomplishments (see Alexander, Comfort, & Weiner, 1998; Ansell & Gash, 2008), and congratulating citizens on their collaborative accomplishments.

Contemporary PPA literature argues that the collaborative process is one of the most critical components for engaging citizens in complex public policy decisions (Dryzek, 2000; Warren, 2001; Foreman, 2002; Hemmati, 2002; Fung, 2003; Innes & Booher, 1999; Kooiman, 1993). Furthermore, the *collaboration* provides a foundation for understanding a variety of perspectives and preferences. As Head (2007) notes, “At the local level, there is an increasing appreciation of the benefits of involving citizens in identifying problems and contributing to the solutions” (443). In other words, citizens can

provide insight and opportunities for complex collaborative processes when included in decision-making opportunities. In addition, contemporary collaborative processes are inherently complex and can include many different agencies, groups, partnerships, and citizens when making public policy decisions (Head, 2007; Fung, 2003; Dryzek, 2000; Warren, 2001). The collaborative process can also help citizens understand that “wicked problems” in the public policy process can be difficult to solve due to limited resources and multifaceted policy outcomes (Head, 2007). Ultimately, the collaborative process provides an opportunity for citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and government officials to interact in a collaborative setting where all perspectives and preferences can be discussed, debated, and perhaps implemented. As a result of the literature, I test the following hypothesis:

H7: The collaborative process is positively associated with citizen engagement.

Diversity of Engagement Methods

One of the key principles of Ansell & Gash’s (2008) CGT is that the process by which municipalities engage citizens is critical for success. This section details the few findings that offer insight into citizen engagement methods in the strategic planning process.

Only a select number of studies in PPA examine the methods that local governments use to engage citizens in the strategic planning process (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, Wheeland, 2003). Samuel Brody, David Godschalk, and Raymond Burby conduct an extensive study examining strategic planning process of 60 different municipalities in Washington and Florida (30 per state). In a different study, Wheeland studies Rock Hill, North Carolina a city with over 50,000 citizens that underwent a multi-

year strategic planning process. The City of Rock Hill focuses on citizen engagement throughout the entire process by involving representative citizen groups. Wheeland notes that, “a community-wide strategic planning process involves citizens and organizations from the public, for-profit, and not-for-profit sectors that have a stake in the community” (2003, 46-47). Additionally, communities in both Washington and Florida are committed to involving citizens early in the strategic planning process, and keeping them informed throughout the implementation process. Each municipality understands that “community knowledge” and “expertise” are needed before strategic plans are designed and successfully implemented (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, 250).

The findings from these studies indicate the citizen engagement methods employed in strategic planning process can have a major impact on success of the process (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, Wheeland, 2003). One of the first steps Rock Hill employs to enhance citizen engagement is inviting citizens to serve on six different theme groups. These theme groups oversee elements of the strategic plan ranging from “business,” “education,” and “culture.” In addition, another method Rock Hill uses to improve citizen engagement is hiring a consulting firm to conduct theme group surveys, “to determine support for projects such as city beautification, renovation of the downtown business district...to open up Main Street, and business park development” (Wheeland, 2003, 52). In other words, elected officials and bureaucrats think surveying citizens on the theme groups might provide insight into support for varying projects. Wheeland (2003) notes that a strategic planning process should include all members of a community in the long-term process if the policy outputs are to be successful. Table 1 below displays citizen engagement methods municipalities in Washington and Florida’s

strategic planning processes employ (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, 252). Clearly, the most common method in Florida is formal public hearings, but Washington focuses more on open meetings where people talk to planning staff.

Table 1 From Brody, Godschalk, and Burby (2003)-Methods Employed for Engaging Citizens in Strategic Planning Processes

Techniques	Percent of jurisdictions where technique played a central role in obtaining citizen input		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types			
Low (1-2)	30	37	23
Medium (3-5)	55	56	53
High (6-10)	15	7	23
Mean	3.7	3.3	4.2*
Types of meetings			
Formal public hearings	82	93*	70
Open meetings where people talk to planning staff	67	47	87*
Facilitated workshops/meetings	52	50	53
Visioning, charettes, or workshops for goal setting, strategies, or designs	33	23	43
Community forums	28	27	30
Other techniques			
Citizen advisory committee	50	47	53
Subcommittee or workgroups	30	23	37
Interviews with key stakeholders	12	10	13
Household surveys	12	0	23*
Telephone hotline	7	7	7

* $p < .05$

In addition, both Washington and Florida use community forums and citizen advisory committees to gain further input from the public in the strategic planning process. Brody, Godschalk, & Burby (2003), note that municipalities could benefit from employing community knowledge and expertise of citizens that results in successful public policy design. They also argue that the methods local government officials employ to engage citizens has an impact on successful citizen engagement. Innes and Booher (2000) note that, “public hearings at the local level in the U.S. typically are only attended by avid proponents and opponents of a measure affecting them personally” (2).

The methods these studies employ varies in the number of citizen engagement techniques used, ranging from citizen surveys to active community dialogue with government officials. Citizen engagement and community participation in the planning process is a valuable component for government officials (Poister & Streib 1994). Scholars have found that including numerous stakeholder groups and active citizens in public organizations strategic planning processes helps develop well rounded strategic plans (Bryson & Roering, 1989; Arnstein, 1969; Innes & Booher, 2000; Wheeland, 2003). The literature further supports the argument for measuring government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, utilizing Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT. Ansell & Gash (2008) argue that CGT optimizes citizen engagement, and now this study tests variables within the CGT model, to determine if the theoretical assumptions are related to practical findings.

In contemporary PPA literature, there is significant debate regarding the best methods that government agencies should employ to engage citizens in collaborative processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Dryzek, 2000; Rowe & Frewer, 2000; Beierle & Konisky, 2000; Graham & Phillips, 1998). Contemporary engagement efforts are focused on collaborative methods that include all citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and government officials in the processes. As Abelson et al., (2003) notes, "Where much previous attention has been given to normative discussions of the merits of, and conceptual frameworks for, public involvement, current activity seems largely focused on efforts to design more informed, effective and legitimate public participation processes..." (239). In other words, scholars and practitioners are implementing collaborative strategies for engaging citizens in public policy decisions. The methods

governments are using to engage citizens, however, really depends on the public policy topics under debate.

At the municipal level of government, PPA scholars examine a variety of citizen engagement methods such as open meetings with citizens and planning staff, surveys, commission meetings, citizen advisory boards (Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009; Wheeland, 2003), e-mail, Facebook, twitter, online forums (Bonson et al., 2012; Elia, Margherita, & Taurino, 2009), face to face engagement methods that result in increased accountability (Healey & Tordoff, 1995; Goetz & Gaventa, 2001), and consulting firms to promote interactions with citizens (Bryson & Roering, 1988). Ultimately, there is no *one best way* to engage citizens in public policy processes, and usually a variety of methods are employed to create a collaborative and democratic process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003). As a result of this literature, the following hypothesis is tested:

H₈: The number of citizen engagement methods used are positively associated with citizen engagement.

Practical Citizen Engagement

While the literature supports a turn toward citizen engagement in public administration theory, in practice, it can be difficult to engage citizens in meaningful and effective decision-making. This study contributes to the field of PPA by studying government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement not just in urban areas, but also in under-resourced rural municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. After exploratory interviews with two city managers, I found they consistently mention the

challenges of engaging the public, and how avid proponents or opponents of a policy are the select few citizens who typically participate most in local government decisions. Additionally, they mention that different structures of local governments can impact citizen engagement, and municipal methods for engaging citizens in local government decisions are inadequate (Chris Kukulski & Ed Meece, Personal Communications, October, 2015). Furthermore, they mention that citizens consistently complain when their perspectives are not translated into the public policy outcomes, but these are the same citizens who fail to attend engaged community meetings (Chris Kukulski & Ed Meece, Personal Communications, October, 2015).

In addition to assessing the extent to which the actual strategic planning processes reflect the components of CGT, I also assess the extent to which these common complaints of city managers about citizen engagement are echoed by my survey respondents. In the next chapter, I discuss the development of the methodological approach, and the justification for why I chose the specific methodological approach that has been applied to this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss development of the independent and dependent variables based on the literature review conducted in chapters I and II, and how these variables are operationalized. I then go on to discuss the survey development and implementation process, as well as the ongoing concerns about data collection for different variables and the best way to mitigate those concerns. Finally, I conclude this chapter by detailing the statistical models employed, consisting of Ordinary Least Square (OLS), ordinal logistic, and binomial logistic regressions models for analyzing data in this study.

Data & Measures

In this section, I provide a description of the variables used to measure government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. I also discuss the limitations and difficulties associated with the measurement of all variables employed in this study.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable I employ for this study is government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. The dependent variable was measured in two different ways. The primary question that measures the dependent variable asked respondents: *thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process?* The two response options I listed were: *citizen engagement was beneficial and citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*, each of which offered respondents a Likert scale

ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Using two different dependent variables is necessary because I was trying to determine two different impacts that citizens had on the engagement process. The term *beneficial* was used to understand if citizens had a positive or negative association with the strategic planning citizen engagement processes, and the term *impacted policy outcomes* was used to determine if citizen engagement had an impact on the citizen engagement strategic planning process from a local government officials' perspective. It is also important to measure these two dependent variables separately because I was trying to determine if government officials thought one of the dependent variables *citizen engagement was beneficial* or *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was more important than the other.

Independent Variables

The independent variables utilized in this study are: *local government structure*, *% with Bachelor's degree*, *average household income*, *leadership*, *institution*, *incentives*, *collaboration*, and *diversity of engagement methods*. *Leadership*, *incentives*, *collaboration*, and *institution* were measured using Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT and key wording design from the discussion of variables in their article. Respondents were required to respond to statements using ordinal response options that consisted of: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree or disagree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, or *don't know*. The first variable, *facilitative leadership* was measured using the following question: *thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process?* The statements respondents read and answered were: *government officials excelled at mediating conflicts amongst citizens, government*

officials facilitated conversations between citizens, government officials encouraged creative problem solving, and government officials helped build trust between citizens.

The second variable, *institution*, was measured using the following question: *thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process?*

The statements respondents read and answered were: all interested citizens were included, clear ground rules were established and maintained, the agenda was clearly defined and communicated, and the process of proposing and deliberating ideas was fair to all citizens.

The third variable, *incentives* to participate was measured using the following question: *thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process?* The statements respondents read and answered were: citizens thought their perspectives would be acknowledged, citizens felt the process was legitimate, citizens understood they were dependent upon each other for a successful planning process, government officials provided *incentives* for citizens to participate.

The fourth variable, *collaboration* was measured using the following question: *thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process?*

The statements respondents read and answered were: government officials implemented activities to build trust amongst citizens, citizens communicated using face to face dialogue, citizens developed a sense of shared ownership, citizens identified common values, and citizens reached goals they set for the process.

The next variable is *government structure*. Respondents selected their local *government structure*, choosing from the following options: *Council manager, Mayor-Council, Commission, Town meeting, Representative town meeting*, or other with a response box allowing further explanation. The reason this variable is being investigated is that the structure of a local government has been shown to impact citizen engagement (Kweit & Kweit, 1981). Furthermore, the city manager structure of government has been found to be the most inclusive for citizen engagement. Analyzing the competing structures of government will be necessary for municipalities to understand varying citizen engagement opportunities. This variable was measured within the survey using government officials' responses. However, to ensure the structures are correct, I also cross-referenced their responses with local government websites and phone calls to municipalities to confirm the structure of government provided was accurate. All responses received by respondents were correct.

The next independent variable, is titled, *diversity of engagement methods*. Respondents reviewed a list of *citizen engagement methods* and selected which methods they used for engaging citizens in the strategic planning process. The methods ranged from: Community forums, formal public hearings, open meetings between citizens and planning staff, facilitated workshops, household surveys, interviews with citizens, telephone surveys, internet-based engagement, newspaper articles/editorials, letter mailings to home addresses, and other. For purposes of using these methodologies in the analysis an index was created. For example, if a municipality used 10 out of 12 citizen engagement methods, they will be assigned a numerical value of 10. If a municipality

used two of the citizen engagement methods, they will be assigned a score of a two in the dataset.

% with Bachelor's degree was employed as an independent variable because research has consistently found that higher education attainment has a positive relationship with citizen engagement (Campbell, 2006; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Foster-Bey, 2008; Putnam, 2000). This data was collected from the U.S. Census Website (2016) for each municipality that responded to the survey. This finding is not surprising because as education increases, citizens realize the importance of citizen engagement. The next variable titled, average household *income*, was employed as an independent variable as research has repeatedly found that a higher average *income* is positively associated with citizen engagement (Foster-Bey, 2008; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). This data was collected from the U.S. Census Website (2016) for each municipality that responded to the survey. In our contemporary society, citizens and elected officials recognize that a higher average *income* is positively associated with power in citizen engagement matters, and the debate continues on how to evenly distribute power in our society.

The first control variable, *population*, is based on the municipalities' citizen *population*. This data was collected from the U.S. Census Website (2016) for each municipality that responded to the survey. Citizens in rural areas can be held accountable, as community members will recognize individuals that did or did not attend a planned government meeting. However, citizens in large municipalities are less likely to engage with municipal officials, attend community or organizational meetings, or vote in local elections. These same citizens are also less likely to be recruited for political activity (Fischer, 1982; Oliver, 2000).

The next variable, *% unemployment* was chosen as a control variable because research has found there is a positive relationship between citizen engagement and employment (Wilensky, 1961). This data was collected from the U.S. Census Website (2016) for each municipality that responded to the survey. Furthermore, many companies or government agencies expect their employees to participate in community driven citizen engagement activities as part of their employment (Houghland & Shepard, 1985). In addition, The Corporation for National and Community Service found citizen engagement was higher in states with lower unemployment rates (CNCS & NCOC, 2011). The third control variable *% minority citizens*, was chosen as a control variable because research has found that minorities are less likely to be involved in citizen engagement processes (Foster-Bey, 2008, Nath, 2012). This data was collected from the U.S. Census Website (2016) for each municipality that responded to the survey. While the research is clear minorities are less involved in citizen engagement, McBride, Sherraden & Pritzker (2006) found that limited resources and fewer opportunities in their communities impacts their opportunity for additional engagement.

Finally, the next variable *% of Republicans* that voted in the gubernatorial election (Montana 2016, Idaho 2014, Wyoming 2014), was utilized as a control variable because voting habits have been correlated with citizen engagement (Carpini, Cook & Jacobs, 2004; Political Typology, 2017). Understanding voting habits of citizens in municipalities is important for controlling for the impact partisan identity habits have on citizen engagement. For a more detailed explanation of the dependent, independent, and control variables please reference Table 2 below.

