

Female Assistant City Managers and Department Directors in Texas
Cities: Describing Employment and Work Patterns and how they
Compare to Career Aspirations and Work-Related Attitudes

By

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About the Author

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Abstract

Purpose: Only 13% of city manager positions in the United States are filled by women, a concerning statistic at a time when the issues of gender equality and equal rights are garnering considerable attention. The purpose of this research is to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and describe how these patterns compare to their career aspirations and work-related attitudes. These positions are included in this research because they usually immediately precede the position of city manager. Insight collected from women in these positions of leadership may have important implications for city management and municipal government as a whole.

Method: This study is modeled after Janet Walsh's 2012 study of the career aspirations and progression of women in law firms. The law profession, similarly to municipal government, is characterized by disproportionate representation of women at the highest firm-level position of partner. Through an electronic survey, this research examines the demographic characteristics and circumstances, employment characteristics and work patterns and arrangements of female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities. Respondents also answered questions about their work-related attitudes in order to glean some insight into what drives their career aspirations and progression. This research identified 71 female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities, whose contact information was listed in the Texas City Management Association online membership directory. 37 surveys were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 52%.

Findings: This research revealed some of the multitude of factors that play a role in the forming of work-related attitudes and career aspirations of female assistant city managers and department

directors in Texas municipalities. Insight was gained into the demands encountered by women in these positions, the struggles they face working in a male-dominated field, the problems that arise with trying to balance work and family lives, and their career aspirations. One major takeaway from this research was the importance of mentorship as a way to ensure success as a female in the profession. Many respondents highlighted the importance of both having a mentor at some point in their careers and being a mentor to up-and-coming professionals. Another significant finding of this study was that 59% of respondents had interest in becoming a city manager. Though this is a promising statistic, there are still 41% that do not have interest in becoming a city manager, opening the door to questions of how this relates to the percentage of women in the field that actually become city managers. Finally, and perhaps the most important takeaway from this research is that this group of highly educated and experienced women that are currently serving Texas municipalities have prepared themselves to excel at their current jobs, and many have also prepared themselves to take a city management position in the future.

Chapter I: Introduction

The field of public administration has traditionally been characterized by male membership in the highest levels of the profession. According to a 2015 article by Heidi Voorhees and Rachel Lange-Skaggs, 34% of assistant city manager positions and 30% of department director positions in U.S. cities are held by women (p.7). Further, only 13% of city manager/administrator positions are filled by women, a statistic that has remained unchanged since the early 1980s (p. 7). The slow pace of change in municipal government leadership is beginning to garner attention from various organizations including the International City/County Management Association, an influential voice in municipal government leadership today.

Following are three profiles of women who have devoted their careers to the profession of city management. These women are prime examples of female success stories in the male-dominated field of municipal government.

Spotlight: Women in City Management

Sheryl Sculley – Past City Manager, City of San Antonio

Sheryl Sculley served as City Manager of San Antonio, Texas from 2005 to 2019. Her previous work experience includes serving as Assistant City Manager of the City of Phoenix, Arizona for 16 years and as City Manager of Kalamazoo, Michigan. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and Journalism from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana and a Master of Public Administration Degree from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Sheryl worked her way up from research writer for the City of Kalamazoo to the first female City



Manager of San Antonio where she oversaw a city of 12,000 employees and a budget of over \$2.5 billion (UMAST, 2018).

Sheryl was an agent of change for the City of San Antonio. One of her most notable accomplishments during her career in San Antonio was leading the city to earn its first triple-A bond rating. Her very prosperous career in the City of San Antonio also included passing the City's largest bond project in its history (Wellinghoff, 2009). She is married and has two adult children, and is still living in the City of San Antonio. In 2019 she was awarded the 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Texas City Management Association.

Julie M. Robinson – City Administrator, City of Spring Valley Village



Julie M. Robinson was appointed as City Administrator for the City of Spring Valley Village in the Houston area in July of 2017. Previously, Mrs. Robinson served the City of Dickinson as City Administrator from 2007 until June of 2017. Prior to assuming her position with Dickinson, Julie served for four years as the City Manager for the City of Oak Point, a city located in North Texas. Julie also served the City of Plano for eight years as Assistant to the City Manager and head of Intergovernmental Relations and as a legal assistant in the Plano City Attorney's Office.

Julie holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of North Texas. She is active in the Texas City Management Association (TCMA), is a Past President of the TCMA Region 6 City Managers group, and serving on the TCMA City Managers of Tomorrow Task Force as a Manager in Residence for the University of Houston and is a member of the International City/County

Management Association (ICMA). In 2018, Julie was honored by the Texas City Management Association as the Mentor of the Year. Julie is currently serving as the first Statewide President of Texas Women Leading Government.

Outside the realm of city management, Julie is involved in several civic organizations. She is a past member and Paul Harris Fellow of the Dickinson Rotary Club, Past Chairman and Committeeman of the Premium Seating Committee of the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo™, and an Advisory Board Member for M. I. Lewis Social Service Center in Dickinson. Julie is passionate about serving as a patient advocate for cancer patients.

Karen Daly – ICMA Mountain Plains Regional Director

Karen Daly is the first Mountain Plains Regional Director for the International City/County Management Association. In 2016, she resigned as City Manager of Hutto, Texas and retired after 31 years of service in five Texas cities (Arlington, Longview, Greenville, Sugar Land and Hutto). She began her career as an intern at the North Central Texas Council of Governments, followed by service in the City Manager's Office in Arlington and Assistant City Manager in Longview. She



became a City Manager when the City of Greenville hired her as their first female leader. She served as an Assistant City Manager in Sugar Land and then became the City Manager of Hutto.

Karen's career achievements include successful bond elections, key construction projects, improved bond ratings as well as increased organizational effectiveness and positive organizational climate. Over the years, Karen has served in leadership roles in her profession

starting as President of the Urban Management Assistants of North Texas and many years and offices in the Texas City Management Association as well as numerous non-profits in her communities. She continues to coach and mentor young professionals. Karen has a Masters in Urban Affairs and a Masters in Social Work Administration. She is one of the co-founders of the Texas Women Leading Government movement and is a proud mom of two grown feminists and a mostly-grown husband who is a musician.

These and other successful female city managers, current and past, have set the stage for women today to progress to the highest administrative leadership position in municipal government. If these women have shown that women can, in fact, excel in the position of city manager then why are women so underrepresented in this position? Questions of education and experience, work-family life balance, fundamental differences between men and women in the workplace and “it’s always been this way,” are common explanations. What would those who are on the career path to becoming a city manager say about their chance, ability or desire to become a city manager? There is a gap in public administration literature in regards to the work patterns and aspirations of those that are nearing the highest levels of municipal government management, namely assistant city managers and department directors.

Literature has shown that there are fundamental differences between men and women in the workplace. Hakim (2006) asserted that “there is solid evidence that men and women continue to differ, on average, in their work orientations and labour market behavior,” due to differences in life goals and “the relative importance of family life and careers” (p. 280). Additionally, Fox and Schuhmann (2000) found that “women and men do in fact bring different voices to city management” (p. 618). This study aims to get an idea of what this means for women in city

management and obtain information about the careers of women nearing the highest rank of this profession, as well as give them an opportunity for their voices to be heard.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and describe how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. By obtaining information about women that are currently in the municipal government profession, important information about patterns leading up to the attainment of the city manager position, the highest leadership position in municipal government, can be gleaned.

Chapter Summaries

Immediately following this introductory chapter, Chapter II, the Literature Review, reviews the scholarly literature pertaining to demographic and individual characteristics, employment characteristics, work patterns and arrangements, and work-related attitudes in the context of female employment in high level municipal government positions. Chapter III depicts the survey methodology used to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and how they compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. An operationalization table was developed from the literature and specifies the questions contained in the survey that was sent to assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities.

Chapter IV relays the results of the survey used to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas

municipalities as well as how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. Chapter V, the Conclusion, summarizes the results of this research regarding assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities, relays their importance and implications for the field of public administration and gives recommendations for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the scholarly literature surrounding women in municipal government. It does this by first presenting a historical overview of women in public administration followed by a review of both the legislation and widespread cultural shifts in the United States that have impacted women's employment. Following is a brief description of the municipal employment model and career paths in this field. Finally, the categories used to describe the employment and work patterns and aspirations of assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities are developed.

Historical Overview of Women in Public Administration

Though modern public administration is considered a relatively new field, "people have filled positions serving the poor and managing cities for thousands of years" (Shields, 2017, p. 43). Women in particular have faced many struggles when trying integrate themselves and their concerns into government. Samantha Alexander (2015) asserted that "the emergence of women in government in the United States started slowly and obliquely, of necessity" (p. 11). An early example of female participation in public administration can be seen through their work in the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). The USSC, which was created during the American Civil War, acted as a vehicle to "prove women's ability and further women's rights" (Shields and Rangarajan, 2011, p. 40). The USSC was organized to combat the "unsanitary conditions in camps and hospitals threatened the health and safety of Union soldiers" (Shields and Rangarajan, 2011, p. 37). This was only the beginning of political activism for these women (Shields, 2006).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the United States experienced “rapidly expanding wealth, urbanization and industrialization,” attracting large numbers of migrants from the rural South and Europe and prompting a public response to this challenge (Shields, 2017, p. 43). Unfortunately, the response was “filtered through corrupt, crony capitalism/crony democracy” that caused many cities to suffer (Shields, 2017, p. 43). The field of public administration developed as a way to address this problematic response and sought to achieve “greater municipal efficiency through business practices and a healthier democracy by incorporating merit and expertise into personnel policies (instead of political patronage)” (Shields, 2017, p. 44).

Though at this time public administration was seen as a predominantly male domain and women were socially limited to work in the household, the women of the Sanitary Commission, early public administrators working in disaster management, continued being politically active, working for women’s rights and education and thus paving the way for the educated women of the settlement movement (Shields & Rangarajan, 2011, pp. 43-44). These women “address[ed] social problems that affected families, women and children,” (Shields, 2017, p. 45) and through their work in settlement houses, met the immediate needs of this group, and “sympathetically



Hull House, founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, the first settlement house in the U.S.

investigated the conditions of the neighborhood, identified social problems and organized to address the problems” (Shields, 2017, p. 47). This is now recognized as the early formal study of sociology in the US (Shields, 2017, p. 51).

The women of this time, including Jane Addams, a leader who is attributed with helping “develop and promote municipal housekeeping as an alternative model of city government” and “infus[ing] policy and administration with social justice concerns,” were, in essence, practicing public administration (Shields, 2017, p. 56). In her book, *Bureau Men, Settlement Women: Constructing Public*



Jane Addams, September 6, 1860 to May 21, 1935

Administration in the Progressive Era, Camilla Stivers describes a time in the nineteenth century when women were completely left out of politics in favor of their requirement to practice “republican motherhood,” an indirect participation in politics in which they “up[held] moral values in the home and prepar[ed] their sons to practice citizenship” (p. 9). This role evolved into what was referred to by women as “public motherhood,” and “municipal housekeeping,” in which feminine and maternal values were relied on for their involvement in important causes, such as abolition and temperance (Stivers, 2000, p. 9). Many women at this time turned to “activities directed at improving municipal services, ameliorating poverty, and calling for social and regulatory policies” while men focused on “masculine politics” and the businesslike aspects of public administration (Stivers, 2000, p. 9).

The field of public administration clearly developed in a gendered context, and despite early disunity, both males and females needed each other for balance and legitimization. In the early twentieth century, male and female municipal reformers collaborated on many activities, blending “‘feminine’ concern for social betterment with ‘masculine’ commitment to efficiency” (Stivers, 2000, p. 10). These differences in policy and career tendencies led to “men and women

organizing into separate professions- the men in public administration, the women in social work” (Stivers, 2000, p.11). Women’s early work as guardians of social welfare represents “public administration’s buried heritage, an entire panoply of concerns that the developing field, sometimes consciously rejected, sometimes simply lost sight of” (Stivers, 2000, p. 13). Many governmental programs at this time, as well as the “the development of an administrative state,” are largely attributable to women’s work in settlement houses and women’s clubs, (Stivers, 2000, p. 14), though these important contributions to public administration were often overshadowed by masculine businesslike and scientific ventures in the eyes of early public administrators (Stivers, 2000, pp. 16-17).

This time also saw gender equality issues unfolding on a national scale. According to Samantha Alexander (2015), at this time groups of women were organizing to fight for the right to vote and to work towards political and social equality, and “more women were entering the workforce, creating a demand for more workforce protections” (p. 15). In 1920 women were granted the right to vote through the passing of the 19th Amendment (Alexander, 2015, p. 15, as cited in Wilcox, 2008; Library of Congress; Progressive Era to New Era, 1900-1929). After this momentous development, women “continued to advocate for workforce protections” (Alexander, 2015, p. 15, as cited in Chopra, 2015).

In the mid to late 20th century five nationwide cultural shifts began forming the basis of female opportunities in the workplace and have shaped the field of public administration and all other employment fields alike. In her 2006 article titled “Women, Careers, and Work-Life Preferences,” Catherine Hakim talks about these historical changes in the labor market and society in general that gave and continue to give women new options and opportunities. The first of these historical changes was the “contraceptive revolution,” which, beginning in the mid-

1960s, gave women “reliable control over their own fertility for the first time” (Hakim, 2006, p. 287). This opened up a world of possibilities for women that could now plan and manage their lives and careers in a way they never could before. Another historical change was the “equal opportunities revolution,” which gave women “equal right to access all positions, occupations and careers in the labour market” (Hakim, 2006, p. 287).

At this time there was also an increase in the availability of white-collar occupations, which were more attractive to females than blue-collar occupations (Hakim, 2006, p. 287). Many government positions fall into this category, including administrative positions in municipal government. The “creation of jobs for secondary earners” was also an important change because it allowed those who “[did] not want to give priority to paid work at the expense of other life interests” to pursue those interests while still being able to contribute to their financial situation (Hakim, 2006, p. 287). Finally, there was a general rise in the importance of “attitudes, values and personal preferences in the lifestyle choices of affluent modern societies” (Hakim, 2006, p. 287). This has allowed women and men alike the chance to make lifestyle choices for themselves based on their needs, not based on what is prescribed for them by society. Public Administration has undoubtedly benefitted from these societal and cultural changes that have brought diversity and openness to the United States labor force.

There is much evidence of female influences on the development of the public administration profession. Yet, Camilla Stivers (2000) still questioned, “Why does public administration see itself as having germinated solely from the efforts of a particular group of well-to-do men associated with the bureau of municipal research, rather than from broader, more diverse origins?” (p. 7). She predicted that the significant contributions of women to the field of public administration “might yet be revived and moved to center stage” and lead to a reinvented

and more effective profession in the future (Stivers, 2000, pp. 16-17). Similarly, Shields (2017) pointed out that in the twenty-first century, the influence that the settlement perspective had on the development of public administration is finally being recognized (p. 44). This is a great win for the profession and has set the stage for women to make great strides in public administration in the future. Following is a brief description of the legislative acts that have had an impact on women in the workplace and play a role in female employment patterns today.

Legal Framework of Female Employment

The last 60 years have seen a great change in female opportunities and options in the workplace. According to Beaty and Davis (2012) “the legacy of equal opportunity for women in the United States has evolved from one of disadvantage and discrimination to one of affirmative action and advancement in the workplace” (p. 620). The Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 and the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act are the main legislative acts that have impacted female employment along the way. A discussion of the gender wage gap prefaces this section, as it is an important component and implication of women’s past and present positions in the workforce.

Before the first major piece of legislation in the equal pay fight was passed in 1963, there was a large gender pay gap in which women were earning only 59 percent of what their male counterparts earned in the workforce (National Equal Pay Task Force, 2013, p.6). Despite an increasing female presence in the labor force, and the fact that by 2013 women had “outnumber[ed] men in their attainment of Bachelor’s Degrees, Master’s Degrees and Doctoral Degrees,” (National Equal Pay Task Force, 2013, p. 6) women in the United States still earn only about eighty percent of what men earn today.

The original premise of the gender wage gap was based on the belief that women did not produce work that was as valuable as the work men produced. Additionally, there was a widely held notion that “women did not need to earn as much as men because they were not supporting a family as men were” (Kulow, 2013, p. 388). Though there are still remnants of this patriarchal structure that was once prominent in the United States, there has been a shift in culture.

Beginning in the 1950s, the United States experienced an unparalleled “feminization of the workplace” that has brought women to the heightened participation in the workforce that is seen today (Kulow, 2013, p. 391).

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 guaranteed “equal pay for women and men performing equal work for the same employer” and has been interpreted to apply in cases where jobs are “substantially equal” (National Equal Pay Task Force, 2013, p. 4). When this act was passed, “more men than women had graduated from both college and graduate schools” (Kulow, 2013, p. 394). This justified claims by both employees and employers that men were entitled to higher wages because they were more educated than women (Kulow, 2013, p. 394). Men were also thought to be more experienced in the workforce than women because women had not spent as much time as men had in the “employment pipeline,” and those that had were still less experienced due to “curtailed hours and/or leaves due to family responsibilities” (Kulow, 2013, p. 397).

