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Leading Canada's Cities? A Study of Urban Mayors

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ABSTRACT

How powerful are Canada's big city mayors? Do mayors have the power to lead in Canada's cities? What does mayoral power in Canada look like, and what can we learn about Canadian urban politics by examining it?

This project explores these and other questions by engaging in the first broad study of urban mayors in Canada. It is often said that Canada has "weak" mayors, or a "weak mayor system" – terms borrowed from an American context referring to the limited executive power of Canadian mayors relative to many of their American peers. This study examines the Canadian mayoralty in its own context, through close examination of the role and power of the mayor in ten Canadian cities. Mayoral power is examined "on paper," comparing the legal and institutional powers of mayors across cities; and, "in practice," informed by interviews with mayors and those who work most closely with them. A new model for understanding mayoral power is advanced.

This project finds that Canada does not have "weak mayors" nor does it have a "weak mayor system." These terms reflect a narrow definition of mayoral power. In Canada, where the role and power of the mayor is largely undefined, institutional variables emerge as less important in practice than the type of leadership provided by the mayor. Canadian mayors are expected to simultaneously serve in three distinct roles – as political leaders, as executive leaders, and as community leaders – with each role involving different resources. Mayors are being uniquely positioned at the nexus of the network of actors who are engaged in local government, with an unparalleled ability to shape the engagement of these actors by virtue of their leadership (or lack of leadership). As a result, mayors play a shaping role in the governance of Canada's cities. This is the power of a Canadian mayor.

Mayors are important leaders in Canada, but they are often misunderstood. This study begins to address outstanding questions about the role and power of the mayor, while raising larger issues about leadership capacity in Canada's cities. It is the beginning of a potentially much larger research agenda – and a contribution to a needed discussion about strengthening leadership in Canada's cities.

KEYWORDS: Mayors, local government, power, leadership, urban politics, cities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project began in a boardroom at City Hall following the sudden resignation of the mayor – an event that sparked some chaos, much confusion and an unrelenting curiosity for me about the role of Canadian mayors. Exploring this topic has proven to be a profoundly fulfilling pursuit, and one which would not have been possible without the support of many individuals worthy of thanks.

First, my advisor Prof. Andrew Sancton has been a steady source of wisdom, guidance and encouragement for this project from beginning to end. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to study with someone who is deservedly regarded as one of Canada's leading local government scholars, and I have learned much from him through this experience. This project also spanned major changes in nearly every aspect of my life. I have benefitted tremendously from having a supervisor who cared not only about the research project but also the overall success of his student, academically and beyond. He set an example I will aspire to emulate when working with students in the future.

Second, both this project and I benefitted from the guidance of other scholars. Prof. Tom Urbaniak provided helpful suggestions at key points during the project, including reviewing the project proposal and the final draft. Profs. David Siegel, Martin Horak, Zack Taylor and Neil Bradford provided thoughtful, insightful and challenging questions during the exam process – including some suggestions now reflected in this dissertation, and other broader considerations have provoked new curiosities that will influence my work in the future. Their comments have surely improved the final product. Any remaining errors or oversights are mine alone.

Finally, I am grateful for the unwavering love and support from my family throughout this project, and in the personal and professional journey it has crossed. The accomplishment of reaching this finish line belongs to them.

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"It's a big job. You're the quarterback, the referee, the equipment manager, and the cheerleader – all at the same time. You're seen as the person who controls everything, sometimes way beyond local government jurisdiction and definitely beyond what you actually control. People think you're in charge, but you're not really. When people are unhappy, they call you. It doesn't matter what they are unhappy about – a big political issue, a family tragedy, or what happened on their morning commute – they call, and they want results. They reach to the leader who is closest to the people, and that's the mayor.

The role keeps evolving. It's moved from a 'chief magistrate' to one that is something of a celebrity. But the bottom line is, it's an awful lot of work and few people really understand it. It's a job like no other."

- Former Canadian Mayor

Chapter 1 | INTRODUCTION

"You don't understand the job of the mayor!"[1]

It was November 18, 2013, a particularly tense afternoon in the Council

Chambers of Canada's largest city. Toronto City Council had gathered for a

special meeting to remove of some of the powers of then Mayor Rob Ford. Since

his election as Mayor in 2010, Ford had been embroiled in scandal: reports of

drunk driving, drug possession and domestic violence; a conflict of interest

lawsuit, resulting in temporary removal from office; sexually explicit comments

about the Mayor's wife and a staff member; accusations of the Mayor attending

official functions while intoxicated, sexually assaulting a former mayoral

candidate, and smoking cocaine in a downtown bar; and, a Toronto Police

investigation into the Mayor's activities.[2] The Mayor's antics had become

spectacle. It was the first time in memory when a Canadian mayor captured

sustained international media attention.[3] American comedian Jimmy Kimmel

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[1] Toronto City Council Special Meeting, November 18, 2013.

[2] For a thorough chronicle of Ford's activities, see: Robyn Doolittle, *Crazy Town: The Rob Ford Story* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2014); John Filion, *The Only Average Guy: Inside the Uncommon World of Rob Ford* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2015); and, Rob Ford and Doug Ford, *Ford Nation: Two Brothers, One Vision, The Story of the People's Mayor* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2016). A chronicle of National Post coverage has also been published as a book: *How Rob Ford Happened: A History of the Toronto Mayor from the Pages of the National Post* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2013).

[3] A book authored by the Rob Ford and his brother Doug (2016) includes several stories that reflect the extent of Mayor Ford's international fame during the peak of the scandal. For example, Doug recalls a trip to LA with his brother. "From the minute we hit the streets of LA, the whole experience was pretty surreal. Jimmy Kimmel himself picked us up. And from there, everybody down there seemed to already know who Rob was. We'd walk down the street and tour buses would stop and people would jump out to get their pictures taken with him. Our friend Kevin

introduced Ford to his show by stating that the Mayor had "tripped, bumped, danced, argued and smoked his way into our national consciousness."[4]

When a new video of Mayor Ford using drugs and uttering death threats surfaced in November 2013, Council reached its breaking point. Mainstream and social media flooded with discussions about what could be done to address the ridicule and embarrassment faced by the City of Toronto from the behaviors of its now infamous Mayor. Despite mounting pressure, the Mayor remained unwilling to resign, and calls on Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to take action were met with reluctance to get involved. "The City of Toronto has a Mayor and Council that were elected by the residents of Toronto and must be accountable to them. It is up to the municipal level of government to address the issues they face," stated the Premier. "It is not the provincial government's role, nor its intention, to impose its preferences upon that government."[5]

And so on November 18, 2013, Toronto City Council held a special meeting to discuss what could be done about the Mayor. The Mayor presided over parts of the meeting as his Council colleagues deliberated on how to limit his powers, and reduce the resources provided to support his position. The advice from city staff was clear: Council did not have the ability to impeach the Mayor from office, nor could it remove any of the Mayor's statutory power as established in provincial legislation, namely being the head of Council and chief

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O'Leary […] was blown away by the attention Rob was getting, in a city already full of the biggest celebrities in the world. 'Rob was just like a rock star,' Kevin told us." (210)

[4] Jimmy Kimmel Show, March 4 2014.

[5] Quote as recorded in Robert Brenzie, "Rob Ford Crisis: Wynne lays out conditions for intervening," *Toronto Star* (November 13, 2013).

executive officer of the City of Toronto.[6] However, Council could take away any of the Mayor's powers which Council itself had granted through policy or bylaw, such as the authority to make committee appointments, chair the Executive Committee, and a number of other procedural privileges. Motions to strip the Mayor of his Council-delegated authorities, and to significantly reduce the resources allocated to support the function of the Mayor's Office, passed with strong majorities. Perhaps in title alone, Mayor Ford retained his statutory post as the head of Council and chief executive officer of the City of Toronto.

The debate waged on for nearly five hours, involving even a minor physical altercation between the Mayor and a Councillor.[7] Throughout the debate, Council members revealed varying perceptions about the nature of the Mayor's power. "We don't have to take away his statutory powers. He's already done that, in the hearts and the minds of thousands of people across this city. I believe, Mister Mayor, that you have lost the ability to lead this city."[8] Another Councillor framed it this way: "in the business world, there are very prescriptive steps that boards would take should the CEO have admitted to smoking cocaine or driving drunk. […] Some of those would be warnings […] or indeed, the removal of the CEO."[9] The Mayor's most loyal supporters called the meeting "a

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[6] Toronto City Council Special Meeting, November 18, 2013.

[7] As reported by Mendleson and Edwards in the *Toronto Star* (November 18, 2013), "At one particularly heated point, the red-faced mayor bolted towards the public gallery. Councillor Pam McConnell was bumped by the mayor in the drama and fell backwards, but did not lose her footing. The mayor helped her get upright and then walked away smiling. People shouted, 'Shame!' at the mayor while others applauded."

[8] Toronto City Council Special Meeting, November 18, 2013.

[9] Ibid.

Kangaroo court"[10] in contemplating actions described as illegal and undemocratic. At one point, an unsuccessful motion was tabled to ask the province to call an election for the mayor and all councillor positions, challenging whether council should have the authority to make decisions about removing the powers of a democratically elected mayor. "This Council is trampling over every person's democratic right. There are 383,000 people who voted for the Mayor. […] If the objective is to take away the Mayor's powers, I will be offended and so will anyone else who wants to carry out the agenda of the electorate."[11] The debate reflected the broader community discussion, which had dominated Toronto headlines and media commentary alike for months. Some Torontonians felt Mayor Ford's behaviours were causing harm and shame to Toronto.[12] Others felt the Mayor's fame had increased the city's international profile.[13] Or perhaps the Mayor's antics had no bearing whatsoever on the life of the city. The garbage continued to get picked up, services were delivered, and life went on in Toronto.

The words of an exasperated Councillor to his colleagues diagnosed an underlying issue. "You don't understand the job of the mayor!"[14] This exclamation to the council of Canada's largest city captures a foundational problem that

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] In the words of one Councillor during the November 18, 2013 meeting, "The mayor has created a crazy train!"

[13] Mayor Ford's brother, Doug Ford (2016), offers a particularly generous account of how his brother's profile impacted Toronto's international reputation. "Before Rob Ford, people outside Canada had no idea about what Toronto is all about and how great a city it is. Rob's personal issues aside, tourism in Toronto was booming, buildings were going up everywhere, and there was no negative impact on our economy. If anything, as far as the city's fortunes went, all of Rob's issues were having a positive impact. People from all over the world wanted to come and visit" (212).

[14] Toronto City Council Special Meeting, November 18, 2013.

extends far beyond any particular mayor or saga or the walls of Toronto City

Hall. It reflects a critical issue facing local governments and cities across

Canada: remarkably little is known about the role and power of Canadian

mayors. The responsibilities of mayors in Canada are "vague"[15] and "generally

quite unclear."[16] There is no 'job description' for mayors; in fact, there are more

than 50 pieces of provincial legislation in Canada prescribing duties of mayors,[17]

not including thousands of municipal by-laws and policies. It is often said that

Canada has "weak mayors," yet the public believe mayors are powerful.[18] There

have been calls to increase the institutional position and resources of mayors,[19]

and yet the relative importance of these factors in Canada remains an open

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[15] James Lightbody, *City Politics, Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 156.

[16] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg, eds., *Leaders and Leadership in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 175.

[17] See list in Appendix A.

[18] In October 2015, Ipsos Public Affairs conducted a survey of more than 12,000 Canadians. In support of this research project, a question was included asking respondents to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement, "Canadian mayors have the power to make things happen in their communities" using a standard Likert scale. The survey results found that most Canadians believe that mayors have the power to make things happen in their communities. Overall, 72.1% of respondents agreed with the statement, including 17% who indicated strong agreement and 55.1% who indicated moderate agreement. 22% of respondents disagreed with the statement, including 4.9% who strongly disagreed, and 17.1% who moderately disagreed. See Appendix B for more details.

[19] Interest in adopting "strong mayor" features for the mayoralty in Canada emerges periodically, particularly when the broader municipal legislation is under review (for example, during discussions about the City of Toronto Act under Mayor David Miller's tenure). Benjamin Barber's popular book, *If Mayors Ruled the* World (2013), calls for strengthened mayors and the creation of a Global Parliament of Mayors. In other jurisdictions, much focus has been invested into investigating a bolstered institutional position of the mayor. For European examples, see: Henry Back, Hubert Heinelt and Annick Magnier, eds., *The European Mayor: Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy* (Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag fur Sozialwissenschaften, 2006); Hubert Heinelt, Annick Magnier, Marcello Cabria, and Herwig Reynaert, eds., *Political Leaders and Changing Local Democracy* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Robin Hambleton and David Sweeting, "U.S.-Style Leadership for English Local Government?" *Public Administration Review* (64:4, 2004): 474-488.

question. A surprisingly small volume of literature exists on the topic. To date, there has not been a comprehensive study on mayors in Canada, and foundational questions about the nature of mayoral power remain unanswered.

This project aims to address this gap by engaging in the first broad study of urban mayors in Canada. This project is not about the antics of Mayor Rob Ford, or any other individual mayor for that matter. Rather, it examines the Canadian mayoralty in ten cities to understand the role itself, and the extent to which Canadian mayors have the power to drive change in their cities – while investigating the contested concept of mayoral power itself. It is an inductive exploration into an understudied topic with important democratic and practical implications. Ultimately, this project aims to contribute new knowledge and advance a needed conversation about strengthening governance and leadership in Canada's cities.

Engaging in the study of mayors in Canada is fraught with challenge. In a recent article, Tom Urbaniak sets an agenda for studying mayors in Canada, recognizing the lack of a theoretical foundation and need to build a literature "almost literally from scratch."[20] He articulates the challenges of building a theory of mayoral leadership: the contested core concepts of "power," "leadership" and "strong/weak mayor;" the numerous variables to be considered including personality, interests, and institutional features; methodological challenges arising from the sheer number of municipalities and variation among them; and,

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[20] Tom Urbaniak, "Studying Mayoral Leadership in Canada and the United States," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* v.49 (2014), 206.

the different approaches engaged in the study of urban politics. Despite these

challenges, Urbaniak points to the importance of this endeavor:

> These intellectual dilemmas should not discourage the study of municipal leadership, considering the growing political focus on cities and municipalities, and increasing public concern about urban poverty, infrastructure, air quality, finances, public safety, and the conservation of vibrant communities. Cultivating local political leadership—and the conditions for such leadership to be effective and directed to salient purposes—may indeed be one of the most important social and public-policy objectives of our time.[21]

Canada's cities play a critical role in many of the most important policy issues

facing the nation, and yet rudimentary questions about local leadership and

mayoral power remain unanswered. Therefore, the mayoralty in Canada is a

worthy and timely object of academic examination.

No single study can wholly address this knowledge gap. This study does

not pretend to explain everything about mayors in Canada. In fact, it does not

even examine all types of mayors in Canada.[22] By focusing on mayors in

Canada's cities, little is learned which can be directly applied to small or rural

communities, for example, as the mayoralty may be very different in those

contexts (although the extent to which this is true is also unknown). Further, this

study does not provide any broad predictive power. There are approximately four

thousand municipalities and mayors in Canada, and many variables by which to

segregate them – structure, size, scope, language, region, geography, legislative

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[21] Ibid, 222.

[22] This study does not even examine all mayors in the cities in the sample, as there are many borough mayors in Montreal that are not examined. Additionally, not all heads of council in Canadian municipalities are referred to as "mayors." Other common terms include warden or reeve, or in the case of regional municipalities, chair. The scope of this study also does not include an examination or comparison of the role of different types of heads of council in Canada.

context, and so on – so it would be impossible for any study to offer conclusions or findings which universally apply across Canada, or span the dimension of time. Instead, this study takes an inductive approach to examining the role and power of urban mayors in ten Canadian cities. It begins by analyzing data, identifying patterns, and drawing conclusions. It challenges assumptions and advances a new model for understanding mayoral power in a Canadian context. It is a starting point for a potentially much larger research agenda.

Study Overview

A common format for presenting the findings of cross-case studies is to provide a chapter dedicated to each case and to present a comparative analysis at the end. This study is not organized this way. Instead, it is presented as a progressive investigation of mayoral power in Canada. Introductory chapters set the context for this investigation through a review of relevant literature and existing knowledge. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the mayoralty, drawing on Canadian and American sources. Previous studies of mayoral power are summarized. Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed in this study, including an overview of the case selection, a discussion of key terms such as "power" and "leadership" and how they are treated, and a summary of the research methods applied.

The first substantive investigation is presented in Part I, providing an institutional examination of mayoral power in ten cities. Here the mayoralty is understood as a central institution within local governments in Canada, with

powers established and defined through legislation and shaped by local arrangements in each city. Chapter 4 compares the formal or legal authority of mayors across cities, drawing from provincial legislation and municipal bylaws. Chapter 5 considers the varied local arrangements in each of the ten cities and how they empower mayors, such as the presence of political parties, resources provided to mayors, and other considerations. What emerges from these chapters is an institutional picture of the power of urban mayors, which although varied across Canada, is generally quite limited.

In an environment where mayoral power – on paper – is limited, are there other resources that mayors draw upon in practice to exercise power? Do the institutional variables of mayoral power matter? Part II takes up this challenge as the second substantive investigation of this study, examining mayoral power "in practice" drawing upon interviews with mayors and those who work most closely with them in each city. A narrative inquiry method is engaged that privileges the perspectives of those with direct experience.[23] Chapter 6 presents a summary of the interview data, identifying perceptions of mayoral power in each of the cities in the study. A key finding is that perceptions of power "in practice" do not align with power "on paper" – in other words, institutional variations in mayoral power do not translate into perceptions of power. Instead, mayoral power is presented as a more complex concept involving interactions with various other actors

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[23] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Sonia M. Ospina and Jennifer Dodge, "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning – the Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 65, No. 2 (March-April 2005).

engaged in local government. Chapter 7 presents a more detailed summary of

the role and expectations of mayors in practice, showcasing how mayors

exercise power in their capacities as political, executive and community leaders.

The final chapter of Part II presents a new model for understanding mayoral

power in Canada, based upon the data presented in the previous chapters. The

chapter argues that the "power" of a Canadian mayor is not found in legislation

or bylaw, and it cannot be understood through traditional institutional categories

("strong mayor" or "weak mayor'"). Instead, the power of mayors in Canada

emerges from being uniquely positioned at the nexus of the network of actors

engaged in local government, and an ability to draw on various resources to

shape, condition, enable or limit the engagement of these actors.

Part III applies this model through a closer examination of the mayoralty in

the City of Toronto. A span of three mayors over 15 years is examined, paying

close attention to the power of each mayor in their work with council,

administration and the community on high profile initiatives during their

respective tenures. The chapter examines Mayor David Miller's quest for

increased power and autonomy for the City of Toronto, Mayor Rob Ford's efforts

to "stop the gravy train" at City Hall, and Mayor John Tory's pursuit of the

SmartTrack commuter rail line. The chapter illustrates a picture of mayoral power

in practice, and offers an example of how the model can be applied to examine

power and governance at the local level.

The study concludes with Chapter 10, revisiting the central research

question about mayoral power, and summarizes the findings of the study.

Traditionally, the power of mayors in Canada has been discounted in the academic literature, as a result of a narrow definition of mayoral power. It is argued that Canadian mayors, in practice, have the capacity to be enormously powerful, but in unexpected and less obvious ways. The study concludes by advancing larger questions about the capacity for effective local leadership in Canada's cities, identifying an agenda for future research.

"You don't understand the job of the mayor!"[24] captures a foundational issue facing cities across Canada: the role of the mayor is confused and misunderstood; simultaneously underestimated and overestimated. This has troubling practical and democratic implications for local government in Canada. This study aims to address outstanding questions about the role and power of mayors, while engaging in important and needed conversations about the leadership of Canada's cities. It is hoped that the findings of this study offer new knowledge about local government and urban politics in Canada to the field of political science, and will be helpful for those engaged in the study of local government, public policy, political science, and related academic fields. The study may assist policy makers engaged in municipal issues, particularly when making decisions which shape the ability of mayors and those engaged in local government to lead in their cities.

Finally, it is hoped that this research is of value to individuals who work closely with mayors – and perhaps even to mayors themselves.

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[24] Toronto City Council Special Meeting, November 18, 2013.

Chapter 2 | THE MAYORALTY IN CANADA

The mayoralty is a global institution, existing on every populated continent and dating back centuries. The term 'mayor' derives from the Latin *maior* or *magnus* – meaning great – and its use dates at least back to the 12th century when the title of 'portreeve' was replaced with 'mayor' for the appointed chief officer of London, England. At the time, the post was considered mostly ceremonial as "the symbolic first citizen of the locality."[25] The term 'mayor' came into use in various jurisdictions at other points in time. Paris was led by a 'provost of the merchants' until the incumbent was shot on the steps of City Hall following the Storming of the Bastille in 1789, and the city's first 'mayor' was elected the following day.

Today, the term 'mayor' generally refers to the highest-ranking local official. In most but not all contexts, the mayor is the head of an elected council or some form of local governance structure. However, there is variation in the role[26] across nations – and often, as in Canada, between sub-national jurisdictions. Some countries have a tradition of appointed mayors, while others

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[25] Colin Copus, *Leading the Localities: Executive mayors in English local governance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 23.

[26] Garrand (2007) states, "[T]he pattern of mayoral government is not unified; mayors exist at different tiers of local government, or share the local political landscape with indirectly elected counterparts; in other states the elected mayor is the only form of local political leadership; and in others only the council-appointed leader exists. Further, mayoral powers, responsibilities, relationships with political parties and influence with government also vary. […] Mayors come to office through a range of voting systems, hold an array of powers and responsibilities, and have a relationship with their council that is party driven by institutional arrangements, partly by cultural and political factors, and partly by the personality of the mayor." (9)

have directly elected mayors,[27] only recently including Britain.[28] Copus

characterizes some nations, such as New Zealand, Canada and Norway, as

having "politically weak" mayors, contrasting them with France, Italy, Germany,

and the United States, where mayors are "politically strong."[29] Italian mayors can

select their own executive body, which can include non-council members, and

have the unilateral ability to appoint or remove members at any time.[30] French

mayors are strong, considered "the locus of local power and decisions."[31]

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[27] According to Copus (2006), several European countries including Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, and South American nations including Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatamala, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela all moved to directly elected mayors in the 1990s.

[28] A distinctive feature of the mayoralty in Britain is the separation between the mayor and the head of council, rendering the position of mayor to be primarily ceremonial in purpose and function. In most British cities and towns, the mayor presides over council meetings but is apolitical and acts in an ambassadorial role. The political head of council, on the other hand, is the leader of the majority party. However, over the past two decades, significant change has occurred. Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'reform agenda' included the introduction of strong, executive and directly elected mayors as a means of promoting interest and understanding of local government. The 2000 *Local Government Act* introduced several changes including a shift towards an executive model of decision making (compared to a committee-based model) with a cabinet of ruling party members, and greater powers over the delivery of services. The *Act* provides that citizens of any county, district or city can, through referendum, select to directly elect their mayors. To date, approximately 30 referendums have been held, and most have decided against the directly electing their mayors. Observers claim this is due to skepticism from sitting councillors, and concerns that consolidating executive power. The City of London is one of community that has opted for direct election and an executive model. On May 7, 1998, 1.2 million people (or 72%) voted in the Greater London Authority Referendum in support of creating a Greater London Authority composed of a directly elected mayor and assembly. London's first elected mayor came into power in 2000 and later defeated by Conservative candidate in 2008. The Mayor of London now holds more executive responsibility, including over strategic planning, emergency services, transport, economic development, and power to create development corporations within the Greater London Authority.

[29] Colin Copus, *Leading the Localities: Executive mayors in English local governance*, 17.

[30] Ibid, 17.

[31] Oliver Borraz, "Mayoral Leadership in France," in Oliver Borraz et al, *Local Leadership and Decision Making: A Study of France, Germany, United States and Britain* (London: LGC Communications, 1994).

Differences aside,[32] Garrand argues the mayoralty has come to be viewed as a

central institution in local government in communities around the world:

> Overall, the mayoralty is a socially and political significant institution. It represents one answer to problems posed by the ever-growing size, complexity and impersonality of towns and cities. Civic heads provide a symbolic centre that can try to give meaning to notions of community in increasingly unpromising urban places. […] They are seen to represent a single direct centre of political authority, with power derived both from how their roles are formally defined and from the ways they manage to use a variety of political resources to expand those roles.[33]

The mayoralty has evolved from a ceremonial role to one often associated with

power, whether real or perceived, and tied to notions of community, local identity

and sense of place. Much can be learned through an examination of literatures

related to the mayoralty, as critical context to inform the study of urban mayors in

Canada. This chapter presents a summary of three distinct but important

literatures: first, a brief overview of the history of the mayoralty in Canada, as a

foundation for understanding the current landscape of Canada's cities; second,

themes from existing academic literature on the mayoralty, from both Canada

and the United States, to understand current knowledge; and third, a summary of

existing models and theories for understanding mayoral power.

History of the Mayoralty in Canada

It is difficult to pinpoint the genesis of the mayoralty in Canadian.[34] Most

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[32] For a helpful summary of the mayoral role by country, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayor

[33] John Garrand, *Heads of the Local State: Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters Since 1800*, 9.

[34] This is, at least in part, because it is difficult to pinpoint the genesis of Canadian local government, and various historic accounts use different starting points. One version of Tindal and Tindal (2004) states a mayor and council were elected in 1647 in the Montreal area as the first

accounts suggest a point of origin in the 18th century. At the time, the lands that would become Canada were composed of British colonies. A new statute in 1793 enabled British-appointed magistrates to convene meetings of local residents in order to select town wardens as "a corporation to represent the whole inhabitants of the parish or township" [35] with some power to act on behalf of their inhabitants and town property.[36] This statute came at a time of rapid population growth. The influx of American Loyalists created a need for increased local services, and a growing number of petitions were advanced to the British government seeking to establish new municipal corporations and increase local autonomy. In 1785, the first municipal corporation in what would become Canada was established in Saint John, New Brunswick.[37]

Perhaps the more significant genesis, however, occurred more than a half-century later with the passing of the *Municipal Corporations Act* (often referred to as 'The Baldwin Act') in 1849.[38] This *Act* "sketched in outline, at least,

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elected local government in what would become Canada. This model was short-lived, viewed to be "a dangerous innovation" by the home government in France, and the mayor and councillors all resigned in 1663. This reference, however, was not found in any other texts. The more common point of origin cited in Canadian local government textbooks is the establishment of the first formally-established municipal corporation in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1785.

[35] Ian MacF. Rogers, *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations* (Toronto: Thomson Reuters Canada Limited, 2009), section 8.1.

[36] It should be noted that the power to legislate remained in the hands of the magistrates, and only wealthy landowners participated in local elections, so they generally held control over how what limited local power was provided would be exercised. The statute also provided local residents to select a town clerk, assessors, collectors and pound keeper.

[37] Andrew Sancton, *Canadian Local Government: An Urban Perspective,* 2nd Edition (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.

[38] 14 years earlier, in 1835, the British Government had passed the *Municipal Corporations Reform Act* in England, allowing for a greater range of affairs to be governed locally and through more democratic means. Many cite this *Act* as the template for the Baldwin Act. The *Municipal*

the framework of the municipal system of Canada as it has since continued today."[39] The *Act* stipulated that heads of council in cities and towns would be called mayors[40] and be selected from within and by the council for a one-year period.[41] It also provided that mayors would hold specific responsibilities: to preside over meetings,[42] to summon special meetings as required,[43] to serve as an *ex officio* Justice of the Peace within the municipal boundary,[44] and to administer oaths.[45] Heads of council could resign at any time and successors would be selected in the same manner in which the departing incumbent was selected.[46] This is the earliest legal foundation for the role of the mayor in Canada, and as identified in Chapter 4, many of these basic tenets of the role remain in place today.

In 1867, the *British North America Act* (now the *Constitution Act, 1867*) established Canada as a constitutional monarchy with continued recognition of the British Crown as its head of state. The Constitution established a presence of the Crown to empower each province, creating a distinct form of federalism with

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Corporations Reform Act provided that mayors would be selected from within elected councils for a one-year period. This same arrangement was included in the Baldwin Act.

[39] Biggar, *Municipal Manual of 1900*, as quoted in Ian MacF. Rogers, *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations*, section 8.1.

[40] *Municipal Corporations Act (Canada),* 1849, section CVII reads, "The Warden of each County shall be the Head of the Municipal Council or Corporation of such County, the Mayor of each City and the Town shall be the head of the Town or Common Council or Corporation of such City or Town respectively, and the Townreeve of each Township and Village, the head of the Municipality or Corporation of such Township or Village respectively."

[41] The Baldwin Act specifies slightly different electoral arrangements depending on the type of municipality.

[42] *Municipal Corporations Act (Canada),* 1849, section XXVII.

[43] Ibid, section LXXXIII.

[44] Ibid, section CIX.

[45] Ibid, section CXIII.

[46] Ibid, section CXI.

largely autonomous provinces. Scholars have described the Crown as Canada's oldest, most pervasive and most important political institution, as the source of power in Canada's political system and the organizing principle of Canadian government.[47] Importantly, however, Canada's Constitution did not reference a local level of government or establish any relationship between local entities and the Crown. Instead, it placed municipal institutions as the responsibility of their respective provinces. Section 92(8) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* enumerates that each province "may exclusively make laws in relation to […] municipal institutions of the province"[48] as well as "generally all matters of a merely local […] nature in the province."[49] As such, while the Crown empowers the actions of the federal and provincial governments, municipalities are empowered through provincial legislation as corporations – quite literally the incorporation of their residents, through statute of their respective provincial governments. This is a profound and often overlooked point. In the words of one legal scholar, "[t]he distinguishing quality of a municipal corporation is its power of loca; the inhabitants, being incorporated, are authorized in their corporate capacity to legislate in respect of matters of local concern."[50]

Today Canada's local governments operate differently from federal and provincial governments in many important respects: municipalities generally

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[47] For an excellent text on the important role of the Crown in Canada, see: David E. Smith, *The Invisible Crown: The First Principle of Canadian Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

[48] Constitution Act, section 92(8).

[49] Ibid, 92(16).

[50] Ian MacF. Rogers, *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations* (Toronto: Thompson Reuters Canada Limited, 2009), section 1.29.

have no separate political legislative and executive branches; there is typically no 'government' in power or official opposition; there is no cabinet or the empowerment of individuals through some form of ministerial responsibility; they are not considered Westminster parliamentary systems, with no separation between a head of state and head of government; the institutions involved in governing are different, typically not involving political parties (and even where parties exist, local political parties are unlike federal and provincial parties in several respects); expectations for openness and transparency are considerably higher at the local level; and, importantly for this study, the process of selecting, electing and empowering leaders is different. Because of the differences between local and other levels of government, the role of the mayor in Canada is distinct from the role of first ministers in federal and provincial governments in many important respects.

Finally, in placing municipal institutions within the purview of the provinces, the Constitution established a framework where Canada would not have a system of municipal government, but rather *systems* of municipal government. The Constitution did not enumerate anything about "municipal institutions" or addressing "matters of a merely local nature" which may have facilitated some degree of consistency across Canada. Instead, municipal government has developed at least somewhat independently in each of Canada's provinces, influenced by the historic evolution, political culture, and

other features unique to each province.[51] The historic evolution of local

government in Canada has produced the current context where the mayoralty is

unique among Canadian political leadership roles, and where it can vary from

province to province, and from city to city – making the Canadian mayoralty a

particularly interesting object of study.

Themes from Current Literature

There is a vast body of media articles, books, blogs, websites, and other

popular content about mayors in Canada. In Canada's largest cities, there is

near daily coverage of the mayor's activities and political positions. National

newspapers feature discussions about mayors,[52] and public figures make regular

commentary about Canadian mayors[53] particularly in the wake of controversy.[54]

A review of academic literature finds a much smaller volume of work. There is

considerably less literature on mayors compared to works on other political

leaders in Canada.[55] Mayors feature as characters in many fields of study

including economic development and urban planning, but surprisingly have not

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[51] For an excellent review of the systems of municipal government in Canada's provinces, see Andrew Sancton and Robert Young, eds, *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[52] For example, see special Globe and Mail feature: Globe Staff ,"Mayors get things done. Should they run the world?" TED Ideas Lab Special Feature in the Globe and Mail, March 15 2014.

[53] For example, see: Richard Florida, "What I Would Change About Mayors in Canada," *Huffington Post*, June 24 2013.

[54] For example, see: Preston Manning, "How to make city mayors 'responsible'," *The Globe and Mail*, July 21 2014; David Mulroney: "Job one for Toronto's next mayor: municipal diplomacy," *The Globe and Mail*, July 20 2014; Stephen Quinn, "Sideshow Rob did Canada's big-city mayors a favour," *The Globe and Mail*, February 28 2014.

[55] David Siegel, Joseph Kushner, and Hanna Stanwick, "Canadian Mayors: A profile and determinants of electoral success," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 10 (June 2001), 539.

been a serious object of study in Canadian political science or local government

fields. What little has been written about mayors is found in textbook chapters,[56]

a small body of work on specific mayors,[57] and a few autobiographical texts.[58]

The most comprehensive description of the role of Canadian mayors is a chapter

by Andrew Sancton in a 1994 book on political leadership in Canada.[59] There are

also a few studies on specific aspects of Canadian mayoralty, including the

electoral determinants of success,[60] the process of recruiting candidates,[61] and

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[56] For example, see: Andrew Sancton, *Local Government in Canada: An Urban Perspective* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), 221-242; and Richard C. Tindal and Susan Nobes Tindal, *Local Government in Canada* (Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson, 2004), 262-264.

[57] See: F. H. Armstrong, "William Lyon Mackenzie, First Mayor of Toronto: A Story of a Critic in Power," in *The Canadian Historical Review* (University of Toronto Press, Vol. XLVIII, No. 4, Dec 1967); Jon Caulfield, *The Tiny Perfect Mayor* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Publishers, 1974); Timothy J. Coulton, *Big Daddy: Frederick G. Gardiner and the Building of Metropolitan Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); Robyn Doolittle, *Crazy Town: The Rob Ford Story* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2014); Brian McKenna and Susan Purcell, *Drapeau* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1980); Allan Levine, ed., *Your Worship: The Lives of Eight of Canada's Most Unforgettable Mayors* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989); Stan Persky, *The House that Jack Built: Mayor Jack Volrich and Vancouver Politics* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1980); Ivor Tossell, *The Gift of Ford: How Toronto's Unlikeliest Man Became Its Most Notorious Mayor* (Toronto: Random House, 2012); and Tom Urbaniak, *Her Worship: Hazel McCallion and the Development of Mississauga* (Toronto: City of Toronto Press, 2009).

[58] See: Nathan Phillips, *Mayor of All The People* (Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1967); John Sewell, *Mackenzie: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2002); Victor R. Russell, *Mayors of Toronto: Volume I 1834-1899* (Erin, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1982).; and Hazel McCallion and Robert Brehl, *Hurricane Hazel: The Life and Times of Hazel McCallion, Canada's Favourite Mayor* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014).

[59] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, edited by Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[60] David Siegel, Joseph Kushner, and Hanna Stanwick, "Canadian Mayors: A profile and determinants of electoral success," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 10 (June 2001), 539-553.

[61] Anthony Long, and Brian Slemko, "The Recruitment of Local Decision-Makers in Five Canadian Cities," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 7 (September 1974), 550-559.

assessments of specific municipal elections.[62] A recent book called *Mayors Gone Bad* by Philip Slayton profiled the antics of some of Canada's most controversial mayors.[63]

The fact that mayors have not been an object of serious study in Canada is symptomatic of a larger issue: namely, that municipal and local government has occupied, historically, only a small part of Canada's political science agenda.[64] It is only within the last few decades that scholars began to study local government in its own right, with early works including Crawford (1954),[65] Plunkett (1968),[66] Rowat (1969),[67] Higgins (1977)[68] and the first edition of a textbook on local government by Tindal and Tindal in 1979.[69] Even today, Canada has only a "handful of urban academics"[70] and much less is known

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[62] For example, see: Joseph Kushner, David Siegel and Hannah Stanwick. "Ontario Municipal Elections: Voting Trends and Determinants of Electoral Success in a Canadian Province." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 30 (1997), 539-553; and, Hannah Stanwick, "A Megamayor for All People? Voting Behavior and Electoral Success in the 1997 Toronto Municipal Election." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 33 (September 2000), 549-568.

[63] Philip Slayton, *Mayors Gone Bad* (Toronto: Viking, 2015).

[64] Zack Taylor and Gabriel Eidelman, "Canadian Political Science and the City : A Limited Engagement," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (43:4, December 2010).

[65] Kenneth G. Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954).

[66] T. J. Plunkett, *Urban Canada and Its Government* (Kingston: Institute of Local Government, Queens University, 1978).

[67] Donald C. Rowat, *The Canadian Municipal System: Essays on the Improvement of Local Government* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

[68] Donald J. H. Higgins, *Urban Canada: Its Politics and Government* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1977).

[69] Richard C. Tindal and Susan Nobes Tindal, *Local Government in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[70] Kennedy Stewart and Patrick J. Smith, "Immature Policy Analysis: Building Capacity in Eight Major Canadian Cities," in Laurent Doubuzinskis, Michael Howlett and David Laycock, eds. *Policy Analysis in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 266.

about decision-making and political behavior at the local level.[71] In the 1980s,

Sancton referred to the study of local politics as an "academic ghetto"[72] and a

2010 paper by Taylor and Eidelman argues "this is perhaps as true today as it

was then."[73] The lack of attention given to local and urban politics within their

field of political science is a serious deficit, particularly given increasing

recognition of the economic and social importance of cities.[74]

 Not only has there been limited academic study of mayors – with need to

develop a literature "almost literally from scratch"[75] – what literature does exist

acknowledges that the responsibilities of mayors in Canada are "vague"[76] and

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[71] Robert Young, "Introduction: Multilevel Governance and Its Central Research Question in Canadian Cities," in Young, Robert, and Martin Horak, eds. *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 3.

[72] Andrew Sancton, "Conclusion: Canadian City Politics in Comparative Perspective," in Warren Magnusson and Anndrew Sancton, eds., *City Politics in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983): 310.

[73] Zack Taylor and Gabriel Eidelman, "Canadian Political Science and the City: A Limited Engagement," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (43:4, December 2010): 976.

[74] This is recognized throughout the literature on cities, local government and urban politics. For example, see: Caroline Andrew et al, *Urban Affairs: Back on the Policy Agenda* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002); Neil Bradford, "Why Cities Matter: Policy Research Perspectives for Canada," Canadian Policy Research Network Discussion Paper, 2002; Alan Broadbent, *Urban Nation: Why We Need to Give Power Back to the Cities to Make Canada Strong* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishing Ltd, 2008); Tom Courchene, "Global Futures for Canada's Global Cities," *Policy Matters (*Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2007); Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); John Lorinc, *The New City: How the Crisis in Canada's Urban Centres is Reshaping the Nation* (Toronto: Penguin, 2006); Mario Polese and Richard Stren, eds., *Social Sustainability of Cities: Diversity and the Management of Change*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 2000); Jeffery M. Sellers, *Governing from Below: Urban Regions and the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); John Sewell, *A New City Agenda* (Toronto: Zephyr, 2004); and, Robert Young and Martin Horak. *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).

[75] Tom Urbaniak, "Studying Mayoral Leadership in Canada and the United States," 206.

[76] James Lightbody, *City Politics, Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 156.

"generally quite unclear."[77] Because the role is ambiguous and undefined, it is

argued that the characteristics of the individual in the role become critical

variables, perhaps more so than in well defined leadership roles:

> Because of the vagueness of their specified powers and duties, their
> relationships with other members of council can vary greatly even within a
> particular city with the occupant of the mayor's chair changes. The extent
> to which a mayor is pre-eminent in council depends much on the
> personality of the particular incumbent. If the mayor has a forceful
> personality and has developed a network of close working relationships
> with other members of council, then the incumbent mayor may acquire
> informally a position of strong leadership in council and be able to
> exercise the powers of a strong chief executive.[78]

This claim that Canadian mayors, because of the vagueness of their role, can

"exercise the powers of a strong executive" [79] is an unpopular view. Rather, the

overarching theme of the Canadian literature is to emphasize the *weakness* of

mayors in Canada. The role of the mayor in Canada is described as "remarkably

limited"[80] with "no *strong mayors* in Canada."[81] Apart from the rights and powers

held by mayors as members of council, their duties are described as being

"primarily administrative in character."[82] Mayors in Canada are often described

as having only 'one vote on council,' as do all other members, and no authority to

act for the city or corporation other than through the authority of the council as a

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[77] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, edited by Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 175.

[78] Donald J. H. Higgins, *Urban Canada: Its Politics and Government* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1977), 96.

[79] Ibid, 96.

[80] Andrew Sancton, *Canadian Local Government: An Urban Perspective,* 228.

[81] Ibid, 228.

[82] Rogers, Ian MacF., *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations*, 153.2.

whole.[83] In some cases, it has been argued that the mayor is actually in an

underprivileged position within council:

> In most Canadian municipalities, mayors preside over meetings and have a special role in determining the agenda, but this gives them little in the way of special advantage. Presiding over council meetings often puts mayors at a disadvantage. In order to contribute to debates, mayors usually have to leave the chair and ask someone else to take over.[84]

Other observers have argued that local institutional arrangements in Canada,

and specifically the position of the mayor within council, can also limit a mayor's

power:

> His power in council is no greater than that of any other member, he can hardly be held to account for action or inaction on the part of his council. Because he does not and cannot act as the head of a party in the council, he has no weapon, comparable to party discipline, to compel support of the measures he proposed. He is also handicapped in giving leadership to his council because some of the other members may be potential competition for the mayoral chair and they may not be anxious to see his proposals succeed.[85]

As a result of their limited power, a common argument is that Canadian mayors

must focus on coalition building and ultimately will be driven to compromise

positions in effort to advance an agenda:

> [T]he mayor's vote is only one, equal in power to each of the other councillors. To accomplish anything like an innovative policy agenda, the mayor must be an astute political leader who devotes time to coalition-building and personality politics. This individual must be prepared to sacrifice the optimal policy (as he or she sees it) to win broader acquiescence for more incremental actions. Otherwise, the mayor will have to be satisfied with occupying the moral high ground while not actually accomplishing anything."[86]

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[83] Ibid, 53.2.

[84] Andrew Sancton, *Canadian Local Government: An Urban Perspective,* Second Edition (Don Mills Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2015), 230.

[85] Kenneth Grant Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government,* 56.

[86] James Lightbody, *City Politics, Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 156.

As this statement illustrates, the literature in Canada is not optimistic about the ability of Canadian mayors to lead their councils or drive agendas in their cities. Given that local political parties or other formal coalitions are absent in most cities in Canada (at least, on the surface), councils consist of individuals who often hold varied perspectives and are not necessarily organized around any shared ideology or agenda. The role of the mayor, as a head of a group of this nature, has been referenced as akin to "herding cats."[87]

Where does the idea that Canadian mayors are "weak" come from? Given the limited literature on Canadian mayors, what has been written borrows heavily from the American literature and is necessarily comparative. The American "strong/weak" mayor typology is a core concept that has been adopted widely into the Canadian literature and local government lexicon,[88] but often without critical discussion of its meaning or applicability to local government in Canada. Given the pervasive influence of these terms, and their centrality to this study, a review of their original context is warranted.

America has an established tradition of defining its forms of local government, dating back to the late nineteenth century.[89] Today there are at

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[87] Richard C. Tindal and Susan Nobes Tindal, *Local Government in Canada* (Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson, 2004), 102.

[88] Interestingly, the term 'weak mayor' was also used by participants in most of the interviews conducted with politicians, administrators and community leaders for this study.

[89] A 1925 book on American City Government suggests there was little interest in local government structures in Colonial America. "[Municipal] activities and the forms of their government did not greatly concern Colonial authorities […] Their powers and functions as then construed were strictly local and largely 'private'" (Anderson, 283). By the mid nineteenth century, however, increasing complexity and cost of local government led to an interest in defining and evaluating forms of government. Some sources point to the establishment of the National Municipal League in 1895, created in part to establish a model city charter, as a departure point

least four common forms of local government in the United States: the mayor-council system, the council-manager system, the commission system, and the town meeting system.[90] There are variants of all four. Almost all local governments in the United States today use one of the first two – the mayor-council form (34%) and the council-manager form (55%).[91]

The mayor-council model is a longstanding form of local government in America.[92] In 1895, the National Municipal League was established, partly in effort to address mounting corruption in local government. The initial task of the League involved developing a "model city charter," first published in 1899, to promote transparency and accountability in local government. The charter envisioned a separation of executive (mayor) and legislative (council) powers, in effort to introduce the "checks and balances" of the federal system into local government.[93] The charter envisioned democratically elected mayors with responsibility for the administration of local government services, including appointing all department heads. Direct election, a separation of powers, and concentrated executive power were viewed as steps towards greater accountability to the public, protection from corruption, and independence from

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for national-scale discussions about forms of government (Ridley and Notling 1934). A 1938 article states, "In recent years a great deal of emphasis has been placed upon improvements in form of government. In numerous instances, reformers have insistent that a change from an existing form of city government […] would solve the city's governmental problems. […] While a form of government of recognized merit may not be considered a panacea for the many ills which beset our municipalities, it is nevertheless important" (Phillips, 91).