Table 2 **Variables**

Dependent Variable	Data Source	Measurement
Government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement	Survey of local government officials	5-point Likert scale
Independent Variables	Data Source	Measurement
<i>Structure of local gov't</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	Manager-Council, Mayor Council, etc.
<i>Percent with Bachelor's degree</i>	U.S. Census Website	--
<i>Average household Income</i>	U.S. Census Website	U.S. Dollars
<i>Leadership</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	5-point Likert scale
<i>Institution</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	5-point Likert scale
<i>Incentives</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	5-point Likert scale
<i>Collaboration</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	5-point Likert scale
<i>Diversity of engagement methods</i>	Survey of local gov't officials	Yes, no, unsure
Control Variables	Data Source	Measurement
<i>Population</i>	U.S. Census Website	Numerical measurement
<i>Percent unemployed</i>	U.S. Census Website	--
<i>Percent of minority citizens</i>	U.S. Census Website	--
<i>Percent of Republican Gubernatorial Votes</i>	Secretary of State website	% in municipality that Voted for Republican Governor

Measurement Concerns

One data measurement issue associated with both dependent variables is measuring citizen engagement using the perceptions of local government officials. The challenge is local government officials play a different role than citizens in the engagement process, which may result in a one-sided perspective. Citizen engagement is

measured using local government officials' perceptions because asking citizens to complete a tri-state survey would have likely encountered a low response rate, and is beyond the scope and resources of this study. Furthermore, this study assumes there is value in measuring decision-makers' perceptions, as they are most often the ones charged with implementing citizen engagement exercises. However, future work should, of course, aim to measure citizen perceptions as well. Another difficulty is respondents might interpret "beneficial" and "impacted" based on their own perceptions and experience, and those definitions will vary between each individual respondent. Respondents were then forced to respond on an ordinal level ranging from: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree or disagree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, or *don't know* based on a five-point Likert scale. The responses were coded in *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) with numerical values ranging from 1-5. *Strongly disagree* was coded as 1, *disagree* was coded as 2, *neither agree or disagree* was coded as 3, *agree* was coded as 4, *strongly agree* was coded as 5, and *don't know* was coded as 9. Several of the survey questions also allowed open-ended response boxes. The next section will discuss the independent variables employed in this study.

A challenge associated with the measurement of *leadership*, *collaboration*, *institution*, and *incentives* was relying on government officials' perceptions. Government officials might have different perceptions or definitions for the questions being asked, depending on their perceptions or practical experience at the municipal level of government. For example, government officials' perceptions of *incentives* were measured using five questions on an ordinal scale: citizens thought their perspectives would be acknowledged, citizens felt the process was legitimate, citizens understood they were

dependent upon each other for a successful planning process, and government officials provided *incentives* for citizens to participate. There are several different terms within these questions that respondents define and interpret differently based on their education, experience, and background. Another problem with measurement of these variables is municipalities completed their strategic plans anytime within the last 10 years. Certain municipalities might have completed their plans within the last two years resulting in more accurate perceptions and measurement from respondents, whereas other municipalities might have completed their last strategic planning update in 2008. As a result, measurement and perceptions of the older strategic plans might be more difficult for officials trying to recall their perceptions of the process.

There were several problems with measuring *diversity of engagement methods* in the survey. First, respondents could define the methods provided differently based on their perceptions. For example, some respondents might interpret open meetings between citizens and planning staff as an event dedicated just to the strategic planning process. Other respondents might have interpreted this as a meeting between citizens and planning staff, regardless of the meeting being directly related to the strategic planning process. Another challenge is respondents might not accurately remember some of the citizen engagement methods employed as several of the municipalities that responded hadn't update their strategic plan in the last five years. Lastly, another concern is I am assuming all methods of citizen engagement are equal in democratic settings. While I recognize all of these methods are not equal, this creates a data collection problem that cannot be resolved. The best solution for this is to acknowledge the limitation, and move forward with analysis of *diversity of engagement methods*.

The only problem with the measurement of *population*, *% unemployment*, and *% minority citizens* is employees conducting the U.S. Census might not always collect the most accurate population of every municipality. The U.S. Census process is far from perfect when measuring population of municipalities, but this is the most accurate process and data available in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

Another concern regarding data measurement is related to *% of Republican voters* for the gubernatorial elections. The issue is voting data had to be obtained at the municipal level of government to be consistent with other municipal level data collected for this study. Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming don't collect municipal data for governor elections. As a result, precinct level data was acquired and analyzed. I reviewed the address of each municipality that responded to the survey. I then cross referenced the addresses of every precinct against the location of municipalities. One problem is several municipalities that responded to the survey shared voting precincts, and it was not possible to distinguish voting precincts for one municipality or another. Since select municipalities had overlap with others, the same percentage of voters for *% Republican* in gubernatorial elections.

Reliability

Reliability is an important concept when researchers are designing variables or measurements within their study. According to Downing (2004), reliability is defined as, "...The reproducibility of assessment data or scores, over time or occasions" (1006). In other words, reliability is a measure(s) that consistently produces the same result(s). *Population*, *% unemployed*, *% of minority citizens*, and *% of Republican Gubernatorial votes* were utilized as control variables for this study. *Population*, *% unemployed*, and *%*

of minority citizens data were all obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. These variables were consistent, especially if other researchers were to obtain these independent variables from the U.S. Census Bureau. Furthermore, this study mentions the year and websites when the data was gathered, allowing other researchers throughout the world the same opportunity for gathering reliable data. *% of Republican Gubernatorial votes* was obtained from Secretary of State websites and cross referenced using address information for precincts. This voting data was reliable and can be obtained if other researchers attempt to ascertain and analyze the same data. The *structure of local governments* was an independent variable that was not available through the U.S. Census Bureau, but the information was obtained from survey responses and then cross referenced with municipal websites to confirm the findings. While there could be errors with how this information was obtained, cross referencing the information confirmed no issues with the reported data. *Average household income* and *% with a Bachelor's degree* data was all obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. These variables were consistent, especially if other researchers are able to obtain these independent variables from the U.S. Census Bureau. *Leadership, institution, incentives, and collaboration* were the four independent variables developed from the CGT model (see Ansell & Gash, 2008). Reliability cannot be ensured for these variables considering previous research has measured these variables using a variety of different qualitative and quantitative techniques (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011). Since the CGT variables were measured using quantitative Likert scales, it will be difficult for future studies to produce the same results or findings. Furthermore, researchers would need to be surveying rural municipalities in

Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming to determine government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. The problem is that municipalities update strategic plans, and the engagement processes involving citizens change as municipal officials update their plans. The other problem is new elections and employee turnover at the municipality level will change the perceptions of officials involved in the citizen engagement processes. This will impact future studies examining similar topics at the municipal level of government. Furthermore, municipal officials might have interpreted the definitions for each variable using their own perceptions, resulting in different understandings of the same variable definition. As a result of these changes, there is no way to guarantee a future study will produce the same reliable results when trying to measure government officials' perceptions of *leadership, institution, incentives, and collaboration* in the CGT process.

Next, the dependent variables in this study were subjective, and could be inconsistent between municipalities. The dependent variables were *citizen engagement was beneficial* and *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. The real problem is developing a consistent measure of the terms "beneficial or impacts" between municipal officials. Municipal officials might interpret and understand these terms in a different manner depending on their perspective, expertise, and background, which can result in different outcomes for their survey answers. To offset this concern, municipal officials had the ability to explain their concern in the "other" category if they didn't understand the question, and no government officials indicated any problems with their interpretation of the key variables employed.

Validity

Internal validity is an important concept for researchers to implement within a research study to ensure that X causes Y. In other words, internal validity is if the researcher chooses the right independent variables that are impacting the dependent variables in the specified models, and if the researcher has chosen the correct theoretical model for analysis (Mentzer & Flint, 1997). One advantage for this study is that based on my understanding of government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, citizen engagement, CGT, and strategic planning literature, the variables developed from this literature had significant overlap between the different areas of study, and were employed as measurements in this study. By conducting a thorough literature review of the independent variables employed in this study, the right independent variables were employed in the statistical models. For example, the *diversity of engagement methods* employed in strategic planning processes has been positively associated with successfully engaging citizens in a collaborative process (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, Wheeland, 2003). This literature stressed the importance of the process or *diversity of engagement methods* employed by municipalities, very similar to Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT. Furthermore, McFadden's R^2 results for the statistical models employed in this study indicated moderate to strong fits for all of the models, supporting the argument that the right independent variables were employed for explaining variation in the models. Furthermore, several control variables (*Population, % unemployed, % of minority citizens, and % of Republican Gubernatorial votes*) were employed to ensure all of the impacts mentioned in the literature were accounted for in the study. One disadvantage for internal validity in this study was that the variables were not randomized

into control groups. However, not randomizing the variables into control groups doesn't mean the independent variables were not impacting the dependent variables in this study.

Survey Development

I used survey methods to test the hypotheses developed from the literature in the earlier chapters of this study. Survey design relied on Ansell & Gash's (2008) CGT model. Multiple independent variables overlapped between CGT, citizen engagement, government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and strategic planning literature. The variables that overlapped were: facilitative *leadership*, *institution*, *incentives* to participate, and the *structure of local government* agencies involved in the CGT process. These variables will be discussed in detail in the upcoming section.

The final strategic planning survey was designed using Qualtrics. A pilot survey request was sent to respondents (n=20) via e-mail, with 12 respondents completed (three city managers, six graduate students, and three other local bureaucratic government officials). Detailed feedback was provided by the pilot test respondents, and the feedback was implemented to improve survey wording and design flow. A total of 69 survey questions (Appendix A) were finalized with additional room for respondents to provide qualitative answers in free response boxes. Anonymity for respondents was ensured by not linking their municipalities with the results in the survey. Respondents were "forced" to answer every survey question given the necessity of complete data collection for proper analysis. While 69 questions is an extensive survey, no respondents answered all questions in the survey. There were several "branching" questions in the survey. Due to the branching options, the most questions answered by a survey respondent was 49. Average survey completion time for respondents was 13 minutes. Although the literature

suggests the most effective way to increase response rates is through a cash incentive (see Singer & Ye, 2013; Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014), this study didn't have the financial resources to provide a cash incentive to respondents. As a result, a \$10 gift card drawing was utilized to increase the survey response rate (see Bosnjak & Tuten, 2003), and pilot respondents agreed an incentive was needed to motivate officials to participate in the research.

In July of 2017, I requested the Montana League of Cities (MLC), Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM), and the Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) participate in the strategic planning survey. Each organization agreed to help relay the information to elected officials at the municipal level of government. These three organizations frequently work with mayors, city managers, or elected officials on a variety of public policy issues throughout their states, and have developed trustworthy working relationships with many of the officials. As a result, MLC, WAM, and AIC were utilized to provide more authenticity and trust for the strategic planning survey, and provide in-state sponsorship for the research project (See Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014), with the goal of increasing response rates. Citizen engagement and government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement is an important topic in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, and the survey design tried to relate to engagement problems municipal officials frequently encounter in rural municipalities. Research has found that survey topics that are highly salient for respondents result in a higher response rate (Cook et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2002). One representative from MLC, WAM, and AIC sent a consent letter, description of the research, and an online link for the survey. Providing an online link for respondents has proven to ease the task of completing surveys, resulting in

higher response rates (Millar, 2013). Survey information was sent via e-mail using MLC, WAM, and AIC, customized List-Serves for all Mayors in their respective states (Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming). The reason for using electronic surveys was that they are the fastest growing form of survey methodology, and use the fewest resources of any survey options (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014).

Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) suggest using a four-tier communication approach for increasing survey response rates. Respondents were informed via e-mail by MLC, WAM, and AIC officials they could complete the survey online using *Qualtrics* or over the telephone by setting up an appointment with me. Research has shown that people who avoid online participation, are often willing to complete surveys via telephone (Olson et al., 2012). Phase I e-mail invitations were sent to (n=429) mayors or city managers in the tristate survey. A total of (n=15) respondents completed the survey after phase I. Seven days later, phase II reminders were sent again to all 429 respondents. A total of (n=35) respondents completed the survey after phase II. Ten days later, phase III reminders were sent to (n=400) officials as several respondents had completed the survey. After phase III reminders, (n=37) respondents completed the survey. 30 days after the initial e-mail request, a final reminder was sent to (n=400) respondents. After the final reminder, an additional (n=25) respondents completed the survey. The results indicate a total of (n=112) respondents completed the survey, resulting in a 26% response rate. Achieving a 26% response rate is high for an online survey, considering response rates for online surveys have recently been in the single digits (LaRose & Tsai, 2014). Forty-two municipal officials in Wyoming, 35 in Idaho, and 35 in Montana completed the survey. Two of the respondents completed the survey via telephone, while the other

110 completed the online survey. Shortly after closing the survey, a \$10 random gift card drawing was completed for (n=20) respondents. The next section will discuss the statistical models employed for this study.

Statistical Models

There are three statistical models employed in this study. The first model is an OLS regression. OLS is a model that is used to estimate parameters within a linear regression model (Field, 2013). The benefit of using an OLS approach is to investigate the relationship between the dependent variables *citizen engagement was beneficial* and *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* and all of the independent variables simultaneously. This allows interpretation of the relationship between the dependent variable and each independent variable, while controlling for all of the remaining independent variables. This model assumes that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is linear, and there is homoscedasticity of the residuals, and the residuals are normally distributed within the model. As previously mentioned, the sample is representative of the population in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming because all of the municipalities in these three states were surveyed. Below is a practical example of what an OLS regression model looks like when applied in a statistical setting. Within the model (Y) is the dependent variable, b_0 is the constant, $b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4, b_5,$ and b_6 are the coefficients for each of the independent predictors, and $X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5,$ and X_6 are the independent or control variables, and e is for the random errors for the model (Pollock, 2016).

