SURVEY RESEARCH AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an argument for incorporating survey research, commonly refered to as public opinion research, at the local government level as a program planning and evaluation tool for policy makers. It is not the intention of this thesis to present survey research as the only tool for program planning and evaluation. However, survey research provides public officials with a variety of benefits that traditional methods, such as, cost/benefit and other economic or political indicators do not.

This thesis reports the results of a national survey on the use of survey research at the local government level, and the problems and benefits associated with it. An organizational description of Boston's Office of Survey Research is used as an example of how a local government may incorporate survey research into its policy decision making process. A survey conducted for Boston's Parks and Recreation Department is presented as an example of how survey data is used for policy matters. The thesis concludes by citing several reasons for local government to use survey research.

OVERVIEW

It is the intent of this thesis to present a case for internalizing survey research at the local government level. Many local governments throughout the United States have begun using survey research as an analytical tool for public management, program planning and evaluation. For local governments that use survey research for policy related issues, it may be worth their while, both in terms of costs and efficiency, to begin thinking about internalizing this function.

I begin by reporting the results of a national survey on the use of citizen surveys at the local level. This survey provides evidence of the growing acceptance of survey research for policy and planning purposes. Then I discuss the problems and benefits associated with the use of survey research at the local level. A section of this thesis will be devoted to several methodological issues that can complicate the analysis of citizen based surveys. This thesis will present an organizational description of Boston's Office of Survey Research as an example of how a local government may structure their efforts in this regard. A survey conducted for Boston's Parks and Recreation Department is presented as an example of how data may be displayed, and how policy decisions are made based on survey research procedures. This thesis concludes with an argument for internalizing survey research at the local level.

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Survey research is only one of several methods available to local officials for program planning, evaluation and management. However, it is not the intent of this thesis to discuss these alternative methods. Nor is it the intent of this thesis to discuuss survey research methods per se. There are several references in the Bibliography for readers interested in both of these areas.

NATIONAL SURVEY OF CITIES

During the first week of January, 1983 I sent two hundred cities a brief questionnaire (see Appendix A) soliciting information concerning their survey research efforts. Only cities with populations of greater than 100,000 were sampled. Cities were selected to ensure that each region (Northeast, Southeast, South, Northwest, Southwest, and Midwest) was proportionately represented. The questionnaire, along with a cover letter, was sent to the mayor's office of each city with a brief explanation directing the contents to the appropriate individual within the administration. Almost one half (47%) of the cities returned a completed questionnaire.

A majority of those responding (58%) cited a variety of reasons for using resident surveys. They included: program planning and evaluation, management performance measures, and citizen needs assessments. Of the cities using resident surveys, nearly one quarter (23%) responded that the resident surveys are designed,

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administered and analyzed by city personnel, 16% employe private consultants for the entire process. A majority (61%) of those cities replying worked closely with private consultants in designing and conducting their surveys. Of the cities using resident surveys, approximately one third (32%) administered them less than once every year, while a majority (55%) administer them at least once per year. Only 13% of these cities conduct citizen surveys more than once per year.

For those cities that use surveys we asked what their reasons were. The table below shows the response category for each reason.

QUESTION   "What is the primary reason for using survey research?"
        (N=55)

To measure service delivery	22%
Program planning	24%
Program Evaluation	16%
General Issues Survey	38%

QUESTION   "...What is the primary method in which you administer surveys"   (N=55)

Telephone	33%
Mail	20%
Face-to-face	12%
Combination	35%

For those cities that use surveys we asked, approximately how

much was spent on an annual basis, and how were the funds appropriated. Approximately 11% report an annual cost of more than $100,000, and 27% report spending less than $25,000 annually, while the remaining 62% reported spending between $25,000 to $100,000 per year for their survey research.

QUESTION "...How are the funds appropriated for survey research expenditures?" (N=54)

General Expenditure	54%
Department or Agency Expenditure	12%
State or Federal Funds	10%
Private Funds	8%
Combination	16%

Although there is no real difference between general revenue and revenue produced by departments or agencies it is important to note the distinction. Surveys funded with "general revenue" are initiated by the central administration, while surveys funded by departments or agencies are initiated by the department or agency. There is also evidence that shows surveys initiated by the central administration are used for budgetary project and general issues, while surveys that are initiated by departments or agencies are used for program evaluation, service delivery, and resource allocation program decisions.

Of the cities (N=39) that have never employed surveys, 45% have

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considered using them at one time or another. One fifth (20%) of those cities that have never used surveys did not feel that resident surveys were useful for public policy decisions. Almost two thirds (60%) of the cities who have not used resident surveys in the past have no plans for using them in the future. There are several reasons that may help explain why such a high proportion of the cities surveyed do not plan on employing resident surveys in the future:

1) Regardless of whether local governments are interested in conducting surveys internally or contracting their work out, it is important to have staff employees who have some knowledge or appreciation about survey research methods. Without employees who process this appreciation or knowledge it is unlikely that survey research will be used.

2) The initial cost of survey research seems very high, and may "turn-off" government officials who may otherwise have used it. However, the benefits derived from citizen surveys, in terms of program evaluation, resource allocation, management performance, and service delivery can outweigh the initial cost of conducting the survey.

3) There are political ramifications that may cause some local governments to avoid using survey research. These are discussed in more detail later.

Another study of local governments that use resident surveys was conducted in 1973 by Webb and Hatry of The Urban Institute (Webb

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and Hatry, 1973, p.10). Their study showed 50% of those surveyed (cities over 100,000 and counties over 250,000) have used some form of survey research. This slight percentage increase from Webb and Hatry's study conducted in 1973 to my study conducted in 1983 provides evidence that there has not been any decrease in the number of cities who use survey research over the past decade.

In the past, the traditional methods of program and policy evaluation relied almost entirely upon political and economic or cost/benefit indicators. The results of both these studies demonstrate that survey research has also played an important role in program and policy evaluation.

This acceptance of survey research by many cities is a result of a number of factors:

1) A greater public awareness of public opinion research. The increasing use of public opinion research in politics, marketing and mass media has heightened the public's understanding of survey research.

2) Improved computer and statistical techniques have increased the efficiency of data analysis. The analysis of large data sets that once took weeks to analyze can now be processed in hours.

3) There has been an increase in the number of people who are trained in survey research methods over the past few years. This is a response to the growing acceptance and use of survey research in the private as well as public sector.

4) Many public officials see public opinion research as one

way of eliminating the unrepresentativeness of participation at such forums as the public hearing.

In addition to the information presented in the survey on cities using survey research there have been numerous articles in professional journals that support the growing acceptance and use of survey research at the local level (Daneke, Kolbus-Edwards, 1979).

During a recent interview with John Griener, a senior official at The Urban Institute, I asked what his experiences have been in working with local government officials, in designing, implementing and using survey research..

QUESTION   "...John, what has your experience been working with local government officials in regard to survey research? How receptive and knowledgable have you found them?"

ANSWER   "First, I think there has been a general increase in receptivity by all agencies over the last couple of years. Some of the more engineering or public works type agencies seem to be more skeptical about the value of the citizens' opinions. They seem to rely more on professional opinion and feel that this is the best way to make informed judgements upon how adequate services are. I think that there has been a great increase in the sensitivity to the perceptions of the public to evaluate the more "hard core"

engineering type services, or public works. In many areas throughout the United States citizens evaluate the quality of the streets, even determine their capital programs for the next year on the basis of perceived roughness of roads. It may sound like a "seat-of-the-pants" evaluation, but I have seen it happen. They are literally relying on items which the public perceives, not the engineering concerns such as road settling, sub-grade cracking, and things of that sort. I think this speaks to the general increase in the receptivity, in a variety of agencies, to the concerns of citizen perception of the quality of services, as opposed to a professionally determined standard as to what constitutes good service. (Griener, 1983)

The results of both the national survey of cities and Webb and Hatry's survey provide us with some evidence that a number of cities throughout the United States depend on resident surveys as a tool for public policy.