The next major piece of legislation that related to the gender wage gap was Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This provision “prohibited employers from discriminating with respect to compensation,” and “applies to race, color, religion, national origin, as well as to gender” (Kulow, 2013, p. 416). This was another attempt to reduce the gender wage gap that had been caused by unequal and unfair compensation. With women earning about 80 percent of what

men earn in the United States workforce today, it is clear that progress has been made but parity is far from being reached.

Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce protection against discrimination of this kind. The EEOC was charged with "seek[ing] voluntary compliance and try[ing] to eliminate discriminatory practices through conferences, conciliation, or persuasion, and it was without power to enforce the provisions of the Act through legal process" (Grossman, 1973, p. 371). The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 amended the Civil Rights act of 1964 by "bringing state and local employment practices under the federal jurisdiction of the EEOC" (Grossman, 1973, p. 376). As an instrument for monitoring compliance, the act also established "employment monitoring studies" to "assess workforce utilization, to report on the actual distribution of women and minorities in the work force and to describe the affirmative action plans state and local governments intended to pursue to correct past patterns of discrimination" (Henderson, 1978, p. 234). The use and filing of standard EEO-4 forms with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was also mandated (Henderson, 1978, p. 234) and these forms are still required to be filled out by state and local governments today. According to Henderson (1978) the impact of the Equal Employment Act of 1972 "can at best be described as symbolic" due to "inadequate time series data, changes in the number and kind of reporting jurisdictions and the absence of questions on local government increases or decreases in employment capacity" (pp. 235, 238).

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 is another crucial legislative act that has influenced the position of women in the workplace. This act "provides employees the right to take leave for the birth of a child, medical or family care, and prohibits discrimination against those who use their leave rights" (Webber, 2016, p. 145). Though FMLA applies to both men

and women in the workplace, according to Webber (2016), “women use these benefits to a much greater degree due to social norms expectations that place this care on their shoulders” (p. 153). It is also important to point out that claims under this law are generally more successful than those under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signaling progress in the United States legal and judicial systems in the policy area of equal employment opportunity (Webber, 2016, p. 145). The Family and Medical Leave Act “broaden[ed] workplace leave rights for men and women and [began] to address critical barriers to full economic equality that stem from medical conditions and care giving responsibilities” (National Equal Pay Task Force, 2013, pp. 5-6).

These major legislative acts have significantly shaped women’s rights and opportunities in the workplace and have played a role in the United States’ approach towards equal opportunities for all. Laws and regulations, though important, are only one part of the story. Choices, aspirations and perceptions of employees are also critical factors that affect workplace outcomes, and this research aims to make sense of some of these important components of workplace opportunity. Thus, the legal framework surrounding female employment paired with the cumulative effects of widespread cultural shifts in the late 20th century have contributed greatly to the position of women in the workforce today. In this research, this is evidenced by the current roles that women play in the field of public administration. Following is a brief description of the municipal employment model and career paths in this field.

The Municipal Government Employment Model

This research focuses on the local government level of public administration, specifically municipalities in Texas. According to Williams (2014), “The purpose of public-sector management is to ensure consistency in the operation and fulfillment in the duties as it relates to

the enforcement of public policy as stated by law" (p. 87). The prevalent form of government in Texas municipalities is the council-manager form of government. This form of government has been considered "the most important innovation in American local government in the last century" (Carr, 2006, p. 673). Under a council-manager form of government there is a division between policy and administration, meaning that "all government authority resides with an elected body, but the responsibility for executive and management tasks lies with a professional administrator who reports to the elected body" (Alexander, 2015, pp. 29-30 as cited in Choi, Feiock, & Bae, 2013, p. 729).

In theory, in a council-manager form of government, policy decisions are made by the Mayor and city council members while the executive and administration functions are the responsibility of the city manager, who shares these functions among other employees (Carr, 2006, p. 674). According to Nelson and Svara (2015), "city managers originally served as administrative technicians who carried out the policy directives of city councils, but, over time, they became more involved in policy advice and community leadership" (Nelson & Svara, 2015, p. 49). This signifies that there has been a blurring of the line that once strictly separated policy and administration in municipal government. The manager's role as a policy advisor to the city council, and the level of acceptance and recognition it is given, varies from city to city (Nelson & Svara, 2015, p. 49).

The highest administrative position in a municipality is the role of city manager or city administrator. Other positions that are commonly seen in municipalities are that of assistant city manager and/or assistant to the city manager, and department directors that lead the various city departments. There are two main paths to the role of city manager that are described by the literature. The first and conventional route to the position of city manager is from intern in the

city manager's office, administrative assistant, assistant to the city manager, assistant city manager and then finally to the role of city manager (Watson and Hassett, 2004b, p. 15). It is also not uncommon for some time to be spent in the positions of department director or budget analyst when following this career path (Watson and Hassett, 2004a, p.193). Watson and Hassett (2004a) also note that starting in the office of the city manager is generally done after completing a Master of Public Administration degree (p. 193). The second route that is seen in municipal government today is directly from the position of department director to the position of city manager (Watson & Hassett, 2004b, p. 15).

Another important aspect of the career path of a city manager is the size of the cities worked for. In general, after gaining experience as a city manager in a small town, a city manager will move on to work for larger cities that pay more than small cities (Watson & Hassett, 2004a, p. 193). Moving from city to city is not uncommon for a city manager, as Alexander (2015) maintained that average city manager tenure was about 6.9 years in the early 2000s, and before that "5.4 years in the 1990s, 4.4 years in 1974 and only 3.5 years in 1963" (p. 34, as cited in Watson & Hassett, 2003, p.71). Though the average tenure of city managers was on the rise through the early 2000s, and likely still is, it is probable that most city managers serve more than one city in their careers with figures of tenure being this low.

Career Paths of Female City Managers in Texas

There are two well-known routes to the top position of city manager in a municipality. These include through the role of assistant city manager immediately before becoming city manager and the less-conventional route of department director straight to city manager (Watson & Hassett, 2004b, p. 15). There is also recent research directed at the types of career paths most

often taken by female city managers in Texas. Through resume analysis of female city managers that were currently serving as of October 2015, common career paths were identified (Alexander, 2015, p. 5). The most remarkable finding of this research was that “most female city managers in Texas fit into two of the four career path categories: Single-City Careerists and Ladder Climbers” (Alexander, 2015, p. 67). Single-City Careerists were classified as “spend[ing] their entire tenures in one city,” (Alexander, 2015, p. 43) and Ladder Climbers were classified as “city managers who move every four to five years following a path to larger and more prestigious positions in larger cities each time” (Alexander, 2015, p. 43 as cited in Watson & Hassett, 2004a, p. 195).

The other two career path categories included in the research, Long-Servers and Lateral Movers, were not predominant career paths for female city managers in Texas (Alexander, 2015, p. 67). Long-Servers were those that “remain employed as city managers in the same city for more than 20 years,” (Alexander, 2015, p. 39 as cited in Watson & Hassett, 2004a, p. 195) and Lateral Movers were “city managers who serve four to five years in smaller cities before moving on to manage another similar-sized city” (Alexander, 2015, p. 42) The fact that these career paths were found to be less common among female city managers could suggest that they “are not advisable career paths for women in Texas pursuing public administration careers” (Alexander, 2015, p. 67).

The following conceptual framework focuses on females that hold assistant city manager or department director positions in Texas municipalities because these positions are commonly held in the time leading up to a person reaching the position of city manager. This information concerning career progression of women in city management sets a context for the following framework, and particularly for the discussion of work-related attitudes and career aspirations,

specifically the desires of female assistant city managers and department directors to become city managers.

Conceptual Framework

The remainder of this chapter develops the categories used to describe the employment and work patterns of assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities, as well as how these patterns compare to their career aspirations and work-related attitudes.

Categorization is the conceptual framework that is used in descriptive research (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013, p. 71) (Shields and Tajalli, 2006). In this process, similar information is sorted into groups or categories that “provide analytic tools for examining the big picture by breaking it into component parts” (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013, p. 71).

The four categories that this research employs mirror those found in Janet Walsh’s 2012 article titled *Not Worth the Sacrifice? Women's Aspirations and Career Progression in Law Firms*, which will be referenced throughout the remainder of this research. This framework was chosen due to the similarities between what Walsh describes in the law profession and what is being seen in municipal government, specifically city management. In both law and city management, there is a large discrepancy between the number of women serving in lower organizational positions and those that make it to the top position of partner or city manager, respectively. Additionally, both of these professions generally require a high level of competency and experience for achievement of upper-level positions. However, there have been some modifications to this framework to tailor it to municipal government and specifically city management. One example of a deviation from Janet Walsh’s framework is the addition of “education” as an element of the category “Demographic/Independent Characteristics.” This was

added in because completing law school and the attainment of the Juris Doctor degree are required to be a practicing lawyer, while there is no similar concrete requirement to be an assistant city manager, department head or city manager, making it a relevant element of this research.

The categories in this framework are (1) Demographic/Independent Characteristics, (2) Employment Characteristics, (3) Work Patterns and Arrangements, and (4) Work-Related Attitudes. In the following sections these categories are broken down into different elements, and the scholarly literature on each of them is reviewed.

Demographic / Independent Characteristics

The first category is “Demographic/Independent Characteristics.” This category takes into account basic characteristics including age, marital status, presence of dependent children, adult/elder care responsibilities, years of experience and education. This section of the framework gives a basic idea of the demographic composition and personal characteristics of female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities, the group that is the focus of this research.

Age

Morton (2018) asserted that “Age is an important vocational factor affecting your ability to adapt to new work situations and compete with other people” (p. 189). Age plays a very important role in a workplace setting including in municipal government and city management. According to Alexander (2015) “a young employee of a large city does not start his or her career as city manager, he or she must work up to that position” (p. 44). Age has a lot to do with the

positions that are attainable to a person, as age is generally associated with more knowledge and experience. As part of the demographic characteristics of respondents in this research, age may provide insight into the composition of the workforce and values of respondents as well as influence their views on their careers and career aspirations.

According to Doress-Worters (1994), in 1994, 74.2% of women ages 25-54 were in the labor force, but for women over the age of 54, that percentage dropped to 66%, a statistic that was attributed to "workplace discrimination and disruptions due to elder care responsibilities" (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 601). More recently, 2017 Bureau of Labor Statistics data concerning the employment status of the noninstitutionalized population by age shows that 75% of women ages 25-54 were in the labor force, while only 58.9% of women ages 55 to 64, were in the labor force. For women age 65 and older, the percent plummets to 15.7% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017, pp. 1-2). These figures, collected over twenty years apart, provide some insight into the age composition of the workforce in recent history. In a 1986 study of newly promoted city managers, Barber found that the mean age of the respondents was 38.4 years old (Barber, 1988, p. 694). This falls within an age range that 75% of women, as of 2017, were still in the workforce.

There is evidence that age may influence job satisfaction and aspirations. According to White and Spector (1987), research suggests that there is a positive linear relationship between age and job satisfaction (p. 261). They argue that this is explained not by age alone, but by the idea that it is "more often a function of declining expectations and aspirations than of objectively better job situations" (White & Spector, 1987, p. 261). Therefore, White and Spector (1987) assert that at the time of their research younger workers were likely more satisfied with their job than older workers, but this is because over the years their expectations decline and their views

become more realistic (p. 261, as cited in Wright & Hamilton, 1978). It is probable that this condition and pattern may still be continuing today.

Lopata (1993) maintained that “although younger women are now more frequently committed to a job, occupation, or career outside of the home, it is the combination of side bets with which they surround themselves, rather than their age which has this effect” (p. 271). These side bets include education, occupational preparation and full-time involvement, among others (Lopata, 1993, p. 257). Thus, some past research, has shown that it is not as much age as it is the products of age, such as declining expectations, aspirations, and other “side bets,” that have explained differences in workforce values and patterns in the past. Whether or not these patterns are still seen today is a possible area of future research.

Marital Status

Though marriage is an element of personal life, not directly professional life, it still plays an important role in career choices and circumstances. The literature has described both the positive and negative effects of marriage on women’s employment. Among the positive effects of marriage are increased promotion opportunity. According to Cassirer and Reskin (2000), married women are more likely to receive a promotion than single women (p. 445). Marital status was also found to have no impact, and thus a neutral effect, on women’s hope for or expectations of promotion (Cassirer & Reskin, 2000, p. 454).

Among the negative effects of marriage on women’s employment are reduced working hours, career commitment and labor force participation. Sturges (2013) found that, in general, women work shorter hours than men, but this was especially true for married women with young children (p. 344). Marriage has also been shown to have a negative impact on career

commitment, suggesting that single women are more committed to their careers than married women (Lopata, 1993, p. 263). Historically, when combined with the presence of children, married women have also been seen to have a lower rate of labor force participation than single women (NEPT, 2013, p. 10).

Marriage has also been shown to impact careers in the field of public administration specifically. For example, in a 2012 study of MPA Graduates in Kansas, married MPAs were found to be more likely to be city managers than their single counterparts (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, p. 29). The authors found that “marriage seems to be a necessary ingredient in becoming a city manager” which is the opposite of the traditional business model “where family is at odds with careerism” (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, pp. 29-30). A possible reason for this phenomenon may be that councils are more likely to select family-oriented people or those with a strong family support-system for city management positions. Married candidates may also be considered as more committed than their single counterparts. This may give some insight into the effects of marriage on career progression and opportunities for promotion, as the position of city manager is the highest administrative position in municipal government.

Dependent Children

Having dependent children to care for has a great impact on a person’s workforce abilities and opportunities as well as the time they have to devote to work outside of the home. According to Voorhees and Lange-Skaggs (2015) women face many challenges when trying to achieve “work/family harmony” and often have to remove themselves from the market to focus on family and child rearing (p. 8). In the past women have been more likely than men to withdraw from the workforce for prolonged periods of time, spending an average of 11.5 years

out of the workforce during their careers while men spent only an average of 1.3 years out of the workforce (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 601). It appears that women often carried, and likely still do, carry a disproportionate amount of child rearing responsibilities, which contributes to the choice of many work-centered women to remain childless or to have children only to conform to societal norms (Walsh, 2012, p. 513).

Many studies have shown that parenthood has a significant impact on women's careers. Being married and having young children has been associated with women working shorter hours than their male colleagues (Sturges, 2013, p. 344). Because some have argued that working long hours reflects an employee's commitment to their organization, career and profession, decreased hours due to child care responsibilities may negatively affect women and their employment opportunities (Sturges, 2013, p. 345). Walsh (2012) also found that having children generally has a positive effect on men's promotion chances, but not on women's (p. 512). There is also evidence, however, that having children does not affect women's hope for and expectations of promotion (Cassirer and Reskin, 2000, p.454). Many women today are challenging societal and workplace norms and striving for higher positions regardless of their family responsibilities. Though having children may be independent of career ambitions, there is no doubt that the balance between career and family is important to women as well as men in all professional sectors (Voorhees & Lange-Skaggs, 2015, p. 8).

In the field of city management there is consistent evidence of dependent children and other family duties impacting women's careers. According to Aguado and Frederickson (2012) "the desire of women to become city managers appears to often be trumped by family choices and circumstances" (p. 33). In their study of Kansas MPA program graduates, they found that women were much more likely than men to cite issues of family and children interfering with

their careers (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, p. 32). Because there is a disproportionately low number of women in municipal government positions of power, any interruption or interference in their careers is a crucial element to explore.

Adult/Elder Care Responsibilities

In addition to caring for dependent children, caring for elders is another activity that has greatly impacted women's employment. In fact, Covan (1997) found that in 1995, working women were more likely to take time off of their job to provide care for their parents than they were to provide care to their children (p. 336 as cited in Schenck-Yglesias, 1995, p. 42). A possible reason for this is that daycare facilities for young children are more readily available on a drop-in basis than elder care centers tend to be (Covan, 1997, p. 336). Caregiving has been associated with many negative outcomes for women, both occupationally and socially. According to Doress-Worters (1994), the time demands of caregiving, "keep women isolated in the home and reduce women's opportunities for employment and other social roles" (p. 600). Cultural capital, or relational skills, are also more difficult to achieve for women with caregiving responsibilities (Walsh, 2012, p. 512). In general, elder caregiving roles are "particularly and uniquely stressful and may limit social participation" (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 606).

When it comes to employment, caregiving responsibilities have been cited as one of the foremost reasons that women take extended periods of time away from the labor force (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 601). In fact, Covan (1997) found that, "12% of the women in the United States who are employed outside of their homes have had to quit jobs to care for elderly parents" (p. 335 as cited in Greenberg, 1994). This was a significant portion of the female workforce at the time, and today these same women are likely experiencing repercussions from this break in

or early termination of their working years. They may have had to work longer or face financial and personal hardships later in life as a consequence. As was seen with having caregiving responsibilities for dependent children, breaks from the workforce and working shorter hours to accommodate adult caregiving responsibilities may signal lower organizational and career commitment than continuous employment (Sturges, 2013, p. 345). However, there is evidence that “employed women continue to meet both employment and elder care responsibilities,” (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 606) signaling a past resilience and desire of working women to meet both personal and work-related needs that is likely to still exist today.

Years of Experience

According to Morton (2018) “work experience” is defined as “the skills you have acquired through work you have done and indicates the type of work you may be expected to do” (p. 193). Williams (2014) asserted that, “often, important and influential positions are held by managers with many years of experience and time with the organization in the public sector” (p.88). As is seen in many professional careers and organizations, experience generally corresponds to employees advancing and obtaining more senior level positions. This has been true in city management since at least the 1980s, when a nationwide study of newly promoted city managers in 1986 found that more than half of the managers had more than ten years of experience in city management (Barber, 1988, p. 696).