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + \dots + e$$

The second statistical model used to analyze the data collected in this study is an ordinal logistic regression analysis. The benefit of using an ordinal logistic approach is to investigate the odds of being in one response category, compared to the others, for the dependent variables *citizen engagement was beneficial* and *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* and all of the independent variables simultaneously. This allows for interpretation of the odds of being in one response category compared to the others, between the dependent variable and each independent variable, while controlling for all of the remaining independent variables (Pollock, 2016). Inputting data into an OLS regression model requires that the observed data possesses a linear association. However, with an ordinal categorical dependent variable, the relationship isn't linear, which requires an ordinal logistic regression analysis be used to conduct the proper analysis (Field, 2013). As a result, the best way to measure officials' perceptions is using categorical response options resulting in reliable measurements of the dependent variable. The ordinal logistic regression model utilized for this study is displayed below.

$$P(Y) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(b_0 + b_1 X_{1i} + b_2 X_{2i} + \dots + b_n X_{ni})}}$$

Within this model $P(Y)$ is the probability that Y will occur, and e is the natural logarithm (Field, 762-763, 2013). Additionally, b_0 represents the Y intercept, b_1 estimates the association between the predictor and outcome variable, X_1 , X_2 , X_3 and additional variables are the values assigned to the predictor variables, which vary depending on which independent variable is employed (Field, 762-763, 2013). The first assumption of ordinal logistic regression is that the model has an ordinal level dependent variable. The

second assumption is there are enough responses in each ordinal response option. Finally, the third assumption is to check the parallel assumptions test, which assumes that the coefficients for all the independent variables are the same regardless of ordinal response categories (Field, 2013). Given that *government structure* is a nominal level variable, a dummy variable is created to offset the impact that a *government structure* of *council-manager* has on the ordinal logistic regression models, compared to a *government structure* of *mayor-council*. The rest of the independent variables are continuous, allowing me to conduct analysis without alterations to the ordinal logistic regression models. The dependent variable titled *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* failed the parallel lines test, resulting in the need to employ a binomial logistic regression model. The dependent variable titled *citizen engagement was beneficial* failed the parallel lines test, resulting in the need to employ a binomial logistic regression model.

The third model this study employs is a binary logistic regression. This is the same as an ordinal logistic regression model, but only two response categories will be compared, *agree* vs. *not agree*. The benefit of this approach is by combining all of the responses (*disagree*, *neither agree or disagree*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*) into two response categories *agree* vs. *not agree*, the sample size is larger in both categories. Therefore, the model will fit better which will detect a change in the respondent's odds between categories more accurately. The assumptions for the binary logistic regression models are the same as ordinal logistic regression assumptions previously mentioned, with the exception of the parallel lines test. A parallel lines test is not necessary because only two ordinal responses categories are being compared.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter focuses on the results using findings from the tristate survey. The first section discusses the descriptive statistics and employs quantitative figures and qualitative descriptions. Next, I review and discuss the factor analysis, multicollinearity, and correlation coefficients for the independent variables employed in this study. In addition, I describe an OLS model employing *citizen engagement was beneficial* as the dependent variable. Then, an ordinal logistic regression model is employed for *citizen engagement was beneficial* as it determines which variables are associated with an increase in odds of the respondent's level of *agreement (Disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree, or strongly agree)*. Next, I conduct a parallel lines test for the ordinal logistic regression model. Finally, I examine a binomial logistic regression for *citizen engagement was beneficial* as the dependent variable. I repeat all of these steps for the dependent variable *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the results and analysis and transitions into the discussion chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics provided in this section review percentage results as well as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation findings from select data in the survey. As previously mentioned, the survey received (n=112) responses, resulting in a 26% online response rate. The first question in the survey was, *please select your current occupation?* As you can see from Figure 2 below, the majority of respondents 79% were elected officials. While the goal of this survey was only for mayors to respond, 14% of

the respondents selected other, all of which were either clerks or deputy clerks. Mayoral terms are usually four years, and select mayors previously involved in the strategic planning process were no longer working for certain municipalities, resulting in clerks responding to the survey.

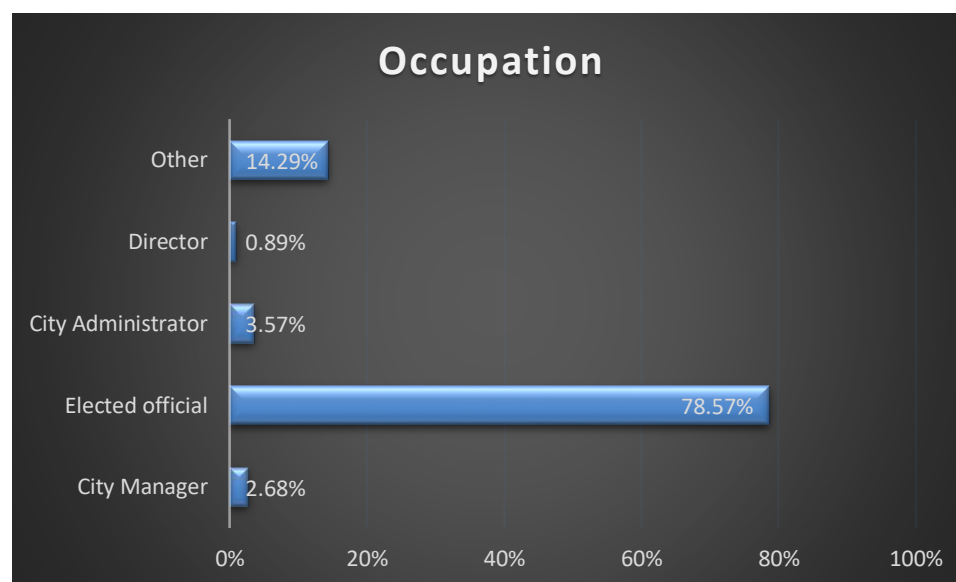


Figure 2. Occupation

It is important to understand the respondents background because it helps explain the importance of elected official's involvement in citizen engagement processes at the municipal level of government. Furthermore, elected officials are frequently involved in the citizen engagement process, and usually have the best perception of the overall process allowing for constructive feedback.

Government Structure

The next question in the survey was, *what is the structure of your local government?* Respondents were given a list consisting of *Council-manager, Mayor-council, Commission, Town meeting, Representative town meeting* and other. As displayed in Figure 3 below, 90.8% of municipalities that responded employed *mayor-*

council as their structure of government, while 9.2% of municipalities that responded employed *manager-council* as their *government structure*. This indicates that the majority of municipalities that responded to the survey in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming utilize *mayor-council* structures of government at the municipal level of government.

Surprisingly, in Idaho only three municipalities operate under the *council-manager* form of government, and all other municipalities in Idaho are *strong-mayor* forms of government.

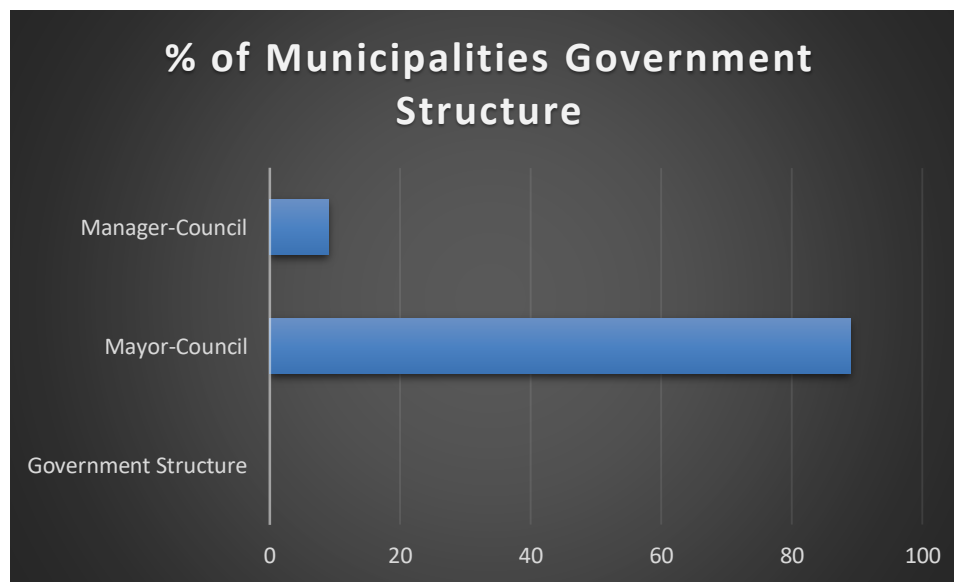


Figure 3. Municipalities Government Structure

Citizen Engagement Methods

The next question in the survey was: *were the following citizen engagement methods used in your municipal strategic planning process?* A list of the following methods were provided and respondents selected *yes* if the method was used.

Respondents were able to select up to 12 different methods for engaging citizens. The method options provided were: community forums, formal public hearings, citizen advisory committees, open meetings between citizens and planning staff, facilitated

workshops, household surveys, interviews with citizens, telephone surveys, internet-based engagement, newspaper articles/editorials, letter mailings to home addresses, or other. As you can see from Figure 4 below, approximately 70% of municipalities used open meetings between citizens and planning staff, and formal public hearings as citizen engagement methods. The least common method used was telephone surveys, with only 4% of municipalities reporting they employed this technique. These findings provide insight into the common methods that municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming used to engage citizens in their strategic planning processes.

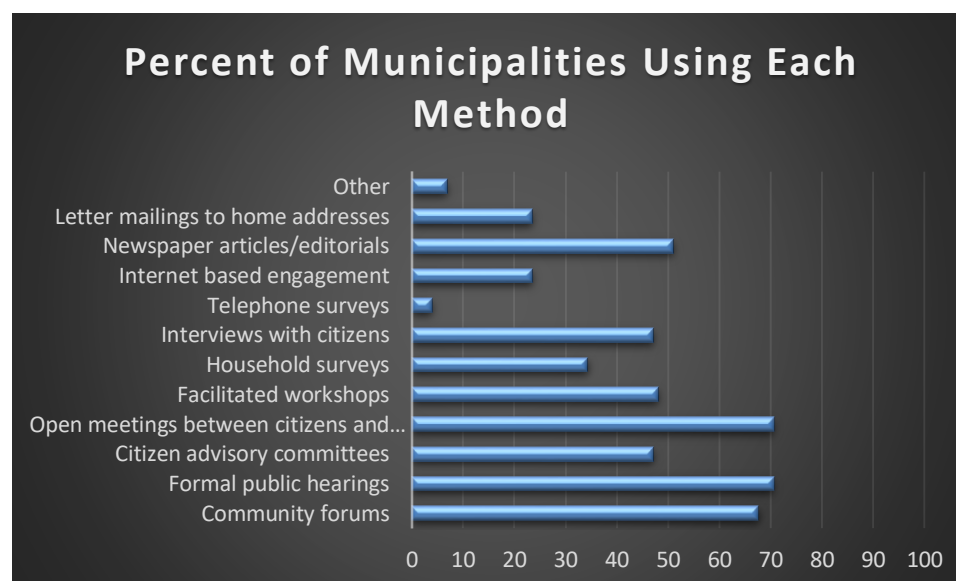


Figure 4. Methods Used by Each Municipality

Diversity of Engagement Methods

Next, as displayed in Figure 4 above, I analyzed the descriptive statistics for the independent variable titled *diversity of engagement methods*. To analyze the methods of citizen engagement from a descriptive perspective, the number of methods each municipality employed were added together. For example, municipalities were able to select up to 12 different methods they used to engage citizens in the strategic planning

process. I then added together every method they used and gave each municipality a numerical score between 0-12. If municipalities used no methods, they received a score of zero. If the municipalities used six methods, they received a score of six. The mean number of citizen engagement methods used by municipalities was 4.7, with a standard deviation of 2.39, a relatively high variance for the data. The mean figure of 4.7 is low indicating municipalities focused on only a few of the 12 different citizen engagement methods they could have used in their strategic planning processes. As a result, municipalities that responded to the survey should recognize that on average, they could increase the number of citizen engagement methods they are using to help increase the diversity and depth of citizen engagement.

This section reviews the descriptive statistics for all four-collaborative governance independent variables, consisting of *collaboration*, *institution*, *leadership*, and *incentives*. All four variables were ordinal level independent variables that were used to measure different aspects of collaborative governance theory in the strategic planning process. The question asked of respondents for all four variables was: Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning process? Response options were customized for each variable and are listed under each question in the following table. Respondents were given ordinal response options, ranging from: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neither agree or disagree*, *disagree*, *strongly disagree*, and *don't know*. These response options were coded as 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 for data analysis purposes, and no respondents selected *strongly disagree* in any of the survey answers.

Table 3 Descriptive Results for Independent Variables

Question	Number of Observations (n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Max	Min
<i>Diversity of engagement methods</i>	103	4	2.39	11	0
<i>Collaboration (trust)</i>	103	4	1.50	5	2
<i>Collaboration (dialogue)</i>	99	4	1.38	5	2
<i>Collaboration (ownership)</i>	100	4	1.58	5	2
<i>Collaboration (values)</i>	100	4	1.63	5	2
<i>Collaboration (goals)</i>	99	4	2.12	5	2
<i>Institution^{SEP} (included)</i>	100	4	1.79	5	2
<i>Institution (ground rules)</i>	100	4	1.39	5	2
<i>Institution (agenda)</i>	100	4	1.28	5	2
<i>Institution (fair)</i>	100	4	1.51	5	2
<i>Leadership (conflict)</i>	101	4	1.4	5	2
<i>Leadership (facilitation)</i>	101	4	1.35	5	2
<i>Leadership (problems)</i>	101	4	1.37	5	2
<i>Leadership (trust)</i>	101	4	1.53	5	2
<i>Incentives (perspective)</i>	102	4	1.59	5	2
<i>Incentives (legitimate)</i>	102	4	1.62	5	2
<i>Incentives (collaboration)</i>	102	4	1.83	5	2
<i>Incentives (participate)</i>	102	3	1.85	5	2
<i>Citizen engagement was beneficial</i>	98	4	1.286	5	2
<i>Citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes</i>	96	4	1.551	5	2
<i>Average Income (\$)</i>	103	\$45,976	\$12,455.58	\$80,179	\$24,271
<i>% Unemployed</i>	103	6.87%	0.051	29%	0%
<i>% Minority</i>	103	3.07%	0.040	34%	0%
<i>Average % of Bachelor's</i>	103	20.37%	0.010	57%	0%

Question	Number of Observations (n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Max	Min
<i>Degree</i>					
<i>Population</i>	103	7,857	16,348	95,623	7
<i>% Republican</i>	103	58%	0.091	78%	31%

Table 3 listed above demonstrates that government officials felt very successful helping build trust amongst citizens with a mean score of 4.3, citizens identified common values with a mean score of 4.2, and goals were set for the process reaching a mean score of 4. The highest standard deviation was 2.12 for goals were set for the process, indicating a relatively large variance for the data.

Respondents reported that citizens communicated using face to face dialogue at lower levels with a mean score of 3.9, and they also felt citizens could have improved their sense of shared ownership, with a mean score of 3.8 for the *collaboration* process. The next variable is titled *institution*. As displayed in Table 3 above, government officials' perception of all citizens being included had a mean score of 4.4, a mean score of 4.2 for ground rules were established and followed, 4.3 for the agenda was clearly defined, and a mean score of 4.3 for deliberation of ideas was a fair process for all citizens involved. The highest standard deviation was 1.79 for all interested citizens were included, indicating a low variance for the dataset.

