

Cities in Crisis: How the Bureaucratic Politics of Public Health and Safety Shape the American Experience

By

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Abstract

Across the United States, citizens are directly impacted each day by the policies and programs adopted by local governments. Municipal governance in the United States is conducted by elected and administrative officials, who conduct themselves similarly to officials at other levels of government. Developing and utilizing an adapted theoretical framework based on the theories of bureaucratic politics, social construction, and policy feedback, this project asks: how do municipal bureaucrats and local politicians respond to crises of public health and safety in their jurisdictions, and to what extent do those responses mitigate or exacerbate the crises in question? Using data collected from observations, interviews, and publicly available city council meeting minutes, this study delineates the steps taken to adapt an established theoretical framework through rigorous qualitative inquiry including content analysis, mini-ethnography, and stories for research. Further, formal propositions concerning the anticipated priorities, values, and actions of local bureaucrats and politicians are proposed, and specific conclusions are presented that demonstrate the validity of those propositions. Finally, a larger research agenda is proposed, focused on refining and exploring the adapted theoretical framework through case studies, as well as qualitative and quantitative analyses.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Every day across America, citizens feel the impact of public policy created and implemented by local governments. When it comes to issues like community safety, public health, and affordable housing, the quality of life of the American citizen is determined in significant and meaningful ways by local governments and the policies they create. The process by which public policy at the local level is created and the resultant outcomes of those policies are part of the larger ecosystem of governance in the United States. This process engages elected and administrative officials in political struggles in which bargaining, horse-trading, and compromise are common, and just as policy at the federal level is constantly reinterpreted and revised by elected and administrative officials, so too are the local laws and regulations that most directly impact the citizen.

However, all too often, we see examples of how the federal government fails to respond adequately to various crises, both human and natural (Hartman & Squires, 2006; Roberts, 2006). Similar processes replay themselves in cities across the country, where local government has been slow or ineffective in preventing or reacting to critical issues, particularly those that fall under the broad heading of public health and safety. In the past decade, there have been numerous publicized instances where municipalities in the United States have been faced with what are often characterized in the media as sudden and unexpected health and safety crises. However, the characterization of these crises as sudden or unexpected lacks empirical evidence, and therefore the claim must be examined from critical perspective. This project seeks to do so through detailed analyses of two high-profile cases where local governments have engaged with health and safety crises. In Flint, Michigan (MI), a lack of clean drinking water has forced

citizens to rely on bottled water for everything from cooking to showering (Davis, Kolb, Reynolds, Rothstein, & Sikkema, 2016, March 21; Graham, 2016a, 2016b). In Manchester, New Hampshire (NH), opioids have ravaged the city, with citizens of New Hampshire overdosing on fentanyl at the highest rates in the country (Leins, 2017). Manchester accounts for 25% of opioid-related deaths, but has only 8% of the population in the state (Soucy & O'Higgins, 2016). Although these two crises are substantively different, they are not entirely unique when it comes to the ways in which both local governments have addressed them through the policy process. In fact, the commonalities in the policy-making process that preceded them and proceeded from them may prove instrumental in understanding how other local governments engage in policy making around acute issues of health and safety. To develop an understanding of this process, I ask: how do municipal bureaucrats and local politicians respond to crises in their jurisdictions, and to what extent do those responses mitigate or exacerbate the crises in question?

To answer this, I conducted two case studies. The two cases selected for inclusion and analysis here were chosen based on several characteristics. First, they both received extensive media attention at the national level, which allows for an assessment of the impact of policy feedback from mass publics. Second, they were accessible and responsive in terms of public records, meetings, and willingness to engage in critical research. Third, both Flint and Manchester have suffered economic downturns, political scandals, and/or cultural shifts in the recent past. As this study seeks to connect the crises in each city with the underlying issues that may already exist, a city that is otherwise in “good shape” is not a good candidate for a case study. However, as the conclusions of this project suggest, there is much work to be done on the

broader topic of municipal public health and safety crisis, and these cases are far from the only cities that have suffered from similar problems.

The cases were analyzed over the same period, 2013-2017, marking the beginning of each crisis, the peak of each, and continuing to the present, as neither crisis has been fully resolved. Three sources of data and three methodologies were utilized to conduct the case studies: short ethnographic observations, or *mini-ethnographies*; city council meeting minutes for the years 2013-2017, coded using a modified membership categorization analysis; and interviews, conducted and coded using a modified *stories for research* methodology. Out of this analysis, specific conclusions and next steps for research are presented, as well as potential shortcomings of this particular study and how future work may fill those gaps.

Beyond looking for commonalities that could help explain the policy process and outcomes that led to and led from these crises, this work will also serve as an attempt to tell the stories of the people whose lives have been impacted by these crises and related policies. This includes administrators and politicians who are formally involved in the policy process, representatives of businesses and non-profits, interest groups, and activists who either formally or informally engage in that process, as well as citizens who have felt the impact of these crises and associated policies first-hand. These personal accounts of the policy process and its impacts provide context to the theoretical and practical understandings presented herein.

Furthermore, a revised framework of bureaucratic politics is developed to answer fundamental questions about public administration and the relationship between democracy and bureaucracy, as discussed by Simon, Drucker, and Waldo (1952). By recognizing the critical role that bureaucrats play in the policy process, this work attempts to support Waldo's view that

administration is not entirely separate from bureaucracy, that efficiency is not the only value or tenet favored by bureaucrats, and that the ideals of *scientific management* are not a good guide to responsible bureaucratic action (Waldo, 1952).

Finally, within the discipline of public administration, there have been frequent calls to improve upon the theoretical foundations of the field (Dobel, 2001; Kirlin, 2001; Rosenbloom, 1983), and this is the primary goal of this study. In developing the aforementioned framework, this project seeks to challenge the notion that public administration is atheoretical, while simultaneously using methodologies, theories, and sources that are interdisciplinary in nature to build a wider theoretical base for the discipline. Expanding the theoretical underpinnings of the study of local government is a constant and necessary challenge for scholars of the field, and developing a theory based on existing theoretical concepts, while incorporating the reality of contemporary events and utilizing innovative sources and methods will help to shepherd public administration and the study of government into the next part of this century.

Bureaucratic Politics and Local Government

Understanding the specific mechanics of decision-making at the local level as it relates to policy is an understudied area of public administration, but a critical process that must be understood if scholars are to better delineate important concepts such as federalism, policy formulation, and the power of administrators to shape policy. While there are several theoretical approaches to this complex process, it is the traditional theoretical framework of bureaucratic politics that is best suited to be revised to apply to local policy formulation. Developed in part out of the original decision-making theories of public administration, bureaucratic politics encompasses how decisions are made in the context of bureaucratic structure (Merton, 1940),

order-giving and hierarchy (Barnard, 1938; Follett, 1926), and the human factors that influence each player in the game (Maslow, 1943). This framework has traditionally been applied to federal-level actors, but it has been adapted in this work to fit the particularities of municipal government.

Local governments are substantively different in many ways from federal or state governments, as clearly demonstrated through the numerous studies of municipal elections, politics, and bureaucracies that have thus far assisted in our understanding of local democracy. These differences extend to most elements of government, including the policy process. Executives, both mayors and city managers, have significantly more power over the policy process than the President or Speaker of the House, while legislatures and courts hold substantially less power (Fox, 1974). The financial structure of local governments is varied as well, and the budgeting process is driven by professional standards and the attempts of bureaucratic agencies to keep their municipalities stable, which does not always lead to positive outcomes for the majority of citizens (Levy, Meltsner, & Wildavsky, 1974). Furthermore, the political structures of cities are varied and idiosyncratic, and policy solutions that are successful for a particular city may not always be successful in others (Stone, Whelan, & Murin, 1986). Finally, the relatively small size, limited scope, and local bias of a particular city will always remain present, shaping the nature of policy-making in that particular municipality (Oliver, Ha, & Callen, 2012).

However, the nature of these differences varies depending upon on the municipality itself, based on the unique characteristics that exist within a given town or city. This distinction makes the process of developing political and administrative theoretical frameworks difficult, but

all the more necessary if scholars are to understand how local governance operates in practice. Local democracies make important decisions that impact the lives of citizens in meaningful ways. If public policy is defined as the decisions made by government that lead to both actions and nonactions (Weible, 2014), then consequential decisions made at the local level are in fact public policy, even if they are not laws or regulations codified in the U.S. Code or at the state level. Therefore, it is critical to develop tools that will help scholars to understand how such local policy is formed. A revised theory of bureaucratic politics is an important step towards understanding how decisions are made within local governments.

There are lessons to learn about local governance from the study of national governance. Such lessons are primarily useful in understanding the significant differences that exist between local and federal governments, as well between the thousands of local governments that exist in the United States. In particular, it is noted that local governments vary widely in three areas: size, a reference to population; scope, which considers the duties and activities of that particular government; and bias, which can impact how costs and benefits are delivered to constituents based upon affluence, racial composition, and other factors. In a study of local elections, these three variables are found to be particularly useful in understanding the differences in electoral politics among local governments, and may be helpful to consider when reflecting on similar differences that may exist in the bureaucratic decision-making processes among governments at the local level (Oliver et al., 2012).

Popular existing theories of local policy and politics include classical pluralism (R. A. Dahl, 1961), urban regimes (Stone, 1989), and the economic imperative of competition between cities (Peterson, 1981). Each of these theories addresses the politics of municipal governance,

and by doing so touches on the policy process in those governments. However, these theories address the governance of cities during the regular, everyday process of governing a municipality. While elements of these theories, in particular the focus on economic concerns as explored by Peterson (1981), are relevant to how municipal government behaves, there remain unanswered questions as to what the actual decision-making process looks like during a crisis. To understand governance during a crisis, a revised theory of bureaucratic politics, whose explanatory power is explored in the cases set forward here, is an important step towards understanding how decisions are made within local governments during periods of acute crisis.

The first step is to delineate the differences in the local process from the federal process, thereby creating a revised framework of bureaucratic politics that applies specifically to local government. To do so, it is necessary to conceptualize that framework as an extension of existing literatures that help us understand policy formulation at the local level, and the relevance that local administrators have to that process: bureaucratic power (Carpenter, 2001; Carpenter & Krause, 2012), policy feedback (Mettler, 2002; Mettler & SoRelle, 2014; Moynihan & Soss, 2014; Soss & Schram, 2007), and the social construction of populations (Schneider, Ingram, & de Leon, 2014; Soss & Weaver, 2017).

Formal Propositions

It should be made clear from the outset that this project is neither intended to be easily replicable, nor to present definitive and falsifiable causal conclusions. Broadly, this project proposes that municipal bureaucrats and politicians across multiple cities act similarly during the policy creation process and attempt to push their chosen policy in the established manner of bureaucratic politics. Their chosen goals may vary, but they will focus on cost-savings and

efficiency over health and safety. This research is an exploratory undertaking that will attempt to identify and delineate important and understudied elements of the local policy-making process. In doing so, I hope to understand how municipal bureaucrats and local politicians engaged in those processes respond to crises in their jurisdictions, and thereby establish a revised theory of bureaucratic politics which may be used to conduct causal and replicable studies in the future. This thesis is operationalized into specific propositions below:

<p>(1) Municipal governments prioritize policies that focus on cost-saving measures.</p>	<p>(2) The actions and/or nonactions of municipal government before and during a crisis will generate policy feedback effects</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1a) During the policy creation process, the individuals at the bargaining table prioritize parochial, political, and agency-specific interests over broader public interests, including health and safety. • (1b) When a higher importance is placed on cost-saving policy than on public health and safety policy, it may contribute to the formation or exacerbation of a public health and safety crisis. • (1c) Once a public health and safety crisis is underway, the importance that municipal government places on public health and safety concerns as compared to cost-saving ones will vary, depending in part upon the population of the municipality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2a) Citizen mobilization will occur in some context as a response to the actions/non-actions of municipal government during a crisis. • (2b) This mobilization and the external pressures that come with it will impact the policy process, a dynamic mitigated in part by race, class, and other factors. • (2c) These feedback effects may be part of a causal mechanism, which establishes how and why municipal governments respond to public health and safety crises differently.

Figure 1. Formal propositions.

With definitions and formal propositions laid out, this manuscript proceeds as follows: Chapter II builds upon these definitions, and reviews the literature concerning bureaucratic

politics, bureaucratic power, policy feedback, and social construction. In doing so, key elements of these literatures are defined and explored to position this research within the appropriate context. Chapter III sets forth and defends a revised framework of local bureaucratic politics to create a new model for assessing the policy formulation process in local government. Chapters IV and V consider the cases of water quality in Flint, MI, and opioid addiction in Manchester, NH, respectively. Chapter VI reviews the findings from each of these cases and offers cross-case analysis, while Chapter VII discusses the implications for both practitioners and academics, provides an overview of the limits of this study, and makes recommendations for future work in this area.

Chapter II: Theoretical Foundations

Bureaucratic Politics

To apply to local policy formulation, the original theory of bureaucratic politics must be critically reviewed to explain how a revised framework will address the inconsistencies between how federal government decision-making processes operate, and how local governments formulate policy. Additionally, as is shown later in this chapter, it is the structural forces stemming from the relative power of individual actors, the impact of policy feedback, and the social construction of populations that help to shape and define local policy formulation, and these components must also be included in this revised theory.

While the traditional model of bureaucratic politics places administrative and elected actors around a table, insulated from the outside world while bargaining and cooperating among themselves, this adapted framework places the bargaining table in the public eye and in an accessible setting—the city council chambers. In addition to the smoky backrooms of the State Department, local bureaucratic politics takes place in the public chambers of city councils and other local legislative bodies across the United States. This means that any theory of local bureaucratic politics must take into account this change in setting, and the potential factors, influences, and consequences that come along with it. Through the analysis conducted here, an adapted and revised theory will be presented as an alternative that takes into account the dynamism and distinctiveness of American local government.

As each of these elements is discussed in turn, the focus of the research is on developing grounded theory out of these literatures that can be operationalized, tested, and formalized within the context of two specific cases of crises in local government. In this literature review, as in the

analysis of data that follows, the emphasis is on an interpretative approach that allows for the data itself, in this case the existing literature, to illuminate for the researcher the specific elements of theory to be brought to bear on the problem at hand (Diaz Andrade, 2009). A lengthier discussion of this process will be described in Chapter III, as part of the broader consideration of the methodological approaches used throughout this study.

The existing literature on bureaucratic politics reveals eight crucial questions that must be answered before creating a model of bureaucratic politics for local government. These questions consider the players or actors at the decision-making table; their power, parochial interests and values; the structural, environmental and organizational factors that affect the process; how both individuals and organizations bargain and cooperate to reach decisions; and how varying perspectives and perceptions of accountability impact the decision-making process. Addressing these questions by applying foundational theory along with seminal works in the field provides a rich base from which to explore the implications of bureaucratic politics on local government, particularly local policy formulation.

Who “sits at the table” to make decisions? In the traditional theory of bureaucratic politics, the “decision-making table” consists of a chief executive and their staff, professional administrators representing both upper and middle levels of an organization, and elected political officials (Allison & Zelikow, 1971; Bryner, 1987; Cleveland, 1956; Meier, 1987; Rourke, 1969). These individuals come into the process with networks, roles, and structures already in place that constrain their ability to make certain decisions, but which are adaptable and flexible depending upon the other individuals involved in the process, the organizational environment, and the formal and informal hierarchies present within the group (Appleby, 1949; Halperin & Clapp,

1974; Long, 1949; Ripley & Franklin, 1984). The process continues after the official “decision” has been reached, with bureaucrats in particular controlling practice, implementation, and enforcement, supported by an informational asymmetry that benefits those on the front lines of policy (Bryner, 1987; Goodsell, 2003). This structure has been shown to accurately describe the federal decision-making process, and there is evidence to suggest that a similar dynamic may exist at the local level.

As local government in the United States has evolved, it has been shaped by multiple forces, including norms, legal precedent, political machines, and attempts at federal government control (Gottdiener, 1987). Despite the changing nature of local government, similar actors can be expected to participate in local policy formulation as at the federal or state level. City executives, managers, and career bureaucrats are involved in the policy formulation process, and to a lesser extent municipal legislatures may weigh in. Bureaucrats involved in rule-making at the local level may prefer a strong principal or chief executive guiding the process, so long as the actions of that executive help to “get things done” (Gains, John, & Stoker, 2008). Finally, at the local level in particular, citizens may have substantial influence depending on the issue, and may be involved both formally through organized committees and informally through pressure groups that seek to influence the policy formulation process. These groups may include neighborhood organizations motivated by positive policy feedback that encourages them to become more engaged (Levy et al., 1974; Sharp, 2012).

There is another player at the table when it comes to local decision-making: corporate interests. Unlike the strict conflict-of-interest laws, rules, and norms that purport to help shape decision-making at the federal level, at the local level there is ample opportunity for corporations

and businesses to represent themselves in the policy process. This is most discernable in the tax abatement and development subsidies frequently provided by cities to businesses, often without discretion or meaningful intent. Evidence suggests that municipal economic policy is influenced by these interests, the very interests such policies might have been intended to constrain (Sharp, 2012).

Finally, the unique character of the elected officials within local government should be considered. Often driven by a sense of duty and civic commitment, elected officials in local government are dedicated to serving their constituents as problem-solvers, addressing one issue at a time. This focus contrasts with the filter of electoral politics that may cloud the decisions of federal or state elected officials. This problem-solving focus is partially due to the high rate of local incumbents retaining their positions, but in no small part also due to the managerial nature of local democracies. Elected officials are more likely to focus on parochial and temporary issues, attempting to “solve problems” for their constituents, not on larger social or economic issues within their communities (Oliver et al., 2012).

How do structural, environmental, and organizational factors influence the decision-making process? The theory of bureaucratic politics considers a number of critical factors, including internal factors such as group membership, the physical environment of a decision-making process, organizational culture, and bureaucratic rules and structures (Appleby, 1949; Barnard, 1938; Reagan, 1987; Seidman, 1970; Stillman, 2004). Outside forces including socioeconomic, political, and administrative factors will impact decision-making as well (Cleveland, 1956; Meier, 1987). Within a given decision-making group, structures and pressures from the organizations represented by the individuals at the table may be brought in, including

formal mandates, sub-governments, and particular interests and values (Allison & Zelikow, 1971; Brower & Abolafia, 1997; Goodsell, 2003; Ripley & Franklin, 1984). Additionally, these individuals bring with them the routines and decision-making processes, issue networks, and institutional norms of their respective organizations (Hammond, 1986; Hecl, 1978; Selznick, 2011).

The structures that influence the local decision-making process are similar to those defined in the literature on bureaucratic politics, with some exceptions. First, there is wide variation in the goals, behavior, and professionalism of bureaucratic agencies at the local level. This leads to an analogous gap between the power and complexity of some local agencies compared to others (Fox, 1974). There are numerous variations on governmental structure in local government, including weak/strong mayoral systems, commissions, council-manager systems, and others (Stone et al., 1986). These factors lead to a unique policy-making environment at the local level, which is shaped by both socioeconomic and structural factors (Levy et al., 1974). Furthermore, local governments are subject to the idiosyncratic circumstances of their particular jurisdictions as opposed to the larger structural and systematic influences of the federal government. This creates an environment in which decisions are made with an eye towards problem-solving, as opposed to far-reaching structural implications (Oliver et al., 2012).

Most local government decisions involve the provision and distribution of services, a distributive policy measure, and not redistributive or social policies. When redistributive or social policies are enacted at the local level, it is often due to state or federal mandate, which circumvents the local decision-making process. This leads to a decision-making process in which

bureaucrats are intimately involved in both the agenda-setting and implementation phases of policymaking. Additionally, since the other policies enacted by local governments are frequently created to promote business development, local business leaders and corporations are heavily involved in the process of creating favorable policy including tax abatements and subsidies (Sharp, 2012). Therefore, when local governments make policy decisions, the decision-makers are primarily influenced by structural and environmental factors that are generated by the individuals chosen to represent the administrative arm of government, and in some cases by the business community.

How are the parochial and particular values and interests of these actors represented? Administrators and elected officials, or their chosen representatives at the bargaining table, will approach any decision-making process with varied opinions, choices, and personal interests. These may include remote, immediate or personally opportunistic purposes, as well as the values and interests of their organizations (Appleby, 1949; Barnard, 1938; Halperin & Clapp, 1974). While they may be influenced by the values and interests of their judicial or legislative peers, elected and administrative officials are unlikely to represent the choices of those branches of government when bargaining at the table (Meier, 1987; Stillman, 2004). Furthermore, the interests of the public, organizational leadership, and individual rank-and-file members of the organization should be represented, but in practice this does not always occur. Those interests may be mitigated by the personal priorities of the individuals at the table, whether or not they are in line with the views of the organization the individual represents (Allison & Zelikow, 1971; Brower & Abolafia, 1997; Finer, 1941; O'Leary, 2019)

The values and interests of actors at the local level are often contradictory, and part of a larger set of values based on their organizational or personal beliefs. Frequently, there is a focus on efficiency, particularly with regard to budgetary concerns, among local policy-makers (Boyne, 1998). Elected officials, involved in a decision-making process that results in a distributive policy, may engage in “area rewards,” distributing resources based on voting patterns in certain neighborhoods and impacted by the political orientation of the community represented (Cingranelli, 1981; Stensöta, 2011). Nalbandian (1990, 1999) writes that in addition to efficiency, the local government professional considers representation, individual rights, and social equity. These values, according to Nalbandian, help to establish the professionalism of the local bureaucrat, which should serve that individual well when attempting to express their power within the policy formulation process.

While elected officials often give lip service to the concerns of community organizations, the interests of those organizations are not always represented when decisions are being made. Whether or not the concerns of mass publics are heard in local government decision-making is partially based on the socioeconomic status and demographic characteristics of the group in question. It is also a function of the size and structure of the city, as evidence suggests that smaller cities will be more likely to consider such concerns (Sharp, 2012). The cohesiveness of neighborhood or activist groups can impact the level of influence that public opinion will have on a decision, as more cohesive coalitions will have a better chance of inducing the elected officials who represent them to adequately represent their interests (Stone, 1989).

How does the relative power of different officials influence decisions? Power in decision-making processes is driven foremost by the possession and distribution of information.

Roles, authority, and hierarchical control help to determine who possesses what information, and thereby what power they have (Appleby, 1949; Barnard, 1938; Long, 1949). The organizational home of the actors at the table is also critical to understanding their power, as the control they exert over their own organization is likely to be predictive of the type of control they may exert within a given decision-making scenario. Furthermore, administrative officials are more likely to possess useful information than elected officials, given the nature of their positions and the value placed upon information within their organizations (Rourke, 1969; Seidman, 1970).

Power for local government bureaucrats depends on the technical complexity, structural autonomy, complexity, and political skill of the individual and their agency. The formal power of chief executives and city managers, while potentially strong, depends upon where they sit in the structure of a particular local government. Legislatures and courts are nearly always near the bottom of the local power hierarchy (Fox, 1974). Community organizations and businesses hold significant power in any local decision-making process (Stone et al., 1986), as do employee unions (Fox, 1974). Municipal fragmentation in particular allows for a decentralized structure of power in local government, adding to the tension around power distribution at the local level (Gottdiener, 1987).

The power granted to neighborhood organizations and communities varies and, like the representation of their values and interests, is a function of socioeconomic status, demographics, and the cohesiveness of their coalition (Sharp, 2012; Stone, 1989). The managerially democratic nature of small municipalities gives more power to those actors who “get things done,” and rewards individuals who act with a focus towards solving particular problems with greater power (Oliver et al., 2012). In local democracies, power is still dependent on similar factors as at the

federal level, but the potency of information and expertise as the source of this power is magnified.

How do bureaucrats and politicians cooperate or bargain to reach decisions?

Bargaining occurs once the actors at the table have been chosen, the avenue of implementation is clear, and those actors who may have an option to either join or sit out a decision have made their choice (Halperin & Clapp, 1974; Meier, 1987). At the bargaining stage, the executive is able to set the agenda, facilitate cooperation through inducements and incentives, and force multiple actors to work together towards particular goals (Barnard, 1938; Cleveland, 1956; Heclo, 1978). Administrators will act according to the pressures and incentives from their own organizations, as well as according to the personal and professional relationships they have with others at the table. By controlling information and mobilizing support, administrators may serve as independent power brokers (Halperin & Clapp, 1974; Long, 1949; Rourke, 1969). This process, begun even before actors reach the table through informal and formal hierarchies and structures, facilitates bargaining and cooperation towards a decision, based in technical data as well as values and created within the context of the bureaucratic rules that govern the process (Meier, Stewart Jr, & England, 1991; Peters, 2002; Wildavsky, 1964).

Local government policy-makers bargain not only among each other, but also with individuals and organizations at other levels of government, particularly when it comes to budgetary issues (Cingranelli, 1981; Gottdiener, 1987). Bargaining occurs between executives, elected officials, and bureaucrats in a similar manner to other levels of government (Fox, 1974). This bargaining is often based on information and data, particularly when bureaucrats are involved (Levy et al., 1974). There is often tension between state and local governments, and so

the bargaining that takes place at the decision-making table, as well as post-hoc during the implementation phase, may enmesh actors at both levels in a principal-agent relationship (Rasmussen, 2000).

The managerial nature and focused problem-solving of local officials leads to a bargaining process that considers efficiency and budgetary concerns above all, and without foreign policy or massive political ramifications that force the veto of certain options, decisions are made almost entirely on the problem at hand. Of course, electoral considerations for some officials are still meaningful, but without the pressure of a massive party apparatus, they are less likely to impact decisions in a significant way (Oliver et al., 2012; Sharp, 2012). Even with engagement from neighborhood groups, the influential role of the business community, and pressure from other coalitions outside of government, local decision-makers have an ability to “get things done” that those at the federal level potentially do not (Stone, 1989).

How do formal and informal networks, organizations, and relationships impact decisions? Decision-making is not influenced merely by the hierarchical order of the actors making the decision, but takes place within a complex network of formal and informal relationships, where power is based on information control (Appleby, 1949; Halperin & Clapp, 1974). The formal and informal structures of the originating organizations of the actors plays a role in how the decision-making process is structured, and informal networks may be created between the actors at the table to facilitate cooperation and bargaining (Rourke, 1969; Seidman, 1970). These networks can be based on the transfer of information, the promotion of organizational priorities, or a shared focus on a particular issue (Brower & Abolafia, 1997; Hammond, 1986; Hecl, 1978).