Experience is an extremely important career aspect for both men and women. Because this research focuses on women in municipal government, it is important to recognize that women are often regarded as having less experience than men even if their years on the job or in the labor force are the same. In these cases, the value of their work experience is considered less

than that of a male with equivalent years of experience. Further, Kulow (2013) found that women are unable to accumulate as much experience as men due to “curtailed hours and/or leaves due to family responsibilities” throughout the course of their careers (p. 397). This may explain the perceived lower valuation of women’s work experience than men’s, though not all women take these leaves or curtail their hours. This exposes an extreme disadvantage for women in the workforce, even those that have been in their profession for many years. Further, for those women that do take leaves or curtail their hours due to family responsibilities, it takes them longer to accumulate equivalent experience than those that don’t.

Education

Morton (2018) defines education as “formal schooling or other training that contributes to your ability to meet vocational requirements—for example, reasoning ability, communication skills, and arithmetic skills” (p. 190). In recent history, increases in female enrollment in institutions of post-secondary education “have been the result of changing roles and expectations of women in society and a growing interest among women in professional careers” (Domenico & Jones, 2006, p. 4). Today more women are also “choosing majors that require continuous employment,” and thus are expanding their workforce participation (Domenico & Jones, 2006, p. 4). Education, though not an original element from Walsh’s framework, is an important element to add to this research in the public administration field. In general, specific types and levels of education are not necessarily required to be a department director, assistant city manager or city manager in a Texas municipality as they are in obtaining certain positions in the law profession.

Though not a profession wide standard, “very few individuals have made it to managerial status without some secondary education,” and because of this “a person interested in

management has only a slight chance of finding success at this level without some postsecondary education" (Williams, 2014, pp. 95-96). A 2014 study of mid-level managers in public sector agencies found that almost 80 percent of the responding managers had bachelor's degrees or higher, and 44 percent had master's degrees or higher (Williams, 2014, p. 92). This shows how much value is placed on education in the public sector.

Public policy and public administration are common graduate degrees within municipal government/city management. In Barber's 1986 study of newly promoted city managers, 82.5% of managers held graduate degrees, and of these, 78.8% were held in public policy/administration (Barber, 1988, p. 696). More recently, Nelson & Svara (2015), found that "in 2012, 70 percent of municipal and county top administrators reported having a graduate degree, with 43 percent reporting holding a master of public administration degree" (Nelson & Svara, 2015, pp. 56-57). This shows that a graduate degree in public administration was and still is a dominant degree among city managers and other top administrators.

In the past, lower rates of education were used to explain the lack of female representation at the highest levels of municipal government, but more recent evidence shows that women's education rates have increased dramatically. In fact, in 2006 women earned 59% of master's degrees in Public Administration, showing that this is not an educational issue (Voorhees & Lange-Skaggs, 2015, p. 7). Women are qualified, at least as far as education is concerned, for the high-level management roles in the public sector.

Employment Characteristics

This category explores the characteristics of various employment situations and what they may mean for employees and organizations. The elements discussed are current position,

department/functional area, mentorship status, organizational tenure, city size and the presence of a female city manager.

Position

According to the literature, there is more than one way to reach the top position of city manager. The conventional path to the city manager includes an assistant city manager position immediately preceding becoming a city manager (Watson & Hassett, 2004b, p. 15). The other less common route is from a department head position directly to the position of city manager (Watson & Hassett, 2004b, p. 15). Often, city size also plays an important role in dictating the ideal path to the position of city manager. In James Thurmond's research on Texas city managers from cities with populations greater than 100,000, he found that "the [assistant city manager] ACM role likely is more valuable than ladder climbing to obtain the city management job in a large city" (Alexander, 2015, p. 46 as cited in Thurmond, 2010, p. 229). In light of this information, this research focuses on department directors and assistant city managers, the two positions that are likely to precede a city manager position.

There is also evidence that not all assistant city managers strive to become city managers during their career. According to Watson and Hassett (2004b), "many local government professionals are considering the assistant city manager position as their career goal" (p. 16). This could be especially true for women who would rather forego the top job in city government in favor of devoting more time to other priorities such as their families (p. 16). If this is true for assistant city managers, it is reasonable to assume that it is also true for at least some department directors.

Department/Functional Area

The department/functional area element was not one that was included in Janet Walsh's study of career progression in law firms. It has been added as an element of this research because positions in different departments or functional areas have different characteristics and may also lead to very different career tracks in municipal government. In Barber's 1986 study of newly elected city managers, the majority of managers, 80 percent, characterized themselves as being in "administration" and the remaining city managers characterized themselves as finance (8%), public safety (0.6%), engineering/public works (1.7%), social services (0.6%) or other (8%) (Barber, 1988, p. 696). This gives some insight into what were considered important functional areas in municipal government in the past, and possibly which were more likely to lead to city manager positions (Barber, 1988, p. 696). Whether or not these statistics have changed in recent years merits research attention.

There is evidence that women are not equally represented across all departments or functional areas in municipal government. Leaning on the definition of the Glass Ceiling, which the U.S. Department of Labor (1991) defined as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization," (p.1) the "Glass Wall" can be interpreted as the barriers that keep qualified individuals from moving horizontally to other functional areas or departments. According to Reid, Kerr and Miller (2000), in the context of female employment, these glass wall impediments are seen mainly in "streets and highways, sanitation and sewage, utilities and transportation, police and fire," as these are largely male dominated areas (p. 39). Further, in 1998 Kerr, Miller and Reid found that "women are most grossly underrepresented in protective service jobs and, as a group, have experienced only modest growth in job share over time" (p.

566). This condition is still seen in many protective service jobs today, as women in leadership positions in these functional areas are scarce. Thus, functional area and/or department may be important factors to consider when exploring women's careers in municipal government.

Researchers have also explored other associations between the functional areas women work in and the characteristics of their employment. For example, Lopata (1993) asserted that "Women in financial management are especially prone to career commitment, possibly because the field has been opened recently and provides high rewards" (p. 269). Therefore, there is some evidence that an employee's functional area may provide important insight into their career path and work characteristics, but all functional areas have not been explored.

Mentorship Status

According to Fox and Schuhmann (2001) mentors are defined as "higher ranking, influential, senior organizational members with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to a protégé's professional career" (p. 383). Most scholars are in agreement about the importance of mentoring and that mentoring can "influence strongly one's professional career development and upward mobility" (Fox and Schuhmann, 2001, p. 382 as cited in Hale, 1992). In addition to these benefits of mentorship, Walsh (2012) asserts that mentorship can also benefit individuals by increasing their likelihood of receiving higher pay and more frequent promotions, and possibly by enhancing an individual's perceptions of their career opportunities (p. 520).

In the field of public administration, mentoring is seen as just as important if not more important than in other professions. According to Beaty and Davis (2012) mentoring has "historically played an important part in the professionalization of the Public Administrator" (p.

628). Mentoring is uniquely important for women in this field. According to Fox and Schuhmann (2001), "high-quality mentoring experiences" are an important variable in women's entrance into administrative professions (p. 382). There is evidence that same-sex mentors are preferred and are the most beneficial to mentees, but because women are underrepresented in public administration, mentorship is unfortunately harder to achieve for women than for men in this profession (Beaty & Davis, 2012, p. 628; Fox and Schuhmann, 2001, p. 383). Thus, the "lack of female role models and female mentors serve as an observable barrier to women's achievement" (Fox and Schumann, 2001, p. 383).

Organizational Tenure

Organizational tenure is defined as "the time that an employee has spent in his or her organization," and is measured by the number of months and/or years an individual has worked for an organization (Kim, 2018, p. 338). Another version of this term, relative organizational tenure, is an employee's tenure "measured in relation to the tenure of others in the organization" (Kim, 2018, p. 337), though most of the literature on public sector tenure uses absolute organizational tenure to describe this characteristic. There are many behaviors seen in organizations that are positively associated with organizational tenure. According to Kim (2018), "workers with long tenure have a greater opportunity to develop organizational commitment, organizational loyalty, and consideration for others due to their lengthy learning process" (p. 338). There is also evidence that employers perceive employees with longer tenure in an organization as more promotable than those with shorter tenure (Cassirer & Reskin, 2000, p. 443). White and Spector (1987) have also suggested that longer tenure may be one of the factors that make older workers more satisfied with their jobs than younger workers (p. 264).

Though tenure has been seen to produce positive outcomes for both employees and organizations, there is also evidence that is contrary to these effects. According to Kim (2018), "in their early days of joining a public organization, civil servants with relatively low tenure tend to be more willing to devote themselves to the organization, serve others, and work for the common good because they recognize themselves as newcomers" (p. 339). This suggests that as organizational tenure increases these positive feelings and behaviors may fade for employees in public organizations.

In municipal government, it is not unusual for administrative positions, namely city manager positions, to be associated with low organizational tenure. According to Watson and Hassett (2004b), the average tenure of city managers is 6.9 years, and was as low as 3.5 years in the mid-1960s (p. 16). Though the average tenure of city managers is on the rise, it is still considered to be low, possibly due to the nature of the position and the fact that city managers are appointed by and working for a city council. This may not necessarily apply to assistant city manager/administrator and department director positions in municipal government because they are not appointed positions, however it is an important consideration for those who aspire to be city managers. From another viewpoint, and as is discussed in the following section pertaining to "city size," there is evidence that larger cities are more likely to recruit and hire employees from within than from outside of the city (Watson & Hassett, 2004a, p. 197). For these managers, their organizational tenure is likely on the higher end of the spectrum because they have worked their way up in their city.

City Size

City size, measured by a city's population, is an important factor to consider in municipal government employment because both small and large cities have unique advantages and disadvantages. Sam Alexander (2015) asserted that "city size shapes what is expected of the city manager from both the community and his or her elected body" (p. 32). According to Watson and Hassett (2004a), small cities have distinct perks for city managers, including "the positive impact they can have in a smaller city," "the quality of life the smaller city provides," "the camaraderie they enjoy with the community and city council," and increased job satisfaction (p. 193). Those in other administrative positions generally have similar interactions with the public and are likely to see some of the same benefits of working in a small city. It is also commonly reported that, "in small cities the city manager is expected to be a jack-of-all-trades," (Alexander, 2015, p. 33) meaning that they need to understand and be knowledgeable about all the different aspects of municipal government in order to be successful. A possible downside to working in a small city is that "by their nature, small cities have fewer job positions than large cities, thus job positions in the internal ladder to the top spot are limited" (Alexander, 2015, p. 34). In general, small cities do not pay as well as larger cities, revealing another downside of working in a small municipality.

The literature has shown that there are many benefits of working in large cities. Watson and Hassett (2004b) said that larger cities are "likely have more opportunities for career advancement and allow access to further training and education for future top executives" (p. 17). This suggests that men and women alike may find large cities more advantageous than small cities if they are interested in furthering their careers. There is also evidence that larger cities are more likely to recruit and hire employees from within for higher positions in the city because

there is a larger pool of employees to choose from (Watson & Hassett, 2004a, p. 197). Watson and Hassett (2004a) believe that this is because “larger cities have more opportunities for career development and are fertile breeding grounds for management talent” (p. 197). These findings suggest that the best route to the top positions in a large city is through lower-level and mid-level positions in the same city.

In Walsh’s 2012 study of female career progression in law firms, it was found that “perceptions of opportunities for promotion were higher amongst women who worked in larger firms” (Walsh, 2012, p. 526). Though law firms and city government do not operate in the same manner, some connections can be drawn from this finding. Cities with larger populations typically have a larger staff to carry out city operations than those with smaller populations. It is possible that the same effect on female perceptions of opportunities for promotion could be seen in larger cities.

Presence of a Female City Manager

There is evidence that female representation in positions of power in an organization has positive effects on female employment within that organization. According to Walsh (2012), “[law] firms are more likely to promote women when they have a female presence among the partnership” (p. 526). The author found that the presence of female partners was “similarly influential in affecting women’s perceptions of their opportunities for promotion” (Walsh, 2012, p. 526). The reverse was seen when there was low representation of females at the partner level. The participants’ responses in the study indicated that “the underrepresentation of women in partnership positions created a sense of disillusionment amongst women regarding their likely future career trajectories” (Walsh, 2012, p. 524).

It appears that low female representation at the highest level of organizations is a self-perpetuating problem, and it is likely that law firms are not the only organizations that see this pattern. In a study of the University of Kansas Master in Public Administration program from 1980 through 1998, it was found that only 10.8% of graduates that became city managers were female (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, p. 29). Their hypothesis that “females are less likely to serve as city managers than males” was confirmed. Without female MPA graduates going on to become city managers, women who are in other positions in the city may be less likely to get promoted and more likely to have pessimistic perceptions of their opportunities for advancement. Many of these graduates are likely still in the workforce, and possibly still working in municipal government, today. Fewer women going on to become city managers at that time may be partially to blame for the low number of women in the field today.

Work Patterns and Arrangements

This category examines the characteristics and schedules of workplaces in regard to the ways that organizations structure their workforce, and the demands that are placed on employees. The elements described are full-time status, hours worked per week, job demands, professional activities, and availability of flexible work arrangements.

Full-Time Status

In many industries, working full-time means much more than just working forty hours a week. According to Hakim (2006), “Many full-time workers are actually on the job, mentally or physically, for almost 24 hours a day” (p. 282). For these kinds of employees, work takes priority over their family and social lives, and they work on a level that cannot be achieved by a part-

time worker (Hakim, 2006, p. 282). Many industries, including many public sector organizations, are highly competitive, and “the person who can devote themselves full-time and permanently to the job is far more likely to be a high achiever than the ‘dilettante part-timer’” (Hakim, 2006, p. 282).

Whether or not an employee has full-time status in their organization may have a great impact on their current and future career. Barnett (2005) found that a woman who works less than full-time “is probably ineligible for or less likely to receive promotions, other opportunities for advancement, and a variety of workplace benefits” (p. 28). Because it has been found that women are much more likely to go to part-time work at some point in their career than men are (Kulow, 2013, p. 399), women are more likely than men to miss out on these workplace benefits. This may partially explain the underrepresentation of females in the top ranks of organizations, including in the position of city manager.

Hours Worked Per Week

As was mentioned previously, “many full-time workers are actually on the job, mentally or physically, for almost 24 hours a day” (Hakim, 2006, p.282). Working long hours sends many signals about an employee to other players inside and outside of the organization. According to Sturges (2013), “in professional jobs, spending a long time on work is a temporal norm that is supposed to reflect commitment to clients, to the profession and to the organization” (p. 345). Sturges suggests, however, that this “also represents a form of management control” (Sturges, 2013, p. 345). Working long hours also says something about the importance an employee places on promotion. According to Cassirer and Reskin (2000), the more hours worked per week, the more important promotion was to men and women (p. 456).

Regardless of the intent of working these long hours, or making sure that employees work these long hours, jobs like this “do not generally appeal to women with children at home, and can rarely be made family-friendly” (Hakim, 2006, p. 282). This puts a large section of the female workforce at a disadvantage. Sturges (2013) said that “working long hours may be widely resented because of the effect it has on other aspects of an individual's life” (p. 344). Thus, working long hours may not be something that all employees wish to do, even if it may have a positive impact on their career.

There is also evidence that working long hours is viewed as more important for women than men because women need to work harder than men to establish themselves in their profession. In her 2012 study on female progression in law firms, Janet Walsh (2012) said “some studies suggest that, in order to establish their partnership potential, women have to demonstrate higher standards of performance than men,” evidenced by many factors including hours worked per week (p. 512). This conveys the idea that women have to outperform men in order to be considered as an equal in the workforce. It has also been shown that “the more hours women work, and the more commitment their work requires, the more their caregiving patterns resemble those of men” (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 604). This suggests that gender is a factor that can be “overcome,” and that “the demands of employment may be more influential than gender” (Doress-Worters, 1994, p. 604).

Job Demands

Many upper-level management jobs are very demanding, requiring employees to travel on business, arrive to work early or stay late, and work on weekends or on vacations. Walsh (2012) found that “around one in five women are work-centered and are thus most likely to

become high achievers in demanding occupations such as the law” (p. 513, as cited in Hakim, 2000, 2006). Extremely demanding jobs often involve “vast amounts of travel, sometimes long distance, frequently on an unpredictable time-table, and periodically for extended periods of time away from home base” (Hakim, 2006, p. 281). Thus, employees who are unable to dedicate their time to these demands may experience difficulties progressing in their organization and career.

The study on women in law firms revealed that, “about one in four respondents had strong aspirations to progress to partnership positions” (Walsh, 2012, p. 525). These women were “significantly more likely to engage in greater work effort, as measured by their work hours, job demands and participation in professional activities” (Walsh, 2012, p. 525). It became clear, however, that majority of respondents did not exhibit strong aspirations toward achieving partner positions. Hakim (2006) offers the explanation that “it is the unpredictable, stressful demands for overtime hours that makes senior positions less family-friendly and less attractive to women” (p. 283). This may be a possible reason for there being so few women in the top demanding positions of partner in the law profession and city manager in municipal government.