As survey research in general (both privately and publically) grows and techniques improve it is likely that more local governments will begin to consider and use it in various policy related areas. However, a discussion of survey research and local governments would not be complete without including the benefits and problems associated with it. The following section will discuss

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some of the major benefits of resident surveys. This section will be followed with a discussion of problems associated with survey research in general, and problems with survey research when applied to local government.

GENERAL BENEFITS

Resident surveys have been used to help local officials plan and evaluate municipal programs and services. By soliciting the public's opinions, desires and degree of satisfaction, estimates can be made as to whether a service or program is meeting its desired objectives. Resident surveys are also capable of monitoring programs, detecting changes in users attitudes, needs and desires. (Hatry and Winnie, 1973, p.7-19) A resident survey can also be used in testing the affects of a particular public policy on a specific community or interest group (Clark, 1973).

As an aid for policy development, resident surveys provide local officials with the ability to refocus or reorient service delivery based on resident priorities. In this regard resident surveys become a key element in the program planning process. Resident surveys also aid in the development and clarification of policy. Webb and Hatry summarize this policy development role with the following list of survey contributions (Webb and Hatry, 1973, P. 15-31).

1). Providing selected factual data.

2).. Pretesting the demands for new services

3). Providing data on citizen awareness of local government

   programs.

4). Determining broader citizen opinions.

5). Providing a means for increased citizen participation in

   government planning and policy formulation.

6). Reducing isolation and alienation from government.

The utility of resident surveys is not limited to public policy and program evaluation in a general sense. For example, resident surveys have been able to identify racial differences in the evaluation of city services and programs. Identifying white, black and hispanic opinions on city services has been used in attempts to reduce racial tension (Aberbach and Walker, 1970). Other surveys have studied how neighborhoods within a city may differ in resident satisfaction with various services (Lovich and Taylor, 1976).

GENERAL PROBLEMS

There are two sets of issues involved with survey research. The first set of issues are associated with survey research and the survey research industry in general, while the second set of issues are associated with survey research when applied to local governments. The following section will discuss both sets of issues.

General Issues: Public opinion research in both the private and
public sector has become increasingly accepted over the past decade.
There are very few people in this country who have not been
approached by someone who says they are taking a "poll" or
conducting a survey. When approached most people have a general set
of understandings and expectations about the nature of survey
research. We have even come to the point in this country where we
believe that certain firms such as The Gallup Organization or the
Harris Poll are the generic equivalent of "public opinion poll."
Unfortunately, local government does not have the same advantages.

One of the major problems with survey research may be rooted in
the industry itself. While the terms poll or survey are generally
well known, they carry some negative as well as positive images for
most individuals, a factor which leaves the typical respondent wary.
For example, it is a common experience for interviewers to encounter
respondents who have some expectation that the interview may serve
as a means of getting attention and action by those in "authority"
for some particular reason. Few Americans have not had some
experience with attempts to sell them something, either commercial
or political, under the guise of a "poll" (Baxter, 1964, p.
124-134).

Using survey methods for these purposes has caused a major
credibility problem with the public towards survey research.
Another factor that damages the credibility of survey research is
the uncontrolled and unfortunate use of methods in such

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controversial areas as credit investigation, real estate assessment, and other forms of marketing. A lack of control and defined standards within the survey research industry has created a suspicion in the eyes of the public. (Arnold, 1964, p. 119-123).

Misuse of data: The major outlet for public opinion polls have been the newspapers and television. There are few individuals in either of these industries that are equipped or trained in survey research methods. As a result there have been numerous instances in which survey research data have been inaccurately presented. Without a set of accepted guidelines or standards which media personnel can agree to follow, it seems likely that faulty research results will continue to find a place in newspapers and on televisions.

Invasion of Privacy: Due to the wide variety of uses and misuses of survey research methods, the public is likely to continue to be wary towards providing information to survey interviewers. If survey research continues to probe into personal areas of peoples lives, then the public will continue to be unwilling to participate.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

When a local government uses survey research as a policy tool there are further issues that require consideration. This section discusses some of the more important of these considerations.

Project Independence: Some feel that it is prudent for local

government to contract it's survey research out to private consulting firms. Proponents of contracting survey research efforts out to private consulting firms contend that;

> "...even those governments that have the technical capability
>
> to handle the surveys on their own may have difficulty in
>
> gaining public credibility for their findings if they do
>
> not use outside experts" (Hatry, et al 1977, p. 125)

Another danger of using government staff to conduct surveys is that the public may be a little less forthcoming knowing that they are giving their opinions on city services to city personnel. There is also a possibility that citizen assessments of local services may represent a generalization of attitudes towards local government as a whole, and not the actual delivery of services. Given the homogeneity of most urban neighborhoods, any individual evaluation of services may result from their adoption of some indigenous set of norms and expectations, rather than from an independent evaluation of the quality of services per se. (Aberback and Walker, 1920)

It is important for local officials to convince the public that their survey efforts are for public benefits as opposed to surveys conducted for private benefit. This is not an easy task, as Rome Arnold writes:

> "...even once local government has satisfactorily
>
> differentiated themselves from non-survey questionaries
>
> and pseudo-surveys they still bear the considerable burden

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of filling a great deal of specific content regarding what they are about, what rules the game has, what should lead the respondent in cooperating with them: (Arnold, 1964).

Local officials must demonstrate to the public that the information obtained from resident surveys is instrumental in shaping public policy. Government officials must show that resident surveys are a means for affecting change, and that the purpose of surveys is for public benefits. One way for the government to demonstrate to the public that it's intentions are for public benefit is to develop an outlet through which survey results can be published and distributed throughout the community.

One Type of Political Problem: There is a fear that resident surveys are conducted for political reasons, and that they do not benefit the general public. In order to alleviate this concern it is important for government officials to report the survey findings in some regular fashion. John Griener of The Urban Institute was asked the following question:

QUESTION "...Since the City of Boston has developed its own survey research capability there have been many allegations that it is used for political reasons. How does a local government that is interested in developing its own unit address this problem?"

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ANSWER   "If administrators are not willing to take some

negative information, well, then maybe survey research is

not a very useful tool for them. Clearly in those

situations political judgements are going to intervene.

If survey research is going to be used to justify some

preconceived ideas or programs, then survey research will

become politicized.   I do feel strongly that the results

of the research be publicized in some regular fashion.

Clearly the public is being asked for their opinions,

being imposed upon at times, and the information should

not be used purely for internal reasons. Of course the

administration has to be careful in the way the

information is disseminated. Over the last couple of

years, even in the national press, I think there has been

some consciousness raising to the point where the average

citizen is fairly knowledgeable about opinion polls."

(Griener, 1983)

Internal Credibility: It is the policy of many local governments to

use survey research to measure management performance in regards to

service delivery. Survey research methods are also used to a great

extent by local governments for program evaluation purposes. Local

officials must be extremely cautious in using survey research data

for these purposes. Department and agency heads are apt to become

very defensive towards negative information regarding their

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department, service or program. This defensiveness may develop into
a lack of confidence and trust towards survey data, and in some
cases they may choose to ignore the results entirely. If a local
government decides to employ survey research methods in order to
measure service delivery or program evaluation it is crucial to
involve the individuals for whom the information is being collected,
including city officials, department and agency heads, and in some
instances citizen groups. Once these people become involved in the
research design and analysis there is greater likelihood that they
will have more confidence in the data generated. The wording,
sequencing, and saliency of the questionnaire will also affect the
accuracy of the survey. Finally, there are a set of methodological
issues that result from improperly designed and administered
surveys. For a fuller discussion of these issues one should turn to
references cited in the bibliography.