[90] For a helpful overview each form, see: National League of Cities, "Forms of Local Government." Available online: www.nlc.org/resource/cities-101-forms-of-local-government.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ridley and Notling 1934, 1; Phillips: 1938, 93.

[93] Ridley and Notling 1934, 1; Svara 1994, xxi.

business interests.[94] The "model city charter" established the basic blueprint for the mayor-council form of government that remains in many cities today.

By the early twentieth century, the need for and complexity of municipal services was rapidly expanding. As the nation urbanized and innovations in technology – including electric lights, motor vehicles and machines – altered the functions of local government, a more "professional" approach to municipal administration was desired.

> Modern city government thus became a great business enterprise calling for administrative ability and leadership at a high order and a greater variety of skilled and technical workers than found in any private enterprise of similar size. […] The theory that democracy depended upon the diffusion of power among many officials elected for a short time became increasingly impracticable and gradually disappeared with the rapid growth and complexity of urban life in general and of municipal services in particular.[95]

These conditions led to the emergence of the council-manager form of government. In 1905, a University of Chicago professor advocated for the hiring of a professional manager to oversee administration and establish the budget. This idea became popular with the United States Chamber of Commerce due to its "businesslike" model, where voters (viewed as akin to shareholders) select a council (akin to directors) who appoint a manager (akin to the chief executive) to oversee operations.[96] In 1908, the Council of Staunton, Virginia appointed a "general manager" and delegated authority over day-to-day administration of municipal services to the manager. In 1914, eight general managers from cities

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[94] Schragger 2006, 2547.
[95] Ridley and Notling 1934, 4.
[96] Rabin and Dodd 1985, 23.

across the United States met and formed what would later become the

International City Managers' Association (ICMA). In 1915, the National Municipal

League modified its model city charter to reflect the design of what has now

become known as council-manager form. By the 1930s, more than 440

American cities had adopted this form.[97] The council-manager form is now the

predominant form of local government in the United States.[98] This model is

based on a principle of unity. Power is concentrated in a legislative body (council

as a whole), which controls the executive (led by an appointed professional

manager, not the mayor).[99] There are no "checks and balances" in this form as

the appointed manager serves at the pleasure of the council, and has no power

to "check" the council.[100] A comparison of the mayor-council and council-

manager forms of local government is presented in Table 1.

There are variants within both (and other) forms of local government –

including, notably, based on the role of the mayor. The terms "strong mayor" and

"weak mayor" refer to variants of the mayor-council form, reflecting the extent to

which executive authority is concentrated in the mayor. A mayor-council "strong

mayor" has extensive executive authority including the ability to appoint and

dismiss staff, prepare budgets, and direct the efforts of departments. A "weak

mayor" is characterized by a fragmentation of power, a more limited ability to

appoint or remove staff (as some are directly elected and/or appointed by other

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[97] Ridley and Notling 1934, 7.
[98] National League of Cities, "Forms of Local Government."
[99] Svara and Watson 2010.
[100] Svara 1994

Table 1: Comparison of mayor-council and council-manager forms of government

Mayor-Council Form[101]	Council-Manager Form
Based on principle of separation of powers	Based on unitary principle
Often described as similar to American national and state government	Often described as similar to parliamentary systems, and somewhat similar to corporate governance models
Mayor is directly elected	Mayor often chosen from among elected Council, or can be directly elected
Mayor oversees administration – and can have "strong" or "weak" powers depending on authority to oversee administration, make policy, and set the budget	Council oversees administration, makes policy and sets the budget
Can appoint a professional manager who reports to the mayor	Appointment of a professional manager who reports to council
Second most common form; often found in very small or older, larger cities (eg. New York, Houston, Salt Lake City)	Most common form; growing in popularity, particularly with populations over 10,000 (eg. Phoenix, San Antonio)

officials), and a more limited role in preparing the budget. "Weak mayors" are those in mayor-council forms who lack integrated administrative control over the operation of city government.[102]

Although many mayor-council cities have "strong mayors" and many council-manager cities have "weaker" mayors, the terms "weak mayor" and "council-manager" are not synonymous. Similarly, "strong mayor" and "mayor-council" are not synonymous. This is a common misconception, acknowledged in

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[101] Chart adapted from Svara 1994; Svara 2009; Watson and Svara 2010; and National League of Cities, "Forms of Local Government."
[102] Svara 1990, 47

the American literature as well.[103] Generally "strong" and "weak" refer to the

extent of power held by mayors within mayor-council systems:

> The terms *strong* and *weak* should only be used to refer to variations in
> the mayor-council form, where mayors have formal powers over other
> participants in the governmental process but vary in the extent of these
> powers. The terms are often used inappropriately to distinguish between
> the mayor-council mayor and council-manager mayor, who does not have
> such formal powers. Their use is inappropriate because mayors cannot be
> measured on a single scale that extends from strong to weak.[104]

In some cases, the "strong" and "weak" mayor variants of the mayor-council

system are positioned as being different enough to be described as distinct

forms of local government. Rabin and Dodd describe three variants of the mayor-

council system, including "weak mayor-council," "strong-mayor council" and

"strong mayor-council with CEO."[105] New York State legislation describes

"council-manager," "strong mayor-council," and "weak mayor-council" as distinct

options for New York local governments in their respective charters.[106] Some

authors identify variants of the council-manager form depending on the power of

the mayor, including Hansell's "council-manager with empowered mayor"

variant.[107] To add to the confusion, numerous hybrids between the forms and

other variants have been established over time (or in the clever words of Phillips

in 1938, "a certain amount of pioneering has been done"[108]). Observers note a

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[103] Svara 1994.

[104] Svara 1994, xxii

[105] Rabin and Dodd, 1985, 23.

[106] New York Department of State, "Local Government Handbook," 6th Edition, Published in 2009.

[107] Hansell 1998; DeSantis and Renner 2002.

[108] Phillips, 1938.

"general convergence" of forms over the past several decades,[109] with the

distinction between them growing increasingly blurry.[110] Some have argued that,

in practice, differences between forms are more apparent than real,[111] and

established terminology may be falling out of fashion. In the words of one

American city manager, "we don't really say 'weak mayor' anymore. Mayors

don't like it. We say strong council." [112]

    If one were to look for a similar discussion on the forms of Canadian local

government and their evolution throughout history, the search would be met with

great disappointment. While there is recognition throughout the literature that the

form and function of local government varies across Canada – in terms of

structure, size and scale, powers and authority, responsibilities, institutional

features such as the presence or absence of political parties, and more – there is

no established nomenclature to distinguish one "form" of Canadian local

government from another. Instead, the Canadian local government literature

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[109] DeSantis and Renner 2002, 95.

[110] Renner 1998; Boynton and DeSantis 1990; Frederickson and Johnson 2001).

[111] In the words of Lockard, "It is sometimes said that the difference between mayor-council and manager-council government is that the former retains the traditional American principle of separation of powers and that the latter system has legislative supremacy. The reasoning is that the mayor stands in somewhat the same theoretical position as a governor of the President, both of whom deal with a separate legislative body in a government where both branches have independent authority and neither is subordinate to the other. […] This distinction is more apparent than real. On one hand, specialization of governmental tasks has produced in the British government a sharp separation of actual power between the executive and the legislative elements of government, the classic interpretation of the British government notwithstanding. By the same token, it is nonsense to talk of American government at the national or state level as if the executive and legislative branches were islands apart. […] Exactly the same thing can be said of mayor-council relationships. True, they are apart in a sense […] but they must share power not only between themselves but with other governmental elements and with nongovernmental elements so they all bargain, deploy, and maneuver in the making of public policy. So too with managers and their councils" (1969, 142).

[112] Conversation with researcher at ICMA Conference, October 2015.

tends to borrow American terminology and concepts, despite their contested meanings, often with limited discussion about their applicability in a Canadian context. There are references throughout the literature – including in textbooks and articles – that Canada generally employs the "council-manager" form of government,[113] and has a "weak mayor system." A strict interpretation of these terms in context, however, would find such references inconsistent. The term "weak mayor" or "weak mayor system" refer to a variant of the mayor-council form of government, which is not present in Canada. Therefore, and as this author has argued elsewhere, [114] the term "weak mayor" is not ideally suited to describe the mayoralty in Canada. In addition to being technically inaccurate, the term loses its relative meaning in a Canadian context, as there are no "strong mayors" on the spectrum. Most importantly, it reflects a narrow definition of mayoral power by privileging the formal-legal dimensions of power. In the words of one Canadian observer, "while the legislation does not on its face appear to create a "strong mayor system," it has generally been the case that a head is in a position to be as "strong"[115] as he or she has the desire or ability to be."[116] As this study will illustrate, a closer examination of mayoral power in Canada

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[113] Plunkett, 1968; Fenn and Siegel, 2007.

[114] Kate Graham, "Does Canada have a 'weak mayor' system?" Paper presented to the Canadian Political Science Association, Toronto Ontario, May 2017.

[115] As articulated here, the term "strong mayor" refers to a variant of the mayor-council system of government, which is not present in Canada. It is technically inaccurate, in most cases, to use the term "strong mayor" (or "weak mayor") in a Canadian context. However, both terms were used by interview participants and are found throughout the Canadian local government literature. These terms are used throughout this dissertation in quotation marks ("_") to remind the readers that these terms are coined expressions, rather than technically precise terms.

[116] George Rust-D'Eye, *Handbook for Municipal Councillors* (Toronto: Thomson Reuters Canada Limited, 2010), pg 23.

reveals a more complex and varied picture than what the universal application of the term "weak mayor" or "weak mayor system" in Canada would suggest.

Theories of the Mayoralty

A number of studies over time have examined dimensions of the mayoralty[117] and established models or theories by which to understand it. In 1963, Duane Lockard advanced a model focused on mayoral leadership styles. He argued that mayors fell into one of the following categories: Stooge, the 'front man' of a political machine or power structure; Reformer, a leader who seeks office to end corruption or make government more 'business like'; Program Politician, an activist seeking to implement particular policies; or, Evader, who avoids conflict after becoming frustrated with council or the bureaucracy.[118] In 1974, Kotter and Lawrence engaged a panel of 20 mayors who had held office for more than four years and developed the 'Coalignment Model' which argues that mayors able to align processes such as agenda setting and network building with the formal structures of government and nature of the city are most successful. Their model identified five leadership styles in mayors: Ceremonial,

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[117] Alexander L. George, "Political Leadership in American Cities," *Daedalus* v. 97 (Fall 1968); James V. Cunningham, *Urban Leadership in the Sixties* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1970); John P. Kotter and Paul R. Lawrence, *Mayors in Action* (New York: Wiley, 1974); Charles H. Levine, *Racial Conflict and the American Mayor* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1974); Douglas Yates, *The Ungovernable City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977); Paul R. Eberts, "How Mayors Get Things Done: Community Politics and Mayors' Initiatives," *Research in Urban Policy* v. 1 (1985), 39-70; Barbara Ferman, *Governing the Ungovernable: Political Skill, Leadership and the Modern Mayor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985); James H. Svara, *Official Leadership in the City: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Oxford University press, 1990).
[118] Duane Lockard, *The Politics of State and Local Government* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 413-427.

Table 2: Yates' model of mayoral leadership

	High Activism / Innovation	Low Activism / Innovation
Strong Political Power Base	Entrepreneur	Boss
Weak Political Power Base	Crusader	Broker

Caretaker, Personality / Individualist, Executive and Program Entrepreneur.[119] In 1984, Yates argued in *The Ungovernable City* that local governments are fundamentally incapable of producing coherent decisions and effective policies due to decentralization in local institutions, dependence on higher levels of government, and the nature of issues faced in modern cities. Yates was equally pessimistic about the capacity for mayors to act as effective local leaders, standing "at the centre of the city's reactive, unstable policy making system […] faced with the unenviable task of making an increasingly ungovernable city governable."[120] His model, presented in Table 2, argues that mayors vary along two dimensions: (1) the amount of political and financial resources they possess, and (2) the degree of activism and innovation displayed in their work. These two dimensions produce a typology of four 'styles' of mayors: the Crusader, low in power and high in activism, who must govern through the force of symbolic politics and personality; the Entrepreneur, strong in power and high in activism, who advances large scale projects and consolidates political support; the Boss,

[119] John P. Kotter and Paul R. Lawrence, *Mayors in Action* (New York: Wiley, 1974).
[120] Douglas Yates, *The Ungovernable City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1984), 146.

strong in political power and low in activism, who assumes a passive attitude towards problem solving but can use political resources to maintain political control; and the Broker, weak in power and low in activism, who accepts the limitations of their power and aims to balance conflicts and interests.[121]

In 1994, Andrew Sancton provided a Canadian perspective on Yates' model. In a chapter on mayors in a book on political leaders in Canada, Sancton argued that because Canadian mayors lack executive power, most fall into Yates' broker category:

> A much more common Canadian response to the absence of power is to act as a broker, working behind the scenes to mobilize support for incremental change. […] They understand the limitations of their office, but they also realize that they are uniquely placed to bring conflicting parties together. […] How skillfully he or she can do so – in the almost complete absence of any established procedures – will likely determine his or her success as a local political leader.[122]

Sancton points to specific examples of Canadian mayors which could be classified as entrepreneurs, but generally argues that the boss and entrepreneur styles are not applicable to mayors in Canada.[123] Sancton's chapter instead describes the role of Canadian mayors as comprising multiple concurrent roles, including as leaders of communities, as leaders within government organizations, and as leaders of political parties.[124]

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[121] Ibid, 147.

[122] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, edited by Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 185-186.

[123] Douglas Yates, *The Ungovernable City,* 185-186.

[124] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders."

Another important contribution is the work of James Svara, an American political scientist with particular interest in the role of the mayor in cities with a council-manager form of government. Svara criticizes the American literature for focusing too heavily on the role of the mayor in mayor-council environments without an appreciation for how the role varies with structure. "When the preconditions of mayoral leadership are assumed to include formal authority over staff and financial resources, it is common to view the mayor in council-manager cities as an incomplete figurehead who fills only ceremonial functions."[125] He argues the "nonexecutive mayor" occupies a strategic location in his relationship with council, the city manager and public agencies. Figure 1,[126] locating the

Figure 1: Svara's mayor in council-manager cities interactions model
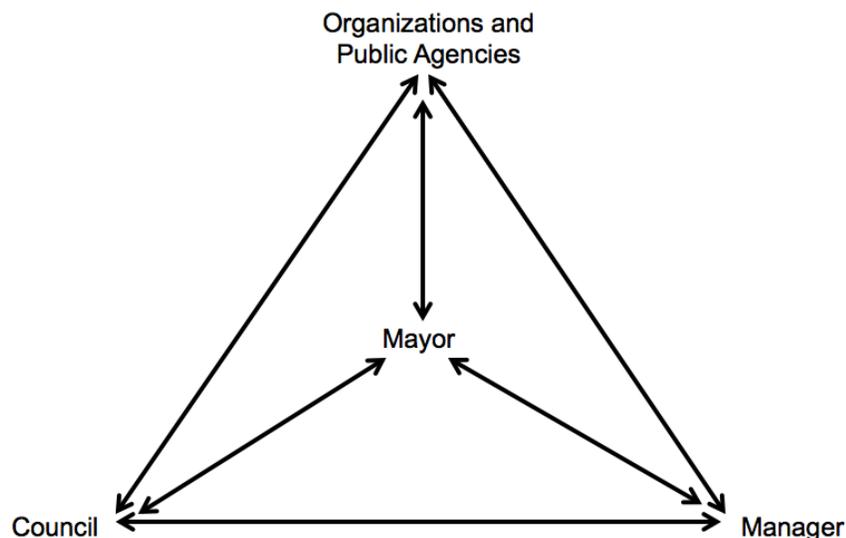
[125] Svara, *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall,* 5.
[126] James H. Svara, "Mayors in Council-Manager Cities: Recognizing the Leadership Potential," *National Civic Review* vol. 75 (September/October 1986).

mayor within this network of actors, first appeared in a 1986 *National Civic Review* article. Svara identifies the common activities involved in each set of relationship: ceremonial activities and official representation in the relationship with organizations and public agencies; serving as presiding officer and leading discussions in the relationship with council; providing agenda setting guidance and serving in an "official head" capacity in the relationship with the city manager.[127] Svara argues that the mayor is uniquely positioned to advance the coordination of the individuals and groups engaged in local government:

> By virtue of this favoured position, the mayor is able to tap into various communications networks among elected officials, governmental staff and community leaders. Although they can and do interact with each other independently, the mayor can transmit message better than anyone else in the government because of the breadth of his knowledge and range of contacts he or she is likely to have. In doing so, the mayor has a unique potential to expand the level of understanding and improve the coordination among participants in the government as a whole.[128]

Svara challenges the notion that "nonexecutive" or council-manager mayors are powerless; he argues they play a different role that is equally central to effective administration of local government. He describes mayor-council mayors as the 'driving force' of local governments, and council-manager mayors are the 'guiding force' with capacity to improve the performance of the entire system:

> This office is important (if not crucial) to the city government's operation, but what the mayor can do beyond filling ceremonial roles has been largely unrecognized. To be sure, the government may operate adequately with minimal leadership from the mayor, given the formal features of council-manager government and assuming a cooperative pattern of interaction among officials. […] An active and effective mayor, however, can elevate the performance of other officials and the

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[127] Svara, *Official Leadership in the City* (1990), 96-97.
[128] Ibid, 97.

government system as a whole. The mayor's roles are to foster communication and facilitate effective interaction among other officials and to provide a greater sense of purpose to city government. In this sense, the mayor is a *guiding force* in city government.[129]

Svara charts the various tasks and responsibilities of "nonexecutive" mayors, and his later work includes substantive quantitative analysis drawing upon survey data on the degree to which mayors are viewed to provide each articulated duty. A later text provides detailed case studies illuminating how the "nonexecutive" mayor role varies in practice.[130]

The common element across these models and theories is recognition that the role of the mayor is fundamentally *relational* – that is, it is defined through its association or connection to other actors engaged in local government. Yates' model sorts mayors based on the strength of their political power base. Sancton defines mayors as brokers with recognition of their limited formal power, but unique positioning to bring conflicting parties together. Svara defines mayors based on their interactions with council, the administration, and community organizations and actors. This is consistent with the broader pluralist tradition and community power literature, where power resources are dispersed across actors. The mayoralty does not exist as an isolated institution of location government; rather, it is a position that is deeply embedded within the institutions of local government. The study of mayoral power in Canada requires a broader examination of mayors that considers their institutional and organizational environment, and relationships with other actors engaged in local government.

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[129] Ibid, 82.
[130] Svara, *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall* (2009).

Conclusion

The mayoralty is a global institution which has evolved over time from a ceremonial or symbolic role to one which is associated with power, whether real or perceived. In Canada, mayors are unique among political leaders as a result of the historic evolution of local government in Canada. Mayors are distinct from other leaders in many important respects, and because Canada has multiple systems of local government, the role can vary by city. The Canadian literature, albeit limited, emphasizes the weakness of Canadian mayors. The terms "weak mayor" and "weak mayor system" have had a pervasive influence over how Canadian mayors are understood, despite the contested nature of these terms. Technically, Canada does not have "weak mayors," as the term refers to a variation of the mayor-council form of government. More importantly, this term reflects a narrow definition of mayoral power based on executive authority. Past examinations of mayoral leadership and power recognize the relational dimension of the role, and examine mayors within their broader institutional and organizational environment. This literature review offers foundational knowledge and insight to inform the study of mayoral power in Canada, but a number of important questions remain. What is "mayoral power" in a Canadian context, and how does it relate to other key concepts such as leadership, authority and influence? How can it be studied in Canada's cities? The next chapter begins to explore these questions, outlining the methodological approach of this study.

Chapter 3 | RESEARCH QUESTION, METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

It is said that the ideal way to approach social research begins with a problem, rather than a methodology.[1] This study takes this advice. It confronts a very real problem: that the role of Canada's urban mayors is unclear, and basic assumptions about mayoral power are contested and confused. This study applies multiple methods for an inductive exploration into mayoral power in a sample of Canadian cities. This chapter presents a summary of the methodological approach: first, a discussion of the research question and scope of study; second, an examination of key concepts such as "power," "leadership," "influence," and "authority" with a discussion on how these terms are understood and explored for the purposes of this study; third, a summary of the research approach and case selection method; and, finally, an overview of the methods applied in the three substantive sections (Parts I, II and III) of the investigation.

Research Question

This project investigates the power of Canadian mayors. The central research question of this study is: *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities?* The question clearly locates the context for the study: cities in Canada. However, even this can be a challenged concept. The term 'city' can mean a type of municipality; a legal entity; a geography contained

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[1] Ian Shapiro, *The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 212.

within a municipal boundary; or, an urbanized area spanning multiple municipal boundaries. Cities can be understood as political entities, defined by legally constituted geographic boundaries; or, as economic entities, where the geographic concentration of economic activity is often not contained within the legal boundaries of a municipality. The City of Toronto as a municipality includes a population of nearly three million people and its boundary is defined in provincial legislation. However, the name 'Toronto' is also a brand for a much larger metropolitan area, with upwards of six million residents and a greatly contested geographic boundary.[2] Statistics Canada delineates urban areas in Canada in several different ways: census metropolitan areas, which includes the largest urban regions in Canada; census agglomeration, a smaller population category than a census metropolitan area which includes fewer people living in the area defined as the 'urban core'; census subdivisions, which generally correspond to municipal boundaries; and, a recently renamed category called population centres.[3] Adding to the complexity, each Canadian province has its own legislation establishing the structure of municipalities in that province. Some include 'city' as a legal category in their municipal legislation, often with a minimum population requirement – although not the same population requirement – while other provinces do not use 'city' at all.

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[2] The term 'Greater Toronto Area' (GTA) has recently been replaced by the term 'Greater Toronto – Hamilton Area' (GTHA) in some provincial documents and programs.

[3] The 'population centre' category, introduced in 2011, further differentiates between 'small population centres' which have a population between 1,000 to 29,999 residents; 'medium population centres' which have a population between 30,000 to 99,999 residents; and 'large urban population centres' which have a population of 100,000 and over.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'Canadian city' refers to an urban municipality. The mayoralty is a defined role within municipal government, and mayors are directly elected by the residents living in the area defined by the legal geographic boundaries of a municipality. However, there are cases where mayors have formal roles in different geographic territories than those of their municipalities – for example, mayors who have leadership roles within regional governance structures – and these occurrences will be noted. Regardless, for the purpose of this study, the term 'city' refers to an urban municipality with an elected mayor.

The research question calls for an exploration of *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities* (urban municipalities). Importantly, this is a different question from *what factors shape the power of Canadian mayors?* The latter question would call for an investigation of the power of urban mayors as a collective. There is evidence to suggest that when mayors work together to influence extra-municipal policy changes or otherwise, they can be effective.[4] However, the focus of this study is on examining the power of urban mayors within their respective cities. In some cases, as

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[4] A recent and notable example of the collective power of mayors occurred during the 2015 federal election. A group called the Big City Mayors Caucus (BCMC), a committee of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities including the mayors of 22 specified cities with a collective population of 22 million Canadians, led an advocacy campaign called *Vote For Cities*. The campaign urged each federal party to commit to dedicated, predicable funding for transit, housing and economic development. FCM maintained a website which tracked party platforms and leader speeches reflecting commitments (or otherwise) related to the campaign's priorities. A parallel *Hometown Proud* campaign ran in communities across Canada to build awareness. The Liberal Party of Canada's platform reflected the strongest commitment to *Vote for Cities* priorities, and many BCMC mayors spoke to endorse their local candidates and leaders. The Liberal Party was elected with a sweeping majority, as the result of many factors, and a number of BCMC's advocacy items are being implemented.

referenced in Part II, mayors often engage with actors outside of their municipalities – for example, federal and provincial political leaders or national organizations – and often do so in effort to accomplish something on behalf of their city. Their individual ability to exercise power beyond local government in their own community can be an important part of the role of the mayor, and therefore is in scope for this study.

A number of related research questions were considered during the process of establishing and conducting this study. What is the role of the mayor, and why does it vary? Are mayors equipped to accomplish what Canadians expect of them? What resources do mayors need to do their jobs, and are they provided with them? What limits mayors from leading cities? Does Canada have "weak" mayors? Why are some mayors on the winning side of most council decisions, and other mayors are not? Which mayors in Canada are most powerful, and why? Do mayors need "strong mayor" powers to lead in Canada's cities? Does limited authority constrain the ability of Canada's urban mayors to lead? Each of these questions was considered, and many will be addressed to an extent in the study to follow. The research question, *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities*, was ultimately selected[5] because

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[5] The research question as the project progressed. Initially, the study was established to investigate the role of mayors in Canada ("what is the role of the mayor in Canada's cities, and how and why does it vary?"). This was rejected after some time examining "the role" and finding limited variation in how the role was defined. The more important question seemed to be about understanding mayoral power, particularly how it is exercised and experienced in practice. A question asking "how powerful" are urban mayors was engaged. Following the dissertation exam process, the question was further clarified and articulated as "what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities?"

it drives at the most foundational debate surrounding the mayoralty in Canada: mayors in Canada are frequently described in universal terms as being "weak" with limited power, and yet the public believe their mayors are powerful.[6] It may be that there is truth in both sentiments, but the way mayoral power is conceived and evaluated in each context is different. More importantly, the question engages an enduring debate about the factors shaping power – specifically, the relative importance of institutional variables compared to the agency of political actors. Given the largely undefined nature of the mayoralty in Canada, this question investigates the core of conflicting assumptions about the concept and variables shaping mayoral power itself.

So what is 'mayoral power,' and how can it be studied?

Key Concepts

The term 'power' comes from the Latin *potere*, which simply means 'to be able'. Over centuries, volumes have been written spanning academic disciplines with various conceptions and definitions: key distinctions between 'power to' and 'power over'; explorations of power as a property, a relation, a structure, or social order; distinctions between the core concepts of power, influence, control, and authority; studies where power is observed only when exercised, and where is it understood as a capacity which may or may not be exercised; examinations of the 'faces' of power'[7] and 'bases' of power;[8] 'soft power' and 'hard power.'[9] There

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[6] See Appendix B.
[7] Stephen Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1974).

is no universal definition of power,[10] and the meaning of the term can vary considerably by context.[11] Dahl unceremoniously described the study of power as a "bottomless swamp."[12] The community power literature of the 1950s and 1960s provides more focus by examining power within the urban realm, including key contributions in Hunter's study of Atlanta,[13] Dahl's study of New Haven,[14] Bachrach and Baratz's study of Baltimore,[15] and Crenson's comparative study of two communities in Indiana.[16] The community power literature, consistent with the broader pluralist tradition, understands power to be unevenly distributed among many actors within a community; as "a relation among people"[17] which can include individuals, groups, governments, nations and any other human-based organization. Stone's work in the 1970s and 1980s added to this literature. Stone built on the work on Bachrach and Baratz's "two faces of power"

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[8] John R. P. French Jr., and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in D. Cartwright, ed. *Studies in Social Power* (Oxford: University of Michigan Press, 1959).

[9] Joseph Nye, *The Power to Lead* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[10] Haugaard (2002) offers an excellent reader on conceptions of power in political and social theory, and provides a helpful diagram locating the work of modern authors such as Dalh, Bachrach and Baratz, Lukes, Foucaut and Poulantzas within the traditions dating back to Aristotle, Machiavelli, Neitzche, Weber, and Marx.

[11] The 'family resemblance' concept, stemming from philosophers Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, is often referenced in surveys of literature on power to illustrate how the meaning of the word 'power' can change so significantly depending on its the context that there may or may not be any single property which applies across all contexts.

[12] Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* (Vol, 2, No. 3, July 1957), 201.

[13] Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

[14] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

[15] Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[16] Matthew A. Crenson, *The Un-Politics of Air Pollution: A Study of Non-Decision Making in the Cities* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971).

[17] Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* (Vol, 2, No. 3, July 1957), 203.

argument[18] and developed a broader conceptualization of power as "the capacity to affect the context within which decisions are made."[19] Stone took a particular interest in "systemic power" biasing political actors and systems to favour certain interests over others:

> Policy is made and power is exercised within a structured set of relationships. These relationships are neither neutral nor easily changed. They confer advantages and disadvantages on various groups in the local community in the form of preferences and predispositions of leading local officials.[20]

Stone's later work further explored this notion of systemic power relations in his now classic study of Atlanta, where he identified patterns of decision making where major public policies that had little broad support but benefited key actors were consistently implemented. Stone's concept of 'urban regimes' – the informal arrangements by which government organizations and private interests function together in carrying out local governance[21] – has since become a dominant theory in the study of in urban politics. The extent to which urban

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[18] Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, *Power and Poverty: Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[19] Clarence Stone, *Economic growth and neighbourhood discontent: System bias in the urban renewal program of Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976), 20.

[20] Ibid, 17.

[21] Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).

regime theory applies in Canada has been challenged,[22] including through one study of Mayor Hazel McCallion in Mississauga.[23]

Given the numerous ways in which power can be conceived, it is not surprising that the ways power has been studied are also varied. Dahl's study of New Haven[24] from 1961 examined social characteristics and backgrounds of mayors over nearly 200 years. He concluded a broader argument that New Haven gradually changed from oligarchy to pluralism, with power becoming increasingly distributed among a greater number of actors over time. Dahl traces distinct periods: where mayors were almost exclusively drawn from patrician families, from 1784 to 1842; where mayors were "self-made men of business, the entrepreneurs" who governed from 1842 to 1900; and a third period where people from working class families or immigrant origins came into power, where "popularity was divorced from both wealth and social position by the influx of immigrants, and public office went to the ex-plebes, who lacked wealth and social position but had the advantage of numbers."[25] Dahl examined how power was exercised within a pluralist lens, finding a number of patterns of interaction

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[22] Timothy Cobban, "The political economy of urban development: Downtown revitalization in London, Ontario, 1993-2002," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* (Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2003), 231-49; Christopher Leo, "Are there urban regimes in Canada? Reply to Timothy Cobban," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* (Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2003), 344-8; Timothy Cobban, "A Reply to Christopher Leo," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* (Vol. 12, No. 2, Winter 2003), 349-53.

[23] Thomas J. Urbaniak, "Beyond Regime Theory: Mayoral Leadership, Suburban Development, and the Politics of Mississauga, Ontario," PhD Thesis, University of Western Ontario (2005).

[24] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

[25] Dahl, *Who Governs?*, 11.

evident within his single case study of New Haven over time.[26] For Dahl, power was about the ability to influence decisions and outcomes to desired ends. He considered the "power resources" held by mayors and others, such as wealth, skill, information, connections and social standing as important to exercise influence.

Twenty-five years later, Ferman's *Governing the Ungovernable City* examines the time in office of two mayors, from Boston and San Francisco. She argues that, over time, mayors have become subject to greater demands for action, and yet have fewer political resources – citing fragmentation and decentralization of local government institutions, increased state and federal interest in local matters, and an anti-power bias in American political culture as the cause of this shift.[27] Ferman investigates how mayors can acquire power, informed by 123 interviews over a two-year period. She argues that while the mayors used different strategies to acquire power, ultimately mayoral power was defined through interplay of institutional and personal interests:

> Power is necessary to govern, but developing that power often comes at a price. Many of these costs seem to result from the structure of urban institutions. Municipal reforms tend to weaken, and in many cases, remove, the institutional checks on power. This weakness, combined with the mayor's need to acquire, often leads to power being developed for its own sake. The fine line between necessary power and self-aggrandizing power is lost and there are no institutional mechanisms to reinstate it.[28]

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[26] Dahl examined several policy areas, and found several patterns of interaction: executive-centered "grand coalition of coalitions," coalitions of chieftans, and rival sovereignties engaging in conflict.

[27] Barbara Ferman, *Governing the Ungovernable City: Political Skill, Leadership and the Modern Mayor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 4-5.

[28] Barbara Ferman, *Governing the Ungovernable City*, x.

Unlike Dahl, where power is exercised through the process of governing and is defined by resources of individuals engaged in governing, for Ferman power is vested in institutions – including the mayoralty – and shaped by the interests of individuals.

A frequently referenced approach to understanding and studying power, from the field of sociology, is French and Raven's Bases of Social Power (1959).[29] For French and Raven, the phenomenon of power involves "a dyadic relation between two agents"[30] which can be observed by examining individuals upon whom power is exerted. The exercise of power can translate into changes in the behaviors, opinions, attitudes, goals, needs, values and otherwise of another person. They identify five common and important "bases" of power: (1) reward power, the perception that one individual has the ability to offer rewards or benefits to the other; (2) coercive power, the perception that one individual can mediate punishments for the other; (3) legitimate power, a perception that one person has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for another person; (4) referent power, based on a person's interest in a closeness or association with another, and (5) expert power, based on the perception that one person has special knowledge or expertise.[31] A later paper by Raven added a sixth category: informational power, the belief that one person has more information than the

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[29] John R. P. French, Jr. and Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in Social Power* (Oxford: University of Michigan, 1959).
[30] Ibid, 151.
[31] Ibid, 151-155.

other.[32] French and Raven's model has been applied in numerous settings, and is one of the most widely cited analysis of power.[33]

In the 1980s, Joseph Nye coined the term "soft power" in a book on American foreign policy,[34] referring to the ability to accomplish objectives by co-opting, attracting or influencing others. This was contrasted to "hard power" as the use of payment or coercion to accomplish preferred outcomes. Nye defines power as "the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers"[35] and understands it as a broad term which includes levers such as influence, authority, persuasion, coercion and more.

There are a number of terms related to power, often used as synonyms or to describe a specific form or source of power. This study intentionally uses the term "authority" when referring to legal powers of mayors, such as the examination in Part I. Authority is understood to be a specific form of power. Similarly, "influence" is often used to refer to mayors' capacity to shape, persuade or condition other actors. These and other words were used by interviewees and in a variety of academic and other sources which inform this study, and are presented here in their original context whenever possible.

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[32] Bertram Raven, "Social Influence and Power," in I.D/ Steiner and M. Fishbein (Eds.), *Current Studies in Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1965), 371-382.

[33] Bertram Raven, "The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence," *Analysis of Social Issues and Public Policy* (Volume 8, No. 1, 2008), 1-22.

[34] Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books: New York, 1990).

[35] Ibid.

In summary, there is no single definition of mayoral power nor a universal approach by which to study it. Themes of the literature emphasize the relational aspect of power, a notion adopted in the approach of this study. Power is not understood to be a static property of an individual mayor; rather, it exists within the relations between mayors and other actors engaged in local government, and can shift over time. It can have many faces: the extent to which mayors are able to realize desired outcomes, or shape the preferences of others, or enable or limit the participation of others. Power can come from many sources, and where it is observed may depend on the lens of the observer. The term "power" is understood to be the larger umbrella which can include "influence," "authority," "control" and more; it can involve "hard" and "soft" forms of power; and, it can be expressed and observed in multiple ways. Mayoral power, specifically, is understood as the sum of these dimensions. The term "mayoral power" is used in this study to refer to a mayor's capacity "to be able"; the extent to which they can realize desired outcomes. A central objective of this study is to examine the factors shaping mayoral power, to develop a more precise definition, and to advance a model for understanding mayoral power in practice. These are presented in the chapters to come.

Just as there is no established and shared definition of "mayoral power," the concept of "mayoral leadership" is equally challenging. This is at least in part because leadership is a contested concept with numerous definitions and conceptions advanced over time. One study found more than 220 different

definitions of "leadership" advanced from the 1920s to 1990s,[36] spanning many contexts including for business, institutional, political, community, religious, social and environmental purposes and audiences. Major works dating back to Plato, Machiavelli, Freud, Tolstoy, Weber and more have focused on key questions about the nature of leadership. Contemporary political scientists including Burns, Tucker, Neustadt, Barber, Nye and others have also taken up this challenge, defining various forms, types and models of leadership in various contexts. Leadership is generally understood as a social relationship involving three components: leaders, followers, and context.[37] Nye defines a leader as those who "help a group create and achieve shared goals."[38] Burns, who is perhaps the most well known and often cited modern author on the topic, argues that there are two basic patterns of leadership: transactional leadership, based on a relationship of reciprocity between a leader and a follower; and transformational leadership, where a leader inspires others to follow not through exchange but through loyalty, admiration or support for the leader's vision.[39] He defines leadership in this way: "leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers."[40] Stone defines leadership as blending and using available resources to affect change or prevent a course

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[36] As quoted in Joseph Nye, *The Powers to Lead* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), x.
[37] Ibid, xi.
[38] Ibid, x.
[39] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).
[40] Ibid, 18.

of events.[41] Sweeting states "leaders set goals, and persuade, cajole, or convince others to follow"[42] and argues that mayoral leadership, specifically, is a product of four distinct components: the external environment, institutional arrangements, the local environment, and the personal characteristics of leaders.[43] These definitions share an understanding of leadership as a social process involving a leader and followers, and a mobilization of resources. Mayoral leadership, then, is defined as the process by which mayors mobilize resources to incite others to follow them.

How does "mayoral power," as a measure of the extent to which the mayor "is able" to accomplish desired objectives, relate to "mayoral leadership," as the ability to mobilize resources and secure followers? There are multiple interpretations of the relationship between these concepts. Sweeting's study of the mayoralty in London considers leadership – and specifically, a Svara-modeled 'facilitative leadership' style – as an ingredient of mayoral power:

> In formal terms, the Mayor is weak. […] The Mayor is obliged by the legislative framework, and by the complexity of the tasks with which he is presented, to engage and secure the participation of others. Only then will the Mayor be able to extend his influence. The Mayor of London will have to act facilitatively and move towards a style of co-operative participation in order to wield power to act and to develop collaborative advantage. In doing so, the Mayor will need to rely on the informal resources of legitimacy, authority and profile.[44]

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[41] Clarence Stone, "Political Leadership in Urban Politics," in D. Judge, G. Stoker and H. Wolman, eds,, *Theories of Urban Politics* (London: Sage, 1995): 18.

[42] David Sweeting, "Leadership in Urban Governance: The Mayor of London," *Local Government Studies* (28:1, 2002): 5.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid, 18.

A study by Greasley and Stoker examined more than 375 mayors in England

and concluded that a more facilitative style of leadership tends to accompany

institutional empowerment of mayors.[45] Sweeting's interpretation that leadership

is necessary "in order to wield power to act" and the findings of the Greasley and

Stoker study affirm the linkage between power and leadership, consistent with

the broader literature. Nye, for example, describes power as a necessary

ingredient for leadership. "You cannot lead if you do not have power."[46] He

clarifies that the existence of power, however, does not necessarily translate into

leadership. "Leadership involves power, but not all power relationships are

instances of leadership."[47] In sum, power and leadership are distinct concepts

but are related to one another, and can be mutually re-enforcing. Mayoral power

can enable mayoral leadership; and, effective mayoral leadership can be a

source of mayoral power. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship *in

practice* is a central pursuit of this study.

The basic research question driving this study examines *the factors which

shape the power in practice of mayors*. The study is oriented around "power"

because this is the dominant frame for how the mayoralty in Canada is

understood, studied and conceptualized. The "strong/weak" mayor taxonomy is

rooted in specific assumptions about the natural of mayoral power which

privileges the institutional dimensions of power – and, importantly, ignores other

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[45] S. Greasley and Gary Stoker, "Mayors and Urban Governance: Developing a Facilitative Leadership Style," *Public Administration Review* 68:4 (2008).
[46] Nye, *Powers to Lead*, 27.
[47] Nye, *Powers to Lead*, x.

dimensions such as leadership as a potential a form of mayoral power. As a result, the foundational consideration about the nature of mayoral power in Canada – how it is understood and conceptualized, and the extent to which leadership is an important source of mayoral power – remains an open question.

Research Approach

The research question inquires about the power of mayors *in Canada's cities*, making it well suited to a comparative case study method. Case study research is common in political science, and an important contributor of knowledge in the social sciences more generally.[48] The case study method generally refers to 'small-N' qualitative research involving intensive investigation into a single unit at a specific point in time. Case study research tends to be "exploratory in nature."[49] When the emphasis of a study includes comparisons between multiple cases, it is referred to as a cross-case study.[50] There is a strong tradition in the local government literature of detailed single case studies, including seminal American studies by Hunter,[51] Dahl,[52] Pressman,[53] Pressman

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[48] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research," *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12 (2006), 243.

[49] John Gerring, "The Case Study: What it is and What it Does," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, eds. Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1137.

[50] Ibid, 1139.

[51] Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

[52] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

[53] Jeffrey Pressman, "Preconditions of Mayoral Leadership," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 66, Issue 2 (June 1972).

and Wildavsky,[54] and Stone.[55] In Canada, Urbaniak conducted a study of

mayoral leadership in one geographic area (now the City of Mississauga),[56] and

there are other texts that focus on a specific Canadian city or mayor. The cross-

case method has also been used in studies of mayoral leadership both in the

United States[57] and in Canada.[58] Generally, single case studies can provide

deep insight about a single heterogeneous unit, while cross-case studies provide

broader insight across two or more homogenous units and can offer more

externally valid or generalizable findings.[59] Cross-case studies are also more

appropriate where there is significant variation between cases.[60] For the

purposes of this study, the 'case' is the mayoralty within a specific Canadian city,

and it is a cross-case study because it investigates the mayoralty across ten

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[54] Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland; or, Why It's Amazing that Federal Programs Work at All* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1973).

[55] Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989).

[56] Thomas J. Urbaniak, "Beyond Regime Theory: Mayoral Leadership, Suburban Development, and the Politics of Mississauga, Ontario," PhD Thesis, University of Western Ontario (2005).

[57] James H. Svara et al., *Facilitative Leadership in Local Government: Lessons from Successful Mayors and Chairpersons in the Council-Manager Form* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); *James* R. Bowers and Wilbur C. Rich, eds., *Governing Middle-Sized Cities: Studies in Mayoral Leadership* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000); Poul Erik Mouritzen and James H. Svara, *Leadership at the Apex: Politicians and Administrators in Western Local Governments* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press, 2002); Richard M. Flanagan, *Mayors and the Challenge of Urban Leadership* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004); James H. Svara, *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall: Reexamining the Scope and Contributions* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2009).

[58] Allan Levine, ed., *Your Worship: The Lives of Eight of Canada's Most Unforgettable Mayors* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989); Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, edited by Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[59] John Gerring, "The Case Study: What it is and What it Does," 1141.

[60] Ibid, 1139.

Canadian cities. Of course, there are tradeoffs with this decision including less opportunity for deep exploration into each case.

Case Selection

Case selection is a critical decision in any research study, and particularly in a primarily qualitative cross-case study where there are practical constraints to the number of cases that can be studied. Many options were considered for this study: selecting the largest cities in Canada by population; selecting the largest cities within specific provinces; selecting all cities above a certain population threshold within a single province; and, random selection of cities above a certain population threshold. The selected approach examines the mayoralty in the largest city in each Canadian province, for a total of ten Canadian cities. Based on this case selection method, the ten cities included in this study are:

1. Vancouver, British Columbia
2. Calgary, Alberta
3. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
4. Winnipeg, Manitoba
5. Toronto, Ontario
6. Montreal, Quebec
7. Saint John, New Brunswick
8. Halifax, Nova Scotia
9. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
10. St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

This approach was selected for three main reasons. First, in order to produce a Canada-wide study, it is critical to examine cities all provinces, particularly as the formal authorities of mayors are primarily assigned through provincial legislation

and because municipalities in Canada are creatures of the provinces in which they reside. Examining the mayoralty in only one or a few provinces would not provide a 'Canadian perspective.' Second, this method of case selection includes diversity in city size and scale. The cities included represent approximately 20% of the Canadian population, and include some of the largest cities in Canada with more than a million residents (Toronto, Montreal, Calgary), as well as smaller cities with fewer than one hundred thousand residents (Charlottetown and Saint John). The selection also includes five provincial capital cities and five non-capital cities, and it includes both French- and English-speaking cities. Finally, this approach follows an established precedent for case selection in national studies of local government in Canada.[61] The territories have also been excluded, consistent with this precedent. The authority of territorial governments differs from that of provincial governments, and thus their relationships with local governments also differ. This analysis is beyond the scope of this study, and so cities in the territories were intentionally excluded.

There are biases in any case selection method. In this case, where the selection includes only the largest city in each province, it could be anticipated that those cities would hold a special place within their respective provinces. The analysis in Part I explores this point further. Therefore, the mayoralty in these cities may not be reflective of the mayoralty within their provinces, and the sample may or may not be reflective more broadly of Canadian cities. However,

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[61] See Martin Horak and Robert Young, eds., *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012).

the selection does include a diversity of cities and provides enough cases to compare the role of the mayor in each province against a larger sample of Canadian mayors. The study seeks to examine the power of Canadian mayors in the context of other Canadian mayors.