Professional Activities

Engaging in professional activities is a way that many people establish themselves in their organizations, career fields or industries. It is common for leaders in municipal government to attend events with different companies and organizations that they do business with, such as law firms, engineering firms, collection agencies and professional organizations. In the field of city management, membership in professional organizations are especially important for professional development and networking. These organizations often hold regional meetings and conferences and bring people from different areas of the state and country together to discuss

topics that are relevant to cities and counties everywhere. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which started in 1914 as the City Manager's Association, is one of the major professional organizations that city managers and other municipal government leaders join (Johnson, Peck & Preston, 2017, p. 186). This organization fosters professional development and communication through annual conferences and periodic meetings, maintains a code of ethics for members to follow, and in 2001 began a credentialing program where "members apply, take a knowledge assessment, pass review by a voluntary credentialing advisory board composed of ICMA members, and commit to ongoing education and self-assessment" (Johnson, Peck & Preston, 2017, p. 186 as cited in ICMA, 2016).

The Texas City Management Association (TCMA) and Texas Municipal League (TML) are also important professional organizations for those at the highest level of local government management. TCMA is "a local government professional organization for Texas practitioners" that municipal government leaders in Texas frequently join (Alexander, 2015, pp. 49-50 as cited in Texas City Management Association, 2015). TCMA is "an organization of local government professionals dedicated to promoting the highest standards of governance, service, leadership, ethics, and education" that provides various services to members including member education, services for members in transition, ethical guidelines and internship assistance (Texas City Management Association, 2018). TML is "A non-profit association which exists solely to provide services to Texas cities through legislative, legal and educational efforts" (Alexander, 2015, pp. 49-50, Texas Municipal League, 2015). These organizations organize events across the state where members actively participate in discussions, learn material that is relevant to the profession and create a network of professionals that they can call on in times of need.

Walsh (2012), referring to women in law firms, asserted that “in order to establish their partnership potential, women have to demonstrate higher standards of performance than men” including the number of professional activities they engage in (p. 512). Females in an array of professions likely experience similar demands as described by Walsh, making this another case in which it appears that women have to work harder than men do to join the top, male-dominated ranks of their professions. Walsh further notes that women with strong aspirations to become partner “experienced significantly higher job demands and engaged more frequently in the types of professional activities (for example, business or client development, attendance at meetings and receptions) that are deemed to be important for promotion to partner” (Walsh, 2012, p. 517). This evidence suggests that people, and specifically women, can’t aspire to achieve high level positions without understanding that participation in professional activities is a necessity.

Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements often allow employees to work in ways that better suit them and to devote time to other demands in their lives. Unfortunately, “family-friendly flexible work arrangements are never cost-free, and employers know this” (Hakim, 2006, p. 283). Flexible work arrangements benefit employees that have demands unrelated to work, such as caregiving. Caregiving is seen as a predominantly female responsibility, and according to Doress-Worters (1994), the time demands of caregiving, “keep women isolated in the home and reduce women’s opportunities for employment and other social roles” (p. 600). Because the expensiveness of flexible work arrangements makes them infeasible for many employers, women who would otherwise be able to manage their workloads may not be able to due to caregiving and other responsibilities.

There is also evidence that the availability of flexible work arrangements has an impact on perceptions of opportunities for promotion. According to Walsh (2012), female perceptions of opportunities for promotions increased when flexible work arrangements were available to them (p. 520). Thus, offering flexible work arrangements to employees may offer them a variety of benefits, but often at a high cost to employers.

Work Related Attitudes

The final category, Work-Related Attitudes, explores the scholarly literature on how people feel about their jobs, careers, and lifestyles as they relate to work. The elements described are career aspirations, promotional opportunities, work commitment, career commitment, balanced life-style career orientation and supportive work-family life/culture.

Career Aspirations

Career aspirations “represent an individual's orientation toward a desired career goal under ideal conditions,” and “provide information about an individual's interests and hopes, unfettered by reality” (Domenico and Jones, 2006, p. 3). According to Hakim (2006), career patterns and long-term ambitions differ between home-centered, adaptive and work-centered people (p. 291), meaning that not everyone will have the same aspirations when it comes to their careers or personal lives. For example, work-centered women are “focused on competitive activities in the public sphere,” and “family life is fitted around their work” (Hakim, 2006, p. 289). Adaptive women combine employment and family work without giving priority to either, and home-centered women “prefer to give priority to private life and family life after they

marry” (Hakim, 2006, p. 289). Considering these differing priorities, it is unlikely that these types of women would all share the same career aspirations.

Research on this topic shows that women are generally regarded as having lower career aspirations than men. Cassirer and Reskin (2000) said that "Women's hypothesized lack of interest in advancement has been offered as the explanation for their lower promotion rates and for hierarchical segregation" (p. 439). Walsh (2012) also said that it is “unlikely that all women will aspire to high-level organizational positions" (p. 513). In a study of University of Kansas MPA graduates, however, “A substantial minority of women (22%) tended to regard their gender as having held back their city management aspirations” (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, p. 33). The direct influence of gender on career aspirations seems to be unclear.

Promotional Opportunities

According to Bishu and Alkadry (2017) "most studies conducted in the public sector context generally report that gender is not a predictor of access to promotion" (p. 78). However, according to Voorhees and Lange-Skaggs (2015), "women tend to work longer to prove themselves before they seek the same opportunities as men" (p. 8). Research also suggests that women who are high achievers in male dominated fields, “are not readily offered special opportunities for advancement, nor are they likely to receive high salaries and other benefits” (Barnett, 2005, p. 27). The concept that women tend to wait longer before even seeking out promotional opportunities reveals the belief that women are less likely to receive promotion opportunities than men. And even once achieving promotions and reaching the higher levels in their organizations, women in these positions “pay a steep price professionally” (Barnett, 2005, p. 27).

Perceptions of promotion opportunities are also important factors to consider when looking at work related attitudes and outcomes, especially for women. Whether or not a person perceives opportunities for promotion in their position and/or organization “can affect the willingness of an individual to stay with a firm and to remain in their chosen profession” (Walsh, 2012, p. 515). In Walsh’s survey of women in law firms, the most important influence on perceptions of opportunities for promotions in this study was the “work-family/life culture of law firms” (Walsh, 2012, p. 520). Perceptions of opportunities for promotion were also found to be higher for women that worked in larger firms and when female partners were present (Walsh, 2012, p. 526). The way employees perceive promotion opportunities can have a considerable impact on an organization. According to Cassirer and Reskin (2000), “blocked opportunity reduces workers' promotion aspirations” (p. 439, as cited in Kanter, 1977). This can cause an organization to become stagnant and may have a negative effect on organizational culture.

Work Commitment

In the context of this research, work commitment is described as the “degree to which an individual is psychologically involved, with their work” (Walsh, 2012, p. 531). Being psychologically involved with your work can be described as psychological ownership, which is “a psychological state that an individual feels ownership of his or her job and considers it as a part of the extended self” (Wang, et al., 2018, p. 3). This is also closely related to job engagement, which “denotes the extent to which an employee invests the full self in performing the job” (Wang, et al., 2018, p. 1).

Some studies have made connections between levels of work commitment and other work characteristics. For example, organizational tenure has been studied as a predictor of work

commitment (Kim, 2018, p. 336). Other studies have also shown that, “the more important an individual believes work to be in terms of job involvement, work commitment and career identity salience, the longer the hours they are prepared to work” (Sturges, 2013, p. 344). Getting and retaining employee commitment to their work can make the difference between a successful organization and an unsuccessful one.

Career Commitment

In Walsh’s 2012 study of female career progression in law firms, career commitment is measured as “the degree to which an individual would like to continue working in the legal profession” (Walsh, 2012, p. 531). Many people have various roles in their lives that they commit themselves to. According to Lopata (1993) “a person can also be committed to a whole line of action we call ‘employment,’ or ‘career,’ as opposed, or in addition, to involvements in other roles such as spouse and parent” (Lopata, 1993, p. 258). The degree to which a person is committed to different parts of their life, including their career, varies greatly from person to person. Hakim (2006) found that men and women differ in their labor market behavior, and these differences are linked to “broader differences in life goals, the relative importance of competitiveness versus consensus-seeking values, and the relative importance of family life and careers” (Hakim, 2006, p. 280).

In the past, women have been viewed as less committed to their careers than men. Lopata (1993) predicted that, “American women's career commitments will increase in the future as more of them utilize education and job training both early, and flexibly throughout life, to prepare for rewarding occupations” (Lopata, 1993, p. 266). Whether or not this prediction has come true or came true by the point in time that this research was considering the “future,”

merits research attention. Some studies have also identified various patterns that have emerged relating to women and career commitment. Research has shown that “the more educated women who also obtained job training in the past are the most apt to have high career commitments” (Lopata, 1993, p. 266). Another factor that is associated with career commitment is having plans for future job training (Lopata, 1993, p. 266). Age has also been studied as related to career commitment. There is also some evidence that younger women are more likely to be committed to a career or job outside of the home due to “the combination of side bets with which they surround themselves” (Lopata, 1993, p. 271).

Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation

"Lifestyle preferences are defined as causal factors which thus need to be monitored in modern societies" (Hakim, 2006, p. 286). Having a balanced life-style career orientation means that a person wants to have a job or career that is integrated into their family life (Walsh, 2012, p. 531). This may be appealing to some employees but not others. In Walsh's 2012 study of female progression in law firms, it was found that "there is a distinction between choice and approval, between personal goals and public beliefs, between what is desired by the survey respondent for their own life and what is considered desirable in society in general" (Walsh, 2012, p. 290). Women today, and employees in general, are more able to make these distinctions and follow their chosen paths than they were in the past, due to employment legislation and widespread cultural shifts.

As discussed in previous sections, Hakim (2006) maintains that women choose between three lifestyles: work-centered, home-centered and adaptive (p. 289). The difference between these lifestyles is the importance and commitment placed on different aspects of a person's life.

Employees who lean towards home-centered and adaptive lifestyles may be more likely to seek balance in their career and lifestyle. Because family responsibilities have been shown to be more likely to affect women's career decisions than men's, it is reasonable that they would be more likely to have a balanced life-style career orientation than men (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012, p. 33).

Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

Walsh (2012) referred to a supportive work-family life/culture as the "extent to which law firms facilitate respondents' efforts to balance work and personal/family lives" (p. 531). This could be extended to almost any career path including municipal government. Family-friendly policies, which signify a supportive work-family life/culture, "are popular among many women, and make it much easier for them to combine paid jobs with family work" (Hakim, 2006, p. 280). According to Walsh (2012), work-family/life culture was the most important influence on female perceptions of opportunities for promotion in law firms (p. 520).

There is no doubt that the work-family/life culture of an organization strongly influences perceptions and attitudes within an organization. Aguado and Frederickson (2012) said that "the desire of women to become city managers appears to often be trumped by family choices and circumstances" (p. 33). More supportive workplaces, particularly municipalities, which permit and encourage employees to balance their work and personal lives may allow more women to reach higher career goals.

Summary of Conceptual Framework

This section explored the available scholarly literature pertaining to the different elements of demographics/individual characteristics, employment characteristics, work patterns and arrangements, and work-related attitudes in the context of female employment in high level municipal government positions. These categories supply this research with relevant information in describing the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department heads in Texas municipalities as well as how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. The following table (Table 2.1) summarizes the conceptual framework and links each category and element to the corresponding literature.

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework Table

Conceptual Framework Table	
Title: Female Assistant City Managers and Department Directors in Texas Cities: Describing Employment and Work Patterns and how they Compare to Career Aspirations and Work-Related Attitudes	
Purpose: To describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and describe how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work related attitudes	
Category	Supporting Literature
Demographic Characteristics	
Age	Morton (2018), Alexander (2015), Doress-Worters (1994), Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018), Barber (1988), White and Spector (1987), Wright & Hamilton (1987), Lopata (1993), Walsh (2012)
Marital Status	Cassirer and Reskin (2000), Sturges (2013), Lopata (1993), NEPT (2013), Aguado and Frederickson (2012), Walsh (2012)
Dependent Children	Voorhees and Lange-Skaggs (2015), Doress-Worters (1994), Walsh (2012), Sturges (2013), Cassirer and Reskin (2000), Aguado and Frederickson (2012)
Adult/Elder Care Responsibilities	Covan (1997), Schenck-Yglesias (1995), Doress-Worters (1994), Greenberg (1994), Walsh (2012), Sturges (2013)
Years of Experience	Morton (2018), Williams (2014), Barber (1988), Kulow (2013), Walsh (2012)

Education	Morton (2018), Domenico and Jones (2006), Williams (2014), Barber (1988), Nelson & Svara (2015), Voorhees & Lange-Skaggs (2015)
Employment Characteristics	
Position	Watson & Hassett (2004b), Alexander (2015), Thurmond (2010), Walsh (2012)
Department/Functional Area	Barber (1988), US Department of Labor (1991), Reid, Kerr and Miller (2000), Kerr, Miller and Reid (1998), Lopata (1993), Walsh (2012)
Mentorship Status	Fox and Schuhmann (2001), Hale (1992), Beaty and Davis (2012), Walsh (2012)
Organizational Tenure	Kim (2018), Cassirer and Reskin (2000), White & Spector (1987), Watson & Hassett (2004b), Walsh (2012)
City Size	Alexander (2015), Watson & Hassett (2004a), Watson & Hassett (2004b) Walsh (2012)
Presence of Female City Manager	Walsh (2012), Aguado and Frederickson (2012)
Work Patterns and Arrangements	
Full-Time Status	Hakim (2006), Barnett (2005), Kulow (2013), Walsh (2012)
Hours Worked Per Week	Hakim (2006), Sturges (2013), Cassirer and Reskin (2000), Walsh (2012), Doress-Worters (1994)
Job Demands	Walsh (2012), Hakim (2006), Hakim (2000)
Professional Activities	Johnson, Peck & Preston (2017), ICMA (2016), Alexander (2015), Texas City Management Association (2015), TCMA (2018), Texas Municipal League (2015), Walsh (2012)
Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements	Hakim (2006), Doress-Worters (1994), Walsh (2012)
Work-Related Attitudes	
Career Aspirations	Domenico and Jones (2006), Hakim (2006), Cassirer and Reskin (2000), Walsh (2012), Aguado and Frederickson (2012)
Promotional Opportunities	Bishu and Alkadry (2017), Lange-Skaggs (2015), Barnett (2005), Walsh (2012), Cassirer and Reskin (2000), Kanter (1977)
Work Commitment	Walsh (2012), Wang, et al. (2018), Kim (2018), Sturges (2013)
Career Commitment	Walsh (2012), Lopata (1993), Hakim (2006),
Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation	Hakim (2006), Walsh (2012), Aguado & Frederickson (2012)
Supportive Work-Family/Life Culture	Walsh (2012), Hakim (2006), Aguado & Frederickson (2012)

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter Purpose

This chapter depicts the survey methodology used to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and how they compare to career aspirations and work related attitudes. Using the conceptual framework an operationalization table was developed that specifies the questions contained in the survey that was sent to 80 female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities. Respondents answered questions about their demographic characteristics, employment characteristics, work patterns and arrangements and finally their work-related attitudes. The strengths and weaknesses associated with survey research are then addressed, as well as how subjects were identified for this research and the possible issues with the chosen method of subject identification. This chapter contains a statement about reasonably foreseeable risks and/or benefits to subjects that participated in this survey and the confidentiality practices used to safe keep information obtained in this research. Finally, the descriptive statistics used to analyze the survey responses are briefly explained.

Operationalization Table

In survey research, “the conceptual framework (categories) is operationalized through creation of the corresponding questionnaire item” (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013, p. 77). The following operationalization table (Table 3.1) highlights the categories and elements that were described in the Literature Review chapter and connects them to the individual survey items used to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities. For example, under the heading “Demographic

Characteristics” the category “age” is measured by “age in years” and respondents chose from “under 25, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 or older.” As another example, under the heading “Work Patterns and Arrangements” the category “Professional Activities” is measured by the “Frequency with which respondents attended professional activities out of normal work hours.” For this survey question, respondents selected from “never, occasionally, frequently and very frequently.”