Similar structures exist in the context of local decision-making, including formal organizations such as administrative agencies and political parties, along with informal networks that include interest groups, personal relationships, and hierarchies (Debus, Knill, & Tosun, 2013; Fox, 1974). However, there is a unique power in the direct link between a local government and the community it serves, which allows public opinion to have a larger impact on how decisions are made, particularly when it comes to matters of resource and service distribution policy. While community involvement in local government has declined over time, there is still no doubt that the influence of citizens on government is felt most directly at the local level (Gottdiener, 1987).

Since *local government* is not defined in the Constitution and is inherently dependent on state government for certain resources and power (Gottdiener, 1987), the relationship between local and state governments may be particularly fraught and complicated. While local governments often have jurisdiction over the distribution of resources and funding levels (Levy et al., 1974), state officials may have the ability to regulate local agencies, creating a principal-agent conflict between the two levels of government (Rasmussen, 2000). The structures of municipal governments vary dramatically, and the organizations and relationships within a given local government and with their respective state government are likely to vary depending on numerous factors unique to individual municipalities (Stone et al., 1986).

The impact of the idiosyncratic nature of local government on both formal and informal networks and relationships cannot be understated. Particularly in exurban or rural communities, the pool of actors who make decisions is likely to be small enough that such actors will know each other and have a working, if not personal, relationship (Oliver et al., 2012; Sharp, 2012).

Size and scope, along with the impact of local coalition-building that occurs between public and private sector organizations to facilitate development and define the character of urban regimes (Stone, 1989), can lead to particularly messy and interconnected networks of decision-makers. Thus, the importance of relationships and networks is considerable when assessing the impact of such factors on any decision.

How do the perspectives of elected and administrative officials differ? There are a number of fundamental differences between elected and administrative officials and how they perceive their roles and priorities at the decision-making table. Some elected officials do not have an official seat at the table, but create and pass the legislation that is then used to set the parameters and legal boundaries within which certain decisions can be made (Finer, 1941). In a similar process, citizens make their wants and needs known to the elected and administrative officials who represent them, and those actors can choose to take those needs into consideration in the decision-making process (Friedrich, 1940). While administrative officials are not elected, this does not mean they do not consider the political ramifications of their decisions, in particular when it comes to the internal political nature of their own organizations (Meier, 1987; Stillman, 2004). Elected and administrative officials not only have different responsibilities for a decision once it has been made, but meaningfully different priorities, resources, and expertise as well (Allison & Zelikow, 1971; Bryner, 1987).

At the local level, conflict may exist between elected and administrative officials, particularly over the distribution of resources in a given municipality (Cingranelli, 1981). This may include elected officials providing input on administrative fees (Debus et al., 2013), or executives having veto power over most legislative and administrative policy formulation (Fox,

1974). Evidence suggests that bureaucrats prefer powerful elected officials, so long as they are mission-oriented and provide support for administrative goals (Gains et al., 2008). Finally, it must be considered that since electoral and governmental systems vary widely across municipal governments, it may prove difficult to fully assess the impact of the administrative-elected official relationships in a generalizable way (Stone et al., 1986).

Local administrative officials may focus on a more practical and resource-oriented perspective, which differs from the more political perspective of local elected officials. In particular, elected officials may be less concerned with “decision rules” intended to eliminate disparity, as well as more focused on the political consequences as opposed to the health and welfare of citizens (Lipsky, 1980; Meier et al., 1991). However, the priorities for both groups at the local level remain similar: adequate resources, effective implementation, and a focus on the problem at hand. Even given that baseline, administrators may need to push back against the coalition of elected officials and the business community, who may be more concerned with development and economic prosperity for corporate interests, to promote the public good and the values of equity and quality of life (Stone, 1989).

Who holds responsibility and accountability for decisions and policy? Officials at any level of government will be held responsible by the public, either electorally or otherwise, for inaction, wrong action, and ineffective policy. This is true both for failed policies, and for successful policies that benefit from both public and expert support (Appleby, 1949; Barnard, 1938; Friedrich, 1940). There is an inherent “muddling of the lines” when it comes to responsibility and accountability, as administrative agencies are often responsible for implementing and enforcing a decision while legislative bodies oversee them (Bryner, 1987).

Accountability and responsibility, fair or unfair, will often fall on administrative agencies and officials due to myths about the poor performance and excessive power of bureaucracy, as well as the difficulty in measuring performance in these agencies (Goodsell, 2003).

Accountability and responsibility become more difficult to define at the local level, where municipal governments are particularly fragmented, and jurisdiction may become blurred or completely opaque. Responsibility may be assigned to a group of agencies, but ensuring accountability can be challenging (Fox, 1974). While local bureaucrats may support the presence of a powerful elected executive, there is no evidence to suggest that this is based on the fact that the executive would be held accountable for policy (Gains et al., 2008). This is not to say, however, that accountability and responsibility are not significant factors in citizen perception of local government. Municipal officials often endure most of the criticism from citizens for problems including poverty, transportation, law enforcement, and effective service delivery. Whether or not this is deserved, or whether they provide adequate response and are held truly accountable, varies depending on the municipality in question (Stone et al., 1986).

Finally, depending on the amount of power in neighborhood organizations and other outside pressure groups, local elected and administrative officials may be held accountable for failures and successes in policy more effectively than national officials (Sharp, 2012). This may play out at the ballot box for elected officials, as voters in local elections often vote on specific policy issues that impact them and they are often aware of the officials who have successfully lobbied for or against that issue.

Policy Feedback, Social Construction, and Relative Power

To understand how the policy formulation process is impacted by policy feedback, we must first look to previous understandings of the role policy feedback plays in Lasswell's (1956) policy cycle. In most understandings of this cycle, policy feedback is understood to be one single element, occurring within the monitoring and evaluation stage of the cycle, wherein policymakers collect and consider feedback from citizens that might help to improve future policy. Over time, however, the theoretical implications of policy feedback have evolved. Tracing a brief intellectual history of policy feedback will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the contemporary view of the feedback process.

Policy feedback was first introduced by Schattschneider (1935), who wrote that policies can help to create new politics, which in turn lead to the creation of new policy. While this is a broad understanding of policy feedback, it is narrowly situated at a single point of entry in the policy process: after the creation and implementation of a given policy. Further, the implication of this particular conceptualization is that the outcomes of a policy may influence later policy-making, but that influence will be mitigated in large part by politics. Lowi (1972) conceived of policy feedback in a similar way, adding that public policy is representative of the values and interests of a state, and that policies may institutionalize themselves within the context of a democracy (Lowi, 1985).

Skocpol (1992) extended policy feedback over time, as well as noting the implications of historical policy for the formulation process of contemporary policy. In particular, she wrote that a program that paid out pensions for veterans after the Civil War generated both positive feedback, in the form of group mobilization to expand and protect pensions, as well as negative

feedback, with some policymakers seeing them as naked political patronage. These feedback effects, according to Skocpol, continue into the twentieth century and influence the creation or lack thereof, of social welfare programs in the early part of that century. While this form of feedback shows the direct link between policies at “Time 1,” group mobilization, and policies at “Time 2,” it still maintains a single point of entry in the cycle, after the implementation of a policy.

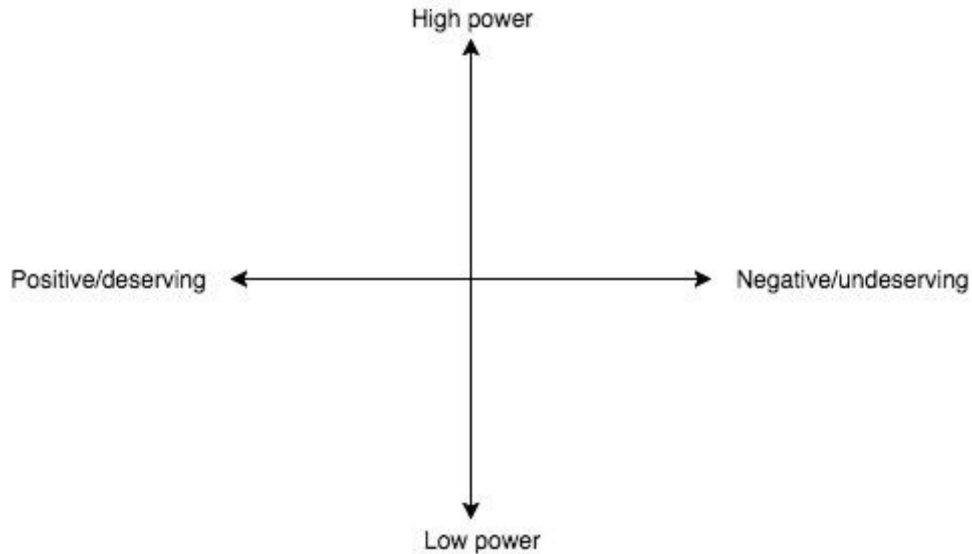
Pierson (1993) advanced the theory of policy feedback by generating a framework and a testable hypothesis for scholars to study and understand policy feedback as a force in policymaking. According to Pierson, policy can shape political behavior through interpretive effects, including sources of information and the generation of meaning for citizens. In this framework, it can also shape that behavior through resource effects, as policies often provide means and incentives for citizens. Again, however, this framework maintains a specific point of entry to the process. Even as policy feedback advances as a theoretical framework, many scholars have maintained this single point of entry for feedback to the process.

In a broader and more contemporary understanding of policy feedback, scholars such as Campbell (2003); Mettler and SoRelle (2014); Moynihan and Soss (2014); Soss and Schram (2007), and Weaver and Lerman (2010) see feedback as ever-present. For these scholars, feedback is how the public shifts their own conceptions of citizenships and the large structural forces shaping policy agendas and formulation. They see policy feedback as an explanatory frame for understanding how policy design and formulation is impacted by and sometimes predicated upon the populations that will receive a given policy’s benefits and costs. This new

policy feedback includes the structural biases and social constructions of policy makers, even if they are not actively engaged in a formal feedback process.

In fact, in this understanding of policy feedback, policies themselves help define status, citizenship, and the extent of political engagement among citizens. If the design and implementation of a particular program is conducted in such a way as to negatively impact how individuals conceive of their citizenship, they are likely to come away with a more negative view of how their concerns would be received by government officials were they to express them (Mettler & Soss, 2004). This is clearly seen in the varying treatment of recipients of Social Security and those who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Social Security recipients are validated as “deserving” citizens through their treatment by street-level bureaucrats administering that program, while TANF recipients have negative, demeaning and threatening experiences at the same level (Campbell, 2003; Mettler & Soss, 2004).

The social construction of populations is delineated by specific categories and definitive positions within the axes of power and deservedness for multiple groups of citizens, as per the figure below, adapted from Schneider et al. (2014).



*Figure 2. Power and deservedness typology. Adapted from “Democratic policy design: Social construction of target populations” by A. Schneider and P. de Leon, in P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (p. 111), 2014, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.*

As demonstrated by Kreitzer and Watts Smith (2018) in a crowdsourced study of citizen perceptions, these constructions can be contentious. In particular, citizens clearly perceive some groups as being more deserving than Schneider et al. (2014) originally proposed. However, Kreitzer and Watts Smith also note that their findings support the idea that “not all policy enhances democracy (p. 13),” with very few groups being seen as advantaged (both powerful and deserving), while more groups were perceived to be contenders (powerful but undeserving) than in the original study. One potential reason for this may be found in the differences in perceptions between citizens and government officials, and such differences should be explored further. This project, to a limited extent, will provide some of this early exploration.

Policies can be formulated in such a way as to pressure certain groups to shoulder costs or to receive benefits, and such design is both intentional and based on feedback from previous policies on similar issues (Jordan & Matt, 2014). Policies such as Social Security or TANF also

frame societal problems for citizens, casting blame and pushing messages about the relative deservedness and power of the groups targeted by the policy. As media and public narratives take shape, the recipients of policy benefits are reconstructed, both in the eyes of the public and within their own self-conceptions of citizenship (Mettler & Soss, 2004). Citizens' perceptions of their place within the political and social hierarchy change based on their receipt of benefits or costs, and this in turn impacts their political engagement, their ability to mobilize and demand change, and their overall sense of efficacy (Soss, 1999). This results in a negative feedback loop, as policies reinforce negative perceptions, shaping narratives around certain citizen groups while those same groups become demobilized and disenfranchised due to this feedback. As this occurs, citizens become less likely to be successful in any demand for policies that bolster their citizenship, and they become permanent residents at the far end of the spectrum of influence.

Furthermore, street-level bureaucrats may also engage in this process through how they interact with clients. Engaging with their roles as situated bureaucrats requires street-level workers to construct professional and personal identities for themselves, which may impact how they serve clients. These identities are impacted by the race, class, and gender of the bureaucrats, as well as the professional environment in which they serve (Watkins-Hayes, 2009a). These interactions between street-level workers and citizens have an impact on the policy feedback process and are an integral part of understanding how policy feedback is inherent in the practice of public policy, and not just within theoretical understandings of the process.

Bureaucratic power is part of a broader scholarly conversation that includes bureaucratic autonomy, politics, and political control of the bureaucracy. However, it is the flexing of that power that can provide the most insight into how bureaucrats and bureaucracies interact with the

policy-making process, particularly when it comes to policy formulation. Bureaucrats within our federal system have possessed power and autonomy since the founding of the United States, but that power increased in the late 19th century, as domestic policy became more complicated due to the rapidly expanding country and the emergence of new technologies. Such power, of course, is conditional and based on both the autonomy of a given agency as well as the unique capacities and legitimacy granted to that organization (Carpenter, 2001).

Bureaucracies are politically active, and increasingly autonomous as networked governance becomes the norm and administrators are tasked with a broad range of tasks and collaborative structures that they must navigate (Carpenter, 2001). As the autonomy of agencies has grown, the reputation and legitimacy of those agencies have become increasingly influential measurements against which the relative power of those actors is judged. Reputation exists along four dimensions: performative, moral, procedural, and technical (Carpenter & Krause, 2012). These dimensions are intended to present the agency differently to different audiences, including the media, Congress, and the public. Presenting themselves differently before different audiences is inherently political, and as such agencies use these reputational dimensions to generate political power. It is that power which allows individuals within those agencies to represent the values and goals of that agency at the bargaining table and use that power to shift a particular decision or policy towards their organization.

Outside of reputation, institutional design can also impact the power of an agency. While some agencies are politically isolated, operating with a managerial context on uncontroversial issues, others are highly political and work closely with their respective congressional oversight committees or other oversight bodies. It remains unclear, however, the extent to which structure

and reputation matter when viewed as the result of political isolation (Krause & Douglas, 2005). While most studies of bureaucratic power have focused on structure, reputation, and how agencies behave within the larger organized system of government, scholars have neglected to study how the internal dynamics of organizations, including decision-making, present themselves in the greater political context. In fact, according to Moe (2006), there has been a bifurcation within this subfield, where some scholars study public administration through the lens of politics while others study it through the lens of organizations. In reality, he writes, such a dichotomy is not useful and should be combined into the study of politics within organizations, perhaps in such a way that might take influences from new institutionalism, economics, and sociology (Moe, 2006).

While bureaucratic power can be discussed in an abstract way, and observed in a broad political context, it can also be observed in practice through the actions of street-level agencies and bureaucrats. Soss, Fording, and Schram (2011) conducted a study of “poverty governance,” demonstrating how the government has regulated and governed low-income communities over decades. The authors centralize race in their understanding of this governance, and demonstrate that certain government programs and agencies, including those that engage in the distribution of welfare, corrections, and policing have significant autonomy and power within low-income and minority communities. This power, far from being an abstract influence on bargaining for certain policies, has a significant and negative impact on the population being served. Paternalism, neoliberal ideology, and the racial constructions of target populations all generate policy outcomes that result in a “disciplining” of the poor, wherein powerful local agencies exert control over citizens without recourse.

Soss and Weaver (2017) expand upon this idea, using the city of Ferguson, Missouri as a case study in race-class subjugated (RCS) communities. In these communities, the authors propose, policing has become a powerful part of everyday life for citizens. Poverty governance and carceral policies are the norm, not the exception, and encounters with the justice system are the primary form of citizen-government interaction. This is significant, as citizens in these communities view bureaucratic power as police power, and vice versa. The two are inextricably linked, and as police in these communities are increasingly expected to become “urban problem solvers,” the power and legitimacy granted to them increases. According to the authors, in RCS communities police help to define race, gender, citizenship, and political power of citizens. This dynamic is an additional way to define and observe bureaucratic power in practice and is perhaps one of the more powerful dynamics at work when considering bureaucratic power at the local level. While bureaucratic power is often used to describe the relative institutional power of agencies, in this model of bureaucratic politics bureaucratic power is expressed through the relative influence of each agency’s representative. Therefore, although it is the individual that is considered within this model, it is important to also recognize the institutional power and pressures that each brings to the bargaining table.

Bureaucratic Typologies

To understand the interplay between the specific interests of those involved in the decision-making process and the structural forces of policy feedback, it is necessary to also briefly review the existing literature on bureaucratic power and political control, which assesses the ways in which political and administrative actors interact and cooperate in multiple contexts. This work is situated within the subset of literature that considers how and where bureaucrats

have the ability to exercise power and influence. Studies of local government have shown that bureaucrats have substantial power within those systems, as municipal governance is often managerial-based and focused on performance and results (Gains et al., 2008; Oliver et al., 2012; Sharp, 2012; Stensöta, 2011). In situating this revised understanding of bureaucratic politics squarely as an explanatory framework for how policy feedback plays out in policy formulation, as well as considering its relevance to the existing literature on bureaucratic power, the framework will be strengthened with regard to its explanatory power.

Typologies of bureaucrats have often proved useful in understanding the decision-making processes of large bureaucracies and the relative power of the actors within them. Downs (1967) describes two unique categories of bureaucratic officials, each of which contains several subtypes. First, self-interested officials, including “climbers” who attempt to maximize their own power through promotion, financial benefit, or status; and “conservers,” who attempt to preserve their job security and status quo above all else. Second, mixed-motive officials, including “zealots,” who remain loyal to specific policies and values; “advocates,” who behave similarly while representing a broader set of policies or an entire organization; and “statesmen,” who proclaim loyalty to the state and society. For Downs (1967), this typology proves explanatory for the decision-making process in a large bureaucracy. Therefore, it may be useful to look for analogues within the literature on local government.

According to Fox (1974), municipal executives often see their role in the context of five categories: reformer, program politician, evader, stooge, or mediator. Each role consists of different values and interests (Fox, 1974), while social values and quality of life concerns may impact decisions made by the executive and other actors (Debus et al., 2013; Gottdiener, 1987).

In assessing these common attributes, it is useful to assign new categories, which form a typology not only of federal bureaucrats or local government executives, but of all local government officials. By combining the attributes of the bureaucrat and that of the local government executive, who is often considered an extension of the bureaucratic state focused on managerial matters, and an administrator first and foremost, we find the above-referenced five categories: the Egoist, the Traditionalist, the Follower, the Technician, and the Glad-hander. These types will serve a critical purpose in the conceptual model of local bureaucratic politics developed here, as they may help to delineate commonalities between actors, both political and administrative, whose priorities may be similar or even identical. Such commonalties may exist within a particular case or may even extend across cases (i.e.: A Traditionalist in Manchester may conduct themselves in a similar way to a Traditionalist in Flint). However, the two typologies have substantial commonalities between them, as shown in Figure 3.

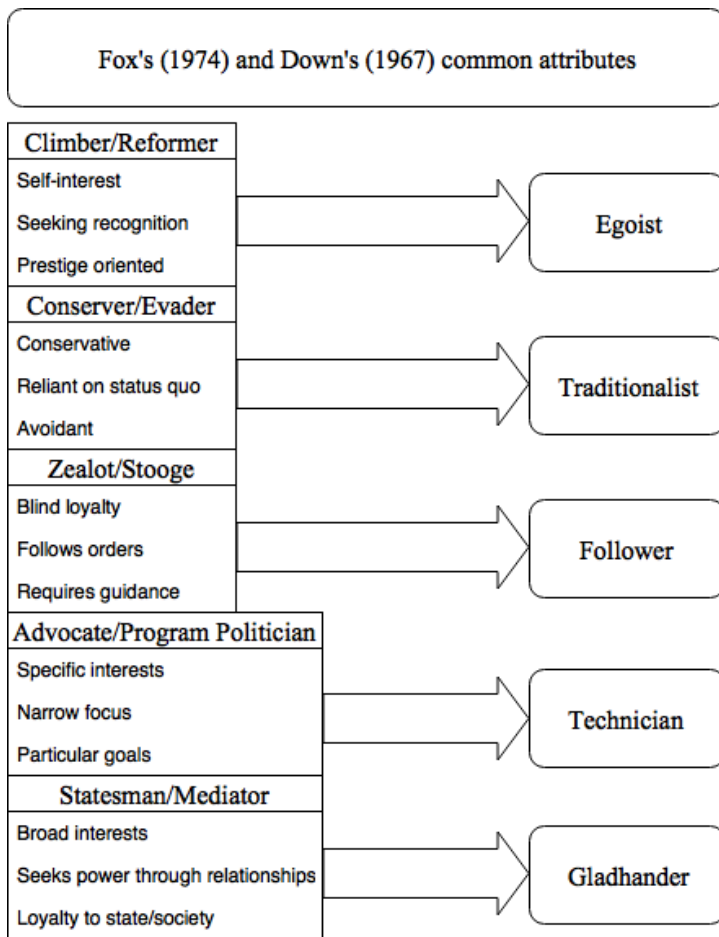


Figure 3. Common attributes of a synthesized typology.

To summarize, when ambiguous policies and procedures are put into place and government officials are given the ability to make a judgment of deservedness on those who come to them for services, the impact on the citizenship of those receiving service can be significant. In particular, if the formulation and narrative of a policy is negative, it may disenfranchise, demobilize, and create feelings of inefficacy among the group it serves. They may feel that they are powerless, less worthy, and undeserving of quality service. Understanding the social construction of populations is critical to understanding how certain policies are formulated, and the ways in which policy design impacts policy outcomes. In addition, the power

of the bureaucrat and the agency they represent is relevant to how and why decisions are made. Based on this interpretation of the literature, it is reasonable to suggest that the intentionality of those conducting policy formulation, including during a crisis, is influenced by four primary considerations:

- The social construction of populations who receive the benefits and costs of the policy, to be demonstrated through demographic data and the social construction typologies of Schneider et al. (2014).
- The specific interests of those designing the policy and the power they have to promote those interests over others, to be demonstrated in a content analysis of city council meetings and first-hand accounts of the policy-making process.
- The external influences on the policymakers, including those from within and outside government, to be demonstrated by a similar analysis of public records of council meeting participants and first-hand accounts.
- The specific individuals engaged in the policy formulation process, and their typologies and distinct strategies to accomplish objectives.

These considerations will provide a useful reference when assessing the eventual outcomes and decisions of the two cases that this work considers. With the relevant literature reviewed and specific questions about the utility of this theory in the context of local government answered, I turn now to developing a visual representation of this revised framework. Chapter III lays out this framework in detail, along with an explanation of the methods used to explore it in both case studies presented here. Further, an explanation of the choice of case studies along with a brief description of those cases sets the stage for Chapters IV and V.

Chapter III: A Revised Framework

As evidenced by the body of research on local government analyzed in Chapter II that considers decision-making and the policy process, including the roles played by both citizens and officials, it is clear that local officials engage in bureaucratic politics, albeit with different priorities, processes, and purposes than those at the federal or state level. To better understand exactly how local officials represent themselves in these situations I have developed, from the key questions proffered in Chapter II, a framework of local bureaucratic politics that can help to explain the processes of bureaucratic politics at the local level. This framework reconciles the observations on the practice of local democracy and bureaucracy elucidated by Fox (1974); Levy et al. (1974); Oliver et al. (2012); Sharp (2012); Stone (1989), while concurrently building a framework based on the fundamentals of bureaucratic politics proposed by Allison and Zelikow (1971); Halperin and Clapp (1974); and Meier (1987). It takes into account both the existing structure of decision-making in the foundational literature, while including new variables and considerations necessary to assess this process at the local level.

My revised framework (Figure 4) considers how the unique characteristics, structures, and power dynamics of local government will influence policymaking. The elements of the framework are based on the fundamental questions posed previously regarding the assumptions of bureaucratic politics, and Table 1 includes these factors within four groups, including Interests, Relationships, Environmental Factors, and Organizational factors, allowing for a simpler visual representation of them in the model. Additionally, the model is constructed in such a way as to consider the influences of policy feedback, social construction, bureaucratic typologies, and bureaucratic power (Table 2).

Table 1
Factor Groups

Factors	Examples	Selected Authors
Interests	Area rewards, efficiency, managerial focus	Cingranelli, Boyne, Nalbandian, Stensöta
Relationships	Personal, political, professional	Appleby, Halperin & Clapp, Oliver, Stone, Sharp,
Environmental Factors	Resources, local idiosyncrasies, political culture	Allison & Zelikow, Bryner, Oliver, Sharp, Stone
Organizational Factors	Professionalism, rules and norms, mission	Fox, Gains, Nalbandian, Selznick, Watkins-Hayes

Table 2
Other Influences

Influence	Description
Social Construction	The elite and citizen perceptions of populations who will receive the benefits and costs of a policy.
Bureaucratic Power	The exercise of power to promote the specific interests of those designing a policy over other interests.
Policy Feedback	The impact policy has on politics, and the resultant influence those politics have on future policy.
Bureaucratic Typologies	Egoist, traditionalist, glad-hander, follower, and technician.