Service delivery: A related issue is whether subjective measures,
such as satisfaction levels towards service delivery are valid
indicators of management performance. What is the relationship
between citizens' subjective evaluations and objective output
measures of service delivery? This is an important debate for
analysts to consider in order to determine whether there should be a
dollar for dollar match between what citizens perceive as true, in
terms of service delivery, and what may be true, in terms of some
objective measure of service delivery. Several studies have
indicated that citizen evaluations of services are not statistically

associated with objective measures of service delivery (Sharp, 1981).

Therefore, citizens apparently possess relatively little knowledge about local government upon which to base their evaluations of municipal services (Converse et. al, 1970). Several studies have indicated that the average citizen pays little attention to services as long as the quality of services remain in some acceptable range (Brudney and England, 1982 p. 127). This lack of knowledge may help to account for the lack of association between subjective and objective measures of service performance.

Whether citizens perceptions reflect actual service delivery or not may be beside the point. John Griener of The Urban Institute was asked the following question:

QUESTION "There has been a lot of debate as to whether subjective measure of service satisfaction can accurately gauge service output or performance. There are of course many statistical and conceptual complications in this regard. What has you experience at The Urban Institute been?"

ANSWER "I think I can address this issue in two ways. First of all, public perceptions are important. I view them objective (perceptions) as a relatively independent indicator, they have a value in and of themselves as an indication of the

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quality of service. If the service is in some sort of absolute terms very good, but the public does not feel that sevice is good, then there is something wrong. Maybe it is merely a public relations problem, and this has been one of the criticisms that has been leveled at survey research. That is, if you are going to judge a police department in terms of fear of crime, all that they need to do is to put forth a good publicity program that crime is going down. So the question becomes, has service improved? Well, from the standpoint of the person who is scared to go out into the streets at night, and was not basing that fear on a real situation, then clearly service has improved. That is, service has been delivered by the department in informing people that their fears were unfounded.

The issue of whether services will be manipulated by a survey or to help a survey merely through publicity and nothing substantive is a real one. At some point one has to give some credit to the city officials involved that they are not merely interested in doing a "song and dance" but that they have some concerns for the real services and the real quality of services. At some point one has to hope that they (officials) will not misuse this data. (Griener, 1983)

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Because of the statistical and conceptual problems related to matching subjective and objective measures, it is useful to determine what each respondent's personal experience with the service or program is. That is, individuals should be asked only about their own needs and preferences, given their personal situation and circumstances. Perhaps the simplest idea is to ask "what is wrong at present?". Is the respondent satisfied with present conditions, and if not, how dissatisfied is he? The attempt here is to get at the intensity of dissatisfaction, correlated with some personal experience. In any analysis of service delivery there should be a significant relationship between the extent of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and the intensity of desire for improvement, along with some indication that the respondent is speaking from some personal experience.

Resource Allocation: Asking the public about resource allocation also deserves consideration when local governments administer resident surveys. In view of the importance of deciding on the allocation of resources to various sub-populations and neighborhoods, the public is sometimes asked to respond directly to how much of an available resource should be devoted to each sub-population or neighborhood (Sharp, 1981, p. 18). Soliciting responses from the public as to how resources should be allocated has several drawbacks. First, many members of the public are not familiar with basic factors such as the distinction between capital

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and non-capital expenditures, and the nature of public expenditures. Also, the allocation of resources involves an appreciation of how much improvement can be bought for each unit of cost, and the general public cannot be expected to possess this knowledge.

Again, John Griener of The Urban Institute was asked to respond to the question of allowing the public to comment on resource allocations.

QUESTION   "Many citizen surveys that I have seen, and been
            involved with, ask the respondent some complicated
            resource allocation questions. What has your experience
            been in this area?"

ANSWER   "I generally stay away from the kind of research that
          deals with the "what if" type of question. Questions that
          ask...."What if you had $1,000 dollars to allocate, would
          you give it to sanitation, police, or fire?". These
          questions tend to be very popular, but I do not believe
          they are very helpful. The results are generally
          discounted by public officials, and do damage to the whole
          survey research business. The random respondent sitting
          at home is not faced with a real decision. This type of
          opinion poll may be interesting but not very valuable to
          the government itself.
          Our tendency is to focus on surveys that focus on the

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actual experience of individuals. For example, if people have not had contact with the service, then we would not ask them to comment on it. If, for instance, someone is living in an apartment building and has never actually seen the trash collector come to pick up their trash, then we would not invite them to comment on it. Citizens should comment from an area of "expertise", or experience. Understanding citizens experiences is what public officials are or should be interested in". (Griener, 1983)

All of the problems cited above are affected to some degree by the design, administration, and analysis of the survey instrument. Questions concerning project independence, cost, political issue, and internal credibility are best addressed through the development of a sound administrative research structure. Whereas, questions dealing with service delivery and resource allocation are best addressed by proper design and analysis, improperly administered surveys conducted internally, or by private consulting firms, will create high cost and jeopardize both political and internal credibility. Questionnaires that measure service delivery and resource allocation will be ineffective if they are not worded and formatted correctly. Again, many of these problems can be alleviated through the administration and organization of survey research.

In 1980, Boston, Massachusetts internalized its survey research efforts and developed a survey research division staffed by government employees. The Boston office has conducted over 180 various resident surveys to date. Since the office structure by which surveys are conducted has a great effect on the problems that surround survey research, it would be useful to outline the organization of the Boston office. The design, implementation and analysis of any survey is the result of various relationships among individuals within the organization, regardless of whether the research is conducted by a private consulting firm or a government staff. The Boston example provides some insight into these relationships.

BOSTON OFFICE OF SURVEY RESEARCH

Following the re-election of Mayor Kevin White in 1979, there was an initiative by the administration to create a policy management information system that would (1) establish policy goals within all City Departments, (2) evaluate each Department Head's performance in implementing the Mayor's policy goals, and (3) make recommendations for executive action based on evaluation. The policy management information system called for the development of a process that included the following steps:

A) Establish Policy Goals

B) Establish Detailed Standards

C) Implement Policy Goals

D) Collect Quarterly Data

E) Summarize and Verify Performance Data

F) Evaluate Actual Performance VS. Lower Case Goal

G) Present the Quarterly Report to the Mayor.

The responsibilities of the Policy Management process are divided among three divisions within the Office of Policy Management.

OFFICE OF POLICY MANAGEMENT


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                          Deputy Mayor
                               |
                               |
  _____|_____ __ _____
 |                             |                    |
 Policy Managers        Data Management       Survey Research
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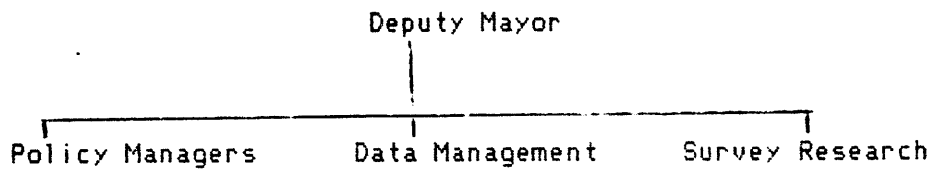

Because a complete description of the roles and responsibilities of the Policy Managers and Data Management Division is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will concentrate on the Survey Research Division.

SURVEY RESEARCH DIVISION

Survey Research Director

|

Assistant Director

|

Technical Dir.

Statistician (1)

Programmers (2)

Keypunching (2)

Operations Dir.

Interviewers (25-30)

Coders (4)

Publication Dir.