Table 3.1: Operationalization Table

Operationalization Table		
Title: Female Assistant City Managers and Department Directors in Texas Cities: Describing Employment and Work Patterns and how they Compare to Career Aspirations and Work-Related Attitudes		
Purpose: To describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities and describe how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes		
Category	Definition	Unit of Measure
Demographic Characteristics		
Age	Age in Years	1 = under 25, 2 = 25-34, 3 = 35-44, 4 = 45-54, 5 = 55-64, 6 = 65 or older
Marital Status	Marital Status	1 = married/cohabitating, 0 = single
Dependent Children	Dependent children living at home	1 = dependent children living at home, 0 = otherwise
Adult/Elder Care Responsibilities	Caring for sick, elderly or disabled persons	1 = respondent caring for sick, elderly, disabled persons, 0 = otherwise
Years of Experience	Years working in municipal government	Years (#)
Education	Level of education achieved	0 = no college, 1 = some college, 2 = bachelor's degree, 3 = master's degree, 4 = doctorate
Employment Characteristics		
Position	Current position with city	2 = assistant city manager, 1 = department director, 0 = otherwise
Department/Functional Area	Current department if department head / functional area if assistant city manager	1 = administration, 2 = finance, 3 = public safety, 4 = engineering/public works, 5 = social services, 6 = other

Mentorship Status	Presence of a mentor	1 = mentored, 0 = otherwise
Organizational Tenure	Years of service with current city	Years (#)
City Size	Number of people residing in city	Population (#)
Presence of Female City Manager	Presence of female city manager in current city	1 = female city manager, 2 = otherwise
Work Patterns and Arrangements		
Full-Time Status	Works at least 40 hours per week	1 = full-time, 0 = otherwise
Hours Worked Per Week	Average number of hours worked per week	Hours (#)
Job Demands	Frequency with which respondents traveled on business	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
	Frequency with which respondents started work early	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
	Frequency with which respondents worked late	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
	Frequency with which respondents worked on weekends	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
	Frequency with which respondents worked on vacations	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
Professional Activities	Frequency with which respondents attended professional activities out of normal work hours	0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = frequently, 3 = very frequently
Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements	Does your job allow for flex-time?	1 = yes, 2 = no/unsure
	Does your job allow for working from home?	1 = yes, 2 = no/unsure

Work-Related Attitudes		
Career Aspirations	I am interested in becoming a city manager.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
Promotional Opportunities	It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
Work Commitment	I am psychologically involved with my work.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
Career Commitment	I would like to continue working in municipal government.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation	I want a career that enables integration of work with personal/family life.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
Supportive Work-Family/Life Culture	My current city facilitates my efforts to balance work and family lives.	1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree

Survey Methodology

Survey

A survey is “a standard method of collecting information on individuals through the questioning of identified samples of individuals” (Griffith, 2014, p. 180 as cited in Rossi et al., 1983). Through an electronic survey, this research examines the demographic characteristics and circumstances of individual respondents, the characteristics of their employment as well as their work patterns and arrangements. Questions about the respondents’ work related attitudes were also asked so that connections between different elements of the conceptual framework could be made. This survey was generated using Qualtrics, a secure, professional survey tool that is used at Texas State University. With this tool, personal links to the survey were distributed via email to each participant allowing for tracking of responses and the ability to send follow up emails to those who had not completed the survey.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are strengths and weaknesses associated with survey research. Surveys, though highly customizable and great tools for soliciting information, are prone to being forgotten about or not completed due to time constraints. Saleh and Bista (2017) explain that “in the last three decades, online surveys have become the predominant method of eliciting participation in academic research for its ease, quick response, and low cost,” but that a downside of these surveys are that the response rate, “is estimated to be 11% lower than other survey modes” (p. 64, as cited in Yan & Fan, 2010). Another common disadvantage of web-based surveys is “the [lack of] availability of Internet-connected computers” (Griffith, 2014, p. 189), but because this survey will be sent to subjects’ work email address this is not likely to be an issue in this research. According to Kuhlmann, Dantlgraber & Reips (2017) conducting research via the Internet has “brought about many advantages over widely used paper-and-pencil procedures (e.g., automated measurement, better precision)” (p. 2173). Given both the benefits and possible complications, an online survey is an acceptable option for this research due to the high volume of people that can be reached without high costs.

Survey Questions

The Operationalization Table (Table 3.1) was used to create the survey that was sent to female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities. Each element in the Operationalization Table is reflected in one of the 19 survey questions, some of which have multiple sub-questions. The survey allowed respondents to skip any question at their discretion. There are 12 multiple-choice questions, 2 of which allow for an “other” response to be filled in. There are 2 Likert-type scale questions, with 6 sub-questions each. In Likert-type questions the degree to which the respondent agrees with a statement is gauged, generally by four to seven

ordinal options, (Kuhlmann, Dantlgraber & Reips, 2017, pp. 2173-2174). One of these survey questions gauges agreement, and respondents were asked to select from four options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The other Likert-type question gauges frequency, and respondents were asked to select from three options: “occasionally,” “frequently” and “very frequently.” There are 4 open-ended questions that are required to be answered with numerical values. For example, “How many years of service do you have with your current city?” There is also one free-response, essay-style question at the conclusion of the survey. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Subject Identification

This survey was sent out by email to female department directors and assistant city managers/administrators in Texas municipalities. The first email was distributed on Friday, January 18th, 2019 and a follow up email to participants who had not completed the survey was sent on Monday, January 28th, 2019. A list of names, titles and emails was generated from the Texas City Management Association (TCMA) public online directory. A total of 44 female assistant city managers and 23 department directors were identified from the TCMA online directory. If the subject had a dual title, for example, “Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Director” they were classified as an assistant city manager. In addition, names of potential subjects fitting this description were solicited through professional contacts. This method identified 2 female assistant city managers and 11 female department directors. In total, this survey was sent to 80 potential subjects, 46 female assistant city managers and 34 female department directors.

Some issues may arise with the chosen method of subject identification. Not all assistant city managers and department heads are members of TCMA, so this is somewhat of a convenience sample. A convenience sample is “taking whoever is eligible to complete the survey” (Griffith, 2014, p. 188). Further, there are more members of TCMA that are assistant city managers than that are department directors. Thus, it is likely that more assistant city managers than department directors will be represented in this research. Second, soliciting names from professional contacts, resembling snowball sampling, “though convenient and sometimes the best way to yield responses, doesn’t come without flaws” (Griffith, Morris and Thakar, 2016, p. 774). The chance of getting a sample that is completely representative of the population is low as “spatial autocorrelation is a fundamental concept associated with georeferenced data,” which refers to the “tendency for similar (or dissimilar) attribute values (e.g., household income, demographics, and perceptions) to cluster in geographic space when portrayed by a map” (Griffith, Morris and Thakar, 2016, p. 774). Therefore, subjects identified in this manner are likely to be geographically clustered around certain areas and are not representative of the state of Texas.

Human Subjects Protection

The proposal for this research went through the Texas State Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and was designated exempt from full review. The documentation of this designation and approval is in Appendix A. This research employs a survey in which participation is voluntary, and no penalty or loss of benefits will be assessed for refusal to participate. Subjects had the right to discontinue participation at any time or skip any survey questions at their discretion. There was no compensation involved for participation in this

study. With that being said, there are no foreseeable risks outside daily activity that may be presented to the participants as a result of taking part in this study.

Participants in this study are contributing to the body of research in the field of public administration and more specifically municipal government and female employment in assistant city manager/administrator and department director positions in Texas municipalities. This descriptive research provides insight in to the employment and work patterns characterizing females in these positions, as well as how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. This research provides public administrators with the knowledge of these characteristics and patterns and may give some insight into the reasons that there are so few women in the position of city manager in Texas municipalities.

The data collected will be stored on a USB drive kept in a drawer labeled "Student Research Records on Human Subjects" in a locked filing cabinet in the secure records room of the Department of Political Science. The room, which is located in room 358 of the Undergraduate Academic Center, is kept locked. The keys to the Departmental Records room and the filing cabinet are kept in the Office Manager's locked desk drawer. This information will be stored here for a minimum of three years. For further information about the research and subjects' rights contact Ashley Wayman at wayman.ashley@yahoo.com.

Survey Analysis

Once collected, survey answers were compiled and grouped so that meaningful information could be extracted from the responses. Descriptive statistics were used to make important connections between different categories and elements of the conceptual framework. Tables are used to provide important visuals for this research. In the next chapter, the results of this survey are presented.

Chapter IV: Results

Chapter Purpose

This chapter presents the results of this survey used to describe the employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers (ACMs) and department directors in Texas municipalities and describe how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. After addressing the survey response rate, the results for the four categories described in this research, demographic/independent characteristics, employment characteristics, work patterns and arrangements and work-related attitudes are presented as well as the qualitative themes that were found in the open-ended responses relating to each of the categories. Following is a section comparing various characteristics of respondents with their work-related attitudes, as well as a section about other notable concepts and patterns found in the open-ended responses. All percentages presented in tables are displayed as integers resulting in some total figures appearing to be greater than or less than 100%.

Response Rate

This survey was sent to 80 potential subjects, 46 female ACMs and 34 female department directors. 5 emails to ACMs and 3 emails to department came back undeliverable. Additionally, one email to a department director produced an automatic response stating that they were no longer employed in that position. In total, 41 ACMs were successfully emailed and 30 department directors were successfully emailed, for a grand total of 71 potential subjects. Of those, 24 ACMs responded (a 58% response rate) and 13 department directors responded (a 43% response rate), for a grand total of 37 respondents, a 52% response rate. The following table summarizes the responses to this survey (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Response Rate

	Assistant City Managers (n=41)	Department Directors (n=30)	Both Positions (n=71)
Response Received (Response Rate)	59%	43%	52%
No Response Received	41%	57%	48%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Demographic/Independent Characteristics

Respondents reported the demographic/independent characteristics of age, marital status, the presence of dependent children, adult/elder care responsibilities, years of experience in municipal government and education. The group of women represented in this survey, those nearing the highest administrative position in municipal government, are generally in their late thirties to early fifties. A large majority of them are married or cohabiting and about half of them have dependent children caregiving responsibilities. They are a very experienced group in their field, having an average of 19 years of experience in municipal government. A notable finding in this category is that this is an extremely well educated group of women, with the majority of respondents holding master's degrees or higher. The following sections break down the results of each survey item in the demographic/independent characteristics category. This section concludes with some examples of the qualitative themes relating to this category that were seen in the free response answers of respondents. The roles that spouses/partners and families play in the careers of women in these positions and how the respondents' ages affect their careers and how they are perceived in the workplace were commonly mentioned.

Age

Table 4.2 highlights the age distribution of respondents. The majority fell into the 35-44 and 45-54 age ranges. Half of the ACMs were between the ages of 45 and 54 while the most common age range of department directors (38%) was between 35 and 44. This result is

understandable, as the position of ACM is generally higher on the organizational chart than the department director position and is likely to be held by an older employee with more experience. No respondents in either position were under age 25 or age 65 or older, and the age group that was the least represented in this research was the 25-34 age group.

Table 4.2: Age

Age Range	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
25-34	8%	15%	11%
35-44	21%	38%	27%
45-54	50%	23%	41%
55-64	21%	23%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Marital Status

Eighty-eight percent of ACMs and 77% of department directors reported that they were married or cohabitating, totaling to 84% of respondents falling into this category (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Marital Status

Marital Status	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Married/Cohabiting	88%	77%	84%
Single	13%	23%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Dependent Children

When asked whether the respondent was caring for dependent children, ACMs were split half and half, with 50% reporting that they had dependent children at home. A larger percent of department directors, 62%, reported that they had dependent children. Though this could point to a lighter workload, and thus more chance of department directors having the capability of working full-time and taking care of dependent children, it also may simply be a result of the higher average age range among ACMs (See Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Presence of Dependent Children

Dependent Children	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	50%	62%	54%
No	50%	38%	46%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Elder Care Responsibilities

When asked if they were currently caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person(s), the majority of respondents, 84%, were not. Only 4 ACMs and 2 department directors reported having elder care responsibilities. Caring for elderly parents/family members was not nearly as common as having dependent children care responsibilities (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Elder Care Responsibilities

Elder Care Responsibilities	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	17%	15%	16%
No	83%	85%	84%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Years of Experience

Table 4.6 highlights the municipal experience levels of respondents, revealing high variation in years of experience in municipal government. ACMs reported having an average of 20.74 years and a maximum of 31 years in municipal government. Department directors reported having an average of 16.38 years and a maximum of 39 years in municipal government. When considering both positions, the average years in municipal government reported was 19.17 years. The most popular experience range for ACMs was 20-29 years and that of department directors was 10-19 years. This may indicate that the position of ACM generally takes longer to be achieved in one's career than the position of department director.

Table 4.6: Years of Experience in Municipal Government

Years (#)	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
0-9	4%	23%	11%
10-19	25%	54%	35%
20-29	58%	8%	41%
30 or More	13%	15%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Education

Overall, the group of women that participated in this survey are an extremely educated group. Sixty-five percent of ACMs surveyed (one respondent left this question blank), as well as 62% of department directors surveyed reported that they held a master's degree. Of the remaining ACMs, 1 had a doctorate degree, 5 had bachelor's degrees, 1 had some college and 1 had no college. Of the department directors that did not report holding master's degrees, 2 reported having bachelor's degrees and 3 reported having completed some college. Only 14% of respondents did not have a bachelor's degree or higher. The importance that the literature placed on education in this profession is clearly reflected in these results (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Highest Level of Education Attained

Education Attained	Assistant City Managers (n=23)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=36)
No college	4%	0%	3%
Some college	4%	23%	11%
Bachelor's Degree	22%	15%	19%
Master's Degree	65%	62%	64%
Doctorate Degree	4%	0%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*One Assistant City Manager did not answer this question

Qualitative Themes – Demographic and Independent Characteristics

The final open-ended question of this survey asked respondents to “Please comment on your career experience as a female in municipal government leadership positions. Your response may include but is not limited to, topics of career progression, career aspirations, work-family

balance, work schedules and females and leadership roles.” 17 assistant city managers and 8 department answered gave their optional statements. The varying and interesting results are elaborated on in this and following sections where they were found to correspond with the four categories of the framework. Those that did not necessarily fit into the four categories are presented in a separate section towards the end of the results chapter.

An important topic that came up regarding these independent characteristics was the roles that spouses and partners play in the careers of women in municipal government leadership roles. Some explained the importance of having the support of a spouse in order to successfully maintain work/family balance. One department director said that the challenges of working extra hours outside of the scheduled 8-5 can be alleviated by “having an understanding partner when it comes to home and kids.” Another ACM explained that “I have a great spouse who also has a demanding career. We make it work through mutual support and creative scheduling.” On another note regarding spouses and families, one ACM said that “I have passed up many opportunities to promote in other cities because of my husband’s career and raising my daughter in one community.” Family support is necessary, but there are also many considerations that employees have to make when it comes to how their career decisions will affect their families.

Another important topic pertaining to the demographic and independent characteristics of respondents was how age impacts the careers of females in this career path. One assistant city manager said, “One challenge I have faced is being taken seriously both as a younger supervisor and as a female supervisor.” Another assistant city manager explained that, “I have performed my duties exceptionally well, yet I am often viewed as a ‘little girl,’ instead of a successful, 30 year old professional.” Not being taken seriously can be a frustrating element of this job, and being younger than others in a profession, or at least being treated as such, presents unique

challenges to these women. This topic will re-emerge in a later section about being a female in male-dominated organizations.

Employment Characteristics

Survey respondents reported on the employment characteristics of current position, department/functional area, mentorship status, organizational tenure, city size and presence of a city manager. The functional areas and organizational tenure of members of this group are highly varied, and most Assistant City Managers and department directors reported working in small to mid-size cities. No respondents reported their functional area being public safety, a phenomenon consistent with the literature about extreme female underrepresentation in law enforcement.

The respondents place high importance on mentorship, though most notably in this category only a small percentage of this group are currently working for a city with a female city manager. This section concludes with some examples of the qualitative themes found in the open-ended question. Comments touch on the importance of mentorship and becoming a mentor to the upcoming generation of leaders, as well as the hope and belief that progress is being made in the number of women in municipal government leadership.

Position

As was revealed in the section on response rate, of the 37 survey participants, 24 (65%) were assistant city managers and 13 (35%) were department directors. A possible reason for there being a higher representation of assistant city managers in this research is that the database used to find participants, the Texas City Management Association online directory, has more members of this title than members that are department directors (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Current Position

Title/Position	Respondents (n=37)
Assistant City Manager	65%
Department Director	35%
Total	100%

Department/Functional Area

The majority of ACMs (63%) considered their department/functional area to be administration. This is to be expected as many cities, especially smaller sized cities, have one assistant city manager that is over general administration of the city. Of the remaining 9 ACMs, 6 classified themselves as “other,” 2 as engineering/public works and 1 as finance. The highest number of department directors (46%) selected the “other” category for their department/functional area. Of the 7 that did not, 4 selected finance, 2 selected administration and 1 selected engineering/public works (See Table 4.9).

The 6 ACMs that selected “other” as their department/functional area responded by listing multiple functional areas, signifying that they fell into more than one of the categories that were provided as well as some additional, more city-specific categories. Among the varied responses were human resources, public information, public safety, neighborhood services, finance/administration and airport. These responses point to the variety of authority structures used by Texas cities. Of the 6 department directors that selected “other,” 3 listed areas relating to planning and or development, 1 wrote in “Economic Development,” 1 “Parks and Recreation” and 1 “Library.”

Table 4.9: Department/Functional Area

Department/Functional Area	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Administration	63%	15%	46%
Finance	4%	31%	14%
Engineering/Public Works	8%	8%	8%
Other (Please Specify)	25%	46%	32%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Mentorship Status

Table 4.10 highlights the mentorship status of respondents. Seventy percent of ACMs and 62% of department directors reported currently having or having had a mentor in the past. One ACM did not answer this question. Though the majority of respondents were mentored at some point in their careers, 67% is not as high a statistic as it could be. Perhaps an objective in the near future should be to facilitate more mentorship relationships among women in these leadership roles and upcoming professionals in the field in order to make the numbers match the importance that is so clearly placed on this concept in the public administration literature.

Table 4.10: Mentorship Status

Mentorship Status	Assistant City Managers (n=23)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	70%	62%	67%
No	30%	38%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%

* One ACM did not answer this question.