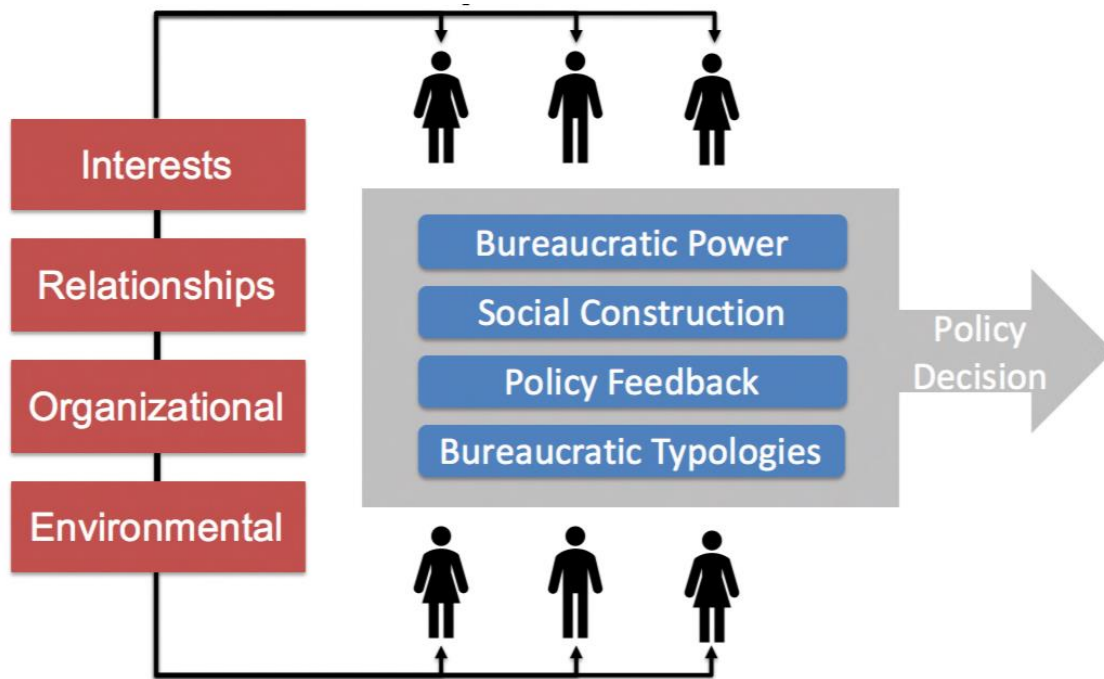


Figure 4. A conceptual model of bureaucratic politics for local government.

As the actors around the “bargaining table” interact within formal and informal policy-making settings, they represent their own interests, relationships, environmental, and organizational factors. These interactions are mitigated or promoted by the influence of bureaucratic power, policy feedback, social construction, and/or bureaucratic typology, and eventually a policy decision is reached. To explore the advantages and limitations of this conceptual model, this project takes a constructivist and transformative approach, using mixed-methodologies to investigate the propositions set out in Chapter I. While the structure of the analysis may read at times similar to a traditional case-study, this is with the intention of delineating temporal and spatial boundaries within the research, and not intended to provide data that are strictly comparative in the traditional sense. To that end, the cases presented are developed primarily to meet four criteria: construct validity, or establishing correct operational measures; internal validity, or establishing distinctions between spurious and causal

relationships; external validity, or establishing the extent to which the cases can be generalized; and reliability, or establishing whether or not the study might be replicated. By meeting these four criteria, it is proposed that these case studies will be useful for the process of theory building and development (Diaz Andrade, 2009; Yin, 2017).

The primary sources of data for this project are observations (developed into mini ethnographies) by the primary investigator, publicly available city council meeting minutes, and semi-structured interviews. Observations were conducted over a 7-10-day period in each city in March 2018 (Flint) and April 2018 (Manchester). These ethnographic observations are recorded at the beginning of each case, along with photographic representations of each city and respective crisis. The methodology used to operationalize these observations is described below, and the process also served as an opportunity to engage with the positionality of the research in the context of each city.

To develop a comprehensive dataset of meeting minutes to code within the context of this model, a search of the city council records in each city was undertaken, covering 2013-2017, the most recent five years available. This timeframe is based on the fact that both the water crisis in Flint and the opioid crisis in Manchester are ongoing, and both have roots that can be traced to 2013 (Graham, 2016b; Soucy & O'Higgins, 2016). All public meeting minutes of the full city legislative body in each case were included in the dataset, and the timeline includes the peak of each crisis, which is shown in Figure 8 and Figure 15. This dataset consists of 139 documents in the Flint case, and 159 documents in the Manchester case. All meetings were included in the dataset, though as described below, not all meetings were analyzed based upon the content discussed within them. The length of meetings and number of speakers varied widely, and Flint

and Manchester record meeting minutes in different styles, making a comparison of the actual page length of the documents coded somewhat impractical and unhelpful. However, to provide some context and scale, the full dataset includes over 1000 PDF pages of minutes.

Interviewees were contacted via snowball sampling, and all interviews were conducted in person whenever possible. Each interviewee is a potential actor as represented in the model, all of whom have first-hand knowledge of the political and administrative process around the issues at play in the specific case for which they were interviewed. Six individuals were interviewed in Flint, and seven individuals were interviewed in Manchester. They included city and state managers and street-level bureaucrats, non-profit executives, and public-sector union leadership.

The model is operationalized through three specific methodologies. These methodologies were chosen with the intention of creating the first three “interpretative moments” characterized by Yanow (2006); first-hand experience or relaying of first-hand experience, sense-making of that experience, and the experience of word-making and writing. First, a mini-ethnography was conducted for each case, both to situate the researcher within the context of the study to provide “thick” description and a relevant background of each case for the reader, developing first-hand experience into data (Fusch & Ness, 2017; Geertz, 1973). Second, the meeting minutes were coded utilizing a combination of interpretative content analyses and textual analyses intended to provide a democratic character to the interpretation of the data, as well as create meaning from the social reality of those whose words and actions are being analyzed (Yanow, 2006). Further, narrative inquiry in the tradition of *stories for research* and associated coding were utilized within the context of semi-structured interviews to create a holistic and descriptive account of two cities and their successes and challenges in creating policy to deal with a contemporary

public health and safety crisis (S. Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2006). The use of these methods allows for triangulation not only of the data, but of the methodology as well, providing a robust foundation for the findings of this study (Fusch & Ness, 2017).

Mini-Ethnographies: The Experience

While classic ethnography may take months, or even years, a focused or mini-ethnography is conducted over the span of days or weeks (Fusch & Ness, 2017). While ethnography has been criticized for allowing research bias to infuse studies, and an overall lack of objectivity, its use in conjunction with other methods allows for methodological pluralism to help mitigate these factors. In this context, the mini-ethnography “sets the stage,” providing thick description, representing experienced and observed realities, and framing the acute nature of the problems at hand in these two cases (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Fusch & Ness, 2017).

While the mini ethnographies presented here are in no way conclusory, they present both the positionality of the researcher and the particular idiosyncrasies of the cases. Positionality refers to the researcher’s relationship with the community being studied, particularly as relates to race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other potential inequalities between the researcher and the research subject. While positionality cannot be removed, it can be recognized and addressed. Best practices for addressing positionality include recognizing ones insider or outsider status within the population being studied, recognizing one’s own cultural, racial, and ethnic heritage as it compares to the studied population, and recognizing the systemic and institutional forces at play for the interviewees (Milner, 2007; Wiederhold, 2015).

Field notes and reflective journaling, two traditional ethnographic data collection methods, were the primary sources of data for this method. Along with photographs, they create

a representation of the case to be studied, creating a frame for the reader through which to view the analysis (Emerson et al., 2011; Fusch & Ness, 2017; Prosser & Schwartz, 2004). Each ethnography attempts to speak to the *authenticity*, *plausibility*, and *criticality* of the case. To demonstrate authenticity and plausibility, they note the details of everyday life, explain relationships that will be explored, position the work as relevant to the audience, “legitimize the atypical” and “normalize unorthodox methodologies.” Further, they ask the audience to examine the assumptions that underlie their own work and their perceptions of this work, promoting an appeal to criticality (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993).

Textual Analysis and Membership Categorization: The Meetings

All public meeting minutes were coded in Atlas.ti by date and city, and each case was analyzed separately. The data were obtained from publicly available sources, including the city websites of each municipality and directly from the City Clerk’s offices. The coding process was iterative and reflected a traditional approach of reading and rereading materials to better search for key attributes and themes, as is often done in research of this nature (Peräkylä, 2011). Following is a description of the formal process by which the materials were first coded.

To develop a sample of relevant city council meeting minutes, the first step was to conduct a content analysis, first coding for the word *water* to identify each time the water crisis may have been discussed. Each document containing *water* was then coded for a thematic reference to the crisis, eliminating discussion of irrelevant policies and issues. This process was intended to develop an accurate dataset, to provide a substantive basis on which to apply an objective coding scheme (Berg, 2003). Once this was complete, a modified membership categorization analysis (MCA) was conducted, searching for meaning in the “normative and

cognitive forms” of the units being analyzed, in this case the meetings themselves (Peräkylä, 2011). While MCA is traditionally used to categorize people, in this case it was used to categorize moments within the city council meeting, delineating the space and time of a particular reference to the water crisis. In concert with the first-hand experience and word-making process, this allowed for the specific references themselves to serve as evidence within the model, representing the various influences of bureaucratic politics within the context of the city council meeting.

Comments by both elected and administrative officials were included, as were those by citizens and individuals representing private entities. As the preceding literature review describes, scholars of local government have found that local administrators and elected officials often have similar goals and attributes, and that both categories fill similar roles and archetypes within local democracy and governance (Fox, 1974; Oliver et al., 2012; Sharp, 2012). This view of the local elected official as a managerial figure and the bureaucrat as a policymaker, is fundamental to the analysis presented here. To that end, rather than to first separate individuals by their job titles, the coding process conducted here separates them first and foremost by their values and priorities. In addition, comments and interactions that involved citizens and private entities were also coded to facilitate a comparative analysis of how city council members interact and respond to each group. As this project focused on how values and interests are acted upon in the context of the council meeting, the coding focused primarily on those values and interests.

The codebook itself is attached as Appendix A, and the coding scheme is developed directly out of the literature review preceding this chapter. Meeting minutes were coded for references to interests, both public and private, that were represented in front of the city council

at each meeting. Interactions between council members and outside individuals were coded as relationships, with reference to the specific organization or interest being represented by the outside individual. Within this code group, an individual's role (bureaucrat, citizen, or otherwise) is indicated. Approximately 6% of the interactions and comments coded involved citizens, 10% involved elected officials outside of the city council, 37% involved bureaucrats, and 47% involved private interests such as businesses or non-profits. All interactions involved, to some extent, city council members. Organizational and environmental factors, such as the exercise of power, allocation of resources, and the mission and role of the council itself and any outside organization being represented in front of it were also recorded, to capture the dynamics of who and what received a formal hearing in front of the council. Within these categories, each of the individual codes is defined in further detail in Appendix A.

Stories for Research: The Interviews

Interviews and observational research were conducted on-site in Flint and Manchester. In both cities, I observed a public city council meeting and subcommittee meeting in order to provide context and “thick description” of the legislative body of that city (Geertz, 1973). Additionally, based on availability and willingness to participate, semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant administrators about the issue at hand, as well as with activists or community leaders focused on these issues or on citizens personally impacted by them. In total, between 6-10 individuals were interviewed in each city. These interviews followed an adapted story-telling approach (Kim, 2015), as conceptualized in *Cops, Teachers, Counselors* (S. Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2006; S. W. Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003) and *Pulled Over* (Epp, Maynard-Moody, & Haider-Markel, 2014). These interviews support the conclusions of

each proposition, and in particular are helpful in addressing the validity of (2a) and (2b), which are concerned with citizen mobilization and activism, factors that cannot be fully captured through content analysis alone.

Open-ended questions were posed in part based upon the information obtained in the coding of council meetings, media sources, and an analysis of the demographic data as indicated above. By assessing whether and how the stories of individuals involved and affected by the policymaking and implementation process track with the analysis of publicly available information, a holistic picture of the policy-making process in each case emerged. In addition, these stories provided relevant information about the impact of policy feedback on the response to policies in these communities. The interviews were coded for evidence of particular bureaucratic typologies, and then for references to social construction, policy feedback, and other influences that might have shaped that individual's perception of the relevant issue. In this way, the interviews serve as relevant data that is analyzed along the same thematic pathways as the city council meeting minutes, indicating whether the propositions put forward by this proposal are indeed accurate.

Each interviewee was also coded as one of the adapted municipal bureaucrat typologies developed out of the typologies synthesized from Fox (1974) and Downs (1967). To make this assessment, their responses to questions about their priorities and views on city government were matched against the attributes described in Figure 3. While brief interviews, observations, and interactions are not as effective as a psychological exam or an extended and anonymous observation, these interactions nevertheless provide some insight into which categories these

individuals fit. Further work in this area, as discussed in the conclusion to this project, may prove useful in continuing to develop these typologies and their measurements.

By utilizing multiple methods and sources of data, the *validity*, *authenticity*, *plausibility*, and *criticality* of each case is addressed and defined, allowing for reasonable conclusions to be reached (Diaz Andrade, 2009; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). While these cases are strong evidence of the utility of the framework presented here, the limitations of this approach are recognized and will be addressed in Chapter VI. With this in mind, Chapter IV will present the case of water quality in Flint, Michigan, and explore how the framework proposed here is relevant and useful to understanding the processes of bureaucratic politics during that crisis.

Chapter IV: Flint, Michigan

Flint, Michigan sits in the space between Michigan's thumb and mitten, a city whose history echoes the mass movements of the 20th century: industrialization, labor, civil rights, and globalization. It is a city where race and class have always been at the forefront of the public sphere, perhaps undiscussed, but nevertheless deeply woven throughout the city in explicit and disparate ways. Abandoned buildings and enormous automotive plants surround a bustling downtown, and references to the history of auto-making in Michigan are inescapable. Ignored for years, with the exception of quick notations in the national news that another automaker had moved their operations to foreign soil, Flint became a household name once again following a series of events that led to what is now colloquially known as the Flint Water Crisis, outlined below.

In 2011, Governor Rick Snyder appointed an emergency financial manager for the City of Flint after the city went into receivership earlier that year. A state review board gave the governor the power to appoint an emergency financial manager until the city had regained financial footing, and over the next several years, a series of emergency managers controlled the city government with broad authority to set the priorities and policies for the city. In 2014, Emergency Manager Ed Kurtz made the decision, with the approval of numerous other parties, to switch the water supply of the city from the Detroit City Water District to the Karegnondi Water District to save money.

While the City of Flint planned to build a pipeline to connect to the Karegnondi Water District, an interim source of water was needed. Beginning in 2014, Kurtz and the management of the City of Flint chose to pump water directly from the Flint River to resident's homes without

treating the water to the extent required by the EPA. In turn, the untreated and acidic water from the river corroded the pipes serving the city, which contained lead under their exterior coatings, resulting in exceptionally high levels of lead leeching into the water. High levels of lead, along with other contaminants from both the untreated water itself and the resulting corrosion of the pipes, were reported by numerous independent testers throughout 2014 and 2015 (Davis et al., 2016, March 21; Graham, 2016b; Longley, 2011).

For the next several years, following tests that clearly showed numerous issues with water quality in Flint, city and state officials communicated with each other in an attempt to determine if there was enough of a problem to require a switch back to the Lake Huron water supply. Though events such as General Motors choosing to stop using water from the Flint River in their production facilities, a switch to only bottled water in state offices in Flint, the disclosure of undesirable test results and continued pressure by community activists to address the issue, there was no significant action taken by the government of Flint or the State of Michigan (Hanna-Attisha, LaChance, Sadler, & Schnepp, 2016; Nickels, 2019).

Despite this lack of action, there continued to be substantial communication and coordination between the two levels of government as well, as with officials from regulatory agencies and administrative agencies at the local, state, and federal level (Graham, 2016a). This collection of actors did not produce policy that served the public interest. Instead, government officials engaged in an effort to spin test results, limit public knowledge of the lead levels in the water, and ignored increasingly focused advocacy by environmental groups and concerned citizens (Howell, Doan, & Harbin, 2019). Finally, in September of 2015, Professor Marc Edwards and his team at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University released the results

of their extensive water quality testing conducted in Flint. Accompanying media coverage was widespread and highly critical of local and state officials (Davis et al., 2016, March 21).

The Flint case demonstrates several important elements of local bureaucratic response to a crisis. First, that in the context of a financial crisis and under the authority of an emergency manager practicing austerity measures, both politicians and administrators tend towards prioritizing cost-savings over policies oriented towards public health and safety. Second, that there is reason to believe that the population of Flint, which is majority-Black and has high rates of public benefit usage, is socially constructed as less deserving of those policies, based on the responses to the crisis by those in authority. Third, as the case supports the framework of bureaucratic politics as proposed, it suggests that future case studies following this model will be useful in developing a theoretical approach to understand crisis response in local government.

Understanding the particulars of the crisis required not only reviewing city council meeting minutes and conducting interviews, but also engaging with the city as a physical space. Over the course of nearly a week, I took photographs, visited cultural and historic landmarks, spoke with workers at convenience stores, restaurants, and retail establishments, and recorded fieldnotes documenting my experiences. In doing so, I engaged critically with my own assumptions about Flint and its citizens, positioning myself and my analysis within the broader context as well as the sociopolitical and racial context of Flint. Following is a brief mini-ethnography, in the tradition of Geertz's (1973) "thick description," that documents several particular instances and images that highlight the city of Flint and the citizens within it.

Mini-Ethnography: Flint

To this day, I won't use it because if our bathrooms sit over the weekend, when we turn it off, that water's going to be brown. I don't care what anybody says. I'm not going to drink that. (Long-time employee of Flint City Hall).

March 24, 2018: 11:58 p.m. Rob picked me up in an old minivan with the name “Veterans Taxi” on the side, waving me into the front seat. As he pulled out into the rainy evening, I asked how long he’d been driving a cab. “It’s my second job, well, after I got laid off now I do it more” he replied. Rob was wearing a bandana on his head in an outdated Axl Rose style, and in the cupholder between us there was a Big Gulp full of soda that he took long pulls from each time we stopped at a light. His van reeked of cigarettes, and the floor was covered in empty fast-food wrappers, outerwear, and an assortment of paper.

We talked from the airport until he dropped me off at the Wingate in Grand Blanc, about a 15-minute drive from the airport and six miles outside of downtown Flint. He gets migraine headaches constantly, and he used to take something for them but now he has no health insurance. “[I] lost that from my job before the last one” he tells me. Rob has lived in Flint his whole life, and he is sure he could make more money driving for Uber in Detroit, but he feels more comfortable driving a licensed cab in Flint. His cluster headaches make him want to “lie down in a dark room.” He’s had head trauma twice, so it’s to be expected, but he never thought they would be this bad. He doesn’t volunteer any more information, and I don’t ask.

Rob and his wife used to work at the General Motors plant, but they both lost their jobs and their house in the 2008 financial crisis. They had to start over, and he tells me that after that “we felt like teenagers.” They had both worked in the shop, a “good job” according to Rob, but

after the crash they became scared that if they got too comfortable it could all happen again. I asked if he still had any trust in the government or the banks after the crash, and he laughed, the only time during our trip, and muttered “no way.” Afterall, he had lost his house and lived in a hotel for five months. I asked if he considered himself lucky. He said yes.

March 25, 2018: 10:05 a.m. I take the hotel shuttle back to the airport to pick up my rental car for the week. My driver is an older white woman who doesn't talk. I walk back into the airport, busier now than when my late flight came in the day before. At the car rental counter, I spot a woman at the register. She has big earrings and long braids, and she dances around behind the counter as she helps the man in front of me with an insurance form. When I get to the counter, she asks why I'm here. When I tell her that it's to study city government, she groans and rolls her eyes. “Man, we were so excited with the new mayor, but then it's just the same old stuff. They all break promises” she says to me, shaking her head. She hands me the keys to a silver Ford Focus.

March 25, 2018: 10:48 a.m. At the Citgo station on West Hill Rd, I stop and buy bottled water, something I will do several times over the course of my trip. As I reach into my wallet to pay, I ask the clerk to add a lotto ticket and make a joke about playing in different states to see if my luck changes. He's one of two white guys in their 20's behind the counter, open cans of energy drink making rings on the Plexiglass of the lottery ticket case. They laugh, and one of the guys says he does the same thing too. He smirks at me and says “Well, enjoy your time in beautiful Flint, Michigan!” and they both laugh as I leave. I get the sense that he doesn't think the city is all that beautiful.

March 26, 2018: 5:22 p.m. There are more than a dozen people crammed into the small committee room, not including the members of the Special Affairs Committee, here to discuss several appointments by the Mayor, including City Administrator and Chief Financial Officer. The room is hot, maybe 14 feet square, and the brown carpet extends up the walls. There is one small window overlooking a parking lot, and in front of it sits the City Clerk and her assistant, behind a soundboard with microphones and cameras recording the meeting. The members of the committee are a diverse bunch, including three Black men and two Black women, two White women, a much older White man and a very young-looking Hispanic man with glasses. Every seat is full, and I'm not the only observer. It seems that I've chosen an important meeting, as the room buzzes until the Clerk calls the meeting to order.

Throughout the next two hours, the tension is palpable. One by one, members of the Mayor's staff (whose office is located just upstairs) enter the room and defend the appointments, though none of the appointed individuals attend, a fact noted by several council members. Questions about the appointees, in particular a former General Motors manager appointed as City Administrator and a young man with no public sector experience appointed as Chief Financial Officer, are fast and furious. A city attorney rebuffs the council's suggestion that they conduct interviews, noting that traditionally their role has been to rubberstamp appointments.

The mayor doesn't appear to have many allies on the council, and several members seem to hint at nepotism or perhaps even corruption being at the root of these appointments. Another council member, who brashly and repeatedly references his time spent in prison, defends the mayor and notes that her office has done a good job managing the finances of the city. This view doesn't appear to be supported by the rest of the council, several of whom seem to ignore the

comments, jumping back into where the previous discussion had left off. In the end, the CFO is approved, as are several other appointees, and a decision on the City Administrator is postponed until April 4. Upon seeing this result, the city attorney audibly sighs and stalks out of the room.

Visual Diary

The following photographs shown in Figure 5 were taken during my trip to Flint. Following the best practices set forward by Prosser and Schwartz (2004), I created a “visual diary” of my time in both Flint and Manchester. This technique, capturing a “precise moment in space and time,” serves as another method for creating the thick description and context described previously. As per Worth (1980), this is not a record *of* culture, which can only be constructed by those within a culture, but a record *about* culture, providing context not only to the work but to the positionality of the researcher and their relationship to the studied culture.



Figure 5. Photos taken in Flint, Michigan. Clockwise from upper left: “Greetings from Flint” by INDECLINE collective, 1721 Saginaw St.; auto worker sculpture at Flint City Hall by Suzanne Johnson, 1101 Saginaw St.; photos of former city council members in the Council chambers, 1101 Saginaw St.; water fountain at the Sloan Museum, 1310 E. Kearsley St.; UAW Sitdowners Monument, 1940 W. Atherton Rd. All photographs copyright of the author.

Social Construction and Policy in Flint

Table 3 below delineates specific demographic characteristics of Flint, and this chapter discusses what they might tell us about how social construction and policy feedback influences policy outcomes generated by the city council. This chapter then lays out the formal propositions described previously and uses data from Flint to address and respond to each. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the findings and a brief comment on the relevance of them to the larger project.

Table 3
Demographic Statistics (Flint)

Race	Estimate	Percentage
Total Population	100,569	100%
White	42,826	42.6%
Black or African American	58,307	58.0%
All Other Census Categories	3,743	3.8%

Employment	Estimate	Percentage
In Labor Force	38,862	50.3%
Employed	28,618	37.0%
Unemployed	10,227	13.2%
Not in Labor Force	38,451	49.7%

Income	Estimate	Percentage
Total Households	40,509	100%
Less than \$10,000	8,985	22.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4,040	10.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7,459	18.4%
\$25,000 to \$24,999	5,312	13.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,522	13.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,329	13.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,987	4.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,428	3.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	276	0.7%
\$200,000 or more	171	0.4%

Welfare Benefits	Estimate	Percentage
With Supplemental Security Income	5,882	14.5%
With Cash Public Assistance Income	4,729	11.7%
With Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits	17,455	43.1%

Note. Adapted from American Community Survey (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

As can be reasonably inferred through the lens of both ethnographic experience and the data highlighted in the table above, a meaningful number of citizens of Flint are poor, minorities and/or recipients of government benefits. Within the theoretical framework of social construction, many of those citizens would fit into the low-power end of the Schneider et al. (2014) typology. This assessment of the population of Flint helps to define how these citizens are perceived both by themselves as well as by politicians and bureaucrats who enact policy that impacts them (Campbell, 2003).

One important consideration when viewing these demographics is the impact of welfare policy. Campbell (2003); Riccucci (2005); Soss (1999); Soss and Schram (2007); Watkins-Hayes (2009b) have pointed out the various ways in which the construction of welfare policy, conceptions of the welfare state, and the social construction of welfare recipients has impacted both the design of welfare policy and public opinion of such policies (Mettler & Soss, 2004). The demographics of Flint, therefore, should leave no doubt that the impact of these constructions have significant meaning within the context of the water crisis.

When bureaucratic and political actors make decisions, they must weigh the information available, bargain and cooperate, and eventually implement a policy or decision with the consent of those who participated in the decision-making process. In a democracy, citizens delegate their power to government officials, interest groups, and politicians (Appleby, 1949). When it comes

time to make a decision, these actors come together at the bargaining table, where certain groups and individuals are either drawn in or cut out from the process (Halperin & Clapp, 1974; Meier, 1987). In Flint, the decision-making process was spearheaded by Governor Rick Snyder, Mayor Dayne Walling, and state-appointed emergency managers Ed Kurtz, Darnell Earley, and Gerald Ambrose. It also included the Flint city council, relevant city bureaucrats within the city of Flint, and officials from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

These actors came to the decision-making process, as all political and bureaucratic actors do, with parochial values, interests, and opinions (Barnard, 1938; Halperin & Clapp, 1974). They had varying levels of power, held different places within the formal hierarchy of their governments, and represented different constituencies (Rourke, 1969). However, the bargaining and cooperative nature of the decision-making process means that a single individual, no matter how powerful, must still seek the cooperation of other individuals to facilitate an enforceable outcome (Barnard, 1938). For the purposes of this analysis, I turn to the discourse around the water crisis in the context of the Flint City Council, and how an analysis of it can answer the propositions laid out in the first chapter of this work.

Proposition 1: Municipal governments prioritize policies that focus on cost-saving measures.

Proposition 1a. During the policy creation process, the individuals at the bargaining table prioritize parochial, political, and agency-specific interests over broader public interests, including health and safety.

Through the process of coding city council meeting minutes, it is shown that certain interests are represented in front of the council far more often compared to others. Take, for example, the occurrence of a council member requesting that the Flint Utilities Department refund customers who paid water bills during a “boil water advisory” for the neighborhood he represents: this issue is agency-specific, temporary, and provides rewards towards a particular area, and would therefore be coded as such. One example of a public-interest issue that appeals to the civic duty of the council or proposes a solution to a particular problem is the presentation of a report on the Flint’s water systems and sanitation processes. In many of these circumstances, multiple interests are being represented, and the quotation is coded as such. In Figure 6 below, the percentage of references to a specific type of interest (as compared to all references to other interests in the context of water crisis) from 2013-2017 are displayed. Out of a total of 152 coded interests, the figure below represents the percentage of references to each interest. Representing references to interests as percentages of a whole is done to facilitate future comparisons.