Methodology

This study is presented as a progressive investigation of mayoral power in Canada, using a mixture of methods. Part I offers an institutional[62] examination of mayoral power in ten cities. Institutionalism is a methodological umbrella including many variants: economic approaches such as rational choice, which emphasize the effects of institutions in conditioning human behaviours and decision-making; sociological institutionalism, which is most interested in the patterns of behavior, cultures and norms of institutions themselves; and, historical approaches which are interested in understanding and explaining 'real-world' events.[63] There are also many types of analysis within institutionalism including: descriptive, which charts the characteristics of institutions in formal-legal terms; normative, which examines how well institutions meet specified objectives; and explanatory, which considers institutions as independent

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[62] "Institution" here is understood broadly, as "[…] a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances" (March and Olsen, 2006). Institutionalism, and more generally the focus on institutions, is common within political science (Clemens and Cook, 1999) – or as one observer notes, until the 1950s, "institutionalism was political science" (Shepsle, 1995).

[63] Sven Steinmo, "Institutionalism," *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences,* 2nd Edition (2015), 182-183.

variables with predictable relationships to other variables.[64] Other variants also

exist. Thus, the institutional perspective has evolved from its historic focus on the

formal-legal dimensions of government institutions to encompass social

structures, behaviours, and norms. Although institutionalism is a long established

methodological approach, some suggest it has experienced a "resurgence" in

recent years.[65] Much of the Canadian local government literature reflects an

interest in institutions: studies of municipal structures and reform;[66] examinations

of the formal rules and established practices involved in local governance;[67]

studies on municipal services,[68] tax regimes,[69] amalgamations and boundaries,[70]

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[64] Miriam Smith, "Institutionalism in the Study of Canadian Politics: The English-Canadian Tradition," in Andre Lecours, ed., *New Institutionalism: Theory and Analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 102-103.

[65] Elisabeth S. Clemens and James M. Cook, "Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change," *in Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 25 (1999), 441-466.

[66] Thomas J. Plunkett, "Structural Reform of Local Government in Canada," *Public Administration Review,* Vol. 33, No. 1, 1973, 40-51; Andrew Sancton, *Canadian Local Government: An Urban Perspective*, Second Edition (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2015); Andrew Sancton and Robert A. Young, eds., *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); C. Richard Tindal, Susan Nobes Tindal, Kennedy Stewart and Patrick J. Smith, *Local Government in Canada* (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2012); Jack Lucas, *Fields of Authority: Special Purpose Governance in Ontario, 1815-2015* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

[67] David M. Cameron, "Provincial Responsibilities for Municipal Government," *Canadian Journal of Public Administration* (Vol. 23:2), 222-235; Warren Magnusson, "Are Municipalities Creatures of the Provinces?" *Journal of Canadian* Studies, Spring 2005, 5-29; Caroline Andrew and Michael Goldsmith, "From Local Government to Local Governance: And beyond?" *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 1998, 101-117.

[68] T. J. Plunkett and W. Hooson, "Municipal Structure and Services," *Canadian Public Policy* Vol. 1(3), 1975, 367-375; Andrew Sancton and Robert A. Young, eds., *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[69] Harry Kitchen, *Municipal Revenue and Expenditure Issues in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Tax Foundation, 2002); Richard M. Bird and Enid Slack, *A Tale of Two Taxes: Property Tax Reform in Ontario* (Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2012); Harry Kitchen and Enid Slack, "More Tax Sources for Canada's Largest Cities: Why, What and How?" *Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance (IMFG) Paper on Municipal Governace and Finance*, University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs, 2016;

and more. Some of the limited literature on Canadian mayors also reflects an institutional perspective.[71]

Part I adopts this approach, understanding the mayoralty as a central institution within local government where interest is paid to its formal, defined and non-personal dimensions. Here mayoral power – "on paper" – is understood in limited terms as formal authority, established through legislation and shaped by local arrangements in each city. Chapter 4 compares the legal authority of mayors across cities, drawing from provincial legislation and municipal bylaws. Chapter 5 considers locally granted authority emanating from the varied governance and organizational arrangements in each of the ten cities, such as the presence of political parties, the ability of mayors to influence the governance bodies of extra-municipal organizations, and municipal budgets. Part I provides a clear, but limited, analysis of mayoral power in Canada. The authority of mayors varies across cities, in a variety of respects, but overall is limited.

How powerful are Canada's mayors in practice? Part II engages a different approach to examining mayoral power, relying on the perceptions of mayors and those who work most closely with them in each city. A narrative

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[70] Andrew Sancton, *Governing Canada's City-Regions: Adapting Form to Function* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Andrew Sancton, *Merger Mania: The Assault on Local Government* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Andrew Sanction, *The Limits of Boundaries* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008); Zachary Spicer, *The Boundary Bargain: Growth, Development and the Future of City-County Separation* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016).

[71] Kenneth G. Crawford, *Canadian Municipal Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954); Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in *Leaders and Leadership in Canada*, edited by Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994).

inquiry method is engaged that privileges the perspectives of those with direct experience[72] and seeks to find meaning through narratives to understand political or social realities.[73] Narrative inquiry is an established method in political science,[74] and has been used in other studies in the field including Siegel's recent study of municipal chief administrative officers.[75] The data was obtained through interviews in each of the cities in the study with people representing three specific perspectives: first, political, including mayors, past mayors, deputy mayors and councillors; second, executive, from senior administrators working in the municipal government including city managers and city clerks; and, third, community, from the people who closely follow the activities of mayors. Table 3 provides a summary of the number of interviews conducted in each category, and separating out mayors and past mayors from the other political interviewees. A total of 68 interviews were conducted involving 70 people (two interviews included two people sharing their perspectives, at their request). The interviews were conducted during May, June and July of 2016. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person, during a research trip across Canada,

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[72] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Sonia M. Ospina and Jennifer Dodge, "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning – the Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 65, No. 2 (March-April 2005).

[73] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Sonia M. Ospina and Jennifer Dodge, "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning – the Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 65, No. 2 (March-April 2005).

[74] Sonia M. Ospina and Jennifer Dodge, "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning – the Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 65, No. 2 (March-April 2005).

[75] David Siegel, *Leaders in the Shadows: The Leadership Qualities of Municipal Chief Administrative Officers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

Table 3: Interviews Completed, By Perspective

Perspective	Number of Interviews	Percentage
Political: Mayors and Past Mayors	12	17.6%
Political: Other Local Elected Officials	25	36.8%
Executive	14	20.1%
Community	17	25.0%
TOTAL	68	100%

which included site visits to each city. This research trip also included opportunities for observation, with the researcher attending a council or committee meeting in almost every city[76] in order to observe mayors 'in action' in each community. Interviews not able to be completed in person, for scheduling reasons or otherwise, were conducted over the phone. The services of a professional translator were engaged to support interviews where participants wished to complete the interview in French.

Part II presents a summary of the interview data, identifying interview participants perceptions of mayoral power in each of the cities in the study. A key finding is that perceptions of power "in practice" do not align to power "on paper" – rendering the institutional variables of mayoral power as less important factors

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[76] No formal data or analysis is drawn from these informal observation opportunities, as the type of observation varied by city. It was not possible to observe a council or committee meeting in person in each city due to scheduling, and due to the timing of a municipal election in one city (Saint John). The researcher attended a council or committee meeting in 7 of 10 cities in the sample. However, the researcher has observed council meetings in person or online in all 10 cities, and has observed current mayors from all 10 cities in other forums. This is not a formal part of the research, but added helpful context for understanding the mayoralty in each city.

of how mayoral power is perceived in practice. The interviews present a more nuanced picture of mayoral power as involving a complex network of relationships with various other actors engaged in local government. Canadian mayors are uniquely positioned at the nexus of the network of actors engaged in local government and in their ability to draw on various power resources to shape, condition, enable or limit the engagement of these actors. Mayoral power in Canada does not necessarily stem from formal authority; rather, it emerges as a product of both institutional arrangements and leadership, with the latter as the more important variable.

The final approach is employed in Part III, where the argument in Part II is applied to an examination of the mayoralty in the City of Toronto. A span of three mayors over 15 years is examined, illustrating the dynamics of mayoral power in three real world circumstances, to offer insight into the nature of power and governance at the local level. Together these methods provide a multi-perspective examination of mayoral power in Canada's cities.

PART I: MAYORAL POWER "ON PAPER"

"Whenever I describe my job and our system to people from
other countries, they always ask: how do you get anything done?"

- *Canadian Mayor*

Municipalities in Canada are established by, and with the authority of, their respective provinces – or, they are "creatures of the province" as is the common phrase. As noted in Chapter 2, this tradition dates back to the *British North America Act* and its successor, the *Constitution Act, 1867,* which in section 92(8) enumerates that each province "may exclusively make laws in relation to […] municipal institutions of the province"[1] as well as "generally all matters of a merely local […] nature in the province."[2] Much has changed in the nearly 150 years since this was written – at the time, fewer than 20% of Canada's population lived in urban areas, which today is well over 80%[3] – but the basic constitutional arrangement for local government in Canada remains the same. Today Canada's cities do interact with the federal government in a variety of ways, but for legal purposes they remain the exclusive purview of their respective provincial governments.[4]

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[1] *The Constitution Act, 1867*, 30 & 31 Vict, ch. 3, s. 92(8).

[2] Ibid, s. 92(16).

[3] In 2011, Statistics Canada replaced the term "urban area" with "population centres" but the data still reflects a long standing shift towards urbanization. Population, urban and rural, by province and territory. Statistics Canada. Accessed September 3, 2016. Available online: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo62a-eng.htm.

[4] Rogers (2009) provides a legal perspective on how the federal-local relationship is unclear and evolving. In his words, "The relationship of municipal institutions to the national government is far from clear. For instance, there has been no judicial determination of the extent to which Parliament can delegate functions to and impose duties on municipal bodies. However, the power of Parliament to impose financial obligations on local authorities was upheld as necessarily incidental to its power to deal with juvenile delinquents and railways. This also involves the question of whether municipalities called into existence by the provinces have any capacity to receive from Parliament jurisdiction in connection with federal matters."

Each province has at least one statute establishing the general structure, roles and responsibilities of municipalities in that province, generally titled the 'Municipal Act' or something similar. Some provinces have more than one primary municipal statute, specific to types of municipalities or geographic areas of the province. Regardless, it is this legislation that provides the primary source of authority for the existence and operation of municipalities within each province. There are also hundreds of other provincial statues and regulations that assign responsibilities to municipalities or individual municipal officer. For example, there are approximately 150 pieces of provincial legislation in Ontario alone impacting the operation of its municipalities.[5] The result of municipalities being 'creatures' of their respective provinces is that Canada does not have one system of municipal government, but rather *systems* of municipal government, having developed at least somewhat independently based features unique to each province. There are important differences in the structure, powers, taxation regimes, and services of municipal governments in every province.[6]

Perennial concerns about the relative powerlessness and fiscal constraints of municipal governments have been expressed over time, particularly for Canada's largest cities.[7] Over the past decade, there has been a

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[5] Association of Municipalities of Ontario, "Ontario Charter: A Proposed Bill of Rights for Local Government," 1994, 4.

[6] For an excellent comparative survey of municipal government in each province in Canada, see: Andrew Sancton and Robert A. Young, eds., *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canada's Provinces* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

[7] Broadbent (2008) provides a summary of the argument for greater power for urban local governments, including the ways in which this position has been advocated for in Canada over time.

general shift across most provinces to confer more power of self-government on

municipalities, particularly in large cities:

> [M]unicipalities are now given wide discretion in the exercise of their
> powers, together with the appropriate tools to make their legislation work.
> This has enhanced the powers and responsibilities of municipal councils,
> with a concomitant increase in their importance and the legislative
> flexibility available to them in the enactment of their by-laws.[8]

In addition to enumerating broad powers and responsibilities of municipalities,

the primary municipal legislation in each province establishes basic governance

structures. In all provinces, municipalities are governed by councils; and,

councils are led by a mayor or equivalently titled head. Each province's primary

municipal legislation establishes the role, duties and authority of heads of council

within that province. Just as the authority of municipal governments emanates

from provincial legislation, so too does the authority of mayors in Canada.

> [T]he functions, rights and duties of the council head are all derived from
> statute although, in the absence of statutory regulations, common law
> rules may apply. The head receives his powers directly under statute and
> not as a representative of council and they are not suspended while the
> council is in session.[9]

For this reason, an analysis of mayors' formal authority as expressed through

provincial legislation is an essential element in this study. This chapter compares

the authority of mayors by examining the provincial legislation in all ten Canadian

provinces, including both general municipal legislation and city-specific

legislation where applicable.

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[8] George Rust-D'Eye, *Handbook for Municipal Councillors* (Toronto: Thompson Reuters Canada Limited, 2010), 3

[9] Rogers, *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations*, s. 153.2.

Defining the Mayoralty

Mayors in all provinces share a basic foundation in how their role is defined in legislation: in all Canadian provinces, the mayor is a member of council; the mayor holds all of the responsibilities of other members of council; and, the mayor is the head of council. Most provinces enumerate the duties of members of council, although using different language. Typically these include considering the well-being and interests of the municipality and/or community, representing the public, participating in council meetings, developing policies and programs of the municipality, ensuring the programs of the municipality are carried out, overseeing a senior administrator or the activities of administration, maintaining the financial integrity of the municipality, and performing other duties conferred upon them by provincial legislation or by their own council.[10] Only one province, Prince Edward Island, does not enumerate duties of council members in its legislation, instead stating simply that council is the "governing body of the municipality."[11]

Mayors hold the same obligations of other members of council, and some additional duties not shared with other members of council. In most provinces, municipal legislation provides that the mayor chairs, or has the option to chair,

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[10] Although a thorough analysis of the duties of municipal councillors is outside the scope of this study, there are some significant differences across provincial legislation. Lidstone (2004) and Sancton and Young, eds (2009) provide helpful reviews, and the ministry responsible for municipal governments in almost all provinces have guides detailing the duties of local elected officials in their respective province.

[11] [Prince Edward Island] Municipalities Act, RSPEI 1988, c. M-13, s 15(3).

Table 4: Language describing the role of the mayor in provincial legislation[12]

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Mayor is the "chief executive officer"	X				X				X	
Mayor is the "chief elected official"		X								
Mayor is the "president of council"	X									
Mayor is the "chief officer of the city"				X						
Mayor is "the official head of the city"										X
None of the above (no title other than "mayor")			X			X	X	X		

council meetings. Legislation also prescribes that mayors have a specific responsibility for signing bylaws, contracts and/or agreements; they have the ability to call special meetings; and, they have a specified role in emergency management. Beyond these basic shared duties, the way the role of the mayor is established in legislation varies by province – and it begins with distinctions in language. In some provinces, mayors are described as the 'chief executive officer.' Other provinces describe the role as the 'chief elected official,' 'the chief

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[12] In provinces with multiple acts, this chart includes both city-specific and general legislation.

officer,' 'the official head,' and in one case, "the president of council."[13] Some

provinces provide no such titles, as outlined in Table 4.

Can anything be inferred from the variation in language? The answer is

unclear. The analysis to follow identifies which provinces' legislation affords the

most formal authority to mayors, and there is no obvious relationship between

the provision of more formal authority and the terminology used. One legal

review of Ontario's legislation supports this claim, suggesting that the use of a

title such as 'chief executive officer' itself does not provide any additional power

or authority to a mayor:

> The term "chief executive officer" does not, of itself, confer any powers or
> duties upon him; they must be sought in the express provisions of the Act.
> Whether the office of mayor is statutory or not, however, it is a public one
> to which common law principles are applicable in the absence of statutory
> provisions relating to his power and duties.[14]

In this same review of Ontario's legislation, it is noted that the head of council

under the former *Municipal Act, 1990* was responsible to "ensure laws were

executed and obeyed" and to "oversee the conduct of all subordinate officers in

the government."[15] This section was amended with the new *Municipal Act* in

2001, with both of the previous clauses removed and the addition of the

language of the head of council as the "chief executive officer" and a suite of

more broadly phrased duties. The legal scholar states:

> The present *Act* is at the same time more general and more restrictive
> than the former and it will remain to see how it will be interpreted.

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[13] Vancouver Charter, SBC 1953, c 55, s 207(1).

[14] Rogers, Ian MacF., *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations* (Toronto: Thompson Reuters Canada Limited, 2009), section 53.1.

[15] *Municipal Act,* R.S.O 1990, c. M.45, section 70.

> However, it is submitted the chief executive and leadership roles alone are broad enough to cover the duties of the former Act."[16]

The use of the term chief executive officer does not seem to imply any additional executive authority, and certainly does not empower a mayor with "strong mayor" executive authority in the American mayor-council form of government.

Another key difference across provinces is whether cities are afforded unique legislation, or 'city charters.' This group of cities includes the largest city in each Canadian province. Eight of these ten cities have unique legislation, five of which are called 'charters,' as detailed in Table 5. Just two provinces – Saskatoon and New Brunswick – have not established city-specific legislation for their largest cities. The most recent addition was Alberta following a recent review of the *Municipal Government Act* initiated by the provincial government in 2012,[17] which culminated in city charters for Calgary and Edmonton adopted in 2017. While there is often political optimism about the benefits of such charters, there is also skepticism of charters as a "false panacea."[18] A paper by Smith and Spicer further argues that there has been little 'give and take' in existing city charters, meaning the provincial governments have extended few additional powers to cities and cities have not always fully utilized the powers granted, and

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[16] Rogers, *The Law of Canadian Municipal Corporations*, section 53.2.

[17] Province of Alberta. Municipal Government Act Review. http://mgareview.alberta.ca/what-we-heard

[18] See: "The False Panacea of City Charters" at the Urban Policy Program Symposium, University of Calgary, June 2015; Jason Markusoff, "City charter may be no cure-all, academics warn," *Calgary Herald* (June 2, 2015); and, Andrew Sancton, "The False Panacea of City Charters?" (2016).

Table 5: Overview of general municipal and city-specific legislation

	General Municipal Legislation	City-Specific Legislation
Vancouver, BC	Community Charter	Vancouver Charter
Calgary, AB	Municipal Government Act	Calgary Charter
Saskatoon, SK	The Municipalities Act The Cities Act	-
Winnipeg, MB	The Municipal Act	The City of Winnipeg Charter
Toronto, ON	Municipal Act	City of Toronto Act
Montreal, QC	Municipal Code Cities and Towns Act	Loi de la Metropole Charter of Ville de Montreal
Saint John, NB	Municipalities Act	-
Halifax, NS	Municipal Government Act	Halifax Regional Municipal Charter
Charlottetown, PE	Municipalities Act	Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act
St. John's, NL	Municipalities Act	City of St. John's Act

that charters have increased the perception rather than the exercise of local

autonomy.[19]

In the eight provinces that have enacted city-specific legislation for their

largest cities, they vary on whether the role of the mayor is treated differently in

the general and city-specific legislation. In four provinces – Ontario, Nova Scotia,

Prince Edward Island and Alberta – the legal provisions for the role of the mayor

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[19] Alison Smith and Zachary Spicer, "Who Gives? Who Takes? Evaluating City Charters in Canada," Presented at the Canadian Political Science Association Conference, University of Calgary, June 2016.

in the city-specific legislation is close to or identical to the provisions in the general municipal legislation. In the four other provinces – British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland – the city-specific legislation provides that mayor with more authority than what is prescribed for other mayors in the province.

Legislative Authority

Provincial legislation varies across Canada in the authority and responsibilities provided to mayors. A summary is provided in Table 6, which identifies the enumerated legal authority of mayors, by province. This table reflects each city's chief governing legislation (that is, in provinces with city-specific legislation, it is that legislation which is reflected in the table; in provinces with only general legislation, that legislation is reflected in the table). A number of interesting observations can be made from this comparison of the role of the mayor as expressed through provincial legislation. First, the three most common duties of mayors across provinces are presiding over meetings, calling meetings, and signing official documents. This is uniform across provinces, with one exception in Montreal with respect to presiding over meetings, as Montreal's charter includes provisions instead for the appointment of a speaker.[20]

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[20] It should be noted that other cities have also appointed council speakers, but the legislation in all provinces other than Quebec provides the mayor with the option to preside over meetings if so desired.

Table 6: Mayoral authority in provincial legislation, by city

	Vancouver, BC*	Calgary, AB*	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB*	Toronto, ON*	Montreal, QC*	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS*	Charlottetown, PE*	St. John's, NL*
Mayor presides over meetings (or has option to)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Mayor calls special meetings at own discretion	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mayor signs bylaws, contracts, cheques, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mayor makes specified appointments	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Mayor appoints deputies, committees and/or chairs	X			X	X	X			X	
Mayor "provides leadership" (or equivalent)	X				X		X			
Mayor "provides direction" (or equivalent)	X					X	X			
Mayor "communicates information" (or equivalent)	X				X	X	X	X		X
Mayor "makes recommendations"	X				X	X				X
Mayor "reflects the will of council"	X									
Mayor "prosecute and punishes all negligence"										X
Mayor oversees employees' conduct	X			X		X				X
Mayor suspends employees or officers	X			X		X				X
Mayor suspends Council decisions for limited period				X		X				

* Denotes cities with city-specific legislation

Interestingly, these basic duties are similar to those identified in the *Baldwin Act* of 1849, which provided that mayors were responsible to preside over meetings, summon special meetings, and administer oaths.[21] Today, these historic responsibilities remain the only mayoral duties consistently enumerated in provincial legislation.

Second, there are important differences across provinces in whether mayors are empowered with specific authority with respect to their council colleagues. Four provinces provide mayors with legislated ability to make appointments. The extreme example of this is found in the Winnipeg Charter which states, "the mayor must appoint (a) a deputy mayor; (b) an acting deputy mayor; (c) the chairpersons for the standing committees; […] and (d) members of the executive policy committee."[22] This could be viewed as an important lever for securing and rewarding political support for the mayor from other council members; however, in no province is this power comparable to the cabinet appointment powers of first ministers in parliamentary systems. Councillors serving as standing committee chairs do not hold comparable authority with respect to specific municipal services or departments, as would a cabinet minister. Some provinces enumerate more vague duties regarding council such as 'providing leadership' or 'communicating information,' and mayors in some provinces have expressed temporary veto authority. The extent to which these powers are used in practice is unknown, but their very provision in some

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[21] *Municipal Corporations Act (Canada),* 1849.
[22] The City of Winnipeg Charter, SM 2002, c 39, s 51(1).

legislation but not in others reflects that there are differences in how the role of the mayor within council is understood across provinces.

Finally, and perhaps most curiously, some provincial governments have extended unusual legislative power to the mayors of their largest city. In some cities, provincial legislation identifies that mayors have a role in overseeing employee conduct, an ability to suspend municipal officers, and in one case an identified responsibility for 'prosecuting and punishing negligence.' Interestingly, during the interviews that inform Part II of this study, current and past mayors in cities with these unusual legislated duties often expressed surprise when asked about them, and indicated they either were not aware of them[23] or that they were not particularly important in practice. Regardless, the fact remains that some provinces empower mayors with duties and authority not granted to other members of council and not typical for urban mayors in Canada.

Summary: The Role of the Mayor in Provincial Legislation

This chapter began by positioning municipal governments as being within the purview of their respective provinces. Canada's provinces have established legislation to govern municipal affairs and establish the authority of mayors and councils. The legislation varies in the language it uses – 'chief executive officer,' 'chief elected officer,' 'official head' – but generally recognizes the mayoralty as holding a central leadership role the structures of local governance. All Canadian

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[23] When one mayor who has the authority to suspend staff was asked about whether this power had ever been used, the person responded in surprise with, "I have that power? Hmm. The staff never told me about that."

Table 7: Comparison of mayoral authority in provincial legislation

Low	Medium	High
Legislation enumerates only procedural distinctions between role of mayor and role of council member	*Legislation enumerates procedural and functional distinctions between role of mayor and role of council member*	*Legislation enumerates procedural and functional distinctions between role of mayor and role of council member; and, empowers mayor with some specific authority outside council*
Calgary Saskatoon Charlottetown	Toronto Saint John Halifax	Vancouver Winnipeg Montreal St. John's

mayors have specific procedural duties with respect to council. In most provinces, mayors are also prescribed specific duties not held by other members of council, although the nature and extent of these duties varies. In a few cases, provincial legislation empowers mayors with individual responsibility that extends beyond the realm of their authority within council, such as unilateral authority to suspend employees.

Table 7 places the cities in the study on a simple low-medium-high scale based on the extent to which provincial legislation empowers the role of the mayor – that is, a relative picture of the degree of mayoral authority afforded to the mayor from provincial legislation. Three cities – Calgary, Saskatoon, and Charlottetown – rank low, as the legislation articulates the role of the mayor as being primarily procedural in nature. Three cities are placed in the middle –

Toronto, Saint John and Halifax – as the legislation recognizes some non-procedural roles for the mayor such as 'providing leadership' or 'communicating information' to council, which distinguish the role of the mayor from the role of other members of council. Four cities rank high – Vancouver, Winnipeg, Montreal and St. John's – as the role of the mayor is distinguished from the role of other members of council, and the mayor is empowered with authority extending beyond the realm of council.

How powerful are urban mayors in Canada? An examination of provincial legislation alone suggests that mayors in Canada have limited legal authority. In general, the role appears to be primarily procedural in nature and limited in scope to working within council. However, there are many exceptions and no two provinces where the role of the mayor is defined in exactly the same way. Importantly, the four cities in the 'high' category in Table 7 are from the same four provinces which have (1) extended city-specific legislation to their largest city, and (2) where the enumerated authority of the mayor in those cities differs from the enumerated authority of the mayor in the general municipal legislation. Therefore, there appears to be a relationship between mayoral empowerment through provincial legislation and the willingness of a provincial government to establish city-specific legislation. In other words, where provincial governments in Canada have extended separate legislation to their largest cities, and recognized a unique role for those cities' mayors, they have also tended to empower the mayors. Just as the nature of local-provincial relations vary across the country, so too does the authority of the mayor.

Chapter 5 | LOCALLY GRANTED AUTHORITY

No two cities in Canada are identical. Local institutional arrangements
vary, reflecting the unique evolution, provincial and local political interests,
political culture, and particular circumstances over time in each city. Municipal
amalgamations and annexations, for example, have occurred in many parts of
Canada and can have a lasting influence on local governance arrangements. [1] In
cities such as Montreal, understanding the structures of municipal government
requires an understanding of the city's history of amalgamation (and, in this
unusual case, de-amalgamation).[2] Similarly, reform movements towards
centralization or decentralization, privatization or public ownership of local
assets, and shifts in desired governance models all shape the political structures
and norms of their respective cities. Even the small number of cities included in
this study reflects great diversity in local institutional arrangements.

This chapter explores the authority of the mayor through an examination
of the locally granted arrangements in each city. It examines procedure bylaws
and other documents, and the various resources granted to mayors across cities.
Variation abounds, with each city choosing to empower – and in some cases,

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[1] For more on this topic, see: Andrew Sancton, *Governing Canada's City-Regions: Adapting Form to Function* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); and, Andrew Sancton, *Merger Mania: The Assault on Local Government* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

[2] In 2002, the Province of Quebec amalgamated 27 municipalities on the Island of Montreal into one unified city. This decision was met with great residence, and after a series of referendums, the Province authorized an unprecedented de-merger which split the city back into smaller municipalities. Montreal City Council includes the mayors, and sometimes councillors, from each of these municipalities. There are now 19 mayors within the City of Montreal.

disempower – through a unique combination of arrangements. The chapter

begins by presenting available data, primarily from municipal websites and

policies, in a comparative format. It concludes with a discussion of mayoral

power "on paper" based on the findings of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Institutional Arrangements

Every municipality in Canada is governed by a council, but the

composition of this council varies by community. Table 8 presents an overview of

the composition of council in the cities in this study. The number of council

members ranges widely from 11 to 65, and with no obvious relationship to

population size or other variables. The number of constituents per councillor also

varies widely from just over 3,400 to nearly 80,000. Understanding why local

government in each city is structured the way it is would require an extensive

investigation into the history, culture and circumstances of each community – all

of which have surely influenced the local institutional arrangements unique to

each city.

In most municipalities in Canada, including those examined in this study,

the operation of council and the duties of members of council are outlined in a

procedure bylaw or similar policy document. In some but not all cases, the role of

the mayor is described. In the City of Toronto's Municipal Code, for example, the

mayor is identified as the 'chief executive officer' of the city, responsible for

Table 8: Council composition, by city

	Size of Council (including Mayor)	At Large vs. Wards	Avg. Constituents Per Councillor[3]
Vancouver, BC	11	All councillors elected at large	60,350
Calgary, AB	15	All councillors elected in wards	78,348
Saskatoon, SK	11	All councillors elected in wards	22,219
Winnipeg, MB	16	All councillors elected in wards	44,241
Toronto, ON	45	All councillors elected in wards	59,469
Montreal, QC	65	All councillors elected in wards	25,774
Saint John, NB	11	All councillors elected in wards	7,006
Halifax, NS	17	All councillors elected in wards	39,010
Charlottetown, PE	11	All councillors elected in wards	3,456
St. John's, NL	11	5 ward councillors + 5 at large positions	10,717

presiding over meetings, providing leadership to council, and representing the city at official functions.[4] Toronto is an unusual case where a leadership role of the mayor is recognized in local bylaw or policy. The Toronto Municipal Code also grants the mayor a range of other special powers, including the ability to

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[3] Note: in Vancouver and St. John's, some or all councillors are elected at large, and represent all constituents.

[4] City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 27: Council Procedures. Available online at: http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/lawmcode.htm

Table 9: Mayoral appointment powers

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Mayor can make additional appointments	X			X	X	X			X	
Mayoral appointments include salary increase	X			X		X			X	
Mayor-appointed executive committee				X	X	X				

appoint deputy mayors and committee chairs, and to flag items from council

agenda as being key matters for the mayor.[5] Procedure bylaws must be

consistent with the municipal legislation relevant to each city, but often provide

more detail about the role of the mayor in practice such as their specific

responsibilities during council or committee meetings. Often this includes

procedural requirements such as for individuals to address comments during

meetings through the mayor as chair, and giving the mayor authority to

determine who can speak when during meetings and rule on points of privilege.

Many cities' bylaws identify the mayor as an ex officio member of all council

committees. In some cases, as illustrated in Table 9, mayors are also granted

appointment powers for specific positions or committees, or an executive body.

In some cases, these appointment powers also involve salary increases for

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[5] Ibid.

appointees. This may be a useful lever for securing political support from appointees. In an extreme case, the Mayor of Winnipeg not only makes appointments but also issues 'mandate letters' to appointees, akin to common practice in parliamentary systems for cabinet ministers.[6] These practices empower the mayor because they shape how the mayor and interacts with their council in one of the most visible aspects of their role, with levers to secure and mobilize political support.

Locally established practices and procedures can also have the effect of disempowering mayors. In some cities, such as Charlottetown, mayors only vote in the case of a tie as the deciding vote. In some cases, procedure bylaws limit the participation of the mayor during council deliberations. In the City of Saskatoon and City of Calgary, for example, the mayor must vacate the chair in order to participate in debate or make a motion. Policies other than procedure bylaws can also establish higher restrictions or expectations on the mayor than what are held for other members of council.[7] Regardless, the role of the mayor is defined and empowered (or disempowered) though local bylaws and policies.

Status and Resources

Although the Canadian local government literature generally emphasizes the weakness of the mayor's role, there is recognition that the mayor holds a

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[6] "Executive Policy Committee & Other Mayoral Appointees Receive Mandate Letters," City of Winnipeg Media Release, November 4, 2016. Available online: http://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/media/news/nr_2016/nr_20161104.stm#5
[7] For example, the City of Calgary's Gifts and Benefits Policy includes requirements for disclosures which apply only to the mayor and not to other members of council.

Table 10: Status of mayoral role vs councillor role

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Mayor is considered a full-time position	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Mayor is only full-time position on council			X					X		X
Mayor is only position elected at large		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	

privileged role within council. Some have argued that the mayor is in a position of greater authority by virtue of popularity with the electorate,[8] and as the mayor is generally the only elected official elected to represent the whole community.[9] In one author's words, "being elected by all citizens presumably provides a moral suasion for the mayor's platform among the council, and the mayor can, as a result, speak for the entire community on issues of consequence."[10] However, as illustrated in Table 10, this is not always the case. In this selection of cities, only three mayors are the only full-time member of their respective council. In two cases, Saint John and Charlottetown, the mayor is not considered a full-time role. In five cities – Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal – all

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[8] Alan Levine (ed.), *Your Worship: The Lives of Eight of Canada's Most Unforgettable Mayors* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1989), 2.

[9] Kenneth Grant Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), 90.

[10] James Lightbody, *City Politics, Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 156.

Table 11: Resources provided to the mayor

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Mayor is paid 2x or more than councillor salary	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Mayor has more than 2x individual councillor staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mayor has more than 2x individual councillor budget	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

members of council are full-time. In three cities –Vancouver, Saint John and St. John's – all residents of the municipality also elect other members of council.

Another important variable is with respect to resources. Mayors generally are provided with greater resources than are their colleagues on council. In all cases, the mayor has more staff and a larger budget than any other member of council. In the City of Toronto, for example, the mayor's office has 17 staff members including dedicated resources for communications, media and various policy files. Council members, in contrast, each typically have two to four staff members. In the smaller cities, councillors typically share staff resources while dedicated staff resources support the mayor. Salary is an also an important consideration. In all but one case (Charlottetown), mayors make six-figure

salaries, with the highest salary of just under $220,000 per annum. The average

salary for the mayors in this study is $149,010. This is equivalent to an average

cost of 66 cents per resident, with the cost per resident generally decreasing as

city size increases. Residents of Toronto pay approximately 7 cents each

towards their mayor's salary, while residents of Charlottetown pay $1.90. Council

establishes the compensation for the mayor (and council) in most but not all

cases. Saskatoon, for example, sets the mayor's salary at 85% of the salary of a

provincial cabinet minister. The average salary for councillors in the cities in the

sample is $67,795. This ranges from $32,700 in Charlottetown to $115,400 in

Calgary. On average, mayors are paid 2.3 times the salary of their respective

council colleagues.

Another organizational variable is the presence of local political parties. In

two cities, Vancouver and Montreal, parties play a critical role in organizing

political decision-making. Local political parties are different from federal and

provincial parties in several respects, including that the mayor tends to play a

more central role in the party. The governing party in Montreal, as the extreme

example, has at times been named after the mayor. Local political parties in

Montreal tend to be organized to support a mayoral campaign and disband after

that mayor's tenure ends. Where the mayor is a member and prominent leader

within the governing political party, the mayor may be able to exercise greater

control over the council agenda and decision-making process.

Table 12: Parties and confidential meetings

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Presence of local political parties	X					X				
Closed meetings with party caucus or executive	X			X		X				

The mayor of Winnipeg has similar capabilities through their ability to appoint the executive committee, which includes close to half of council and makes many key decisions, sometimes without requiring council support. During the interviews in these three cities for Part II of this study, it was clear that all three mayors meet with their party caucuses or executive committees in closed session on a regular basis. In the words of one interviewee in Winnipeg, "everyone knows. It's the worst kept secret at City Hall."[11] The current governing party in Vancouver, Vision Vancouver, has been scrutinized in the media for holding closed caucus meetings which, given their majority on council, could be considered illegal council meetings.[12] Regardless, this is an important variable because it can provide a forum for the mayor to exercise greater control over

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[11] Confidential interview, Administrator, City of Winnipeg.

[12] Jeff Lee, "Councillors who meet privately likely breaking the rules, says lawyer," *Vancouver Sun* (September 22, 2015). Available online:

Table 13: Mayoral power within council

	Vancouver, BC	Calgary, AB	Saskatoon, SK	Winnipeg, MB	Toronto, ON	Montreal, QC	Saint John, NB	Halifax, NS	Charlottetown, PE	St. John's, NL
Mayor holds unilateral appointment powers	X			X	X	X			X	
Mayor is only full-time, at large position on council			X					X		X
Mayor is granted more resources than councillors	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mayor has political party or confidential executive meetings	X			X		X				

council decision-making by removing deliberations about key decisions from the

public eye and media reach, and providing opportunity for what is commonly

referred to as 'horse trading' on policy matters behind the scenes.[13] All of these

variables influence the power of the mayor.

Summary: Locally Granted Mayoral Authority

This chapter began by articulating that no two municipalities in Canada

are identical, as local institutional arrangements are unique to each city. These

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http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Councillors+meet+privately+likely+breaking+rules+says+lawyer/11385689/story.html

[13] This phrases was used in interviews in all three cities.

arrangements can empower the mayor. Table 13 presents a summary of the variables considered in this chapter: the ability for mayors to make appointments; the status of the mayoralty relative to other members of council; the resources provided to the mayor; and, the presence of political parties or an executive committee which can meet confidentially akin to a cabinet at the federal or provincial level.

Table 14 presents a broad categorization of cities based on the degree to which mayors are empowered through local institutional arrangements, using a similar low-medium-high scale as presented in the summary section of Chapter 5.[14] In all cities, local arrangements provide mayors with more authority and more resources than are provided to councillors. However, cities vary in the degree to which mayors are empowered with resources to assist in exercising leadership, organizing political support, and streamlining decision-making. In cities ranked 'low,' specifically Calgary and Saint John, mayors are not provided with any additional appointment powers. They also do not hold unique status as the only full-time council member, and do not have any means by which to organize or make decisions outside of the public arena. In cities positioned in the 'medium' level on the scale, the mayor has some levers such as appointment powers or through having a unique status as the sole full time, at large elected official with the unique ability to represent an entire community.

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[14] Note: as in Chapter 5, this table is presented for illustration purposes only, to communicate the variation across cities in a simple format. The assessment of low, medium or high is relative (that is, based on a comparison of where each city sits relative to the other cities) rather than against an objective, fixed standard.

Table 14: Mayoral authority through institutional arrangements

Low	Medium	High
Mayor is granted only modestly more resources than are other members of council, and no additional levers which may assist in organizing political support or decision making.	*Mayor is granted more resources than are other members of council, and some additional levers which may assist in organizing political support or decision making.*	*Mayor is granted more resources than are other members of council, and significant levers to assist in organizing political support or decision making.*
Calgary Saint John	Saskatoon Toronto Halifax Charlottetown St. John's	Vancouver Winnipeg Montreal

On the high end of the scale, mayors have institutional levers they can use to organize support and decision-making. The mayor of Winnipeg has unilateral authority to appoint an executive policy committee, which has been known, historically, to meet in closed session and through which all other committee decisions flow. The mayor issues mandate letters to those appointed to key positions as a clear expression of authority. In Montreal and Vancouver, the mayor is a member of a governing political party, a significant vehicle for organizing council decision-making or for a mayor to execute their agenda.

This review of the local institutional arrangements finds variation including municipal structure, council composition, and nature of local political organization – and this variation can translate into greater power for the mayor. Interestingly, the low-medium-high distribution of cities bears resemblance to the low-medium-

Table 15: Summary of institutional variables

	Low	Medium	High
Authority from Provincial Legislation	Calgary Saskatoon Charlottetown	Toronto Saint John Halifax	Vancouver Winnipeg Montreal St. John's
Authority from Local Institutional Arrangements	Calgary Saint John	Saskatoon Toronto Halifax Charlottetown St. John's	Vancouver Winnipeg Montreal

high scale of mayoral authority from provincial legislation. Montreal, Vancover and Winnipeg emerge in the 'high' category, Toronto and Halifax in the 'medium' category, and Calgary in the 'low' category, in both examinations. It may be that the mayoralty, as an institution, reflects much of its environment. The political culture and norms within each province, the structures and dynamics of local government unique to each city, and the particular features of a community are all echoed in the mayoralty. The ways in which mayors are empowered through provincial legislation, for example, is illustrative of the nature of local-provincial relations. British Columbia, for example, is considered to have a more collaborative approach to municipal government described by some as one of 'leniency'[15] and 'gentle imposition'[16] and has extended some of the most

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[15] Kenneth Grant Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), 47.

[16] Paul Tennant and David Zirnhelt, "Metropolitan Government in Vancouver: The Politics of Gentle Imposition," Canadian Public Administration, vol. 16 (Spring 1973): 124-38.

empowering legislation to the mayor of its largest city. As another example, the traditionally more conservative political culture in Alberta may be what is reflected in the low level of mayoral empowerment in that province. The rapid growth of Toronto and expanding expectations for local services has led to perennial discussions within the city about empowering Toronto's mayors.[17]

This institutional examination of the mayoralty finds some variation in how both provincially and locally granted authority and arrangements empower mayors – but importantly, *mayoral power as presented here is quite limited*. Canada does not have any mayors with American "strong mayor" styled executive power. Canada does not have mayors who have much unilateral authority separate and apart from their council. However, the examples also show that mayors in Canada are not universally "weak" even when mayoral power is understood in solely institutional terms. Variables such as the presence of political parties or council-granted authority to make appointments are levers that empower the mayor.

A second important finding from this review is that provincial and municipal governments in Canada define mayoral power in vague terms. There were no examples found where the role of the mayor – and the power of the mayor – was clearly and comprehensively articulated. What limited articulation of mayoral power exists tends to focus on the procedural aspects of the role. By reviewing a newspaper in any Canadian city, it will quickly become apparent that mayors in Canada are engaged in many activities not listed in provincial

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[17] See Chapter 9.

legislation or municipal bylaw. Mayors regularly engage with a wide array of actors and play various roles within these groups. Mayor are involved in a broader scope of activities, and play a role with a wider network of actors, than what this institutional review would suggest.

Third, there are institutional variables in Canada which are associated with increased mayoral power: first, the presence of city-specific provincial legislation; second, the use of different language to describe the role of the mayor in the city-specific legislation, compared to the general municipal legislation for the province; and, third, the presence of local political parties. But do these institutional variations matter? Do they translate into mayors actually being "more powerful" in practice? Part II takes up this question, exploring the mayoralty through an organizational lens and expressed through narratives shared by mayors and those who work most closely with them. This approach presents a rather different image of mayoral power in Canada's cities.

PART II: MAYORAL POWER "IN PRACTICE"

"Everyone assumes the mayor is the boss, but what level of control
or power or leadership capacity does the mayor actually have?

Well, that's up for discussion."

- City Councillor

On September 2, 2015, a three-year-old boy drowned as his family attempted to flee to Europe from Syria by boat. A shocking photograph of the boy's lifeless body washed up on a beach went viral within hours. The image prompted an outcry from leaders around the world, including several of Canada's big city mayors who expressed a desire to address the continuing Syrian refugee crisis. On September 3, 2015, the mayor of Canada's largest city issued a press release urging the federal government to "act quickly."[1] On September 4, 2015, the Big City Mayors Caucus – a group of mayors from Canada's largest cities – issued a formal press release, indicating that "Canadian cities are ready to address this crisis"[2] with a call on governments to work together to take action. Press conferences were held in many cities across Canada, and mayors spoke out individually and collectively to attract attention to the issue and apply pressure. Fundraising efforts to privately sponsored refugee families occurred across the country. Mayors spoke publically about the number of Syrian refugees their cities would be prepared to accept, and called on the federal government to increase the number of families being admitted to Canada. These events happened to fall just weeks before a federal election, and attracted considerable attention from the media and political parties alike. All of the major parties

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[1] Media Release, Office of the Mayor, City of Toronto. September 3, 2015.

[2] Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Cities mobilize for action on Syrian refugee crisis," September 4, 2015. Available online: http://www.fcm.ca/home/media/news-and-commentary/2015/cities-mobilize-for-action-on-syrian-refugee-crisis.htm

articulated plans to increase the number of Syrian refugees welcomed to Canada. Following the election, the newly elected government unveiled a plan to welcome more than 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada.

This is a curious story. Immigration and international relations are decidedly federal matters in Canada. Making decisions about the number of refugees to be accepted into Canada is not within the jurisdiction of any city council in the country, and yet mayors were an active part of the response. Mayors also contributed to the high profile the issue received during the election. In the words of one Canadian mayor:

> Last year, when the Syrian crisis hit the front pages, it wasn't the federal government that was leading it. It was mayors. We were saying, 'we need to do something about this.' Cities are where life happens – and it's not just because we're the 'closest level of government' and all that. It's because you can't really talk about big issues – environment, health, immigration – without talking about cities.[3]

There is no municipal legislation in Canada that would suggest that holding a press conference on an immigration issue is a part of the role of the mayor – or that mayors hold any power or influence in this policy space – yet mayors across the country were actively engaged on the issue. In every Canadian city, every day, mayors engage in activities not prescribed in legislation or bylaw. The story about the Syrian refugee crisis is but one example of the sometimes curious activities of mayors, and the undefined scope of mayoral power in Canada. Thus begins an exploration into the ambiguous and largely uncharted area that is mayoral power, in practice, in Canada's cities.

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[3] Confidential Interview #8.

Studying Mayoral Power in Practice

The perspectives and observations of mayors and those who work most closely with mayors are essential ingredients for understanding mayoral power in practice. For the purposes of this study, a narrative inquiry approach is engaged, privileging the perspectives of those with direct experience.[4] During the summer of 2016, the researcher travelled to the ten cities in this study to observe mayors in practice, and to conduct interviews with people representing three specific perspectives in each city: political, including mayors, past mayors, deputy mayors and councillors; executive, from senior administrators working in the municipal government including city managers and city clerks; and, community, from media or others who closely follow the activities of mayors. A total of 68 interviews were conducted involving 70 people (two interviews included two people together, at their request).[5] Interviews were conducted in person, or over the phone where required for scheduling or other reasons. A translator was offered to interviewees where participation in French was preferred. The researcher also observed a council or committee meeting (and, where possible, both) in each city.