Table 3 above provides all of the descriptive statistical data for *leadership*. As displayed, the mean score of 4.1 is based on respondent answers to government officials successfully facilitated conversations between citizens, encouraged creative problem solving, and helped build trust between citizens. While government officials mostly agreed they were successful in using several *leadership* concepts, government officials scored themselves lower with a mean score of 3.8 for mediating conflicts amongst

citizens. The highest standard deviation was for government officials helped build trust between citizens 1.53, indicating a low variance for the dataset. Mediating conflicts amongst citizens can be more difficult, as ultimately the successful resolution should be agreed upon by the citizens in conflict. While this is difficult for government *leadership* to resolve, evidently this is an area that government officials in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming can improve.

The fourth variable titled *Incentives*, focused on measuring incentives citizens had to participate in the strategic planning process. As displayed in Table 3 above, government officials' perceptions were that citizens thought their perspectives would be acknowledged, with a mean score of 4.2. Furthermore, government officials also perceived that citizens felt the process was legitimate, and citizens understood they were dependent upon each other for a successful planning process, with mean scores of 4.1 and 4.

The surprising result in Table 3 above is for the variable government officials provided *incentives* for citizens to participate, with a mean of 3.4. This independent variable description scored the lowest of all 17 questions used to measure *incentives*, *leadership*, *collaboration*, and *institution* with a mean score of 3.4. This finding suggests that local officials in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming didn't rely heavily on *incentives* to encourage citizen engagement. The next variable titled, average % of *bachelor's degree* had a mean score of 20.37% and a slightly higher mode at 21.30%. The U.S. Census statistics (2016) are for the entirety of all municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. According to the U.S. Census, the mean average % of *bachelor's degree* in the United States is 30.4%. Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, therefore, have a less educated

population compared to the rest of the United States. As displayed in Table 3 above, the mean income is \$45,976, compared to the national mean calculated by the U.S. Census at \$72,641. This result is not surprising considering the low cost of living in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana compared to the rest of the United States.

Unemployment, Minority, Population, and Republican

The four control variables utilized were: *% unemployment, % of minority citizens, population, and % that voted Republican in the gubernatorial election*. Referring again to Table 3, responding communities had an unemployment rate of 6.87% in (n=112) municipalities. According to the U.S. Census, the United States mean unemployment rate at the time of data collection was 5.7%. As a result, the mean unemployment rate was slightly higher in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming compared to the national average. The next variable, *% minority* had a relatively low mean of 3.07%. According to the U.S. Census state level data, Montana has a minority *population* of 10.8%, Idaho has 6.7%, and Wyoming has 7.2%, compared to the United States minority *population* of 23.1%. As a result, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming had much lower figures for *% of minority citizens* compared to the United States. The next variable listed was, *population* with a mean *population* of 7,857. The low *population* figure was not surprising as the majority of replies to the survey were from rural communities with under-resourced municipalities. Furthermore, according to the U.S. Census, out of the 50 U.S. States Idaho ranks 39th, Montana 44th, and Wyoming 50th in overall *population*. Given these results, I expected to see a very low mean *population* for the municipalities responding to the survey, further supporting the importance of conducting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement research in rural municipalities. The last variable was

% Republican with a mean score of 58%. A high mean *% of Republican voters* in the gubernatorial election is not surprising as Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming consistently favored Republican candidates at the state level (Political Maps, 2018). The surprising standard deviation result was for *population* 16,348, a relatively high variance in the *population* data, considering the majority of municipalities that responded were small rural areas. However, several larger municipalities had a population of 75,000-95,623 that responded to the survey, resulting in a higher variation for the dataset. The next section will discuss the results and analysis of the OLS, ordinal, and binomial logistic regression analyses.

Statistical Models: Factor Analysis, Multicollinearity & Correlation Coefficients

This section provides factor analysis, multicollinearity, and correlation coefficient results for the independent variables employed in this study. A factor analysis was conducted for the variables titled *incentives*, *collaboration*, *institution*, and *leadership*, each of which are scale variables comprised of multiple survey questions. For the factor analysis, I combined the variables to obtain one summary that addressed the level of *agreement* for each of the measures *incentives*, *institution*, *collaboration*, and *leadership*.

I performed a factor analysis for each of the four variables below. For each of the four factored variables below, there were either four or five questions within the survey that were detailed questions intended to measure each variable. The Cronbach's Alpha score for *incentives* was .763, indicating all four of these questions can be summarized as a single variable. For *incentives*, there were four questions in the survey, and each listed below includes the component factored score: citizens perspectives were acknowledged .827, citizens felt the process was legitimate .899, citizens were dependent upon each

other .689, and citizens had incentives for participation .661. Even though *incentives* for participation had the lowest component score .661, this is still a strong to moderate correlation between this question and the incentives factored score. The second factored variable is *leadership*. The Cronbach's Alpha score for *leadership* was .946, indicating there was a strong fit for summarizing all four questions as a single variable. For *leadership*, there were four questions in the survey, and each listed below includes the component factored score: government officials excelled at mediating conflicts .954, government officials facilitated conversations between citizens .930, government officials encouraged creative problem solving .953, and government officials helped build trust between citizens .884. Even though *leadership* was trusted had the lowest component score .884, there was still a strong correlation between this question and the *leadership* factored score.

The third factored variable is *collaboration*. The Cronbach's Alpha score for *collaboration* was .903, indicating there was a strong fit for summarizing all five questions as a single variable. For *collaboration*, there were five questions in the survey, and each listed below includes the component factored score: activities were implemented to build trust amongst citizens .635, citizens communicated using face-to-face dialogue .733, citizens developed a sense of shared ownership .838, citizens identified common values .794, and citizens reached goals they set for the process .694. Even though *collaboration* resulted in trust had the lowest component score .635, this is still a moderate to strong correlation between this question and the *collaboration* factored score. The fourth factored variable was *institution*. The Cronbach's Alpha score for *institution* was .848, indicating there was a strong fit for summarizing all four questions

as a single variable. For *institution*, there were four questions in the survey, each listed below includes the component factored score: all interested citizens were included .679, citizens understood the ground rules .775, citizens understood the agenda .829, and the process for deliberating and proposing ideas was fair .775. Even though *institution* interested citizens had the lowest component score .479, this is still a moderate correlation between this question and the *institution* factored score.

I ran multicollinearity diagnostics in SPSS for all of the independent variables included in my models.¹ The mean VIF for all independent variables was 1.808. Additionally, the highest VIF was 3.338 for *collaboration*. Even though *collaboration* had the highest VIF, it was still below 5, resulting in all independent variables remaining in the statistical models. Next, I ran the correlation coefficients below in Table 4 for all independent variables included in the statistical models to ensure no two variables had the same linear dependence in the statistical models and found no extremely strong and significant relationship among any of the variables. *Institution* was treated as the dependent variable for this model. However, I switched *incentives* with *institution* to verify *institution* didn't have an output above .7. *Institution*'s highest correlation coefficient was .3, and it was moved back into the model as the dependent variable.

¹ If a numerical output for VIF is close to 10, it indicates multicollinearity is likely, and further investigation of the highly correlated variables will be necessary in this study (Field, 2013). *Incentives* was treated as the dependent variable for multicollinearity diagnostics in SPSS, as SPSS requires having a dependent variable for the multicollinearity diagnostics. *Incentives* was switched with *institution* to test the multicollinearity of *incentives* in the model.

Table 4 Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Collaboration	% Republican	% Minority Citizens	Average Household Income	Population	Gov. Structure	% Unemployment	Average % of Bachelor's Degree	Incentives
<i>Collaboration</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>% Republican</i>	-.055	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>% Minority Citizens</i>	.033*	.076	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Average Household Income</i>	.062	-.333	-.114	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Population</i>	.281	.131	.038*	-.109	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Gov. Structure</i>	-.138	-.153	-.110	-.037	.120	--	--	--	--
<i>% Unemployment</i>	-.144	-.178	-.153	.274	-.162	.035*	--	--	--
<i>Average % of Bachelor's Degree</i>	-.362	.345	-.052	-.177	-.278	.268	.177	--	--
<i>Incentives</i>	-.445	.002*	.008*	.048*	-.288	.091	-.078	.276	--
<i>Leadership</i>	-.582	.150	.033*	-.113	-.127	.025*	.142	.278	-.218

*P < .05

Models

All of the models in this section utilized both of the independent variables previously mentioned in the methods chapter. All municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming were sent a survey. There were (n=98) valid responses, and (n=9) responses from municipalities that completed the survey, but never created or implemented a strategic plan and weren't prompted to answer any questions in the survey. There were also (n=5) *don't know* responses that were eliminated from the analysis. For both of the upcoming ordinal logistic models, I ran a parallel lines test to determine if ordinal logistic regression was the appropriate model for this data. Because both ordinal logistic models failed the parallel lines test, a binomial logistic regression model was employed. The control variables for all statistical models were: *% Republican*, *% minority citizens*, *% unemployment rate*, and *population*. All three statistical models for the dependent variable *citizen engagement was beneficial* are presented and their findings are discussed. Then, all three statistical models for the dependent variable *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* are presented and their findings are discussed.

OLS: Citizen Engagement was Beneficial

The first model I used to analyze the dependent variable *citizen engagement was beneficial* was an OLS approach that explained 42.8% of the variation in responses for *citizen engagement was beneficial* (R-Square=0.428), indicating this was a moderate fit for the model. The model passed all tests for linearity, heteroscedasticity, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals.² As displayed in Table 5 below, for any of

² A *White's Test* for heteroscedasticity was run to determine if the residual errors exhibited constant variance. *White's Test* Chi-Square was 86.808, the degrees of freedom were 86, and the (p-value=.455), indicating heteroscedasticity was not present in this model. In addition, the observed

the variables that had an odds ratio of 1, this means that the odds of government officials being in a higher level of *agreement that citizen engagement was beneficial* was the same. In other words, for the variables with a odds ratio of 1, this didn't result in an increase or decrease of *agreement that citizen engagement was beneficial*.

As displayed in Table 5 below, for *diversity of engagement methods* (p-value=.001), I found that for one additional *diversity of engagement method*, there was on average a .122 increase in level of *agreement that citizen engagement was beneficial* holding all other variables constant in the model. The more methods that cities use to engage citizens, the more likely the respondents were to *agree that citizen engagement was beneficial*. For *collaboration*, (p-value=.057) I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, there was on average a .288 increase in level of *agreement that citizen engagement was beneficial* holding all other variables constant in the model. If government officials build more trust amongst citizens and help citizens set goals within a shared ownership process, there will be an increase in level of *agreement* from an elected leader's perspective that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. In other words, these results support my hypotheses that *increasing diversity of engagement methods* and having a *collaborative* process improves citizen engagement in the strategic planning process from government officials' perceptions. Furthermore, the results indicate that multiple cities in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming were using citizen engagement techniques compatible with the CGT framework.

standardized residuals were examined in a plot graph, and they followed the reference line, meaning that these are what we would expect to see if the standardized residuals follow a normal distribution.

Ordinal Logistic Regression Model: Citizen Engagement was Beneficial

Next, I employed an ordinal logistic regression model that utilized *citizen engagement was beneficial* as the dependent variable. Most respondents believed that *citizen engagement was beneficial*, with 34.7% of respondents choosing strongly agreed, 49% agreed, 13.3% neither agreed or disagreed, and 3.1% disagreed citizen engagement was beneficial. McFadden's result indicated that 28.5% of the variation in citizen engagement was beneficial was explained by the ordinal logistic model, indicating this was a moderate fit for the model.³

Diversity of engagement methods (p-value=.000) can be interpreted to mean that for an increase of one more method, I expect a 1.53 multiplicative increase (53% more likely) in ordered odds of increasing the respondent's *agreement* level that *citizen engagement was beneficial* holding all other variables constant in the model.

³ Cox and Snell (1989) compare the log likelihood for the overall model compared to the intercept only model (Elamir & Sedeq, 2010). There are technical limitations for this approximation that will not result in a R^2 of 1. To correct for this error, the other R^2 option is Nagelkerke (1991) (R^2), which rescales the Cox & Snell, allowing for an R^2 of 0 and up to 1 (Elamir & Sedeq, 2010). Lastly, McFadden (1974) (R^2) is another statistic that uses the kernels for log-likelihood for the entire and intercept only models (Elamir & Sedeq, 2010). R^2 indicated the percent of variance in citizen engagement was beneficial explained by the ordinal logistic regression model that included all independent variables. Since McFadden is the common R^2 indicator used for logit models, McFadden's output will be the only indicator used for the rest of this study. Next, a model fit was run outputting an intercept only or final output model. The final model that includes all variables fits significantly better than the intercept only mode (p-value=.000), thus I have statistically significant better predictions for citizen engagement was beneficial categories when including all variables. As a result, the final output model was employed for analysis. In addition, a goodness of fit model was run, outputting Pearson's chi-square statistic and deviance, both measuring if the data was not consistent with the model. The ordinal logistic model with all variables that predicts citizen engagement was beneficial was utilized within outcome categories. Since the tests were not significant (p-value=1), the model was a strong fit for running ordinal logistic regression.

Table 5 OLS, Ordinal, and Binomial Logistic Regression Results: *Citizen Engagement was Beneficial*

Variable	OLS	Ordinal	Binomial
	Estimate & (Robust Std. Error)	Odds ratio & (Std. Error)	Odds ratio & (Std. Error)
<i>Engagement Beneficial (disagree)</i>	--	0.015* (2.113)	--
<i>Engagement Beneficial (neither agree/disagree)</i>	--	0.145 (2.043)	--
<i>Engagement Beneficial (agree) & Constant</i>	3.653* (.620)	5.601 (2.043)	3.184 (4.145)
<i>Diversity of Engagement Methods</i>	.122* (.035)	1.53* (.113)	1.222 (.216)
<i>% Republican</i>	-.006 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.009)</small>	0.964 (.031)	1.023 (.061)
<i>% Minority Citizens</i>	.006 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.012)</small>	1.023 (.056)	1.225 (.178)
<i>% Unemployment Rate</i>	.007 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.019)</small>	1.038 (.048)	0.916 (.085)
<i>Institution</i>	.150 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.176)</small>	1.930** (.381)	1.743 (.622)
<i>Population</i>	2.275E-6 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](5.55E-6)</small>	1 (1.689E-5)	1 (.000)
<i>Average Household Income</i>	4.579E-6 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](6.487E-6)</small>	1 (1.978E-5)	1 (.000)
<i>Average % of Bachelor's Degree</i>	.002 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.010)</small>	1.015 (.030)	1.04 (.060)
<i>Collaboration</i>	.288* (.150)	2.872* <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.427)</small>	25.955* (1.183)
<i>Leadership</i>	.337 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.210)</small>	7.221* <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.548)</small>	22.301* (1.155)
<i>Incentives</i>	-.138 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.143)</small>	0.541 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.420)</small>	0.273** (.738)
<i>Gov. Structure-Council Manager</i>	-.065 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.246)</small>	1.147 <small>[[L]] [[SEP]](.924)</small>	2.10E+09 (9975.328)
<i>Gov. Structure-Mayor-Council</i>	1 (.)	1 (.)	1 (.)