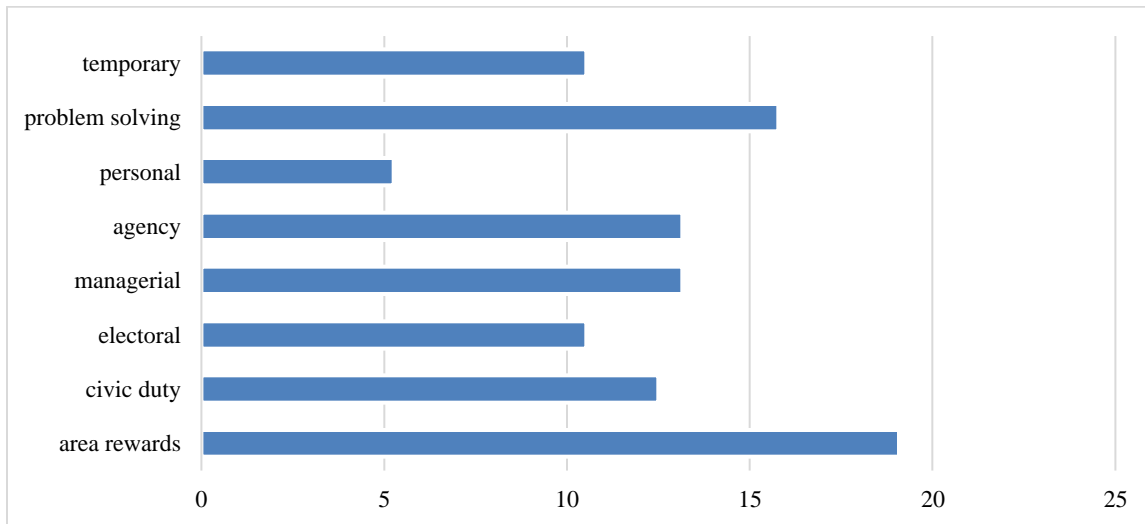


Figure 6. Representation of interests by % (Flint).

To better compare which categories of interests are represented above others, these subcategories are redefined into four themes: council politics (area rewards and electoral interests), self-interest (personal and agency), efficiency (managerial and temporary), and public good (civic duty and problem solving) and are illustrated in Figure 7. Political concerns, referring in this context to the politics of reelection among council members, occur most often (~30% of the time) relative to the other thematic streams, followed by public concerns (~29%). However, taken as a whole, the prioritization of council politics, efficiency and managerial concerns, and self-interest combined (~71%) is substantially higher than that of public concerns, with public concerns making up slightly less than one-third of the interests represented during what is ostensibly a discussion about a public health and safety issue. Many of these concerns thematically centered on the financial interests of the city of Flint and the private entities engaged in business before the city council.

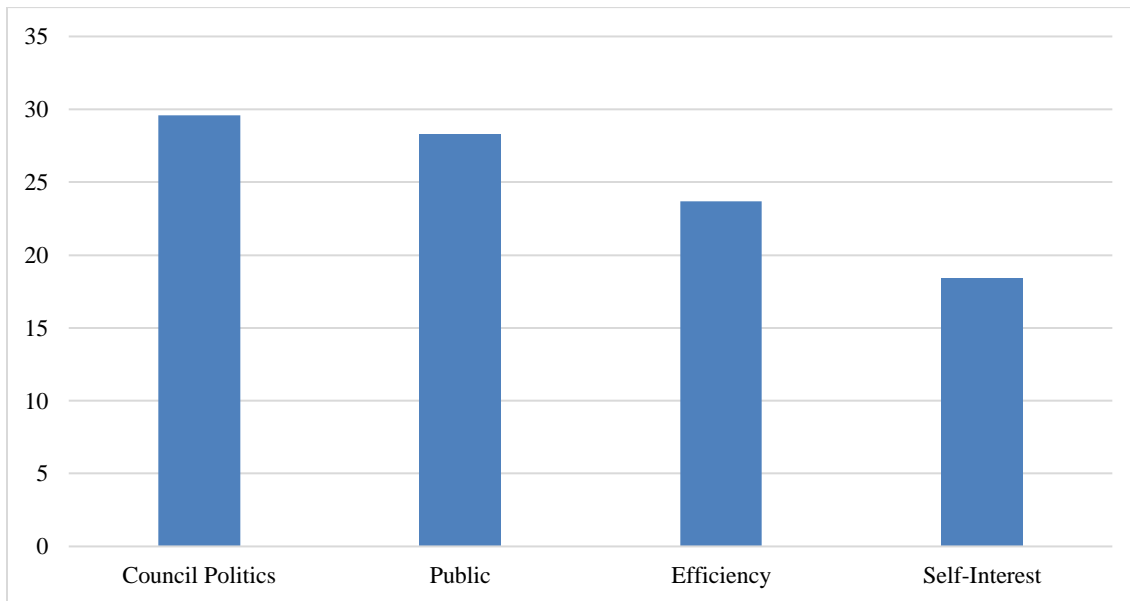


Figure 7. Representation of interest themes by % (Flint).

These findings suggest that while public interests are represented, they do not make up a majority or even a plurality of the interests that are discussed most often in the context of the water crisis. This is backed up by open-ended discussions with interviewees who work for or closely with the city council, the department of education, state government, and the mayor. Respondents were asked to tell the interviewer about a time they felt that certain interests (of any type) were being prioritized over others in front of the city council. Following are selected quotes on the subject, with the relevant evidence highlighted in yellow.

And there are Flint dollars in there, so one of the things I've been doing lately, because there are some legislators that do not want that money to be there, **because they don't think we should continue to fund public health programs in Flint.**

Yeah, yeah. **I think the Administration [of Flint] didn't fight what the state wanted because they had things that they wanted.** Again, politics. It's certain positions. It's grants. They said, "You give us this, we'll give you that. Don't fight us on this, we won't fight you on that."

We've lost the fertility rate . . . so that obviously should be the first priority. Second priority should have been, "Why are we still allowing the kids to go to the schools and the school water hadn't been taken care of yet?" **There's no prioritizing of any of that stuff.**

It just seems like the local government, say the water commission or the County Water Commission, at some level, they had to have known that something was wrong. I just don't see how that couldn't have happened.

But the state owns—it's part of the state's company. So, we have to choose a source that the state is involved in. And it's the source that the state —it just tells me it's all too intermingled. I feel like if they had involved the Council from the beginning, they probably could've convinced them that this one's the best source.

Other interviewees echoed similar themes, putting the blame on city officials for not pushing harder for a resolution to the crisis, as well as on state and federal authorities who had neglected their responsibilities. Overall, each of the six interviewees seemed focused on the idea that state officials had ignored what was happening with regards to public health in Flint, focusing instead on the financial situation of the city and only conducting public relations work once word spread about the lead levels in the water.

Proposition 1b. When a higher importance is placed on cost-savings than on public health and safety policy, it may contribute to the formation or exacerbation of a public health and safety crisis. To understand the impact of the prioritization of cost-savings over public health and safety on the formation and exacerbation of the Flint Water Crisis, this analysis turns to the link between the relationships of city council members and other entities (in the form of bargaining over contracts, agreements, or similar interactions during city council meetings) with the factor groups (interests, environmental, and organizational factors) set forth in Chapter

II. These relationships frequently co-occur with factors in the coded meeting minutes, as it stands to reason that a city council member interacting with an outside entity before council is doing so in service of some goal or decision. Table 4 below shows the number of times a particular type of relationship (i.e.: a council member and a representative of a private entity, either business or non-profit) occurs in connection with the representation of a particular type of factor or interest.

Table 4
Connections between relationships and factor groups (Flint)

Relationship	Citizen	Government	Elected Official	Private Entity
Environmental Factors	1	21	2	39
Organizational Factors	2	2	4	3
Interests	2	6	5	4

As shown above, there are four types of outside entities that appear before the Flint City Council or arise in response to a discussion of the water crisis: citizen groups, administrators of other governments, political figures, and private enterprises. Knowing that relationships like these can be powerful influences on government officials, particularly when a government is focused on the financial aspects of a given policy (Boyne, 1998; Kelleher & Yackee, 2009), it makes sense to ask how those relationships influence the policy-making process in the context of the water crisis, first by showing (as in Table 4) the connection between these relationships and the factors and interests being promoted by council members in that context.

To do so, each interaction between a council member and an outside entity is coded, both for the type of outside entity, as well as the particular environmental factors that exist within that relationship. Of the four types of relationships city council members engage in before the body, it is overwhelmingly government-council and private entity-council relationships that are represented, both of which occur most frequently in connection with environmental factors. The

next step in understanding what this means is to unpack the category of environmental factors to understand exactly which factors the participants in these relationships are engaging in.

Table 5
Environmental factor co-occurrences (Flint)

Factors	Occurrences with Government Relationships	Occurrences with Private Entity Relationships
Information Asymmetry	0	0
Organizational Home	1	0
Accountability	0	2
Power	6	10
Local Idiosyncrasies	15	7
Resources	21	39

Three factors (power, local idiosyncrasies, and resources) in occurrence with two relationships (government and private) make up the overwhelming majority of connections between council relationships and factors in the context of the water crisis. There are few interactions with citizen relationships, and very few of these relationships involved information asymmetry between actors, appeared to be influenced by the organizational home of the actor in question, or referenced accountability of any sort. For example, the sole reference to the interests of the organizational home of the council member in conjunction to a relationship refers to an agreement with the City of Burton, categorized as an “organizational home” interest due to the explicit reference to the City Council making the agreement, as opposed to another branch of the city government. This comes on June 17, 2017 and reads as follows:

Resolution resolving that the City of Flint, through its City Council, acknowledges and agrees to coordinate with the City of Burton and its agents for the disconnection and abandonment of the existing City of Flint water mains currently serving the City of Burton’s Elmwood Gardens Neighborhood at such time the Elmwood Gardens Water

Main Project is prepared for the conversion. [NOTE: As a result of the Flint Water Crisis, the City of Burton has undertaken plans for the construction of a new water main, known as the Elmwood Gardens Water Main Project, to service the citizens living within the boundaries of the City of Burton's Elmwood Gardens Neighborhood (Dort Highway/Hemphill Road area)]

Instead, some focus falls on issues of local idiosyncrasy, for example the passage of a resolution to give the authority to the Council's Finance Committee to approve a six-way agreement between the City of Flint, the State of Michigan, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), and the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA). This resolution occurred on October 12, 2015 and reads as follows:

Resolution resolving that the Finance Department is authorized to process a budget amendment to the appropriate Water and Sewer funds to facilitate the switch back to the Detroit water system as soon as practicable, with specific revenue and expenditure line items to be provided by the Chief Financial Officer. [NOTE: The State of Michigan and CS. Mott Foundation have committed \$6 million and \$4 million dollars respectively to assist the City with the cost of purchasing water from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) and its successor, the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), until the City is able to receive water from the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA). At this time the KWA reports that construction is on schedule to be completed by June 30, 2015 [2016]. The City estimates the total cost to purchase water through DWSD will be \$12 million for nine months. The balance of \$2 million not covered by the pledges of State

and Local resources is the responsibility of the City. A budget amendment is necessary to reflect both an increase in revenues for the receipt of \$10 million in assistance and \$2 million of budgeted Use of Fund Balance, and an increase in expenditures of \$12 million for the purchase of DWSD water supply.]

Such an agreement is not likely to be found in other scenarios, as these actors and their particular institutional structures, history, and relationships are all unique to this particular area of Michigan. Additionally, there exists the exercise of power in the relationships noted here, exemplified by a non-negotiable request from the Mayor's Office for a repayment schedule for the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) from the Council. However, the primary emphasis is on resources, and the plurality of relationships between the council and other governments, along with the majority of the relationships between the council and private entities, exist to bargain over the allocation of resources. To further demonstrate the impact this has had over the course of the water crisis, quotes from individuals intimately involved in the policy process are laid out below:

Money always plays a role in everything. Flint, they're not the richest city in the world, let's just put it that way, right? . . . But because we're typically a poorer city, let's just say. I think that probably had a lot to do with it.

The prioritizing was money. It was all about money. It was all about what kind of money can we save. What kind of money can we get away with not having to spend?

Unless you get these unfunded pensions dealt with and people start paying their water bills, you're going to have long-term financing issues, which very well could result in another emergency manager being put in.

So it was really huge for me from a public health perspective that we stay on the Detroit water...and like I said, at that time, from a cost perspective, it was undoable.

And then also, a lot of times, it's difficult because people always say that they want public health to be considered, but when you have to think about the dollars and cents side of things, it's very difficult to take the time to make sure that you're looking at both of those things.

Immediately the very next pay all of the sudden we're back to paying the 120-something dollars again with no credit, no anything. So, we're paying for water that we can't use.

This is evidence of the utility of Proposition 1b, as it is well established that the allocation of resources is a zero-sum game, even within the public sector (A. Dahl & Soss, 2014; Morgenstern & Von Neumann, 1953). If resources are not allocated in consultation with citizen groups, and instead are allocated to other governments or private entities, along with power not exercised in concert with citizens groups, then there is little evidence that citizen needs are being met. It must also be stated that the tone and directness used by these individuals in identifying these priorities was unmistakable. While this evidence points toward the utility of Proposition 1b, further analysis of the budget of Flint must be conducted in order to demonstrate if and how

resources were allocated after the prioritization of these particular interests in front of the council.

Proposition 1c. Once a public health and safety crisis is underway, the importance that municipal government places on public health and safety concerns as compared to cost-saving ones will vary, depending in part upon the population of the municipality.

This sub-proposition, unlike 1a and 1b, is difficult to demonstrate without the comparative case, and so will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter VI. That is, to understand how the populations of municipalities might impact the policy response of their city councils, it is necessary to compare (at minimum) two cities. Chapter VI will provide such a comparison, albeit limited to the two cases considered herein. However, to begin to understand the dynamics of how municipal governments decide which policies are important, and the relationship between prioritization and population, Figure 8 illustrates the change over time of the conversation of the city council, and which interests they prioritized.

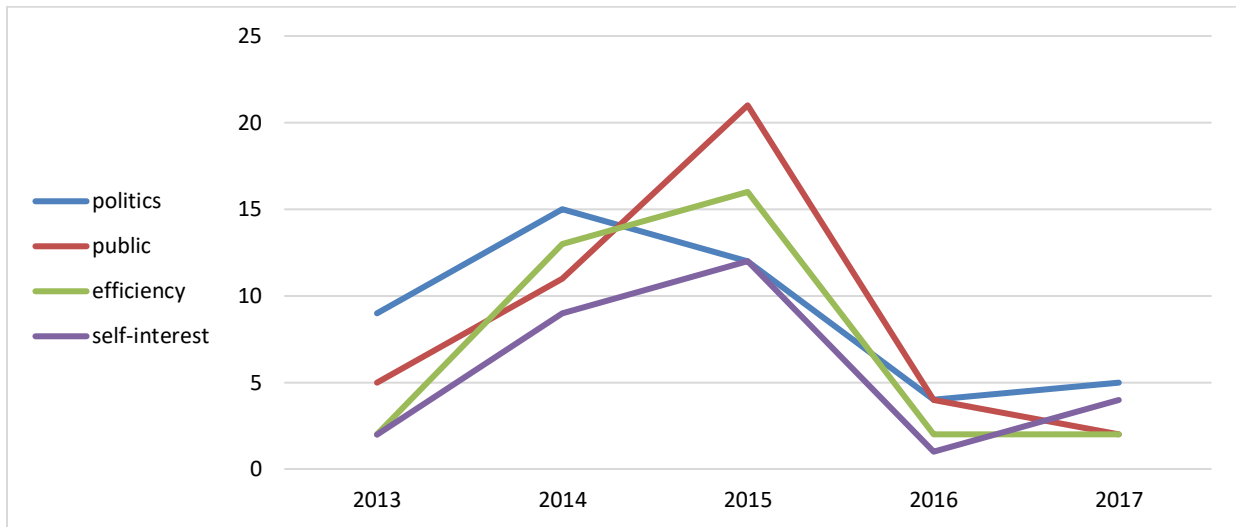


Figure 8. Number of references per year by interest type (Flint).

The graph above indicates that in 2015, at the height of media attention on Flint, references to public interests dominated the debate in the city council. However, before and after this time, when the city and its politicians faced less scrutiny, the discussion focused on their own political interests. This may be indicative of two things: first, that the location of the citizens of Flint within the power-deservedness typology (low and less deserving) leads politicians to represent instead the interests of those in favor of efficient and cost-saving policies; and second, that pressure from citizens in the form of national media coverage, interest groups, and protests from activists can have an impact on the political conversation and eventual policy outcomes.

Scholars have demonstrated that the type, manner, and direction of policy feedback is influenced by media coverage (Boydston & Glazier, 2013; Breznau, 2016; Soss, 1999). However, to fully understand those dynamics, an understanding of social construction must serve as a mitigating factor, demonstrating that these results may vary significantly based on the construction of the population in question. As Campbell (2003) and others demonstrate, the power of certain populations to influence policy is variable, and so the full conclusion of this proposition requires the comparative nature of the analysis in Chapter VI.

Proposition 2: The actions and/or nonactions of municipal government before and during a crisis will generate policy feedback effects.

Proposition 2 and its associated sub propositions cannot be addressed entirely through the coding of city council minutes alone, as it inquires as to the impact of outside and external influences on the potential policies discussed by the council. Mettler and SoRelle (2014) provide an overview of what this cycle looks like, showing how payments, goods, and services along with rules and procedures (created by policy decisions), in turn influenced by resources and

interpretations, develop civic capacity and civic disposition among mass publics that leads to civic engagement or a lack thereof. Figure 9 below, shows this as a linear process.

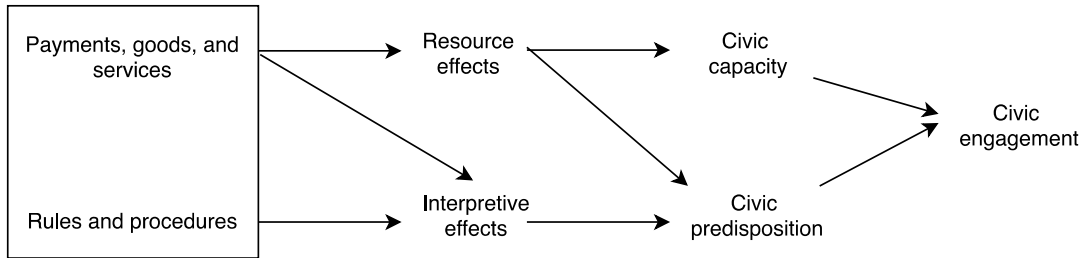


Figure 9. Mechanisms of policy feedback. Reproduced from “Policy feedback theory,” by S. Mettler and M. SoRelle, in P. A. Sabatier (Ed.) *Theories of the Policy Process* (3 ed., p. 165), 2014, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

The analysis of this proposition looks at the cyclical relationship between citizen mobilization as civic engagement and proposed future behavior of the city council in Flint. By analyzing interviews with stakeholders, participants, and observers of the policy process, it is possible to determine how each of these individuals and the agencies/interests they represent view the role of citizens, including activists and the media, in the policy process. Understanding how these citizens and their roles are viewed by the gatekeepers to that process indicates whether they, in the eyes of the interviewees, played or will play a significant role in changing future approaches to policy (Moynihan & Soss, 2014). If perceptions of citizens by those in power influences those citizens own conceptions of their power and deservedness, or as Campbell (2003) puts it, policies make citizens, then an analysis of those perceptions is the first step towards understanding the impact of policy feedback and social construction in the revised theoretical framework proposed herein. It is further proposed that those perceptions are mitigated and influenced by the relative power of the individual holding the perception, along with the bureaucratic typology that best represents them.

These representations of bureaucrats fit best into the *interpretive effects* stage of Mettler and SoRelle (2014). These local officials are the ones who interpret and distribute policy outside the council chamber, impacting how mass publics will respond and develop (or not) a *civic predisposition* leading to *civic engagement*. By addressing this critical stage within the broader policy feedback cycle, this proposition unpacks the impact of municipal leaders on feedback, and how citizens respond in turn. As per Figure 10 below, Proposition 2 can be reconceptualized as a cycle, wherein each sub-proposition is related to the next.

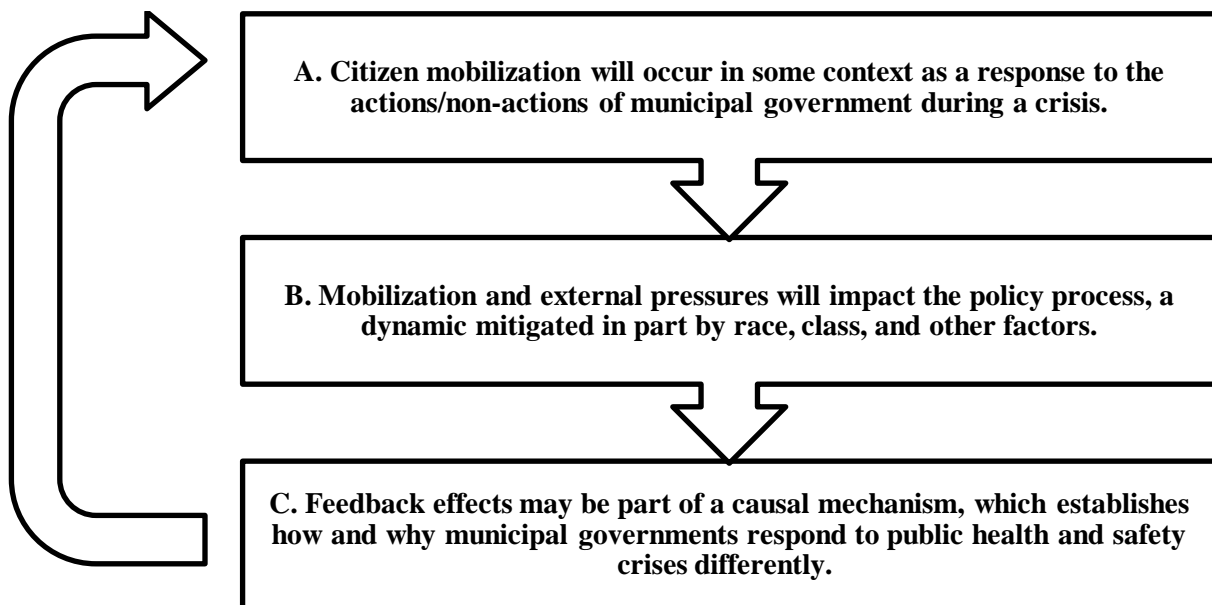


Figure 10. Proposition 2.

Interviews were conducted with six individuals who work for the City of Flint, including in the City Clerk’s Office and the Health Department, are active in public sector labor unions in Flint, and who are on grant-funded projects associated with the water crisis. Their responses to the open-ended interview questions were coded based on a network of interrelated concepts, shown in the following Figure 11 network diagram.

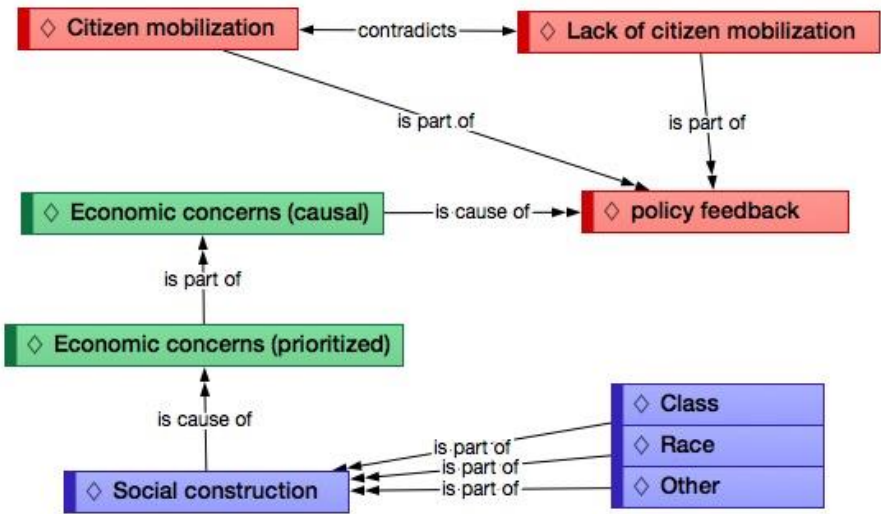


Figure 11. Atlas.ti coding network for social construction and policy feedback

Based on this coding schema, it is shown that in the interviews, references to citizens mobilization occur more frequently than references to a lack of mobilization. Further, these references occur in interviews with *egoists*, *glad-handers*, *technicians*, and *traditionalists*. Table 6 table below indicates the number of references to either citizen mobilization or a lack thereof for each of the typologies interviewed.

Table 6
Typologies and # of references to citizen mobilization (Flint)

	Egoist	Glad-hander	Technician	Traditionalist
Citizen mobilization	5	7	8	3
Lack of citizen mobilization	0	0	1	2

Interestingly, only *technicians* and *traditionalists* referred to a lack of citizen mobilization in their interviews, which leads to several further questions: First, are these bureaucratic identities in any way associated with perceptions of citizen mobilization, and are they more likely to support such actions; Second, does this pattern occur in other crises; And third, is this mobilization and related perceptions by administrators associated with media

coverage of the crisis, and does the bureaucratic identity of the administrator in question play any role in that association?

While this single case study cannot provide a definitive answer, it does indicate that citizen mobilization in response to actions and nonactions by municipal government officials occurred during this crisis. Below are several examples of how interviewees referred to citizen mobilization or the lack thereof, with the relevant passages highlighted:

We do some campaigns for—depending on if the governors being elected and that kind of thing—we get involved at a local level to get petition signatures and that kind of thing. I've had several interactions with local community leaders that sort of lead a grassroots effort and actually started an organization in response to the water crisis.

And it was just really heartbreaking, her story was really heartbreaking. And yet, I really appreciate somebody that maybe really was never—maybe had never really been activated, if that makes sense, before to participate in the political process. But she became involved and now she's been on panels all over the state, she's been in DC.

Also, making sure that we are doing whatever we can to inspire activism. We know that it was activism and the voice of residents that brought [to] light the environmental justice of the water crisis here in Flint.