Graphics (1)

Writers (2)
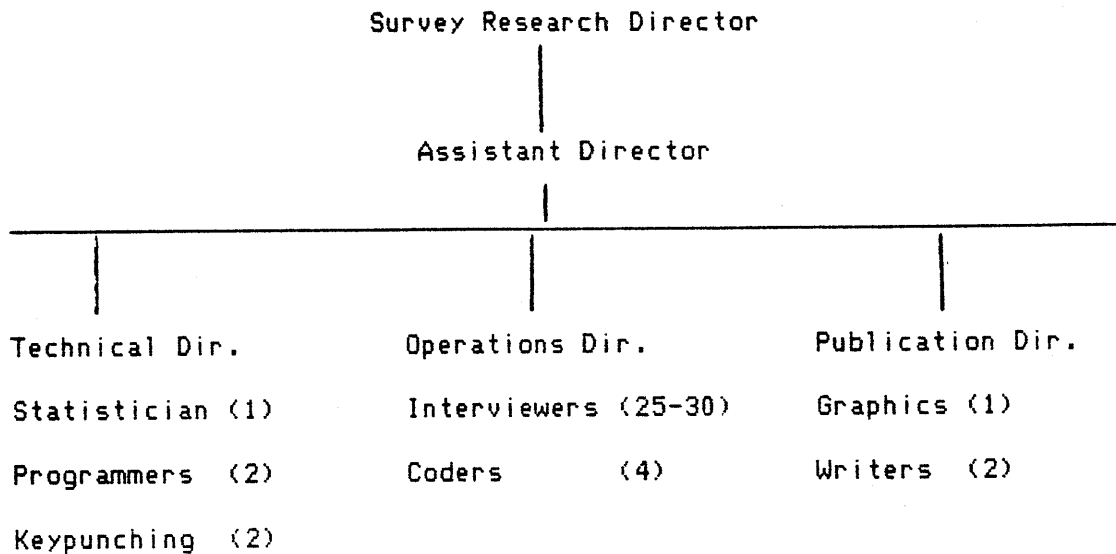
The Survey Research Division is staffed to design, conduct and analyze citizen surveys undertaken as part of the measurement process. Survey results are one of several different measures used to evaluate department and agency heads. This measurement process using survey results is generally accomplished by developing the pre-post test survey method. The measurement is the percentage improvement in the public's perception of the quality of a particular service over time. For example, residents living in neighborhoods that are contiguous to targeted parks or playgrounds are randomly sampled and surveyed as to their frequency of use, type of use, quality of service or maintenance, quality of interaction with recreation personel etc. Their responses are recorded and analyzed, and then compared to the results of an identical survey of

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residents randomly selected from the same sampling frame 3-4 months later.

Because there are numerous statistical and conceptual problems in using subjective responses to measure service output, the Research Division is only interested in viewing major increases or decreases in resident perception over time.

Citizen surveys are also conducted for various departments and agencies for policy and program evaluation purposes. For example, the Elderly Commission may be interested in finding out what the major concerns of the elderly population are in regard to transportation services provided.

Since 1980, approximately 30% of all surveys conducted by the Survey Research Division were for public safety (police, fire), 33% of all surveys were for service delivery (Parks and recreation, public works), 20% were for program evaluation (elderly, housing, etc), and the remaining 17% were conducted for various issues (property tax, proposition 2 1/2, etc.). Survey results are generally directed at a specific sub-population or geographic area, and an adequate sample size (at least 100) is maintained for statistical significance at each level of analysis.

Staff salaries for the Survey Research Division are approximately $300,000 per year. All costs for surveys conducted are paid for by the department or agency for whom it is being conducted. This payment plan is accomplished through a transfer of funds. Since 1979 the City has conducted approximately 180 surveys

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(1,000 respondents per survey) with a total (interviewing and analysis) cost of $1,200,000. This turns out to be approximately $6.50 per interview. It has been estimated that this cost would have been at least 100 percent greater had the City contracted this work out to private firms.

The Boston Survey Research Office attributes much of its success to the following:

A) Strong support from the Mayor

B) Flexible measurements that are negotiated directly with the department or agency head.

C) Questionnaire design is a function of a team that includes the Department Head and other personel from his/her office.

D) All measurements are measured over time.

E) The same team that designs the questionnaire is involved during the sampling, interviewing and analysis.

F) Study results are held in the strictest confidence, and are shared only with the appropriate department head.

Because of the particular structure of Boston's Survey Research Office, it is more capable of addressing some of the problems mentioned earlier than a private consulting firm. For example, the issue of whether the research is for political reasons is tempered by linking the Survey Research Office with the newly created Policy Management process. The issue of internal credibility is improved because Boston's Office is more capable of involving department or

agency personnel.

The following survey was conducted for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, and it is presented in this thesis to demonstrate various considerations necessary in designing, implementing and analyzing surveys. The survey also helps to demonstrate several analytical procedures that are useful to public officials designing public policy.

PARKS AND RECREATION

In January of 1982, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a planning grant from the Federal Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program of the National Park Service. The grant was awarded to aid the City in planning and revising the five-year Recovery Action Program required by UPARR to reflect the impact of the new fiscal austerity created by Proposition 2 1/2.

The Parks and Recreation Department had undergone crippling cutbacks in each of its three divisions, (maintenance, recreation and administration). The Administration found itself charged with the responsibility of maintaining a physical plant which had expanded greatly during an era of generous public resources. At the same time they were charged with safeguarding public access to open space and recreational opportunity, and felt they could not abandon that responsibility. Was there still public support for these goals, or should the department interpret the broad tax reform to

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mean that taxpayers were less willing to insure public access? Did the voters only intend to cut out the waste in government, and was there support to restore some services once voters were convinced the resources would be managed more effectively? Was the general public relatively satisfied with the current recreation offerings in their neighborhoods?

There were also a number of management issues to confront. Should there be a different mix of public and private support in the recreation service delivery system? Should the Parks and Recreation Department be in the direct recreation service delivery business at all or should they instead look to supporting more community non-profits which could leverage more of a local investment in programs and neighborhood facilities? Should users continue to be subsidized 100% for any service, or should certain segments of the population be asked to supplement program activities with fees? Should the Parks and Recreation Department follow precedents set by other cities in supplementing the City's tax based support for recreation with income from concessions and vending leases? In order to clarify public sentiment on some of these issues, the decision was made to utilize some of the federal planning funds to conduct a residents opinion survey.

In designing the survey questionnaire an attempt was made to elicit opinions which could provide some help to the Department as it attempted:

1) To assess the relative level of public satisfaction with

opportunities for recreation in the twenty-one neighborhoods of Boston, and the perceived need for recreation services improvements.

2) To identify segments of the population that were particularly dissatisfied with currently available recreation offerings.

3) To identify specific types of recreation activities that residents would like more of.

4) To determine the acceptability of fee programs and membership fees as a way of making recreation services available.

5) To measure public attitudes towards what the City's priorities should be in the area of parks and recreation services.

In the survey, three questions (see Appendix B) on broad aspects of recreation offerings were asked, and then the respondents were asked about satisfaction with opportunities for women and for any age group represented in the household. The intention of the "satisfaction questions" was not to evaluate recreation services per se, but to develop some insight as to what recreation wants and needs of the general public were not being satisfied. For this reason, no attempt was made to differentiate between public and private services, instead the questions on satisfaction were framed in terms of how people felt about the opportunities available to them in their neighborhoods. Did people feel there were enough recreational opportunities? Were they satisfied with the quality of the offerings?

Earlier in this paper I discussed the various methodological issues that should be considered when interpreting the results of a survey. Three general methodological issues were given specific attention during the analysis of this particular survey. I discuss them again because of their relevance to this survey.

1) The respondents' general dispositions towards government may influence their impressions of particular services. Even though the scope of the questions on satisfaction with local recreation opportunities (public, private, or non-profit) was broader than just public recreation services, the phone interviewers did identify themselves as calling from the City of Boston Survey Research Office. Thus, there is a reasonable possibility that some responses were influenced by the respondents' general attitudes toward government, and the results should be examined with this in mind.