Organizational Tenure

The average organizational tenure, or years of service with their current city, was 14.1 years for ACMs and 9.4 years for department directors. The average for both positions combined was 12.5 years serving their current city. The organizational tenure of ACMs was more evenly distributed across the different ranges than that of department directors. There was not a category that the majority of ACM's fit into, but 62% of department directors fell into the 0-9 years of service category (See Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Years of Service with Current City

Years (#)	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
0-9	33%	62%	43%
10-19	33%	23%	30%
20-29	25%	15%	22%
31 or More	8%	0%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

City Size

Table 4.12 summarizes the population ranges reported. ACMs in this study worked in cities with an average of 40,910 people and department directors worked in cities with an average of 30,556 people. The largest city population reported in this study was 145,000 people, reported by an ACM. The majority of respondents (62%) worked in small cities, with populations ranging from 5,001 to 40,000 people. The next most popular city size, made up of 30% of survey respondents, was mid-size (40,001 to 100,000 people). Very small and very large cities were not as strongly represented in these responses.

Table 4.12: City Size by Population

Population (# of Residents)	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Very Small (5,000 or fewer)	4%	0%	3%
Small (5,001 - 40,000)	54%	77%	62%
Mid-Size (40,001 - 100,000)	38%	15%	30%
Large (100,001 or greater)	4%	8%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Presence of a Female City Manager

Table 4.13 summarizes the responses regarding presence of a female city manager. A majority of respondents (79% of ACMs and 77% of department directors) reported working in cities that did not have a female city manager. In total, only 22% of respondents worked for cities that currently had a female city manager. This is greater than the 13% of city manager positions in the United States that the literature, as recently as 2015, say are filled by women.

Because this is a small sample, however, and that this survey includes only Texas cities, this doesn't necessarily mean that this statistic, which has remained unchanged since the 1980s (Voorhees & Lange Skaggs, 2015, p. 7) is on the rise.

Table 4.13: Presence of a Female City Manager in Current City

Presence of a Female City Manager	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=13)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	21%	23%	22%
No	79%	77%	78%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Qualitative Themes – Employment Characteristics

Mentorship was perhaps the most mentioned concept in this category. The importance and reliance placed on mentorship was extremely evident in the free-response answers given by ACM's and department directors alike. Many talked about how having mentors throughout their career has been crucial to their success. One department director said, "I have been very lucky to have several very strong female leaders as mentors who have both opened the door and guided my progression through municipal government." The hope to one day be a mentor to upcoming members of the profession was also expressed. Another ACM explained, "I have had excellent mentors that have helped me navigate these difficult areas," referring to having to work hard to receive recognition as a female in municipal government, and that, "my hope is that I can be a mentor for other female professionals in municipal leadership." Some expressed that they had the pleasure of having both male and female mentors throughout their careers, but one ACM explained that "I have found that female mentors are hard to come by and often women are harder on other women than their male counterparts." Regardless, the importance of having and being mentors came through in these responses.

Just as the importance of having a mentor was prevalent among responses, so was the topic of being a mentor and supporting the next generation of municipal leaders. One department

director said, “It is also a strong priority for me as a female leader to support and mentor those coming up in the ranks and ensuring they are given the support they need to be successful in their careers.” Another ACM explained that, “I promote women, gender equality, equal pay, etc. throughout my organization. And I strive to give young women opportunities. That’s the part of my career that makes me the most satisfied now.” This attitude and corresponding action is and will continue to be crucial in the development of the young generation of professionals that will soon be leading our cities.

It is also beginning to be recognized that progress is being made in the numbers of women in municipal government leadership positions. One department director said, “The increase in female city managers in the last decade has given me confidence that I will not experience the glass ceiling so many before us faced.” Another ACM mentioned that “while many strides have been made for women in leadership positions, my current city has gone backwards in the numbers of women in executive positions.” This is a reminder that there is still work to be done, and not all municipalities have begun to understand the potentially remarkable effects of increasing female representation and leadership in this field. There is still optimism for the future, however, as one ACM explained that, “overall, women are excellent administrators and bring much to the field. I do hope that in the coming years, we are able to gain a greater number of positions in a leadership role.”

Work Patterns and Arrangements

Respondents reported their work patterns and arrangements, including full-time status, hours worked per week, job demands, their attendance at professional activities, and the availability of flexible work arrangements. This group of female assistant city managers and department directors are all full-time workers, many working far more than forty hours per week

on average, speaking to the demanding nature of these public service jobs. Working outside of normal hours is a normal occurrence for this group of women. The cities these women work for appear to be attempting to provide flexible working arrangements for these employees who devote much of their personal time to their careers. This section concludes with some examples of the qualitative themes that were seen in the free response answers of respondents. Popular themes of this category were the long hours that were required in these positions as well as the differing opinions on flexible work schedules.

Full-Time Status

All 24 ACMs and all 13 department directors indicated that they are full-time employees.

Hours Worked Per Week

As to be expected, given that all respondents indicated that they were full-time employees, there were no reports of fewer average hours worked per week than 40. The maximum number of hours reported was 75 hours per week and 60 hours per week for ACMs and department directors, respectively. On average ACMs worked 52 hours per week and department directors worked 48 hours per week. This question in the survey allowed respondents to enter a numerical value for the average hours they worked per week, and they were later categorized into ranges to allow the results to be presented in an understandable way.

Table 4.14 shows that the most popular range of hours worked per week for ACMs was 50-59 while that of department directors was 40-49 hours. Because ACMs usually worked more hours per week and even had representation in the 70+ hours per week category, it can be concluded that this position generally requires more hours of work than the position of department director. This is as to be expected as the position of ACM is higher on the organizational chart than the position of department and generally would have more

responsibilities. Taken as a whole, however, these numbers point to the demanding nature of both of these positions.

Table 4.14: Average Hours Worked per Week

Hours (#)	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=12)*	Both Positions (n=37)
40-49	34%	58%	42%
50-59	54%	33%	47%
60-69	8%	8%	8%
70 or More	4%	0%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*One department director did not answer this question.

Job Demands

This survey measured job demands by asking respondents how frequently in the past six months they had: traveled on business, started work early, stayed at work late, worked on weekends and worked on vacation. The results are summarized in table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Job Demands

Job Demand/Position	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently	Total
Traveling on Business					
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	4%	92%	4%	0%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	23%	69%	8%	0%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	11%	84%	5%	0%	100%
Starting Work Early					
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	46%	29%	25%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	0%	54%	31%	15%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	49%	30%	22%	100%
Staying at Work Late					
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	8%	25%	67%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	0%	23%	46%	31%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	14%	32%	54%	100%
Working on Weekends					
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	50%	25%	25%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	15%	38%	31%	15%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	5%	46%	27%	22%	100%
Working on Vacation					
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	46%	42%	13%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	0%	54%	38%	8%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	49%	41%	11%	100%

Most respondents reported traveling on business occasionally, with a higher percentage of department directors than ACMs reporting never traveling on business. ACMs reported higher frequencies of starting work early, staying at work late, working on weekends and working on vacations than department directors. Staying at work late was the most popular job demand for respondents, in which 86% reported doing so frequently or very frequently. Sixty-seven percent of ACMs fell into the category of staying late very frequently, which speaks to the increased job demands associated with this position. Luckily, the most popular frequency of all other measures of job demands, traveling, starting early, working late and working on vacation, was occasionally.

There was not one respondent that reported never starting work early, staying late or working while on vacation, showing that both of these positions demand work outside what is done during working hours, Monday through Friday. What these results reveal is that those in leadership positions in municipal government can expect at least some degree of working outside of normal work hours. It is the nature of the job. Whether this is because there is too much work to be done in normal work hours, there are too many distractions during the day that keep leaders from finishing other work or that their work is never really finished, these are highly demanding positions.

Professional Activities

Respondents were asked how frequently in the past six months they had attended professional activities outside of normal work hours. The results are summarized in table 4.16. Seventy-nine percent of ACMs reported frequently or very frequently attending professional activities outside of normal working hours, while only 46% of department directors reported the same. Department directors' answers were concentrated in the occasionally to frequently categories, with 69% choosing one of these two options. These results could partially explain the higher average hours worked per week reported by assistant city managers.

Table 4.16: Frequency of Attending Professional Activities Outside of Normal Working Hours

Title/Position	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	4%	17%	54%	25%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	15%	39%	31%	15%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	8%	24%	46%	22%	100%

Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements

This survey measures the flexibility of respondents' work arrangements by whether they are able to flex their time and/or work from home. Table 4.17 summarizes the results for flex-time allowance and table 4.18 summarizes the results for working from home allowance.

Table 4.17: Flex-Time

Job Allows for Flex-Time	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=12)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	79%	69%	76%
No	21%	31%	24%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 4.18: Working from Home

Job Allows for Working from Home	Assistant City Managers (n=24)	Department Directors (n=12)	Both Positions (n=37)
Yes	50%	38%	46%
No	50%	62%	54%
Total	100%	100%	100%

An example of flex time would be leaving early from work one day because the employee stayed late for a meeting the night before. Seventy-six percent of respondents said that their job allowed for flex-time, suggesting a relatively flexible work arrangement in this way, while only 46% said that they were able to work from home. A greater percentage of ACMs than department directors (79% and 69% respectively) reported being able to flex their time at work, suggesting that perhaps those in higher ranked positions in the organization are more likely to be given this benefit. However, it could also simply reflect the tendency for ACMs to work more hours per week than department directors.

A similar pattern was seen in the results for working from home. Only 50% of ACMs and 38% of department directors reported being able to work from home. This may indicate that this

practice is not yet as prevalent in Texas cities as allowing employees to flex their time, and that there is room for cities to improve their allowance of flexible work arrangements.

Qualitative Themes – Work Patterns and Arrangements

A strong, recurring theme in the free responses that relate to work patterns and arrangements is that these jobs often require long hours. Working extra hours during the week to get work done during busier times of the year, staying late for evening meetings and having to attend special events were mentioned as examples of the demanding nature of these positions. A department director explained that, “My work schedule is 8-5 Monday through Friday, but often stay late and sometimes the weekends, if during budget and audit season, along with the City Manager.” Another ACM described her job as “Rewarding but at times challenging with the work-family balance. Too much time, after hours, etc. is expected.” The idea that working long hours is expected of many municipal government professionals speaks to the demanding nature of these jobs.

Another concept that was talked about, particularly by department directors was flexible work schedules. One director mentioned that, “both municipalities I have worked with have begun to understand the importance of flexing schedules to allow for work/life balance and see it as a retention tool.” Another, less optimistic view from a department director was that “the city is fairly good about flex time in theory but in reality, it simply doesn’t happen,” citing that the reason for this was that the needs of small cities often make it difficult to take earned time off. Improving the flexibility of jobs in this career field may alleviate many of the pressures that women and men alike face when trying to balance their work and personal lives.

Work-Related Attitudes

The purpose of this research is two-fold. The results that have been presented thus far describe the personal, employment and work patterns characterizing female assistant city managers and department heads in Texas municipalities. Second, this research describes how these patterns compare to career aspirations and work-related attitudes. This section describes the results reported about work-related attitudes including career aspirations, promotional opportunities, work commitment, career commitment, balanced life-style career orientation and supportive work-family/life culture. These attitudes and ideas are the essence of this research, as they go beyond simply the current situations of these assistant city managers and department directors and take a deeper look into their personal opinions and insights towards this career field.

Interest in becoming a city manager is high among members in this group, though not as many of them may see promotion as a likely option in their current cities. These women are extremely committed to their work and to municipal government, and many of them plan to continue working in municipal government in the future. A large majority of this group seeks employment that allows them to integrate their work and personal lives, and many of these women feel that their current city does facilitate their efforts to balance their work and personal lives. This section concludes with some examples of the qualitative themes regarding work-related attitudes that were seen in the free response answers. Among the topics mentioned were the varying views on work-life balance in these positions, both the difficulties encountered and others that are content with their work life balance, as well as comments on whether or not respondents aspire to the position of city manager.

Career Aspirations

This research is focused on those nearing the position of city manager, the highest appointed position in municipal government. Respondents' career aspirations were measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, "I am interested in becoming a city manager." The results are summarized in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Career Aspirations - Interest in Becoming a City Manager

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	8%	25%	17%	50%	100%
Department Directors (n=13)	15%	39%	15%	31%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	11%	30%	16%	43%	100%

Sixty-seven percent of ACMs showed interest (reported "agree" or "strongly agree") in becoming a city manager while only 46% of department directors showed the same interest. These statistics correspond with the idea found in the literature that not all ACMs aspire to become city managers in their careers, and even fewer department directors have this aspiration. As both positions are concerned, 59% of respondents were leaning toward agreement, or interest in becoming a city manager. The open ended responses presented later in this section give insight into some of the reasons that respondents answered the way they did.

Promotional Opportunities

Respondents' perceived promotional opportunities were measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, "I am able to get a promotion in my current position" The results are summarized in table 4.20.

Table 4.20: Promotional Opportunities

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	8%	33%	38%	21%	100%
Department Director (n=13)	31%	23%	38%	8%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	16%	30%	38%	16%	100%

Assistant city managers showed more optimism than department directors did about their opportunities for promotion in their current cities, with 38% agreeing and 21% strongly agreeing that it was possible for them to get a promotion in their current city. Fifty-four percent of department directors were on the disagreement end of the spectrum in regards to this statement.

Work Commitment

Respondents' commitment to their work was measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, "I am psychologically involved with my work." The results are summarized in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Work Commitment

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	4%	46%	50%	100%
Department Director (n=13)	0%	8%	23%	69%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	5%	38%	57%	100%

In both positions, psychological involvement in their work and thus work commitment was extremely high, with 95% of respondents being in some degree of agreement with the statement. Department directors were only slightly more likely to respond that they were committed to their work than ACMs but this result is negligible with such a small sample size.

Career Commitment

Respondents' commitment to their career was measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, "I would like to continue working in municipal government." The results are summarized in table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Career Commitment

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	4%	25%	71%	100%
Department Director (n=13)	0%	8%	23%	69%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	5%	24%	70%	100%*

Just as was seen with work commitment, career commitment is very high among this group. Over 90% expressed their desire to continue working in municipal government. There was, however, more "strong" agreement with the statement regarding career commitment than work commitment seen in both positions, suggesting that women in these positions have stronger commitments to their careers than their current work.

Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation

Respondents' tendency to want balance in their career and their personal lives was measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, "I want a career that enables integration of work with my personal/family life."

Table 4.23: Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	4%	50%	46%	100%
Department Director (n=13)	0%	0%	31%	69%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	3%	43%	54%	100%

The results, summarized in table 4.23 above, support the statement that most females in these positions are seeking balance between their careers and personal lives. The only notable

figure found in this section was that department directors were more likely to “strongly” agree with this statement than ACMs. This could suggest that department directors are more likely to be oriented towards a career that enables them to integrate their work with their personal/family life. This question measured the desire of respondents to have this balance, and the following question focuses on whether or not they perceive their current city to be in support of this balance.

Supportive Work-Family/Life Culture

Respondents’ perception of their current city’s support of balance in their work and personal lives was measured by their degree of agreement with the statement, “My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.” The results are summarized in table 4.24.

Table 4.24: Supportive Work-Family/Life Culture

Title/Position	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Assistant City Managers (n=24)	0%	29%	58%	13%	100%
Department Director (n=13)	0%	8%	62%	31%	100%
Both Positions (n=37)	0%	22%	59%	19%	100%

Department directors were more likely to perceive their current city as supportive of their efforts to balance their work and personal lives, with 93% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement above. Though the majority of ACMs also perceived their current city as facilitating these efforts, 29% did not share this perception. This may point to the larger workload of ACMs compared to that of department directors and perhaps that it is just more difficult to maintain balance in these positions. In earlier sections, it was presented that ACMs worked more hours per week on average than department directors, and were also more likely to spend more of their time attending professional activities outside of normal work hours. These factors combined with

the patterns seen in the job demands section, where ACMs expressed that they generally have higher career demands than department directors, may be a factor in the lowered perception of support from their city in balancing their careers and personal lives.

Qualitative Themes – Work-Related Attitudes

Work-life balance was mentioned by a large number of respondents to the free response question. For the most part, respondents spoke about the difficulties they had experienced while trying to find work/life balance in their leadership positions. One ACM explained that “there is also no such thing as work-family balance, at least not in a 50/50 format.” She spoke about how her workload ebbs and flows, and sometimes she is able to take more time off and others she must work more. One department director explained that city government leadership “involves a lot of meetings, work related events outside of 8-5; this can be challenging for work life balance.” Another ACM also mentioned that she felt like “it is more difficult for women in the profession to find work/life balance if they choose to have children.”

Some respondents commented, however, that their careers were friendly to having a favorable work-life balance. One ACM said that her current city allowed her an acceptable work-life balance, and another department director even spoke about how her work schedule mostly coincided with her young children’s school schedules, allowing for work-life balance. It seems that these women, and likely other employees in general, all have their own ideas of what constitutes a comfortable work-life balance and what arrangements best suit them. A woman with children likely seeks something a little different in her work-life balance than perhaps a young professional who does not yet have children to consider. An ACM had a very positive comment about choosing to be the professional that promotes work-life balance in her organization. She explained, “I have 3 kids and have been married to the same man for 21 years.

I've had to be intentional about work/life balance and fostering an environment that promotes that for women and men in the organizations I have worked.” It is important to see that it is the people within organizations, particularly those in positions of authority, that truly work to define the culture of the organization and the work-life balance of their members. It is not something that simply happens, but rather must be something that cities intentionally work towards.