Based on these preliminary findings, future research should address several key points elucidated here. First, the role of media influence on the policy process must be explored to a greater extent, in particular how the timing of national media attention can influence local policy

process and outcomes. Second, activism (both locally and nationally) must be recognized as a meaningful driver of policy feedback and studied not only through an ethnographic or sociological lens, but as a determinative factor that can push decision-making in certain directions. The role of activists and interest groups should not be understated, particularly in an open and accessible forum like a city council. Finally, the relationship between bureaucratic typologies and policy choices should be explored further, including both how those categories influence the decision-making of bureaucrats, as well as how and why bureaucrats develop these identities, and whether it is purposeful or not.

Turning to the influence of race and class on this mobilization and the perception of government officials, each type of bureaucrat interviewed used language and phrases that indicate the social construction of the citizens being referred to. Table 7 shows the number of references to three types of social constructions: race, class, and other (which includes any other characteristic including age, use of public benefits, or gender) by bureaucratic typology, and following are several quotes, with the relevant sections highlighted, that indicate the socially-constructed language used to discuss citizens.

Table 7
Typologies and number of references to social constructions (Flint)

Social Construction	Egoist	Glad-hander	Technician	Traditionalist
Class	2	4	3	1
Race	1	3	0	5
Other	2	5	4	5

And these are folks that can't necessarily go to the store and just continually buy water over and over and every day and every day.

Well, how do we know that this just isn't because of the fact that they were poor before and didn't have access to nutrition services because there's nothing but corner stores and liquor stores in Flint?

And it's not like they don't deserve the water or need the water, but you're talking about the most fragile of students. . . . well, the bottom line, there's a lot of kids coming into the system now that are high behavior issues, lower IQ.

Both of their final reports said that this was an environmental injustice and that race played a role. And these weren't just a bunch of Democrats

The race issue, our meetings now, that's all they talk about. It's the race. When the election was going on, the Mayor, our current mayor, she fed on that. Said that, "The only reason they did the recall is because I'm a black woman."

Based on the previous two tables and associated quotations from the interview transcripts, it can be demonstrated that in the case of the Flint water crisis, (a) local officials and community leaders believe that citizen mobilization does occur, and (b) that race, class, and other factors are fundamental to how local government officials and those who work for and with them talk about the citizens they serve. However, the question remains as to whether the policy feedback provided by this mobilization, mitigated in part by the social constructions of these citizens, has any impact on how policy is created, and which interests are prioritized.

Recognizing the inherent unreliability of a single case, it can be demonstrated via Table 8 below that the typologies that use socially-constructed language more often in their interviews also have views that reflect cost-saving concerns as either a priority of city government and/or as a cause of the Flint water crisis. Although this should not be construed to mean that there is a definitive connection between being identified as a *glad-hander* or a *traditionalist*, the use of socially-constructed language, and the priorities or causes of all crises, it does demonstrate the noteworthy relationship between these elements in the context of the Flint water crisis.

Table 8
Typologies, social constructions, and cost-saving concerns (Flint)

Reference	Egoist	Glad-hander	Technician	Traditionalist
Cost-saving concerns (prioritized)	2	4	3	4
Cost-saving concerns (causal)	3	11	5	4
Social constructions	5	12	7	11

In summation, while it is clear that mobilization of citizens did occur in Flint, and that race, class, and other social constructions were relevant to the interpretation of that mobilization by local officials, there remains the question of whether or not a causal mechanism exists that can help explain how and why municipal governments respond to public health and safety crises differently. The nature of the question suggests it will require a comparative case, and for this reason it will be explored in Chapter VI, within the context of both the Flint and Manchester cases, with an eye towards determining how these two cases might be used to discern specific factors and causes that differ between them.

Chapter V address the case study of Manchester, New Hampshire, and how that city has handled the opioid crisis. While this is a different issue, the opioid crisis has similar attributes to the water crisis in that it has impacted the whole city, put significant strain on resources and

administrators, and it has been the focus of intense media scrutiny and city council activity.

Using the same framework and propositions, I turn now to exploring the opioid crisis before proceeding to a comparative analysis of these two cases.

Chapter V: Manchester, New Hampshire

Manchester, New Hampshire is a classic New England city with red brick mills standing along the banks of the Merrimack River and a near-constant icy wind whipping between the Victorian homes of the 19th century industrialists, long since converted into multifamily housing for the descendants of Irish millworkers. Like Flint, this was once a thriving hub of industry, and though the fortunes of Manchester have certainly increased in ways that Flint's have not, the differences between the two cities are, in part, developed out of the similarities they once shared. Where Flint has abandoned factories, collapsing from the inside with beams poking out like bones, Manchester has the revitalized Millyard District, featuring tech companies like Texas Instruments and DEKA Research and Development Corporation (creators of the Segway). Where Flint has empty lots, detritus, and blight, Manchester has parks named after Revolutionary War heroes and a new Riverwalk along the Merrimack. But, lurking in the grass of those green spaces is evidence of the public health crisis in Manchester—hypodermic needles, empty pill bottles, spoons, baggies, vials, tinfoil—the telltale waste products of opioid use. Between 2010 and 2015, New Hampshire had the largest increase per capita in opioid-involved deaths of any state, and as its largest city, Manchester has suffered the brunt of that increase (Leins, 2017; Rose A. Rudd, Seth, David, & Scholl, 2016).

The story of how opioids took a stranglehold on Manchester, and more broadly in the United States, remains nonlinear and a causal factor has been difficult to pin down. While over-prescription of pain medication is part of the answer, so too is the smuggling of cheap heroin through ports of entry, at both the northern and southern border. Increasingly, these pathways are supplemented, and in some cases replaced, by the import of fentanyl, carfentanil, and other

synthetic opioids shipped from China and elsewhere. Between 2013 and 2014, the first year considered in this case study, opioid overdose deaths in New Hampshire rose by 73.5%, surpassed only by North Dakota, where total deaths were nearly 8 times fewer than in New Hampshire (Rose A Rudd, Aleshire, Zibbell, & Matthew Gladden, 2016; Sudders, 2015).

In 2016, the City of Manchester released a report titled *Response to the Opioid Crisis*. Put together by the city's Department of Health, this report details multiple actions taken by Manchester's government to address the opioid crisis, as well as to engage in mitigation and prevention programs to further benefit the populations most impacted. The report also contains evidence of the successes of some programs, including statistics on prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery, and integration. This includes conducting presentations to hundreds of citizens and distributing thousands of informational resource cards, fielding nearly 1000 visits to Safe Stations (fire stations where citizens can surrender drugs without penalty and request services), and investments of millions of dollars along with a massive expansion of bed space at local recovery centers and shelters.

According to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and American Medical Response, the primary provider of ambulance services and emergency healthcare in Manchester, opioid overdose deaths declined 18% from 2016 to 2017, even while total overdoses increased by 11% (*American medical response: Opioid crisis fact sheet*, 2017). This suggests that while opioids remained a significant problem in Manchester through 2017, the changes and investment by the city into this issue have had some impact. This chapter, beginning with the mini ethnographies, engages with this case through observations, interviews, visual representations, and an extensive review of the Board of Aldermen meeting minutes. Utilizing

the same methodology and structure as the Flint case, this chapter explores how Manchester, a fundamentally different city, has responded to a problem similar not in terms of the matter at hand, but in its impact on the population.

The Manchester case is crucial to understanding the differences inherent in the local bureaucratic response to a crisis, and the factors that may contribute to them. First, Manchester, while suffering the effects of a long-term economic downturn was not under any specific financial constraints or austerity measures, lead to a focus among local politicians and bureaucrats on policy measures more closely related to public health and safety. Second, the City of Manchester serves a less diverse and wealthier population compared to Flint, which is also socially constructed by those in authority but with expectedly different results. Third, the Manchester case supports the framework of bureaucratic politics as proposed and provides a substantive second case study on crisis response in local government that can be applied to the expansion and improvement of the model.

Mini-Ethnography: Manchester

We actually had an incident where one of our emergency rooms was totally taken out of commission because they had five Carfentanil [a synthetic opioid] cases come in at once—three in the back of a pickup truck and while doing CPR on two of them, someone else overdosed in the bathroom at the same time, and literally shut the emergency room down. *Public health official, Manchester.*

April 17, 2018: 5:45 p.m. The drive to Manchester from outside of Boston traces the Merrimack, 93 North swinging east as the river swings west. The traffic clears out quickly over the border into New Hampshire, long stretches of gray asphalt punctuated by exit signs for towns

straight out of Lovecraft or King: Andover, Ballardvale, Derry, Salem. It's not deserted, exactly, but southern New Hampshire certainly feels more like rural Virginia or western Pennsylvania than a commuter suburb of Boston. The trees arch over the highway, and for nearly an hour as the sun sets, the light peeks through the branches, highlighting the rain flicking off the windshield. Pulling off the highway into Manchester, the red brick mills announce the city, laid out along the Merrimack and glinting in the sunset. On closer inspection, the signs across their facades proclaim in clean, sans-serif font the names of technology start-ups: Dyn, Geneia, snhu.edu. Past the mills, the off-ramp widens into a two-lane road leading into downtown. At each stoplight on the way into town, there's at least one panhandler in the median.

April 17, 2018: 6:27 p.m. Dressed in black ball caps and red shirts proclaiming their membership in the Manchester Fire Department and Local 856 of the International Association of Fire Fighters, a group of at least 50 men march in a circle outside of Manchester City Hall, a building that at first glance appears to be a Gothic church. The men are marching (but not singing or chanting) and more than a few step off the line to chat to friends or family, most of whom stay for just a few minutes before retreating to the safety of their warm vehicles. It's cold for April, even in New Hampshire and it's clear that enthusiasm among the union brotherhood is waning. A megaphone squeals feedback, a voice proclaims, "FAIR CONTRACT," and the assembled group lets out a mildly enthusiastic cheer. The firefighters have been picketing for a new contract for weeks now, in protest of the city failing to give the fire department the same 3% raise given to the police department. Two mayors, Republican Ted Gastas, and the recently elected Democrat Joyce Craig, have both been unwilling to budge on the issue. While opioid overdoses, the recent debate over the carrying of Narcan by first responders, and the rise in

property crime that many in Manchester attribute to the opioid crisis, are not referenced explicitly by the marchers, it's hard to imagine that these issues don't contribute to the requests for a new contract, including the request for increased hazard pay.

April 17, 2018: 7:30 p.m. Entering the Aldermanic Chambers on the third floor of City Hall in Manchester, the first thing I notice is how similar it looks to a traffic court. Benches, gates, and daises of dark but cheap-looking wood are laid out symmetrically throughout the high-ceilinged room. A balcony overhead provides overflow seating, although tonight it seems that we can all be contained on the first level. With no windows, large overhead fluorescents provide the only light, a harsh glare that reflects off the glossy finishes. 12 men and 2 women, all White, and most with Irish and Italian last names, file into the chamber, many of them stopping to greet observers or each other. The Aldermen settle into their seats, then stand up (along with the room) as a group of school-age students from the Manchester Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing sign the National Anthem. The meeting is called to order, announcements are made, and a discussion begins concerning the budget of the city. Alderman At Large Levasseur interrupts the mayor to note a minor objection to the readjustment of severance funding for city employees. As the meeting proceeds, this scene is repeated several times. From the facial reactions of the other Aldermen, it would seem that the board is familiar with the negotiation style of the Alderman At Large.

April 18, 2018: 1:30 p.m. On the way to meet an interviewee, I pass a sign just outside of Manchester that declares itself in red bubble letters—*Funworld*, and below that, *NOW HIRING*. Funworld, it would seem, is a large building shaped like a medieval castle. I can't resist pulling into the parking lot to get a better view. Circling the lot, it feels like an abandoned building, but I

can see cars parked in the lot and can hear faint music coming from within. As I turn my car around, I spot a homeless encampment, just outside the chain-link fence that surrounds the complex. Beer cans, plastic bags, and the remains of what looks like a small shelter built out of tarps and boxes spill down a small incline. Driving back out the front entrance, I see a small army of schoolchildren waiting in the rain with their chaperones to enter the castle. Nobody seems to be having much fun. When I meet up with my next interviewee, I ask her about it. “Oh, that’s Funworld” she says, in a thick New Hampshire accent, and doesn’t elaborate further.

In similar fashion to the Flint case, in Figure 12 below are a number of images taken in the greater Manchester area during my visit. As indicated in Chapter IV, the intention with these and the vignettes described on the previous page is to capture specific moments, bringing the reader along with the researcher into the process of visiting a particular place at a particular time. Following these photographs, I explore the specific demographic characteristics of Manchester, in light of what they might explain regarding the influences of social construction and policy feedback on the bureaucratic politics of the Board of Aldermen. The previously described formal propositions are repeated, this time using data from Manchester. Finally, the chapter closes with a summary of the findings and a brief comment on their relevance to the larger project.

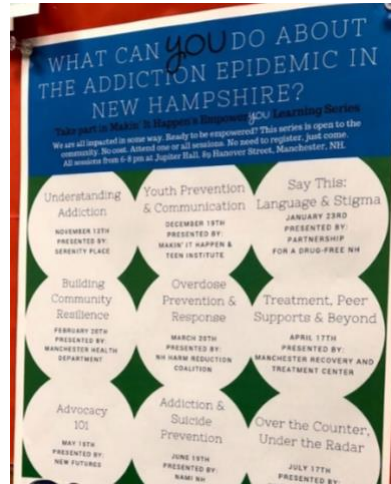
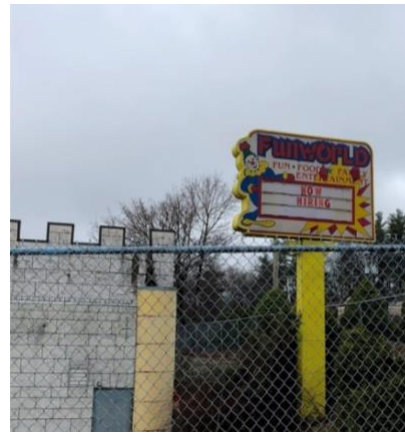


Figure 12. Photos taken in Manchester, New Hampshire. Clockwise from upper left on previous page: Aldermanic Chambers, 1 City Hall Plaza, 3rd floor; firefighter's picket at Manchester City Hall, 1 City Hall Plaza; Funworld, 200 Daniel Webster Highway, Nashua, NH; poster in the Manchester Health Department, 1528 Elm St.; Merrimack River and former Amoskeag Manufacturing Company mills, 10 Arms St.; photos of former mayors in the stairwell of City Hall, 1 City Hall Plaza, 1st-4th floors. All photographs copyright of the author.

Social Construction and Policy in Manchester

Table 9
Demographic statistics (Manchester)

Race	Estimate	Percentage
Total Population	110,065	100%
White	94,390	85.8%
Black or African American	5,066	4.6%
All Other Census Categories	10,609	9.6%

Employment	Estimate	Percentage
In Labor Force	62,892	69.3%
Employed	58,731	64.8%
Unemployed	4,161	4.6%
Not in Labor Force	27,809	30.7%

Income	Estimate	Percentage
Total households	44,156	100%
Less than \$10,000	2,437	5.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2,324	5.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,521	10.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,000	11.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,758	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	8,900	20.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,436	14.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5,668	12.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,974	4.5%
\$200,000 or more	1,138	2.6%

Welfare Benefits	Estimate	Percentage
With Supplemental Security Income	3,146	7.0%
With Cash Public Assistance Income	2,063	4.6%
With Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits	6,510	14.5%

Note. Adapted from American Community Survey (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

Some of the demographic characteristics that are most relevant to understanding social construction of the population of Manchester, as in any city, are race, employment, income, and

use of public benefits. Manchester is a majority-White city, with Black or African American residents making up a narrow plurality of the non-White residents. Close to 10% of the population identifies as neither White nor Black, with most of those residents identifying as Asian or Hispanic/Latino. Race is a particularly salient variable when it comes to policy development and implementation according the literature on social construction, and therefore the super-majority of White residents is particularly important to understanding how bureaucratic politics function in Manchester (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider et al., 2014).

Outside of race, it is also important to consider the impact of employment and income, and by association class, on the social constructions that may be most prevalent in Manchester. Close to 1/3 of the population of Manchester over the age of 16 does not participate in the labor force but there is a low level of unemployment, suggesting that the job market is good, and therefore many of those non-participants may be students, caretakers, or otherwise occupied outside of the workforce. While there is a wide range of incomes in Manchester, there are very few households that report income below \$15,000 per year. The majority of earners are grouped within the income range of \$35,000-\$100,000 per year, well above the poverty line for even a six-person household (Destro, 2019). These two variables of race and class suggest that the citizens of Manchester are likely to be categorized though the lens of social construction as relatively deserving of “good” policy, and powerful when it comes to their political power to mobilize and provide meaningful feedback to policy makers.

As previously discussed in Chapter IV, welfare policy and those who receive welfare are highly likely to be viewed through this lens of social construction. In Manchester, very few residents use three common public assistance programs: SNAP (food stamps), Supplemental

Security Income, and cash public assistance. The literature on social construction would therefore suggest that in Manchester, the social construction of welfare is unlikely to have a significant impact on the bureaucratic politics of the Board of Aldermen, or on how policy is conceived and perceived within that city (Campbell, 2003; Riccucci, 2005; Soss, 1999; Soss & Schram, 2007; Watkins-Hayes, 2009b).

It is fair to say that in Manchester, the Board and mayor have a meaningful amount of power that allows them to shape policy within the city. The delegation of power to this group suggests some amount of trust in their ability to execute the process of creating and implementing policy, although just as any other decision-making body must, they are forced to bargain and negotiate with other entities, both within and outside government (Halperin & Clapp, 1974; Meier, 1987; Rourke, 1969). Just as in Flint, I turn to the discourse around the crisis in this city, opioid overdoses, to analyze the propositions laid out in Chapter I.

Proposition 1: Municipal governments prioritize policies that focus on cost-saving measures.

Proposition 1a. During the policy creation process, the individuals at the bargaining table prioritize parochial, political, and agency-specific interests over broader public interests, including health and safety.

An analysis of the Board of Aldermen meeting minutes demonstrates the various interests represented in front of that body, and which are prioritized over others, as seen below in Figure 13. For instance, in an invited presentation to the Board, the chief of police stated:

The way it works is the money is dedicated to certain initiatives, however, the initiatives that we are going to be funding like Operate Cayenne, Granite Hammer and some of our

other drug initiatives will all come out of that. Last year, we used the money from the vacancies that we had. Once we filled those vacancies if you recall I came to this board and said we have to stop doing what we are doing. The board said they would cover me if there was any overage in our budget, which you did, and I appreciate that. The board has been very supportive. You also gave us another \$100,000 if you remember.

This statement, and the interactions preceding and following, are coded as *agency* interests, as the individual is clearly advocating for funding for his agency, and the board is clearly supportive of that request. Conversely, a report on a broad, multi-agency coalition developing educational materials about prescription drugs and home security is coded as *civic duty* and *problem solving*, as instead of requesting resources for a particular agency, it demonstrates an attentiveness to the needs of individuals, and corresponds to interview data suggesting that this is what the citizens of Manchester want. Out of a total of 112 coded interests, Figure 13 below represents the percentage of references to each interest. As in the Flint case, this choice to represent references to interests as percentages of a whole is done to better facilitate future comparisons.

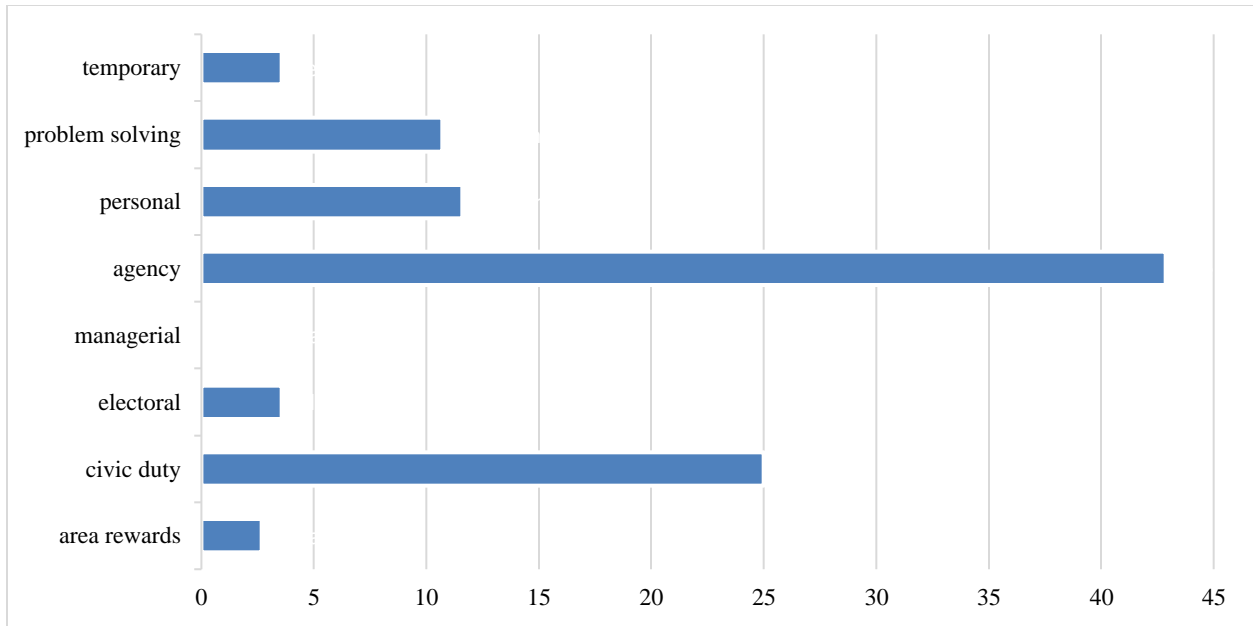


Figure 13. Representation of interests by % (Manchester).

As in the previous chapter, to provide a more concise analysis of which categories of interests are represented most often, these subcategories are redefined into four themes: council politics (area rewards and electoral interests), self-interest (personal and agency), efficiency (managerial and temporary), and public good (civic duty and problem solving). Self-interested concerns occur a majority of the time (nearly 55%) relative to the other thematic streams, followed by public concerns (~36%). Political concerns are noted just over 6% of the time, while efficiency concerns are only noted just over 3% of the time. In particular, many of these concerns thematically centered on the police department, and how law enforcement was dealing with the opioid crisis in the city

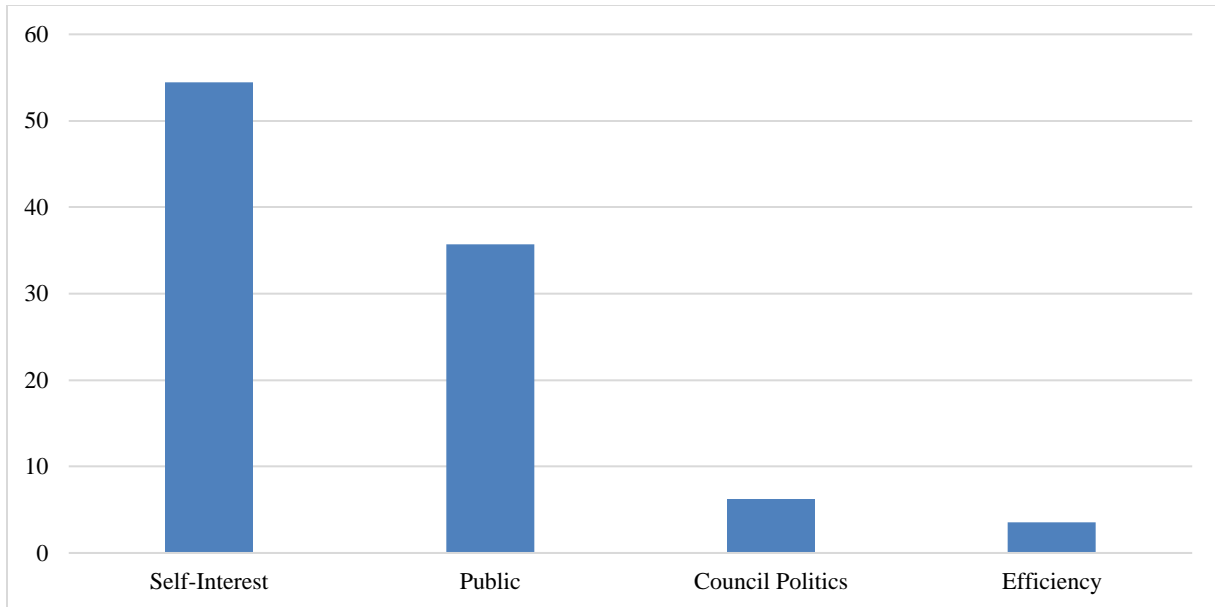


Figure 14. Representation of interest themes by % (Manchester).

These findings suggest that public interests are represented to a significant extent in front of the Board, but that it is self-interested concerns (primarily the interests of police officials or other law enforcement personnel) that takes up the majority of the time spent discussing the opioid crisis. This is echoed in some of the open-ended discussions with interviewees who work for or closely with the board, various city departments, state government, and local non-profits. Respondents were asked to tell the interviewer about a time they felt that certain interests (of any type) were prioritized over others in front of the Board. Following are selected quotes on the subject, with the relevant evidence that suggests the prioritization of certain interests highlighted in yellow.

And for the most part, I'd have to say the Aldermen are extremely supportive of what we do, and the mayor is extremely supportive of what we do. But we have an ongoing

relationship and they call us when they have some issues that are going on in the community to help them understand or deal with.

They not only have priorities that surround community health issues, but they're balancing budgets and they have school budgets and potholes to take care of and all that.

And so, they're balancing a set of priorities that's different than the set of priorities, I think, that we have.

One [priority] is to reduce the current pool of users, and you're going to do that from a law enforcement perspective and from things like the PDMP [prescription drug monitoring program], making sure there are fewer drugs...so helping those that are currently addicted, reducing that pool. Getting the drugs off the street, getting people help, getting people treatment.

But when the public issues come up like the opioid epidemic, people in this state are savvy enough to know what position they're going to take on it, and the take is going to be we're going to do something.

As these selected quotations imply, many of the interviewees found that their priorities overlapped or were explicitly supported by the Board. For several non-profits dealing with the opioid crisis, this meant that the Board supported them both financially and politically, and they did not see private interests or other levels of government interfering with that support. All seven of the interviewees believed, at least to some extent, that the Board of Aldermen was in support

of their agency or organization and did not see the Board as unhelpful or deleterious regarding opioid overdoses in the city.