2) The level of potential for discretionary actions by service deliverers may effect any attempt to match subjective measure with more objective measures of service delivery. One explanation for subjective measures of service delivery not matching more objective measures results in the amount of discretion the service provider has in the field. The amount and type of service or program delivery is scheduled at the administrative level, and there is no guarantee that schedules are followed at the "field" level. Some services or programs have a higher potential for discretionary action by field personnel than others. For example, police services have a high potential for discretionary actions by police, whereas

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bus services leave little discretionary authority to bus operators since bus routes are set at the administrative level and highly routinized. Parks and recreation services were considered by Rosentraub and Thompson (Rosentraub and Thompson, 1980) to have medium potential for discretion since employees frequently have discretion over maintenance and production of special programs although the level of physical resources are decided at the administrative level. Rosentraub and Thompson conclude that the greater the discretion a service has the more difficult it becomes to match subjective an objective measures of service delivery.

3) If asked, non-users of a service may offer an opinion. Although the survey questionnaire did not include a question designed specifically to differentiate service users from non-users, the survey did attempt to use a surrogate measure in an attempt to ascertain whether users and non-users differ in levels of satisfaction. The survey identified those people who responded to questions 1a or 2a ("during the warm and cold weather what recreation activities in the City do members of your household participate in the most, where?") with any type of recreation facility (park, bench, gym, tennis court, etc) as users. A comparison revealed no statistically significant difference between the satisfaction levels of our "users" and "non-frequent users".

Citizens were asked if they were satisfied with three aspects of recreation opportunities: the quantity, quality, and physical condition of facilities. Because it is not appropriate to present

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all of the analysis involved in this survey, the remainder of the analysis will only deal with the quantity of recreation opportunities.

The various demographic sub-groupings examined included division by sex, ages represented in households, household types, race, ethnic background, handicapped, length of residence, residential status (own/rent), and by neighborhood. These variables were chosen to demonstrate the affect of third variables as influencing factors.

The survey of 2,029 Boston residents, 18 years or older was conducted from January 1983 thru March 1983 by trained research personnel. All interviews were coded and verified by trained personnel. Telephone numbers for participants in this survey were randomly selected in proportion to the geographic distribution of Boston's adult population. This stratified random sample was drawn in such a way as to ensure the likelihood that every Boston adult had an equal opportunity of being selected as a participant. The opinions expressed in this survey reflect the opinions of every Boston resident over 18 years within plus or minus 3%. Error margins for smaller sub populations vary according to the size of the sampled sub population.

Citywide, fifty-one percent (51%)of the people surveyed who had opinions toward the quantity of recreation provided were dissatisfied, while forty-nine percent (49%) were satisfied.

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Fourteen percent (14%) of all respondents had no opinion.

It is instructive to compare these figures with the results of a survey conducted in May of 1981 by the Center For Survey Research, under contract to the Boston Committee, Inc.* ratings. (Boston Committee, 1981) In this survey, respondents were asked how satisfied they felt about nine different kinds of neighborhood services. Their results are presented in Table P-1. There is a difference between the proportions of the Boston Committee's survey and the City's survey. The most likely explanation for this difference is that the Boston Committee's survey was done prior to the implementation of cutbacks in service due to Proposition 2 1/2, while the parks and recreation study was done after the cutbacks had been in effect over a year.

Nevertheless, the Boston Committee survey indicates that even before Proposition 2 1/2, residents were relatively less satisfied with Parks and Recreation Services than with many other neighborhood services. Only police, street maintenance and restaurants received lower ratings.

*The Boston Committee is a non-profit group assembled to investigate racial tension in Boston.

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TABLE P-1

BOSTON COMMITTEE FINDINGS

SATISFACTION WITH NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS BY

Percent who say they are "very satisfied" or "generally satisfied with"

Way neighborhood residents get along	80%
Access to good shopping area	77%
Way property is kept	71%
Kind and quality of nearby stores	67%
Public transportation	65%
Noise level in neighborhood	59%
Parks and recreation facilities	54%
Nearby restaurants, places to go out	53%
Police service in neighborhood	48%
Way streets and sidewalks are maintained	44%

It is also interesting to compare the parks survey to a survey from another city. The United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit recently completed a survey which asked residents about their satisfaction with the availability of recreation facilities for both indoor and outdoor activities away from home. (United Community Services, 1980) The Detroit results differ dramatically

from Boston's. Sixty nine percent (69%) of Detroit residents surveyed responded that they felt there were enough indoor facilities accessible to them, and seventy-three percent (73%) were satisfied with the availability of accessible facilities for outdoor recreational activities. These differences may be due in part to the fact that the Detroit survey was not conducted by or for a city agency as was Boston's, and thus the Detroit survey minimized the likelihood that generalized attitudes toward the city administration influenced evaluative responses on specific services. Also, the survey questionnaire was different, and the specific question was geared towards satisfaction with availability of facilities, whereas Boston's survey measured satisfaction with quantity and quality opportunities for recreation activities (a function of facilities, services, and programs). Different sample selection and survey administration could also contribute to differences. Finally, there may be demographic and geographic differences between Detroit and Boston that could effect results. Detroit, for example, has a black majority and their sample was 63% black in contrast to our sample which was 23% black. Some studies suggest that various demographics and geographic variables influence perceived levels of satisfaction in terms of service delivery (Stipak, 1980)

In Boston's survey the factors which seemed to differentiate segments of the population showing significantly different levels of satisfaction with recreation were race, the presence of children in the home, income, and distance to a park.

Unfortunately, the Boston sample did not have a large enough representation to examine racial/ethnic groups other than blacks and whites in a meaningful way. The combined other category includes responses from Hispanic, Chinese, and other groups. As a whole, this combined minority group was somewhat less satisfied than whites, however, and more satisfied than blacks. (See Table P-2)

The characteristic that most dramatically differentiated groups on satisfaction was race. Of the sample of people who had opinions, 68% of the black respondents were dissatisfied as compared to 46% of the white respondents. When we examined the total sample, there was another interesting difference between the white and black population. Whites were almost twice as likely to have no opinion, or to register no opinion.

Another factor in determining satisfaction with the quantity of recreation services is household composition. The survey asked respondents to characterize their households in one of several ways: single adults, couples with no children or no children at home, couples with children, and single parents. The differences were consistent between households with children at home compared to households with no children at home. Households with children at home were more dissatisfied than households without children.

satisfaction with recr

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TABLE P-2

SATISFACTION WITH QUANTITY OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE

	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied
Total Citywide (N=2029)	49%	51%
RACE		
Blacks (N=412	32	68
Whites (N=1,532)	54	46
Other (N=76)	45	55
INCOME		
Low (under $10,000) (N=401)	54	46
Middle ($11,000-25,000) (N=719)	44	56
High (over $26,000) (N=355)	52	48
HOUSEHOLD TYPES		
Households with children (N=845)	40	60
Households without children (N=878)	58	52
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ANY MEMBERS:		
Under 6 years old (N=245)	42	58
6-12 years (N=291)	34	66
12-21 years (N=54	43	57
Adults under 65 (N=1459)	47	53
Adults over 65 (N=393)	57	43
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ANY MEMBERS:		
Households with handicapped (N=171)	43	57
Households W/O handicapped (N=1570)	49	51

OTHER

Access to car (N=1,557)	48	52
No access to car (N=472)	49	48
Rent home (N=902	51	49
Own Home (N=810)	47	53
Male (N=722)	50	50
Female (N=1012)	49	51
Within walking distance to a park (N=1568)	50	50
Not within walking distance to a park (N=179)	40	60
Primary Language not English (N=50)	52	48
Primary Language English (N=1684)	49	51

Our respondents were asked to identify whether there were members of the household in various age groups. In response to the general question on satisfaction, there was more satisfaction with programs for older people; 57% of the respondents in households with people over 65 were satisfied with recreational opportunities for the elderly. The most dissatisfaction was with recreational opportunities for households with children between 6-12 years old.