*P < .05, **P < .01

As displayed in Table 5 above, for *collaboration* (p-value=.013) I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, I expect a 2.872 multiplicative increase (183% more likely) to *agree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* to the strategic planning process. For the variable *leadership* (p-value=.000) I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, I expect a 7.221 multiplicative increase (622% more likely), and for *institution* (p-value=.085) I found that for an increase of one unit as a

factor variable, I expect a 1.930 multiplicative increase (93% more likely) in ordered odds of increasing the respondent's *agreement* level, that *citizen engagement was beneficial* holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, if government officials encourage creative problem solving and the ability to mediate conflicts amongst citizens, and government officials ensure there were clear ground rules and the process for deliberating ideas was fair for all members involved, there will be an increase in *agreement* among respondents that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. Importantly, each of these variables derived from the CGT framework are associated with the perception that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. Below is Figure 5, displaying the graphical representation of the predicted probabilities for the ordinal logistic regression model with all independent variables, holding all other variables constant at their mean. ⁴

⁴ For *diversity of engagement methods*, with 8 methods there is nearly a 100% probability of the respondents selecting up to and including *agree* within the response options for *citizen engagement was beneficial*. The predicted probability of selecting either *disagree* or *neither disagree or agree* is approximately 0.67, and the probability of selecting *agree* for 8 methods is 33%. This indicates that the probability of the respondent *agreeing* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* is nearly 100% for municipalities that employ 8 *diversity of engagement methods*. If municipalities add additional *diversity of engagement methods* beyond 8, this actually decreases the *agree* level of respondents that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. For *institution's* highest factored score, the predicted probability that the respondent would *disagree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* was 42%, and *neither disagree nor agree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* had a predicted probability of 46%, resulting in a predicted probability of 12% *agreeing* that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. Ordinal logistic regression assumes the lines are parallel. However, this assumption failed for these particular models. This assumption isn't correct for these models because it doesn't follow CGT where expect respondents to be more likely to *agree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* with their higher level of *agreement* within the institutional processes, which should result in a higher factor score. For *leadership's* highest factored score, the predicted probability that the respondents would *disagree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* was 100%, and *neither agree nor disagree* is 0% because all of the predicted probabilities lie solely with *disagree*. The odds ratio for *leadership* was 7.221, which causes the curves to be steeper and reach 100% probability within the range of the observed leadership factor scores. For *collaboration's* highest factored score, the predicted probability that the respondent would *disagree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* was 78%, and *neither disagree nor agree* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* had a predicted probability of 19%, with a predicted probability of 3% *agreeing* that *citizen engagement was beneficial*.

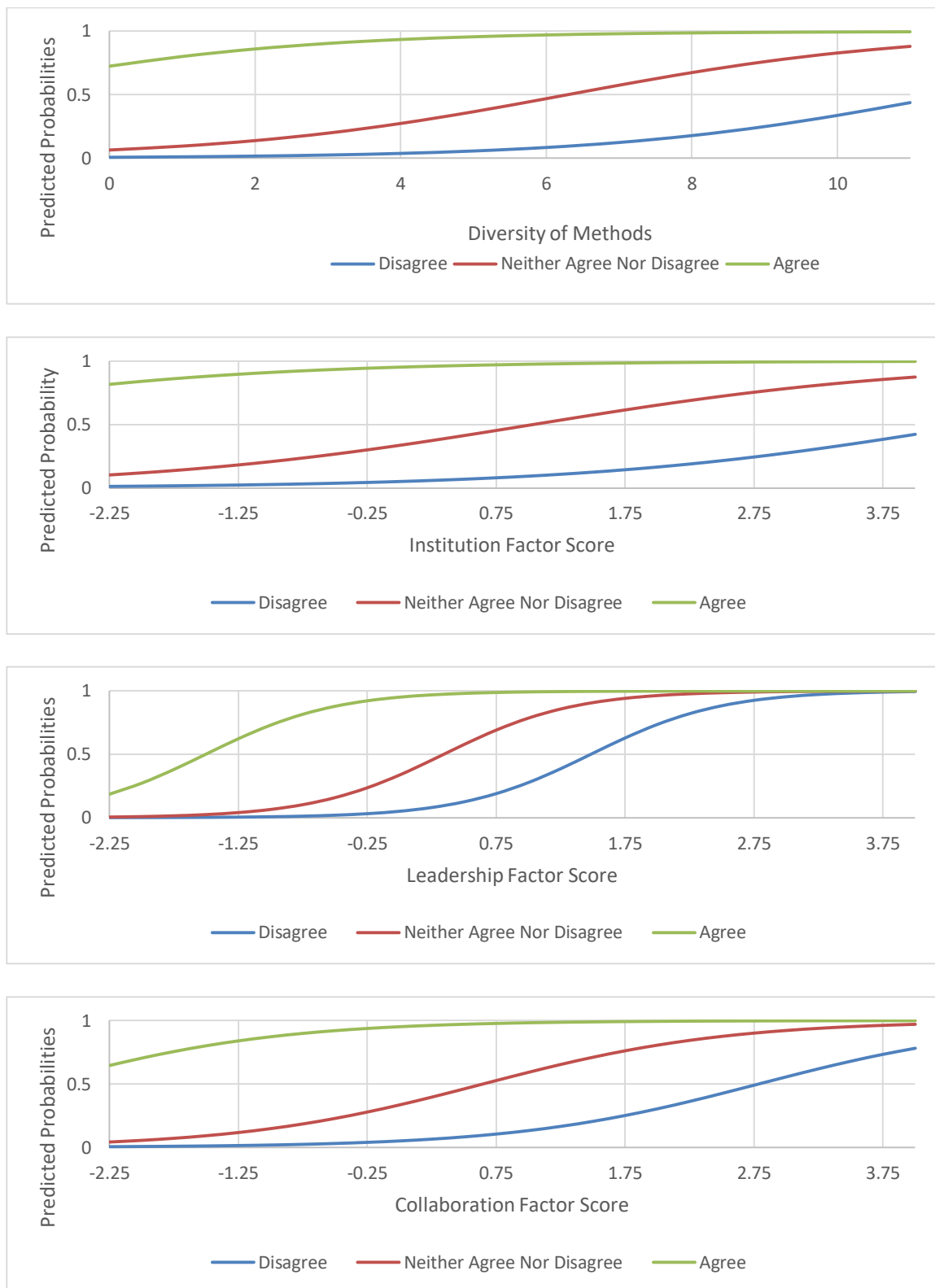


Figure 5. Predicted Probabilities: Statistically Significant Variables in Ordinal Logistic Regression Model

These findings support my hypotheses that increasing *diversity of engagement methods*, and having a collective *leadership, institution, and collaboration* process, all of which are derived from the CGT framework, improved government officials' positive perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. That is to say that, use of CGT methods increased the likelihood that city officials believed that *citizen engagement was beneficial*.

Binomial Model: Citizen Engagement was Beneficial

As previously mentioned, I used a binomial logistic regression analysis to analyze the dependent variable *citizen engagement was beneficial*. I explored the possibility of using this dependent variable for a multinomial logistic regression model. However, for the response option *disagree*, there were only (n=5) responses. A sample size of five is not large enough for properly conducting comparative analysis of the response options in multinomial logistic regression. As a result, a binomial logistic regression was employed allowing me to combine *disagree* and *neither agree or disagree* into a response category termed *not agree*. Next, I combined *agree* and *strongly agree* into a response category called *agree*. For this model, (n=16) 16.3% of respondents answered *not agree* and (n=82) 83.7% answered *agree*. According to the model summary, 33.7% of variation for *citizen engagement was beneficial* was explained by the binomial logistic model including all of the independent variables (Cox & Snell's $R^2=0.337$), indicating this was a moderate fit for the outcome of the model.

Agree vs. Not Agree

Next, Table 5 above displays the binomial logistic regression results for response option *agree* compared to *not agree* with *citizen engagement was beneficial* as the

dependent variable. For *collaboration* (p-value=.006), I found that for a one unit increase in the factor variable, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement was beneficial agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively increase by 25.955 (2,495.5% more likely), and for *leadership* (p-value=.007), I found that for a one unit increase in the factor variable, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement was beneficial agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively increase by 22.301 (2,130.1% more likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, if government officials encourage creative problem solving and the ability to mediate conflicts amongst citizens, as well as build more trust amongst citizens and help them set goals within a shared ownership process, there will be an increase in *agreement* level from an elected leader's perception that *citizen engagement was beneficial* within the CGT process. For *incentives* (p-value=.079), I found that for a one unit increase in the factor variable, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement was beneficial agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively decrease by .273 (72.7% less likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, if government officials design a legitimate process, and citizens feel their perspectives were acknowledged, there is an increase in *agreement* level from an elected leader's perception that *citizen engagement was beneficial*.

The findings for *collaboration* and *leadership* support my hypotheses that having a citizen engagement process that utilizes *collaboration* and *leadership* will result in increased odds that respondents select an *agree* response option, compared to the odds of selecting one of the *not agree* response options that *citizen engagement was beneficial*. Furthermore, *incentives* was statistically significant, but the odds of respondents selecting

an *agree* response option decreased compared to the odds of selecting one of the *not agree* response options that *citizen engagement was beneficial*, which directly contradicts my hypothesis. Respondents who reported using methods and techniques derived from CGT reported higher levels of *agreement* that *citizen engagement was beneficial* to the strategic planning process.

OLS Model: Citizen Engagement Impacted Policy Outcomes

This OLS model utilized the dependent variable *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. This OLS model explains 40% of the variation in responses for *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* (R-Square=.040), indicating this was a moderate fit for the model. The model passed all tests for linearity, heteroscedasticity, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals.⁵

This first section addresses OLS, then ordinal, and lastly binomial logistic regression results. In Table 6 below, OLS, ordinal and binomial logistic regression results are all displayed. For any of the variables that had an odds ratio of 1, this means that the odds of government officials being in a higher level of *agreement* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was the same. In other words, for the variables with a odds ratio of 1, this didn't result in an increase or decrease of *agreement* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*.

As displayed in Table 6 below, for *diversity of engagement methods* (p-value=.000), I found that for one additional *diversity of engagement method*, there was on

⁵ A *White's Test* for heteroscedasticity was run to determine if the residual errors exhibited constant variance. *White's Test* Chi-Square was 85.028, the degrees of freedom were 86, and the (p-value=.509), indicating heteroscedasticity was not present in this model. In addition, the observed standardized residuals were examined in a plot graph, and they followed the reference line, meaning that these are what we would expect to see if the standardized residuals follow a normal distribution.

average a .149 increase in level of *agreement* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* holding all other variables constant in the model. Each additional engagement method used increased the odds that respondents thought that citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes by .149. For *leadership* (p-value=.053) and *collaboration* (p-value=.085), I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, there was on average a .411 and .240 increase in level of *agreement* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*, holding all other variables constant in the model. If government officials build more trust amongst citizens and help citizens set goals within a shared ownership process, as well as encourage creative problem solving and the ability to mediate conflicts amongst citizens, there was an increase in *agreement* level from an elected leader's perception that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. In other words developing processes based on CGT concepts leads to an increase in the perception that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. Using CGT-based techniques such as *diversity of engagement methods*, *leadership*, and *collaboration* supported my hypotheses that the use of CGT methods increases the perceived impact of *citizen engagement* on policy outcomes in the strategic planning process.

Ordinal Logistic Regression Model: Citizen Engagement Impacted Policy Outcomes

Next, I utilized an ordinal logistic regression model that employed *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* as the dependent variable. I found that 32.3% of respondents *strongly agreed*, 37.5% *agreed*, 25% *neither agreed or disagreed*, and 5.2% *disagreed* *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. McFadden's R^2 indicated that 22.4% of the variation in *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was explained by

the ordinal logistic regression model, indicating this was a moderate fit for the outcome of the model.⁶

For *diversity of engagement methods* (p-value=.000), I found that for an increase of one additional method, I expect a 1.486 multiplicative increase (48.6% more likely) in ordered odds of increasing the respondents' *agreement* level, that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* holding all other variables constant in the model. This means that the more types of *engagement methods* utilized, the more likely that respondents *agreed* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. As displayed in Table 6 below, for *leadership* (p-value=.001), I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, I expect a 5.33 multiplicative increase (433% more likely) and for *collaboration* (p-value=.085), I found that for an increase of one unit as a factor variable, I expect a 2.02 multiplicative increase (102% more likely) in ordered odds of increasing the respondent's *agreement* level, that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, if government officials utilize CGT based methods such as, encourage creative problem solving and the ability to mediate conflicts amongst citizens as well as build more trust amongst citizens, and help citizens set goals within a shared ownership process, there was an increase in *agreement* level from an elected leader's perception that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* within the strategic planning process.

⁶ A model fit was run outputting an intercept only or final output model. The final model that includes all variables fits significantly better than the intercept only model (p-value=.000), as there was statistically significant better predictions for *citizen engagement impacted policy outcome* categories. As a result, the final output model was employed for analysis. In addition, a goodness of fit model was run, outputting Pearson's chi-square statistic and deviance, both measuring if the data was not consistent with the model. This was the ordinal logistic model with all variables that predicted *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. Since these tests weren't significant (p-value>.05 level), Pearson (p-value=.871) and Deviance (p-value=1), the model was a strong fit for conducting ordinal logistic regression.