Proposition 1b. When a higher importance is placed on cost-saving policy than on public health and safety policy, it may contribute to the formation or exacerbation of a public health and safety crisis. To understand how the priorities set forward in the previous proposition impact the formation and exacerbation of the opioid crisis in Manchester, I look at the connection between the relationships of Board members and other entities (in the form of discussions regarding contracts, agreements, or similar interactions during Board of Aldermen meetings) with the factor groups (interests, environmental, and organizational factors) set forth in Chapter II, the same method that was conducted for the Flint case. As stated previously, these relationships frequently co-occur with factors in the coded meeting minutes, and it is likely that a member of the Board of Aldermen would only be interacting with an outside entity before the Board in service of some particular priority. Table 10 below shows the number of times a type of relationship (i.e.: A Board member and a citizen) occurs in connection with a factor or interest.

Table 10
Connections between relationships and factor groups (Manchester)

Relationship	Citizen	Government	Elected Official	Private Entity
Environmental Factors	0	14	1	12
Organizational Factors	0	6	1	5
Interests	6	9	1	19

Using the same methodology as in the Flint case, an analysis is conducted on the public interactions between the Board and four groups: citizens, administrators of other governments, political figures, and private enterprises. As in the Flint case, it is likely that relationships like these can have meaningful influences on Board members (Boyne, 1998; Kelleher & Yackee, 2009). Relationships between Board members and either government officials or private entities

were most common. Table 11 shows the occurrences of government-Board relationships among environmental factors, while Table 12 does the same for both environmental factors and interests in connection with private entity-Board relationships

Table 11
Environmental factor co-occurrences (Manchester)

Factor	Occurrences with Government Relationship
Information asymmetry	1
Organizational Home	2
Accountability	2
Power	0
Local Idiosyncrasies	1
Resources	12

Table 12
Interest and environmental factor co-occurrences (Manchester)

Interest	Occurrences with Private Entity Relationship
Agency	4
Area Rewards	0
Civic Duty	4
Electoral	0
Managerial	0
Personal	14
Problem Solving	2
Temporary	0
Factor	
Information Asymmetry	1
Organizational Home	0
Accountability	1
Power	0
Local Idiosyncrasies	0
Resources	11

While relationships are coded for multiple interests or factors, the majority of government-board interactions occur in the context of a discussion of resources, while private entity-board interactions co-occur with a discussion of resources or personal interests. Examples

of government-board relationships co-occurring with discussions of resources include multiple discussions on how potential grant funding from the state government would be distributed within the city. Below, Alderman Levasseur asks for a clarification from the Director of the Health Department:

I would like to ask Mr. Soucy a question. Can you tell us and explain a little bit if you can what the benefits are of this grant and what you as the Health Director . . . are you able to provide any services directly for the citizens of the city of Manchester for these drug related issues and does any of the money you get go to the Fire Department for the purchase of Narcan?

The connections between private entity relationships and personal interests are primarily through the relating of stories by Aldermen that recount specific interactions they have had with people in the community impacted by the opioid crisis. This co-occurrence is exemplified in the following statement from Alderman O'Neil:

We have a major issue in the City of Manchester. I don't think there is a person in here that isn't aware of somebody that was touched by heroin or other drug issues. The people of Manchester want us to do something about it. They don't want to hear well we are waiting on the county delegation to do it. They want us to do something and take action. I think this is a good opportunity to show the county we are serious about it. I support the motion to include it.

Repeatedly, Aldermen and others before the Board used personal experience and the impact of the opioid crisis on their constituents, friends, and families in support of resolutions or other decisions that would promote education and enforcement around the opioid crisis. Personal

and other “non-rational” factors influence how policy-makers conduct themselves within the context of bureaucratic politics, and it appears that Manchester is no exception (Allison & Zelikow, 1971; Brower & Abolafia, 1997; Lindblom, 1959). In interviews with multiple local government leaders who work in close association with the Board, a similar theme was reflected. With this evidence in hand, it is worth noting that *self-interest* in Manchester may be very different than *self-interest* in Flint, and this will be explored in the proceeding chapter. The following quotes illuminate perceptions of a problem that exists on a very personal level for many of these individuals, and the associated belief that the government has a mandate to do something about it.

But the other thing is I have a friend goes back many, many years who I know is a wonderful mother involved in the community and cause . . . and her son died of a drug overdose, and I've just been able to watch that.

He was suffering—he was a heroin user and she learned of this time when he perished, and it turned about to be that he died in a drunk-driving accident. And she said “I was relieved. I was relieved because he didn't die from a heroin overdose. He died in a drunk-driving accident. And it was much easier to tell people my son died in a drunk-driving accident then to tell them my son overdosed on heroin”

We had had a series of meetings . . . the impetus of those were that the mayor at the time received a call from actually someone who was a friend of his whose son had overdosed multiple times and basically said, “What are you going to do?”

They have an executive director who's openly in recovery. He wanted to get into substance use treatment, so they built a big infrastructure on it. That doesn't make sense.

Well, that's the way New Hampshire works.

And I remember getting up in front of the board at Mayor and Aldermen and really pleading with them that "We had 100 people die last year and we're talking about poor parking spaces." There's times when you have to forget the rules, forget the zones, forget all those things that we decide [when] you live [in] an organized community.

The preceding evidence suggests that, in Manchester, only part of Proposition 1b is demonstrated. While it is true that public concerns are not prioritized, there is no clear evidence to say that cost-saving concerns are prioritized above any other interests in particular. In fact, when the specific interests and concerns that are prioritized are analyzed at a granular level and supplemented with feedback from individuals close to the process, it becomes clear that in Manchester, personal experience and the close proximity of the issue to the individuals making policy has a significant impact on how decisions are made. This may well be related to the phenomenon of policy visibility and proximity described by Soss and Schram (2007), who posit that citizens who are more proximate to a given issue or policy are more likely to push for action on that issue. To fully understand the utility of Proposition 1b, an analysis of the budget of Manchester between 2013-2017 could prove useful in unpacking how specific economic concerns were or were not acted upon.

Proposition 1c. Once a public health and safety crisis is underway, the importance that municipal government places on public health and safety concerns as compared to cost-saving ones will vary, depending in part upon the population of the municipality. As in the previous case, the evidence for the utility of this proposition will be discussed in more detail in Chapter VI. In similar fashion, however, Figure 15 below will help to demonstrate how the government of Manchester adapted their priorities over time, determining which policies were important. These findings, when taken in context with those of Flint and the respective populations of the two cities, provides insight into how and why local governments choose to shift their priorities over time.

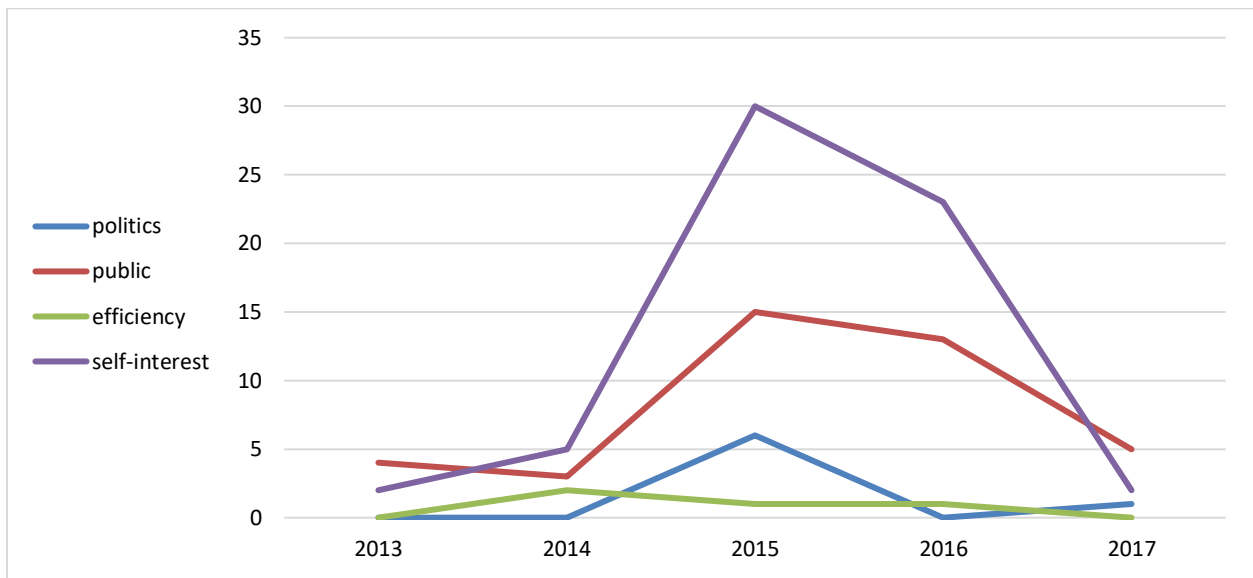


Figure 15. Number of references per year by interest type (Manchester, 2013-2017).

In Manchester, self-interest, as described previously, dominates the conversation and discussion in front of the Board over the period analyzed here. Public interests are represented too, but even as the conversation expands in 2015 and 2016, the priority of self-interests remains. In Manchester, however, this so-called *self-interest* suggests not a selfish value judgement, but a

proximal and visible relationship between opioid-related policies and the Board of Aldermen in Manchester. If, in fact, these Board members have close working relationships with the public as the stories and quotes in response to Proposition 1b have shown, then it follows that they will see the citizens of Manchester as more powerful and deserving within the associated framework (Schneider et al., 2014; Soss & Schram, 2007).

Further, evidence from interviews shows that many of the community leaders outside and inside of city government have good working relationships with the Board and with government leadership, and so while it is entirely possible that increased media coverage and awareness of the crisis pushed the conversation onto the agenda of the Board, it is also possible that Aldermen were prioritizing this issue even prior to receiving unexpected pressure from outside groups.

To recognize the impact of social construction, a comparative case must be made, demonstrating that policy outcomes may vary significantly based upon the constructions of the population in question. This will require more than two cases, but preliminary assessments can be made from the cases contained in this work. The full conclusion as to the utility of this proposition is reached in Chapter VI, where a relevant comparison between the two cases is made.

Proposition 2: The actions and/or non-actions of municipal government before and during a crisis will generate policy feedback effects.

A full discussion of the cyclical nature of policy feedback and how bureaucratic typologies may impact that cycle can be found in Chapter IV. For purposes of convenience, these figures are repeated below as figures 16 and 17, respectively, demonstrating both the cyclical nature of the proposition and the coding schema and network first laid out in Chapter IV. As in

the Flint case, the perceptions of the bureaucrats analyzed here are those of individuals who deal with the impact of policy outside of the Aldermanic Chambers, and thereby help shape how mass publics mobilize, respond, and perceive the impact of policy as well.

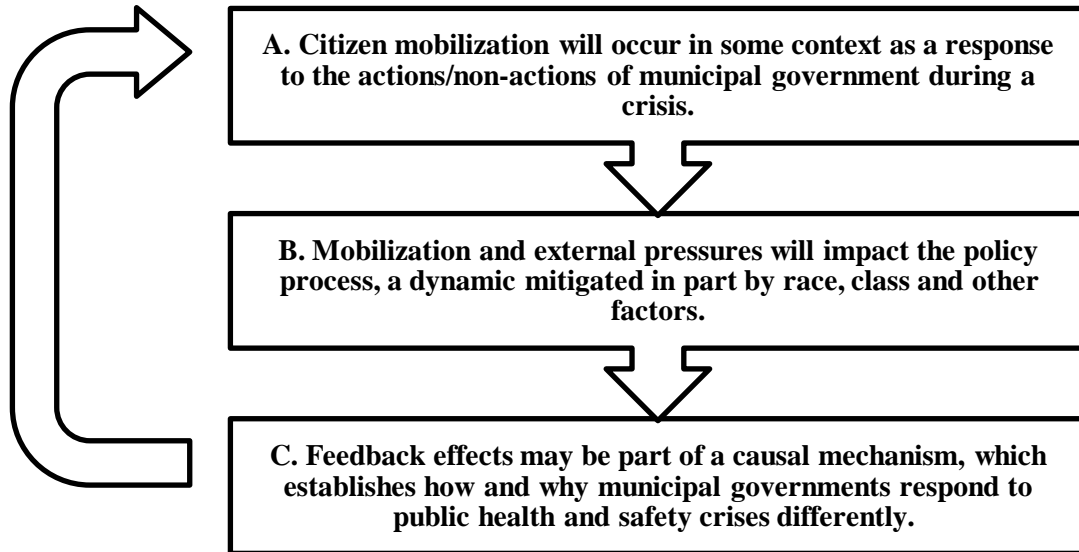


Figure 16. Proposition 2.

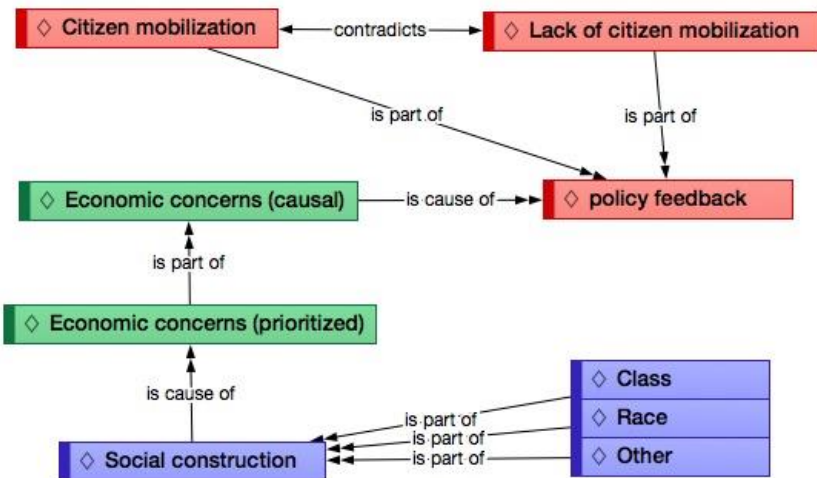


Figure 17. Atlas.ti coding network for social construction and policy feedback

To demonstrate Proposition 2a, Table 13 below shows that references to citizen mobilization occur with greater regularity than to a lack of mobilization. This pattern persists

among both *glad-handers* and *technicians*, the two types of bureaucrats interviewed in Manchester.

Table 13
Typologies and number of references to citizen mobilization (Manchester)

	Glad-hander	Technician
Citizen Mobilization	7	12
Lack of Citizen Mobilization	3	2

The limitations here are clear, as it is impossible to get a full picture without understanding how *egoists*, *traditionalists*, and *followers* perceive citizen mobilization. As was true in Flint, this case is limited by the time and resources available at this stage of the project to find a wide enough selection of interviewees to ensure each typology is represented. However, there is still relevance to using these typologies to make comparisons, although future research will necessitate the recruitment and analysis of interviewees who do fall into these other typologies. Finally, it is notable that no bureaucrats were identified as *followers* in Flint or Manchester. While it is possible this is a result of a coding bias, it may also be a result of the self-selection of particular individuals who consented to interviews. *Glad-handers* and *technicians* clearly saw citizen mobilization as more prevalent, and Chapter VI will assess these findings in conjunction with those in Flint. To further facilitate that comparison and the broader conclusions that may be drawn from it, below are references to citizen mobilization or the lack thereof from interviews conducted in Manchester:

We have a tremendous amount of information to help each other but with this crisis, we just don't have time. There's no more time to have more meetings. We've got work to do.

And so that group convened and Ron's on that group, representatives of two hospitals, and they talked about who might serve as the lead, and there were three or four that were considered, and it ended up being Catholic Medical Center stepped up and said that they would do it.

But what was amazing—I remember two weeks after the announcement of the receivership, the new mayor convened a meeting, there must have been 60 people in the room, all providers, and 95% were representatives of Network for Health member partners or delivery network, and nearly all the services that have been maintained have been picked up by other partners.

And it's up to us to advocate for the folks that we serve to explain as best we can to the community leaders around what the real cost of not providing these services might be and where we would like to do more or better.

These findings are illuminating, but as stated in Chapter IV, more value can be brought to them by pursuing questions of media influence on the policy process, how activism and mobilization can impact policy decisions, and what bureaucratic styles or typologies can tell us about how those decisions are made.

Proposition 2b posits that any mobilization of citizens will be mitigated in part by the social constructions of race and class within the population in question. These constructions impact both citizen mobilization and the perception of local officials of that mobilization, and the following Table 14 shows how each type of bureaucrat interviewed used language and phrases

that indicate the social construction of the citizens being referred to. In Manchester, it is worth noting that “Other” social constructions often revolved around perceptions of mental health and addiction, categories that are particularly salient within the literature of social construction and this case in particular. New work has shown that opioid addicts, in particular, are seen as “deviants,” both less powerful and less deserving, by mass publics (Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018). Following this table are several quotes, with the relevant language highlighted.

Table 14
Typologies and # of references to social constructions (Manchester)

Social Construction	Glad-hander	Technician
Class	6	4
Race	0	1
Other	11	16

I mean, this epidemic or whatever you want to call, it really didn't take on until people from all walks of life were dying. People were dying from heroin overdoses who were poor and nobody cared about it, and then all of a sudden, lawyer's sons and doctor's sons, people from the north end of Manchester, people that you would never think—teachers were dying from this stuff then all of a sudden we've got to do something, and that's kind of the way America is I believe.

And as a provider, you don't have a lot of job satisfaction when you have somebody you just keep putting more time into and more time into and they're not improving, but maybe they're not improving because of the chaos they have at home, the unsafe place they're living, they don't have food security, they're trying to heat their apartment from their stove

We will still do business the way that we do but rather than terminate these people when we initially discover that they have a substance-use disorder, how do we find them treatment and how do we have them be more effective?

We have to wear ballistic vests and those kinds of things because generally, those calls [mental health or substance related] have a higher risk.

In Manchester, there is clearly a perception among local officials that citizens are mobilized around this issue, particularly with the help of and in collaboration with non-profits, government officials, and other community leaders. In addition, bureaucrats' views of citizens are socially constructed, but the impact of that construction is somewhat unclear. While research suggests that opioid addicts are seen as both low-power and low-deservedness, the evidence presented here and in Proposition 1 points toward a characterization of the opioid crisis as both proximal and visible to the policymakers of Manchester (Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018; Soss & Schram, 2007). So, both Proposition 2a and 2b would appear to be confirmed, although to ambiguous degrees. There are clearly, elements of citizen mobilization present in Manchester, but the impact of social construction on that mobilization and the direction of that impact requires further scrutiny. Future work should explore how the social construction of opioid addicts in a proximal and visible policy environment may change, or how policymakers may change their social constructions of certain groups based on the policy environment in which they find themselves.

With only two typologies of bureaucrat to compare, it is difficult to make a clear association between the social construction of populations and the priority of cost-saving concerns among bureaucrats in Manchester. Table 15 below shows that both typologies represented in the Manchester interviews used socially constructed language frequently and do consider cost-saving concerns as priority of the Board of Aldermen and/or as a causal factor in the opioid epidemic. Again, there is no definitive link between the identities of *glad-hander* or a *technician* and the likelihood of holding these views, although the comparative case put forward in Chapter VI will discuss further the commonalities between Flint and Manchester in this analysis. Finally, even without a definitive causal connection, there is a thematic connection made by bureaucrats between cost-saving concerns and the social construction of populations. This connection must be explored further, both in this case and in future cases, as it may lead to the development of a causal mechanism determined by economic factors.

Table 15
Typologies, social constructions, and cost-saving concerns (Manchester)

References	Glad-hander	Technician
Cost-Saving Concerns (prioritized)	6	8
Cost-Saving Concerns (causal)	11	9
Social Constructions	17	21

Citizens were mobilized by the opioid crisis in Manchester, and that mobilization did not go unnoticed by local officials dealing with the crisis. Their perceptions, and in particular their social constructions of mental health and addiction, combined with the proximal and visible nature of the problem, led to a collaboration between citizens and local officials unlike what occurred in Flint. To understand if there is a causal connection between that collaboration and the policy outcomes in Manchester, a comparative case is set forth in Chapter VI. While these

two cases alone may not provide all the answers, there is a particular need to determine how future cases might be explored in different ways, or how the propositions proposed herein might be altered.

The next chapter contains a comparative look at the cases of the water quality crisis in Flint, Michigan, and the opioid crisis in Manchester, New Hampshire. While the issues considered in these separate case studies are different, as crises of public health they contain commonalities and the relevant findings from both are important in demonstrating the utility of the model and propositions contained here. By comparing the two cities and how different public health and safety crises were handled, insight into how other cities handle similar crises may be elucidated, along with information that will help revise and refine both the model and propositions presented in Chapters I-III, in order to help them capture more relevant data in future cases.

Chapter VI: Cross-Case Analysis and Major Findings

There is much to be learned in observing how different jurisdictions, with different priorities and actors, respond to crises of public health and safety. Any comparison is rightfully constrained by the meaningful differences between the cities, as well as the substantive differences in the crises they face. Given that this work intends to open new research pathways that consider the utility of an adapted theory of bureaucratic politics for local government, along with a framework for assessing the politics of crisis in American cities, the comparative case proves useful primarily in demonstrating that commonalities exist.

First, the figures below lay out a comparison of the cities demographically and socioeconomically. Next, a review of the evidence for Propositions 1c and 2c, both of which require a comparative case to demonstrate, is conducted. A comparison of the findings for Propositions 1a-b and 2a-b follows. Finally, results from both cases are assessed regarding their relationship to the four primary considerations proposed in Chapter II.

According to the U.S Census, the population (measured by either individuals or households) in Flint and Manchester is relatively similar. As previously discussed, both cities have a history of heavy industry and rapid economic growth, as well as more recent economic difficulties. Outside of this, however, the makeup of each city is very distinct. The population in Flint is majority-Black, while in Manchester it is a super-majority-White. Manchester has much lower rates of unemployment, as well as higher rates of participation in the labor force. Both cities have many low-income residents, but 22% of Flint's residents make below \$12,490 per year, which is below the poverty line even for a household of a single person. Finally, Flint has a significantly higher percentage of residents who utilize public benefits, a meaningful statistic

when considering the social construction of populations (Soss & Schram, 2007). The tables and figures below show the similarities and differences along demographic and socioeconomic lines in Flint and Manchester.

Table 16
Comparative demographic statistics

	Flint Estimates		Manchester Estimates	
Race				
Total Population	100,569	100%	110,065	100%
White	42,826	42.6%	94,390	85.8%
African American	58,307	58.0%	5,066	4.6%
All Other Census Categories	3,743	3.8%	10,609	9.6%
Employment				
In Labor Force	38,862	50.3%	62,892	69.3%
Employed	28,618	37.0%	58,731	64.8%
Unemployed	10,227	13.2%	4,161	4.6%
Not in Labor Force	38,451	49.7%	27,809	30.7%
Income				
Total Households	40,509	100%	44,156	100%
Less than \$10,000	8,985	22.2%	2,437	5.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4,040	10.0%	2,324	5.3%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7,459	18.4%	4,521	10.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,312	13.1%	5,000	11.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	5,522	13.6%	5,758	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,329	13.2%	8,900	20.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,987	4.9%	6,436	14.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,428	3.5%	5,668	12.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	276	0.7%	1,974	4.5%
\$200,000 or more	171	0.4%	1,138	2.6%
Public Benefits				
With Supplemental Security Income	5,882	14.5%	3,146	7.0%
With Cash Public Assistance Income	4,729	11.7%	2,063	4.6%
With Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits	17,455	43.1%	6,510	14.5%

Note. Adapted from American Community Survey (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>

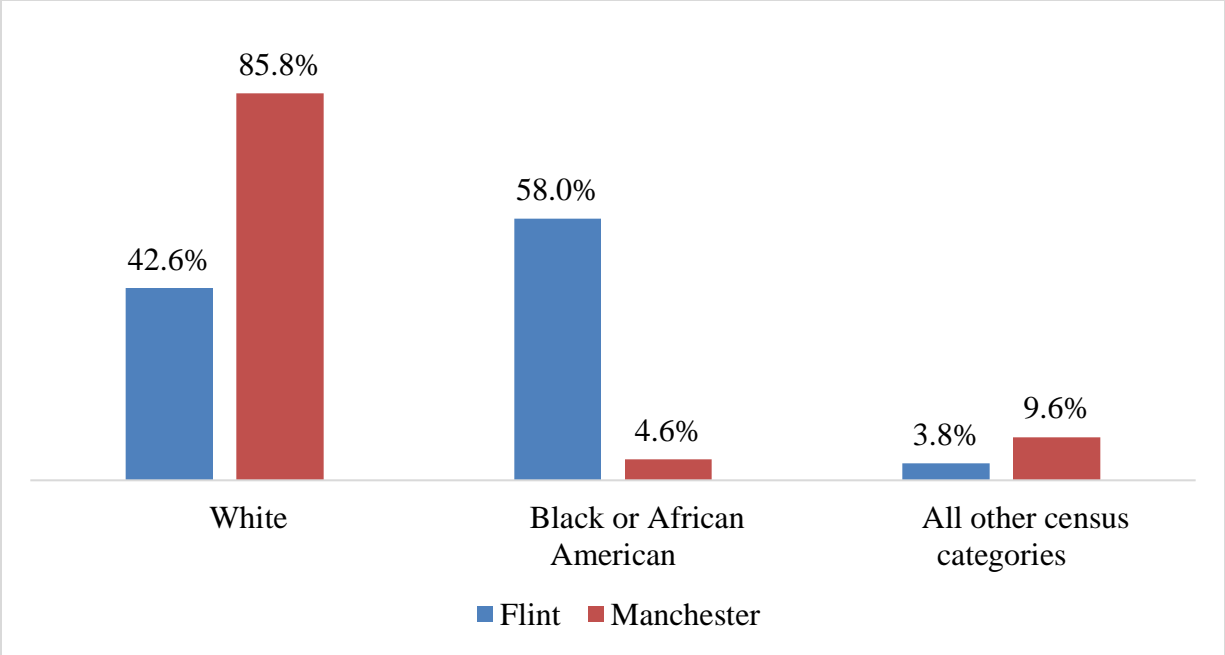


Figure 18. Race in Flint and Manchester.