We cross tabulated race results with income and household type to examine whether there might be some underlying factors which particularly characterize whites or blacks and might explain their differences. For instance, if the group of blacks in the sample includes a disproportionate number of low income households compared to whites, and income is a strong determinant of satisfaction, then income, rather than race, may be the influencing factor.

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In Tables P-4 thru P-9 the results have been broken down into various subgroups to aid in an analysis of how the race, income and household type factors interact. Table P-4 summarizes the breakdowns along racial and income lines. There were also some significant differences among each of the three income responses of blacks. The largest percentage of dissatisfied ratings was in the middle income group (77%), followed by 67% in the high income group. Surprisingly, the income group that one might assume was the most needy, i.e. the low income group, was the most satisfied with the quantity of recreation, with only 58% responding negatively. In fact, the difference between the high and low income groups is not very significant. For whites, the middle and high income groups had similar frequency rates for satisfaction, they were almost as likely to be dissastified as satisfied with the quantity of recreation activities available. As with blacks, low income whites had a more significant level for satisfaction, with 61% of low income whites responding they were satisfied.

When income alone was viewed as a factor, there was no real differences between low and high income groups. The middle income group, though, was significantly more dissatisfied than both the low and high income groups.

TABLE P-4

RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Low income black	.42	.58	n=112
Low income white	.61	.39	n=265

Chi square = 11.56   df = 1   p = 0.00

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Middle income black	.23	.77	n=128
Middle income white	.51	.49	n=1055

Chi square = 31.60   df = 1   p = 0.00

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
High income black	.33	.67	n=51
High income white	.51	.49	n=331

Chi square = 5.98   df= 1   p = 0.021

TABLE P-5

HOUSEHOLD TYPES, INCOME AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Low income household with children	.40	.60	n=124
Low income household without children	.62	.38	n=253

Chi Square = 15.71   df = 1   p = 0.00

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Middle income household with children	.31	.69	n=297
Middle income household W/O children	.54	.64	n=236

Chi Square = 14.68   df = 1   P = 0.00

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
High income household with children	.20	.80	n=174
High income household W/O children	.55	.45	n=212

Chi Square = 51.75   df = 1   p = 0.00

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TABLE P-6

RACE AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Black household with children	.28	.72	n=185
White household with children	.44	.54	n=410

Chi Square = 13.19 df = 1 p = 0.00

HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT CHILDREN

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Black household W/O children	.40	.60	n=106
White household W/O children	.60	.40	n=595

Chi Square = 14.81 df = 1 p = 0.00

There were also significant differences among households of different income levels. Once again, the level of satisfaction increased as the income level decreased in both groups, however, even in the low income level households with children there was a high (60%) level of dissatisfaction.

When household types were broken down by race, there was a significant difference between households with and without children, in both blacks and whites. White households without children were more satisfied than white households with children. Black

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households, with or without children were more dissatisfied than white households. Black households with children were more dissatisfied than black households without children.

Finally, in Tables P 7-9 the sample is broken down by race, income, and household type. In the middle income groups, it does not seem to make a difference whether or not there are children present for either the black or white population. At the low and high ends of income distribution the presence of children at home does seem to contribute to a determination of satisfaction.

TABLE P-7

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Low income black households with children	.37	.63	n=60
Low income white households with children	.45	.55	n=64

Chi Square = 1.19   df = 1   p = 0.8750

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Low income black households without children	.48	.52	n=52
Low income white households without children	.66	.43	n=201

Chi Square = 6.062 df = 1 p = 0.022

TABLE P-8

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction	
Middle income black household with children	.21	.79	n=91
Middle income white household with children	.59	.41	n=206

Chi-Square = 36.61 df = 1 p = 0.00

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Middle income black households without children**	.27	.73 n=37
Middle income white household without children	.59	.41 n=199

Chi Square = 12.89 df = 1 p = 0.00

TABLE P-9

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
High income black household with children	.29	.71 n=34
High income white household with children	.45	.55 n=149

Chi Square = 3.0177 df = 1 P = 0.0750

HOUSEHOLD TYPE, RACE, INCOME, AND SATISFACTION

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
High income black household without children	.41	.59	n=17
High income white household without children	.56	.44	n=195

Chi Square = 2.37 df = 1 P = 0.1420

The perceived level of satisfaction with the quantity of recreation service seems to be a factor of a combination of variables; race, income and whether or not there are children present in the household.

As a result of this survey there were several significant policy changes affecting the quality and quantity of Park services and recreation programs. Information produced from this survey, but not presented in this thesis, helped City officials decide that in spite of fiscal austerity, parks and recreation services and programs were important to significant segments of the Citys population. What is needed is not any more or less service or programs, but a more equitable distribution of existing resources.

Specific policy decisions were made to shift resources from neighborhoods with high income residents with fewer children, to lower income neighborhoods with high proportions of households with children. There is a strong association between minority

neighborhoods, and low income neighborhoods with high proportions of households with children. Satisfaction with the quantity of recreation is more of a neighborhood factor than a factor of any individual variable such as race or whether or not a household has children. Table P-10 divides the survey sample into three broad categories; (1) neighborhoods with a minority population of greater than 50%, (2) neighborhoods with a minority population of less than 20%, and (3) neighborhoods with a minority population between 20% and 50%. Blacks living in predominately black neighborhoods tend to be more dissatisfied with the quantity of recreation, than whites living in the same neighborhood. However, blacks living in predominately white neighborhoods are more satisfied than whites living in the same neighborhood. If satisfaction with the quantity of recreation was soley a factor of race we would expect to see all blacks more dissatisfied than whites. The results of this survey presented strong evidence that services and programs were not perceived to be equitably distributed among the City's neighborhoods.

TABLE P-10

Neighborhoods with Black Majority

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Blacks (N = 213)	28%	72%
Whites (N = 50)	42%	58%

Neighborhoods with Less Than 20% Blacks

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Blacks (N = 59)	63%	37%
Whites (N = 1011)	55%	45%

Neighborhoods with Between 20% and 50% Black

	Satisfied	Dissastified
Blacks	31%	69%
Whites	52%	48%

Without this survey it would have been unlikely that the Administration could have determined the need for parks and recreation services and programs, nor, could they have determined the inequitable distribution of parks and recreation resources. The survey provided a means through which the unbiased responses of neighborhood residents could be translated into policy decisions making parks and recreation services and programs more fair, efficient and effective.

Survey research is not the only tool that can be employed to help public administrators make these decisions, but it seems to be the fairest (democratic), and more efficient. The following section presents an argument for employing survey research, and attempts to explain why survey research is more efficient and democratic.

The Role of Survey Research in Government

There are three areas in which survey research can improve the actions of local government: these include (1) more representative and unbiased citizen input, and, (2), more effective and efficient methods of gathering information, which, (3), results in improved decision making.

(1) Since 1950 the size of local government personnel has increased by almost 200% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1979, P.313). As government size increases, it is more likely that its actions

grow more removed from the desires of the people. Traditionally, government has relied on the ballot, or public hearings, in order to keep in touch with the desires of its citizenry. But as special interest and "pressure" groups more and more dominate the traditional methods, the opinions and desires of the unattached citizen become less heard and less influential. Survey research provides an unbiased means through which local governments can gain more informed access to the desires and opinions of its citizens.

(2) Government actions are being increasingly dictated by fiscal conservatism. This is evident in such tax revolts as Proposition 2 1/2 in Massachusetts, Proposition 13 in California and the current reign of supply side economics. The revenue generated by local government has not kept pace with inflation (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1979, P. 291). Therefore, there is less money for local government to provide the services it has in the past.