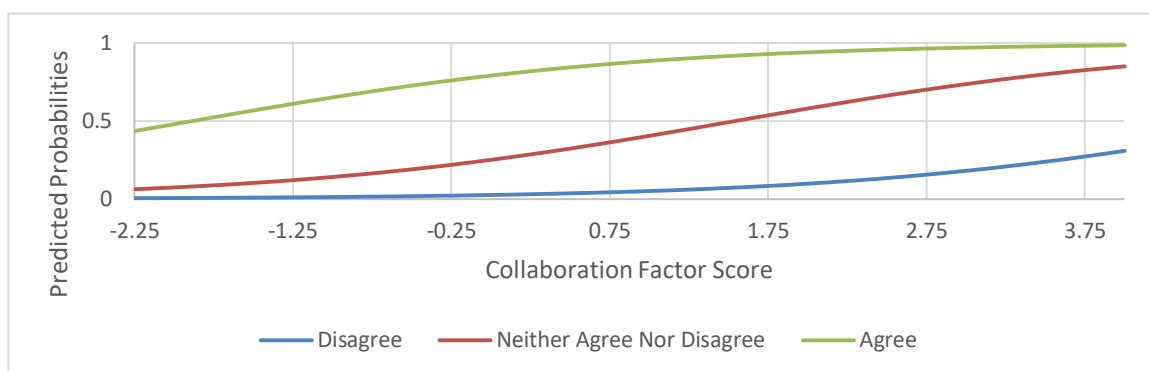
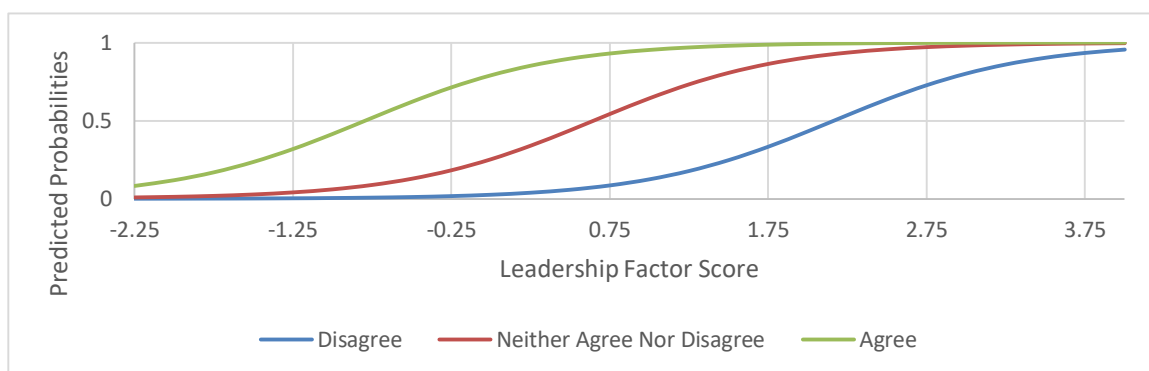
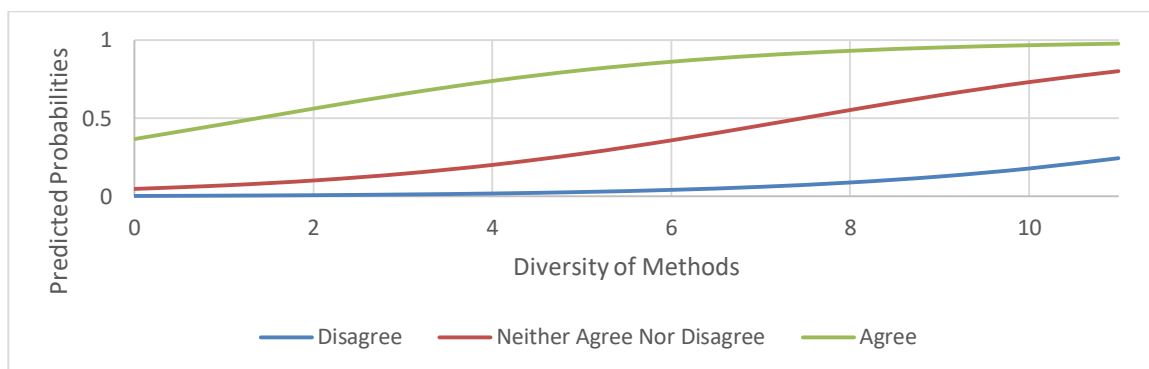
Table 6 OLS, Ordinal, and Binomial Logistic Regression Results: *Citizen Engagement Impacted Policy Outcomes*

Variable	(OLS)	Ordinal	Binomial
	Estimate & (Robust Std. Error)	Odds Ratio & (Std. Error)	Odds Ratio & (Std. Error)
<i>Engagement Impacted (disagree)</i>	--	0.015* ^L _(.974)	--
<i>Engagement Impacted (neither agree/disagree)</i>	--	0.193 (1.930)	--
<i>Engagement Impacted (agree) & Constant</i>	3.702* ^L _(.717)	2.15 ^L _(1.922)	.206 (2.999)
<i>Diversity of Engagement Methods</i>	.149* ^L _(.037)	1.486* ^L _(.107)	1.889* ^L _(.186)
<i>% Republican</i>	-.010 ^L _(.010)	0.967 ^L _(.029)	.922* ^L _(.000)
<i>% Minority Citizens</i>	-.017 ^L _(.046)	0.967 ^L _(.050)	.754 (.180)
<i>% Unemployment Rate</i>	.007 ^L _(.022)	1.040 ^L _(.045)	1.125* (.070)
<i>Institution</i>	.114 ^L _(.140)	1.56 ^L _(.369)	3.242* ^L _(.705)
<i>Population</i>	2.042E-6 ^L _(1.127E-5)	1.000 (1.661E-5)	1 (.000)
<i>Average Household Income</i>	4.696E-7 ^L _(7.881E-6)	0.999 ^L _(1.818E-5)	1 (.000)
<i>Average % of Bachelor's Degree</i>	.008 ^L _(.011)	1.02 ^L _(.030)	1.032 (.050)
<i>Collaboration</i>	.240* ^L _(.138)	2.02** ^L _(.409)	1.437 (.605)
<i>Leadership</i>	.411* ^L _(.209)	5.33* ^L _(.506)	6.268* ^L _(.878)
<i>Incentives</i>	-.062 ^L _(.163)	0.701 ^L _(.395)	0.553 (.800)
<i>Government Structure-Mayor-Council</i>	-.088 ^L _(.371)	1.9 ^L _(.918)	.342 (1.205)
<i>Gov. Structure-Council Manager</i>	1 (.)	1 (.)	1 (.)

*P < .05, **P < .01

Below is figure 6, which displays the graphical representation of the predicted probabilities from the ordinal logistic regression model including each of the independent variables, holding all of the other variables constant at their mean.⁷

⁷ For *diversity of engagement methods*, with 11 methods there is a 98% probability of the respondents selecting up to and including *agree* within the response options for *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. The predicted probability of selecting either *disagree* or *neither disagree or*



agree is approximately 80%. This indicates that 11 *diversity of engagement methods* results in a probability of the respondent *agreeing* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*, with a probability of 18%. Furthermore, the probability of *agreeing* is 53% when municipalities employ five *diversity of engagement methods*. Since the predicted probability curve for *agree* doesn't reach 100%, this leaves a 2% probability that the respondents selected *strongly agree*. For *leadership's* highest factored score, the predicted probability that the respondent would *disagree* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was 96%, and *neither agree nor disagree* was 4%. These predicted probability curves for *agree* and *neither agree nor disagree* results in them together reaching 100%. For *collaboration's* highest factored score, the predicted probability that the respondent would *disagree* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was 31%, and *neither disagree nor agree* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* had a predicted probability of 54%, with a predicted probability of 13% *agreeing* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. Since the predicted probability curve for *agree* doesn't reach 100%, this leaves a 2% probability that the respondents selected *strongly agree*.

Figure 6. Predicted Probabilities: Statistically Significant Variables in Ordinal Logistic Regression Model

These findings support my hypotheses that increasing *diversity of engagement methods* and having a well-designed *leadership* or *collaborative* process improved citizen engagement in the collaborative governance and strategic planning process from government officials' perceptions. For the two ordinal logistic models employed in this study, not all of the variables investigated were important to both models. However, *diversity of engagement methods*, *leadership*, and *collaboration* were statistically significant and were associated with an increase in perception that citizen engagement was both *beneficial* and *impacted policy outcomes*, regardless of the dependent variables being investigated.

Binomial Model: Citizen Engagement Impacted Policy Outcomes

As previously mentioned, I used a binomial logistic regression to analyze the dependent variable *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. The ordinal response categories were combined into a binomial analysis because the response option *disagree* only had (n=5) responses, resulting in insufficient data for a multinomial model. As a result, a binomial logistic regression was employed allowing me to combine *disagree* and *neither agree or disagree* into a response category termed *not agree*. Next, I combined *agree* and *strongly agree* into a response category called *agree*. For this model, (n=29) 30.2% of respondents answered *not agree* and (n=67) 69.8% answered *agree*. According to the model summary, 43.2% of variation for *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* was explained by the binomial logistic model including all of the independent variables (Cox & Snell's $R^2=.432$), indicating this was a moderate fit for the outcome of the model.

Agree vs. Not Agree

Above Table 6 displays the binomial logistic regression results for response option *agree* compared to *not agree* with *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* as the dependent variable. For *diversity of engagement methods* (p-value=.001), I found that for a one unit increase in *diversity of engagement methods*, we expected the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively increase by 1.889 (88.9% more likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. This means that increasing the number of engagement methods increased the odds that respondents *agreed* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. For *leadership* (p-value=.037), I found that for a one unit increase in the factor variable, we expected the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively increase 6.268 (526.8% more likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, if government officials build more trust amongst citizens and help citizens set goals within a shared ownership process, there will be an increase in *agreement* level from an elected leader's perception that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. For *% unemployment rate* (p-value=.090), I found that for a one-unit decrease, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively decrease by 1.125 (12.5% less likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, as the *% unemployment rate* decreases, government officials will be more likely to *agree* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* within the CGT process.

For *institution* (p-value=.095), I found that for a one unit increase in the factor variable, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively increase by 3.242 (224.2% more likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. In other words, government officials might want to ensure there are clear ground rules, and the process for deliberating ideas is fair for all members involved. For % *Republican* (p-value=.096), I found that for a one-unit increase, we expect the odds of a respondent answering *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes agree vs. not agree* will multiplicatively decrease by .922 (7.8% less likely), holding all other variables constant in the model. As the % of *Republican's* in a municipality increase, government officials were less likely to *agree* that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes* within the CGT process. In other words, a higher % of *Republicans* in a municipality, was negatively associated with government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. These findings for the CGT-based methods of *diversity of engagement methods, institution, and leadership*, support my hypotheses that increasing the *diversity of engagement methods* and having a well-designed *leadership* or *institutional* process increased the perception that *citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes*. The next chapter provides a discussion of the results for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The research question this project investigated was: *What factors explain government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in municipal strategic planning processes?* This study focused on the factors impacting government officials' perception in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, three states within the Inter-Mountain West. From a broader perspective, it was important to study these three states because they primarily consist of few urban areas with many rural municipalities that are under-populated, and lack the necessary staffing and financial resources for conducting extensive collaborative governance and citizen engagement processes. This may explain why citizen engagement in these types of environments has not received significant attention from researchers.

In addition, examining these municipalities might provide insight into the impact managers and mayors—those who have primary responsibility for city and local government in these parts of the West—have in designing and supporting citizen engagement processes. Understanding the factors that impact government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in a geographical region of the Inter-Mountain West might therefore provide insight into citizen engagement processes in other, similarly rural and under-resourced municipal environments.

In this chapter, the discussion suggests that based on local government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, several forms of CGT are being applied in practical settings. However, this chapter also highlights areas of improvement that are needed in the strategic planning process, and other concepts that

had a minimal impact on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. Furthermore, I briefly review the major findings of this study, placing them in the context of relevant CGT literature. Next, I broadly discuss the results in relation to CGT, strategic planning, citizen engagement, and government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. Then, I discuss topics by hypothesis and relate the findings back to the literature. I also explain why I think several of the variables were not statistically significant in this study. I end the chapter by discussing what these findings mean for Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT, specifically focusing on elements of the model that may need to be modified, particularly for studies like this one that focus on largely rural areas of the Inter-Mountain West. Finally, I discuss some possible limitations of CGT, and the future research that could build on the findings of this study. In closing, I argue that government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process is understudied, particularly in this type of context.

Summary of Major Findings

The results of this study indicate that select elements of CGT are used in strategic planning processes at the municipal level of government in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. The four primary findings indicate that *leadership*, *institution*, *collaboration*, and *diversity of engagement methods* are all statistically significant variables that have positive impacts on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. Practitioners at the municipal level of government are utilizing select elements of citizen engagement practices similar to Ansell & Gash's (2008) CGT model, which recommends a collaborative and elaborate citizen engagement process. This in itself is a notable finding: based on the perspectives of the practitioners surveyed

for this study, at-least some forms of collaborative governance appear to be utilized in practice, even in largely rural areas, which may also be under-resourced and understaffed, compared to larger metropolitan areas.

However, while previous studies have utilized the entire CGT model for investigating a variety of citizen engagement processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Huxham, 2003; Robertson & Choi, 2010; Reed, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2010; Silvia, 2011), the findings from this study suggest that not all variables within the CGT model are equally explanatory. In my models, the variable average *education levels* was not statistically significant, even though previous literature suggested they would have a major impact on citizen engagement.

There were several variables that were statistically significant in my models. This study showed that, for the states studied, *leadership* in collaborative governance matters. *Leadership* is important because it provides citizens with a direction and expectations for what they should expect from government officials (Liddle, 2010). *Leadership* by government officials in the CGT process is critical for ensuring all citizens, stakeholders, and government officials have an equal voice in final public policy decisions. These findings matter theoretically and practically because future scholars or local government practitioners might want to consider having leaders that believe CGT matters, and they are willing to implement the best practices in a strategic planning process. This might result in additional citizens that are willing to participate in a process where deliberation, critical thinking, and positive outcomes are attainable at the municipal level of government, resulting in a more constructive dialogue between citizens and government officials in the strategic planning process. *Leadership* matters when citizens,

stakeholders, and government officials have varying perspectives, and having a seasoned and experienced leader running the collaborative governance process is critical for successful outcomes. The findings reinforce those found in previously conducted studies that *leadership* is an important component in CGT, citizen engagement, and government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement municipal strategic planning process (Abdel-Monem et al., 2016; Bingham & O'Leary, 2008; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Goss, 1999; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Lowndes et al., 2001).

Government officials also reported that *institution* was only sometimes positively correlated with an increase in government officials perceptions of citizen engagement. *Institution* is a key component of the strategic planning and CGT process, and it was measured in this study by examining the structure for implementing ground rules, public agendas, trust, and developing a fair process for deliberating ideas amongst citizens and government officials. While it is plausible that *institution* might have important impacts on the CGT process, from the elected officials' perspectives it didn't always result in an increase in the positive evaluation of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process.

There are several plausible explanations for why *institution* was selectively positively correlated with government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning processes. First, local municipalities are required to post public agendas and implement ground rules at public meetings. Since these were key components for measuring *institution*, and are required by state law in any municipality for citizen engagement purposes, these factors had to be utilized in the strategic planning process. While these required processes are not extremely collaborative from a citizen

engagement perspective, they do provide information and opportunities for citizens to participate in their local government processes.