Selecting participants for interviews was more challenging in some cases than others. Securing interviews with individuals representing a political perspective was relatively straightforward. Invitations were sent to the current

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[4] D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); Sonia M. Ospina and Jennifer Dodge, "It's About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning – the Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 65, No. 2 (March-April 2005).
[5] See chart in Appendix B.

mayor, deputy mayor (where applicable), most recent living past mayor, and current councillors in each city included in the sample. In cities with larger city councils, invitations were sent to a shorter list of councillors selected by random draw. Interviews with individuals representing an executive perspective were more challenging. An invitation was sent to the city manager (or equivalent) and city clerk (or equivalent) in each city. In a few cases, referrals were made to other senior staff members or former city managers (or equivalent). In one city with a forthcoming election, it was not possible to obtain any executive interviews as all invited participants declined. The most challenging group to select for interviews was individuals representing a community perspective. Originally, invitations were sent to local reporters in each city who cover city hall affairs. In small communities with only one or two local newspapers, this was straightforward. In larger communities, it was more difficult. The method of selection involved searching for recent media stories including the word "mayor" and "city of ___" and identifying authors with the highest volume of recent stories. This method resulted in many referrals. Most individuals contacted through this means responded by recommending a more suitable individual in their community who was more attuned or had a longer history of observing local politics. In several cases, the referrals included non-media community leaders who have frequent contact with mayors or local government. In some cities, securing interviews was relatively simple with a high participation rate from those contacted. In other cases, it was more difficult. The researcher followed up with individuals who did not respond to the requests a maximum of one time in

additional to the original request, per research ethics guidelines. Interviews

reflecting the community perspective were secured in all but one city. The

interviewees proved a wealth of insight, history and stories about mayors in each

city.[6]

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. A list of

general questions was provided to all interviewees in advance,[7] asking

interviewees to describe the mayor's role, and share observations from their

experience. Many of the questions prompted story telling, long answers, and

returns to earlier questions. The researcher was careful to speak as little as

possible, and instead listen for the ways in which interviewees described their

perceptions of the role and power of the mayor. Prodding and follow up

questions were incorporated during the discussion as needed. Interviewees were

assured confidentiality, and processes required by research ethics were

followed.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher provided a verbal

overview of the study, including the scope and purposes. It was also expressed

that the study is not focused on individual mayors, nor does it seek to assess or

evaluate any specific mayor or group of mayors. Interviewees were asked to

focus on the role, not any particular person in the role. Some interviewees were

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[6] This point cannot be overstated. The interviews offered far richer and deeper insights about mayors, local government and cities in each community than anticipated. The experience of travelling to each city in the sample, meeting with people with personal experience and insight into the role of the mayor in their city was a once in a lifetime experience for the researcher. The journey is chronicled through a series of blog posts available online at www.mayorsproject.ca.
[7] See Appendix C.

more compliant with this direction than others. In most cases, interviewees were quick to share stories and reference specific mayors. Interviewees would often compare specific mayors from their own city as a way to express a point. For many interviewees, it was difficult or impossible to speak about the mayoralty without references to individuals.[8] The following chapters aim to communicate perspectives on mayoral power as shared by interviewees, using their own words as often as possible.

Summary of Interview Findings

The most basic – and unsurprising – observation emerging from the interviews is that the role of the mayor in Canada is unclear. This is consistent with the literature, as presented in Chapter 2. When asked, "Do you think the role of the mayor is well understood?" more than 80% of respondents indicated that they do not feel the role is understood. Interestingly, as articulated in Table 16, mayors and other elected officials were most likely to indicate that the role of the mayor is unclear. Community members were the least likely to indicate that the role is unclear, although the majority of this group still felt the role is unclear. A common response was to indicate that the public believes mayors have more power than they actually do, based on the perspective of the interviewee. In the words of two interviewees:

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[8] This important point will be revisited in Chapter 8. The inability to examine the role of the mayor absent the person in the role ultimately had a shaping influence on the approach taking in this study.

> A lot of people still believe the mayor has executive authority. If the mayor says something is going to happen, or believes a certain initiative should happen, they think it's going to happen. I really don't think the public understands how it all actually works."[9]

> People think mayors have a lot more power than they do, but he's just another vote – but he's got to answer for all of it, like he's in control.[10]

Many mayors and past mayors shared stories to illustrate the lack of understanding about their role: receiving calls about services provided by other levels of government; being requested to make decisions outside their authority, such as about an individual's immigration status or matters related to health or education; being contacted to help with personal or family matters. Other elected officials also reported similar experiences where constituents not only did not understand their roles, but also more generally, did not understand the roles of each level of government:

> There isn't much understanding about the three orders of government. Almost every day, I get an email telling me that we should focus on building a new hospital, but that's a provincial thing. We're trying to build a recreation centre right now, and people tell us we should be spending that money on a hospital.[11]

Some respondents felt there were benefits to the ambiguity in the role. "I don't think people realize what the mayor actually does or can do. And it's just because we don't talk about it. That leaves a lot of leeway. I think someone could walk into the office, and really take control, if they wanted to."[12]

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[9] Confidential Interview #5.
[10] Confidential Interview #8.
[11] Confidential Interview #14.
[12] Confidential Interview #1.

Table 16: Responses to "Do you think the role of the mayor is well understood?"

	Yes	No
Political: Mayors and Past Mayors	8% (1/12)	92% (11/12)
Political: Other Local Elected Officials	12% (3/25)	88% (2/25)
Executive	14% (2/14)	86% (12/14)
Community	41% (7/17)	59% (10/17)
Total	19.1% (13/68)	80.9% (55/68)

Defining the Mayoralty

If the role of the mayor is considered generally unclear and ambiguous, how do mayors and those who work most closely with them define it? Interviewees were asked to describe the role of the mayor in their own words. There was remarkable consistency across cities and perspectives in how the role is defined. Overwhelmingly, the role of the mayor is described as a position of leadership. The word 'lead' (or 'leader' or 'leadership') was used by nearly 9 of every 10 interviewees. As described in Table 17, municipal administrators (executive perspective) were the most likely to use this term, followed by politicians and community members. Interviewees in all cities used the term with similar frequency. Overall, there was strong consensus across cities and across perspectives that the role of the mayor is fundamentally characterized as a position of leadership.

Table 17: Use of words 'lead,' 'leader' and 'leadership,' by perspective

	Political (n=37)	Executive (n=14)	Community (n=17)	Total (n=68)
Percentage of interviewees using word 'lead,' 'leader' or 'leadership' to describe role of the mayor	89%	93%	82%	88%

Table 18 captures common responses to this question in more detail. The six most frequent responses are listed in the table. The interviews are again sorted by perspective, and reflect the percentage of interviews from each perspective mentioning the response listed. The variation across perspectives is striking. The most common response overall described the role of the mayor as providing leadership to council. Interestingly, almost all city managers and administrators (executive perspective), when describing the mayor's role, spoke about the mayor as primarily a leader of council, while fewer than one third of community members (community perspective) identified this as a part of the role. Just over half of mayors and other elected officials (political perspective) identified leading council as part of their description of the role of the mayor. The second most common response to this question was to indicate that the mayor represents the city or speaks on behalf of the city – but with variation based on perspective. 70% of community interviewees included their response, compared to only 35%

Table 18: Common responses to "How would you describe the role of the mayor?"

	Political (n=37)	Executive (n=14)	Community (n=17)	Total (n=68)
Provide leadership to council	57%	85%	29%	56%
Provide leadership to administration	22%	29%	18%	22%
Provide leadership to community	13%	7%	53%	22%
Represent the city / speak for the city	35%	42%	70%	45%
Drive a vision / set a direction	32%	21%	41%	32%
Sell the city / economic development	16%	0%	23%	14%

of political interviewees. The central observation here is that while interviewees

agree that the mayoralty is fundamentally a leadership role, the type of

leadership that is valued and expected varies depending on the perspective of

the interviewee. For politicians, the mayoralty primarily involves providing

leadership to council, representing the city, and driving a vision or direction. For

administrators, the role involves providing leadership to council, representing the

city, and providing leadership to administration. For community members, the

role involves representing the city, providing leadership to the community, and

driving a vision or direction. Providing leadership to council is the top response

for the other two perspectives, but was not included in the top three for

community members. Interestingly, nearly a quarter of the community

perspective interviewees identified the role of the mayor as involving selling the

city and/or economic development – but this was not mentioned by any

administrators. Other less frequent responses to the question included serving

as a diplomat, engaging in intergovernmental relations, negotiating with unions,

and building the brand of a political party.

Interestingly, while almost all interviewees describe the role of the mayor

using the word "leader," few used the word "power." Fewer than 1 in 5

interviewees mentioned power at all when describing the role of the mayor in

their own words. Administrators were most likely to use the word power, as

illustrated in Table 19, but in only slightly higher frequency than were politicians

and community members. In some cases, the reference to "power" was in the

context of suggesting that mayors have limited power ("Mayors have very little

actual power, beyond the power of persuasion."[13]). In other cases, the

interviewee was suggesting the opposite ("I've discovered that the mayor has a

significant amount of power. Even though Council may have debated something,

or voted on something, the mayor can still go to the public and say something

else."[14]). Regardless, the notion of "power" was far less frequently cited than

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[13] Confidential Interview #16.
[14] Confidential Interview #24.

Table 19: Frequency of word "power," by perspective

	Political (n=37)	Executive (n=14)	Community (n=17)	Total (n=68)
Percentage of interviewees who used the word 'power' to describe role of the mayor	19%	21%	18%	19%

was "leadership" across all cities as a way to describe the role of the mayor. This may be an important contrast between the political cultures in Canada and the United States, where less emphasis is placed on the "power" of the mayor in a Canadian context.

Where the interviewee did not offer a perspective on mayoral power, the researcher followed up with more specific questions to assess the interviewees' sense of how powerful mayors are in their community. Respondents were asked, "how powerful do you think the role of the mayor is?" The responses were wide ranging:

It's a pretty powerful position. The mayor controls the microphones. If he doesn't want to hear from you, he just won't turn your microphone on. That happened to me [as a councillor]. I went to the clerk, and they said, "Well, it's his meeting." Staff won't buck him.[15]

Well, the role of the mayor is unfortunately not as substantial as you might think. He has, in most cases, very little political power. He's just one of

[15] Confidential Interview #25.

many councillors, presiding over a budget that is wholly inadequate. He ends up doing things that are relatively trivial in nature.[16]

Anything I've really wanted to accomplish [as mayor], it's been accomplished, much to the chagrin of the councillors. If we really want to get it done, we're going to get it done.[17]

Because responses were so varied, the researcher coded each interviewee's comments based on their perception of mayoral power using a simple 1-3 scale.[18] Interviewees who emphasized the powerlessness or weakness of the mayor during their interview were given a score of 1 (such as the second quote above, describing the mayor as having "very little political power" [19]). Interviewees who acknowledged mayoral power, but also spoke about constraints or limits on mayoral power were given a score of 2 ("Mayors have power, yes, but it depends on what they do with their council."[20]). The majority of respondents (58%) were scored as a 2. Interviewees who emphasized the power of the mayor were scored a 3 (for example, "he [the mayor] is the boss. It isn't any more complicated than that"[21]). Averages of these scores, by city and by perspective, are presented in Table 20. Overall, interviewees across perspectives presented fairly even assessments of mayoral power. Community

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[16] Confidential Interview #46.

[17] Confidential Interview #54.

[18] Note: this scoring is for illustration and comparative purposes only. Interviewees likely have varied perceptions about what power is, how it would be evaluated, and may have different reference points (eg. comparing the power of a mayor to that of a councillor, vs comparing the power of a mayor to that of a prime minister). Therefore, this should not be understood as an objective assessment but rather as an illustrative tool to demonstrate the variation in responses from interviewees.

[19] Confidential Interview #46.

[20] Confidential Interview #20.

[21] Confidential Interview #33.

Table 20: Perceptions of mayoral power, by city and perspective

	Political	Executive	Community	Overall
Vancouver, BC	2.2	2.0	3.0	2.4
Calgary, AB	1.5	2.0	--	1.8
Saskatoon, SK	2.3	--	3.0	2.5
Winnipeg, MB	1.6	2.5	3.0	2.1
Toronto, ON	2.2	1.5	2.0	2.0
Montreal, QC	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.8
Saint John, NB	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.1
Halifax, NS	1.8	2.0	1.0	1.7
Charlottetown, PE	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.3
St. John's, NL	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.9
Average Overall	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.1

members tended to view mayors to be more powerful than did political or executive interviewees, although not notably so. The variation across cities presents a more interesting picture. Cities where interviews scored the lowest – or, where the perceived powerlessness of the mayor was most often emphasized – included Halifax, Calgary and St. John's. All other cities were scored to an average of 2.0 or higher. The highest scores were given in Montreal, Saskatoon and Vancouver. Importantly, this picture is not consistent with the relative

assessment of mayoral power "on paper" as presented in Chapter 5. Saskatoon,

for example, fell in the low and medium categories relative to other cities in the

sample in terms of how the role of the mayor is empowered through legislation

and bylaw, but the perceptions of mayoral power were among the highest based

on interviews for this study. Winnipeg consistently scored in the high category

"on paper" but "in practice" is exactly average. Interviewees in Halifax had

relatively low perceptions of mayoral power, and yet was Halifax is average in

terms of empowerment of the mayor in provincial legislation and municipal

bylaw. Chart 1 presents a summary of mayoral power "on paper" (from Table

*Chart 1: Mayoral power "on paper" and "in practice"[22]*

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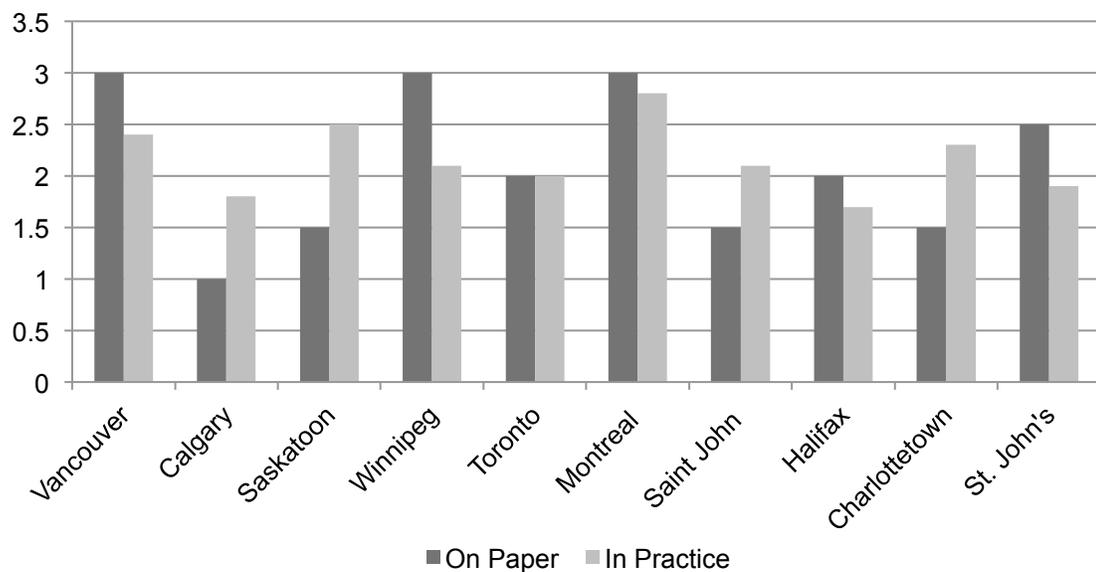
[22] Note: this is for illustration purposes only, as no standard scale was used for all the data summarized in this diagram. There is no objective "unit" of power; instead, this provides a relative picture of mayoral power in each city in the context of the other cities in the sample.

15 in Chapter 5, where cities ranked low are marked as a 1, low-medium as a

1.5, medium as a 2, medium-high as a 2.5, and high as a 3), and "in practice"

(from Table 20, where the scores from 1.0 to 3.0 charted), again for illustration

purposes only.

The important finding here is that increased mayoral power "on paper"

does not translate into perceptions of greater power "in practice." In other words,

institutional variables, such as legislation and local arrangements, are less

important factors in terms of how mayoral power is perceived in practice. The

only variable that appears linked to both higher "on paper" and "in practice"

perceptions of power are the presence of local political parties, in Vancouver and

Montreal. Otherwise, there is no obvious relationship between these relative

comparisons. Variation in legal authority appears to have no obvious relationship

to perceptions of power. Mayors and those who work most closely with mayors

rarely referenced municipal legislation or any formal power of the mayor when

participating in the interviews. This was a surprising observation to the

researcher, particularly the frequency with which the researcher seemed to know

more about the legal authority and institutional powers of the mayor than

interviewees – sometimes including mayors themselves. The argument that

institutional variables do not translate into higher perceptions of power is further

bolstered when considering survey data on public perception.

In October 2015, Ipsos Public Affairs conducted a survey of 12,000

Canadians. To support this research project, one question was included in this

Chart 2: Perceptions of Mayoral Power, by Province
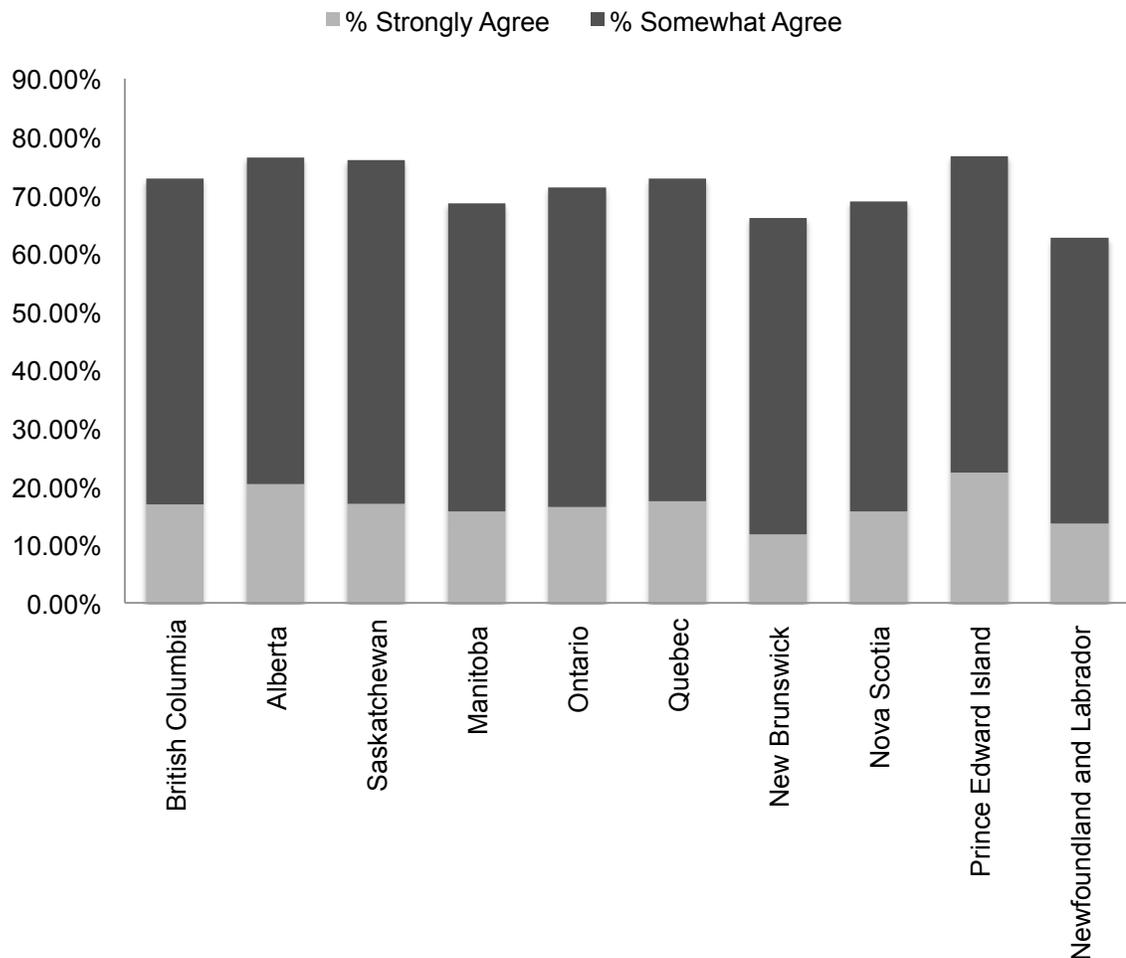
survey regarding attitudes about mayoral power.[23] The survey found that

Canadians, generally, believe that their mayors have the power to make things

happen in their communities. However, perceptions of power across provinces

do not mirror variations in legal authority or institutional power. As presented in

Appendix B, respondents in Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Saskatchewan

had the highest perception of mayoral power – provinces where the mayors in

their largest cities have some of the least formal authority. Respondents in New

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[23] See Appendix B for more details on this survey question and the findings.

Newfoundland and Labrador had the lowest perception of mayoral power,

despite the mayor of their largest city having among the highest level of legal

authority in this sample.

Perhaps most interesting finding from the survey was the responses in

Canada's largest cities. Urban residents had higher perceptions of mayoral

power than rural residents, particularly in Canada's largest cities. Calgary had

the highest perception of mayoral power of any of the city-specific[24] results, with

79% of Calgarians believing their mayor has power to make things happen,

compared to 72.1% of people across Canada. Calgary is the only city in this

sample rated in the 'low' category for both legal authority and local institutional

arrangements. This further demonstrates the finding expressed in Chart 1, that

institutional variables – other than the presence of political parties – appear less

important factors shaping how mayoral power is perceived in practice.

Mayoral Leadership

As noted above, interviewees rarely described the role of the mayor in

terms of power. The much more common way to describe the mayoralty, and

speak about mayors and their ability to accomplish things, was for respondents

to speak about mayoral leadership. The interviews revealed that the role of the

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[24] There are limitations to this data, given that it was a part of a larger study. The researcher had limited access to the data other than summarized results from Ipsos. This posed a number of issues. For example, the city-specific data as presented here and in Appendix B reflects respondents in a Census Metropolitan Area, as it was not possible to obtain the data based on the geographic boundaries of the municipality. The data was not able to be disaggregated for every city in the study. As a result, the decision was made to use this survey data to support a few general arguments rather than feature as a central part of the research project.

mayor is fundamentally viewed to be a leadership position; and, that mayors have more than one leadership role. Interviewees spoke of mayors working across the groups engaged in local government, including politicians, staff, unions, business leaders, media, officials from other governments, and the public. Svara's model,[25] which identifies the mayor at the nexus of three groups – council, administration, and the community – was adapted as a way to sort interviewees' discussions about mayoral leadership with various groups. Svara's model closely mirrors the ways in which interviewees described the role of the mayor. Interviewees described mayors in three specific leadership roles: first, a political role, working with council and other elected officials; second, an

Table 21: Roles mentioned in response to question, "How would you describe the role of the mayor?," by perspective

	Political (n=37)	Executive (n=14)	Community (n=17)	Total (n=68)
Political role – working with council and other elected officials	92%	100%	78%	87%
Executive role – working with the city manager and/or administration	48%	71%	35%	51%
Community role – working with the broader public	70%	57%	82%	70%

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[25] As presented in Chapter 2, and pictured in Figure 1.

executive role, working with the city manager and/or administration; and, third, a

community role, working with citizens, groups, businesses and other

organizations. The extent to which these roles were emphasized often depended

on the perspective of the interviewee. As presented in Table 21, most

interviewees recognized all three roles in some way when describing the role of

the mayor in their own words. The most recognized role of the mayor is a

political role (identified by 87% of interviewees), followed by a community role

(identified by 70% of interviewees), and an executive role (identified by 51% of

interviewees). Interestingly, the interviewees reflected a bias toward recognizing

that the mayor plays a role in whatever group the interviewee represented.

When asked to identify the single *most important* part of the mayor's role,

respondents were most likely to point to some aspect of the mayor's community

or political role. The mayor's role as an executive leader – working with

administrators or on the delivery of municipal services – was referenced least

often. When asked to identify the single *most challenging* aspect of the mayor's

Table 22: Summary of other interview responses, by role

	Political Role	Executive Role	Community Role
What is the most important part of the mayor's role?	44% (30 / 68)	10% (7 / 68)	46% (31 / 68)
What is the most challenging part of the mayor's role?	35% (24 / 68)	23% (16 / 68)	25% (17 / 68)

role, respondents were most likely to point to the mayor's role as a political

leader.[26] A summary of this data is presented in Table 22.

What can be learned about mayoral power from this summary of interview

data? First, consistent with the literature, the role of the mayor in Canada is

unclear. Mayors themselves experience this most acutely, but those who work

closely with them also perceive ambiguity in the role. Second, the role of the

mayor in Canada is fundamentally viewed to be a leadership position. Although

the Canadian and American literature tends to focus on the "power" of the

mayor, this term rarely emerged during the interviews. Instead, mayors and

those who work with them were more likely to define the role as one involving

"leadership" and related terms. "Mayoral leadership" was referenced as the

defining feature of the role, and an important contributing factor to percpetions of

"mayoral power." The relationship between these concepts will be returned to in

Chapter 8. Finally, the role of the mayor is understood to be multi-dimensional.

This, too, is consistent with themes emerging from the literature. Sancton[27]

described mayors as having multiple concurrent roles. Svara's work[28] positions

the mayor at the nexus of a network of individuals and groups engaged in local

governance. Similarly, interviewees across perspectives and cities recognize

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[26] 11 of the 68 respondents' response to this question, regarding the most challenging aspect of the mayor's role, did not fit into one of the three categories. These 11 respondents all indicated that the most challenging aspect of the mayor's role has to do with work-life balance, time pressures or strain on family life. This response was not coded as falling into a political, executive, or community role because it is a product of all three roles. For this reason, the data in Table 25 for this question does not add up to 100%.

[27] Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders" (1994).

[28] Svara, Official Leadership in the City (1990).

mayors as having more than one distinct leadership role, each involving a different suite of actors and different power resources.

If leadership is a critical component of understanding the role of mayors in practice, what exactly does it entail? To gain an understanding of the mayoralty in Canada, careful attention was paid to the perceptions expressed by interviewees when describing the role of the mayor – and in their own words. Interviewees were not led to discuss any of these three roles specifically. They were not asked to describe what mayoral political leadership looks like, or what community or executive leadership entails. Instead, interviewees were asked open-ended questions about the role of the mayor, with interest in narratives and expressions to inform a more nuanced understanding of the mayoralty in Canada. Chapter 7 presents an image of the leadership of a Canadian mayor, as described by mayors and those who work most closely with them.

Chapter 7 | POLITICAL, EXECUTIVE AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

What does the role of the mayor entail? How do mayors work with council, with staff, or with the community? What resources empower mayors when working with these groups? What happens when mayors lead, and when they do not? This chapter presents insights on these questions, informed by interviews with people who have served as or with urban mayors in ten Canadian cities.[1] As identified in Table 21, interviewees with political, executive and community perspectives each recognized multiple leadership roles for Canadian mayors. Mayors are expected to serve concurrently as: first, political leaders, as the head of council and sometimes a local political party; second, executive leaders, recognized as the 'CEO' of the municipality in many provinces and having some degree of formal leadership in the administration of municipal government; and, third, community leaders, elected on behalf of an entire community to represent its interests on a local, provincial, national and sometimes international stage. But what do these roles look like, and what is expected of mayors in each capacity?

To answer this question, the researcher used a theming method[2] to examine the interview data. The interviews were examined with interest in

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[1] Informed by the narrative inquiry approach, this chapter privileges the experiences of interviewees, and shares perspectives using direct quotes as much as possible.

[2] Identifying themes is a central challenge of qualitative data analysis, with many approaches: word repetitions, identifying indigenous categories, examining words in context, analyzing transitions or connectors, and more. This study takes a theming approach, grouping similar ideas together and labeling those ideas with terms used by interviewees.

expressed expectations of the mayor – in other words, concrete actions or responsibilities that interviewee expected the mayor to undertake in their capacity as mayor. The researcher sorted this list of expectations into the three roles – political, executive and community – and then further grouped similar ideas together. For example, interviews expressing expectations like "getting council to act positively together"[3] or "playing that facilitator for us, making us feel like we're working towards a common cause"[4] were grouped together as "council cohesion." Using this method, the majority of comments were captured and condensed into a shorter list of defined categories.[5] Table 23 presents a list of these categories, sorted into the three leadership roles of mayors.[6] As political leaders, mayors are expected to articulate a vision for their community, build cohesion among council, chair meetings, champion decisions, and build relationships with officials from other levels of government. As executive leaders, mayors are expected to work with their city manager, have oversight over service delivery and taxation, serve as chief spokesperson for municipal activities, and motivate public servants. As community leaders, mayors are expected to build civic pride, keep "the pulse" and stay closely attuned to the community, mobilize groups, give hope in times of crisis, and personally project a positive image of

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[3] Confidential Interview #2.

[4] Confidential Interview #11.

[5] Very few outliers were excluded after using this method. These included: "telling little lies to sell the city," "hiring senior staff," "knowing the municipal legislation," and "giving advice to businesses."

[6] Importantly, these responses were taken from the entire content of the 68 interviews, rather than just the responses to a single question, as was the data presented in Chapter 6.

Table 23: Expectations of mayors, by leadership role

Leadership Role	Expectations of Mayors
Political	1. Articulate a shared vision 2. Build council cohesion 3. Chair meetings effectively 4. Champion council decisions 5. Maintain strong intergovernmental relationships
Executive	1. Maintain positive relationship with city manager 2. Align service delivery with community needs 3. Steward tax dollars responsibly 4. Communicate municipal activities 5. Motivate the public service
Community	1. Build civic pride 2. Keep the pulse of the community 3. Mobilize and engage diverse groups 4. Give hope in times of crisis 5. Project a positive image of the city

the city. Importantly, these roles are not mutually exclusive. Mayors may be engaged in an initiative that requires working with council and community actors collectively. Strong leadership in one role may generate positive externalities by strengthening the mayor's leadership in another aspect of their role. The defining lines between the political, executive and community leadership aspects of the mayoralty can be blurry – but there are still distinct expectations held of the mayor within each role.

Table 24 presents the frequency with which each of these common expectations was expressed, in total and by interviewee perspective. Overall, the

Table 24: Expectations of mayors, and frequency expressed

		Political (n=37)	Executive (n=14)	Community (n=17)	Total (n=68)
Political Role	Articulate a shared vision	64.9%	57.1%	58.8%	61.8%
	Build council cohesion	51.4%	71.4%	52.9%	55.9%
	Chair meetings effectively	29.7%	50.0%	29.4%	33.8%
	Champion council decisions	27.0%	14.3%	11.8%	20.6%
	Maintain strong intergovernmental relationships	13.5%	7.1%	0%	8.8%
Executive Role	Maintain positive relationship with city manager	43.2%	64.3%	23.5%	42.6%
	Align service delivery with community needs	24.3%	21.4%	17.6%	22.1%
	Steward tax dollars responsibly	29.7%	14.3%	11.8%	22.1%
	Communicate municipal activities	16.2%	7.1%	5.9%	11.8%
	Motivate the public service	0%	28.6%	5.9%	7.4%
Community Role	Build civic pride	54.1%	64.3%	58.8%	57.4%
	Keep the pulse of the community	56.8%	64.3%	47.1%	55.9%
	Mobilize and engage diverse groups	32.4%	42.9%	47.1%	38.2%
	Give hope in times of crisis	13.5%	14.3%	11.8%	13.2%
	Project a positive image of the city	16.2%	7.1%	5.9%	11.8%

most frequently expressed expectation of mayors was to articulate a vision for their community (identified by 61.8% of interviewees), contribute to civic pride in the community (57.4%), build council cohesion (55.9%), and to stay closely attuned to the needs and interests of their community (55.9%). However, the expectations held of mayors vary depending on the perspective of the interviewee. For example, municipal administrators were more likely than politicians or community members to expect mayors to build council cohesion, as the single strongest response (71.4% of administrators). The mayor's role in motivating the public service was identified by more than a quarter of executive interviewees (28.6%) but was not identified by a single elected official. Community members were most likely to expect mayors to be well attuned to the public interest (identified by 64.3% of community interviewees, compared to 56.8% and 47.1% of political and executive interviewees respectively). But what did interviewees express specifically, and what is meant by these expectations? The chapter is organized into three discussions on the distinct and concurrent roles of mayors in Canada – as political leaders, as executive leaders, and as community leaders – in the words of mayors and those who work most closely with them.

Role #1: Mayor as Political Leader

It was clear the former mayor had told this tale before. It had the character of a war story: a personal experience of hardship and adventure, where those who live to tell the tale relish in sharing it. The former mayor set the stage: a city

experiencing rapid growth, with mounting transit and transportation demands and a need for quick action. He had campaigned on a specific proposal for a new rapid transit system, and shortly after being elected, the mayor set to work on bringing the proposal to life. Much legwork had already been done, including the needed studies and assessments. What was missing was political support from council. The past mayor described his approach this way. "I would go to [the councillors'] offices, one by one, and say, 'Can you share a few minutes with me? I'm bringing forward a motion. I want to run past you what I'm going to say. I need your feedback.'"[7] The former mayor indicated that he would have this conversation several weeks in advance of tabling any significant motion on the project. "I'd say, 'I'm giving you a copy of my speech, and a copy of my motion. I'll leave it with you. Please think about it. I'm going to ask you to support this motion, and this investment for our city.'"[8] The former mayor emphasized the importance of this step. Asking for feedback in advance would reveal which councillors would be supporters and detractors when the motion came to council. This enabled the mayor to be strategic about the timing of when to bring items forward, and come prepared to address outstanding concerns. As with all good war stories, the tale concludes in victory: a series of affirmative council decisions, and the successful construction of one of the city's largest infrastructure investments in its history. "We did it in 36 months. It's never been done again. It

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[7] Confidential Interview #58.
[8] Ibid.

happened because I did the legwork with council."[9] The former mayor described

this approach as a strategy that he would use on any major policy file, and one

that had never failed him during his time in office. "It's enormously time

consuming […] but if you don't respect your colleagues, they won't respect you.

If you respect them enough to share what you are doing, why you are doing it,

and ask for their help, most people will join you."[10]

Canadian mayors are political leaders. They are elected alongside a

council, and as the head of that council, mayors are expected to provide

leadership to the council in some way. The means by which mayors serve in this

political leadership role can vary depending on many factors, including

personality, local political culture, and the institutional arrangements specific to

their municipality. The former mayor's story about securing political support for a

rapid transit project reflects both the priority he placed on political relationships,

and the political norms of his community. A similar approach was described

during the interviews in several cities; however, in cities in Ontario this approach

could be considered an illegal serial meeting.[11] Mayors provide political

leadership to their elected council colleagues; and, they are expected to be the

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ontario's *Municipal Act, 2001* provides that all meetings of municipal council and committees must be open to the public, except in specific circumstances. There has been much discussion, and confusion, over what constitutes a "meeting" and whether informal gatherings of, or conversations among, a quorum of councillors from any committee constitutes a "meeting." In 2008, the Ontario Ombudsman established the Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team (OMLET) to educate municipalities, and investigate complaints. Numerous investigations have taken place in municipalities across Ontario, finding violations of the open meeting requirements of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in several cases. For a helpful overview of Ontario's context, see Sancton, "What is a Meeting? Municipal Councils and the Ontario Ombudsman" (Working Paper, 2014).

primary contact with political leaders from other governments. The political leadership role is challenging, complex and viewed to be one of the most important dimensions of any mayor's job.

What does mayoral political leadership look like?

The political leadership role of Canadian mayors is at the same time one of the most visible and one of the most hidden parts of the mayor's job. The most visible part occurs during council meetings. In most Canadian cities, the mayor chairs council meetings.[12] They call the meeting to order. They recognize visitors. They announce agenda items, and moderate the debate on those items. In some cities, they speak to the item at hand; in other cases, they do not speak but instead focus on facilitating the discussion. In some cities, the mayor votes; in other cases, the mayor votes only in the case of a tie. If a member of council is out of order, the mayor is expected to address the member and remedy their behavior. The mayor concludes the meeting, and is often called upon to speak to the press following the meeting about key decisions made. This visible dimension of the role extends beyond procedure; mayors can set the tone of debate through the way they run a meeting and interact with their political colleagues. Council meetings are among the most accessible forums in which the public can observe the political leadership of the mayor.

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[12] In some Canadian cities, including Toronto and Montreal, the mayor or council select a speaker to chair council meetings.

However, a significant part of the mayor's political leadership role occurs outside of council chambers through the relationships the mayor builds with their council colleagues. In cities where mayors have appointment powers, a positive relationship with the mayor can have a direct political and sometimes financial benefit to members of council, and result in leadership opportunities such as chairing committees or acting as a lead on key policy files.[13] Even in cases where mayors do not have appointment powers, council members often go to the mayor for advice, for support on key decisions, to amplify a specific issue or concern, and with requests specific to their own ward. Similarly, the mayor may seek out advice and support, and make requests of their council colleagues.

The relationship between a mayor and their council, collectively and individually, is complex and often filled with tension. Some of the sources of tension are obvious: when members of council have personal ambitions to become mayor, when councillors aim to position themselves in opposition to the mayor and/or council, and, the positioning that occurs around key votes or leading up to election time. There are also less obvious sources of tension, including a persistent dynamic of interdependence. Individually, for a councillor to achieve something they want, it often helps to have the mayor on side;

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[13] This is based on perceptions shared in cities where mayors have appointment powers; however, not everyone agreed that appointment powers always translate into political support. In the words of one past mayor, "It's been said that Winnipeg has a 'strong mayor system' [laughs] – but I don't know any mayor of Winnipeg who has actually experienced that. Yes we have an Executive Policy Committee [appointed by the mayor], and the mayor picks the chairs. The media calls EPC the cabinet, but of course it isn't. I can assure you, I selected people and sometimes they supported me and sometimes they didn't. And you can't just replace them if they don't. It's not that easy." (Confidential Interview #53)

similarly, the mayor may need to maintain or build support from the councillor to achieve their own goals. Collectively, a council is typically more effective when the mayor is an effective political leader; and, the mayor tends to be more effective when they have the support of their council. There can also be a 'push and pull dynamic' where council members try to align themselves more closely or less closely with the mayor, depending on the mayor's perceived popularity at any particular point in time. The nature of the mayor's relationships with other councillors can influence the cohesion of council and the decision making process. In the words of one media observer:

> The mayor can really set the tone, lead the agenda, and be the coalition builder. Council has to believe in their authority and the legitimacy of their authority. You could translate this into cynical, casual terms: if council believes that voters like the mayor, they will vote with the mayor. If they believe voters have turned against the mayor, they will too. They are all about saving their own skin.[14]

When interviewees were asked about the most important part of the mayor's job, 'working with council' (or a variant such as 'dealing with council' or 'bringing leadership to council') was the second most common response, per Table 22. When asked about the most challenging part of the mayor's role, 'working with council' in the political role was the most common response.[15] Across all cities, there was recognition of the complexity of this role, and interviewees often

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[14] Confidential Interview #45.

[15] Interestingly, interviewees from all three perspectives (political, executive and community) frequently shared this response. The language varied depending on the context. In cities with political parties, interviewees said things like 'trying to stop the bickering between parties during council meetings.' In cities without political parties, common responses included things like 'trying to build consensus at council' and 'keeping council together.'

described this challenge with humour, as "herding the cats of city council"[16] or, in a city with 10 councillors, as akin to "having 10 kids."[17] Despite recognition of how difficult this aspect of the mayor's role can be, there was also broad consensus across interviewee perspectives and across cities that the relationship between the mayor and council is critically important to the overall effectiveness of local government: the difference between a mayor who has positive relationships with their council and a mayor who has negative relationships with their council can be the difference between having a functional and a dysfunctional council. In the words of one interviewee, a seasoned local politician, "if you have a mayor who can't get along with their colleagues, you won't have an effective council. And that's that."[18]

When interviewees described the political leadership role of mayors, five chief expectations emerged, and many interviewees expressed several from this list. As political leaders, mayors are expected to:

1. Articulate a shared vision

2. Build council cohesion

3. Chair meetings effectively

4. Champion council decisions

5. Maintain strong intergovernmental relationships

Interviewees expressed expectations for mayors to play a leadership role in each of these areas; and, that when mayors are able to provide leadership in these

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[16] Confidential Interview #58.
[17] Confidential Interview #18.
[18] Confidential Interview #36.

areas, it can translate into a cohesive council, productive decision making processes, and more effective local governance. The following section provides an overview of each responsibility, expressed through the words of interviewees.

1. Articulate a shared vision

In many cities, the mayor is the only local politician elected on a citywide basis; and in all cities, a mayoral election can be a vehicle for a community to express a shared vision of their city. Mayoral candidates frequently project competing policy positions on key issues facing a community, and they themselves can personally represent competing images of a community. The election of a mayor is a significant act of collective expression in Canada's cities – and this point is not lost on Canada's mayors. In the words of one longstanding and highly respected former mayor,

> A mayor represents the collective psyche of a city at a particular moment in time. Sometimes it's during an election. Sometimes it's a longer period. That's a really significant obligation, to be the owner of that spirit and the representation of collective will. If you're lucky, that moment lasts. If you're not, it can pass quickly. It's different than being the 'face of the city'; you're the embodiment of hopes, of dreams, and sometimes anger. You need to honour that spirit in all of your actions. [19]

In describing the role of the mayor, several interviewees expressed similar sentiments about mayors as an expression of a collective vision from a community, and having a responsibility for that vision. In the words of two city councillors from two cities:

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[19] Confidential Interview #35.

> The mayor is the convener of the vision of the city, to look to the horizon and understand where the city is going. It's about helping citizens and administrators see beyond the immediate. At their best, mayors' jobs are to see the big picture.[20]

> A mayor can really set and drive a vision, something that can be achieved on behalf of the people. That's what I think the mayor's role is: it's to be the keeper of the vision and be the one who champions it. Oh, and a lot of other things too.[21]

In the words of one senior administrator, this expression of a community vision is a key distinction between the mayoral campaigns and other councillor campaigns. Mayoral candidates are expected to convey 'broader visions and grander ideas' about their community, and as such, mayors take on a different role from councillors on council after the election:

> Mayoral candidates campaign in a very different way. It's obvious the kinds of councillors who want to become mayor, and the ones who want to be councillors. Some just want to represent their wards. Mayoral candidates are expected to have broader visions and grander ideas. Councillors can't do that. They talk about the kinds of things they support or will vote for, but they are not the front line on big ideas.[22]

The community can express a collective voice through their selection of a mayoral candidate; but the council plays a critical role in articulating this vision, and mayors are expected to play a leadership role with council in doing so.

> There is some confusion between a campaign platform and a strategic vision. They are not the same. […] The strategic vision for the city is set by council, but it's up to the mayor to lead the development of it.[23]

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[20] Confidential Interview #54.
[21] Confidential Interview #1.
[22] Confidential interview #47.
[23] Confidential Interview #58.

Most Canadian cities have a strategic plan or similar document,[24] which sets out a vision, prioritizes areas of focus, and identifies specific strategies or goals to be achieved during the council term. It is common for this document to be developed by new councils, often early in their term, as a way to define their shared agenda. Some interviewees provided examples where mayors have played a leadership role in this process, facilitating discussions and conversing with members of council to build support around shared priorities. In cities with political parties, this process may occur outside of council and instead be a discussion within the political party.[25]

Mayors who play an active leadership role with their council in articulating a shared vision for their city can benefit from having a council that is aligned around a common direction; and, it can be helpful to build broader council support for key elements of the mayor's campaign. Articulating a shared vision can be a powerful tool for mayors to advance their interests. In the words of one former mayor,

> In order to satisfy the people's aspirations and dreams, as expressed
> through your election, you have to use all of your skill and power to

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[24] All but two cities included in this study have a document called a "Strategic Plan" for their municipality. Other documents such as Community Plans, Community Strategies, Corporate Plan, Plan for the Future, etc. also exist in cities included in this study.

[25] Interviewees from the City of Vancouver indicated that the current majority party's campaign platform serves as the guiding strategic document for council. Interviewees aligned with the majority party spoke favourably about this arrangement, citing how it provides alignment across organizations including the school boards and parks board because representatives on many organizations have contributed and support a common vision. Interviewees who are not aligned with the majority party spoke unfavourably about the arrangement, expressing a sense of exclusion.

ensure that the policies and programs that you believe are right for the city actually get implemented.[26]

Mayors are often evaluated on the basis of whether they are able to advance the vision of their city expressed during their campaign with their council, and a mayor who takes a stand can be praised for doing so. In the words of one councillor,

> Some people have criticized our mayor for coming out so strongly in the promise to end homelessness. They say it hasn't happened, and that we have more homeless people now than ever before. But I think that's exactly the kind of thing the mayor should do. I praise him for taking a stand. Naming the issue. Calling out to people, getting them on board, and articulating a goal.[27]

Mayors, by virtue of the uniqueness of their election, represent and are expected to advance some vision of their city for the future. The act of working with their council to more fully articulate this vision, and coalesce the group around a shared vision is a critical aspect of the mayor's role as a political leader.