Sample surveys are capable of keeping government officials informed as to how local residents feel towards those services and programs. Survey research provides government officials with a flow of information for a more equitable and efficient distribution of resources.

(3) Survey research adds a new dimension to policy decision making. Policy decisions that were once made on the basis of political and/or cost/benefit indicators can now be supplemented with the unbiased responses of its residents. Survey research

combines cost efficient ways of gathering unbiased information with information that is more representative of the general public.

Alternatives for Implementing Survey Research

Local governments that are interested in using survey research as a tool for policy and program planning and evaluation have several alternatives available to them:

A) Contract with private consulting firms

B) Develop a part-time research staff and supplement it with a private consulting firm

C) Develop an internal survey research unit, capable of designing, administering, and analyzing.

Each alternative has an economy of scale associated with it. As the volume of survey research work increases the cost advantages of internalizing becomes stronger.

Contracting with an outside consulting firm is the most widely used method. This alternative is particularly attractive to local governments that engage in one or two annual resident surveys. The annual cost (approximately $75,000 to $125,000) for conducting one or two resident surveys would not justify the overhead required to develop an internal unit. Using outside consulting firms avoids the problem of having residents being less forthcoming in talking about city services and programs to city personnel. Two major

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disadvantages in using private consulting firms are high cost, and lack of management control.

There may be an additional advantage in contracting out to private firms, where private consultants seem to have more credibility than local government employees and, therefore, the results may be considered with more weight.

A second alternative for conducting survey research at the local level is to develop a part-time internal capacity. Again, this alternative depends upon the volume of anticipated annual survey work. The staff may be supported by outside consultants. The major disadvantage with this alternative is with its management. It may be difficult for local officials to synchronize the staff's responsibilities at any given point during the year. Conducting annual or semi-annual resident surveys may interfere with the staff's permanent positions. This method also has an organizational disadvantage, in that city personnel may be transferred, promoted, or leave city employment. It may be difficult to adequately maintain the continunity of an effective part-time staff.

The third alternative is for the government to fully internalize the operation. In order for this alternative to be successful and cost efficient, there has to be an ongoing committment by city management to conducting surveys. Because a fully internalized survey research capacity requires a full-time professional staff, technical support (computers), and office space, the cost can only be justified if the volume of work is high.

There are several other advantages for local governments that internalize their survey research units. Once a local government has accepted and internalized survey research into the everyday function of city government it becomes easier to inform residents as to what survey research is, and what they can expect from it. By continually soliciting residents opinions about city services and programs it allows local governments to clarify to the public the difference between the public and private surveys, thereby improving the response rates.

If one objective for conducting residents surveys is to measure management performance in regards to service delivery and program evaluation, then there are additional benefits in internalizing survey research efforts. Once department and agency heads recognize the committment by management in their efforts towards internalizing survey research, they are more apt to accept and use survey results. Another advantage in creating a survey research unit is that staff members will be capable of supporting and working with other research units throughout the city. Internalizing survey research will also allow for greater management and organizational control within the staff. Finally, the development of an internal survey research unit improves the ability to conduct on-going (longitundinal) research. Any effort in surveying residents opinons, no matter how directly the local government is involved in its operation, should include the following elements (Biderman, 1970).

A) Respondents are selected randomly from the public at large or from some large categorical population.

B) They are subjected to a question and answer process and nothing more.

C) Information is handled anonymously and confidentially, and a known set of safeguards exists to insure that this is the case.

D) No direct consequences should occur to the individual as a individual from his participation in the survey. Survey information is insulated from legal process and all other forms of case action. "No salesman will call", no gossip will follow, no credit rating will suffer, no social worker will fret, etc.

E) Respondent participation is voluntary.

F) Cooperation is solicited as an act of citizenship...a contribution to some public or large group purpose.

G) Purposes have been weighed carefully against the burdens placed on informants and the worth of the potential information found worth the cost and bother.

H) The maximum public benefit from the knowledge produced will be possible because it will be made freely available to all users.

Each government must decide on the extent of survey research they expect to do annually, and from there determine what the best alternative would be.

APPENDIX A

National Survey of Cities Questionnaire

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND RETURN IT IN THE
ENCLOSED SELF ADDRESSED, POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE.

Your name   _____

Position   _____

Yrs. employed with city _____

Name of city _____

Population   _____

Region   _____

1) Has your city ever used a public opinion survey for
   any reason?

                    YES_____

                    NO _____   (SKIP TO QUESTION 7)

2) What is the primary purpose of the public opinion
   survey?

                  TO MEASURE SERVICE DELIVERY   _____

                  PROGRAM PLANNING   _____

                  PROGRAM EVALUATION   _____

                  GENERAL ISSUES   _____

                  COMBINATION OF ABOVE   _____

3) How often does your city use public opinion surveys?

                  LESS THAN ONCE PER YEAR   _____

                  ONCE PER YEAR   _____

                  MORE THAN ONCE PER YEAR   _____

4) Who is responsible for designing and conducting the survey?

                    OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS   _____
                    CONSULTANTS & CITY   _____
                    ALL CITY PERSONNEL   _____

5) What is the primary research method?

TELEPHONE   _____

MAIL   _____

FACE TO FACE   _____

COMBINATION   _____

6) How are the funds appropriated for survey research expenditures?

GENERAL EXPENDITURES   _____

DEPT. OR AGENCY EXP.   _____

STATE OR FEDERAL FUNDS   _____

PRIVATE FUNDS   _____

COMBINATION OF ABOVE   _____

7) Has your city ever considered using survey research?

YES   _____

NO   _____

8) Do you think survey research is an appropriate tool for policy analysts?

YES   _____

NO   _____

APPENDIX   B

Boston Parks and Recreation Survey

PARKS AND RECREATION
NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

CALLER: Screen for 18 years of age or older.

Hello, my name is _____ . I'm calling from the City of Boston
Survey Research Office. We are conducting a survey in your area
on your use and satisfaction with recreation opportunities, and on
suggestions for their improvement. We would appreciate your partici-
pation in the survey.

1a. During the warm weather, what recreation activities in the city
     do members of your household do most often in their free time?

     _____

     _____   (____)

1b. Where?

     _____   (____)
     SPECIFIC FACILITY/LOCATION

2a. During the cold weather what recreation activities in the city
     do members of your household do most often in their free time?

     _____

     _____   (____)

2b. Where?

     _____   (____)
     SPECIFIC FACILITY/LOCATION

     We are interested in finding out how satisfied you are with
     the opportunities for recreation such as ORGANIZED SPORTS, DANCE,
     EXERCISE, SWIMMING, ARTS, AND GYM PROGRAMS in your neighborhood.

3a. In general would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied
     with the quantity of recreation activities available in
     your neighborhood?

     1. satisfied
     2. dissatisfied
     3. don't know   (____)

3b. What about the overall quality of neighborhood programs?

    1. satisfied
    2. dissatisfied
    3. don't know   (____)

3c. The physical condition of neighborhood recreation centers?

    1. satisfied
    2. dissatisfied
    3. don't know   (____)

4a. What about opportunities for active recreation for women
and girls in your neighborhood?

    1. satisfied
    2. dissatisfied
    3. don't know   (____)

4b. What type of program would you give the highest priority
for women and girls?

_____

_____   (____)

5a. Are any members of your household between the ages of
12 and 21?

    1. yes
    1. no - skip to Ques. #6a.   (____)

    How many are Male _____   M(____)
                 Female_____   F(____)

5b. What about recreation opportunities in your neighborhood
for youths between the ages of 12 and 21? Are you very
satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

    1. very satisfied
    2. satisfied
    3. dissatisfied
    4. very dissatisfied
    5. don't know/no opinion
    6. none in neighborhood   (____)

5c. What types of programs would you give the highest priority
for this age group?

_____

_____   (____)

6a. Are any members of your household between the ages of
6 and 12?