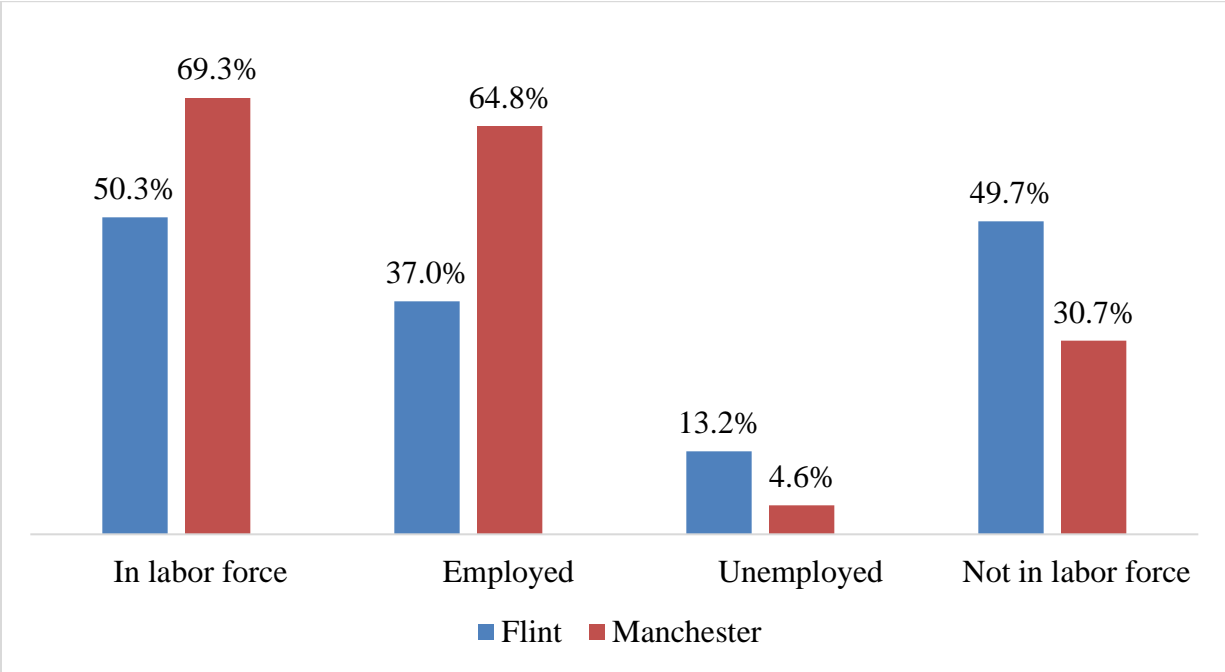


Figure 19. Employment in Flint and Manchester.

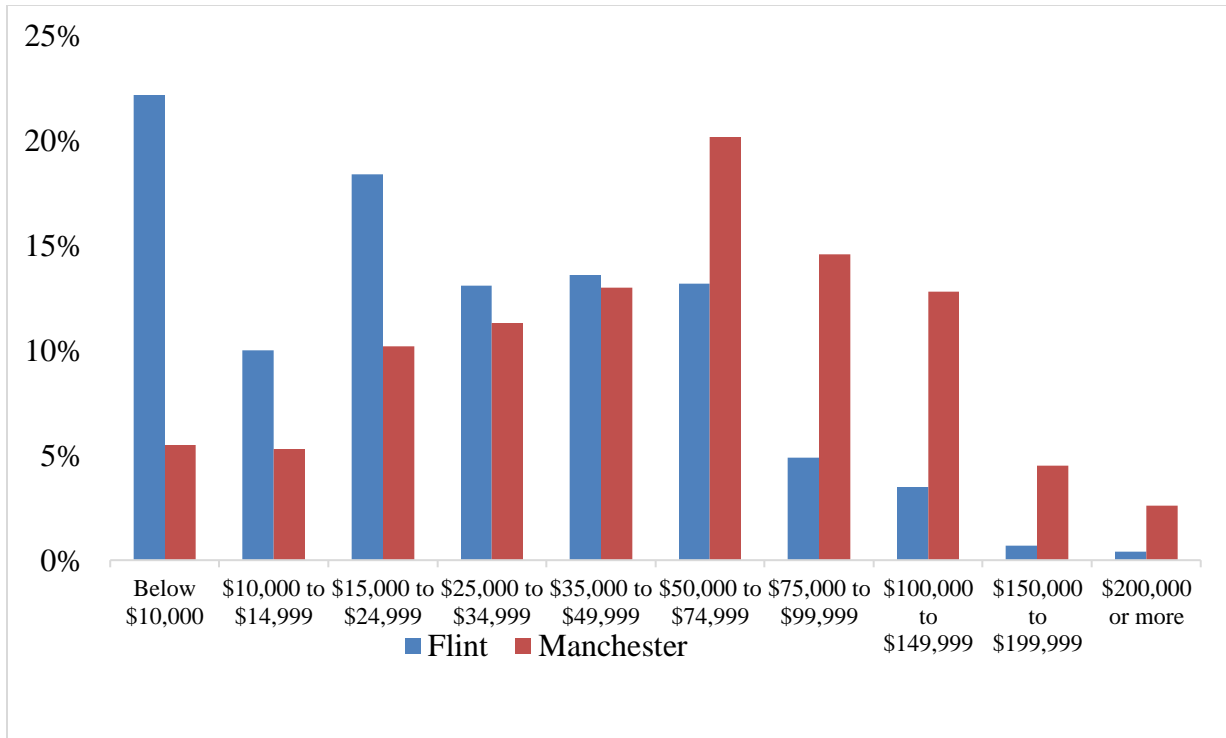


Figure 20. Income in Flint and Manchester.

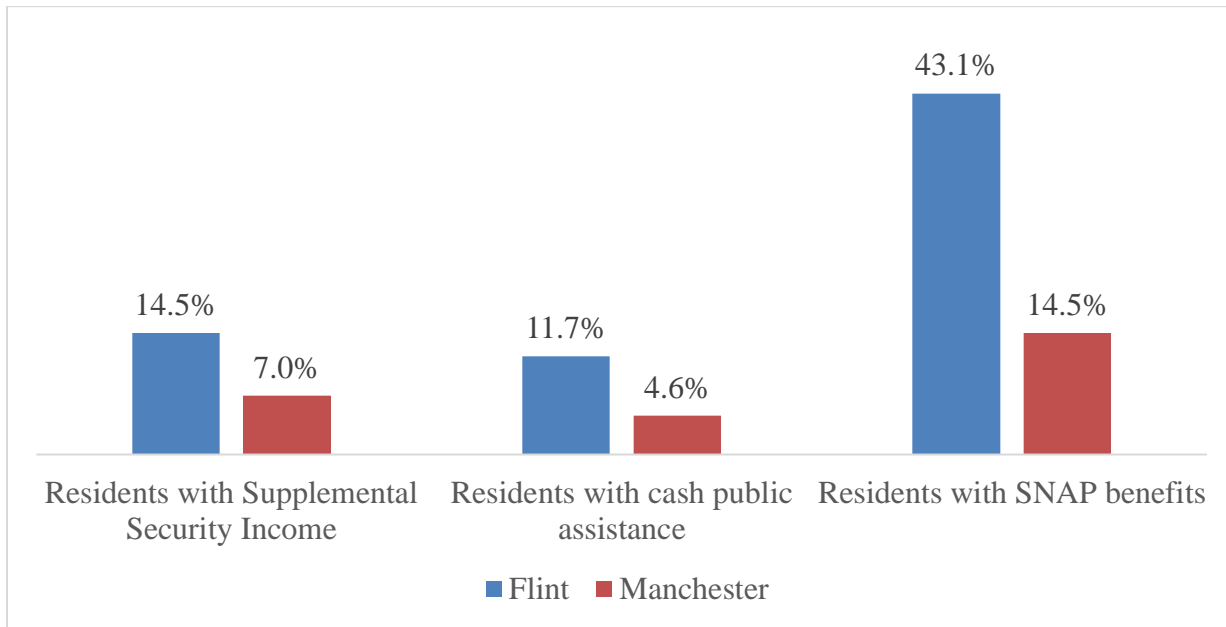


Figure 21. Public benefit usage in Flint and Manchester.

Proposition 1c. Once a public health and safety crisis is underway, the importance that municipal government places on public health and safety concerns as compared to cost-saving ones will vary, depending in part upon the population of the municipality.

To demonstrate Proposition 1c, it is necessary to compare at least two cities to understand how cost-saving interests are prioritized over other interests, and how the social construction of those impacted may be part of the reason for such a prioritization. As previously demonstrated in Chapters IV and V, the figures below show the change in interests over time, as represented before the Flint City Council and Manchester Board of Aldermen, respectively. In Flint, political, efficiency and public interests were much more prevalent than in Manchester, where self-interests dominated the discussion. Cost-saving concerns, as represented in the category of *efficiency*, were well-represented over the course of the dates considered in Flint. Both cities had more references to their respective crises in 2015, and this may be attributed to the additional media and public attention focused on them at that time (Boydston & Glazier, 2013; Breznau, 2016; Soss, 1999).

In fact, the *self-interest* in Manchester is perhaps better characterized as a *community orientation*. This focus in Manchester, as described in Chapter V, is likely based both in the particular social constructions of opioid addicts and the personal connection that many community leaders in Manchester have to those individuals. Such connections lead to opioid addiction becoming a more proximal and visible issue, and therefore may have influenced the perception of opioid addicts among policymakers in Manchester (Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018; Schneider et al., 2014; Soss & Schram, 2007). References to self-interests, or with a *community orientation*, appeared before the Board considerably more often than references to any particular

cost-saving interests, and this indicates that there are differences between Flint and Manchester as pertaining to the types of interests that receive a hearing before the local government legislature.

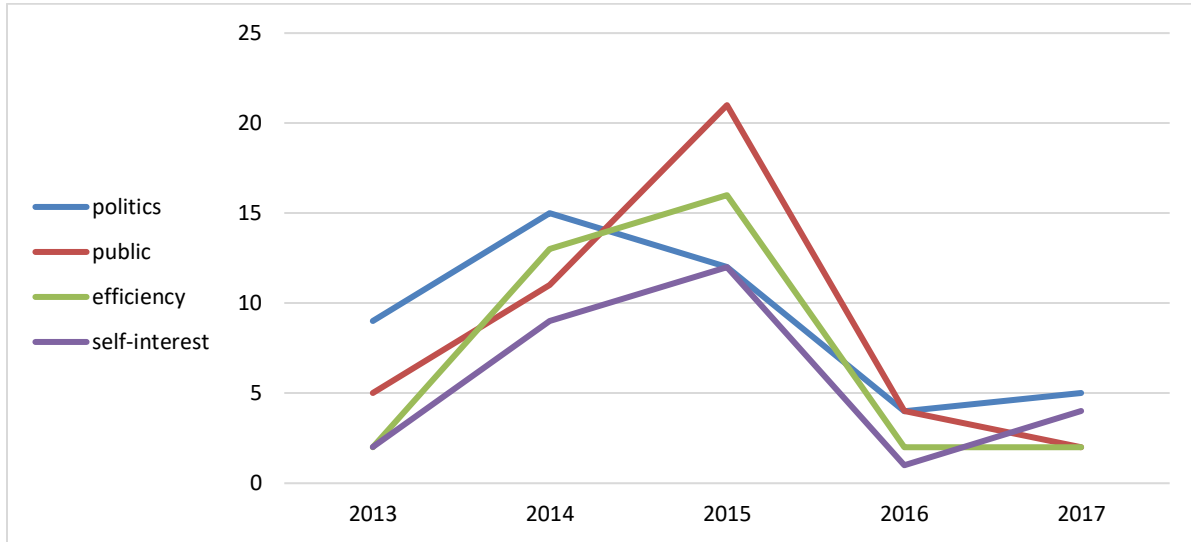


Figure 22. Number of references per year by interest type (Flint).

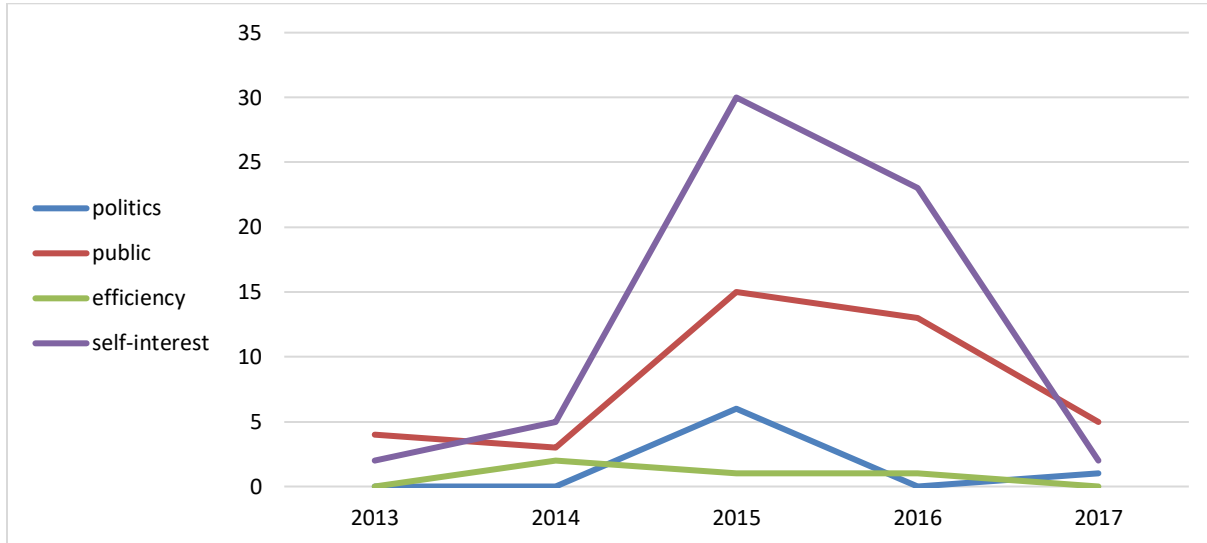


Figure 23. Number of references per year by interest type (Manchester).

While the limitation of only two case studies means it cannot be definitively stated that it

is the social construction of the respective populations that contributes to the changing interests over time in these cities, there is certainly enough evidence to call for further inquiry into this proposition. The first part of the proposition, that interests will shift in priority as a crisis goes on, is clearly demonstrated, with the caveat that the interests that tend to dominate the discussion in front of local government continue to do so. To demonstrate the second part, more case studies, as well as further exploration of demographic data and policy outcomes (i.e. cleaner water in Flint or fewer overdoses in Manchester) will be needed to determine whether this proposition is a useful measure of the impact of social construction on the interests represented before local governments during a crisis. However based on the literature, the social construction of populations has an impact on the policy they receive and the expected difference between the two cities is clearly demonstrated: local officials in Manchester, a whiter and wealthier city, respond to social constructions very differently than those in Flint (Campbell, 2003; Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018; Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider et al., 2014).

Proposition 2c. These feedback effects may be part of a causal mechanism, which establishes how and why municipal governments respond to public health and safety crises differently.

In order to begin the work of developing potential casual mechanisms that may be present and drive the ways in which bureaucratic politics is conducted in the local government setting, the first step is to look at the specific individuals who are engaged in those politics, and identify how their individual positions, power, and approaches may contribute to creating those mechanisms. As in Chapters V and VI, I turn here to an analysis of the bureaucratic typologies of individuals who sat for interviews, to understand how and when they socially construct the

populations they serve. Since, as previously demonstrated, citizen mobilization occurs and its impact is influenced in some part by the social constructions of that population by these local officials, the first step towards understanding the cause of the differences between the cities may lie in the responses of these actors, and how it relates to the populations they serve.

Table 17
Typologies, social constructions, and cost-saving concerns

Flint	Glad-hander	Technician	Egoist	Traditionalist
Cost-Saving Concerns (Prioritized)	4	3	2	4
Cost-Saving Concerns (Casual)	11	5	3	4
Social Constructions	12	7	5	11
Manchester				
Cost-Saving Concerns (Prioritized)	6	8	-	-
Cost-Saving Concerns (Casual)	11	9	-	-
Social Constructions	17	21	-	-

With only two typologies of bureaucrat to accurately compare between both cities, and two others that occur in the Flint interviews only, it would be inadvisable to make any type of definitive statement regarding how these individuals are influenced by their own social constructions of those they serve, and if their personal attitudes and approach (as constituted in the typologies) are meaningful factors. As Table 17 above shows, individuals across all typologies and with different roles in and around government use socially constructed language frequently. While recognizing the limitations of two case studies, the evidence suggests that these individuals do see cost-saving concerns as both causal to the crisis at hand, as well as noting that those concerns are prioritized throughout an ongoing crisis. To better understand this relationship, future research should include more structured interviews to reveal those connections, and the link between social construction and cost-saving concerns made explicit. However, this important first step demonstrates that all of the typologies interviewed in both

cases used the language of social construction, and also saw causal cost-saving factors as well as the prioritization of cost-saving concerns in the context of the respective crises.

Below, Propositions 1 and 2 are reproduced, and the results of each shown for both Flint and Manchester in Table 18. A “Strong” finding indicates that the sub-proposition was definitively demonstrated, a “Weak” finding indicates that the sub-proposition was demonstrated with some limitations or inconsistencies, and a “Null” finding indicates that the sub-proposition was not demonstrated. To be clear, this is not representative of the utility of the propositions themselves, as each potential finding demonstrates a different utility of the proposition for future research. To wit, a “Strong” finding for both cities indicates that the proposition might be universally demonstrable, given the significant differences between the cities considered here. A “Strong” in one city but “Weak” in another indicates that the proposition may be influenced in part by the city itself, including the bureaucratic typologies represented therein, the population of that city and their associated social constructions, or the overall sociodemographic makeup of the city. A “Weak” finding for both cities indicates that this proposition could be universally untrue. More case studies and future research, to be discussed further in Chapter VII, may be helpful in refining and expanding upon the propositions set forth here.

1. Municipal governments prioritize policies that focus on cost-saving measures.
 - a) During the policy creation process, the individuals at the bargaining table prioritize parochial, political, and agency-specific interests over broader public interests, including health and safety.

- b) When a higher importance is placed on cost-savings policy than on public health and safety policy, it may contribute to the formation or exacerbation of a public health and safety crisis.
 - c) Once a public health and safety crisis is underway, the importance that municipal government places on public health and safety concerns as compared to cost-saving ones will vary, depending in part upon the population of the municipality.
2. The actions and/or nonactions of municipal government before and during a crisis will generate policy feedback effects.
- a) Citizen mobilization will occur in some context as a response to the actions/nonactions of municipal government during a crisis.
 - b) This mobilization and the external pressures that come with it will impact the policy process, a dynamic mitigated in part by race, class, and other factors.
 - c) These feedback effects may be part of a causal mechanism, which establishes how and why municipal governments respond to public health and safety crises differently.

Table 18
Sub-proposition findings for Flint and Manchester

Sub	Flint	Manchester
1a	Strong	Weak
1b	Strong	Weak
1c	Strong	Strong
2a	Strong	Strong
2b	Weak	Strong
2c	Weak	Weak

This comparison shows that Propositions 1c and 2a are demonstrated in full in Flint and

Manchester, while Proposition 2c is demonstrated with limitations and/or inconsistencies in both cities. All other sub-propositions are demonstrated with incongruent findings, suggesting that differences between the cities, the people within them, and the priorities of their local governments lead to meaningfully different results when it comes to public health and safety. This is not unexpected, but it does raise questions about why they differ, if it is in fact linked to elements of social construction, bureaucratic power and typologies, and policy feedback, and what this means for the future study and refinement of this framework. To that end, the following analysis of the proposed primary considerations for local government officials attempts to answer some of those questions.

In Chapter II, four potential “primary considerations” of local government officials engaged in the policy process were laid out. These considerations are evidenced, to varying degrees, by the policy decision-makers in Flint and Manchester. Below, each is addressed in turn based on the findings of Propositions 1 and 2 in both cities.

- The social construction of populations that receive the benefits and costs of the policy, is demonstrated through demographic data and the social construction typologies of Schneider et al. (2014).

In both Flint and Manchester, there was evidence that the sociodemographic makeup and the associated social constructions of the population were part of the considerations made by policy decision-makers, as indicated in the findings of Propositions 1c, 2b, and 2c. While the benefits and costs have yet to be measured in any meaningful way as these crises are still ongoing, it is clear that there must be some consideration of social constructions in any future work that assesses what happened in either of these cities. Additionally, it will be important to

consider the proximity and visibility of these issues, and the impact this has on both social constructions and eventual policy outcomes in cities facing crises of public health and safety (Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018; Nicholson-Crotty & Nicholson-Crotty, 2004; Schneider et al., 2014; Soss & Schram, 2007).

- The specific interests of those designing the policy and the power they have to promote those interests over others, is demonstrated in a content analysis of city council meetings and first-hand accounts of the policy-making process.

Undoubtedly, the relative power of policymakers is evident from the meeting minutes analyzed in this project. Of course, certain members will always talk more often, propose more legislation, and engage more outside voices in the policy creation process (Oliver et al., 2012). However, as per the findings of Propositions 1a and 1b, this dynamic was stronger in Flint than in Manchester, where power and interests were more evenly spread among both Aldermen and outside interests. Interviewees saw similar dynamics, referring to particular individuals who they saw as powerful or astute at getting their issues and constituents onto the policy-making agenda.

- The external influences on the policymakers, including those from within and outside government, is demonstrated by a similar analysis of public records of council meeting participants and first-hand accounts.

External influences played a meaningful role in both cities, as shown in the findings of Propositions 2a and 2b. Citizen mobilization was seen by interviewees to be a meaningful factor in determining the course of action the city council or board would take. Almost all interviewees provided evidence through their statements that citizen mobilization occurred and had an impact on the bureaucratic politics occurring in the context of both local governments. In Flint, clean

water activists pushed the story of their city onto national news outlets, who in turn provided coverage and meaningful public accountability measures, while in Manchester, striking firefighters and personal stories from constituents showed Aldermen the cost of opioid addiction.

- The specific individuals engaged in the policy formulation process, and their typologies and distinct strategies to accomplish objectives.

As per the findings from Proposition 2a-c, there are associations between the typologies among local government officials and how they socially construct the populations they serve. In addition, the defining and refining of these typologies is useful in understanding the priorities individuals place on particular issues. For example, *glad-handers* and *technicians* were more likely to use the language of social construction compared to *egoists* or *traditionalists*. While the findings here are undoubtedly constrained by the low number of interviewees, further interviews and assessments can now build on these preliminary conclusions.

The findings generated from this initial analysis of bureaucratic politics in these cities tell two stories. The story of Flint is the prioritizations of cost-saving concerns, race and class-based social constructions of the population, and the focus on engaging private interests to deal with the crisis at hand. It is a story of city officials attempting to navigate a takeover by state government, forcing them to shift their priorities and attitudes (Nickels, 2019). Racial, class, and other biases also play a meaningful role in Flint, as demonstrated through the interviews conducted with community leaders and bureaucrats and the overwhelming anecdotal and journalistic evidence gathered in that community (Eligon, 2016; Hanna-Attisha et al., 2016; Howell et al., 2019).

Solutions to the crisis in Flint focused on mitigating damage and impact of the crisis,

including the distribution of bottled water, refunding water bills for residents, and engaging a new water supplier. However, none of these solutions addressed the underlying issue at hand: the pipes underneath the city leaching lead into any water that might pass through them. Some of these solutions were predicated upon engaging private entities or other governments, at a cost to the city. Others were dependent on grants, charity, or other semi-permanent funding structures. As evidenced in Chapter IV, the meaning of these type of solutions was clear to the stakeholders interviewed: The City of Flint did not prioritize engaging substantively with the root cause of the crisis.

Conversely, the story of Manchester shows a Board reaching out to the Health Department, police and fire agencies, and local non-profits to ask: how can we help? While the Board may have focused on the concerns of particular agencies as they were brought before them, those interests were in turn correlated with ideas of civic duty, of “getting things done,” and of parochial solutions to address “wicked” problems. Police officials discussed arrest rates and drug courts; health officials talked about the connections between addiction and mental health, homelessness, and rehabilitation; fire officials and emergency medical professionals were concerned about overdoses, the use of Narcan, and their ability to provide enough staffing to meet demand (Weber & Khademian, 2008).

Non-profits dedicated to rehabilitative, housing, and mental health services were engaged and funded by the Board to help mitigate the crisis. Aldermen used their informal networks within and outside of government to understand the problem and to engage other agencies, non-profits, and citizen groups in the shared work of combatting opioid overdoses (Van Slyke, 2007). It is clear from the discussions that took place in front of the Board that these stakeholders are

working from a shared set of values and facts, a necessary element to making decisions in the public interest (Bozeman, 2007). While the process was far from perfect, there is evidence that the local government in Manchester engaged in meaningful ways with citizens and outside groups to deal with an important issue.

Reassessing the Conceptual Model

Based on the analysis of the two cases and the comparisons made in this chapter, there is a meaningful amount of validity to the conceptual model proposed in Chapter III (reproduced as Figure 24 below). The model accurately represents the factors present in both cases and does a suitable job of representing the major influences as determined by the literature. However, there are several ways in which this model can be improved to better represent these dynamics in future case studies and further research on this subject. In particular, I refer to the second proposition and the role of social construction and policy feedback in influencing decision-making.

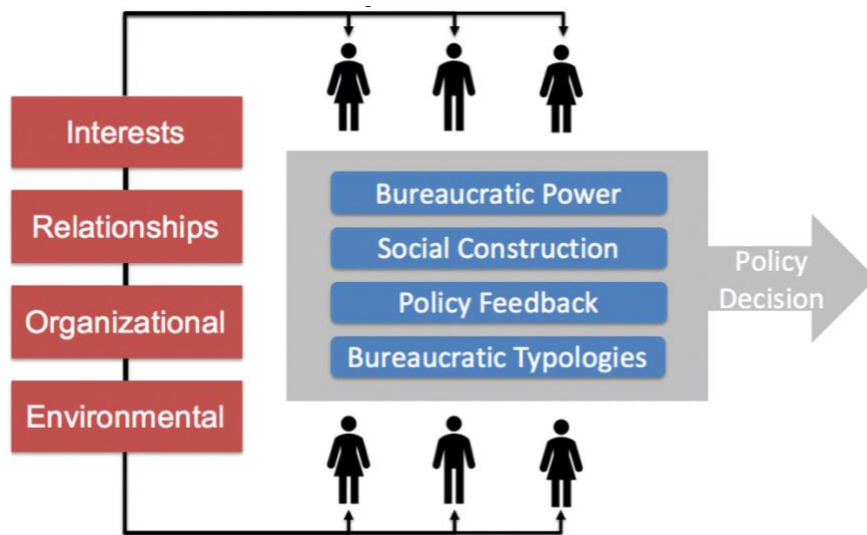


Figure 24. A conceptual model for bureaucratic politics in local government.