Another topic of interest in this category was whether or not the respondents had career aspirations to become a city manager. Of those that talked about this in their response, two said that they wanted to be a city manager in the future and one said that she did not. An ACM that had worked her way up from the position of city secretary to deputy city manager in the same city was optimistic about her future plans. She explained that she gained a large array of knowledge because she was always eager to learn in her positions, and said that the next career step for her would be city manager. Another ACM had a bit of a different view, explaining that “My career goal was to be an HR Director. After serving as the HR Director for 15 years, I was promoted to ACM. I have no desire to be a City Manager here or anywhere. I have enjoyed a wonderful career in a wonderful city when I have always felt valued and appreciated.” She further explained that the nature of the jobs she had held would sometimes interfere with adequate work/life balance. The department director that spoke on this topic said that some years down the road city manager would be the career step for her. She explained that she first wanted to become an expert at her current job and be able to share her experience through mentoring others. There were widely varying opinions on this topic and there was clearly no one-size-fits-all response that justified a respondent’s career aspirations.

Comparing Characteristics to Work-Related Attitudes

Some of the characteristics that were reported in this research had interesting connections to the work-related attitudes that respondents reported. The following sections examine and discuss how the demographic characteristics, employment characteristics and work patterns and arrangements reported by respondents are connected to their work-related attitudes, including career aspirations, promotional opportunities, work commitment, career commitment, balanced life-style career orientation and supportive work-family life/culture. Each table shows the statement and response options (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) associated with a specific work-related attitude along the vertical axis and the characteristic that it is being compared to along the horizontal axis. The tables showcase the percentage of respondents that answered with each of the four responses. Below each table are two more rows labeled “disagreement,” and “agreement,” which combine the percentages of respondents that reported one of the two levels of disagreement or the two levels of agreement. This is done to simplify the data and allow generalizations to be made about the results presented in each table. Just as in previous sections, all percentages presented in tables are displayed as integers resulting in some total figures appearing to be greater than or less than 100%.

Impacts on Career Aspirations

There were various notable connections found between different characteristics in this study and career aspirations, which were measured by the respondents’ interest in becoming a city manager. The following tables and discussions depict how age, years of experience, education, mentorship status, organizational tenure, city size and presence of a female city manager were seen to impact career aspirations.

Table 4.25: Age and Career Aspirations

		Age Range:				Total (n=37)
		25-34 (n=4)	35-44 (n=10)	45-54 (n=15)	55-64 (n=8)	
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	7%	38%	11%
	Disagree	0%	20%	33%	50%	30%
	Agree	50%	10%	20%	0%	16%
	Strongly Agree	50%	70%	40%	13%	43%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		0%	20%	40%	88%	41%
Agreement		100%	80%	60%	13%	59%

Table 4.25 summarizes the connections between age and interest in becoming a city manager. Caution should be taken in cases when the number of respondents in a category is less than ten, as is the case for the 25-34 age group and the 55-64 age group. With that in mind, as the age ranges of respondents increased, interest in becoming a city manager decreased. The age group with the lowest interest in becoming a city manager is the 55-64 age group, with 88% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement “I am interested in becoming a city manager.” These results may imply that those in the higher age groups would likely already be in a city management position if they were interested.

Table 4.26: Years of Experience and Career Aspirations

		Years of Experience in Municipal Government				Total (n=37)
		0-9 Years (n=4)	10-19 Years (n=13)	20-29 Years (n=15)	30 or More Years (n=5)	
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	25%	0%	7%	40%	11%
	Disagree	0%	31%	27%	60%	30%
	Agree	25%	15%	20%	0%	16%
	Strongly Agree	50%	54%	47%	0%	43%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		25%	31%	33%	100%	41%
Agreement		75%	69%	67%	0%	59%

Table 4.26 summarizes the connection found between years of experience and career aspirations. This is another case in which a low number of respondents in a category, particularly the 0-9 years and 30 or more years of experience categories, necessitates caution when analyzing possible associations. The group with the highest interest in becoming a city manager was those with 0-9 years of experience in municipal government. This may reflect the idea from the literature that younger employees, or employees that are starting just starting out in their careers are likely more satisfied with their careers and jobs than older employees, but only if looked at from the viewpoint that city manager is the next step in this career path. If the current job is the extent of a person's career aspiration then this may signal a higher degree of career satisfaction. As years of experience increased, interest in becoming a city manager decreased. These results may imply, similarly to what was seen for age and career aspirations, that those with more years of experience in municipal government would likely have already been in a city management position if they were interested.

Table 4.27: Education and Career Aspirations

		What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?			Total (n=36)
		No/Some college (n=5)	Bachelor's Degree (n=7)	Master's/ Doctorate Degree (n=24)	
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	20%	0%	13%	11%
	Disagree	80%	43%	17%	31%
	Agree	0%	29%	13%	14%
	Strongly Agree	0%	29%	58%	44%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		100%	43%	29%	42%
Agreement		0%	57%	71%	58%

Table 4.27 reveals that education level seems to have a positive relationship with interest in becoming a city manager. No respondents in the “no/some college” category had interest in

becoming a city manager, though caution should be taken when interpreting this result due to the low number of respondents in this category. As the reported level of education increased (Bachelor's, Master's/Doctorate) interest in becoming a city manager also increased. This interest in becoming a city manager might be one of the major reasons that these respondents have gone on to further their education.

Table 4.28: Mentorship Status and Career Aspirations

		Do you currently have or have you had a mentor in the past?		Total (n=36)
		Yes (n=24)	No (n=12)	
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	8%	17%	11%
	Disagree	21%	50%	31%
	Agree	17%	8%	14%
	Strongly Agree	54%	25%	44%
Total		100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		29%	67%	42%
Agreement		71%	33%	58%

Mentorship did appear to be positively related to interest in becoming a city manager.

Seventy-one percent of respondents that currently have or have had a mentor in the past either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am interested in becoming a city manager” while only 33% of those that were not mentored agreed or strongly agreed with this statement (See Table 4.28). As will be presented later, those who had been mentored were also more likely than those that had not to have a positive perception of their ability to be promoted in their current city. These results point to the recurring theme throughout this research that mentoring has extremely positive effects on careers in this profession.

Table 4.29: Organizational Tenure and Career Aspirations

	Years of Service with Current City
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		0-9 Years (n=16)	10-19 Years (n=11)	20-29 Years (n=8)	30 or More Years (n=2)*	Total (n=35)
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	13%	0%	13%		9%
	Disagree	13%	36%	50%		29%
	Agree	13%	27%	13%		17%
	Strongly Agree	63%	36%	25%		46%
Total		100%	100%	100%		100%
Disagreement		25%	36%	63%		37%
Agreement		75%	64%	38%		63%

*Information for this category is not included to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

Table 4.29 reveals that years of service in the current city seemed to be negatively associated with interest in becoming a city manager. As years of service to the current city increased, interest in becoming a city manager decreased. These results may imply, similarly to what was seen for the characteristics of age and years of experience, that if these respondents were interested in becoming a city manager they would likely already be in a city management position. They also may not be comfortable leaving their current city but don't see a chance that they will be promoted to city manager. The age group with the most interest in becoming a city manager was those with 0-9 years of service to their current city.

Table 4.30: City Size and Career Aspirations

	Population of Current City
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		Very Small (5,000 or Fewer) (n=1)*	Small (5,001 - 40,000) (n=23)	Mid-Size (40,001 - 100,000) (n=11)	Large (100,001 or Greater) (n=2)*	Total (n=34)
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree		9%	18%		12%
	Disagree		26%	45%		32%
	Agree		17%	18%		18%
	Strongly Agree		48%	18%		38%
	Total		100%	100%		100%
	Disagreement		35%	64%		44%
	Agreement		65%	36%		56%

*Information for this category is not included to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

There was more interest in becoming a city manager in small cities (5,001 to 40,000 population) than there was in mid-size cities (40,001 to 100,000 people). Respondents in very small or very large cities were not well represented in this research and thus were left out of the results. In total, 56% of respondents that are included in this table were on the agreement end of the spectrum in regards to the statement “I am interested in becoming a city manager” (See Table 4.30).

Table 4.31: Presence of a Female City Manager and Career Aspirations

		Does your city currently have a female city manager?		
		Yes (n=8)	No (n=29)	Total (n=37)
I am interested in becoming a city manager.	Strongly Disagree	38%	3%	11%
	Disagree	13%	34%	30%
	Agree	25%	14%	16%
	Strongly Agree	25%	48%	43%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	50%	38%	41%
	Agreement	50%	62%	59%

Table 4.31 shows that the presence of a female city manager did not have a very significant impact on respondents’ interest in becoming a city manager. Those that did not have a

female city manager were only slightly more likely to show interest in becoming a city manager, with 62% stating their interest, than those that did not. This is another case in which caution should be taken in analyzing these numbers due to the small sample size of respondents with female city managers. In depth research into this topic, and possibly a free-response type question may give more insight into whether or not the presence of a female city manager impacts an employee's interest in becoming a city manager.

Impacts on Perceived Promotional Opportunities

Survey results found connections between the characteristics of age, years of experience, education, mentorship status, organizational tenure and city size on the perceived promotional opportunities of respondents, gauged by their responses to the statement, "It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city." The results are summarized in the following tables and discussions.

Table 4.32: Age and Perceived Promotion Opportunities

		Age Range:				Total (n=37)
		25-34 (n=4)	35-44 (n=10)	45-54 (n=15)	55-64 (n=8)	
It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree	25%	0%	20%	25%	16%
	Disagree	25%	10%	33%	50%	30%
	Agree	50%	80%	27%	0%	38%
	Strongly Agree	0%	10%	20%	25%	16%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	50%	10%	53%	75%	46%
	Agreement	50%	90%	47%	25%	54%

Table 4.32 summarizes the connections found between age and perceived promotion opportunity. Respondents in the youngest age group were split half and half when it came to whether or not they felt that they could get a promotion in their current city. Because only four

respondents fell into this category, however, further research would be needed to see if a pattern truly exists here. The next age group, 35-44 years old, was the group most likely to be optimistic about promotion opportunities in their current city, with 90% feeling that they could get a promotion in their current city. Optimism about promotion then diminished as age increased, until the oldest age group, the 55-64 age group, only had 25% of respondents in agreement about their promotion possibility. This perception of respondents could be related to many factors, including their confidence in their abilities in the workplace and confidence in their city based on past instances of who they have selected to hire/promote and how.

Table 4.33: Years of Experience and Perceived Promotion Opportunities

		Years of Experience in Municipal Government				Total (n=37)
		0-9 Years (n=4)	10-19 Years (n=13)	20-29 Years (n=15)	30 or More Years (n=5)	
It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree	50%	15%	7%	20%	16%
	Disagree	25%	15%	33%	60%	30%
	Agree	25%	62%	33%	0%	38%
	Strongly Agree	0%	8%	27%	20%	16%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	75%	31%	40%	80%	46%
	Agreement	25%	69%	60%	20%	54%

Table 4.33 reveals a possible connection between respondents' years of experience and their perceived opportunity for promotion. Low sample sizes in both the lowest and highest experience groups, however, signal that caution should be taken when analyzing this data. As years of experience increased, respondents were more optimistic about their ability to get promoted with the exception of the highest age group in which optimism about a possible promotion faded significantly. This could be explained by less experienced employees not feeling like they had enough experience to be promoted, those in the middle ranges of experience

being in the prime of their careers and feeling like promotion is likely, and those with the most years of experience feeling that they had gone as far as they wanted to go in their careers.

Table 4.34: Education and Perceived Promotional Opportunities

		What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?			Total (n=36)
		No/Some college (n=5)	Bachelor's Degree (n=7)	Master's/ Doctorate Degree (n=24)	
It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree	40%	0%	16%	16%
	Disagree	40%	43%	21%	28%
	Agree	0%	57%	42%	39%
	Strongly Agree	20%	0%	21%	17%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		80%	43%	37%	44%
Agreement		20%	57%	63%	56%

Education level seems to have a great impact on optimism for future promotions in respondents' current cities (See Table 4.34). Those with no college or some college felt the least like it was possible for them to get a promotion in their current cities, though a small sample size in this group yields inconclusive results and warrants further research. As level of education went up (Bachelor's, Master's/Doctorate) the perception of promotion opportunity went up. This result is reasonable because though certain degrees aren't usually required to be a city manager, candidates who have achieved higher levels of education would likely be considered to be more qualified for a job than someone with less education. These results imply that many respondents understand that their education level has an impact on the likelihood of getting promoted.

Table 4.35: Mentorship Status and Perceived Promotion Opportunity

		Do you currently have or have you had a mentor in the past?		Total (n=36)
		Yes (n=24)	No (n=12)	

It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree	13%	25%	17%
	Disagree	29%	33%	31%
	Agree	42%	25%	36%
	Strongly Agree	17%	17%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	42%	58%	47%
	Agreement	58%	42%	53%

Table 4.35 highlights the connection between mentorship status and perceived promotion opportunity. Respondents who reported having a mentor currently or at some point in their career were more likely to be in agreement with the statement “It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city,” than those who reported not having a mentor. This may reveal an increased confidence in career abilities and optimism for future advancements, a positive consequence of mentorship.

Table 4.36: Organizational Tenure and Perceived Promotion Opportunities

		Years of Service with Current City				Total (n=35)
		0-9 Years (n=16)	10-19 Years (n=11)	20-29 Years (n=8)	30 or More Years (n=2)*	
It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree	25%	9%	13%		17%
	Disagree	13%	27%	50%		26%
	Agree	56%	37%	13%		40%
	Strongly Agree	6%	27%	25%		17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%		100%
	Disagreement	38%	36%	62%		43%
	Agreement	62%	64%	38%		57%

*Information for this category is not included to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

Perceived opportunity for promotion was quite consistent among those with 0-9 and 10-19 years of service to their current city, with 62% and 64% respectively being in some degree of agreement that it was possible for them to get a promotion in their current city. For those with 20-29 years of service, however, optimism about being promoted in their current city dropped

significantly to the point at which only 38% were in agreement that promotion was possible. Those with 30 or more years of experience were not well represented in this survey and thus were left out of these results (See Table 4.36). This is a similar pattern as was seen with years of experience in municipal government, though agreement with the possibility of a promotion diminished quicker as the number of years in the same city increased than it did as number of years in municipal government increased. This could imply that being in one city for an extended number of years is harmful to the possibility of obtaining a promotion while years of experience in the profession is helpful for promotion possibilities until the highest age group, in which lack of agreement with the possibility of promotion may be simply because the individual doesn't want to take a higher position.

Table 4.37: City Size and Perceived Promotion Opportunities

		Population of Current City				Total (n=34)
		Very Small (5,000 or Fewer) (n=1)*	Small (5,001 - 40,000) (n=23)	Mid-Size (40,001 - 100,000) (n=11)	Large (100,001 or Greater) (n=2)*	
It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.	Strongly Disagree		17%	9%		15%
	Disagree		13%	64%		29%
	Agree		52%	18%		41%
	Strongly Agree		17%	9%		15%
Total			100%	100%		100%
Disagreement			30%	73%		44%
Agreement			70%	27%		56%

*Information for this category is not included to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

Table 4.37 summarizes the connection between city size and perceived promotion opportunities. Very small and large cities were not well represented in this research and thus responses in these categories are left out. Respondents in small cities were more likely to be optimistic about their opportunities for promotion in their current cities than those in mid-size

cities. This may imply that in larger cities going from department director to assistant city manager or city manager, or from assistant city manager to city manager may be a larger step than in smaller cities. This could be because leadership positions in larger cities have more complex responsibilities than those in smaller cities or because there are more internal and external candidates for job openings in larger cities than in smaller cities.

Impacts on Work Commitment

Work commitment, which was measured by respondents' agreement with the phrase "I am psychologically involved with my work," was for the most part something that all respondents agreed on. Only two respondents in this research were in disagreement with the above statement. Further research with a larger sample size could reveal whether or not this a pattern that is seen in municipal government leadership positions.

Impacts on Career Commitment

Similar to what was seen with work commitment, career commitment, which was measured by respondents' agreement with the phrase "I would like to continue working in municipal government," was generally agreed upon by respondents. Again, only two respondents in this research were in disagreement with this statement, signifying that further research with a larger sample size would be necessary before generalizations are made about connections to career commitment.

Impacts on Balanced Life-Style Career Orientation

Balanced life-style career orientation was relatively stable regardless of other characteristics described by respondents. Only one respondent was not on the agreement end of the scale in regards to balanced life-style career orientation. Because hers was the only

disagreeing response, meaningful results cannot be extracted from this information for the impacts of certain characteristics on balanced life-style career orientation.

Impacts on Perception of Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

Marital status, presence of dependent children, years of experience in municipal government and city size seemed to have an impact on how supportive respondents perceived their current city to be of work-family life/culture. The results are summarized in the following tables.