1. yes
2. no - skip to Ques. #7a.   (____)

How many are Male _____   M(____)
            Female_____   F(____)

6b. What about recreation programs (outside of school) for children
in this age group? Would you say you are very satisfied,
satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1. very satisfied
2. satisfied
3. dissatisfied
4. very satisfied
5. don't know/no opinion
6. none in neighborhood   (____)

6c. What types of programs would you give the highest priority
for children this age?

_____

_____   (____)

7a. Are their any children in your household under the age
of 6?

1. yes
2. no - skip to Ques. #8a.   (____)

How many are Male _____   M(____)
            Female_____   F(____)

7b. What about recreation programs for children under the age of
6? Are you very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very
dissatisfied.

1. very satisfied
2. satisfied
3. dissatisfied
4. very dissatisfied
5. don't know/no opinion
6. none in neighborhood   (____)

7c. What types of recreation activities would you give highest
priority for children under six?

_____

_____   (____)

8a. Are there any people over the age of 65 in your household?

1. yes
2. no - skip to Ques. #9a   (_____)

How many are Male _____   M(_____)
          Female_____   F(_____)

8b. What about recreation activities for people over 65, like dance,
exercise, arts & crafts, and social activities? Are you very
satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1. very satisfied
2. satisfied
3. dissatisfied
4. very dissatisfied
5. don't know/no opinion
6. none in neighborhood   (_____)

8c. What type of recreation programs would you give highest
priority for senior citizens?

_____

_____   (_____)

9a. How many adults (over 21 but under 65) are there in your
household?

_____ - if 0, skip to Ques. #10a   (_____)

How many are Male _____   M(_____)
          Female_____   F(_____)

9b. What about recreation programs for adults? Would you say you
are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dis-
satisfied?

1. very satisfied
2. satisfied
3. dissatisfied
4. very dissatisfied
5. don't know/no opinion
6. none in neighborhood   (_____)

9c. What type of recreation programs would you give highest
priority for adults?

_____

_____   (_____)

10a. Could you now please tell me whether you or any household member
has every used one of the following City owned recreation facilities?

		YES	NO	
a.	The Bunker Hill Recreation Room in the Elderly Building	1	2	(___)
b.	The Hyde Park Municipal Building	1	2	(___)
c.	The L-Street Recreation Center	1	2	(___)
d.	The Mission Hill Extension	1	2	(___)
e.	The North Bennet Recreation Center	1	2	(___)
f.	The Paris Street Gym	1	2	(___)
g.	The Roslindale Municipal Building	1	2	(___)
h.	The Shelburne Center	1	2	(___)
i.	The Tobin Building on Tremont Street	1	2	(___)
j.	The North End Pool	1	2	(___)
k.	The Mason Pool in Roxbury	1	2	(___)
l.	The Charlestown Pool on Bunker Hill Street	1	2	(___)

10b. Would you give me any reason why your household does not use any
of the facilities just mentioned more often?

01. don't know about facility or its program
02. not open the right time
03. not used by people my age
04. no transportation available
05. it's too crowded
06. it's not attractive
07. cost too much to go there
08. too dangerous there
09. do not like other users
10. personal health
11. poor facilities
12. too busy ———
13. other _____ (___)
                    please specify

11a. Are there any recreation activities which members of your household enjoy doing and would like to have more opportunity to do?

   1. yes
   2. no - skip to Ques. #12a   (____)

11b. What are they?

   _____

   _____   (____)

11c. Would you pay a fee for this/these programs if that was the only way they could be made available?

   1. yes
   2. no
   3. don't know   (____)

11d. What is the most you would pay per session?

   1. up to $1.00
   2. $1.00 to $1.99
   3. $2.00 to $2.99
   4. $3.00 to $3.99
   5. $4.00 to $4.99
   6. $5.00 or more
   7. don't know   (_____)

12a. Do you pay an annual membership fee at a community center or recreation club?

   1. yes
   2. no   (____)

12b. Where?

   _____   (____)

13. How much priority should be given by the City's Parks and Re-
creation Department in spending the limited funds it has
available to the following projects? Should these projects
be given high priority, some priority, or no priority.

		HIGH PRIORITY	SOME PRIORITY	NO PRIORITY	D/K	
a.	more supervised programs in parks	1	2	3	4	(____)
b.	improve access to parks & buildings for handicapped	1	2	3	4	(____)
c.	clean parks more often	1	2	3	4	(____)
d.	provide restrooms in parks	1	2	3	4	(____)
e.	more summer recreation programs	1	2	3	4	(____)
f.	keep city pools open year-round	1	2	3	4	(____)
g.	more soccer fields	1	2	3	4	(____)
h.	more day care/day camp programs	1	2	3	4	(____)
i.	more exercise and health programs	1	2	3	4	(____)
j.	more arts & crafts	1	2	3	4	(____)
k.	more gym programs	1	2	3	4	(____)
l.	return water in the frog pond at Boston Common	1	2	3	4	(____)
m.	provide more drinking fountains in local parks	1	2	3	4	(____)
n.	repair the benches and play equipment in parks more often	1	2	3	4	(____)
o.	provide more decorative fountains in parks	1	2	3	4	(____)
p.	provide more parking for major parks & ball fields	1	2	3	4	(____)
q.	improve tree care	1	2	3	4	(____)
r.	improve lighting in parks	1	2	3	4	(____)
s.	improve the conditions of playing fields	1	2	3	4	(____)

14. We would like your opinion on how city recreation programs
    should be paid for...all out of local taxes,
                              some taxes and small fee to users,
                              no taxes with user paying full cost

    Which of these three choices should apply to programs for:

		A CHILDREN	B TEENS	C ELDERLY over 65	D ADULTS 21-64	
1.	all taxes	1	1	1	1	A (____
2.	taxes & fees	2	2	2	2	B (____
3.	all fees	3	3	3	3	C (____
4.	don't know	4	4	4	4	D (____

15. Have you or other members of your household ever refrained
    from using your neighborhood park because of gangs or groups
    of youths or young adults hanging-out?

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. no groups hang-out there
    4. don't know/no opinion   (____

    Now I would like to ask you a few questions for statistical
    purposes only.

16. Does anyone with a physical handicap reside in your household?

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. refuse   (____

17. What is the primary language spoken in your household?

    1. English
    2. Spanish
    3. Chinese
    4. Portugeuse
    5. other
    6. refuse   (____

18. Which of the following racial categories best describe you?

    1. Black
    2. White
    3. Hispanic
    4. Oriental
    5. other
    6. refuse   (____

19. Do you have access to a car for your transportation needs?

    1. yes
    2. no
    3. refuse   (___)

20. Are you within walking distance to a neighborhood park?

    1. yes
    2. no   (___)

21. Do you own or rent your home?

    1. own
    2. rent
    3. refuse   (___)

22. How many years have you lived in Boston?

    _____   (___)

23. How many years have you lived at your current address?

    _____   (___)

24. Which of the following categories best applies to your
    household?

    1. one person household
    2. couple without children
    3. couple with children at home
    4. one parent with child/children
    5. couple with no children at home
    6. unrelated persons sharing a residence.   (___)

25. Into which age category do you fall?

    1. 18 - 24
    2. 25 - 34
    3. 35 - 49
    4. 50 - 64
    5. 65 +
    6. refused   (___)

26. Please estimate the total yearly income for your entire
    household. That is, the combined income of everyone living
    in your household who is working or receiving outside income.
    Into which of the broad categories would it fall?

    1. under $7,000
    2. $ 7,000 to $10,000
    3. $11,000 to $15,000
    4. $16,000 to $25,000
    5. $26,000 to $30,00
    6. $30,000 or over
    7. don't know
    8. refused   (____)

27. Sex of respondent.

    1. male
    2. female   (____)

    Thank you very much.

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