Second, scholars have found that government officials and citizens have different perceptions of the same citizen engagement processes, which can lead to a lack of trust in the process (see Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017). As a result, it is possible that citizens and government officials had different perceptions of these same citizen engagement processes. Third, government officials and city clerks involved in the open meetings processes often find the public disclosure and notification laws burdensome, resulting in a negative opinion of mandated policies and procedures. Therefore, perhaps a reason *institution* was selectively effective in the strategic planning process was certain government officials acknowledged there was a structural process they must follow, and some of them found those public meeting requirements useful and beneficial for citizen engagement in their strategic planning processes, while others didn't. These findings suggest that *institution* is a variable that is selectively positively correlated with government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, but might not always be a component within CGT that is required for a successful citizen engagement process.

The *collaboration* process is one of the most critical elements of CGT (Ansell & Gash, 2008), and the findings in this study indicate the collaborative process is widely employed at the municipal level of government in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Collaboration is important for citizen engagement because it allows citizens and government officials the opportunity to cooperate, communicate effectively, develop goals, a sense of shared ownership, and negotiate public policy outcomes.

The findings from this study indicate *collaboration* is an integral part of the CGT process for three reasons. First, communication between citizens and government officials is an important part of the democratic process (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004). Elected officials at the municipal level of government consistently communicate with citizens in-person, via e-mail, and at public meetings, attempting to incorporate their preferences into public policy outcomes. The findings in this study further support the notion that consistent communication, especially in a collaborative manner between citizens and government officials is imperative for a successful citizen engagement process.

Second, *collaborative* processes are where local governments focus their attention when developing new public policies in a community. By law, municipalities are required to hold public hearings and interact with citizens to listen and possibly incorporate their perspectives into policy decisions. Since most of the municipalities surveyed in this study utilized a *diversity of engagement methods*, municipalities may have been more successful engaging citizens in their local strategic planning processes. Furthermore, these collaborative interactions might have result in increased trust between citizens and government officials (see Alexander, Comfort, & Weiner, 1998; Ansell & Gash, 2008), and created an opportunity for citizens and government officials to engage in-person about future community decisions.

Lastly, from a broad perspective citizens and government officials understand we live in a democracy where collaboration, shared goals, intense debates, and negotiating public policy outcomes is part of the democratic process. The findings from this study indicate that government officials, citizens, and other stakeholders are involved in

collaborative processes at the municipal level of government. Without the *collaborative* process, government officials might design public policies that use top-down approaches that don't incorporate citizen perspectives, and are ineffective for democratic settings (Healey, 1996; Booher, 2004). As a result, a *collaborative* approach for engaging citizens at the municipal level of government has never been more important.

Next, *diversity of engagement methods* wasn't included in Ansell & Gash's (2008) CGT model, but other strategic planning studies have found the *diversity of engagement methods* positively impacted citizen engagement in the strategic planning process (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003, Wheeland, 2003). The *diversity of engagement methods* are important because the type and number of methods municipalities employed for understanding citizen and government officials' perceptions can be an important part of the strategic planning process. One of the most obvious reasons a wide range of *engagement methods* is important is citizens have more opportunities to participate in their local government processes. Citizens are inherently busy and disconnected from citizen engagement opportunities (Putnam, 2000), but if they have more chances to participate, it makes sense this would increase their engagement levels in local government decisions. Second, citizens might prefer one *engagement method* instead of another. For example, citizens might prefer not to attend a public meeting and provide feedback, but they might choose to provide their input using a survey or online portal. Furthermore, the research is clear that when additional *engagement methods* are available, citizens have more individual flexibility for participating in their contemporary democracy (Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003), resulting in additional *collaboration* and feedback for government practitioners. Perhaps

the most obvious reason additional *diversity of engagement methods* may have increased government officials' positive perceptions of citizen engagement is that using more *engagement methods* potentially results in more citizens being involved in the strategic planning process. Lastly, it is possible that additional *diversity of engagement methods* also provides municipalities with flexibility, allowing them to adjust according to context of each meeting or process. In the end, there is no *one best way* to engage citizens in public policy processes, but a variety of engagement methods should be utilized to create a collaborative and democratic process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, 2011; Brody, Godschalk, & Burby, 2003; Wheeland, 2003) resulting in a well-informed and engaged citizenry.

Unexpected Findings

The results from this study also indicate that certain variables weren't statistically significant in my models. The findings indicate that average *education levels* and average *household income*, two concepts used to measure the variables resources and power in the CGT process, didn't have a significant relationship with government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement. Furthermore, the results of this study suggested that while the CGT model accurately describes collaborative processes, it didn't adequately account for constraints on *incentives* experienced by small municipalities.

Incentives was one of the main variables employed by Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT. Research has shown that government officials should *incentivize* citizens to participate in their local democracy because such enticements can provide motivation for citizens to share their perspectives with other citizens and local government officials (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Andranovich, 1995; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray, 1989).

Furthermore, when government officials utilize *incentives* this can help citizens realize they are dependent upon their fellow citizens to engage in the process, and that government officials want to understand and possibly incorporate their perspectives into public policy outputs. I found that local government officials in this study responded that very few officials used *incentives* to increase citizen participation, and ultimately *incentives* was only statistically significant in one of my models, which had a negative impact on the perceptions of government officials that citizen engagement was positive. This may be because, in smaller communities, citizens feel compelled to participate in government decisions due to a greater sense of community. Second, it is possible elected officials perceptions were that *incentivizing* citizens to participate is a waste of municipal time and resources. These smaller municipalities have resource constraints, and elected officials may not have been able to provide the proper monetary incentives for motivating participants in a comprehensive collaborative governance process.

Since the municipalities studied were rural, under-resourced communities, this likely resulted in government officials choosing to disregard implementing *incentives* to preserve their limited municipal resources and staff investment. Lastly, it is likely government officials perceptions' were that citizens should be motivated and effective democratic citizens by participating in their local government strategic planning processes. Studies have found that government officials expect citizens to be involved in their community decisions, regardless of the public policies under consideration (Lowi, 1979; Putnam, 2000). I think the findings in this study are inconsistent with previous research, perhaps because other scholars that employed CGT primarily focused on larger,

urban based municipalities, and this study focused on rural, under-resourced municipalities.

Next, average *household income* wasn't an important statistical factor within the my model. Lower levels of *income* have been associated with decreased levels of citizen engagement (Lukes, 2009; Solt, 2008). Ultimately, scholars and practitioners can now understand that average *household income* has a much smaller effect on government officials' perceptions of the benefits of citizen engagement, especially in rural and under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West. Furthermore, average *household income* being statistically insignificant might benefit citizens in these rural, under-resourced municipalities because citizens of all socio-economic statuses can engage in their local government decisions.

Even though previous research has found that *education* positively impacts levels of citizen engagement (see Marsh & Kaase, 1970; Bachrach & Baratz, 1970), this study didn't find that higher average levels of *education* increased the perception that citizen *engagement was beneficial or impactful on public policy*. The finding related to average *education levels* might be more related to the study sample, because there was minimal variation in the average *education* levels for municipalities included in this study. Rural and under-resourced municipalities are likely to have a lower level of average *% of bachelor's degrees* compared to municipalities in urban settings, and few urban settings exist in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Second, smaller municipalities usually have higher levels of citizen engagement, despite lower levels of *education*. This is another way that smaller municipalities need to approach CGT differently than larger cities. Understanding this impact of average *education levels* on small, rural municipalities in

the Inter-Mountain West, might provide additional insight into citizen engagement processes for government officials.

Next, *government structure* wasn't a statistically significant variable within my findings, even though previous literature found that local *government structure* (*mayor-council, town administrator, strong mayor, or manager-commission*) can impact the level of citizen engagement (Cited in Franklin & Ebdon, 2005, 169; Kweit & Kweit, 1981). However, the finding related to *government structure* is likely more related to the study sample, than to a refutation of previous scholars' findings. For this research, eighty-nine municipalities responded that their *government structure* was *mayor-council*, and nine municipalities responded that their *government structure* was *council-manager*. While there isn't one solution to the problem, a higher response rate would have resulted in more variance of the data, possibly resulting in a statistically significant finding for *government structure*.

Control Variable Concerns

The four control variables employed in this study were *population, % minority citizens, % unemployed, and % Republican*. All four of these control variables were negatively impacted by the sample size and diversity of municipalities in this study. For example, the municipalities that completed the survey were primarily small and rural under-resourced municipalities. For the (n=112) municipalities that responded, only (n=7) had a population over 33,000 citizens. Due to this minimal variation, deciphering significant changes in *population* was difficult. This same sample problem was present for *% minority citizens, % unemployed, and % Republican*. Ultimately, conducting a

larger study in additional states with a greater variation in the data would help improve this shortcoming of the study.

Next, *population* wasn't statistically significant in any of the findings. Previous research has found that citizens in small and rural municipalities have a higher level of social capital, and are usually more involved in local government decisions (Morton, 2003). As a result, since citizens in small, under-resourced municipalities were the primary sample, it is unlikely that *population* would impact government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement without having municipalities with a higher *population* for comparison. Overall, *population* isn't an important variable to employ when examining citizen engagement in rural, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West. This matters because practitioners and researchers might want to understand that previous research has indicated a higher municipal *population* is associated with a lower level of engagement (see Fischer, 1982; Oliver, 2000), and these findings aren't true when examining rural, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West.

Next, the *% of minority citizens* failed to positively impact citizen engagement in the strategic planning process. The most likely reason was the *% of minority citizens* in Montana municipalities was 11.8%, Idaho 6.7%, and Wyoming 7.2%. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States has a minority population over 24%, more than double that of Montana, with the highest minority population in this study. Expanding the sample to other states in the Inter-Mountain West might help incorporate larger populations of minorities, and this might provide more interesting results. Second, since primarily rural municipalities were examined, minorities in these municipalities might

feel they have just as strong of a voice compared to other citizens, and it is there civic duty to engage with other citizens in their community.

The next variable employed in this study was *% unemployment rate*. The findings were fairly consistent that *% unemployment rate* was primarily statistically insignificant for this study. This is important for PPA scholars because previous research has found that a lower *% unemployment rate* is associated with a higher level of citizen engagement (see CNCS & NCOC, 2011; Wilensky, 1961), and that wasn't the case for small, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West. I think this finding speaks to the social capital of rural municipalities (see Morton, 2003). Citizens in these communities feel they should participate in local government matters whether they are employed or not, ultimately benefiting the community as a whole, resulting in input from citizens of all socio-economic backgrounds. Ultimately, this finding matters for scholars and practitioners because scholars have continually found that citizens with employment or increased income (Houghland & Shepard, 1985; Wilensky, 1961) are more likely to be involved in citizen engagement opportunities. Scholars can now understand that in rural, under-resourced municipalities, *% unemployment* might not be the most accurate predictor of citizen engagement, and practitioners can now understand that engagement and outreach efforts with citizens should be the same whether those citizens are employed or not.

Additionally, *% Republicans* was utilized as a control variable for this study because voting habits have been correlated with citizen engagement levels (Carpini, Cook & Jacobs, 2004; Political Typology, 2017). Understanding voting habits of citizens in municipalities was important for controlling for the impact voting habits have on citizen

engagement levels. There were likely several reasons *% Republicans* was primarily insignificant in this study. First, one of the models found that a higher *% of Republicans* actually negatively impacted citizen engagement. This is a surprising finding considering rural areas usually have more conservative citizens (Sng, Neuberg, Varnum, & Kenrick; 2017). This could be a significant finding for future studies examining the effect partisanship has on citizen engagement at the municipal level of government. Further research will need to be conducted to clarify the role *% Republicans* has on citizen engagement. Scholars can study these rural, under-resourced communities to better determine why a higher *% of Republicans* actually had a negative impact on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the Inter-Mountain West. In conclusion, *population, % minority citizens, % unemployment rate, and % Republicans* were important for developing thorough models, but their impact on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process were minimal for this study.

Implications for CGT

I originally tested Ansell & Gash's (2008) model of CGT, and utilized literature from strategic planning, citizen engagement, and government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement to develop additional variables for this study. After reviewing the findings and discussion of this study, I re-created Ansell & Gash's (2008) model based on CGT findings and government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process for rural, under-resourced municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. As displayed in Figure 7 below, I removed the left section of the model that focused on *power, resources, incentives, and trust*. *Trust* is already included as a

variable within the collaborative governance process, and duplication within the model isn't necessary. By removing this portion of the model, average *education levels* and average *household income* were also removed as independent variables, because the findings were clear that government officials' positive perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process didn't increase as a result of these variables.

Furthermore, other scholars or practitioners might be able to use this model as an effective tool for testing collaborative governance processes at the municipal level of government in rural and under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West.

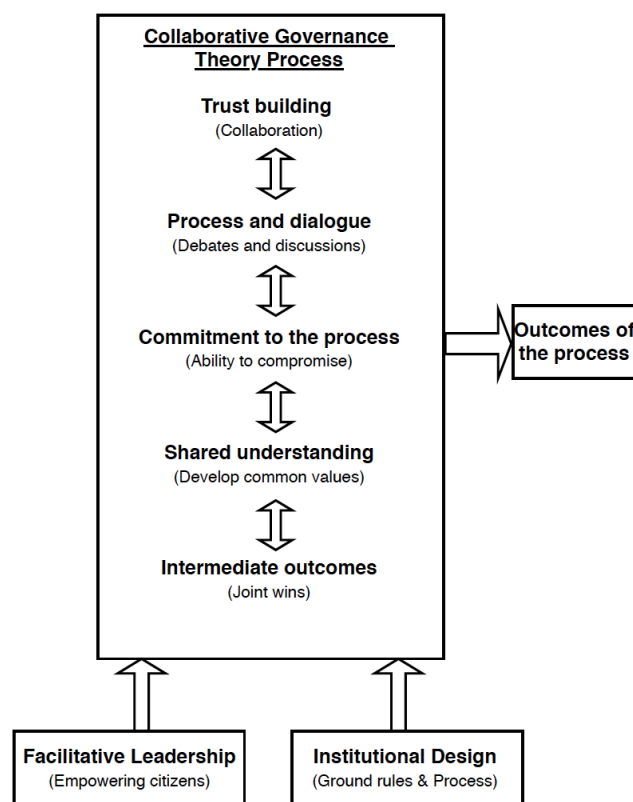


Figure 7. Suggested CGT Model

To be clear, the results from this study were based on findings from rural, under-resourced municipalities and might not extend to other regions with the same results.

As previously stated, this study relied on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and not on citizens' perceptions of the same processes. As a result, there was no way to compare citizens' perspectives of engagement to government officials' perceptions of the same processes. A future study should gather data from both the citizen and government officials' perceptions. Furthermore, scholars should use caution when applying the CGT model to smaller, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West because the model has historically been applied to larger, urban municipalities. In other words, additional research needs to be conducted that understands the effectiveness of the CGT model in small, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West.