2. Build council cohesion

After articulating a vision, the second most commonly expressed expectation of mayors in their political leadership role was about establishing positive dynamics and relationships with council. For interviewees from an executive perspective, this was the most frequently expressed expectation. Across cities, building council cohesion was identified as one of the most important and challenging roles that mayors play – but one that is vital to

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[26] Confidential Interview #35.
[27] Confidential Interview #63.

everything from the passing of individual policy decisions to the overall brand of

the city. Building cohesion among council includes the visible dimensions of the

political role – namely, working together at meetings and in public forums – and

the less visible aspects of the role, including the way councillors speak to the

media and members of the public about the work of council. The mayor is widely

viewed to play a critical role here, and it starts with the quality of relationships.

> A mayor needs to take the councillors he's been given – he hasn't
> selected them, he's been given them – and he needs to curate them into a
> cohesive unit so they can actually get something done. A mayor who
> understands the strength of council will focus on building relationships
> with them.[28]

One mayor described the importance of having personal relationships with his

councillors, including providing insight into their individual interests and

philosophies, which can help mayors build consensus from the group:

> I know all of our councillors. I know how they think. I know their attitudes.
> So you gravitate towards the group that has the same philosophy as you
> do […] and you know how many you have on side. Then it's a matter of
> rational discussion with the others to move them towards consensus.[29]

One local reporter and blogger, after closely following city hall affairs for many

years, indicated that he had witnessed how relationships and the personal

orientation of councillors can influence policy outcomes:

> It's all about getting councillors on board, and that starts with good
> personal relationships. If you go and find out why votes were delayed or
> failed, often it's about personality and it's really petty. It's personal feuds
> that are costing us votes. One councillor told me she didn't like the tone of

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[28] Confidential Interview #24.
[29] Confidential Interview #7.

a presentation, and voted against it. She made a policy decision, just based on that.[30]

The way in which policy decisions are brought forward to council also emerged as an important ingredient toward building a cohesive council. The story from the former mayor about building support for a rapid transit project is an extreme case. A more common story came from councillors who felt surprised, uninformed, or caught off guard when big items came forward without their knowledge or input. One councillor described a situation where a challenging budget was submitted to council, including both significant tax increases and service cuts. The councillor received negative public feedback almost immediately on the budget's public release, and expressed disappointment about not getting a 'heads up' in advance. The councillor laid blame with the mayor for "blindsiding" council when the budget came forward.

> There was a lack of preparation for council members, so we were blindsided. I decided to vote for [the budget], but I didn't really have enough information or understanding of the issue. I didn't hear from the mayor, not even once. I went to Finance committee, and the mayor wasn't even there.[31]

Norms around how the mayor communicates with council in advance of key reports and decisions seem to vary considerably. In some cases, mayors take an active role in agenda setting with senior administration and play a role in communicating the council agenda to members; in other cases, mayors take a less active role. In some provinces, legislation restricts informal discussions

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[30] Confidential Interview #56.
[31] Confidential Interview #4.

between members of council outside of formally constituted meetings.[32] A

common theme in the interviews with councillors was that communication from

the mayor – particularly proactive communication before items advance through

the formal council or committee process – enables members of council to feel

more engaged, connected and included.

Several councillors also identified a desire for more deliberate team

building work with council, and looked to the mayor to lead this work. The

challenges and disincentives for doing so were also recognized:

> The mayor is the chair. He could say, 'okay guys, today we're going to do
> a team building exercise.' But, we don't. Fortune 500 companies do team
> building exercises – giving space to hash out ideas and move away from
> the politics of it – but we don't do any of that. […] I can't imagine how
> much further we'd be, and how much more effective we'd be, if people
> actually came together to hash out ideas. But that's not a public role.
> That's something people won't see, and generally politicians don't do
> things that people can't see. The public needs to see what we're working.
> If we went out there and said, we had a great team building session,

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[32] This is a complex and unclear area of municipal legislation in Canada. In all provinces, the relevant municipal legislation requires council and committee meetings to be open to the public, save for specific matters which can be discussed in closed session. Ontario has traditionally been the extreme case in terms of its requirements for open meetings. The definition of what constitutes a 'meeting' remains unclear but has been subject to much debate and a few important court decisions. A draft bill defined a 'meeting' as including any gathering of councillors constituting a quorum of council or a committee, which could mean even in an informal or social setting. One particular Ontario Ombudsman informally adopted this definition, including applying it in investigations in a number of Ontario municipalities. As such, the general practice in Ontario is to avoid informal discussions involving members of council that constitute a quorum of any committee. This interpretation was subject to considerable challenge. In 2017, the Ontario Government adopted new legislation which defined a 'meeting' as involving a quorum of members and where matters are materially advanced. In British Columbia, a 2012 Ombudsperson report adopted a similar definition of a meeting. In 2015, members of Vancouver's majority party were criticized for meeting in closed session as a party caucus. The party includes seven of Vancouver's 11 members of council, so caucus meetings included a quorum of council. The rules around open meetings and informal discussions between council members were only raised during the interviews for this project in two cities, Toronto and Vancouver.

people would just roll their eyes and say, 'oh that's so lame'. So yeah, we don't do it.[33]

In lieu of informal and formal opportunities for council members to "team build," the dynamics of council often depend on the multiplicity of relationships between the mayor and individual members of council, and their relationships among one another. Most of the mayors and past mayors, during their interviews, identified this aspect of political leadership as one of the most challenging part of their job, but also essential to the success of council. In the words of one mayor:

> The most challenging part of my role is getting council to act together positively on issues. It comes back to the fact that I have no overall authority. That doesn't mean everyone has to agree on everything, but it does mean that I have to try to get them to not attack each other. If you can't do that, it can make for an awful few years.[34]

3. Chair Meetings Effectively

One of the most obvious political leadership roles of a mayor takes place during council meetings, where in most cities, the mayor serves as the chair and presides over the meeting. The mayor is the focal point of council meetings, on both a symbolic and functional level. One council member phrased it this way: "The mace gets walked in. We all stand up. He walks in wearing a chain, that mayoral bling! [laughs] I really think we defer to him, to a degree because, well … because he's the mayor."[35] The role of the mayor during council meetings also varies across cities. In some cities, the mayor plays primarily a procedural

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[33] Confidential Interview #1.
[34] Confidential Interview #7.
[35] Confidential Interview #1.

role during the meetings; in other cities, the mayor plays a procedural role but also speaks on substantive matters; in other cities, a speaker is selected to preside over meetings and enable the mayor to more freely participate in debate. The manner in which the mayor engages during council meetings does not go unnoticed by other politicians, administrators or observers. Even in cities where the mayor does not chair the meeting, the role of the mayor during meetings can have an influence on the participation of other members of council. A local politics reporter in Montreal (a city where a speaker presides over meetings, and with a large council) commented on the dominance of the mayor during meetings:

> Our councillors have been marginalized. We elected them and they don't have a lot of importance. It's sad. I like the Toronto system where there are no party lines, so when the mayor wants to pass something, he has to make sure it pleases everyone. In Montreal, the parties, the alliances – the mayor get what he wants when he wants it. They always vote with him according to party lines. Councillors are pretty much invisible. Even some of the 65, when they raise from their seat, we [the media] say, 'who's that?' It's pretty sad. We don't even know who they are.[36]

In cities where the mayor does preside over meetings, the mayor tends to speak less frequently than other members of council. One councillor argued that this adds strength to the mayor's voice, because when it is used less frequently, it carries more weight when used. The councillor reflected on advice he had given to his mayor:

> I said to him, 'your voice carries weight. Use it appropriately. The more you use it, the more you erode its power. Save it for when you want to win that vote. If you're already winning the vote, don't speak.' But the mayor, he talks all the time. He speaks on everything. He's eroded the power of

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[36] Confidential Interview #33.

his voice to the point where his comments carry no more weight than mine. He's no longer the first among equals; he's just an equal.[37]

Council members in other communities expressed similar sentiments. "A good mayor is a mayor that doesn't talk about every subject. He allows councillors have dialogue. If you don't have a good chair, then you don't have a good meeting."[38]

Individuals involved in local government, including elected officials and administrators, as well as the media expect the mayor to set and enforce both the procedural and social norms of political decision making in cities. In every city, individuals had perspectives on the degree to which their mayors are effective in this role. Where the mayor was perceived to not be an effective or inclusive chair, or to dominate during council meetings, councillors and administrators expressed frustration with decision-making processes in their city. Where the mayor was perceived to be an effective and inclusive chair, individuals expressed appreciation for the efficiency of decision-making or would common on the 'professionalism' of council meetings. In the two cities in this sample with political parties – Vancouver and Montreal – the dynamic during council meetings is quite different. Interviews with members of council in the non-majority party in both cities revealed similar sense of exclusion from council; and, interestingly, individuals expressed an expectation of the mayor to bridge partisan lines during council meetings. In the words of one councillor, "[the party] is not council. Council is 10 councillors and the mayor. There is bickering, and

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[37] Confidential Interview #58.
[38] Confidential Interview #23.

extreme partisanship at times. The role of the mayor should be to stop that, and play a leadership role in diminishing the partisanship at council."[39] The mayor's skill level in chairing meetings, and setting the tone for council meetings as a whole, is an important aspect of their political leadership role.

4. Champion Council Decisions

Canadian mayors tend to be the most well known member of council, and the person who the media turns to first for comment on council decisions, actions and activities. The mayor's voice is widely viewed to carry greater weight with the public than is that of other members of council, by virtue of their position. In one council member's words, "it's a huge difference when a councillor says something and when the mayor says something. People think the mayor is in charge. […] He represents the whole city."[40] Many interviewees expressed an expectation that the mayor serve as a positive spokesperson for all of council. This expectation is not without challenge. The spokesperson role is easier when the decisions and actions are positive, and more difficult when the situation involves conflict or something, which is not popular with the public. In the words of one mayor, "when there is good news, all of the councillors are willing to take credit for it. Success has many fathers, but failure has none. When there is failure, it's harder to find someone to speak, so the public looks to the mayor."[41]

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[39] Confidential Interview #62.
[40] Confidential Interview #1.
[41] Confidential Interview #55.

Several councillors recognized the challenges inherent in the mayor's role as spokesperson for council, and the political disadvantage this role can create for the mayor. "It works well for me as a councillor, but the mayor wears a lot of the decisions, whether he voted from them or not. Council will make a decision, and if citizens don't like it, they blame the mayor."[42] Mayors also acknowledged the difficulty of this role. In the words of a former mayor:

> In today's world, there's never any praise. As a society we've become very negative about our elected officials. The mayor receives a lot of criticism, and it's hard to not stand up and say, 'I didn't even vote for this' or 'it wasn't my decision' because you are expected to support the decisions of council.[43]

Examples were shared of mayors who have spoken out publically against their council colleagues following decisions. Interviewees viewed this as a calculated move that may have personal political benefits for the mayor, but weakens the overall image and cohesion of the group. One councillor, after telling a story about a mayor publically criticizing their council's decision on a planning matter, cited this as a source of power because of the weight of the mayor's voice in the public. "I've discovered that the mayor has a significant amount of power. Even though Council may have debated something, or voted on something, the mayor can still go to the public and say something else. "[44]

Several interviewees expressed frustration about other members of council speaking out against their council colleagues following meetings or after

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[42] Confidential Interview #57.
[43] Confidential Interview #17.
[44] Confidential Interview #24.

difficult decisions. Even in cases where the mayor is the designated

spokesperson for council, it is not uncommon for other member of council to

publicly criticize their colleagues and shared decisions. One mayor, who had

also served as an elected official at the federal level, expressed it this way:

> There is a 'caucus mentality' at the other levels of government, where even if you don't agree, at least you appreciate that there is value to having a united front. But [in local government], not only do we allow everyone to speak their mind, we encourage it."[45]

Another mayor commented on expectations to ensure council presents itself as a

cohesive and united group:

> When councillors break out on their own, people will say to me, 'why don't you control this?' I say, 'I can speak to them but they are independent representatives. They can act and say what they wish. I can't control what they say.' Their reaction is, 'but you're the mayor!'[46]

Whether this expectation is reasonable or not, mayors are expected to be

champions and spokespeople for their councils. During the interviews, this was

consistently identified in relation to the mayor's role in strengthening the

cohesion of council. This challenging expectation may mean that mayors need to

be cautious in their own public remarks regarding contentious matters where

their colleagues are divided. One former city manager expressed this

observation:

> The mayor is the spokesperson for council. If a mayor is doing a good job being a chair, he will be a better spokesperson for council. If they have opined too much before an issue is decided, they risk becoming a less

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[45] Confidential Interview #8.
[46] Confidential Interview #7.

effective spokesperson because they could be aligned to the wrong side. Smart mayors won't speak until they know how the wind is blowing.[47]

5. *Maintain strong intergovernmental relationships*

The fifth expectation related to the political leadership role of mayors in Canada was to build strong working relationship with officials from other levels of government. Interestingly, this expectation was raised by political and executive interviewees, but not by any community perspective interviewees. For interviewees who did identify government relations as a key part of the mayor's political leadership role, it was often spoken of in relation to the tangible outcomes from these relationships for the community. One councillor described with great pride a number of recent investments from the federal and provincial government into their municipality, and cited their mayor's previous political experience as a leading reason for this success.

> He knows how to work with other levels of government. He's friends with ministers. He's friends with Justin Trudeau. That's the benefit of having someone from the big leagues come back to municipal government. Someone on their way up wouldn't have those kind of national connections.[48]

The intergovernmental role also includes the work of mayors through municipal associations. There was a high level of awareness in each city of the role interviewees' respective mayors play in associations, particularly on the

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[47] Confidential Interview #61.
[48] Confidential Interview #12.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Big City Mayors Caucus (BCMC).

Nine of the ten cities in this study are engaged in BCMC, and interestingly,

interviewees in all nine cities made reference to the role their mayor played at

this table. In some cities, interviewees spoke to strained relationships between

their city and their provincial governments. In the words of one executive in

Montreal, with a particularly prominent mayor, "it's because of him as a person,

and his position. They [the provincial government] feel like they are in his

shadow. And they don't want to give too much power to the City of Montreal."[49]

Frustration with municipal-provincial affairs was not an uncommon theme during

the interviews. Misalignment between provincial priorities and local priorities can

highlight underlying fiscal and power imbalances.

> When you have a federal or provincial government that needs to hang on to a seat, or win a seat, they will just dump money in. Let's call it what it is. All of a sudden, we're building that bridge or community centre. They are trying to make an 'investment' but it's really in the seat. They can look down the city's list, and suddenly their priority becomes our priority. It's hard for us to say no to money. It's a really frustrating experience.[50]

Canadian mayors, individually and collectively, engage in intergovernmental

activities on a regular basis, particularly in the largest cities – and mayors report

having unique access to provincial and federal officials, particularly in large and

capital cities. In the words of a politician from Charlottetown, "oh yes, we [the

premier and the mayor] see each other a fair bit. He's just down the street!

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[49] Confidential Interview #31.
[50] Confidential Interview #51.

[laughs] Access has never been an issue."[51] Interviewees expressed a clear expectation of mayors to play a leadership role in discussions and negotiations with other levels of government, and placed value on mayors' personal relationships with key leaders.

Summary: Mayoral Political Leadership

Canadian mayors are expected to be political leaders. This role is complex, but viewed as one of the most important aspects of the mayor's role, and the most challenging part of the role. As described, none of these tasks are without challenge. The relationships between mayors and their councils, as well as with officials from other governments, are often filled with tension. They are also described as involving a high degree of interdependence.

What makes a mayor an effective political leader? There appears to be no single answer to this question. During the interview process, competing perspectives were shared about how a mayor is able to be a strong political leader. Some interviewees argued that political leadership depends on "standing and reputation."[52] Another argued political leadership requires a mayor to be "a great peacemaker, and really good at dealing with people."[53] Even in speaking to mayors and past mayors, their perspectives on what effective political leadership

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[51] Confidential Interview #17.
[52] Confidential Interview #5.
[53] Confidential Interview #8.

looks like varied across cities. One past mayor described his approach to

political leadership:

> You can't lose a vote. If you start losing votes, you lose your power. You have to make council think you are all powerful, and make sure the civil service knows too. […] You have to create the illusion that you're all powerful and you always get your way. There are a bunch of things that are tied to that. Once you start getting your way, council members will start coming to you asking for favours. You have to be very careful in judging whether those favours are aligned to your agenda. And, you have to bully people. They have to be a bit afraid of you. They need to be afraid that if you're not on board, nothing will get done. [… It is also] smart and strategic use of the bully pulpit, which is an incredibly powerful thing. You have to use that wisely. You can't fritter it away. […] You can lose your bully pulpit very easily – through personal behavior, or weighing in on issues that you don't need to. If you do silly things too often, it undermines your ability to be taken seriously.[54]

Interestingly, other interviewees described this particular mayor as being highly

collaborative and an effective leader of council. But, the approach described

differs considerably from that of other mayors interviewed for this study. The

mayor who built rapid success for a transit project summarized his approach this

way. "Creative tension is healthy. Show respect, and maintain your humility.

You'll get the votes every time."[55]

When mayors are strong political leaders, councillors feel more engaged,

the council is more functional and effective, the public see a more positive image

of their city projected, and cities may receive more benefits or have more

influence with other levels of government. Overall, effective mayoral political

leadership contributes to effective local governance. In the words of one

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[54] Confidential Interview #35.
[55] Confidential Interview #60.

seasoned former city manager, who had worked with several mayors over the course of a career in local government:

> The chaos that you get when you have a mayor that can't get votes together, it's bad – and it's harmful to a community. Things don't move forward. It creates fighting and conflict. Every group of people needs a leader. If the mayor can't be the leader, there's constant positioning among the council to become the leader. […] I've seen councils where the mayor is unable to master the role of leader. Very seldom do things move quickly. Councils learn quickly how they can obstruct things. When it's council leading, instead of the mayor leading, it's not a good place to be as an administrator. You don't move forward fast, because you're always waiting for the dust to settle."[56]

Others echoed this sentiment. When mayors are not effective political leaders, other members of council begin taking on roles such as coalition building, liaising with other government officials, or other duties generally expected of the mayor. Chaos can also emerge, with fractures and conflict among councillors. When the mayor is unable or unwilling to provide political leadership, or focuses energies into other leadership roles, other elected officials will position themselves to take on this leadership role – sometimes creating conflict when there are multiple individuals seeking to emerge as leaders. This tends to shift the dynamic of council in a significant way, and can impact relations between council and staff, and the reputation of council and the community. As such, the nature of the mayor's political leadership – and the mayor's political relationships – can have a profound influence on the dynamics of governance at the local level in Canada's cities.

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[56] Confidential Interview #60.

Role #2: Mayor as Executive Leader

The public servant was seated at a handsome boardroom table in his office, featuring an expansive view of the city through large glass windows. For someone who manages an organization with a multi-billion budget and a staff team exceeding 25,000 people, his office was remarkably organized. He began to describe the role of the mayor in his own words. "The most important part [of the mayor's role] is to tell the public service where he wants to go with the city. He tells the vision for the city. Public servants then do the work to arrive at this goal."[57] The administrator shared a few examples. "He has a lot of decisions to make: so many programs, recreation subsidies, grants for nonprofit organizations. He's the driver – we go there, or we go here – but he has to know where he wants to go. The most difficult thing for a municipality is if the mayor doesn't know where to go." The administrator was a seasoned executive with decades of experience within the provincial government, and described his appointment just two years earlier. The municipality had come through a period of chaos, so when the newly elected mayor contacted the public servant about taking on the most senior administrative role in the organization, he knew he was in for a challenge. Within months on the job, he had created three new plans for the city – a planning document, an infrastructure plan, and a budget – working closely with the mayor and executive committee, and ultimately receiving support from council. When asked about nature of the working relationship with the mayor, the public servant was very direct. "The mayor is the boss. […] If the

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[57] Confidential Interview #33.

mayor wasn't satisfied with me, he would have to propose my removal to council – but in reality, if the mayor wasn't satisfied with me, I would just quit. It's like that here."

In every Canadian city, the mayor is in some sense an executive within their respective municipality. As illustrated in Chapter 4, in many provinces the mayor is officially titled the 'chief executive officer' (or similar title) of the municipality. In all provinces, the mayor's signature is required to authorize official documents and enter into contracts. Mayor's signatures appear on cheques issued by municipalities, and they have individual responsibilities with respect to certain public services such as emergency management. In many cities, the mayor is involved in activities of the municipality such as economic development and tourism in a way that other members of council are not. The level of legal authority held by the mayor varies across cities and provinces, and mayors in some large cities have 'executive' type powers such as the ability to suspend senior staff. The story shared here is an extreme case in the Canadian context. Most city managers would not refer to the mayor as their 'boss' or describe the role of the mayor as including making decisions about grants or recreation subsidies. The point is that all Canadian mayors are expected to be executive leaders to some extent, and this ranges widely from signing bylaws all the way up to being described as "the driver" and "the boss" of the public service.

The executive role of Canadian mayors is subject to great confusion. While the American "strong mayor" model of concentrated executive power independent of council does not exist in Canada, Canadian mayors do have

executive-type duties – that is, responsibilities related to the administration of government services. When interviewees were asked about the most important part of the mayor's role, the executive role was the least frequently referenced leadership role of mayors. However, it was recognized more frequently by interviewees when asked about what the most challenging aspect of the mayor's role is, with approximately a quarter of interviewees mentioning this role at least a few times during the discussion, per Table 22. There was broad recognition that the mayor plays a special role in everything from setting priorities with the city manager, down to day-to-day issues faced by citizens with city services. In the words of one interviewee, "sure, theoretically, the mayor can't direct city staff to do something. But if his office asks for something, as a courtesy, he will get a briefing on what staff know, what their thoughts are. Anyone who complains about this doesn't understand the system."[58]

What does mayoral executive leadership look like?

The executive role of the mayor is the most ambiguous and varied aspect of the job. It is rarely articulated in writing, and often is defined informally over time through periodic testing as circumstances arise. Often this informal testing of boundaries begins shortly after the election, when a new mayor will sit down with their most senior administrator and share their campaign platform with an expectation that it will drive the work of the organization during the term ahead. Interviews with current and former city managers indicated that this was a

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[58] Confidential Interview #48.

common occurrence, particularly when the individual comes to office without experience in local government. One former city manager provided this account:

> After every election, my senior team would do a good analysis of the platform of the mayor elect. I remember, after one mayor was elected, he gave me a copy of his platform, and told me what he expected on the environment, and other issues. We went through his platform with he and his political staff, and made it very clear what would still require approval from council and what was already underway. That's where you get your priorities and strategy for the next four years. What becomes tricky is when there is something the mayor wants to do, and council won't approve it.[59]

Another senior municipal administrator shared a similar sentiment. "I welcomed the last three mayors to their jobs. Each of them, regardless of their political backgrounds, and especially if their staff came in from outside – they were all surprised to learn that they don't have executive power."[60] This is a more common narrative; although, it must be recognized that there is variation across cities in Canada in the norms related to the executive leadership of mayors. In the case of the story at the beginning of this chapter, these early discussions between the mayor and the senior administrator following an election were likely rather different.

In general terms, on what exactly do people expect mayors to provide leadership in this executive role? During the interviews, five main expectations emerged:

1. Maintain positive relationship with city manager

2. Align service delivery with community needs

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[59] Confidential Interview #42.
[60] Confidential interview #41.

3. Steward tax dollars responsibly

3. Communicate municipal activities

5. Motivate the public service

Interviewees expressed expectation for the mayor to play a leadership role in each of these areas and communicated that when a mayor is able to provide leadership in all of these areas, it may translate into a more productive municipal organization, improved service delivery, or greater citizen satisfaction with local government.

1. Maintain positive relationship with city manager

The most commonly expressed expectation of mayors as executive leaders, particularly by administrators, was to build a strong working relationship with the most senior administrative official – the city manager, sometimes known as the chief administrative officer (CAO). This relationship was widely viewed to be critical to the mayor's ability to 'get things done':

> The mayor can't get anything done at City Hall without the cooperation of city staff – so it's important to have good relationships, especially with the CAO. The CAO's job is to make sure staff are implementing council's directions, and they don't always do that willingly.[61]

The terms of relations between the mayor and city manager vary by city, and with changes in the individuals involved. In some cities, the mayor and city manager meet on a regular basis for advice, sharing information, and to make decisions about emerging issues. In some cases, mayors rely on city managers

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[61] Confidential Interview #21.

for advice; in other cases, the direction of the advice is reversed. When council's

direction is unclear or ambiguous, city managers referenced conversations with

mayors to 'translate' or clarify council direction. Some city managers claimed that

they rarely met with the mayor, and instead tended to have positive relationships

with committee chairs or, in smaller cities, all members of council. One city

manager described how sensitive his role was to a change in mayor:

> The city manager job, it changes completely when the mayor changes.
> You have to reinvent yourself. Whatever worked before, probably won't
> work now. Especially if you're a survivor from the previous mayor, you're
> already on shaky ground. There is too much room for comparison, and
> they always feel like they are being evaluated. So you have to reinvent
> yourself."[62]

Although the mayor may not be viewed as 'the boss' in most cases, this

relationship remains an important one for the most senior of municipal

administrators.

In several cities, examples were given of what can happen when there is

misalignment between the mayor and the city manager. A councillor from a city

where the contract of their city manager was recently discontinued described the

importance of the relationship in this way:

> We had a city manager who had a complete disregard for all associations,
> stakeholder groups, and council itself. That made it very difficult for us to
> not only work together, but also to work on behalf of our community. [As a
> councillor] it's a part time role, and the city manager plays a big role in
> running the organization. So much happens without council even knowing
> about it. If it's done in the wrong tone, or with the wrong vision, the whole
> system just doesn't work. But if you have a city manager who works well

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[62] Confidential Interview #61.

with council, and partners with the mayor – wow. Things will really start happening.[63]

The relationship between the mayor and city manager requires effort, trust and respect on the part of both individuals involved. One seasoned city manager made this remark about his peers in other cities. "I see a lack of respect for mayors, mayor's offices and councils among other administrators. It's concerning. I truly respect them. They were elected. We would all act similarly in their situation."[64] However, the real or perceived power imbalance in the relationship also needs to be recognized. In the words of one council member, "you need to find yourself a strong city manager who is not going to be afraid to stand up to the mayor, especially if you have a mayor who is prone to doing his own thing."[65] In extreme cases, where the mayor has strong support from council, the nature of this relationship may be very different. One former city manager recalled working for a mayor who was perceived to have control over council. "Working for a mayor who never loses a vote is a cakewalk. We [administration] didn't have to be prepared to debate policy issues. We just wrote marketing documents."[66] Regardless of the dynamics, the relationship between the mayor and the city manager – and the ability of the mayor to provide leadership through this relationship – is an important expectation of mayors in their executive leadership role.

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[63] Confidential Interview #1.
[64] Confidential Interview #59.
[65] Confidential Interview #24.
[66] Confidential Interview #61.

2. Align service delivery with community needs

One in five interviewees expressed an expectation that mayors play a role in ensuring that the services of a municipality are aligned to the needs and expectations of the community. This is a confusing, and perhaps unreasonable, expectation, as many people could view this to be the responsibility of all of council or of administration – or perhaps both. An expectation that the mayor can ensure that municipal services match community needs is one of the most ambiguous and confusing areas of the role. In some cases, this expectation was expressed at a system level, inclusive of all city services:

> The role of the mayor is to understand what the community's needs are, and balance them against [the municipality's] ability to deliver on those needs. The mayor needs an understanding of both, and the difference between them. We need clean drinking water; we want a soccer pitch. It is incumbent on the mayor to make sure everyone understands the difference.[67]

In other cases, mayors are expected to address day-to-day operational service related issues. By virtue of their position, mayors receive numerous constituent requests for help regarding issues with city services. Some constituents may start by communicating a problem to their ward councillor, and then escalate the concern by contacting the mayor's office.

> The community thinks that the mayor has a hell of a lot more authority than he does. They'll say, 'Mr. Mayor, get rid of panhandlers.' 'Mr. Mayor, do something about crime.' They believe he can just give direction and it will happen, but there is no law that gives him this power.[68]

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[67] Confidential Interview #2.
[68] Confidential Interview #15.

In some cases, these concerns have little to do with municipal government at all. One mayor remarked, "Do you know how many times I get calls from people saying, 'I didn't get my welfare cheque?' The average citizen does not understand it at all."[69]

When mayors receive complaints regarding city services, it can create confusion and place mayors and their staff in a challenging position. On one hand, they are not in a position to direct city staff to address the issue; on the other hand, the citizen expects the mayor to address their issue. In some cases, the public service may also be confused about the role of the mayor in this regard. One administrator argued that this confusion can lead to mayors having greater power over municipal operations than may be expected.

> Within the public service, there are also different understandings of the role of the mayor. I meet a lot of people who say, 'the mayor asked for this and so of course we're going to do it.' There are members of the public service who have literally no understanding of the constructs of the law whatsoever, and they will do it because it's coming from 'the president'."[70]

Some interviewees cited examples where they felt mayors had abused their position of power by making demands of staff or intimidating staff.

The expectation that mayors play a leadership role in aligning service delivery with community needs – both from a system-level perspective, and at a day-to-day level – creates challenges for mayors. It is also a challenge for municipal administrators. "It puts the public service in an awkward position. It's hard to say to someone [the mayor], no I'm not doing it, go to council and get the

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[69] Confidential Interview #53.

[70] Confidential interview #41.

votes."[71] There are clear differences in practices across cities, and it seems that

it is an area of leadership that is gradually tested and defined over time. The

confusion may reflect a deeper issue: a general misunderstanding of the role of

the mayor, and the executive part of the role in particular. Interestingly, two

interviewees had similar comments about the influence of American television in

this regard:

> There is a growing 'presidentialization' of the mayor, or of Canadian politics generally. This is a function of the fact that most of our civics education comes through watching American television. [72]

> My perception is that people see the television version of the strong mayor from the United States – you know, the New York or Chicago mayors, who can dish out contracts and get potholes filled. It just doesn't work that way here.[73]

Regardless of the cause of confusion or the dynamics of this role in each city, it

was regularly cited as a source of tension. "The public believes the mayor runs

the city. This creates a lot of problems. You end up with mayors who try to run

the operations, and that can be very dangerous. Mixing political interests with

what roads get paved – well, that just doesn't work."[74]

3. Steward tax dollars responsibly

A closely related expectation of mayors in their executive leadership

capacity is about acting as a steward of tax dollars, and of taxpayer interests

more generally. Again, this is an area where all of council has a role – but

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[71] Confidential interview #41.
[72] Confidential interview #41.
[73] Confidential Interview #11.
[74] Confidential Interview #28.

interviewees expressed a particular expectation of mayors to play a leadership position. One elected official described the expectation aptly:

> The job is hard. You have massive public expectations, and very limited resources. I could line up people who have very good causes, and the line would go from my desk here all the way to my house 20km away. There is a tsunami of needs out there that are not being met, but the taxpayer is only willing to pay so much. The pot is only so big. The challenge for mayors is to allocate these scarce resources among so many competing needs. […]
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> Most people are not engaged. Sure, there's 1% who are in the political class – the activists, the attentive public, sometimes the highly educated – but most people don't even know who their councillor is. In my ward, people just want their taxes kept low. That's it. If you asked them, 'what's the role of the mayor?' they would just say, 'to keep my taxes low.'"[75]

Citizens and community leaders alike may expect the mayor, typically as the only local official elected with a citywide mandate, to play a particularly strong leadership role in ensuring the responsible stewardship of tax dollars. Many mayoral candidates across cities campaign on platforms oriented towards costs savings or keeping taxes low. In these cases, where a community expresses a preference in a cost-reduction agenda through the election of the mayor, the mayor is likely to be expected to play an even stronger leadership role in this area.

4. Communicate municipal activities

In most communities, the mayor is a chief spokesperson not only for the decisions of council but also for the day-to-day operational activities of the

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[75] Confidential Interview #36.

municipal corporation. This is particularly true during extreme weather events

and crises. Interviewees from community, executive and political perspectives

alike articulated an expectation that mayors, in their executive leadership role,

would play a key role in communicating municipal activities to the public.

> The mayor is the spokesperson for the city. He's the go-to person for
> media who will comment on anything of citywide significance. Residents
> turn to the mayor for leadership on emerging issues, the big things, the
> crises. He's the person who articulates the city's voice on those
> occasions.[76]

The mayor's ability to command media and public attention can be helpful for

communicating an important message, and for shaping the tone of the

communications. One elected official commented on the particular skill of a

former mayor in her city in this regard:

> [The mayor] brought a really positive perspective to the city. He came with
> a lexicon of superlatives that he used all the time. If we budgeted $6
> million for snow removal, and then we spent $9 million – well, he could still
> find a way to celebrate a really expensive snowstorm.[77]

This expectation of mayors is not without challenge. In particular, the time

sensitivity of crises and major events means that the spokesperson role can

require the mayor's availability at any time. The expectation of mayors to be fully

aware of the details relating to emerging issues and events can also pose a

challenge. One former mayor stated the difficulty in this way:

> The problem is that these events unfold quickly, and unexpectedly, and as
> mayor you are required to respond immediately. You could wake up one
> day and not even know something was an issue, and by lunch you have

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[76] Confidential Interview #63.
[77] Confidential interview #24.

> to have an intelligent conversation about how the issue will be resolved. The media is so fast, and now with social media – people want the impossible.[78]

A senior administrator shared a similar concern:

> The 24/7 media age we're living in, the news cycle that seems to be about 15 minutes – it's challenging to meet the needs of a society that wants instant answers. Our system hasn't evolved as quickly as society has. […] People want answers in the age of social media. Information gets out there very quickly, and a challenge for the mayor is to help them understand that there are still processes that have to be undertaken. But, sometimes those processes are outdated.[79]

The demands of this aspect of the mayor's leadership role can be highly time consuming for the mayor, the mayor's staff, and for administration. One interviewee felt this was a key difference between the role of the mayor and the role of leaders in other levels of government, and felt the expectations of mayors are underestimated in some cases:

> There are just so many files, and we don't have a proper cabinet in the way a prime minister or premier has a cabinet. So you have to be constantly up to speed on all of the issues. That's why city councillors look like such buffoons, because they speak on every single issue and they have so few staff to bring them up to speed on them. So when they are talking about issues, they just talk off the cuff, so they look stupid. The mayor does have some people, but the number of files and issues and priorities – it's a lot. It's a full-time job, even in cities where it's a part time job. It's really [a] full-time job.[80]

The resources required for mayors to effectively serve in this leadership role may vary based on city size, and based on the norms and expectations in each city regarding the types of activities and events for which the mayor is expected to

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[78] Confidential Interview #44.
[79] Confidential Interview #5.
[80] Confidential Interview #45.

serve in a spokesperson role. Although no examples were found where this role

is clearly articulated, it was identified in all cities.

5. Motivate the public service

In Canada's cities, municipal government is a large enterprise.

Municipalities provide numerous services to their respective residents, and are

often among the largest employers in their communities. The relationship

between the mayor and the public service can be unclear, as there is no direct

reporting relationship between most municipal staff and an individual member of

council, yet the mayor is a highly visible leader of their organization. More than a

quarter of administrators interviewed shared an expectation of mayors to build

positive, supportive relationships with the public service as a whole. Interestingly,

this expectation was not identified by any elected officials interviewed. In the

words of one senior administrator interviewed,

> Maintaining a good relationship with the public service matters. There's no
> substitute for that. You can have a mayor who breathes fire, and it will get
> short term results. But if you want the public service all moving in the
> same direction, it doesn't work. The public service shouldn't need to be
> persuaded, because we serve at the will of council, but it really does start
> with that relationship.[81]

There can be tension between a mayor and the public service for a variety of

reasons. The relationship may be strained after a difficult contract negotiation or

collective agreement decision, where anger among staff members is targeted

towards the mayor. Similarly, given that staff salaries tend to be among the most

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[81] Confidential interview #47.

expensive budget line items for municipalities, there may be political incentives for mayors to publicly attack the public service in the media or community. This can also damage relationships. In the words of one city manager, "staff want mayors to support them, not criticize their work or question their value. Some mayors gain traction on the basis of criticizing administration, and it's hurtful to the organization."[82]

Interviewees frequently identified relations with municipal staff as a challenging aspect of the role of the mayor, across cities. One of the most commonly cited reasons for this challenge was how entrenched staff may be in their work, or their policy recommendations. In the words of a community observer:

> Staff can be challenging for politicians, because they feel they have to push – and sometimes staff feel that council isn't listening. But staff's role is to study issues and make recommendations, then step back, and let Council make the decision. They can't take the decisions personally, but some of them do. Some staff feel offended if council doesn't take their view. But, staff are there to give their best advice, and council is there to make decisions."[83]

What role can the mayor play towards addressing tension between council and administration? Interviewees identified demonstrating and communicating respect for the public service as an important leadership role. Some argued there is a connection between the mayor's orientation towards the public service and the performance of the employees.

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[82] Confidential Interview #59.
[83] Confidential Interview #20.

> If morale is high among city staff, that means the mayor is doing a good job. He needs to strike a balance of listening to professional staff, and listening to councillors, and really hearing the public. Finding that balance is tough. He's the conduit between staff and elected officials. If he can create synergy in these groups working together, rather than it feeling like Us vs. Them, that would be real success."[84]

In the words of one former city administrator, now in a community leadership role, but reflecting on an experience as a staff member. "As a municipal worker, yes we work for them [council] – but we're also voters. They never really understood that we were people too. We are the community. We're the ones who are paying attention. We talk to other people about what is going on."[85] Although the relationship between the mayor and the public service can be unclear, and appears to be most valued by administrators, it is an important element in the executive leadership role of the mayor.

Summary: Mayoral Executive Leadership

Mayors are expected to provide executive leadership in Canada's cities. This role is less visible to the public than the political and community leadership roles, but it is important to those engaged directly in municipal government. The nature of the mayor's relationship with the city manager, their ability to help align service delivery with community expectations, their role in stewarding taxpayer interests, their capacity to communicate the activities of the municipality, and

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[84] Confidential Interview #26.
[85] Ibid.

their role with respect to the public service may each play a role in supporting the overall effectiveness of a municipal corporation.

What makes a mayor an effective executive leader? Maintaining relationships with, and showing respect for, administration is clearly a key ingredient. Mayors who build positive relationships and champion their administration can boost morale and pride in the public service, enhance productivity, and build the public's confidence in their public service. One former mayor stated it this way: "Administration is professional, and they are there for the long term. If you respect them, and provide them with clarity, anything can be done. It's when there isn't clarity, and there isn't a mission or focus, people start to muddle."[86] Conversely, mayors who do not maintain positive and productive working relationships with their city managers risk divergence between the political agenda and the activities of administration. The tension between council and staff generally can stem from a technical knowledge imbalance, and can be perceived as problematic for the mayor and council. In the words of one councillor:

> Most municipal politicians don't have a firm grasp on our legislation, and the restrictions in places on them. Their ability to make decisions is highly restricted and prescriptive. Councillors don't understand the system. That's why staff are so powerful, because we have to rely on them so much.[87]

When the mayor is disengaged from executive leadership, the city manager may become more powerful and be in a position to make decisions which would be

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[86] Confidential Interview #60.
[87] Confidential Interview #27.

made by, or in consultation with, the mayor in other cities. Where mayors do not provide leadership regarding aligning service delivery expectations or taxpayer interests, there may be misalignment with citizen interests. A mayor who attacks staff or the municipality in a public way, or who does not communicate the activities of the municipality, can diminish the public's perception of their local government. In short, the role of the mayor as an executive leader can be a shaping and important ingredient in effective municipal administration. This role is one of the least recognized, and most confused, dimensions of the mayoralty, but remains an important part of the role of the mayor in Canada.

Role #3: Mayor as Community Leader

"In a small city, everyone knows the mayor. Maybe in Toronto the mayor is a celebrity, but here, he's your next-door neighbour. He is someone you can call at home. You have his cell number. You see him at the grocery store. You can stop him while he's cutting the grass and ask a question."[88] The pride in the local reporter's voice was obvious as he described his own personal connections to his city's mayor: his father had served on committees with the mayor; they had become personal friends; sometimes they would go out 'just to shoot the breeze.' He described the mayor as someone who everyone knew, and who knew everyone. "A few years ago, I was offered to be a legislative reporter [on provincial affairs]. I turned it down flat. It's sort of a promotion around here, but I

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[88] Confidential Interview #18.

turned it down. I enjoy covering city council because of the access." [89] He referred again to his close relationship with the mayor, and with other members of council. "It's so grassroots, and you can talk about the tiniest little issue and it really resonates. It could be paving a street, building a building – anything can become a huge story. It's never dull covering city council, and there's always drama. Nothing beats the city hall beat."[90]

Canadian mayors have a unique relationship with their communities. Unlike leaders at other levels of government, they are directly elected by citizens. In most cases, they are elected as an individual – not as a member of a party – representing a set of ideas or proposals, or a particular philosophy. To become a leader in a provincial or federal government, there are many steps a politician must take in sequence – being selected by a riding association, becoming elected in a riding, campaigning in a leadership race, and so on – before taking on the leadership role. To become mayor, an individual need only file nomination papers and campaign to gather support of the electorate. As a result, mayors are uniquely positioned as community leaders – and have unique relationships with their city, relative to politicians at other levels. In the words of one former mayor who now serves in a federal position, "mayors are closer to the people. These are the people on your street, in your city. You see them on a regular basis.

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[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

You're not off to a capital somewhere. You're in tune with what's going on in your city."[91]

But what does it mean to lead a community? Canadians elect mayors to represent them within the governance structures in their city. As discussed in this chapter, mayors are expected to provide leadership within the political arena at council and with other elected officials; and, they are expected to provide executive leadership within their municipality. What leadership is expected of mayors outside of City Hall? And how can one individual represent a whole city, which is diverse, complex and increasingly heterogeneous? As the reporter aptly illustrates, in smaller communities this may be easier, as mayors may actually know a larger percentage of their population. But in Canada's largest cities, this personal familiarity is impossible. What role are Canadian mayors expected to play as leaders of an entire community?

When asked to describe the role of the mayor in their own words, more than two thirds of interviewees described the mayor in a community leadership role in some way. The words used to articulate this role varied. Common responses described the mayor as 'the face' or 'the voice' of the city. Others viewed the mayor to have a more symbolic role. "The community looks at the mayor as a figurehead, as the symbol of the city, as the person who represents the city."[92] Some referred to the mayor as the 'chief cheerleader' or 'civic booster' or 'head coach' of a city. In one community member's words, "it's sort of like

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[91] Confidential Interview #38.
[92] Confidential Interview #7.

being captain of a cruise ship. They try to keep everyone going in the same direction, and try to get everyone to stay positive."[93] Another interviewee expressed it this way: "The role of the mayor is to provide leadership to citizens. It's ceremonial; the mayor is the first citizen of the city. He goes to a host of different events, presides over functions, welcomes royal visitors, meets people from out of town, and gives away keys to the city. It's an important part of the job."[94] People look to mayors to provide leadership to the community, but what this role looks like remains an open question. This chapter provides a summary of the community leadership role of the mayor, including the frequently expressed expectations involved, and a discussion on what happens when Canadian mayors provide effective – and ineffective – community leadership.

What does mayoral community leadership look like?

When mayors and past mayors describe their role, it does not take long before one common word comes up: events. Mayors will describe attending numerous community events every day. In the words of one mayor, "People say, 'oh thank goodness it's Friday. Well, Friday doesn't matter if you're a mayor. Look at my Twitter. I think I went to 14 events on Saturday, and even more on Sunday."[95] One past mayor described working an average of 100-120 hours per week over the duration of his two terms in office, and often sleeping in his office between a late night event followed by an early morning event. "The mayor has

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[93] Confidential Interview #49.
[94] Confidential Interview #38.
[95] Confidential Interview #9.

to be everywhere. I think that's a big part of being effective – and it's definitely a big part of being popular and getting re-elected."[96] Attending community functions can mean a range of things: making speeches to social clubs, schools or community groups; bringing greetings at fundraisers, charity runs, sporting events or festivals; presiding over parades and cultural festivities; attending openings of new businesses and buildings; participating in fundraisers, celebrations and other events for organizations of all types. Some mayors and past mayors described also attending numerous birthday parties, family reunions and funerals each year. One councillor commented, "he could delegate, and he does delegate – but really, the person people want to see is the mayor. He dresses up the occasion."[97] Several interviewees identified this expectation as a serious concern:

> The most challenging part is the meet and greets. Everyone wants the mayor at their event, and it's impossible. And if you did, you would never get any actual work done. There's a real social and cheerleading expectation from the public for the mayor, and trying to manage that is really difficult."[98]

> I am stunned by how he [the mayor] is always out. There is not a day or an evening where the mayor is not out with the public – shaking hands, opening things, talking. I don't understand this energy level. It's mind blowing. It makes me nauseous just to think about it. If I had to go out and do that tonight – no no no, I just want to stay home and drink a cup of tea.[99]

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[96] Confidential Interview #21.
[97] Confidential Interview #15.
[98] Confidential Interview #24.
[99] Confidential Interview #66.