As demonstrated in the Manchester case, the social construction of populations is often more nuanced in practice than the current literature suggests. Kreitzer and Watts Smith (2018) have begun to delve into this phenomenon, but more research is necessary to determine the ways in which social construction, particularly in conjunction with the visibility-proximity axis of policy feedback for mass publics developed by Soss and Schram (2007), influences how public officials make decisions about policy. Normatively “good” social constructions clearly can have an impact on policy decisions, and more work must be done to ensure that this concept is integrated into the model proposed here, as well as in other research on social construction and public policy.

Further, the influence of policy feedback must be refined and measured in a more conclusive way than through an analysis of interviews with specific bureaucratic typologies. The limitations imposed by this method, including the number of interviewees, the typologies represented (or not), and the subjective interpretations of policy feedback and citizen mobilization by the interviewees was not sufficient to declare this element of the model valid. While the findings appear to track how the influence of policy feedback is represented in the conceptual model, more examples and further analysis are required. This analysis should include textual analysis of interviews as conducted here, but in conjunction with an investigation of specific votes and actions taken by those interviewees. This will allow the continued use of bureaucratic typologies and power to determine how and if received policy feedback is put into action by public officials, supplemented by a more objective observation as opposed to solely a more subjective perception.

As more case studies are conducted and other supplementary work is done to revisit and research this model, there will undoubtedly be further refinements and modifications to consider. This is both expected and essential, as the conceptual model is conceived as a representative framework which can be improved as relevant information is uncovered. That information may either demonstrate the validity or disprove how these factors and influences are represented. In either case, findings that impact how the model is constructed will help to develop a framework that may eventually be testable and comprehensive, representing a more fully nuanced understanding of how these factors and influences play out in the context of bureaucratic politics in local government.

The findings presented in Chapters IV-VI, constrained as they are by the case study design, the dataset, and timeframe analyzed here, provide a useful starting point for future research. Additionally, these findings provide meaningful implications for the practice of public administration, particularly as pertaining to the implementation of policy, the relationships between street-level bureaucrats and local government officials, and the role of non-profits in local governance. Chapter VII explores those implications, discusses several potential pathways for that research, and identifies specific cases to be analyzed as practical next steps in this research.

Chapter VII: Implications for Practice, Scholarship, and Further Investigation

There are multiple takeaways from the findings presented in Chapters IV-VI that have implications for the practice of public administration, as well as for research in the areas of public administration, public policy, and political science. Beyond that, this project is designed to open a new field of inquiry into the utility of the revised framework designed here. This chapter summarizes those findings as they pertain to the practice of and research in public administration and related fields, proposes future avenues for that research, and indicates next steps to take to refine and improve the adapted framework laid out in Chapter III. Through each of these summations, the broader implications of this work are addressed and shown to be both useful and important to the field of public administration. Future research is proposed, taking into account the limitations and scope of the findings of this project, providing guidance as to the bounds of replicability and wider applicability of this study.

Implications for Practice: Accountability, Street-Level Sensibilities, and Power

Even in a theory-building exercise such as this one, practical applications may be uncovered, particularly through the process of interviewing stakeholders and administrators who are intimately involved in the policy decision-making process in their communities. By highlighting their experiences, advice, and knowledge, this work develops several key takeaways for practitioners. First, there is meaningful evidence to suggest that administrators who are tasked with assigning accountability and responsibility to liable parties must reassess how those determinations are made. Research shows that informal accountability can be institutionalized through effective collaboration and relationship-building, while it is challenged by competition for resources and funding, dynamics that are present in both cases presented here (Romzek,

LeRoux, Johnston, Kempf, & Piatak, 2014). Additionally, it is shown that among private actors conducting policy implementation, such as the private entities contracted to implement policy in Flint and Manchester, struggle with the dilemma of providing normatively “good” service while staying accountable to market incentives and client demands (Thomann, Hupe, & Sager, 2018).

Recognizing the myriad challenges of developing intersectoral formal and informal accountability measures for street-level bureaucrats, it is clear that while administrators and bureaucrats often shoulder the blame during public health and safety crises, in the cases of Flint and Manchester political machinations determined the type of policy to be implemented long before street-level bureaucrats or managers were involved in the process. New strategies for assigning accountability, such as the calibrated public accountability model proposed by Schillemans (2016) may be more suited to understanding accountability in a crisis, as it takes into account decisions that occur prior to implementation, as well as noting the importance of the difference in accountability for processes and accountability for outcomes.

Oversight bodies, inspector generals, auditors, and special committees convened for the purposes of investigating specific crises must ensure they are making the critical distinction between who implements a policy and who creates and upholds it. By understanding whose interests were served by a given policy, as the framework proposed herein has the ability to do, these investigatory commissions can start assigning accountability beyond implementation, appropriately recognizing the meaningful role that local policymakers have in the process of how a policy is implemented in practice. By expanding their capacity for assigning accountability, investigatory entities may be better served in their attempt to not only appropriately designate

responsible and accountable parties, but also to unearth the root causes of crises which may be evident based upon the interests promoted and the parties held responsible.

Relatedly, it has been shown that street-level bureaucrats have some agency in the policy process, particularly when it comes to implementation, and that the social construction of populations may impact their decision-making and how they exercise their agency (Harrits, 2018; Keiser, 2010; Lipsky, 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2012). By recognizing the value of and analyzing the specific perceptions and stories of these individuals, their street-level sensibilities become apparent. These views and perceptions, shaped by their experience on the ground during a crisis, as well as their own personal values and beliefs, are valuable both as evidence for the propositions laid out in this work and also as substantiation that these street-level bureaucrats do, in fact, socially construct the identities of those they serve, even during times of acute crisis.

It is to be expected that both practical and personal factors may impact how street-level bureaucrats make decisions, including perceptions of race and class of both the bureaucrat and the client (Watkins-Hayes, 2011). However, it then becomes imperative that manager-level local officials make an attempt to push back against the social construction of the populations their departments serve, particularly during times of crisis. If those populations are both socially constructed and treated differently based on those constructions, even a racially and socioeconomically representative bureaucracy may not be effective in combatting inequality in service provision. This is evidenced particularly in Flint, where a relatively racially representative city government made decisions and implemented policy that, according to

stakeholders, was not in the best interests of the public, at least in part based on their social constructions of the population.

Finally, it has been well established across multiple academic disciplines that power among the myriad groups that influence local government decision-making, including non-profits, activist groups, other governments, and private entities, is unequal (Dahl, 1961; Long, 1949; Rainey & Bozeman, 2000; Wacquant, 2012). This work makes such inequality explicit and demonstrates how that power is wielded in the context of local government decision-making during crises. Outlining the power dynamics among actors is not only helpful in understanding how and why certain decisions are made, but also provides meaningful evidence of the “pressure points” in the system where certain interests are able to exert their power.

By recognizing and exposing those points, including how personal, political, and business relationships are leveraged towards an invitation to appear in public before the city council (with the implicit merit that accompanies such an appearance) individuals and groups with less power can emulate the strategies of those with more power. While this is an imperfect and temporary solution to a systemic problem, it still holds that understanding “the game” as per Allison and Zelikow (1971) may make an interest group better at navigating the hierarchies within. Engaging with government in the same ways as more powerful actors may be one of the keys to accessing power for smaller and less influential organizations or individuals. Power, particularly that which influences local government, is exercised in ways not always visible to the public, and this work takes one more step towards exposing some of the ways in which the latent conflict of those exercising power and the interests of others is played out behind the scenes (Lukes, 1974).

Implications for Academe: Theory Development and Bridging the Gap

The primary contribution to the field of public administration from this work is the establishment of core principles and basic building blocks of a revised theory of bureaucratic politics that applies specifically to local governments, and particularly to how they function during crises. The field of bureaucratic politics has explored numerous substantive areas of public management and administration, including performance management, public policy, foreign relations, regulation, and institutional power (Gains, John, & Stoker, 2008; Halperin & Clapp, 1974; Hammond, 1986; Rasmussen, 2000; Stone, Whelan, & Murin, 1986; Yang, 2009). However, the foundational theoretical framework has yet to be revised and updated to reflect the changes in society in the 21st century, nor has it been adjusted to reflect the realities of local government that vary in significant ways from the federal or state level.

Developing a model of bureaucratic politics for local government helps to drive the academic conversation, creating a testable framework for scholars to use in studying the motivations of administrators in the municipal context. By incorporating elements of the literature on social construction, policy feedback, and bureaucratic power and typologies, this adapted framework brings the study of bureaucratic politics into the current era, recognizing the unique complications and vast racial and socioeconomic diversity of the American city (Downs, 1967; Fox, 1974; Kreitzer & Watts Smith, 2018; Mettler & SoRelle, 2014; Moynihan & Soss, 2014; Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Soss & Schram, 2007). These literatures, many of which were more fully developed in the post-Cold War era, reflect the modern American state and help to advance the theory of bureaucratic politics beyond an era defined by the ever-present threat of the Soviet Union and its allies. The utility of bureaucratic politics has been shown to extend

beyond the White House Situation Room, and this work builds on that scholarship to fully embrace the theory as one of governance and decision-making in multiple contexts (Brower & Abolafia, 1997; O'Leary, 2019; Stensöta, 2011).

This reframed understanding of bureaucratic politics also takes into account broader concerns of how policy is created, and more importantly, by and for whom. In an increasingly diverse society with rising levels of racial and economic inequality, theorists of public administration, public policy, and political science have been sluggish to adapt existing frameworks to reflect these critical changes. Meaningful research questions are often asked using outdated frameworks and models that fail to take into account these important distinctions, drawing conclusions that are methodologically valid but theoretically weak. By updating this particular theoretical framework, both diversity and inequality are recognized and valued as important factors to consider in work on local government, and thereby incorporate a more holistic representation of the American city in the 2010s into our understanding of bureaucratic politics. Such an adjustment should be recognized as valuable to the academy at large as others do the same for theories of voting behavior, public service motivation, policy diffusion, and other important theoretical frameworks that cross interdisciplinary boundaries.

This newly adapted theory is used here to look specifically at issues of crisis, and therefore is of particular value to scholars of emergency management looking to assess the effectiveness, fairness, and outcomes of specific planning, recovery, and mitigation processes. Scholars have begun the process of outlining how race and socioeconomic status may contribute to how emergency management is conducted in the United States, particularly with regard to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath (Hicklin, O'Toole Jr, Meier, & Robinson, 2009; Roberts,

2006). Given that local governments are important actors in each step of the emergency management process, it will be important for that discipline to fully reckon with how inequality and race have impacted the response and recovery efforts to both natural and manmade disasters (Caruson & MacManus, 2011; Hartman & Squires, 2006). By using a framework that considers both how local governments respond to crisis and how the social construction of their populations may impact that response, scholars and practitioners will be able to develop new best practices for emergency management.

Finally, as with any rigorous and empirical qualitative study, this work highlights innovative and important methodological approaches, and in doing so creates empirical qualitative work that drives the development of theory in the field of public administration, a task which is often called for but less frequently undertaken (Hacker & Pierson, 2014; Nabatchi, Goerdel, & Peffer, 2011; Rosenbloom, 1983). Such work helps to bridge the oft-lamented gap between theory and practice by developing new frames for looking at classic problems, as well as uncovering new avenues for research, including those presented forthwith. Theory development is an ongoing and long-term undertaking, and as such this study serves not only as a case study for understanding two particular instances of how bureaucratic politics impacts public health and safety, but also as a generator for any number of important questions concerning bureaucratic politics, emergency management, social constructions, and the intersections thereof.

Avenues for Future Research: Cases, Causal Mechanisms, and the Neoliberal State

This study consists of two cases, both of which were selected based on the availability of data, location, existing literature and research, and broad public knowledge of the crises studied.

As with any research design, this choice comes with inherent limitations. Most importantly, the number of cases must be increased to develop this theoretical framework further, and it must be done so in specific ways and with specific cases. Much of the future research outlined below is proposed to take the form of such cases, although there are diverse research designs that might serve scholars in these undertakings. While the qualitative case study analysis using mini-ethnographies, a modified membership categorization analysis, and stories for research is a valid and useful methodology, there are other designs, including surveys, quantitative analyses, and mixed-method approaches that would also serve important roles in creating a more robust dataset from which to continue developing this framework. Such designs are reviewed in brief, as is potential further work on more general principles of bureaucratic politics.

One case study is already underway using the same methodology and design as Flint and Manchester and will supplement these cases by further developing the adapted framework and revised theory of bureaucratic politics. This case, which considers the housing crisis in Oakland, California, reviews housing policy proposed and implemented by the Oakland City Council and the associated administrative managers in that city. In Oakland, rising housing costs have made the city the fourth most expensive rental market in the United States, while renters in the city have a median annual income of only \$36,000 (Berg, 2016), forcing citizens into unsafe housing or onto the streets (Baldassari, 2017). This has resulted in a homelessness and affordable housing crisis, and the bureaucratic politics of the Oakland City Council and of other government officials in that city will be analyzed similarly to Flint and Manchester, providing a third case in the same style and with similar markers of utility and validity.

In selecting other future case studies, it may be necessary to undertake a case study that considers a positive outcome to a crisis, where media reports and the general public acknowledge that the end result is objectively “good” for the public health and safety of the individuals in that municipality. Flint, Manchester, and Oakland, while substantively different in both policies and outcomes, are seen more broadly as failures and instances where government, regardless of intentions, was unable to prevent or mitigate a crisis of public health and safety. For that reason, the cases within this study are limited to understanding failures, and positive cases may prove useful in moving beyond that narrative and exploring how local governments can succeed.

One potentially positive case to consider is that of violent crime in Aurora, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. Once cited as one of the more violent cities in Illinois, violent crime in Aurora has dropped drastically since its most recent peak in 2002 (Jones, 2018). This drop in violent crime was seen across the United States during that time period and Aurora is only one of many cities to be impacted, with New York City being perhaps the best-known example (Sharkey, 2018). However, given that New York is a large international financial and cultural capital, there has already been exhaustive and extensive research into the decline in crime in that city (Zimring, 2011). Conversely, Aurora is much similar to Flint or Manchester in terms of population and industry, and experienced a similarly significant decline in crime, but no empirical academic research to date has been conducted into how and why. Scholars have noted more broadly the impact of community policing programs, crime hot-spotting, and other similar policies on crime rates, and it is possible that similar dynamics were present in Aurora (Braga, Hureau, & Papachristos, 2011; Schnebly, 2008; Taylor, Koper, & Woods, 2011). A case study that considers the bureaucratic politics prior to the implementation of such programs, particularly

as it relates to the social construction of the populations who receive the benefits of the policies, may prove useful to understanding the decline in crime as a net positive, but with an eye towards answering the previously proposed question of policy “by and for whom”.

Beyond solely positive cases, another example to be considered as a potentially relevant case is that of the homelessness crisis and the “Housing First” approach in Utah, and in particular in Salt Lake City, the largest municipality and capital of the state. Homelessness has been shown to be a critical issue of public health and safety, and Housing First is defined as a policy of providing shelter to homeless or rough-sleeping individuals without conditions (Bashir, 2002; Tsemberis, Gulcur, & Nakae, 2004). According to state officials, between 2003-2015 the Housing First approach resulted in a 91% decline in homeless individuals. It was widely remarked upon in many media and political circles that this policy, instituted and enacted by administrative and political leaders, led to an improvement in the public health and safety of the citizens of Utah. Articles that praised the policy response of the government officials involved appeared in the Washington Post, NPR, and The New Yorker (McCoy, 2015; McEvers, 2015; Surowiecki, 2014). However, there were also many who argued against this approach or suggested that the data provided by state officials was not accurate, and an audit of the policy in 2018 provided some evidence that the methodology used to count homeless individuals was in part responsible for the steep decline (Dean, Behunin, Gibson, & Cabulagan, 2018; Overton, 2007). An assessment of this case, one that is seen as overwhelmingly positive by the general public, but not by policy experts, and utilizing the same research design of the two cases analyzed here, may be a useful tool in understanding how policy feedback in particular is an important mechanism within this framework.

Case studies, while useful in understanding particular crises, must be supplemented by other research designs and methods if the conceptual model presented is to be demonstrated as valid and used to its full potential. There are several options for scholars to consider, three of which are proposed here. First, a survey of local government officials may prove useful to understand on a larger scale, how perceptions of policy feedback and social construction of populations influence how those individuals make decisions. Such a survey should target city council members, heads of administrative agencies, and city clerks along with other administrators involved in the policy process, and ask questions about how groups and individuals are chosen to appear before city council, whether those appearances are important to the survey taker's future decision-making, and the importance they place on particular values when making policy decisions. A large-n survey along these lines would provide valuable insight into whether the conceptual model posited here is valid, and to what extent it accurately represents the considerations of local government officials.

Second, quantitative analyses that focus on budgetary priorities in conjunction with public health and safety outcomes of a particular crisis may help determine how the prioritization of cost-saving policy may be detrimental to public health and safety. By utilizing existing data on the allocation of budgetary resources and public data available through institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Justice, and state governments, it should be possible to determine, compared to similar cities with similar problems, how budgeting impacts the public health outcomes of a particular crisis such as opioid addiction or water quality. Just as a survey would provide important context to micro-level decision-making by individuals, a study along these lines would provide macro-level context to broader implications around the

allocation of resources and the prioritization of certain interests over others by local governments. This type of multi-city quantitative study will help refine the conceptual model further, demonstrating how particular elements either accurately represent how local governments operate, or are overly deterministic.

Finally, the incorporation of mixed methodologies and technological advances into this field of research will undoubtedly prove fruitful. New technologies, such as geographic information systems (GIS) and social media, can help to spatially map crises, and with the support of qualitative observation of the individuals impacted and quantitative assessment of the outcome of the crisis, the impact of policy around public health and safety may be rendered in a holistic and comprehensive manner. In doing so, the conceptual model here may be refined further to include physical and spatial characteristics of crises, location-based information, and micro-level data on individual reactions to public health and safety crises, similar to the scholarship being conducted in the fields of emergency management and disaster planning (Middleton, Middleton, & Modafferi, 2014; Veil, Buehner, & Palenchar, 2011). As these technologies and methods become more advanced, the nature of the data that can be collected about how bureaucrats make decisions may prove more useful than anticipated.

Virtually every American city has experienced some type of public health and safety crisis in its history, and as is to be expected by the nature of such crises, many of those have resulted in negative outcomes for the populations of those cities. It is difficult to define overarching causal mechanisms for these crises, and while the conclusions presented in Chapter VI indicate that local government officials in both cases in this study did see cost-saving factors as causal, there is more work to be done before such assertions can be deemed valid. However,

the evidence to this point suggests that there is a causal mechanism related to cost-saving concerns that is driving the failures of local governments to prioritize public health and safety, and that future research should proceed from that postulation.

There is validity to the criticism that developing a model likely to find corroboration of these outcomes is subject to some level of confirmation bias. However, it would be just as limiting to only consider the relatively infrequent successes of local government in prioritizing public health and safety. The minimal work that does exist on how local governments deal with crisis, particularly as pertaining to how citizens and mass publics perceive their conduct, is rife with inconsistencies, including widespread variation between how officials understand the results of their efforts as compared to citizens (Avery, Graham, & Park, 2016; Lee, 2009). While it is important to acknowledge the potential for confirmation bias with regard to the assumption of failure, the evidence suggests that the perception as well as the reality of frequent failure is due to the fact that local governments are subject to pressures and concerns, including special interests and managerial priorities, that may limit their ability to respond to crisis (Agranoff & McGuire, 2004; Sharp, 2012).

There are other theoretical alternatives to understanding these crises, including through urban regime theory, which posits that policy elites with access to resources are the sole group that can engage in “sustained politics,” including confronting crises. However, criticism of that work has shown that in fact other groups, including marginal entities that are seen as low-power, low-deserving by elites as per the social construction framework, do have some meaningful power to influence politics as pertaining to housing, labor rights, and education (Jones-Correa & Wong, 2015; Stone, 1989). Given this evidence and that of the preceding cases, it would appear

that urban regime theory, at least as originally conceived and proposed, may have little explanatory power when it comes to understanding how crises are resolved. With continued work, a revised framework of bureaucratic politics may be able to fill that gap, providing an empirical and relevant way to understand how policy is created and implemented to deal with large-scale crises of public health and safety.

Given the relevance of economic concerns and priorities as related to potential causal mechanisms in the two cases presented here, future research must also consider how the broader neoliberal state and its attendant influence on local government impacts how crises are managed and resolved (Centeno & Cohen, 2012; Harvey, 2007; Howell, Doan, & Harbin, 2019). Neoliberalism, operationalized by the institutional frameworks of modern society that promote global trade policy, property rights, and deference to market forces, is present in Flint, Manchester, Oakland, and in cities across the United States and the world. These macro-level forces, while not explicated in the framework developed in this project, are embedded in our understandings of both how and why crises of public health and safety develop, as well as what remedies to these crises are possible within the American city (Gane, 2012; Soss, Fording, & Schram, 2011).

The carceral state, which exists for many American citizens at the intersection of race and class under neoliberalism, is not only enforced through police departments and welfare offices. In many ways, it is this neoliberal carceral state that limits the prospects for success of local governments dealing with crises (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012; Bernstein, 2012; Soss et al., 2011; Weaver & Lerman, 2010). In Flint, this dynamic can be evidenced through the punitive measures inflicted upon street-level bureaucrats charged with involuntary manslaughter while the

Governor of Michigan remains unindicted (Williams, 2019). In Manchester, it is evidenced by the overwhelming focus on law enforcement and prosecution as primary avenues towards mitigating the opioid crisis. In Oakland, the conditions of the homeless have been remarked upon by the United Nations, whose Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing stated explicitly in a press conference that the homeless population of that city are “the victims of failed policies—not the perpetrators of crime” (BondGraham, 2018; Farha, 2018). Given these cases, an assessment of crisis and emergency management in the United States through the lens of neoliberalism is clearly warranted, and a revised framework of bureaucratic politics will be a useful tool in conducting that analysis.

Governments will always be forced to deal with crises. They will make decisions about, prioritize, and enact policies that cope with those crises and they will be obligated to defend those decisions to their constituents and to the broader public. This process may not be homogeneous across the United States or the world, but the commonalities in decision-making that occur during a crisis, as first proposed by Allison (1969), have proven to be relevant and important for understanding those dynamics in general. This study, and the work that arises from it, is the next step in applying those principles to specific instances of crisis, in the hopes of developing new pathways for knowledge and applied research that can not only change how crisis is studied, but also how governments choose to prioritize the public health and safety of the populations they represent.

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Appendix A: Codebook

Code	Proposition	Code Group	Comment
drug	n/a	Manchester	Code covers full meeting; reference to opioid(s), opiates, heroin, fentanyl, drug(s). Spurious references that refer to other drugs are removed.
water	n/a	Flint	Code covers full meeting; reference to water, lead, pipe(s). Spurious references that refer to water in another context are removed.
managerial_focus_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on managerial interests; efficiency, effectiveness, human capital management, agency performance or other.
temporary_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on temporary interests: stop-gap measures, time-limited policy, impermanent efforts, or other.
electoral_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on electoral interests; reference to votes, concerns about political future, calling of press conferences, ceremonial activities, or other.
personal_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on personal interests; discussion of personal relationships, photo or media advisory, connection to personal story, or other.
area_rewards_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on area rewards; policy that serves particular neighborhoods, request to pay legal damages for certain individuals or groups, listening session/town hall for particular area, or other.
problem_solving_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on problem solving; reference to specific program to address specific problem, information for citizens to solve issue, resolution or instruction to do specific action, or other.
civic_duty_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on civic duty; interest of larger public considered, policy serves entire municipality, information session intended for all, or other.
agency_int	PROP1	Interests	Focus on agency interests; agency-specific funding, resolution that benefits specific agency, issues that are dealt with by particular agency, or other.
citizen_rel	PROP1	Relationships	Interaction between citizen and council member.
political_rel	PROP1	Relationships	Interaction between elected official and council member.
government_rel	PROP1	Relationships	Interaction between government official (non-elected) and council member.
private_rel	PROP1	Relationships	Interaction between representative of a private entity and council member.
mission_org	PROP1	Organizational	Organizational mission; reference to mission or purpose, clear adherence to organizational mission of agency, or other.
roles_org	PROP1	Organizational	Organizational roles; reference to the role of a member within an organization, special order by individual based upon their role/status, or other.
networks_org	PROP1	Organizational	Organizational networks; indication of the use of an organizational network (internal or external), reference to connections or informal relationships, or other.

structure_org	PROP1	Organizational	Organizational structure; scheduling of meetings, reference to the hierarchy or structure of organization, or other.
professional_org	PROP1	Organizational	Professionalism; adherence to rules of organization, action taken due to or reference to the professionalism of organization, or other.
norms_org	PROP1	Organizational	Organizational norms; clear following of organizational norms or informal rules, actions taken based upon the norms of an agency, or other.
org_home_env	PROP1	Environmental	Organization of actor; reference to an individual's home agency, action taken in support of home agency, or other.
info_asym_env	PROP1	Environmental	Information asymmetry between actors; evidence of one side of interaction having more information, use of information as tool to negotiate, or other.
account_env	PROP1	Environmental	Reference to accountability in context of crisis, specific action to assign accountability, or other.
power_env	PROP1	Environmental	Evidence of unequal power among actors, action taken to exert power over other actor, reference to hierarchy, or other.
local_env	PROP1	Environmental	Issue specific to local environment; MI environmental law or NH drug law, municipal ordinance, or other.
resources_env	PROP1	Environmental	Reference or discussion of financial or other resources; budget decisions, agency funding, programmatic funding, or other.
cc_concerns_causal	PROP2	Cost-Saving Concerns	Cost-savings concerns, causal; reference to cost-savings causing a particular issue, decision, policy, or other.
cc_concerns_prio	PROP2	Cost-Saving Concerns	Cost-savings concerns, prioritized; reference to cost-savings being prioritized over other issues, decisions, policies, or other.
follower	PROP2	Typologies	See Fig. 3
egoist	PROP2	Typologies	See Fig. 3
traditionalist	PROP2	Typologies	See Fig. 3
glad-hander	PROP2	Typologies	See Fig. 3
technician	PROP2	Typologies	See Fig. 3
race_sc	PROP2	Social Construction	Social construction of a particular group based on race.
class_sc	PROP2	Social Construction	Social construction of a particular group based on class.
other_sc	PROP2	Social Construction	Social construction of a particular group based on attribute besides race or class.
lack_mob_pf	PROP2	Policy Feedback	Reference to the lack of citizen mobilization around a policy.
mob_pf	PROP2	Policy Feedback	Reference to citizen mobilization around a policy.