Table 4.38: Marital Status and Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

		Marital Status:		Total (n=37)
		Married/Cohabiting (n=31)	Single (n=6)	
My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%
	Disagree	19%	33%	22%
	Agree	61%	50%	59%
	Strongly Agree	19%	17%	19%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	19%	33%	22%
	Agreement	81%	67%	78%

Whether or not respondents viewed their current city as supportive of their efforts to balance their work and family lives seemed to be related to marital status (See Table 4.38). Because there was a small number of single respondents, further research would be needed to confirm the accuracy of the connections found in this section. Married or cohabitating respondents were more likely to be in agreement with the statement, “My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives,” than their single counterparts. Only 19% of married respondents were in disagreement with this statement. This may imply that married employees have different needs when it comes to balancing their work and family lives, and

sometimes not all cities can provide for these needs to a satisfactory degree. Overall, however, the majority of respondents were in some level of agreement with the statement regarding their current city supporting and facilitating their efforts to balance their work and family lives.

Table 4.39: Presence of Dependent Children and Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

		Do you have dependent children?		
		Yes (n=20)	No (n=17)	Total (n=37)
My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%
	Disagree	10%	35%	22%
	Agree	60%	59%	59%
	Strongly Agree	30%	6%	19%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
	Disagreement	10%	35%	22%
	Agreement	90%	65%	78%

Table 4.39 shows that the presence of dependent children seemed to have a negative relationship with respondents' perception of a supportive work-family life/culture. Respondents with dependent children were more likely than those without to agree that their city facilitated their efforts to balance their work and family lives, with 90% being in agreement. Only 65% of respondents without dependent children were in agreement with this statement. A possible reason for this could be that women with children have more reasons to ask for flexibility in their schedule due to child care responsibilities and cities oblige while those without children don't ask for as much support in this way and thus don't see their employer to be as supportive. It could also be that cities may see employees with children as having more reasons to leave work and otherwise and are more flexible when it comes to supporting them than someone without children.

Table 4.40: Years of Experience and Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

		Years of Experience in Municipal Government				Total (n=37)
		0-9 Years (n=4)	10-19 Years (n=13)	20-29 Years (n=15)	30 or More Years (n=5)	
My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.	Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Disagree	50%	8%	27%	20%	22%
	Agree	50%	62%	60%	60%	59%
	Strongly Agree	0%	31%	13%	20%	19%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Disagreement		50%	8%	27%	20%	22%
Agreement		50%	92%	73%	80%	78%

Table 4.40 highlights the connection between years of experience in municipal government and perception of a supportive work-family life/culture. Though a very large majority of respondents wanted a career that enables them to integrate their work and family lives, there were some interesting results when it came to whether or not respondents felt like their current city was doing so. The group that felt the least like their current city was supportive of their efforts to balance their careers and personal lives were those that had spent the fewest years in the profession, though a small sample size in this group as well as the group with 30 or more years of experience requires caution in reporting and making generalizations. A possible reason for this result could be that those with the least experience likely younger than many in other groups and have more major life events occurring at this time in their career, such as getting married, having children and caring for young children, and may not feel as much support from their city as someone with fewer events like these happening. Those that felt the most like their city was supportive in this effort were those in the 10-19 years of experience group, with 92% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that their current city facilitates balance in their work and personal lives.

Table 4.41: City Size and Supportive Work-Family Life/Culture

		Population of Current City				Total (n=34)
		Very Small (5,000 or Fewer) (n=1)*	Small (5,001 - 40,000) (n=23)	Mid-Size (40,001 - 100,000) (n=11)	Large (100,001 or Greater) (n=2)*	
My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.	Strongly Disagree		0%	0%		0%
	Disagree		26%	9%		21%
	Agree		48%	82%		58%
	Strongly Agree		26%	9%		21%
	Total		100%	100%		100%
	Disagreement		26%	9%		21%
	Agreement		74%	91%		79%

*Information for this category is not included to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.

As was reported in previous sections, very small and large cities were not well represented in this research and thus responses in these categories are left out. Respondents in mid-size cities were more likely to have the perception that their current cities facilitated their efforts to balance their work and family lives than those in small cities (See Table 4.41). This may imply that larger cities are better able to facilitate these efforts than smaller cities. A reason for this could be that larger cities are less likely to have staffing issues that may keep people in the office, causing them to miss commitments in their personal/family lives. Larger cities may also be better able to provide family-friendly and supportive programs because they likely have more funding than smaller cities.

Other Notable Qualitative Themes

Some statements and themes stood out in the free response answers but did not directly relate to any of the categories or elements of the framework. In general, assistant city managers chose to speak more about the difficulties faced by women in their positions and the hardships they had to endure throughout their careers. Department directors tended to be slightly more

positive and optimistic about their careers and expressed more encouraging messages about their faith in the profession and their abilities to progress in it. This may be a product of the nature of these positions in general, and the more personal freedom and flexibility, or the smaller workload of department directors as compared to assistant city managers. Because work and career commitment remained high among respondents, however, it is not likely that themes about career satisfaction can be drawn from this information.

A very prevalent theme in these responses, particularly among assistant city managers, was the disparity that exists between the treatment of women and men in a largely male-dominated environment. Those that mentioned this topic often expressed that it was more difficult to be taken seriously by others in and out of their organization as a result of being a female in a leadership position. One assistant city manager said, “I have supervised male dominated departments and have felt the need to prove myself more than my male counterparts from time to time. I think that women who speak their minds are sometimes unfairly labeled ‘mean girls’ when men with the same opinions are labelless.” Another assistant city manager explained, “I love my career, but it has been challenging to hold a high level leadership position in a male-dominated environment. My professional experience (both prior to my work in municipal government and during) is frequently discounted or ignored, and I often have to work twice as hard or twice as much to achieve recognition or respect.”

Along these same lines, the “Good Old Boy” concept was one that was also mentioned often, particularly among assistant city managers, in the free response section. This term has a generally negative connotation and refers to the tendency some organizations to hire for reasons other than merit, including political reasons, and in some cases keeping homogeneity in employment patterns. This idea is much more prevalent in professions that are male dominated

than those that aren't. Some believed that this led to them being treated as "little girls" by male peers and superiors no matter how old they were or how much experience they had. All of these ideas tie into the difficulties women face in a male-dominated environment.

Another concept that came up in the free response answers was that self-imposed determination and pressures were sometimes just as if not more influential on workplace behaviors as pressure from coworkers, superiors and job demands in general. One assistant city manager explained that, "Just the nature of the job did sometimes interfere with the proper work/life balance, but it was more my own nature than pressure from superiors." Another example of this came from another assistant city manager who said "I probably put undue pressure on myself to not show emotion in the workplace in order to avoid stereotypes." A department director also recounted that "I get to work early and stay late, not just because I have to sometimes, but because I want to." This seems to reflect that many women in these roles often display character traits that include self-determination and initiative and that they really want to be the best professionals that they can be, even if it means that their work and personal life balance is disturbed.

A very positive theme that was seen throughout many of these responses was the expression of love and satisfaction with these municipal government leadership positions. One department director said, "I am consumed by work, but love my job," and went on to explain the demands of her job in a positive light. Another assistant city manager also expressed love for her career, but qualified this statement with other various challenges that she faces as a female in her position. It seems that many of these women have embraced both the positive and negative attributes of their career choice and have used them both to find a sense of satisfaction and purpose. One reason that was cited as to why respondents loved their job was that they enjoyed

the challenges they got to face in their position. One department director explained that, “I really enjoy my job, as it's constantly changing and I am always finding new challenges. I like being challenged and seeking new solutions/alternatives to old problems.” Another department director said, “My career in local government has been rewarding and continues to be, because I have been afforded opportunities to have input on solving large, complex problems/issues that affect communities and increase the quality of life for residents and business owners.” The free-response answers were undoubtedly the greatest and most honest source of information gained in this research about how women in these positions perceive their careers. It gave them a chance for their voices to truly be heard. The following chapter summarizes and interprets the results of this research and how they contribute to the field of public administration.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to interpret the findings of this research and suggest topics for future research. By conducting a survey of female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities, this research sought to describe their employment

and work patterns and describe how these patterns compared to their career aspirations and work-related attitudes.

Summary of Findings

The demographic/independent characteristics of the women that responded to this survey revealed that women in these positions all have different backgrounds and personal lives. Many of these women are married and have varying responsibilities outside of work including family and child care responsibilities. A key finding from the results in this section was that these women are very experienced in their field and extremely well educated. For the most part these factors were positively correlated to interest in becoming a city manager and perceived promotion opportunity. Work commitment and career commitment were also high among all respondents, so by default the educated and experienced respondents had high career and work commitment. The largest takeaway from this section was that women in these positions have prepared themselves to excel at their current jobs, and many of them have also prepared themselves to take a city management position in the future. The literature regarding education in this profession implied that lack of education was not the reason for women's underrepresentation in city management positions, and this research supports that.

The employment characteristics of this group, made up of more assistant city managers than department directors, revealed varying functional areas and years of service with their current cities. Generally, these professionals work in small to mid-size cities with very few currently having a female city manager, in keeping with the literature on women's underrepresentation in this position. A majority of these women reported having been mentored, corresponding with the overwhelmingly positive literature on the benefits of mentors in this profession. Because having a mentor was found to be positively correlated to interest in

becoming a city manager and optimism for a future promotion, increasing mentorship opportunities across the profession would likely be beneficial for growing the number of women in city manager positions.

The responses concerning work-patterns and arrangements collected in this survey revealed just how professionally busy and hard-working these women are. For the most part they work far more than the minimum 40 hours a week and devote a lot of their time outside of work to work-related activities, a topic that was often brought up in the free-response answers. Municipal government leadership is a demanding profession and though flexible work arrangements are present and seem to be becoming more prevalent, it is clear that improvements could be made in this area to mitigate some of the pressure put on these professionals.

The work-related attitudes and career aspirations, including those reported in the free response question, were perhaps the most insightful part of this research. A large majority of respondents reported high levels of work and career commitment. Though this made it difficult to compare these results to other characteristics of respondents it speaks volumes about the women in these positions and their dedication to the career path they have chosen. Similarly, most respondents were in agreement that they wanted their employers to support the integration of their work and personal/family lives so there weren't many connections to be made between this and work-related attitudes. This is, however, a helpful insight into a way for cities to attract and retain women in leadership positions. Because there was not as overwhelming a consensus among respondents that their current cities facilitated their efforts to balance their work and family lives an opportunity for cities to make improvements is presented.

Fifty-nine percent of the women included in this research had interest in becoming a city manager. Though this is more than half of the women that responded and was an opinion more

commonly held by assistant city managers than department directors, what stands out in the data is that there are also many women that are not interested in becoming city managers. Whether or not the improvement of some of the conditions that were reported as a main concern of respondents would increase the percentage of women that aspire to be city managers warrants further research. Regardless, some women not wanting to be city managers could be one reason that women are underrepresented in this position.

Each respondent gave a snapshot of some of their views and experiences as women in municipal government leadership positions. The following quotes, the first from an assistant city manager and the second from a department director seemed to be the best representation of these women's responses.

...“I've never been a male in a municipal government leadership position so I don't have anything to compare it to. But, my experience has been that hard work and getting results has led to career progression. Have I experienced gender discrimination? I'm certain of it. My attitude about it is I can't control other people's opinions or beliefs, I can only control my actions and reactions. So, I do me. I have 3 kids and have been married to the same man for 21 years. I've had to be intentional about work/life balance and fostering an environment that promotes that for women and men in the organizations I have worked. I have a great spouse who also has a demanding career. We make it work through mutual support and creative scheduling.” – Assistant City Manager

“I have been very lucky to have several strong female leaders as mentors who have both opened the door and guided my progression through municipal government. Both municipalities I have worked with have begun to understand the importance of flexing schedules to allow for work/life balance and see it as a retention tool. The improvement of parental leave and nursing mother policies has been long overdue. The increase in female City Managers in the last decade has given me confidence that I will not experience the glass ceiling so many before us faced. It is also a strong priority for me as a female leader to support and mentor those coming up in the ranks and ensuring they are given the support they need to be successful in their careers.” – Department Director

Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research was quite specific in only including female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas municipalities. Future research could broaden the pool of potential respondents to include other positions that have similar roles as assistant city managers and department directors. This would yield insight from those in other positions that are also on the path to the position of city manager. An example of this would be the inclusion of the position of chief of staff, which is very similar to the position of assistant city manager. Including men in this research and being able to compare the responses of men and women would also provide useful information for future research. This gender specific information about those in municipal government leadership positions could be used by cities to help them understand the needs of current and prospective employees and what they can do to provide a mutually beneficial work environment.

The free response question in this survey was particularly informative and gave much more insight into respondent’s work related attitudes than many of the multiple choice questions. Future research could contain more free response questions, perhaps more strictly tailored to specific topics so that meaningful results could be extracted from more uniform and in-depth responses. Finally, not all characteristics and work arrangements were able to be compared to

work-related attitudes due to having a small sample of respondents. The ideas in this research could be taken to more cities in other states to get a larger picture of the characteristics of assistant city managers and department directors nationwide.

Conclusion

What we already know about women in municipal government is that they are underrepresented in upper-level, leadership positions. In the United States, women only make up 13% of city managers, the top administrative position in municipal government. This research gives some broad insight into the characteristics and careers of female assistant city managers and department directors in Texas cities because these women are in the positions that generally precede that of city manager. The results of this research don't show that women are being kept out of city management positions or are being passed over in favor of men with similar or lesser qualifications. These results also don't show that women are given just as much consideration in the hiring process as their male counterparts or explain why there are so few women in the position of city manager. What this research does show, however, is that there are a multitude of factors that play a part in the forming of work-related attitudes and career aspirations of women in these positions. Survey respondents revealed the many demands they face in these positions, talked about their struggles being women in a male-dominated profession, and the problems that arise with trying to balance their work and family lives. They also spoke about their career accomplishments and aspirations, many with enthusiasm and optimism for the future.

Though the field of public administration has traditionally been characterized by male membership in the highest levels of the profession, these women show just how much they have to offer to this profession. This research has contributed a better understanding of the characteristics of this group of municipal government leaders in hopes that this information will

be used to foster a more favorable work environment for all municipal government professionals. Perhaps this and future research will even be used to help bring more women into this profession and careers that may ultimately result in the position of city manager.

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Appendix A: Documentation of IRB Exempt Status and Approval



In future correspondence please refer to 6208

December 3, 2018

Ashley Wayman
Texas State University
601 University Drive.
San Marcos, TX 78666

Dear Ashley:

Your IRB application titled "Describing the Employment and Work Patterns Characterizing Female Assistant City Managers and Department Directors in Texas Municipalities and how they Compare to Career Aspirations and Work-Related Attitudes" was reviewed and approved by the Texas State University IRB. It has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

1. In addition, the IRB found that you need to orient participants as follows: (1) signed informed consent is not required as participation implies consent; (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data; (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects. (4) Compensation will not be provided for participation.

This project is therefore approved at the Exempt Review Level

2. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. If you expand the project at a later date to use other instruments, please re-apply. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.

Report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. All unanticipated events and adverse events are to be reported to the IRB within 3 days.

Sincerely,

Monica Gonzales
IRB Regulatory Manager
Office of Research Integrity and Compliance

CC: Dr. Patricia Shields

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH
601 University Drive | JCK #489 | San Marcos, Texas 78666-4616
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This letter is an electronic communication from Texas State University-San Marcos, a member of The Texas State University System.

Appendix B: Survey

Survey: Employment and Work Patterns, Career Aspirations and Work-Related Attitudes of
Female Assistant City Managers and Department Directors in Texas Municipalities

1. Please select the age range that you fall into:
 - a. under 25
 - b. 25-34
 - c. 35-44
 - d. 45-54
 - e. 55-64
 - f. 65 or older
2. Please select your marital status:
 - a. Married/Cohabiting
 - b. Single
3. Do you have dependent children?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Are you currently caring for a sick, elderly or disabled person(s)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. How many years have you been working in municipal government? (Free Response)
6. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?
 - a. No College
 - b. Some College
 - c. Bachelor's Degree
 - d. Master's Degree
 - e. Doctorate Degree
7. What is your current position?
 - a. Assistant City Manager/Administrator
 - b. Department Head
 - c. Other (Text box for respondent to fill in)
8. What is your current department/functional area?
 - a. Administration
 - b. Finance
 - c. Public Safety
 - d. Engineering/Public Works
 - e. Social Services
 - f. Other (Text box for respondent to fill in)
9. Do you currently have or have you had a mentor in the past?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. How many years of service do you have with your current city? (Free Response)
11. What is the population of your current city? (Free Response)

12. Does your city currently have a female city manager?

- a. Yes
- b. No

13. Are you a full-time employee? (Full-time is defined as working at least 40 hours per week.)

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. On average, how many hours do you work in a week? (Free Response)

15. In the past six months how frequently have you:

	Never	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
15a. Traveled on business?				
15b. Started work early?				
15c. Stayed at work late?				
15d. Worked on weekends?				
15e. Worked on vacation?				
15f. Attended professional activities outside of normal working hours?				

16. Does your job allow for flex time?

- a. Yes
- b. No/Unsure

17. Does your job allow for working from home?

- a. Yes
- b. No/Unsure

18. Please indicate to what degree you agree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18a. I am interested in becoming a city manager.				
18b. It is possible for me to get a promotion in my current city.				
18c. I am psychologically involved with my work.				
18d. I would like to continue working in municipal government.				
18e. I want a career that enables integration of work with my personal/family life.				
18f. My current city facilitates my efforts to balance my work and family lives.				

Optional Free Response Question

19. Please comment on your career experience as a female in municipal government leadership positions. Your response may include but is not limited to, topics of career progression, career aspirations, work-family balance, work schedules and females and leadership roles.