> The most challenging part is simply trying to satisfy the demands of the people who want you to be at every event. Finding time in your life to do that, and still having a life, would be exceedingly difficult. There are only so many hours in a day.[100]

Several mayors expressed frustration about the practical challenges that an expectation to 'be everywhere' can create, including taking time away from other aspects of the mayor's role. This concern was shared from many other interviewees. However, there was also broad recognition that this role is important. "It's about a whole lot more than kissing babies!"[101] In another person's words, "it can't be easy to fit everyone into a day and talk to them, but I think that's incredibly important. Otherwise, people will lose faith. They don't think the mayor cares about them."[102]

Why do mayors spend so much time in the community, and what exactly is expected of them in their 'outside City Hall' role? When describing this leadership role of mayors, the following expectations emerged from interviewees:

1. Build civic pride

2. Keep the pulse of the community

3. Mobilize and engage diverse groups

4. Give hope in times of crisis

5. Project a positive image of the city

Interviewees expressed expectations for the mayor to play a leadership role in each of these areas; and, that when a mayor is able to provide leadership in all

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[100] Confidential Interview #63.
[101] Confidential Interview #67.
[102] Confidential Interview #10.

of these areas, it can translate into heighted civic engagement, empowered community organizations and increased community pride. The following sections provide an overview of each core responsibility, expressed by mayors and those who work most closely with them.

1. Build civic pride

Many interviewees shared at least one story that connected the activities of the mayor and how they felt about their city. One individual described the first time the mayor raised the pride flag at City Hall, and feeling proud to live in an inclusive and welcoming community. A reporter described a tragedy in the community where the mayor had spoken out to support the family involved, and feeling proud of the outpouring of support that followed. A community leader shared a story about the mayor attending the opening of a friend's new small business, and how important it had been to her friend that the mayor made time to be there. A humorous letter to an American media company sent by the mayor after a slight against his city's basketball team was shared with a joyful laugh. One conflict between a mayor and a premier was described as embodying the 'Fighting Newfoundlander' spirit. Interviewees referenced interactions between their mayor and other important people – Justin Trudeau, Queen Elizabeth, Drake, the Pope – as a mark of the importance of their mayor, or told stories about a renewed sense of optimism coming to their city with the election of a new mayor. But how exactly does a mayor shape how people feel about their city?

As illustrated in these stories, mayors seem to play a role in building civic pride in many different ways. The mayor is often one of the most visible and well-known individuals in their city. Particularly in large cities, the daily activities of mayors are closely followed by media, and chronicled through social media. What they say, what they do, whom they meet with and how they act often has a large audience. Interviewees provided clear examples of how mayors can use their prominence to build a sense of pride. They can draw attention to the opening of a new business simply by being there. They can raise the profile of an issue by speaking up. A consistent underlying theme is that mayors can make individuals or organizations feel like they are important to their community through how they spend their time and the things they say. One community member described it this way:

> [The mayor] is very visible in the community, and very hands on. We were Facebook friends before he became the mayor. He brought a real mind shift to the city. When downtown groups would put holiday lights out, he would be online right away giving kudos to the groups. He would always say that we have lots to offer, and we're in a good place. He made the city feel like it was a gem again. We just needed to polish it up.[103]

Another interviewee was even more direct in arguing that this area is the most important part of the mayor's role. "The mayor's job is to build love for the city. I know 'love' is an emotional word, but I think that captures the role. Once you have love for your city, everything else will fall into place."[104] People expressed

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[103] Confidential Interview #26.
[104] Confidential Interview #22.

the importance of the mayor reflecting a genuine commitment to their city and

'believing in' the city:

> If the mayor doesn't believe in his or her city – if they don't believe it's a great place to live, to put down roots, to build a business, to start a family – then no one will. [As mayor] you have to believe in your city. You have to be an optimist. There isn't always a sense of optimism in our part of the country, but when people listen to the mayor speak and he sounds so positive, it raises the spirits of the entire city.[105]

The extent to which a mayor can influence or shape a community's sense of civic

pride remains an open question, and further study in this area may reveal

interesting insight. What is clear, however, is that building civic pride in the

community, in some way, is expected of the mayor in their capacity as a

community leader.

2. Keep the pulse of the community

Interviewees frequently expressed an expectation for mayors to stay

closely attuned to the interests, needs and opinions of their community –

appreciating that rarely does a community share a homogenous perspective.

Often as the sole citywide elected representative, people expect mayors to

understand the entire city in a way that is not expected of other elected officials.

Mayors shared various strategies for staying attuned to the public 'pulse'. In the

words of one former mayor, "it's all about listening. People call you. You don't

need opinion polls. I'd check in with our receptionist twice a day. I'd ask, 'what's

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[105] Confidential interview #19.

hot today? What are people calling about?'"[106] Another past mayor cited events

as a helpful way to hear from the public:

> That's why I went to so many events – it's so I could hear what people were saying. It's a clear message. When you go to that many things, you're close to the ground. People are not shy about coming up to you and saying, 'hold your ground!' or 'what are you doing?!' The public is very forthcoming about what they think.[107]

Other mayors and past mayors referenced social media as a tool they use to

seek out public opinion. Staying attended to the community was articulated as

something that people expect of mayors in their role as community leader; and, a

role which mayor mayors appear to take very seriously. In the words of one

former mayor, "you're the only person in the entire city who has the privilege of

meeting with representatives of every sector of the community, so you have to

be really systematic about it."[108] Mayors have an obvious personal and political

interest in staying aligned with the public. One interviewee described it this way:

> People vote to oust a mayor. If the mayor has fallen in bad with the public, they go to the polls not to vote someone in but to vote someone out. They will ram into the polls to oust someone. If the public feels the person isn't doing a good job, or is controlled by a certain faction, they want to get rid of him. And the only way to do that is to rally behind a new guy.[109]

3. Mobilize and engage diverse groups

Interviewees expressed that mayors, by virtue of their position, are

uniquely positioned to engage individuals and groups in a community. One

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[106] Confidential Interview #60.
[107] Confidential Interview #20.
[108] Confidential Interview #35.
[109] Confidential Interview #23.

interviewee shared a story about a mayor writing individual letters to a long list of

community and business leaders to ask for their help on a priority issue. A

community leader recalled a time when the mayor called a group of community

organizations together. The mayor asked each organization to describe their

requests for provincial and federal funding, and facilitated a discussion about

how they could align funding requests so the community would appear more

organized externally. [110] Mayors are well positioned to ask individuals and

organizations to become engaged in community initiatives, often more so than

any other local official. One community leader made this point succinctly. "If the

mayor was to call and ask me for something, and a councillor was to call and ask

me for the same thing, would my reaction be different? Yes. Yes it would.

Because he's the mayor."[111] Several interviewees shared similar remarks:

> The mayor has terrific levers. He can call on people from all walks of life –
> from the business community, or from labour unions, or citizen activists –
> to gain their knowledge or ask them to volunteer their efforts to tackle
> issues. People have respect for the office. The mayor has that kind of
> persuasion.[112]

> Strike a group of community leaders, and give them some resources –
> staff, maybe funding. You need to make sure the staff member is
> connected on the inside, is respected and knows who to contact and how
> to get through the silos. If there is a big priority at the top of the list, the
> mayor should rely on his staff and the community, and empower them to
> do something about it.[113]

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[110] Confidential Interview #26.
[111] Confidential Interview #40.
[112] Confidential Interview #38.
[113] Confidential Interview #26.

> You are the only elected official who has the chance to articulate what the city is, and lead a strategy to help the city achieve its potential. That includes establishing confidence in citizens, championing leadership of the community, and rising to the challenge of leading the city through the issues of the day. The mayor can gather a community behind the vision to achieve something together.[114]

In all cities, there were examples where mayors have convened special task forces or directly approached individuals or organizations about contributing to a community initiative. The treatment and recognition of the people involved once the initiative was underway was also highlighted as being important. One interviewee shared an example where a past mayor had yelled at a group of volunteers after being displeased with the results of the group's work. Most of the volunteers quit shortly afterwards. In her words, "when you're getting paid in a muffin, you don't need to put up with that."[115] Mayors are well positioned to invite diverse individuals and groups to become engaged in civic affairs, but need to be strategic in doing so. The politics of who is included and excluded, the issues selected to be addressed, and the terms of the engagement should all be subject to careful considerations.

4. Give hope in times of crisis

Leadership during crisis emerged as a key expectation of, and opportunity for, mayors. Crises can include severe weather events such as snowstorms, flooding, hurricanes, fires and more; it can include tragedy and loss; it can also

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[114] Confidential Interview #54.
[115] Confidential Interview #24.

mean events that are embarrassing for a community. In one community, interviewees described their city being named as the most racist city in the country by a national magazine and looking to the mayor to speak up. Mayors are often judged based on their response in crisis. A mayor who is seen to be active during the crisis, who communicates frequently and accessibly to the public, and can give a voice to the feels being experienced by a community during a particular event will be celebrated for doing so. In the words of one interviewee, "when there are major issues, people expect the mayor to be there. If there were any catastrophic events or major issues, people look for leadership."[116]

Providing leadership in times of crisis can be challenging for mayors, particularly given the substantial time commitment involved. One mayor described his experience after his community experienced a major weather event, and working around the clock for days even after the event had subsided. In his words, "you're the face, you're the person who they expect to be there when you need them to be there. Your job is to be there. There is no such thing as being 'off'."[117]

5. Project a positive image of the city

Mayors have a high profile within their community, and sometimes also beyond their cities. Many interviewees expressed a shared perspective that the

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[116] Confidential Interview #2.
[117] Confidential Interview #20.

activities and behaviors of mayors can be viewed as a reflection of the city they

serve. Mayors are expected to look, act, speak, and behave in ways that reflect

positively on the community they serve. One seasoned city manager stated this

expectation in this way. "It's like being pastor of a church. You have to live a life

that is of a higher standard. The mayor is a leader of a community. If the way

they act doesn't live up to what people expect – that's how people lose faith in

leaders, in government, in democracy."[118] There are many examples of

Canadian mayors who have become notorious on the basis of their behaviour.

Interviewees had varying perspectives on the impact of the mayor's behaviour on

their city. One administrator shared an example of a mayor who became

embroiled in a scandal, and how the mayor lost the support of colleagues and

projects were affected:

> With [a past mayor], his popularity was declining and the dissension
> among the ranks grew. The scandal was too broad, and things started
> going wrong on big projects. The more this happened, the more he was
> losing the room. So remaining scandal-free seems obvious, but it's really
> important.[119]

Others expressed a more general concern about the impact of scandals on the

public's perceptions of politics, politicians and government:

> We're going through a huge change in democracy. In the old days, people
> stepped up in their communities. The position of mayor was highly
> regarded, and was seen to be a force to be reckoned with within the
> community. Politics has changed. It's become entertainment. In the old
> days, people would step up to the job. Business leaders would run for
> office to make their community successful, because it would make their
> business successful. They understood that they needed to make the city

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[118] Confidential Interview #59.
[119] Confidential interview #47.

have a good reputation, because their sales depended on it. That's not so today. You can live anywhere. You don't have to make your community successful to be successful anymore. [120]

The expectation of mayors to project their city in a positive way extends beyond staying 'scandal-free'; it extends to the ways in which the mayor conducts him- or herself in public settings. Making comments that are viewed to be offensive or uneducated can be taken very seriously by some in the community. As a result, mayors must have a strong repertoire of cultural, social and political knowledge suited to a diversity of settings.

The contemporary mayor has to have a lot of bandwidth. This is not as true for a member of parliament, say, because their ward is not usually as diverse as a whole city. The mayor needs to be able to cross cultural communities, give greetings in many languages, understand complex business interests, know what to do when you walk into a Sikh temple or how to pronounce First Nations names. In big cities, this is absolutely required."[121]

Because urban mayors are subject to daily media scrutiny, even small gaffes can result in embarrassment for the mayor or others involved. Fairly or unfairly, there is a clear expectation that their activities and behaviors reflect positively on the city they represent.

Summary: Mayoral Community Leadership

Canadian mayors have a unique relationship with their cities, and are expected to provide leadership to their communities. This leadership role is highly visible and involves engaging with the community in many forums. The

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[120] Confidential interview #59.
[121] Confidential Interview #64.

expectation that mayors 'be everywhere' presents both a significant opportunity and a great challenge for mayors. Through events and other community interactions, mayors can contribute to the sense of civic pride in their community by raising the profile of the activities of individuals or organizations, making groups feel appreciated, and drawing attention to important issues. Mayors can leverage their profile to highlight the best parts of their city, and elevate a community's own awareness of its assets. Mayors can also benefit from unusually frequent interactions with the public as a means of better understanding the needs, interests and perspectives of their community. Mayors, by virtue of their position, can engage diverse groups and mobilize action by asking people and organizations to contribute to priority initiatives or to collaborate with one another. During times of crisis, mayors can bring hope and optimism, and provide direction to a community during a time of need. Finally, mayors can present their city in a positive light through their actions and behaviors. These activities can require extraordinary investments of time and energy by mayors, which can come at the expense of other important elements of their roles. There are often challenging politics involved in making needed decisions about which events to attend, or who to include and exclude from community initiatives. Mayors may struggle with the burden of being expected to reflect their community in a positive light at all times, and may be challenged to live up to a standard of living that may or may not be attainable.

What makes for an effective community leader? The interviewees offered sage advice. Prioritizing and being strategic with time management, maintaining

deep and strong relationships across a diverse array of community groups, being optimistic and hopeful about the community particularly in times of crisis, and remaining free from scandal are all ingredients for success. When mayors provide strong community leadership, the benefits are internal and external to the city. When mayors do not provide strong leadership in this area, other actors may do so – sometimes creating conflict, confusion and duplication – which further erodes the mayor's ability to serve in the community leadership role.

Conclusion

Canada's urban mayors face high expectations. The importance of building strong relationships emerges as an overarching theme across all aspects of the mayor's role – including with council colleagues and other political leaders, with administration, and with groups and individuals in the community. *The ability of a mayor to foster positive relations and maintain the support of these groups emerges as a critical ingredient of a mayor's success – and the dominant factor in shaping perceptions of mayoral power.* Strong leadership in one part of the mayor's role can have positive externalities in the others. For example, interviewees spoke about mayors who have strong personal popularity with the public (community leadership) as having an easier time building support within council (political leadership), and with administration (executive leadership). Each of these groups hold different expectations of the mayor, and the extent to which a mayor can meet these expectations will determine how

supportive these groups are of the mayor – and how able the mayor will be to mobilize these groups to accomplish desired outcomes.

Building and sustaining relationships with the many actors engaged in local government is not without its challenges. As identified earlier in this chapter, actors may have personal interests which run counter to the mayor's interests, such as other councillors considering a mayoral run, or staff or citizens who are disgruntled over a particular policy decision or action of the mayor. Interviewees were also quick to express the practical difficulties associated the role – particularly given the sheer volume of stakeholders engaged in local government. Some interviewees spoke of the extraordinary time commitment required, the lack of personal privacy, and sacrifice involved in other areas of one's life in order to do the job. The pressures associated with having a high profile in one's community, and the inability to live a 'normal life' during or after being a mayor was also mentioned by several individuals. One reporter who covered three mayors over 15 years phrased it this way:

> I think it's probably one of the worst jobs, honestly. [laughs] There are so many expectations, and they come from every possible angle. You're trying to please your constituents, who are in every part of the city. You have to represent the city on a national and international stage […] while answering to a lot of people. People will focus their anger on you for anything happening in the city. [The mayor] is a lightning rod. You have to work terrible hours. It's a lot of nights and weekends. People expect you to be at every parade, every dinner. The hours of the job are not fully understood. The last mayor, he was even sleeping in his office. He loved all of that, but I can't imagine a regular joe loving all of that. The pull on your family – it's brutal – and the microscope you're under. Even if you're

having a hamburger somewhere, people are tweeting about it. I think it would be quite thankless.[122]

Interviewees in all cities agreed that the role of the mayor is unique, and challenging. Expectations for leadership are high, and yet Canadian mayors have limited institutional power and often few institutional supports. So how can mayors deliver on all of that is expected of them? How do mayors fulfill expectations that fall far outside the defined scope of their roles? Most importantly, how do mayors and those who work with them understand "mayoral power" in practice in Canada's cities?

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[122] Confidential Interview #7.

Chapter 8 | A MODEL OF MAYORAL POWER IN CANADA

Power is a complex, challenging, and contested concept. Although the original Latin word *potere* simply means 'to be able,' political science and other disciplines have taken up the challenge to examine its many dimensions or 'faces,' its sources, its properties, and its expression. When Dahl famously described the study of power as a "bottomless swamp"[1] in the 1950s, he may not have been surprised to learn that today – six decades later – there are more than 300,000 book titles including the word "power."[2] Power remains a central concept in the study of political science for defining relationships between political actors – including within local government in Canada, with respect to Canada's mayors. As discussed in Chapter 2, Canadian mayors have traditionally been understood to be "weak" reflecting a narrow definition of mayoral power which privileges institutional dimensions of power. In lieu of a developed literature on the Canadian mayoralty – or even defined systems of local government in Canada – the American "strong mayor / weak mayor" taxonomy has had a pervasive influence on how the power of Canadian mayors is understood. Over time, the influence of this concept – and its narrow view of what "mayoral power" is – has led Canadian observers and practitioners alike to discount the power of Canadian mayors.

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[1] Robert A. Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* (Vol, 2, No. 3, July 1957), 201.
[2] A search on Amazon.com for books with the word "power" in the title yields over 300,000 results, including titles in nearly all topic categories: arts, business, biographies, education, health, history, law, literature, medicine, parenting, religion, romance, science, sports, self-help, and others.

This study questions the assumption that Canadian mayors are "weak" by investigating a foundational question: *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities?* Part I approached the question through an institutional lens, comparing the legal authority of mayors in provincial legislation, and the extent to which local arrangements empower or disempower mayors. The findings of this investigation support the dominant view within current academic and professional discourse: that *Canadian mayors have limited institutional power*. Legislation alone would suggest that Canadian mayors chair meetings, sign bylaws, and have varied other duties that are primarily procedural in nature. The common elements of the mayoralty across Canadian cities, as defined in provincial legislation, remain remarkably consistent with the original design of the role as articulated in the Baldwin Act nearly 170 years ago. Mayors of cities with unique legislation, and where the role of the mayor has been defined in a way that is different from other cities in the province, tend to have more formal power. However, the variation is modest. The analysis found nothing to suggest that the mayor of Vancouver (on the high end, relative to the other cities in this sample) is dramatically more powerful – in institutional terms – than is the mayor of Calgary, despite the institutional differences between these cities. More importantly, these institutional variables appear to have relationship to perceptions of mayoral power – including from the public, those who work with mayors, or mayors themselves. In sum, while there is modest variation across cities, institutional variables related to mayoral power are less important factors in terms of the ability of mayors to get things done.

A key theme emerging from the data presented in Part II, informed by interviews with mayors and those who work closely with mayors, is that the role of the mayor in Canada is described, conceptualized, and understood far more in terms of *leadership* than *power*. This observation marked a significant departure point in this study. The project began by examining the mayoralty within each city as the "cases" to be studied. Interviewees were asked to describe the mayoralty in their city, irrespective of the individuals in the role. It quickly became clear that this was impossible for most interviewees. The mayoralty, as a central institution in each city, is generally undefined. The bounds of its powers are unknown, uncharted, and difficult to observe. Examining the mayoralty of a specific city – absent of individual mayors in the job – emerged as much less meaningful (or interesting) than examining specific mayors. In Calgary, when interviewees were asked to describe the role or power of the mayor in Calgary, they would ask, "do you mean with Mayor Nenshi, or Mayor Bronconnier? Because it's completely different." Similar sentiments were expressed in other cities: Ford or Miller? Bowman or Katz or Murray? Despite the researcher's initial effort to focus interviewees on the role of the mayor itself, rather than the individuals in the role, it quickly became clear the power of a mayor is understood to be person-specific, not city-specific. Additionally, the levers which were described as rendering a mayor more or less "powerful" were rarely cited as stemming from legislation or institutional structure; instead, they emerges from a more complex dynamic involving relationships with other actors at a particular point in time. Interviewees understood the role of the mayor to include working with three primary groups –

political actors, executive actors, and community actors – and expressed that a

that a single mayor may be more or less "powerful" as a leader in one of these

realms than another at any point in time, depending on circumstance. The same

mayor may have considerable influence over council, and yet have limited

influence over staff of individuals in the community. This dynamic was also

viewed to be fluid and prone to change over time, as the mayor gained or lost the

support of council, administration or the public. As a result, it would be too simple

to conclude that a mayor is "strong" or "weak" – or that Canadian mayors are

"strong" or "weak" generally. *Mayoral power is person- and context-specific, and

is best examined at this scale.* This chapter presents a model for understanding

mayoral power in Canada that reflects this observation.

What is the role of the mayor?

     In practice, the role of the mayor is much larger than what is described in

provincial legislation or municipal bylaws. Mayors and those who work with

mayors describe the role as being primarily a leadership position; and, that

mayors have at least three distinct leadership roles. Mayors are political leaders,

working with council and elected officials in other governments; mayors are

executive leaders, working with city administrators and staff of other local

government organizations; and, mayors are community leaders, working with

citizens, community groups, businesses, organizations and more. This

Figure 2: The Role of a Canadian Mayor

COUNCIL

POLITICAL
LEADER

EXECUTIVE
LEADER

COMMUNITY
LEADER

ADMINISTRATION
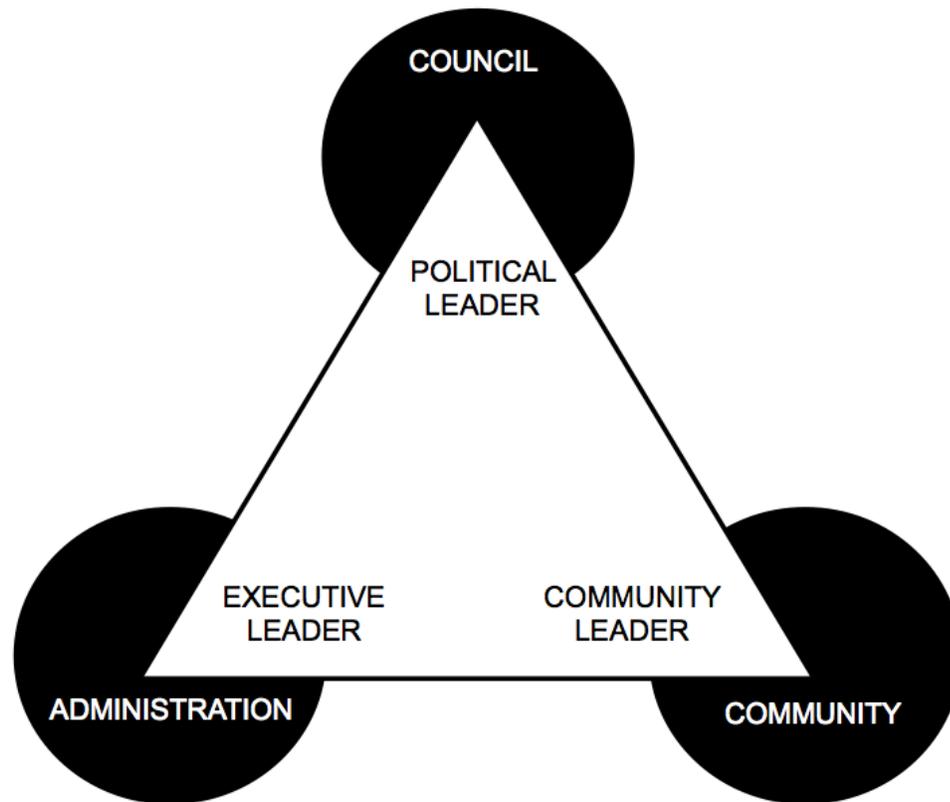
COMMUNITY

conceptualization of the role of the mayor, originally based on Svara's model[3] but

with an important adaptation based on this project, is presented in Figure 2.

Svara was not trying to communicate what the role of the mayor entails; instead,

he was describing the mayor as having a key role as an interlocutor between

these actors. Figure 2 presents a different concept. The role of the mayor is

represented by the triangle. Mayors occupy an important role within each of the

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[3] Svara's "mayor in council-manager cities interactions model", as presented in Figure 1 in Chapter 2, positions the mayor as being in the middle of three groups: council, manager, and organizations and public agencies.

three main groups of actors engaged in local government; mayors are uniquely

positioned between these groups; and, the role of the mayor involves leadership

to these groups. The political, executive and community leadership roles of a

mayor involve different expectations – as outlined in Chapter 7 – and working

with different actors. As a political leader, the mayor is working within a council,

sometimes with a local political party, and with elected leaders of other

governments; as an executive leader, the mayor is working within a municipal

corporation, and often within other corporate entities such as boards and

commissions; as a community leader, the mayor is working as the elected

representative of an entire city, inclusive of numerous groups, organizations, and

communities. These roles are not mutually exclusive nor are they necessarily

distinct from one another in practice. Many issues, policy initiatives or activities

may require the mayor to be working with multiple groups simultaneously.

Effective leadership to one group may have positive externalities with the others.

These leadership roles were widely acknowledged by interviewees in all cities,

and across all perspectives.

Defining Mayoral Power

What makes a mayor more or less "powerful" in Canada? This study

investigated *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's*

cities and finds that institutional variables are less important in practice than are

leadership variables. Mayoral power cannot be understood based on legislative

or executive authority alone – as the "weak mayor" taxonomy would suggest –

but instead, to understand power in practice, one must examine the mayor in relation to other actors engaged in local government. The "power" of a mayor is a measure of the extent to which the mayor can realize desired outcomes in relation to other political, executive and community actors. It emanates from both the institutional authority of the mayoralty – as established in legislation and bylaw, and defined through local arrangements – and the leadership of the person in the role. This is consistent with Nye's definition of power as "the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers,"[4] and argument that nation states can use "hard" and "soft" powers to achieve these desired outcomes. Similarly, mayors draw upon the institutional authority inherent in their role, as well as their own ability to lead those around them, as means to accomplish desired outcomes in their cities.

Which of these sources of power – institution authority or leadership – is more important in Canada? This study finds that the latter, leadership, is considerably more important. Mayors do have institutional authority. They are recognized in legislation across Canada, and by a wide range of actors, as an important figure. Upon being elected, the mayor gains an ability to speak up on issues, influence others, participate in a wide range of discussions with varied actors, and legitimately serve as the representative of their city – simply by virtue of their position. This is power, and it comes from the institutional authority vested in the role of the mayor in Canada. This source of power is largely unchanging, static and stable. It is defined through legislation and bylaw, and

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[4] Ibid.

shaped by the institutional arrangements unique to each city. It varies across Canada, but only modestly. Importantly, in Canada – where the mayoralty and forms of government are defined so vaguely – *the formal or institutional power of a mayor is less important in practice*.

In Canada, the more important source of power for a mayor is leadership. This is the variable that distinguishes a mayor who can accomplish desired outcomes from one who cannot. It is this variable that results in mayoral power being viewed as being different from one mayor to another in the same city. Leadership, as a source of power, is complex because it is relational; it defines power based on the relationships between the mayor and other actors. It is highly sensitive to circumstance, and can change rapidly.

What is "mayoral power"? It is *the extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government to achieve desired outcomes.* It comes from both institutional authority and leadership – and in a Canadian context, the latter is far more important. This definition of mayoral power allows for the likely (and common, according to interviewees) possibility that a mayor is more powerful in one aspect of their role than in another – and, that mayoral power changes over time; it is a variable capacity. The same mayor may be more powerful when working with council than they are with staff, or vice versa. During a term in office, the same mayor can shift from being very powerful to becoming less powerful, for a variety of reasons. This runs counter to the dominant view of mayoral power as being a relatively static function of legislation or institutional arrangements, or a

conclusion that Canadian mayors are "weak." Instead, Canadian mayors have the capacity to be enormously powerful by drawing on various resources available to them to influence, mobilize, empower, and lead others.[5]

In a study of economic development in North American and European cities,[6] authors Savitch and Kantor offer a helpful analogy. They compare cities based on a suite of economic variables, and ultimately sort them into two categories: 'driving' and 'steering' variables, conjuring the image of a car. The 'driving variables' are the features of a city that influence the economy but are relatively fixed and static, such as geography or climate. The 'steering variables' are the features over which a community has some control, such as policy decisions. Using the analogy, a car is built to do one thing – to drive – and cannot be made to swim or fly, but a driver still has agency to steer the car to their desired destination. This is akin to mayoral power in Canada. The mayoralty as an institution is like the car, formally empowered within local governments in Canada. The design specifications vary somewhat by city. However, the more important variable – the 'steering variable' – is leadership. Although the mayoralty as an institution is relatively fixed, the individual in the role has wide discretion in how they choose to use the resources available to lead those around them.

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[5] This argument is consistent with the findings of Brian McKenna and Susan Purcell, *Drapeau* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1980); and Tom Urbaniak, *Her Worship: Hazel McCallion and the Development of Mississauga* (Toronto: City of Toronto Press, 2009).

[6] Hank V. Savitch and Paul Kantor, *Cities in the International Marketplace: The Political Economy of Urban Development in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

A Model of Mayoral Power

If mayoral power is *the extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government to achieve desired outcomes* – how can it be observed? This definition understands mayoral power

Figure 3: Mayoral Power in Canada
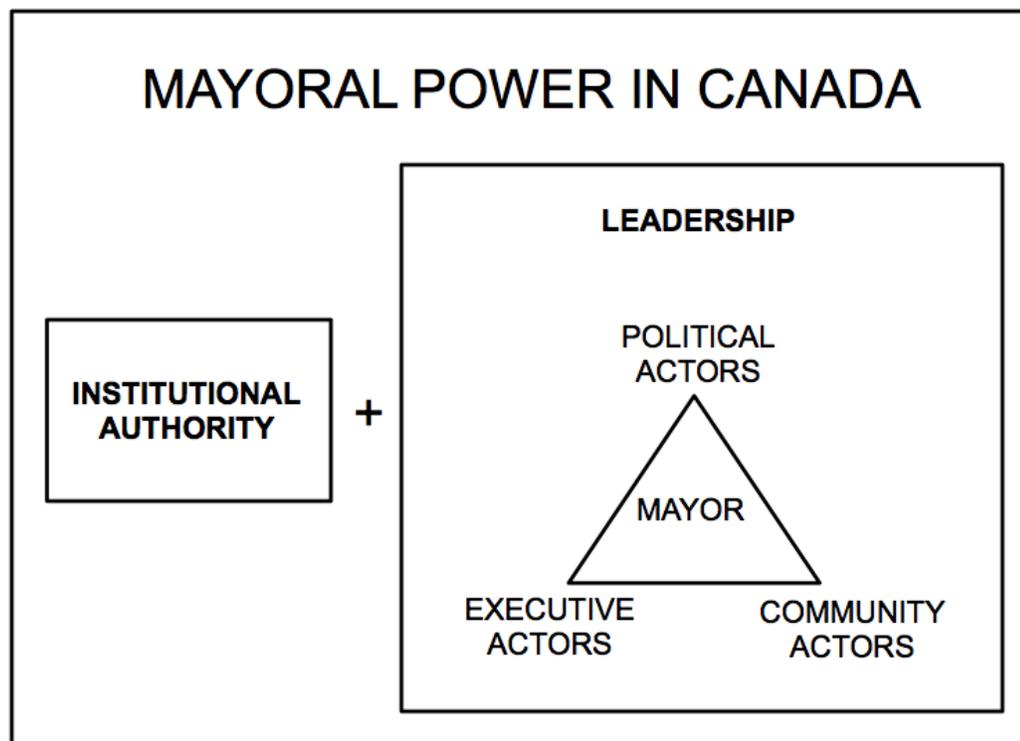
as relational, defined by the relationship of the mayor to actors engaged in local government. The mayor may be more or less powerful within the arena of political, executive and community actors. This model of mayoral power holds that, to understand the power of a mayor, the position of the mayor in relation to these three groups must be examined. To assess "how powerful" a mayor is, one

must consider the mayor in the context of each group:

- How powerful is the mayor in relation to political actors?

- How powerful is the mayor in relation to executive actors?

- How powerful is the mayor in relation to community actors?

It is expected that the answer to these three questions is not the same; that, in practice, mayoral power presents as patterns where mayors tend to be more powerful in one aspect of their role than in others.

During the interviews, the stories from mayors and others revealed that mayors draw on many different resources to exercise power over political, executive and community actors. Interviewees rarely characterized the mayor as "exercising power" yet the stories demonstrated how mayors were able to accomplish desired outcomes by influencing and leading others. Table 25 presents a summary of "power resources" used by mayors in their relations with political, executive and community actors. These were drawn from the Interviews. This table is surely not exhaustive of all power resources of mayors; it includes only the specific examples shared during the interviews. Council members, working with mayors in their political role, indicated that mayors use resources such as providing or limiting opportunities for leadership, supporting or hindering ward-specific priorities, preferential or diminished opportunities to speak during meetings, and access to information before the rest of council. Administrators, working with mayors in their executive role, have experienced mayors offering or withholding political support for key initiatives, shaping public opinion about municipal staff through how they communicate in the media, and

Table 25: Power Resources

	Political Actors	Executive Actors	Community Actors
Institutional Sources of Power	Procedural controls; giving or limiting time to speak at meetings Appointments; giving or limiting opportunities for leadership	Procedural controls; ability to call meetings	
Leadership as a Source of Power	Support for ward-initiatives Directing media to interview specific councillors Positive public recognition Greater access to information from staff; ability to share earlier access to information	Political support for key initiatives Creating or preventing political challenges for staff initiatives Positive public recognition Speaking on behalf of city "Clarifying" council positions Knowledge about community interests or activities Sense of job security for senior administrators	Ability to amplify an organization or person's activities; positive political recognition Access to financial, human or other city resources Giving or limiting opportunities for public to engage with council Access to information and knowledge

having unique access to information from officials at other levels of government. Community members also experience mayoral power in varied ways, with mayors having an ability to either amplify or discredit an organization or individual through their actions and comments, as well as having discretionary access to staff or financial resources desired by a community organization or initiative. Chapter 7 includes examples where mayors engaged in activities outside of local government altogether, such as when the mayor brought together community groups to align their funding requests to other levels of government, where some planned requests were not brought forward. Collectively, mayors can exercise power by using these resources to influence, mobilize, empower, and lead others.

Mayors occupy a privileged and central position with the political, executive and community realms of local government – and are uniquely positioned within them. No other role within local government has as many power resources available or as great of a potential reach across these realms, providing an unparalleled opportunity to influence, empower, mobilize and lead others. Ultimately this is what makes a mayor in Canada more or less powerful: their ability to activate those around them to realize desired outcomes. This view is consistent with Svara's work on "non-executive" mayors in the United States, [7] arguing that mayors without "strong mayor" powers are uniquely positioned to be

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[7] James H. Svara, *Official Leadership in the City: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); James H. Svara et al., *Facilitative Leadership in Local Government: Lessons from Successful Mayors and Chairpersons in the Council-Manager Form* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994); James H. Svara, *The Facilitative Leader in City Hall: Reexamining the Scope and Contributions* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2009).

the "guiding force" in local government through their relations with other actors:

> [T]he mayor *facilitates*, that is, accomplishes objectives through enhancing the efforts of others. This distinction makes a great difference in the orientation of the mayor. Rather than seeking power as the way to accomplish tasks, the facilitative mayor seeks to empower others.[8]

Dahl's oft-cited study of community power in New Haven, Connecticut reaches a similar conclusion about the central position of the mayor:

> If it were possible to single out any one person as the leader of the "grand coalition of coalitions," the mayor was unmistakably the man. Yet it would be grossly misleading to see the executive-centered order as a neat hierarchical system with the mayor at the top operating through subordinates in a chain of command. The mayor was not at the peak of a pyramid but rather at the centre of intersecting circles. He rarely commanded. He negotiated, cajoled, exhorted, beguiled, charmed, pressed, appealed, reasoned, promised, insisted, demanded, even threatened, but he most needed support and acquiescence from other leaders who simply could not be commanded. Because the mayor could not command, he had to bargain.[9]

Even individuals who have served as mayors express a similar sentiment, describing their position as the "lynchpin" between actors:

> When I was first elected, my tactic was to spend hours with each member of council, trying to understand what they wanted to get done in their term, what the future city looked like to them, what they wanted on the agenda. And then I would sit with administration, and work on what exactly our agenda would look like. I would talk a lot to community groups too. Really, the mayor's job – it's all about bringing council together, and then working with administration and others. The mayor is the lynchpin.

This idea of mayors as the "lynchpin"[10] between actors, the "guiding force" [11]

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[8] James H. Svara, *Official Leadership in the City: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 87.

[9] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 204.

[10] Confidential Interview #58.

within local government, and the "centre of intersecting circles"[12] appreciates that the mayoralty does not exist in isolation. Mayors who understand that they are uniquely positioned to empower political, executive and community actors around them, and use the resources available to them to do so, ultimately will be more powerful in practice than those who do not.

If mayoral power is *the extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government to achieve desired outcomes,* what happens when a mayor is not powerful? What happens when a mayor cannot lead those around them, or is unable to exercise influence over council, administration or the community? In practice, mayors tend to be unevenly powerful across the political, executive and community aspects of their role. This can be for a variety of reasons: because their own personal interests, experience or skills cause them to gravitate to one or more parts of the role more than others; because there is a specific need for leadership within the council, community or organization at a point in time, and others become more deferential to the mayor; because of established norms and expectations about the role of the mayor at a point in time or in each city; and, sometimes, because the scope of expectations associated with the role of the mayor exceed the mayor's personal capacity to lead. When a mayor becomes less powerful in one aspect of their role, it leaves a gap for others to fill. When a mayor is an

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[11] James H. Svara, *Official Leadership in the City: Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 87.

[12] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 204.

ineffective political leader, other members of council emerge as leaders and take on tasks generally expected of the mayor, such as coalition building or speaking on behalf of council. This can cause friction among members of council and dysfunction within council as a whole. When a mayor does not provide executive leadership, senior administrators become more powerful and autonomous from council. This can create tension between council and administration. When a mayor is an ineffective community leader, others in the community will emerge as leaders, often speaking out against the mayor to further their own particular interest. This can create distrust, chaos, anger, a loss of civic pride, and disappointment in the community, and may cost a mayor their political career. *The leadership, or lack of leadership, from the mayor ultimately changes the engagement of other actors – and shifts the power dynamics within the respective realm of local government.* In the words of one experienced city manager:

> I worked with two very different mayors, back to back. One mayor worked continuously with council to get a majority of votes on various issues. Because there are no parties, and no defined agenda, a mayor working on the side can be very effective at getting his agenda through. So you have that type of mayor – and then there's our current mayor, who is a 180-degree flip. He doesn't have an agenda. He wants to promote collective discussion in the community, but it doesn't work that way for this council. So there are different styles, and they can be effective in their own ways. Administratively, I'll tell you it's a whole lot easier to follow someone who says, 'I'll get you the votes, you do what you're told.' But now with this mayor, who has no clear agenda – well, we're administration, and we're basically building the agenda.[13]

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[13] Confidential Interview #59.

A mayor's leadership – or lack of leadership – shapes the engagement of political, executive and community actors, and ultimately, the power dynamics of local governance in their city. This is the central argument of this study. The mayoralty is not as simple as being "strong" or "weak," based on a narrow definition of power. Mayoral power is a larger concept involving institutional and leadership variables, as explored in this study. It is expressed, and best examined, in the extent to which the people around the mayor are influenced, mobilized, empowered, and led by the mayor. Mayoral power in practice is precious – it can be fleeting. Just ask a mayor who was at one time highly powerful but lost the trust of others, finding what was once simple to be much more difficult. Mayors have the power to shape the environment of others and set the conditions of their engagement in local governance. This can be intentional or not, and in practice is expressed in both obvious and more subversive ways. Mayors, in being uniquely positioned at the nexus of the network of these actors, have unparalleled opportunity to mobilize and lead others, and to influence the dynamics of local governance in their cities. This is the power of a Canadian mayor.

PART III: APPLYING THE MODEL

"If Steve Jobs was the mayor of Toronto, what would Toronto look like? Would we have more technology? Would we be the start up capital of North America? Would we have a more effective council?

The real question here is, does it matter who the mayor is?"

- Community Leader

Chapter 9 | TORONTO: A TALE OF THREE MAYORS

It was a busy morning at the headquarters of one of Canada's largest daily newspapers. The reporter sat on a couch in the middle of the newsroom, leaning in to be heard over the steady hum of typing and conversation. The reporter had lived in Toronto for all of his life, and had spent almost his entire professional career covering the politics of Toronto City Hall. When asked to speak about the role of the mayor in Toronto, he leaned back and smiled. "I'm sure you know, the Toronto mayor – well, it's a relatively weak office. The mayor doesn't have any legislative power beyond other councillors, and all that. But, you know, what I've noticed is that the mayor can really set the tone." [14] The reporter continued. "It's the mayor who sets the agenda. The mayor appoints who sits on committees, and who chairs committees; what get on the agenda, and what gets attention on the agenda. They can build coalitions and get things done. But more importantly, it's often the mayor who sets the terms for public debate – but, it's a bit different with each mayor."[15]

The reporter reflected on the mayors he had covered over the years, starting with Mayor Mel Lastman, the first mayor of the City of Toronto following the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto and its constituent municipalities in 1998. "With Lastman, the budget process went like this: we need you on board, what do you need? These are your goodies, now vote for the rest. It was a more

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[14] Confidential Interview #45.
[15] Ibid.

explicit kind of horse-trading. He would build coalitions by putting his strongest opponents and fiercest critics into important roles, and by doing that, he gained their support. When it came time to get things done, they got done."[16]

The reporter paused for a moment, and began speaking about David Miller, who followed Lastman as the Mayor of Toronto from 2003 to 2010. "Now Miller, he was more strategic, choosing who he wanted to be on his coalitions. It would be behind the scenes. When he brought something up, it would already be done. Leadership took place at an earlier stage, less of an issue-by-issue basis – but more in setting the tone. […] David Miller never lost a significant vote his entire time in office. The only vote I can remember that he lost, on a land transfer tax issue, they just voted to defer, and then later on when it came back in the summer, he won. He was very successful in leading public debate on terms he wanted. Building a 'magnificent city.' Being 'a transit city.' [Using] buzz words like that, and lining up his ducks behind him."[17]

The reporter smiled, thinking about the next mayor, the infamous Rob Ford who served as Mayor for one term from 2010 to 2014. "Ford, well, I don't think council actually supported him, even at the beginning. No, they were afraid of him! They were afraid of the voters, or the mayor, shaming them. He also defined the parameters of the debate. This is not about a transit system, or moving a bike lane. Every debate with Rob Ford was about respect for the taxpayers. And then, of course, he lost them. […] The example of Rob Ford is so

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.

crystallizing, not just because he's a celebrity, but because the extent to which

he lost control of council was so profound. But even after he was gone, council

basically appointed [Deputy Mayor Norm] Kelly as a caretaker, and I can't think

of anything significant that they did that was against Rob Ford's wishes, really.

It's because there was no alternative agenda. It was just an anti-Ford agenda.

Success was taking down the mayor, not implementing a different agenda. Sure,

he lost significant votes, but I can't think of a single initiative brought forward that

actually passed without his support."[18]

The reporter then turned to speak of the current mayor, John Tory,

elected as Mayor of Toronto in 2014. "Tory, from what I can tell, actually does try

to meet people and shape his agenda on what he thinks there will be consensus

on. In the Uber case, for example, he was meeting with the right and the left, and

they wanted two very different bylaws. According to some people in his office,

they had two separate bylaws written and ready to go, and just hours before the

council meeting they decided which one should go forward. It's a different form of

leadership. The debate was taking place, it was being negotiated, people were

filibustering to delay the vote so what they really wanted to could be written in.

They went to lunch, and council's left was told that their deal was off. It's a

crystal clear example of what I mean. The mayor has things he wants to

accomplish, and he's working with people to see how he can get things done,

finding constituencies to support what he wants."[19] The reporter leaned back on

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

the couch, seeming satisfied with having given a thoughtful response to the question, before offering one final comment. "People will say the mayor only has one vote and all that. But, he has the bully pulpit. He can psychologically set the agenda and tone for the whole city. That's what's really important."[20]

This chapter investigates the mayoralty in Toronto by examining three specific stories involving three different mayors. The purpose of this chapter is to apply the model advanced in Chapter 8 by exploring it through real events in a Canadian city involving the exercise of mayoral power. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the City of Toronto and the mayoralty in Toronto, for context. A descriptive overview of the Mayor of Toronto in three specific circumstances is then presented: Mayor David Miller in the quest for increased power and autonomy from the Government of Ontario for the City of Toronto; Mayor Rob Ford in his efforts to "stop the gravy train" at City Hall; and, Mayor John Tory in the pursuit of a SmartTrack commuter rail line. These examples were selected for several reasons: first, because they are all high profile examples of initiatives desired and championed by the Mayor; second, because they were examples mentioned by interviewees in the City of Toronto when describing mayoral power in practice; and, third, because each situation involved the mayor working with other political, executive and community actors, and thus provide an opportunity to examine the relationships between the mayor and those around them. This is not an exhaustive summary of the mayoralty or leadership of David Miller, Rob Ford and John Tory, as this would be beyond the scope of one chapter. Instead,

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[20] Ibid.

this chapter explores mayoral power "in practice" through an examination of three situations involving three mayors. The chapter concludes with a discussion of mayoral power in Toronto, examining how mayors can shape the engagement of other actors around them, and ultimately their city.