From a broad perspective, scholars conducting research in other geographical regions that are employing CGT should consider employing Ansell & Gash's (2008) entire model. This research can't be generalized to the United States due to different demographics, socio-economic data, and the unique rural geography of the municipalities studied. However, scholars can certainly utilize the adjusted model if they are investigating government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in rural, under-resourced municipalities within the Inter-Mountain West. Even though I am emphasizing caution, a major benefit of this study is practitioners now have a revised citizen engagement model for rural, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West that is more simple than Ansell & Gash's (2008) original CGT layout. If practitioners choose to use this model, there are fewer resources and employees required to implement similar citizen engagement processes at the municipal level. Furthermore, the findings in this study reinforce the importance of the *collaborative* process within CGT. While

municipalities are required by law to implement certain elements of the *collaborative* process in their municipal decisions (public notices, collaborative, etc.), scholars and more importantly practitioners might want to understand that the core of the CGT model seems to consist of the most important and reliable components for creating a deliberative, informative, and fulfilling citizen engagement process. While *leadership* and *institution* aren't included in the core *collaborative* process of the revised model, they are still two very important variables that should be utilized for a successful CGT process. In the end, this study provides one approach for investigating government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level of government in the American West, and expands the literature that empirically investigates citizen engagement approaches that utilizing CGT in their strategic planning processes (see Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009).

Limitations

As with most research, there were several limitations this study encountered when investigating factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. First, this study relied on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and not on citizens' perceptions of the same processes. As a result, there was no way to compare citizens' perspectives of engagement to government officials' perceptions of the same processes. Only gathering data on one perspective of citizen engagement was a shortcoming of this study, and a problem that future studies should address.

Next, this study could have more effectively measured the *collaborative* process. Many local governments follow state mandated citizen engagement rules and methods for

engaging citizens in local government policy decisions. Several of the citizen engagement methods utilized by local governments might have failed to allow citizens and government officials the same *collaborative* experience. Therefore, officials might have perceived *collaboration* to be present, whereas citizens might have had the perception that the processes weren't collaborative. This study could have been more critical about the quality of collaboration citizens and government officials perceived, and could have more effectively measured those perceptions.

Third, the government officials that responded to the survey were relying on their perceptions of citizen engagement processes that happened between one and 10 years ago. Government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement processes that occurred in 2008 have a higher chance of inaccurate responses simply because memories may fade with time, and perceptions shift. The information they provided could impact the validity and reliability of this study, even though they believed their perceptions of their citizen engagement processes were accurate. Fourth, the majority of municipalities that responded to the survey (n=89) had a *mayor-council* structure of government, and (n=9) had a *council-manager* structure of government. This limitation was related to my response rate of 26%, even though response rates for many online surveys have been in the single digits (LaRose & Tsai, 2014). If the response rate was higher, this might have resulted in a greater variability of local *government structures*, and a more in-depth analysis of the impact *government structure* had on government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level of government.

Next, external validity is defined as a random sample with a large enough sample size for proper statistical analysis (Mentzer & Flint, 1997). External validity encounters

problems with the current study design. The focus of this study was on a specific region in the Inter-mountain (Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming). One disadvantage was I couldn't randomize the sample because the sample was already predetermined. Furthermore, there were only (n=429) municipalities in these three states, and not every municipality in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming had developed a strategic plan. As a result, future research studies could survey all municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, but their study couldn't be random given the small sample size, and the fact that not every municipality created a strategic plan. One advantage of this study was the specific goal of understanding government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in a region of the Inter-mountain West, not to understand all government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement throughout the United States. This eliminated the need for a random sample and generalizing the results to the entire U.S. population.

Future Research

Since scholars have yet to use CGT to examine decision makers' perceptions of citizen engagement at the municipal level in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, and specifically not in relation to the strategic planning process, this study fulfills a unique gap in the literature. Furthermore, to my knowledge no studies have researched government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement strategic planning processes, especially in rural, under-resourced municipalities in the Inter-Mountain West. Future scholars could build on the findings in this study by developing a large multi-state study, examining rural and under-resourced municipalities that have conducted citizen engagement strategic planning processes. In addition, by increasing the number of states involved in the study, scholars could survey municipalities that more recently completed

their strategic plans (within the last five years), resulting in more reliable and valid responses from government officials. Lastly, and most important, future scholars could attempt to gather data from both government officials and citizens that were involved in the same strategic planning citizen engagement processes at the municipal level of government for comparative analysis. Even though scholars have conducted research on the difference between citizen perceptions and government officials' perceptions of the same citizen engagement process (see Goss, 1999; Lowndes et al., 2001; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Wilfred et al., 1973), scholars have yet to focus on these perceptions in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. As a result, a multi-state analysis that focuses on under-resourced and rural municipalities with more contemporary strategic planning citizen engagement processes, and employs CGT as the theoretical model, will fulfill a much-needed gap in the PPA, citizen engagement, strategic planning, government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement, and CGT literature.

Ultimately, the results of this study indicate government officials at the municipal level of government in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming utilize several key variables within the CGT model when designing strategic planning processes. Furthermore, the findings in this study provide a unique opportunity for local government officials trying to design effective and inclusive citizen engagement processes in rural, under-resourced municipalities. While there is no *one best way* to design and implement collaborative engagement processes at the municipal level of government, this study expands the literature and findings that will ultimately help scholars and practitioners understand factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic

planning process. In the end, a successful collaborative citizen engagement process requires that government officials understand the complexities and factors impacting their municipalities, and an engaged citizenry that is willing to participate in a collaborative and effective public policy process. Based on this study and many other scholarly findings in the near future, perhaps CGT will continue to evolve in a way that ultimately will result in a deliberative, collaborative, and effective citizen engagement processes at the municipal level of government.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, engaging citizens and communities in local government public policy and administrative decisions is important for a representative democracy (Bryson, 2011; King & Stivers, 1998; Kweit & Kweit, 2007; Mariana, 2008; Mohammadi, et al., 2017; Putnam; 2000; Wilfred et al., 1973). Since few scholars in PPA examined citizen engagement in the strategic planning process (see Brody, Godschalk & Burby, 2003; Bryson, Crosby, & Bryson, 2009; Wheeland, 2003), and to my knowledge no scholars have examined government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. As a result, this study fulfilled a small but important niche within contemporary PPA literature. Furthermore, this study provides a foundation for future scholars to utilize in citizen engagement research, and one that will help enhance the ever evolving paradigm of CGT in PPA.

This research tested whether or not elements of Ansell & Gash's (2008) CGT is utilized in the strategic planning process at the municipal level of government. Improving our understanding of the factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process in rural and under-resourced municipalities in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming is important for future theoretical and practical citizen engagement development. While scholars are still researching the most effective collaborative governance processes for engaging citizens and government officials (see Ansell & Gash, 2008), practitioners are also trying to better understand and implement successful collaborative citizen engagement processes at the municipal level of

government. In practice, it can be difficult to engage citizens in meaningful and effective decision-making. As a result, this study was critical for further understanding the most effective and efficient collaborative interaction processes between citizens and government officials.

The findings in this study matter for several different reasons. First, better understanding government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement is important for an informed and collaborative democracy. As previously mentioned, citizens and government officials have different perceptions of the same citizen engagement processes, and minimizing those varying perceptions for future practical and theoretical use is important for NPM and new public service (NPS) as evolving paradigms in PPA. Second, CGT provides a theoretical and practical model that effectively describes citizen engagement processes. To my knowledge, since no studies in PPA have utilized CGT to examine factors impacting government officials' perceptions of citizen engagement in the strategic planning process, the findings of this study provide unique quantitative results that future scholars and practitioners might utilize in practical and theoretical settings. Third, from a broader perspective, it was important to study these three states because they primarily consisted of widely separated urban areas and rural municipalities that were under-populated, and often lacked staffing and financial resources for conducting extensive collaborative governance and citizen engagement processes. Examining these municipalities provides insight into the successes and limitations citizen engagement processes encountered in these settings. Ultimately, the results of this study provide a positive perspective on local governments engaging citizens in our contemporary democracy. The variety of citizen engagement effort practiced by local government

agencies to interact with citizens is beneficial for our citizens, and ultimately the future democratic society of the United States of America.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire

Introduction and Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a study of how municipalities in the InterMountain West use strategic planning and/or citizen engagement for management purposes. The survey will take about 15 minutes of your time. Your individual municipality will not be identified in my research, nor will you as an individual be identified in my research.

Your participation will help us understand how and whether municipalities engage citizens in strategic planning, and may help guide future engagement efforts in practice. You will have the option at the end of this survey to enter your name and address for a chance at winning one of 20---\$10 gift cards. You have been selected to participate in this survey based upon your municipality's history of developing strategic plans. Your participation is voluntary. You must be 18 years or older to participate. You may choose not to answer certain questions and can stop at any time. Your responses will NOT be connected to your identity as an individual or within your municipality. Your answers are NOT considered public information, and are not available through the Freedom of Information Act requests. This research is being conducted by Michael P. Wallner, a Ph.D. candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Boise State University. If you have any questions about this survey or research, please contact: michaelwallner@u.boisestate.edu or Dr. Stephanie Witt at switt@boisestate.edu. Should you have additional research compliance questions, please contact the Boise State IRB Office at 208-426-5401

or humansubjects@boisestate.edu.

Thanks for your time!

Key Terms & Clarification For the purposes of this survey, citizens and stakeholders should be considered the same concept.

This survey is attempting to collect data about the entire strategic planning design process, not just one or two public meetings. Please provide responses that you feel are accurate perceptions of the entire strategic planning design process in your municipality.

Q1

Occupation

Please select your current position:

City Manager

Elected Official

Assistant City Manager

City Administrator

Director

Assistant Director

Other (Please specify) _____

Q2

Structure of Local Government

What is the structure of your local government?

Council Manager

Mayor-Council

Commission

Town Meeting

Representative Town Meeting

Other (Please specify) _____

Q3

Historical Information To the best of your knowledge, what year did your municipality design or most recently update the strategic plan?

▼ 2017 ... My municipality has not created or updated our strategic plan within the last 27 years

Q4

Policy Entrepreneur

A policy entrepreneur is an individual who waits for government problems to arise, for which they can attach or recommend their own solutions to the policy problem.

As a result of this definition, did a policy entrepreneur suggest or lobby for the design of a municipal strategic plan?

Yes

No

Unsure

Q5

How do you feel about the extent to which policy entrepreneurs play in the design of a municipal strategic plan?

Q6

Citizen Engagement

Were the following citizen engagement methods used in your municipal strategic planning process:

	Yes	No	Unsure
Community forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formal public hearings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizen advisory committees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Open meetings between citizens and planning staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitated workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Household surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviews with citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telephone surveys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet based engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newspaper articles/editorials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Letter mailings to home addresses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q8 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **community forums** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q9 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **community forums** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q10 Since turnout for **community forums** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q11 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q12 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **formal public hearings** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q13 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **formal public hearings** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q14 Since turnout for formal public meetings was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q15 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q16 Please estimate, how many residents participated on the **citizen advisory committees** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q17 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **citizen advisory committees** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q18 Since turnout for citizen advisory committees was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q19 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q20 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **open meetings between citizens and planning staff** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q21 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **open meetings between citizens and planning staff** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q22 Since turnout for open meetings between citizens and planning staff was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q23 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q24 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **household surveys** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q25 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **household surveys** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q26 Since turnout for **household surveys** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q27 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q28 Please estimate, how many citizens conducted **interviews** with government officials?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q29 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **interviews** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q30 Since turnout for **interviews** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q31 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q32 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **telephone surveys** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q33 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **telephone surveys** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q34 Since turnout for **telephone surveys** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q35 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q36 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **internet engagement process**?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q37 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **internet engagement** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q38 Since turnout for the internet engagement process was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

- Lack of advertisement
- Ineffective citizen engagement method
- Problematic meeting time
- Weak incentive to participate
- Low efficacy
- Other _____

Q39 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q40 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **facilitated workshops** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q41 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **facilitated workshops** satisfactory?

- Yes
- No

Q42 Since turnout for **facilitated workshops** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

- Lack of advertisement
- Ineffective citizen engagement method
- Problematic meeting time
- Weak incentive to participate
- Low efficacy
- Other _____

Q43 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q44 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the "**other**" process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q45 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for "**other**" satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q46 Since turnout for **other** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other _____

Q47 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q48 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **newspaper articles and/or editorials** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q49 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for **newspaper articles and/or editorials process** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q50 Since turnout for **newspaper articles and/or editorials** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other

Q51 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q52 Please estimate, how many residents participated in the **letter mailing** process?

▼ 1-5 ... 100+

Q53 To the best of your knowledge, was citizen turnout for the **letter mailing process** satisfactory?

Yes

No

Q54 Since turnout for **letter mailing** was unsatisfactory, what was the reason for low turnout?

Lack of advertisement

Ineffective citizen engagement method

Problematic meeting time

Weak incentive to participate

Low efficacy

Other

Q55 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q56
Collaboration

Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Government officials implemented activities to build trust amongst citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens communicated using face to face dialogue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens developed a sense of shared ownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens identified common values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens reached goals they set for the process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q57 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q58
Institution

Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
All interested citizens were included	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear ground rules were established and maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The agenda was clearly defined and communicated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The process of proposing and deliberating ideas was fair to all citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q59 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q60
Leadership

Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Government officials excelled at mediating conflicts amongst citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government officials facilitated conversations between citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government officials encouraged creative problem solving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government officials helped build trust between citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q61 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q62
Incentives

Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Citizens thought their perspectives would be acknowledged	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens felt the process was legitimate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizens understood they were dependent upon each other for a successful planning process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Government officials provided incentives for citizens to participate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q63 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q64
Engagement

Thinking broadly about the overall process, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your municipal strategic planning design process:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Citizen engagement was beneficial	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Citizen engagement impacted policy outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q65 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share.

Q66

Municipal Information

Please select your state:

Reminder: Your municipal information is for data analysis, your Individual or municipal responses will not be linked in the research findings.

- Montana
- Idaho
- Wyoming

Q67

Municipal Information Please select your municipality

▼ Alberton ... Wolf Point

Municipal Information Please select your municipality

▼ Aberdeen ... Worley

Municipal Information Please select your municipality

▼ Afton ... Yoder

Q68 Free response box: Please add additional comments you would like to share that were not addressed in the survey.

Q69 **Your name and address provided WILL NOT be recorded or LINKED to your responses.** If you wish to enter the drawing for one of *twenty* available \$10 Gift Cards, please provide your name and mailing address in the box provided! **YOU MUST HIT THE FORWARD ARROWS BUTTON FOR YOUR SURVEY RESPONSES TO BE RECORDED AND TO ENTER THE GIFT CARD DRAWING.**