The City of Toronto

On March 12, 1795, a boy named William was born in Springfield, Scotland, to be raised by his 45-year old twice-widowed single mother. As a young man, he trained as a tradesperson and later opened a general store. After a recession caused his store to go bankrupt, 25-year old William lacked stable employment and emigrated from Scotland to British North America. William took a job writing for a newspaper, and four years later, established his own. He became involved in the reform movement, speaking out against upper class domination of the government in Upper Canada. In January of 1829, William was elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada for York. On March 6, 1834, the township of York incorporated as a city, taking the name "The City of Toronto" in effort to differentiate itself from many other places with York in their name.[21] The City of Toronto's first elections were held three weeks later, and William was elected as an alderman. The new council met to select a mayor

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[21] The council of the township of York was petitioned regarding the name "Toronto" during the incorporation process, and the Incorporation Acts allowed for the new council to change the name if desired. During the debate, the Speaker is quoted as saying "this city will be the only Toronto in the world!" securing majority support for the name.

from amongst themselves, and on March 27, 1836, William Lyon Mackenzie became the first Mayor of Toronto.[22]

Sixty-four mayors later, the City of Toronto today has grown into Canada's largest city. As home to 2.7 million people, and the hub for a region of nearly 6 million, Toronto is arguably Canada's sole "global city"[23] and is widely recognized as one of the most multicultural, diverse and livable cities in the world.[24] Nearly half of Toronto's population is foreign-born, ranking it second in the world,[25] with more than 100,000 immigrants arriving in the region on an annual basis.[26] The city is Canada's leading financial, industrial and cultural centre.

As Toronto has grown, its legal structure has also evolved. In 1954, the Government of Ontario created a new regional government. Metropolitan Toronto included twelve lower-tier municipalities, which were later amalgamated into six larger lower-tier municipalities in 1967. In 1998, the Harris Government, as a part of a larger municipal reform agenda,[27] amalgamated Metropolitan

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[22] For a comprehensive account of Mackenzie's mayoralty, see: John Sewell, *Mackenzie: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Lorimer, 2002); Victor R. Russell, *Mayors of Toronto: Volume I 1834-1899* (Erin, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1982).

[23] The term "global city" is often attributed to Saskia Sassen for her 1991 text, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo,* which defines the term as referring to cities which serve as the leading geographic nodes in the global economy. Other cities in Canada, namely Vancouver, Montreal and Calgary, are also sometimes considered to be "global cities."

[24] Toronto has consistently ranked in the top among the most livable cities in the world by indexes such as The Economist's Global City Liveability Report (available online: https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=liveability17) and the Mercer Quality of Living Survey (available online: https://mobilityexchange.mercer.com/Insights/quality-of-living-rankings)

[25] United Nations World Development Program.

[26] Statistics Canada, 2016 census.

[27] In 1995, Ontario elected a new Premier, Mike Harris, on a "common sense revolution" platform which included a promise of "less government." From 1996 to 2001, the Harris government led sweeping reforms to municipalities in Ontario, implementing 160 restructurings that reduced the

Toronto and its six constituent municipalities into a single-tier City of Toronto.[28]

Although the amalgamation into a "megacity" was met with considerable local

opposition[29] and criticism,[30] it holds as the current legal structure today. The

amalgamation contributed to a political cleavage between the residents of the

core urban area (the former City of Toronto) and the suburban surrounding areas

that unwillingly joined the City of Toronto, which remains a defining feature of

Toronto politics. It is particularly pronounced through mayoral elections, as will

be outlined later in this chapter. Today, the single-tier City of Toronto is governed

by an elected council comprised of a mayor elected at-large and 44 councillors,

has an annual operating budget exceeding $12 billion and more than 33,000

employees,[31] and is one of the largest governments in Canada.

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total number of municipalities in Ontario from 885 to 445 (and later, 444). The Toronto amalgamation was the first during Harris' tenure.

[28] It is unclear to what extent the megacity decision was linked to this broader platform. Sancton (2000) argues that the Harris government "stumbled into the megacity solution" and that the CSR agenda was too vague to directly account for the resulting structural changes. However, prior to becoming Premier, Harris led a task force on "Bringing Common Sense to Metro Toronto," taking particular interest in municipal reform in Ontario's largest city.

[29] A non-binding referendum demonstrated that 76% of Toronto and area residents opposed the amalgamation.

[30] Although municipal reform was aimed to reduce the size and cost of municipal government, many have argued that the promised benefits never transpired. Hollick and Siegel (2001), among others, have since argued that the promised savings and efficiencies did not actually transpire as a result of amalgamation. Kushner and Siegel (2003) found that citizens in most jurisdictions perceived a decline in value for taxes following amalgamation. A study by Slack and Bird (2013) finds that while amalgamations may have enabled some small municipalities to achieve new economies of scale, this was not possible in large cities such as Toronto. In the words of one media observer, "Harris' government said amalgamation would save tons of money; critics said it would likely increase costs. The critics have been proven right. Most of the services that would provide economies of scale through bundling into a larger organization were already amalgamated [through] the Metro government. Meanwhile, what was lost under Harris' amalgamation was regional identity, local control over issues like zoning and garbage pickups and parks, and political representation." (Keenan, *Some Great Idea,* 60-61).

[31] City of Toronto budgets. Available online: www.toronto.ca/budget

The Toronto mayoralty is a unique role, in several respects. Unlike the Prime Minister of Canada or Premier of Ontario, the Mayor of Toronto leads a nonpartisan government, does not have the equivalent of a party caucus or cabinet, and is subject to considerably higher requirements for openness and transparency. Depending on the individual in the role, the Mayor also tends to have a public profile and media demands that would rival those of a Premier or Prime Minister. The Mayor of Toronto is directly elected by more citizens than any other politician in Canada, and the process of becoming the mayor is a major undertaking – arguably, among the most challenging political campaigns to run in the country.[32] Without party banners to differentiate themselves, Toronto mayoral candidates must campaign on a platform that captures the support of hundreds of thousands of people [33] against more opponents than in any other political race in the country.[34] Through the election of a new mayor, Toronto expresses its preferences on major policy issues by selecting an individual who embodies what the majority of voters desire for the future of their city. The individual elected, in turn, has a powerful influence over the dynamics of governance of the city – in obvious, and less obvious, ways.

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[32] Mayoral campaigns in Toronto require significant financial resources. In the 2014 election, John Tory raised $2.8 million dollars, of a total $6.7 million raised by all 65 candidates. Doug Ford raised $1.9 million in the 2010 election, of a total of $7.1 million raised by all mayoral candidates. There are no other campaigns of this scale in Canada without the support and structure of organized political parties.

[33] In the 2014 municipal election, John Tory won with 394,775 votes (40%). In 2010, Rob Ford received 383,501 votes (47%). No other directly political role in Canada requires securing this volume of votes.

[34] Over the past four elections, no fewer than 38 candidates have run for mayor in Toronto (specifically: 44 candidates in the 2003 election, 38 in 2006, 40 in 2010, and 65 in 2014).

Mayor David Miller (2003 – 2010)

David Miller was born in California. When his father passed away two years after his birth, he and his mother moved to England where he received a scholarship to attend a prestigious private school. Miller went on to graduate with degrees from Harvard and the University of Toronto, and began a career in law at a large Bay Street firm. As an articling student, Miller represented residents of Toronto Island in an arbitration, which he later described as his introduction to local government. Miller's first campaigns for office, both locally and provincially, were unsuccessful. In 1994, Miller was elected to Metro Toronto Council, and he was a vocal critic of municipal restructuring under Premier Mike Harris. After serving two terms on council in post-amalgamation Toronto, Miller ran for mayor in the 2003 election. On December 1, 2003, David Miller became the 63th Mayor of Toronto.

The 2003 mayoral race was notable for a number of reasons. First, the election signaled a shift in the fault lines of Toronto politics, countering the dominant contention at the time that the suburbs of the amalgamated city had the balance of votes to select the mayor and council.[35] After a series of controversies, [36] Mayor Mel Lastman announced he would not be seeking re-

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[35] Bill Freeman, "Toronto," in Dimitrios Rousopoulos, *The Rise of Cities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 118.

[36] Mayor Mel Lastman was the subject of numerous controversies during his time in office, which are well chronicled in media reports: threatening to kill a reporter after a story about the Mayor's wife being caught shoplifting at Eaton's store in Toronto was aired (Timothy Appleby, "The mayor goes ballistic: Death threat against report has Lastman in hot water", *Globe and Mail*, p. A1, A3, 13 May 1999); making racist comments following a trip to Kenya in support of Toronto's bid to host the Olympics (James Rusk, "Lastman apologizes for cannibal joke on eve of Kenya trip", *Globe and Mail*, p. A1, 21 June 2000); and a lawsuit from two adult children, conceived during an

election. With no incumbent contender, a record 44 mayoral candidates entered

the race, including several high-profile individuals: Barbara Hall, the former

Mayor of the pre-amalgamation City of Toronto, who was defeated by Lastman

for Mayor following amalgamation; John Nunziata, a former Member of

Parliament; John Tory, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Rogers

Cable and former conservative strategist at the national and provincial level; and

Tom Jakobek, a former City Councillor who resigned in disgrace in 2000. When

David Miller entered the race, he had only 8% support, and as a left-wing

progressive candidate who primarily appealed to downtown voters, he was

widely considered to have little chance of winning.[37] Miller used a trademark

broom throughout his campaign, promising to literally and figuratively "clean up

the city."[38] As the campaign progressed, support consolidated around two

candidates: Miller, and the prominent conservative candidate, Tory.[39] Miller

ultimately won with 43% of the vote over Tory's 38%, with no other candidate

receiving more than 10%. The election of a downtown, progressive mayoral

candidate was cited by observers as "a revolution"[40] and "fresh oxygen into the

political life of Toronto."[41]

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extramarital affair with a former employee, for unpaid child support (Lisa Priest, "Lastman 'mortified': Facing lawsuit, mayor reveals affair but doesn't admit paternity", *Globe and Mail*, p. A1, A19, 1 December 2000).

[37] Edward Keenan, *Some Great Idea,* 72.

[38] For helpful overview of Miller's first campaign and term, see: Bill Freeman, "Toronto," in Dimitrios Rousopoulos, *The Rise of Cities* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2017).

[39] Ibid, 117-118.

[40] Edward Keenan, *Some Great Idea,* 72.

[41] Freeman, "Toronto," 118.

The second notable aspect of the 2003 mayoral election was that it coincided with a change in Ontario's Premier and Canada's Prime Minister. Dalton McGuinty defeated Mike Harris in the Ontario general election on October 2, 2003. David Miller was elected as Toronto's mayor on November 10, 2003. Paul Martin succeeded Jean Chretien as leader of the reigning Liberal Party of Canada on November 13, 2003.[42] The near simultaneous emergence of new leaders at all levels presented a unique opportunity to re-establish intergovernmental relationships for the City of Toronto – an opportunity not lost on Miller. A campaign to increase revenues and empower cities was already well underway in Canada, [43] with decades of discussion about the appropriate level of authority and autonomy for the City of Toronto.[44] Miller quickly prioritized the

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[42] The swearing in of the new leaders also fell within weeks of one another. Dalton McGuinty was sworn in as Premier of Ontario on October 23, 2003. David Miller was sworn in as Mayor of Toronto on December 1, 2003. Paul Martin was sworn in as Prime Minister on December 12, 2003.

[43] In May 2000, Jane Jacobs met with the mayors of five of Canada's largest cities (Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver and Winnipeg) at what later became known as the "C5 Summit". The Summit, convened by urban advocate and business leader Alan Broadbent, followed a nearly two-year exploration about the powers of cities in Canada. Jacobs positioned the meeting as emerging from concern about each city's economy being "at risk" due to "outdated, paternal relationships" with senior levels of government. The C5 continued to meet and host delegations with federal officials until the New Deal for Cities was announced in the 2004 federal budget. For an excellent overview of the C5 Summit, see: "Report of the C5: Historic meeting of mayors of Canada's hub cities with Jane Jacobs," *Ideas That Matter* (September 2001). For a broader argument about empowering Canada's cities by C5 facilitator, Alan Broadbent, see: Alan Broadbent, *Urban Nation: Why we need to give power back to the cities to make Canada strong* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2008).

[44] Some sources cite the origin of this conversation as dating back to the founding of Toronto. The first chapter of Broadbent's *Urban Nation* (2008) includes reference to the uprising led by Toronto's first mayor, William Mackenzie, against the Family Compact in 1837, and events leading up to the anti-amalgamation Citizens for Local Democracy (C4LD) movement in the 1990s, including a 1993 rally about whether Toronto should seek to declare its independence from Canada, tapping into the larger narrative about Quebec's separation. For an excellent collection of essays on Toronto's quest for greater financial and political empowerment, see:

renegotiation of Toronto's relationships with other governments as "a centerpiece of his governing platform."[45]Just three days into Mayor Miller's term, a senior member of his advisory team published an editorial titled "New deal for cities critical" in *The Globe and Mail*,[46] praising Paul Martin for his "farsighted and enlightened" work as Finance Minister and artfully questioning whether similar leadership would be extended through financial support of Canada's cities:

> Cities are also, disastrously, at the wrong end of a constitutional anomaly, having little political power or ability to raise the taxes they need to pay for the services they must provide. […] As our cities go, so goes Canada. Federal government goals to ensure a national effort at improving our quality of life, of rendering our cities affordable, healthy and competitive, would then have a real chance of being met. It is time not only to fund our cities adequately, but also to see to it that the funds are effectively invested, propelling Canada once again to the forefront of urban excellence.[47]

The call for greater revenues for Toronto and other cities was well timed. Just three months later, the new Prime Minister Paul Martin announced a "new deal" for Canada's cities, including a $7 billion tax rebate in the 2004 federal budget.[48]

The negotiation of Toronto's provincial relationship was more complex, and given the arrangements of Canadian federalism, perhaps more significant.

Jane Jacobs and Mary Rowe, eds., *Toronto: Considering Self-Government* (Toronto: Ginger Press, 2000).

[45] Martin Horak, "Success and Failure in Multilevel Governance in Toronto," in Martin Horak and Robert Young, eds., *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2012), 233.

[46] Jack Diamond, "New deal for cities critical," *The Globe and Mail* (December 3, 2003). Available online: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/new-deal-for-cities-critical/article774172/.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Government of Ontario. Budget 2004: A New Deal for Communities. Available online: https://www.fin.gc.ca/budget04/PDF/pacome.pdf

At the time of David Miller's election as Mayor, all municipalities in Ontario,

including Toronto, were governed by a single *Municipal Act,* 2001; and,

importantly, consulted with the provincial government through a signed

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Association of Municipalities

of Ontario (AMO) and the Government of Ontario. The new Mayor's

discontentment with this arrangement became clear.[49] In the words of the

Mayor, "as the sixth largest government in Canada, we need a new deal that can

only be negotiated government to government."[50] Within the first year of his term,

Mayor Miller and the new Premier Dalton McGuinty launched a joint task force to

"develop recommendations to provide Toronto with comprehensive, enabling

new powers,"[51] and the City of Toronto announced its intention to leave AMO.[52]

The joint Ontario-City of Toronto Task Force was co-chaired by the

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the City

Manager of the City of Toronto, supported by staff working groups from both

governments.[53] Work began in the fall of 2004, with consultation and a progress

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[49] In a January 2004 article on the New Deal, journalist Nick Swift describes Miller's dissatisfaction: "Mr. Miller has also expressed disagreement with the idea that Toronto, by far the largest city in Canada, should be expected to interact with the government solely through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario."

[50] Jennifer Lewington, "Convention leaving city, AMO says," *The Globe And Mail* (January 29, 2005).

[51] According to the Terms of Reference, these powers were intended to: "[be] commensurate with the city's size, needs, responsibilities and capacity; recognize Toronto's importance as the economic engine of Ontario and Canada; and, recognize that Toronto is a mature order of government capable of exercising its powers in a responsible and accountable fashion."

[52] In a statement issued by AMO in 2005, Miller is cited as saying that "AMO could no longer represent Toronto's interests as well as Toronto could represent themselves."

[53] Joint Ontario-City of Toronto Task Force to Review the *City of Toronto Act, 1997* and other Private (Special) Legislation, Staff Progress Report, May 2005. Available online: http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/10000/252927.pdf

report issued in the spring of 2005. By the fall of 2005, legislation was drafted

and introduced at Queens Park. In June 2006, the *Stronger City of Toronto for a*

Stronger Ontario Act, 2005 received Royal Assent,[54] and the new *City of Toronto*

Act, 2006 came into force on January 1, 2007. The new *Act* expanded the City's

taxation and legislative powers,[55] and introduced new governance requirements

for the mayor and council, such as establishing an executive committee.[56] City

council publicly celebrated their victory[57] in the *Act,*[58] with Mayor Miller calling it

the beginning of a "new era"[59] for Toronto. "This legislation is the most important

and significant change for the City of Toronto in the past century. It recognizes

Toronto as a mature government and provides it with much-needed tools to meet

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[54] The bill received support from the Ontario Liberals and New Democratic parties in a 58-20 vote, with opposition from the Ontario Progressive Conservatives. In the words of leader John Tory, "This is a bill that is focused on new powers to tax and new ways to get money from taxpayers […] I hope the city doesn't use those powers to tax going forward, because taxpayers are paying enough."

[55] Under the authority of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, Toronto City Council implemented two new direct taxes in October 2007: a land transfer tax, generating more than $300 million per year in revenue and still in effect today; and, a vehicle ownership tax, which generated more than $60 million per year before it was discontinued following the election of Mayor Rob Ford in 2010.

[56] Interpretations of the motivation behind these new requirements vary. Keenan (2013) argues that the governance changes were aimed to strengthen the power of the mayor by giving the mayor the ability to establish a group similar to a cabinet as a base of support. Others (Broadbent 2008) suggest the underlying motivation was to encourage the city to get its "house in order," stemming from a general disregard for local politicians within provincial and federal governments, who may view municipal politics as "messy" and municipal politicians as "bumpkins – unsophisticated and undisciplined hacks." (163)

[57] The extent to which the City of Toronto Act (COTA) can be considered a "victory" is up for debate. In an article titled "The False Panacea of City Charters?" Sancton (2016) argues that, in practice, the COTA leaves the City of Toronto more at the mercy of the provincial government than other Ontario municipalities.

[58] A media story cites Council Chambers as "erupting" with applause at the time, and one councillor even being "chided" for being too enthusiastic in her applause (Rachel Mendleson, "The law said we could think big. So why didn't we?" *The Toronto Star,* March 2, 2014).

[59] "Ontario Capital City Begins new Era," Government of Ontario, Media Release, January 1, 2007. Available online: https://news.ontario.ca/archive/en/2007/01/01/City-of-Toronto-Act-2006-proclaimed.html

its responsibilities to its residents."[60]In the words of one media observer:
"[A]lthough I say Miller did these things, perhaps it's more accurate to say that
council did them under his leadership. For all of Miller's time as mayor, the two
concepts seemed synonymous. He never lost a single major vote at city council
in his entire two terms as mayor, an accomplishment that in retrospect seems
like a masterwork of negotiation and persuasion."[61]

Mayor Rob Ford (2010 – 2014)

Rob Ford[62] was born in Etobicoke, Ontario, as the youngest of four
children. His father, Doug Ford Sr., co-founded a successful business making
plastic labels for grocery products, which grew to generate more than $100
million in annual sales. As a child, Rob had a close relationship with his siblings,
and aspired to be a professional football player. After graduating from high
school in Etobicoke, Rob attended Carleton University to study political science,
but dropped out after one year. Rob began working alongside his siblings at the
family business. In the 1995 provincial election, Doug Ford Sr. was elected
alongside leader Mike Harris on a "common sense revolution" platform to serve
as a Member of Provincial Parliament, the first political step by a member of the
Ford family and the dawn of a movement which later became known as "Ford

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Edward Keenan, *Some Great Idea,* 77.

[62] Summary of Rob Ford's life based on biographical content in: Robyn Doolittle, *Crazy Town: The Rob Ford Story* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2014); John Filion, *The Only Average Guy: Inside the Uncommon World of Rob Ford* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2015); and, Rob Ford and Doug Ford, *Ford Nation: Two Brothers, One Vision, The Story of the People's Mayor* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2016).

Nation." [63] Rob followed suit by running in the 2000 municipal election, and was

elected as the Toronto City Councillor for Etobicoke North (Ward 2), later

succeeded by his brother Doug Jr. in the same ward. The Fords became an

important and influential part of the Toronto political landscape.[64] Rob Ford

served three terms on City Council. In September 2009, Mayor David Miller

announced that he would not be seeking re-election, opening the field for new

mayoral candidates to enter the race. Rob Ford, along with 39 other candidates

including prominent politicians George Smitherman and Joe Pantalone, ran for

mayor in the 2010 Toronto election. Ford campaigned on a fiscal conservative

platform to "stop the gravy train" at City Hall, seeking to reduce the size and cost

of government.[65] The election drew the highest turnout (51%) in Toronto's post-

amalgamation history, and Rob Ford won handily with 47% of the vote. [66]

Perhaps the most striking part of Ford election, however, was the pronounced

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[63] Doolittle (2014) cites the plans for a political family dynasty date back to Rob Ford's childhood. "According to those who knew him well, Rob Ford always knew he would run for mayor once he got elected to city council. But he dreamed even bigger. One day, he wanted to become leader of the federal Conservative party, and ultimately prime minister. Brother Doug Jr. planned to run provincially and eventually be elected as premier." (47-47). A family friend of the Fords' is cited as saying, "The Fords think of themselves as the Kennedys. They talk about it. They're the Canadian Kennedy's." (48)

[64] Doolittle shares a story from John Tory from during his run for mayor in the 2003 election. "Tory was a conservative. And to win an election in Toronto as a right-winger, you needed the suburbs. His advisors explained that the Fords were the gatekeepers to Etobicoke. 'It was 'Fords' plural,' Tory remembers. […] 'We like you. You'll get elected, because we're going to help you in Etobicoke,' Tory remembered [Rob's mother] Diane saying. 'You'll serve for a period of time, and then it will be Robbie's turn'." (47)

[65] Rob Ford's campaign mantra of "Respect for Taxpayers" included a four-part platform to: (1) reduce the size of Council; (2) reduce the size of government; (3) reduce the cost of government; and (4) "save our city" defined as "identify opportunities to save money and improve the value taxpayers receive for their money." The language of "stopping the gravy train" appears frequently in Ford's campaign materials and speeches, both during the election and while in office.

[66] City of Toronto, 2010 Municipal Election Results, Available online: www.toronto.ca/elections/results/results_2010.htm (accessed March 23, 2013).

geographic concentration of his support. The suburban wards formerly outside the City of Toronto voted for Ford, and the urban core of the city – the former City of Toronto – did not.[67] Many viewed Ford's election as a response to escalating costs under Mayor Miller, largely due to expansions in Toronto's transit system and urban infrastructure.[68] On election night, Ford interpreted his victory as "a clear call from taxpayers: enough is enough."[69]

Within weeks of the election, the City Manager and Chief Financial Officer of the City of Toronto presented a budget report to the new Mayor and Council which identified that "achieving a balanced budget in 2012 will be challenging […] an ambitious program to find offsetting cost savings will be required immediately following the passage of the 2011 budget."[70] This recommendation, which closely mirrored Ford's campaign platform, was met with support from the Mayor:

> Since amalgamation, Toronto has added new services, programs and activities that added significantly to our cost base. Our expenses grow at a rate much faster than our revenues. […] The gap keeps getting bigger and bigger because we have not addressed the root cause. To address this

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[67] Ford's election reflected the growing post-amalgamation cleavage between the suburban and urban neighbourhoods of Toronto. Keenan (2013) writes, "To the so-called 'downtown elites' who opposed Ford, his campaign slogans didn't event cohere into a rational argument. As anyone who followed city hall at all could tell you, the billions of dollars in waste he claimed he could cut simply did not exist. And the combination of massive tax cuts and slashed government spending appeared nonsensical when considered in combination with his insistence that no city services would be cut. […] When you add all of that up, the election of Rob Ford to the mayor's office looked to a lot of his opponents like a kamikaze vote from people who hated the city." (107).

[68] When Ford took office in 2011, City Council passed a $9.4 billion operating budget, representing 150% growth over the past decade from $6.1 billion in 2001.

[69] Rob Ford, speech on election night (October 25, 2010) at Toronto Congress Centre.

[70] City of Toronto, "2011 Budget Process" Report to Executive Committee from the City Manager, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, December 6, 2010.

gap, we must find permanent reductions in our cost base: either by changing what we do, or by doing it more efficiently.[71]

In March 2011, just weeks after the passage of the 2011 budget by the new Mayor and Council, City Manager Joe Pennachetti recommended an ambitious process to review every single one of the City's over 150 services within six months – cited as the most aggressive review of any government in Canadian history.[72] Pennachetti identified that the City was facing a $774 million budget gap heading into the 2012 budget, and that an extensive service review would identify opportunities to address this gap.[73] The recommendation was approved unanimously by the Executive Committee, and supported by Council in April 2011.[74]

Toronto's service review program included three components: first, a core service review, to determine which services the City should be providing; second, service efficiency studies, to examine service levels, and, third, a user fee review, to examine all of the City's 3,700 user fees.[75] The program timeline identified that the core service review recommendations would be taken to Council three months later, in July 2011; and, that the full process would be complete by November 2011 when the 2012 budget process was to be launched.[76] In an internal email to all City of Toronto staff, Pennachetti wrote:

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[71] Mayor Rob Ford comments to the Toronto Executive Committee, March 21, 2011.
[72] Marcus Gee, "Turns out it's not all gravy," *The Globe and Mail* (July 11, 2011).
[73] City of Toronto, Executive Committee Minutes from March 21, 2011.
[74] City of Toronto, City Council Minutes from April 12, 2011.
[75] City of Toronto, "Core Service Review Program," July 11, 2011.
[76] City of Toronto, "Service Review Program 2011 Timeline."

> I understand that this will be a very different and challenging year for the Toronto Public Service. There is a great deal of work that must be completed in a relatively short time. My goal is to reach perfection in our service delivery methods and I believe that these service efficiency reviews will move us closer to that target.[77]

Pennachetti opted to personally manage the review, supported by a team of external consultants.[78] An accompanying public consultation process, facilitated by City of Toronto staff, occurred alongside the review, drawing nearly 13,000 Toronto residents to participate.[79] Not surprisingly, participation heavily weighted from residents in the downtown area[80] with more than half of participants indicating they would like to an expansion, not reduction, in service.[81] In July 2011, Pennachetti delivered the consultants' final report to the Mayor and Council, identifying that 90% of the City's services were considered core or essential, and 85% were delivered at or below standard when compared to other

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[77] Email from Joe Pennachetti to all City of Toronto employees, dated March 21, 2011.

[78] Toronto City Council authorized a $3 million consulting budget to support the first part of the process, the core service review. The City hired KPMG, a private consulting firm, to undertake this work. KPMG's scope included reviewing the 105 services directly provided by the City and the 50 services provided by the City's agencies, boards and commissions; and, to research and analyze several comparable municipalities and jurisdiction. KMPG was asked to evaluate each service based on whether it was mandatory (required by legislation), essential (critical to the operation of the City), traditional (provided by virtually all municipalities for many years), or other (a service provided by the City to respond to particular community needs or specialized purpose). KMPG was also asked to evaluate the level of service against that in comparable other municipalities (classified as either below standard, at standard, or above standard), and examine the City's role in providing the service (classified as regulator, funder, manager-contract, manager-partnership, designed service manager, or delivery by city staff).[78]

[79] City of Toronto, "Core Service Review Public Consultation Report," July 2011.

[80] For a map of participation by postal code, see: City of Toronto, "Core Service Review Public Consultation Report," July 2011.

[81] Participants rated transit, fire, water, health and garbage as the highest priority services; and placed theatres, the zoo, provincial offences court management, and Exhibition Place as the lowest priorities. When asked how much more property tax they would be comfortable paying to support services, the responses were divided, with an response of 5.15%. Most participants felt that the City of Toronto should provide services that are better than most other cities (35%) or than all cities (24%).

Ontario municipalities.[82] The report identified over 200 "opportunities" for cost

reductions.[83]

The release of the report sparked outcry from Toronto residents and

interest groups in opposition to the "opportunities" presented, including

numerous protests at City Hall and community-led campaigns.[84] Keenan (2013)

describes the community response this way:

> The Core Service Review made the conversation about everything at
> once […] the heritage preservation folks and the AIDS supporters, the
> library users and the dental health advocates, the labour unionists and the
> people who own small businesses, all kinds of people who are not
> typically on the same side of things suddenly found themselves rowing in
> a single boat against the cost-cutting tide.[85]

On July 28, 2011, the Executive Committee held a special meeting to hear

directly from the public. Three hundred and forty-four citizens requested

delegation status.[86] It turned out to be the longest continuous committee meeting

in the City of Toronto's history,[87] lasting 22.5 hours when it was adjourned at

7:55am on July 29.[88] Citizens spilled into the hallway and overflow rooms waiting

for their three minutes to speak. Some Council members spoke positively about

the level of engagement demonstrated, one quoted as saying, "in two decades of

activism […] I have never seen public participation like this. […] People are

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[82] KPMG, "City of Toronto Core Service Review: Final Report to the City Manager," July 7, 2011.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Friends of the Toronto Public Library, for example, launched a campaign to mobilize opposition to reducing library hours, a campaign that was prominently supported by famed Canadian author Margaret Atwood.
[85] Keenan, *Some Great Idea*, 128.
[86] Ibid, 128.
[87] Ibid, 126.
[88] City of Toronto, Executive Committee Minutes from July 28, 2011.

talking to each other about the kind of city they want. It's amazing.[89] The Mayor, however, had less positive remarks, as quoted in *The Globe and Mail* following the meeting. "[A]ll the people who were getting grants saying don't take my free money, my grant money. All the special interest groups. Again, let's call it for what they are, they are the left-wing NDP people who always got this money handed to them year after year after year."[90]

In September 2011, Pennachetti reported back to the Executive Committee with numerous recommendations: reduce library hours, reconsider service improvements to the subway system, reduce the number of funded childcare spaces, discontinue windrow and sidewalk snow clearing, divest the Toronto Zoo and Heritage Toronto, and many more.[91] Pennachetti opened the meeting by saying "[w]e heard clearly from Toronto residents that they cherish our services. However, at the same time, as all are aware, we have a massive projected deficit that must be addressed. My objective in the recommendations to Council is to balance both these opposing realities."[92] Over the next several months, Council debated and made decisions on Pennachetti's recommendations. Ultimately, only 19% of his recommendations were directed by Council to come forward as business cases for consideration in the 2012

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[89] Keenan, *Some Great Idea*, 131.

[90] Patrick White, "Toronto mayor to city staff: take a buyout or face layoffs," *The Globe and Mail*, August 12, 2011.

[91] City of Toronto, "Final Report to the Executive Committee: Service Review Program and 2012 Budget," September 19, 2011.

[92] City Manager Joe Pennachetti, speaking to the Executive Committee, September 19, 2011.

budget.[93] Some recommendations, such as divesting the Toronto Zoo, were

approved by Council during the service review, only for the decisions to be

reversed during the budget process.[94] The majority of the recommendations and

"opportunities" were referred back to administration for further feasibility studies

or to be subject to a further efficiency study.[95] In the end, the core service review

saved about $20 million during the budget process[96] – considerably short of the

initially stated $774 million gap. In July 2011, The Globe and Mail concluded

"turns out, it's not all gravy."[97] By early 2012, Mayor Ford was facing a conflict of

interest lawsuit and the beginning of what would become a challenging

remainder of his term.[98] Ford opted to run again for mayor in the 2014 election,

but withdrew part way through the race due to a battle with cancer, which later

ended his life in March 2016. In the words of his brother, Doug, "Rob may be

gone, but Ford Nation remains. […] Ford Nation is about standing up to the

political elite; the same old, same old; wasted money; and unacceptable and

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[93] City of Toronto, "Status of Council Decisions on the Core Service Review," January 6, 2012.
[94] Interview with an executive from the City of Toronto.
[95] City of Toronto, "Status of Council Decisions on the Core Service Review," January 6, 2012.
[96] City Manager Joe Pennachetti, Presentation to the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance, May 17, 2012.
[97] Marcus Gee's July 2011 article states, "If there is anybody left in Toronto who still thinks the city can solve its money troubles simply by stopping the gravy train, the results of the city's core service review should disabuse them. The review of city public works programs by KPMG consultants gave Toronto its first good look at what it will take to get city finances in line and it has nothing to do with cutting back on hired chipmunk suits, overpriced plant waterers or any of the other fluff that Rob Ford went on about during last year's election campaign. […] What we are facing instead is the prospect of cuts on things as practical as grass cutting, snow shovelling and recyclables collection. Even fluoridation of the water supply is being flagged as potentially dispensable. […] The easy and obvious cuts that Mr. Ford talked about are simply not to be had. The report presents city council with a menu of tough choices."
[98] See introduction section in Chapter 1.

unreachable leadership. Rob knew what this is all about; the question for the rest of us is what comes next."[99]

Mayor John Tory (2014 – Present)

John Tory was born in Toronto in 1954, as the oldest of four children born into a lineage of successful Canadian businessmen. Tory's great-grandfather founded Sun Life Canada, his grandfather founded the successful law firm Torys LLP, and his father was president of Thompson Investments and a director at Rogers Communications. As a child, John became politically active by joining the Young Conservatives at the age of 13, and later worked for Premier Bill Davis and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.[100] Professionally, Tory was trained as a lawyer and later served as the President and CEO of Rogers Media. He ran as a mayoral candidate in 2003 and was defeated by David Miller. From 2004 to 2009, he served as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and the MPP for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey from 2005 to 2007. In 2009, Tory resigned his post and took on a variety of community leadership roles, including as Chair of CivicAction Toronto during Rob Ford's tenure as Mayor from 2010-2014. In February 2014, Tory registered as a mayoral candidate in the 2014 election, initially challenged by incumbent Mayor Rob Ford and later his brother, Doug Ford, after Rob's withdrawal from the race; and, Olivia Chow, a well known

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[99] Rob Ford and Doug Ford, *Ford Nation: Two Brothers, One Vision, The Story of the People's Mayor* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Limited, 2016), 271.
[100] Linda Diebel, "Mayoral candidate John Tory a leader from childhood," *The Toronto Star* (October 25, 2014).

former City Councillor, Member of Parliament, and wife of the late New

Democratic Party of Canada leader Jack Layton. Tory won the election with 40%

of the vote,[101] and on December 1, 2014, was sworn in as the 65th Mayor of

Toronto.

The central plank of Tory's mayoral platform was a proposal for a "city-

wide transit relief" plan called SmartTrack, a "London-style surface rail subway

system that moves the most people in the shortest time, across the entire

city."[102] The $8 billion plan[103] promised a 53-kilometer line[104] with 22 stations,

aimed to reduce commute time for suburban passengers, with service beginning

in 2021.[105] The plan committed that no existing roadways would be displaced,

and the fares would remain the same as the current rate of the Toronto Transit

Commission.[106] An interactive "Smart Tracker" website was also launched during

the campaign, where users could click on an origin and destination on a map,

and the website would calculate timesavings that SmartTrack would provide to

the user.[107]

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[101] Election Results, City of Toronto. Available online: https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/elections/general-information/election-results/

[102] See John Tory's Smart Tracker website: smarttracker.ca.

[103] Tory's plan proposed that the City of Toronto's one-third share of the costs would be paid through tax increment financing ("One Toronto: Financing the Smart Track," John Tory campaign brochure. Available online: http://www.johntory.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/OneToronto_Backgrounder_Four_Finance.pdf)

[104] According to Tory's campaign materials, 90% of the proposed line would be on existing GO trackage.

[105] "The One Toronto Transit Plan: The SmartTrack Line." John Tory campaign brochure. Available online: http://www.johntory.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/OneToronto_Backgrounder_Three_Smart_Track_Line.pdf

[106] Ibid.

[107] John Tory's Smart Tracker website: smarttracker.ca.

Mayor Tory was sworn in as Mayor on December 1, 2014. On December

4, 2014, the Mayor issued a letter to Council, stating:

> The SmartTrack plan is a cornerstone of my election platform. Moving
> forward on SmartTrack requires an informed public debate and City
> Council's direction to proceed with this vital transit expansion initiative.
> […] During my first meeting with Premier Wynne we agreed that the City
> of Toronto must work closely with the Province when considering and
> implementing SmartTrack which we both see as complementary to the
> Province's vision for transit in our region. […] With the support of City
> Council, I will be formally asking the City Manager to work with my office
> to coordinate a review of the SmartTrack plan in close collaboration with
> the Toronto Transit Commission and the Provincial Government and its
> agencies.[108]

A proposed motion was attached to the letter. On December 5, 2014, the

Mayor's motion to direct the City Manager, Toronto Transit Commission, and

relevant provincial agencies to bring forward a report within two months with an

"accelerated work plan for a review of the SmartTrack"[109]was endorsed by the

Executive Committee. On December 11, 2014, at their first meeting, the new City

Council voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Mayor's resolution, with now Ward

2 Councillor Rob Ford as the sole dissenting vote on all parts of the resolution.[110]

In January 2015, the City Manager reported back to the Executive

Committee, reporting that the City had established a joint committee with the

Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, and the Toronto Transit Commission "to

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[108] Letter from Mayor John Tory, December 4, 2014. Available online:
https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-73931.pdf
[109] City of Toronto Executive Committee minutes from December 5, 2014.
[110] City of Toronto Council Minutes, December 11, 2014.

integrated the SmartTrack plan with RER [Regional Express Rail]."[111] Expansion

of RER service was already underway, stemming back to "The Big Move," a

2008 regional transportation plan developed by an agency of the Ontario

government.[112] The report recommended a work plan for 2015 and 2016, and

identified elements of the SmartTrack plan such as service frequency,

electrification, integration with other services, and additional stations.[113]

Councillor Rob Ford moved for the report to be received for information with no

further action, losing 41-2. Council ultimately approved the work plan and

recommendations 42-2.[114] During the summer of 2016, an initial business case

was presented and conditionally approved by City Council, including a modified

concept for SmartTrack and a reduced number of new stations (from 22, to 6).[115]

An updated report was received in November 2017, recommendation more

detailed parts of the plan regarding station design and network connections,

reflecting continued development of the SmartTrack plan.[116] The City of Toronto

now has a website which provides the public with updates on the plan.[117]

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[111] "SmartTrack Work Plan (2015-2016)," Report to the Executive Committee, January 16, 2016. Available online: https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-74826.pdf
[112] "The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area," Metrolinx, November 2008. Available online:
http://www.metrolinx.com/thebigmove/Docs/big_move/TheBigMove_020109.pdf
[113] "SmartTrack Work Plan (2015-2016)," Report to the Executive Committee, January 16, 2016.
[114] City of Toronto Council Minutes, February 10, 2014.
[115] "Developing Toronto's Transit Network Plan to 2031," Report to Toronto Executive Committee, June 28, 2016. Available online:
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX16.1
[116] "SmartTrack Project Update and Next Steps," Report to Toronto Executive Committee, November 28, 2017. Available online:
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.1
[117] See: smartrack.to

Tory's SmartTrack plan has not been without critics. Freeman (2017)

describes SmartTrack as a election-driven strategy which is "disastrous" and

"irresponsible" as a means to develop major infrastructure projects:

> It is now clear that SmartTrack was designed on the back of an envelope
> in the heat of the election to show that John Tory was knowledgeable and
> in control of this difficult issue. No transit experts were consulted. It was a
> scheme to win votes in the election, no more. An experienced politician
> and administrator like Tory would or should have known that it is very
> dangerous and even irresponsible to make political promise on technically
> complicated, expensive projects like transit without careful study by transit
> experts, and yet he did it anyway.[118]

A recent *Toronto Star* article, "Has John Tory's SmartTrack come off the rails?"

argues that the Mayor's transit plan has changed so significantly since the 2014

election that it is difficult to track actual progress.[119] In the 2018 Toronto election,

Tory is opposed by former Chief Planner of the City of Toronto Jen Keesmaat,

and has faced significant criticism for the SmartTrack plan.[120] As with all major

transit projects which span numerous years, the outcome of SmartTrack remains

to be seen – but will surely be influenced by the outcome of the October 2018

mayoral election.

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[118] Bill Freeman, "Toronto Politics and the Possibility for Change," in Dimitrious Roussopoulos, *The Rise of Cities* (Toronto: Black Rose Books, 2017), 132.

[119] Edward Keenan, "Has John Tory's SmartTrack come off the rails?" *The Toronto Star* (April 16, 2018).

[120] Keesmaat's campaign website states, "Four years after John Tory pitched SmartTrack to voters in the last election, what remains bears little resemblance to his lofty promises. Revision after revision of the original plan has left us with little more than GO train service the province was already planning, with a handful of added stations coming at a huge cost to Toronto taxpayers. "SmartTrack no longer exists as John Tory promised it to you during the last election," says Keesmaat. "It is nothing more than a mirage that was designed to get him elected. I will ensure efficient use of Toronto's $1.4 billion investment in the context of a realistic GO Regional Express Rail plan, and not a SmartTrack smoke screen." (see: https://www.jenniferkeesmaat.com/transit-relief)"

Mayoral Power in Canada's Largest City

Canadians generally believe that their mayors hold power – and this is particularly true in Canada's largest cities such as Toronto. A survey of 12,000 Canadians[121] found that 72.8% of urban dwellers – compared to 68% of rural dwellers – believed that their mayors had the power to make things happen in their communities. In Toronto, 73.7% of residents believe their mayor holds power. The sample size of the survey was large enough to further disaggregate the data in Toronto, as illustrated in Table 26, finding that 905 area residents (suburban) were most likely overall to perceive their mayor as having power, but 416 area residents (urban) were more likely to indicate a strong belief in mayoral power. Toronto residents generally believe their mayors have the power to make things happen in their city.

Table 26: Perceptions of Mayoral Power within the Greater Toronto Area

	416 Region n=898	905 Region n=1,082	Toronto GTA n=1979	Rest of Ontario n=3103
Strongly agree	19.5%	17.2%	18.2%	15.5%
Somewhat agree	52.5%	57.9%	55.4%	54.4%
Somewhat disagree	19.2%	15.6%	17.2%	18.6%
Strongly disagree	4.5%	4.9%	4.7%	6.1%
Don't know / not sure	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%	5.4%

[121] For more details on this survey, see Appendix B.

The reporter's narrative at the beginning of this chapter well articulated an obvious point: each Toronto Mayor is a distinctly different person, elected by Torontonians at a specific point in time in a specific set of circumstances. In many ways, the election of each Mayor reflects something about Toronto at that point in time: the victory of Harvard-educated, left-leaning David Miller with a broom in hand was described as a "revolution" and "fresh oxygen" signaling an uprising of the progressive movement in Toronto and a desire for change in the way politics is done in the city; the election of Rob Ford was a result of record voter turnout and an uprising of "Ford Nation" with a leader articulating the sense that "enough is enough" and a desire to respect the taxpayers; the successful campaign by John Tory, a seasoned politician from a well established Toronto family, often regarded as a steady hand and described by the reporter as someone who can "work with people." The election of each Mayor also reflects something of their predecessor: Ford's "respect for taxpayers" may have resonated with voters angered by the escalating costs of municipal services or the highly disruptive outdoor worker strike during Mayor Miller's term; Tory as a "steady hand" is a stark contrast to the chaotic time at the end of Mayor Ford's tenure. The individual characteristics of a Mayor often reflect the unique dynamics of their community at a specific point in time – and shape how they operate in the role as Mayor.

On paper, all three Toronto Mayors occupied the same job with the same "power" on paper. They held the same role, with similar formal authority and organizational arrangements, and had similar resources at their disposal – and

yet their ability to actually realize their desired outcome varied. Each Mayor had a specific desired outcome: Mayor Miller was on a quest for greater autonomy and empowerment for the City of Toronto; Mayor Ford campaigned and promoted his mandate to "stop the gravy train" at City Hall; and, Mayor Tory campaigned to construct a city-wide transit relief plan for commuters. Each of these Mayors operated within, generally, the same legal and institutional environment. Only Mayor Miller was able to achieve his desired outcome, with the passing of the City of Toronto Act. Both Mayor Ford and Mayor Tory were able to initiate action towards their desired outcome, in the Core Service Review and the creation of the joint transit committee, but it would be difficult to argue that either Mayor fully achieved their desired outcome. Why?

The model of mayoral power advanced in this study (presented in Chapter 8) argues that mayoral power is the product of both institutional variables and leadership – and in a Canadian context, the latter is far more important. As illustrated in Figure 3 (reprinted here from Chapter 8), the more important factor shaping mayoral power in practice is leadership. As such, mayoral power is defined as *the extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government to achieve desired outcomes.* The final part of the definition, *to achieve desired outcomes*, is particularly important. Considering our three Toronto mayors and these three specific examples, what was their *desired outcome*, and to what extent was the mayor able to *influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors* in order to achieve it?

Figure 3 (repeat): Mayoral Power in Canada
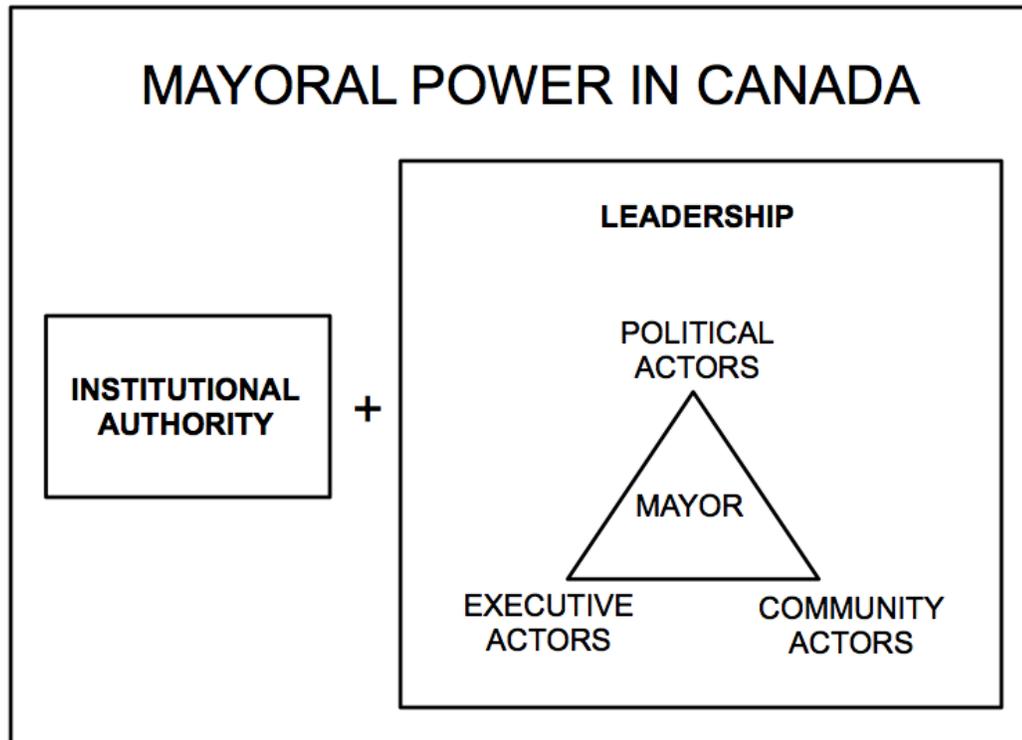
Toronto Mayors do not have the institutional authority to accomplish any of these three objectives on their own. As a source of power, institutional authority provided each Mayor with the legitimacy that comes by virtue of being in their role, but few other power resources by which to accomplish their desired outcomes. Instead, the ability to achieve their desired outcomes becomes a question of leadership – and specifically, to what extent could each Mayor *influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government* to achieve what they wanted. Table 27 presents a summary of these three examples, starting with the desired outcome of each Mayor and followed by an indication of whether that objective was achieved. Mayor Miller's desired

Table 27: Mayoral Power in Practice – Mayors Miller, Ford and Tory

	Mayor Miller	Mayor Ford	Mayor Tory
Desired Outcome	Secure new legislation for City of Toronto	Save tax dollars and reduce cost of government	Implement a city-wide commuter relief
Achieved?	Yes – new legislation approved in 2006	No – realized only modest cost savings	Unknown – still in progress
To what extent was the mayor able to lead political actors?	High - Leveraged good timing and built relationships with new Premier and Prime Minister; received support from Council for direction; bill received support at Queen's Park	Moderate – Council supported the Core Service review, but did not vote in favour of many of the cost savings presented from the review	High – Letter to Council four days into the term to create joint committee received near unanimous support;
To what extent was the mayor able to lead executive actors?	High – Supported by staff to create Joint Task Force and supporting working groups	Low – City Manager designed and executed their own Core Service program	Moderate – Staff supported joint committee, but have not implemented the SmartTrack plan
To what extent was the mayor able to lead community actors?	Moderate – Public support from community members on advisory team; editorial printed in Globe and Mail	Moderate – Public support during campaign; but, participants in Service Review consultation were mostly downtown residents who wanted increase in services	Unknown – Will be a central question in the October 2018 election

outcome to secure new legislation for the City of Toronto was achieved. Mayor Ford's desire to "stop the gravy train" and reduce the cost of government resulted in only modest cost savings – far short of the $774 million annual budget gap identified. The final outcome of Mayor Tory's hallmark platform plank remains unknown and is featured as a central question in the 2018 election campaign. These results can at least in part be explained by examining the extent to which the mayor was able to *influence, mobilize, empower, and lead others* – including political, executive and community actors with an interest in each initiative.

Mayor Miller was able to accomplish his desired outcome, marking one of the most significant steps forward in terms of empowering an Ontario city in the history of the province. He led his Council to support this direction, and leverage the opportunity of a new Premier and Prime Minister, in order to accomplish what he wanted. The policy window[122] emerging from the near simultaneous elections of new leaders at all three levels of government created a unique opportunity, and Mayor Miller had the skill to identify these opportunities, and capitalize on them towards realizing his objective. Staff also supported the Mayor's direction by creating and participating in the Joint Task Force and working groups. This was unquestionably aided by the existing work that had been done by the past council, and the base of support within the administration. The quick assembly of a staff team to lead the negotiation with the Ontario government would not likely

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[122] Pal (2006) describes policy windows as "unpredictable in the policy process that create the possibility for influence over the direction and outcome of that process." Kingdon (1995) argues that taking advantage of a policy window is a matter of skill and chance.

have been nearly as prompt if the interests of Mayor Miller and the City's senior administrators were not so clearly aligned. There is at least some evidence of public support given the editorial written by a prominent community member and the Globe and Mail editorial board's decision to publish the letter. Although Mayor Miller lacked the institutional authority to establish new provincial legislation, he was able to realize his desired outcome by leading others.

Mayor Ford, on the other hand, found organized opposition at every step of his efforts to "stop the gravy train." Mayor Ford had broad public support for his campaign platform but he quickly ran into challenges starting with the proposed process from City of Toronto City Manager for an aggressive review of all of the City's services. Following Ford's election, the City Manager would have been well aware of the political pressure ahead to make dramatic cuts to services and staff. He would also have a greater knowledge about the practical realities and constraints of managing a multi-billion corporation with costs largely driven by arrangements outlined in provincial legislation or in collective agreements. By proposing a highly visible and aggressive political process, the City Manager was able to both respond to the new Mayor's stated interests, and protect against dramatic or uninformed changes to municipal services. The public outcry began once specific changes were being contemplated, and council did not support most of the cost savings opportunities identified through the review. Mayor Ford was not able to realize his desired outcome because he was unable to successful lead those around him – a challenge which intensified later

in his term when his personal struggles eroded his ability to lead council, administration or the community.

Mayor Tory's ability to implement the SmartTrack remains unknown, in large part because Tory's mayoralty is not yet complete and because the outcome of the 2018 mayoral election remains unknown. Progress on a city-wide transit projects has occurred, and Tory has secured political support at key stages of the process. However, allies and critics alike have been quick to acknowledge that Tory's original plan is becoming further distorted as it merges into the regional transit plans already underway.

Importantly, in all three examples – whether they are ultimately successful or not – the Mayor was able to focus considerable energy from political, executive and community actors towards outcomes they desired. They were able to garner sustained media attention and public dialogue on issues that were important to them – and, importantly, defined in terms set by them. As Mayors, they leveraged their unique position within local government and the power resources at their disposal to shape the agenda, to define the efforts of other actors (either in support of the mayor, or in opposition), and powerfully influence the prevailing narrative about the priorities of their city. In other words, they were able to leverage the resources available to them – such as the ability to capture media attention, drawing on personal relationships, speaking on behalf of a community by virtue of the uniqueness of their election as mayor – in effort to *influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors*. This is mayoral power, and it is clearly evident in this tale with all three Mayors of Toronto.

However, the ability of the Mayors to achieve their desire outcome varied. Is it to be concluded, then, that Mayor Miller was "more powerful" than was Mayor Ford? In the case of these specific situations, the answer is yes. Mayor Miller was able to accomplish his desired outcome and Mayor Ford was not. Both Mayors shared the same institutional authority, but the important difference was leadership. One Mayor was able to successfully mobilize resources and lead those around him; the other was not. However, to conclude broadly from these specific stories that one Mayor was more powerful than another would be unfounded. Only three specific examples were explored. There would be many other issues, situations and events taking place simultaneously to these stories that may have also shaped the relationships and relative power of the mayor. Mayor Miller also advocated for one cent of the sales tax for the City of Toronto, and this effort was unsuccessful. The purpose of this chapter is not to assess the relative power of Mayors Miller, Ford and Tory as an assessment of that scale is beyond the scope of this single chapter. Instead, the purpose was to explore the model as to demonstrate how it could be applied in a "real world" context. The most important aspects of the model advanced in this paper have been affirmed through this exploration.

First, mayoral power is the product of both institutional variables and leadership – and in a Canadian context, the latter is far more important. The three examples presented in this chapter affirm this argument. Mayors Miller, Ford and Tory benefitted from the legitimacy and institutional authority emanating from position, but the important variable in terms of actually realizing

a desired outcome was leadership. The *extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government* emerges as the distinguishing variable for realizing desired outcomes.

Second, mayoral power is relational, dynamic, and person- and context-specific. Describing the mayoralty in Toronto as uniformly "weak" would be an almost meaningless way to conceive of the position. Instead, mayoral power must be understood by examining the mayor in relation to others. The definition of mayoral power allows for the likely possibility that a mayor is more powerful in one aspect of their role than in another – and, that mayoral power changes over time. It may also vary depending on the circumstances and issues at hand. Other actors have independent interests which also play a role. The important point is that mayoral power is more complex, nuanced and fluid than the traditional institutional frame of "strong/weak" would suggest. The model of mayoral power proposed in this study requires observers to think more broadly about mayoral power inclusive of institutional variables and the leadership of the individual in the role, appreciating its highly fluid and context-specific nature.

Finally, in being uniquely positioned at the nexus of actors engaged in local government, mayors have unparalleled influence over local governance in their cities. This tale of three mayors illustrates this argument. All three mayors were able to dominate the agenda and focus sustained attention from political, executive and community actors on their desired initiative. In turn, this shaped the engagement of those actors in local government. Interviewees from the City of Toronto acknowledged the significance of the mayor in the "shifting power

dynamics" [123] at City Hall and beyond. Several interviewees commented

specifically on Mayor Ford's term, as the most pronounced example of a shift in

a mayor's ability to lead others, and as a result, hold power:

> David Miller pushed, pushed, pushed for more powers, and [Premier] McGuinty said yes, that's where we're going. And then Toronto ended up with Rob Ford, whose actions were not met with approval from the public or council. Even with all of the powers of the City of Toronto Act, Council was able to largely remove the major powers of the office of the mayor. Council was able to function, and continue with the major functions of the organization. A number of initiatives went through, despite the dysfunction of the political environment. […] My take on it is that the system has worked. [124]

> The power of mayors in Toronto is all about the power of position, the power of direct and unfettered access to the media; not the powers set out in law. We know that a mayor who squanders these powers can be sidelined by their council. In the period where Mayor Ford was absent or disgraced, Council exerted itself, the system righted itself, and we carried on. We had a mayor who was basically absent and doesn't do large parts of their job – well, it didn't bring the city to a halt. My view on the Rob Ford situation is that the system worked beautifully. A mayor who abused the power of the office was basically contained by the system. [125]

> A change in the mayor can change how people view the city. As strange as it may sound, under our last mayor [Ford], I think people really started caring about the city. The drama brought things into perspective. It sparked a new generation of civic activists." [126]

Mayors shape the environment for others and set the conditions of their

engagement in local governance. Sometimes this is through active leadership,

coalition building, and intentionally aligning interests – such as Miller's leadership

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[123] Confidential Interview #40.
[124] Confidential Interview #39.
[125] Confidential Interview #42.
[126] Confidential Interview #44.

with other levels of government to renegotiate relationships for the City of Toronto. Sometimes it is unintentional, where a mayor ceases to meet the expectations of those around them, and other actors begin to take on new leadership roles. Rob Ford is the most acute example, both in how the City administration ultimately took over the leadership of the service review process, and later in the appointment of another member of Council to take on several of the mayor's duties after Mayor Ford became embroiled in scandal. It is through shared experience and circumstance that mayoral power is tested, negotiated, defined and expressed between mayors and those around them. The landscape can shift quickly, and profoundly, and when it does, it shifts the dynamics of local governance.

This chapter has limitations. A more in depth examination of mayoral power in Toronto could involve a more rigorous measurement of one or more mayors in relation to others, perhaps by surveying the perceptions of how powerful each mayor is in relation to political, executive and community actors, or by developing a scale against which to assess each mayor. Further, a more detailed study of a single mayor over time, using the model presented in this study, would surely reveal interesting shifts over the course of the mayoralty. This assessment is outside of the scope of this study, but would be a worthy future pursuit. The important contribution of this chapter is to emphasize the key elements of the model and demonstrate how it can be a useful theoretical and empirical tool for understanding mayoral power in practice.

Nearly two decades ago, in reflecting on the C5 meeting of Canada's big city mayors with Jane Jacobs, Alan Broadbent argued, "Our mayors have the ability to mobilize political power in ways that are yet untried for the most part; they can significantly improve the way most Canadians are governed."[127] The reporter cited at the beginning of this chapter made a similar claim: "importantly, it's often the mayor who sets the terms for public debate [… they] can psychologically set the agenda and tone for the whole city."[128] Toronto's mayors hold power that is less obvious, but more important, that what has been traditionally understood. Discounting Toronto's mayors – or the mayors of any Canadian city – as being "weak" fails to appreciate the complex nature of mayoral power in Canada, and more importantly, underestimates the power that Canadian mayors can and do wield in Canada's cities.

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[127] Alan Broadbent, ""Report of the C5: Historic meeting of mayors of Canada's hub cities with Jane Jacobs," *Ideas That Matter* (September 2001).
[128] Confidential Interview #45.

CONCLUSION

"[B]eing in municipal politics is much harder. It's more demanding, more frustrating, but also more rewarding. […] It's a different form of government, but I also think it's much better. It's more transparent, more open, less rehearsed. [Laughs] It's more real."

- Canadian Mayor (and former Member of Parliament)

Chapter 10 | LEADING CANADA'S CITIES?

In every Canadian city, the mayor is an important figure. Mayors lead

elected councils, serve as chief executives of municipal corporations, and are

generally the most well known local officials. Big city mayors are directly elected

by more people than any federal or provincial politician in Canada.[1] In times of

celebration and crisis, mayors are the voices of their cities on the provincial,

national and international stage. They are praised for their communities'

successes and blamed for their failures. In many ways, the mayor is "the living

symbol of [their] city."[2]

Despite the significance of the position, there has been remarkably little

study of mayors in Canada, particularly when compared to other political leaders.

The current literature admits this knowledge gap, describing the Canadian

mayoralty is "vague"[3] and the responsibilities of mayors as "generally quite

unclear."[4] Because Canada's mayors have not been well studied, conventional

knowledge about the Canadian mayoralty has necessarily drawn from other

jurisdictions. The dominant assumption about Canada's mayors has been their

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[1] There are 28 mayors in Canada whose municipalities' populations were greater than the most populous federal or provincial electoral districts, and therefore directly represent more citizens than any federal or provincial politician in Canada. This number has almost doubled in the two decades since Sancton (1994) produced the same calculation, finding that there were 16 mayors in Canada in 1991 directly representing more residents than any federal or provincial politician.

[2] Leonard I. Ruchelman, *Big City Mayors: The Crisis in Urban Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1969), 4.

[3] James Lightbody, *City Politics, Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 156.

[4] Andrew Sancton, "Mayors as Political Leaders," in Maureen Mancuso, Richard G. Price and Ronald Wagenberg, eds., *Leaders and Leadership in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 175.

perceived "weakness." This stems from a comparative American convention about the role of the mayor in various forms of local government in the United States. In strictly technical terms, a "weak mayor" in the United States exists only in a variant of the mayor-council form of government, which is not present in Canada. More importantly, labeling Canadian mayors as "weak" reveals problematic underlying assumptions about mayoral power, where it is understood primarily in institutional and legal terms. The assumption that Canada's mayors are "weak" – an assumption which to date has largely been untested – has had a pervasive influence on how the role of the mayor is understood in academic and professional discourse alike. An examination of mayoral power in Canada is long overdue.

This study investigates a central question about Canada's mayors, asking: *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities?* Two parallel investigations were pursued. First, the institutional dimensions of mayoral power were examined through an assessment of provincially and locally granted authority – or, power "on paper." Mayoral power, understood in these terms, was found to be limited. While variation is present across cases, it tends to emerge from institutional differences such as the presence of local political parties rather than stemming from legislative differences. Provincial municipal legislation across Canada is relatively vague with respect to the role and power of mayors. The basic shared responsibilities of urban mayors across Canada remain those enumerated in the Baldwin Act in 1849. Importantly, when mayoral

power is understood in institutional terms, it can be accurately concluded that mayoral power in Canada is quite limited.

The second investigation explored mayoral power "in practice," informed by the perspectives of mayors, past mayors, councillors, municipal administrators, members of the media and public who frequently interact with their mayors. This approach yielded rather different results, where mayoral power was defined in more complex, relational, and person- and context-specific terms. Mayors are expected to simultaneously serve in political, executive and community leadership roles, with each role involving different responsibilities. For an individual mayor, their *ability to lead* – and as a result, their *power* – may vary across these roles, and at different points in time. Mayors can set the agenda, define the narrative, limit or enable the participation of others, and generally shape the engagement of political, executive and community actors. They have unique resources to draw upon, and are uniquely positioned at the nexus of the network of these actors engaged in local government. Their leadership, or lack of leadership, shapes the engagement of others. Mayors have unparalleled influence over local governance in their cities. This is the most important dimension of mayoral power in Canada.

To the central research question: *what factors shape the power in practice of mayors in Canada's cities?* This study finds that the institutional variables associated with mayoral power are less significant factors than the leadership of the individual in the role. It finds agency to be more important than institution. This is a significant finding, particularly given the global emphasis on institutional

reform and strengthening the formal dimensions of the role and power of mayors. Benjamin Barber's popular book, *If Mayors Ruled the World*, goes to far as to suggest that institutional changes to bolster mayoral power could be the solution to a whole host of global social and economic issues.[5] This dissertation began with a story about Toronto City Council removing power from then Mayor Rob Ford in response to his personal struggles. Two years after Rob's death, his brother Doug has been elected as Premier of Ontario, and has focused early efforts on institutional reform in the City of Toronto, including a stated interest in creating a "strong mayor" in Toronto.[6] The concept of mayoral power as an institutional product, reflected in language such as "strong" or "weak" and expressed through interest in institutional change as a vehicle to empower mayors, reflects a limited understanding of mayoral power in Canada's context. Mayoral power is broader than institutional authority; it also encompasses leadership. Mayoral power is *the extent to which the mayor can influence, mobilize, empower, and lead other actors engaged in local government to achieve desired outcomes.* Mayors shape the dynamics of local governance in Canada's cities. This is mayoral power.

The examination of three high-profile initiatives championed by mayors in Toronto further illustrates the relational and context-specific nature of mayoral

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[5] Benjamin R. Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

[6] Ontario Premier Doug Ford was elected on June 7, 2018. Within the first 100 days of his term, Ford made unprecedented changes to the composition of Toronto City Council, reducing the number of wards from 47 to 25. This change took place during an ongoing municipal election. Premier Ford spoke publicly several times during the campaign and after being elected about introducing "strong mayor" powers in the City of Toronto.

power. The legislative power of Mayors Miller, Ford and Tory was relatively similar (save the limits imposed by Toronto City Council on Mayor Rob Ford toward the end of his tenure), and yet their ability to realize desired outcomes depended on their ability to lead others, and was sensitive to the context and climate around them. This reveals perhaps the most important point of this study: local governance in Canada involves a large network of actors, operating in a largely undefined environment; power is dispersed across these actors, subject to constant shifts in the relationships between actors; and, the mayor occupies a central position within this network of actors. Without formally defined parameters, the nature and limits of power is defined through constant testing and retesting of boundaries in the relationships between actors.

In the United States, there are defined forms of local government, which set parameters for the individuals occupying specific roles. It establishes the power of various actors relative to one another. "Weak" and "strong" mayors refer to the extent to which power is concentrated in the mayoralty, relative to the rest of council and administration. No similar forms of government or established classifications exist in Canada. Instead, local governance in Canada involves a network of actors with varying interests, and various power resources that can be used by actors to achieve their desired outcomes. This is true for mayors, councillors, administrators, members of the media, local special interest groups, and other actors alike. Mayors are uniquely positioned at the nexus of these actors, and have an unparalleled ability to shape and condition their engagement in local government.

Canadian mayors, in practice, can be enormously powerful. Given the right conditions, they can exercise tremendous influence over the people around them. They have unique resources, which a skillful mayor can and will use to their benefit – and a greater span of influence than any other actor engaged in local government. In the largely undefined environment of local government in Canada, a mayor who is a skillful leader can have significant impact in their city. Mayors can shape the dynamics of governance in their city, and drive the agenda in a way that no other individual in the city can. In the Toronto reporter's words, the mayor can "psychologically set the agenda and tone for the whole city [and] that's what's really important."[7]

This is not intended as the final word on mayoral power in Canada. Instead, the findings of this study are aimed to be helpful for further studies of mayoral power and urban politics in Canada. It argues for a broadened thinking about the important role of the mayor in Canada's cities that may inform an ambitious research agenda ahead. In an age where cities are central to Canada's prosperity, and where many of the most pressing social and economic issues facing the country are concentrated in cities, continued urban research is particularly relevant and necessary. A few important areas for further exploration are worth highlighting.

First, although Canada does not have "weak mayors," it does have weak cities. Canadian federalism does not recognize a local level of government and does not include any formal collective role for Canadian mayors in making

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[7] Ibid.

decisions to advance urban interests and participate in national policy discussions. The extent to which mayors can and should play a greater role in national decision-making on urban issues has been a topic of debate for decades. This topic could be the subject of its own dissertation. Canadian municipalities have long worked through associations to advocate for local interests and participate in provincial and federal policy discussions. The 1901-formed Union of Canadian Municipalities, which later became the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), has long convened mayors to "lobby" the federal government on various priorities. Similar efforts have materialized within municipal associations in each province. FCM's Big City Mayors Caucus played a particularly active role during the 2015 federal election, prominently advocating for investments in transit, infrastructure and housing. All federal parties responded to this effort, and these areas were featured as priorities within each party's platform. Other prominent BCMC work has included work on the Syrian refugee crisis, as noted at in Chapter 7. There is evidence of mayors working together, but the long-term impact of this work remains a question worthy of further study. More fundamentally, the organization of mayors for lobbying efforts – akin to what various sector associations and private interests undertake – reveals the underlying power imbalance between levels of government. Canadian cities, and their leaders, need to be acknowledged as vital parts of Canadian federalism, and accordingly extended the opportunity to participate in shared decision-making. Many of the most pressing issues facing Canadians are, in one way or another, local issues. Cities play an increasingly important role

in many policy files traditionally considered within federal and provincial jurisdiction, from immigration to healthcare to the economy. Canada's urban mayors are uniquely positioned to understand the local dynamics of a wide range of policy issues, and to mobilize key actors in their communities to address them. However, the collective capacity of mayors to play a meaningful role in addressing major issues facing Canada's cities – economic inequality, social exclusion, environmental degradation, political disengagement, or more – remains an open question. The continued failure to address these problems will hinder the ability of Canada's mayors to provide the needed collective leadership to address the most pressing issues facing Canada's cities.

Second, mayors – and local governments, generally – continue to struggle to be appropriately resourced to meet the growing expectations, particularly in Canada's largest cities. There was broad recognition among interviewees that mayors are critically under resourced, with expectations far exceeding the mayor's capacity. One media commentator described it this way:

> There are just so many files, and we don't have a proper cabinet in the way a prime minister or premier has a cabinet. So you have to be constantly up to speed on all of the issues. That's why city councillors look like such buffoons, because they speak on every single issue and they have so few staff to bring them up to speed on them. So when they are talking about issues, they just talk off the cuff, so they look stupid. The mayor does have some people, but the number of files and issues and priorities – it's a lot. It's a full time job, even in cities where it's a part time job. It's a really really full time job.[8]

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[8] Confidential Interview #45.

What resources do mayors need to be successful? An investigation into this question would be an important and practical contribution to the literature in Canada, and would address the significant pressure experienced by many mayors. The answer would differ across cities for many valid reasons, but a review of appropriate level of resources – including remuneration, staff support, budgets, and otherwise – should be undertaken. The perennial question of whether mayors and councillors should be considered part-time or full-time positions is an important part of the discussion, albeit rife with political challenges and important theoretical considerations. Mayors may also benefit from greater educational and institutional supports. There are executive education programs available to leaders in most other sectors, but few are tailored to Canadian mayors. In particular, these forums could provide helpful opportunities to connect past mayors with current mayors to share learnings and best practices. In a practical context, municipalities should periodically and deliberately review the roles and related expectations of their elected officials, including both mayors and councillors. Neither cities nor municipalities are well served by having unclear but exceedingly high expectations of their leaders, and then not resourcing them to a level where they can be successful.

Finally, many aspects of the mayoralty in Canada remain unstudied. This project has advanced arguments that would benefit from more empirical study. This could include more focused case study research examining mayoral power, such as by applying the model to the mayoralty or political career of a single individual, or closely examining the mayoralty in one city. It could also involve a

larger quantitative study to better understand the patterns in mayoral leadership. For example, a study to identify electoral or governing patterns across mayors in their political, executive or community roles would be a helpful contribution. There may also be significant differences in the role of the mayor in small communities, or rural communities, or mid-sized communities in larger provinces. A study of non-urban mayors, the heads of council in upper-tier and regional governments, or mayors in Canada's territories would also provide needed insight.

The exclamation, "you don't understand the job of the mayor!" captures a foundational issue facing Canadian local governments, and the study of local government. Mayors are among the most important, and least understood, political leaders in Canada. This study offers what is intended to be a helpful starting point for a much larger exploration into the role and power of Canada's mayors and the conditions for effective local leadership. Fortunately, it remains an active conversation within and across Canadian communities. The opportunity to travel to cities and interview local leaders across Canada was a profound learning experience for this researcher. In the words of one community member interviewed, "Many mayors are unsung heroes. You hear about the charismatic ones, or the outlandish ones. But there are a lot of mayors out there, just doing their job – running the city well. They don't get the attention they deserve."[9] This researcher could not agree more. Although there is much work to do towards deepening the understanding local government in Canada, and in

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[9] Confidential interview #37.

building the conditions for strong leadership in Canada's cities, the foundation of

a shared commitment to seeing Canadian cities prosper is an excellent place to

start.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION, BY PROVINCE

British Columbia
Local Government Act, RSBC 1996, c 323 - http://canlii.ca/t/847v
Community Charter, SBC 2003, c 26 - http://canlii.ca/t/84m0
Indian Self Government Enabling Act, RSBC 1996, c 219 - http://canlii.ca/t/8441
Vancouver Charter, SBC 1953, c 55 - http://canlii.ca/t/84hz
Resort Municipality of Whistler Act, RSBC 1996, c 407

Alberta
Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 - http://canlii.ca/t/8239
City of Lloydminster Act, SA 2005, c C-13.5 - http://canlii.ca/t/81t1
The Lloydminster Charter, Alta Reg 212/2012 - http://canlii.ca/t/8r3k
The City of Calgary Charter, Alta Reg 40/2018 - http://canlii.ca/t/91ct
The City of Edmonton Charter, Alta Reg 39/2018 - http://canlii.ca/t/91cs

Saskatchewan
The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010, SS 2010, c N-5.2 - http://canlii.ca/t/8ntl
The Municipalities Act, SS 2005, c M-36.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/wkp
The Cities Act, SS 2002, c C-11.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/wrm
The Lloydminster Charter, OC 595/2012 - http://canlii.ca/t/8r5l
The City of Lloydminster Act, SS 2004, c C-11.2 - http://canlii.ca/t/wch

Manitoba
Municipal Act, CCSM c M225 - http://canlii.ca/t/526xg
The Portage la Prairie Charter Act, SM 1989-90, c 77 - http://canlii.ca/t/8lm8
The City of Flin Flon Act, SM 1989-90, c 72 - http://canlii.ca/t/8lm2
The Northern Affairs Act, CCSM c N100 - http://canlii.ca/t/8ggn
The City of Winnipeg Charter, SM 2002, c 39 - http://canlii.ca/t/8j26
The Brandon Charter Act, SM 1989-90, c 71 - http://canlii.ca/t/8lm1

Ontario
Municipal Act, 2001, SO 2001, c 25 - http://canlii.ca/t/311
City of Toronto Act, 2006, SO 2006, c 11, Sch A - http://canlii.ca/t/33l

Quebec
Municipal Code of Québec, CQLR c C-27.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/xkg
An Act respecting Northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government, CQLR
c V-6.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/xq0
Cities and Towns Act, CQLR c C-19 - http://canlii.ca/t/xr2
Charter of Ville de Gatineau, CQLR c C-11.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/xw1

Charter of Ville de Longueuil, CQLR c C-11.3 - http://canlii.ca/t/xd0
Charter of Ville de Lévis, CQLR c C-11.2 - http://canlii.ca/t/x6m
Charter of Ville de Montréal, CQLR c C-11.4 - http://canlii.ca/t/xlh
Charter of Ville de Québec, CQLR c C-11.5 - http://canlii.ca/t/z1d
Municipal Powers Act, CQLR c C-47.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/xtm

New Brunswick
Municipalities Act, RSNB 1973, c M-22 - http://canlii.ca/t/88nh
Control of Municipalities Act, RSNB 1973, c C-20 - http://canlii.ca/t/88nf

Nova Scotia
Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c 39 - http://canlii.ca/t/885f
Municipal Government Act, SNS 1998, c 18 - http://canlii.ca/t/87dk

Prince Edward Island
Municipalities Act, RSPEI 1988, c M-13 - http://canlii.ca/t/8d3n
Charlottetown Area Municipalities Act, RSPEI 1988, c C-4.1 -
 http://canlii.ca/t/8d91
City of Summerside Act, RSPEI 1988, c S-9.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/8dfm

Newfoundland and Labrador
Municipalities Act, 1999, SNL 1999, c M-24 - http://canlii.ca/t/8b19
City of St. John's Act, RSNL 1990, c C-17 - http://canlii.ca/t/89xx
City of Corner Brook Act, RSNL 1990, c C-15 - http://canlii.ca/t/8b17
City of Mount Pearl Act, RSNL 1990, c C-16 - http://canlii.ca/t/89qd
Municipal Affairs Act, SNL 1995, c M-20.1 - http://canlii.ca/t/8b2q

Yukon
Municipal Act, RSY 2002, c 154 - http://canlii.ca/t/8j80

Northwest Territories
Cities, Towns and Villages Act, SNWT 2003, c 22, Sch B - http://canlii.ca/t/8hsq
Charter Communities Act, SNWT 2003, c 22, Sch A - http://canlii.ca/t/8j0b
Hamlets Act, SNWT 2003, c 22, Sch C - http://canlii.ca/t/8hsl

Nunavut
Hamlets Act, RSNWT (Nu) 1988, c H-1 - http://canlii.ca/t/8l85
Cities, Towns and Villages Act, RSNWT (Nu) 1988, c C-8 - http://canlii.ca/t/8l4z
Settlements Act, RSNWT (Nu) 1988, c S-9 - http://canlii.ca/t/8l93

APPENDIX B: IPSOS SURVEY RESULTS

In October 2015, Ipsos Public Affairs conducted a survey of more than 12,000 Canadians. In support of this research project, one question was included in this study regarding attitudes about mayoral power. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement "Canadian mayors have the power to make things happen in their communities," using a standard Likert scale. This data was collected to provide a glimpse on whether perceptions of mayoral power vary across Canada. The survey results found that most Canadians believe that mayors have the power to make things happen in their communities. Overall, 72.1% of respondents agreed with the statement, including 17% who indicated strong agreement and 55.1% who indicated moderate agreement. 22% of respondents disagreed with the statement, including 4.9% who strongly disagreed, and 17.1% who moderately disagreed.

However, perceptions of mayoral power are not equal across Canada. Chart 3 (provides an overview of the variation by province. Respondents in Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Saskatchewan were most likely to perceive mayors as powerful. Respondents in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Newfoundland were the least likely to perceive mayors as powerful. Respondents in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec fell close to the national average. Interestingly, there are also differences within provinces in perceptions of mayoral power. As illustrated in Table 27, respondents from urban

Chart 2: Perceptions of mayoral power, by province
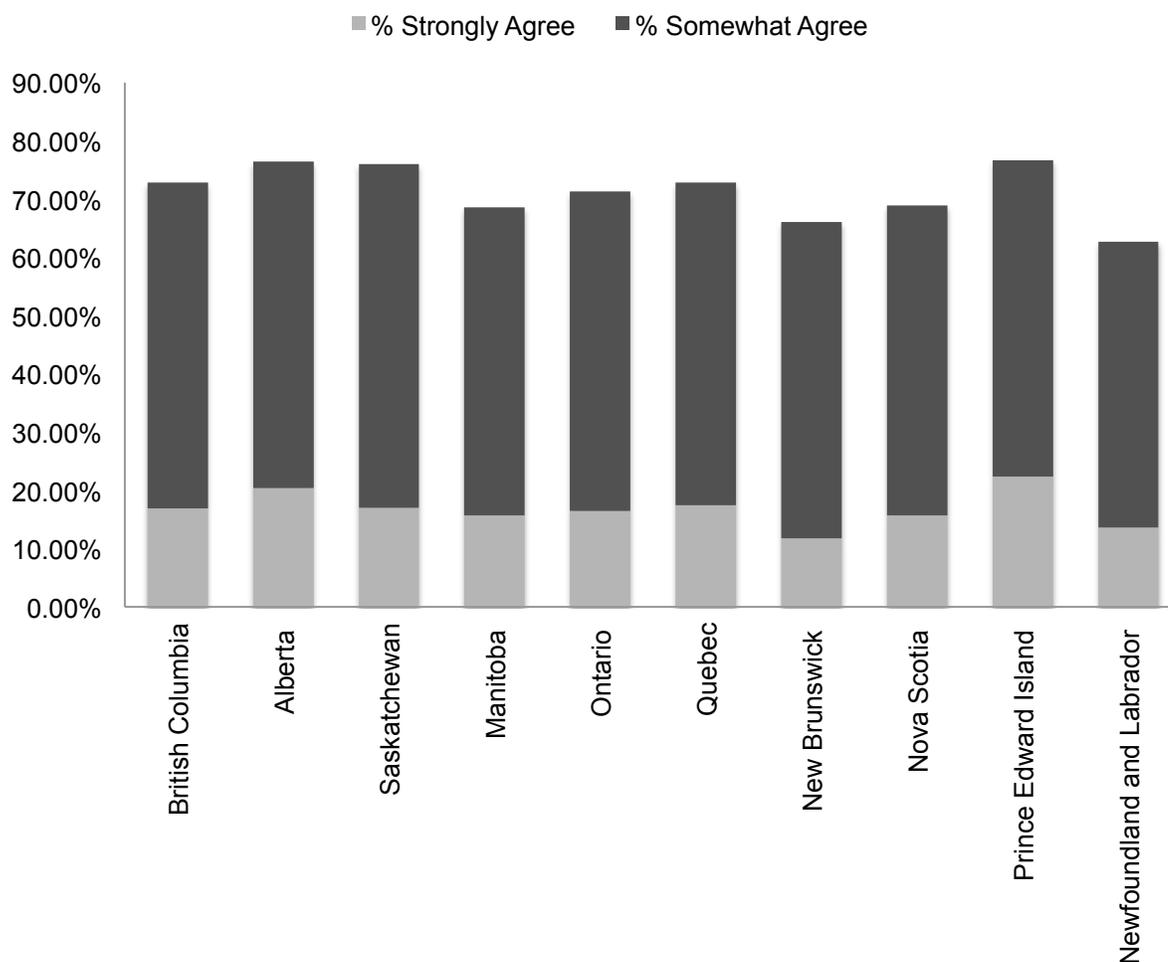
areas were more likely to consider mayors to have power than were respondents from rural areas. Overall, 72.8% of urban dwellers believe mayors have power to make things happen in their communities, compared to 68% of rural dwellers. There was little difference in responses based on many other demographic characteristics including gender, age, income, education, employment status, union membership, religion, and immigration status.

Canadians' perceptions of mayoral power are uneven and may reflect more of other variables such as political culture, the personality of specific

Table 28: Perceptions of Mayoral Power, Urban vs Rural

	Urban Dwellers n=10,282 (84.7%)	Rural Dwelling n=1,852 (15.2%)
Strongly agree	17.5%	14.2%
Somewhat agree	55.3%	53.8%
Somewhat disagree	16.7%	19.4%
Strongly disagree	4.7%	5.8%
Don't know / not sure	5.7%	6.8%

mayors, particular point-in-time circumstances, or otherwise. Regardless,

Canadians generally believe that mayors have the power to make things happen

in their communities.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS BY CITY AND PERSPECTIVE

	Political	Executive	Community	Total
St. John's, NFL	4	1	2	7
Halifax, NS	4	2	3	9
Charlottetown, PEI	4	1	1	6
Saint John, NB	4	1	2	7
Montreal, QC	3	1	1	5
Toronto, ON	6	2	4	12
Winnipeg, MB	3	3	1	7
Saskatoon, SK	3*	0	1	4
Calgary, AB	2	2	0	4
Vancouver, BC	4	1*	2	7
Total	37	14	17	68

Note: a total of 68 interviews were conducted, but two interviews included two people, at their request. These cases are denoted with an asterisk (*).

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were provided to all interviewees in advance of the interview, and used to guide the discussion:

1. *In your own words, how would you describe the role of the mayor?*

    a. *Follow up: how powerful do you think the mayor is?*

2. *Do you think the role of the mayor is well understood? Why or why not?*

3. *What do you think is the most important part of the mayor's role?*

4. *What do you think is the most challenging part of the mayor's role?*

5. *Based on your experience, what enables a mayor to lead?*

6. *Based on your experience, what can limit a mayor's ability to lead?*

7. *Do you think there is anything unique about the mayor's role in [city], compared to other cities in Canada?*

8. *Is there anything else you would like to share with me related to the role of the mayor in Canadian cities?*

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VITAE

PROFILE

KATE GRAHAM is a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in the Political Science Department at Western University in London, Ontario. Kate's areas of focus include local government, urban politics, public policy and city competitiveness. Kate's PhD dissertation, *Leading Canada's Cities: A Study of Urban Mayors* (affectionately known as "The Mayors Project" – see mayorsproject.ca), examines leadership in Canada's cities, specifically focused on the role and power of mayors. Kate holds a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) from Western University's Local Government Program.

Kate has more than ten years of experience working in local government, most recently as the Director, Community & Economic Innovation at the City of London. In this role, Kate was responsible for the City's government relations, strategic initiatives, culture and economic partnerships portfolios. Kate worked directly with four mayors and dozens of elected officials during her time in local government. Kate is a published author, and has spoken at more than 50 municipal sector conferences, workshops and events. In 2013, Kate's peers recognized her with a Municipal Leadership Award.

Kate is an active member of the London community, including serving as Chair and longtime Board Member of the Pillar Nonprofit Network Board of Directors, as a past Board Member of ReForest London, and as a volunteer with several other community organizations. In 2015, Kate received a Volunteer Service Award from the Government of Ontario, and Business London magazine recognized her as one of London's Top 20 Under. Kate also ran as a candidate in London North Centre in the 2018 Ontario general election.

KATE GRAHAM

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Political Science | 2012 – 2018
University of Western Ontario
- Focus areas: local government, public policy, urban politics, city competitiveness
- Dissertation: *Leading Canada's Cities: A Study of Urban Mayors*
- Supervisor: Dr. Andrew Sancton

Masters of Public Administration (MPA) | 2007 – 2008
University of Western Ontario
- Major research paper: The Role of Universities in the Knowledge Economy
- Supervisor: Dr. Neil Bradford

Honours Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) | 2003 – 2007
University of Western Ontario
- Courses included political science, philosophy, social justice, public administration

ADDITIONAL TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Municipal Officer (CMO) | Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario | 2014

Municipal Law Course | Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario | 2013

Certificate in Employment Law and Human Resources | Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario | 2011

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Political Science Departments | September 2017 to Present
Western University, Brescia University College & King's University College
- Economics & Policy Analysis course (Western Local Government Program)

- Women in Political Life course (Brescia)
- Campaign School course (King's)
- Women in Civic Leadership course (King's)

Instructor | September 2017 – Present
Western Continuing Studies
- Teaches courses in Leadership program, including on theories of leadership and public policy

Instructor | September 2017 – Present
Association of Municipal Clerks, Treasurers & Managers of Ontario
- Teaches courses in public policy, local government management, strategic planning and community engagement

Director, Community & Economic Innovation | April 2015 – Aug 2017
City of London
- Responsible for the Government & Community Relations, Economic Partnerships, Culture, and Community Reporting portfolios
- Youngest member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Chair of the Operations Management Team
- Reports to the City Manager, and works closely with the Mayor, Council, All Service Areas and various London community organizations
- Recognized through several internal awards, including a 2015 Leadership Award for work on Council's Strategic Plan

Manager, Corporate Initiatives | 2011 – 2015
City of London
- Managed complex corporate-wide projects including the development of Council's Strategic Plan, performance measurement, community research, operational reviews and many community collaboration projects
- Recognized through awards for various projects, including an international web design award after moving the City's annual report to a web-based format

LEADERSHIP

Candidate for London North Centre, Ontario Liberal Party – June 2018
Member, Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference – Summer 2017
Chair, Pillar Nonprofit Network Board of Directors | 2014 – 2017
Director, Pillar Nonprofit Network Board of Directors | 2008 – 2014

Executive Member, Reforest London Board of Directors | 2009 – 2012
Co-Founder and Chair, New Municipal Professionals Network | 2008 – 2011

PUBLICATIONS

Graham, Kate, "Strong Communities, Strong Canada: A Case for a New Federalism," *Public Sector Digest* (Fall 2018).

Bastedo, Heather and Kate Graham, "Canada's Mayors Speak," *Municipal World* (November 2018).

Spicer, Zachary and Kate Graham, "Taking the Reigns: Mayoral Transition Planning in Canadian Cities," Canadian Public Administration (December 2016).

Agocs, Carol and Kate Graham, "Citizen Action for Sustainable Development: Case studies in London, Ontario, Canada," in Andrew Sancton and Zhenming Chen, eds., *Citizen Participation at the Local Level in China and Canada* (Boca Raton, Florida: CRC Press, 2015).

Graham, Kate and Mat Daley, "Local Government and Big Data: Turning Potential into Practice," Municipal Monitor (Spring 2014).

Graham, Kate, "The True Cost and Effectiveness of Service Reviews," Public Sector Digest (Fall 2013).

Graham, Kate, "Mayors Who Tweet, and What It Means for #cdnpoli," Public Sector Digest (September 2013).

Gamble, Elaine, Kate Graham and Rosanna Wilcox, "Beyond Traditional Engagement: Working Together with citizens to improve decision making," Municipal World (June 2013).

Graham, Kate, "Getting to Know You: Changing the conversation with citizens," Municipal World (May 2013).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

"Do Canadian Mayors Have Power?" Curious Public Podcast (November 2017).

"Leading Canada's Cities: A Study of Urban Mayors," Western Local Government Alumni Conference, London Ontario (November 2017).

"Does Canada have weak mayors?" Canadian Political Science Association Conference 2017 (May 2017).

"Learnings from the Mayors Project," Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (October 2016).

"City of London Experiments in Engagement & Research," Municipal Innovation Conference, Barrie Ontario (September 2015).

"Leading Canada's Cities," Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) Spring Forum, Ottawa Ontario (April 2015).

"Engaging Students in Local Government," Transforming Local Government Conference, Phoenix Arizona (April 2015).

"Leading Canada's Cities: A Study of Urban Mayors," Western Student Research Forum, London Ontario (March 2015)..

"Engaging through Open Data: London's Story," Panel Presentation at the Open Data Forum, Toronto Ontario (November 2014).

"Big Data and Local Government," Local Governance Seminar Series, Political Science Department, Western University (October 2014).

"Meaningful Citizen Engagement," Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario Annual Conference, Niagara Falls (June 2014).

"Surveys, Segmentation and Social Media: Using Data to Make Better Decisions," Directors Club, London Ontario (November 2013).

"Local Government: Closer to the People?" Western Local Government Program Annual Conference, London Ontario (November 2013).

"Did the Common Sense Revolution reduce the size of municipal government in Ontario?" Local Governance Seminar Series, Political Science Department, Western University (October 2013).

"Did the Common Sense Revolution reduce the size of municipal government in Ontario?" IPAC National Conference, Montreal Quebec (August 2013).

"Engaged citizens, engaged cities," Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, Ottawa Ontario (June 2012).

"Citizen Action for Sustainable Development," Canadian-Chinese Local Government Research Project Partnership Conference, Xiamen, China (May 2009).

"London's Creative City," Innovation Systems Research Network Conference, Montreal Quebec (April 2008).