

**The Working Nature of Collaborative Relationships in City
Government**

by

Robin Liss

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The contemporary construction of the role of nonprofits for individuals who do not study them evokes people sacrificing personal gain for the greater societal interest. Inherent in its connotation are groups of individuals providing for the needs that market forces have not or will not serve in our free market economy.

The term “nonprofit” evokes social service agencies working to help those who can’t help themselves. We think of groups like one in Boston which secures low income housing for women and minorities. Or we think of the little league in Lynn which provides recreation to the children in neighborhoods of a city whose economy has been wrought with plant closings. Religious organizations like the Somerville Catholic church with pictures of nuns, priests and volunteer church members feeding the hungry fill our minds. Individuals brought together engaging in selfless acts putting the needs of others before their own. We do not think of their interests because they exist to serve the interests of others.

But nonprofits do have interests. Primarily needing financial support, as well as a steady flow of volunteers. They need space, they need resources, and they need laws and mandates to support their missions. While the common image is that of a generous philanthropist handing over a blown up cardboard check to the director of a social service agency grinning at their new found fortune, the reality is that in today’s climate, much support for nonprofits comes from the government.

Yet that very dependency that increases with each passing year conflicts with our belief system surrounding nonprofits. The perception is that these are selfless organizations that should not be concerned with politics. Our tax code limits them from engaging in political activity because of their 501c3 status. If they are spending time and money lobbying then those actions

must detract from their selfless missions. But the reality is that nonprofits get the majority of their funding from the government. To fulfill their promises they must work with legislators to lobby government to get appropriations and laws passed.

On a national scale, lobbying of the federal government happens by large nonprofits. Many of those groups are aided by their 501c4 counterparts which fall under less restrictive rules for lobbying activity. It is not unusual to see the executive director of the American Red Cross or Habitat for Humanity testifying in front of Congress, and this activity has been studied by political scientists. However, much of the execution of social service happens on a local level where lobbying the federal government is out of reach both physically and financially for smaller city-based nonprofits. Not enabled with the political experience or the tools of lobbying that their national counterparts utilize, how do these local nonprofits get the funding and resources they need from their local governments to achieve their goals?

Shifting Responsibility

Since the 1970s, there has been a shift in governing responsibility in the U.S., with state and local governments taking on more service-providing responsibilities.¹ This trend has continued into the 21st century with decreased federal support and other financial pressures.² Over the past decade, American cities have faced tighter financial pressures, making it more difficult for them to meet the demands placed on them. In 2003 and 2004 81% and 63% of city finance directors responded to a survey saying that they were less able to meet the financial needs placed on them when compared to the previous year. That number has trended downward from a low of 25% responding the same in 1999.³

¹ Cigler, Beverly, "Challenges Facing Fiscal Federalism in the 1990s" *PS*, vol. 26, no. 2, (June 1993): 181

² Salamon, Lester. *The State of Nonprofit America*. 149

³ Pagano, Michael. *City Fiscal Conditions in 2004*. 4

One of the areas receiving less federal support is economic development. This has forced cities to develop their own economic development programs. While Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) gave cities funding control, rollbacks in the CDBG program have forced cities to be more innovative and do more with less with their development efforts.

Another example is The Welfare reform of 1996 aimed at making dramatic changes to the welfare system which broke down direct government welfare and increased funding sources for a broader spectrum of social services provided by the nonprofit sector.⁴ As a result the need for job training, social workers and other services has increased in cities. Less federal welfare assistance has also meant an increased demand for social services assisting children.

The cities in this study all are in eastern Massachusetts which has experienced dramatically rising house prices. The result is gentrification and property values reaching a point where many long time residents can no longer afford to live in the communities in which they have grown up. Developers, seizing opportunity and hungry for profit are moving into these communities creating expensive housing units that many can't afford. In response, cities are seeing increased pressure for subsidized "affordable" housing.

While cities are struggling, nonprofits are thriving. Current estimates are that there are 1.2 million 501c3 and 501c4 organizations in the United States. Since many nonprofits do not register, especially smaller ones on the local level, that number is likely higher.⁵ Funding for nonprofits has increased and they have begun to more effectively identify alternative sources of funding. One revenue stream becoming more prevalent is charging the "customers" of services fees that are often subsidized through government programs. Because of their focused and

⁴ Salamon, Lester. *The State of Nonprofit America*. 28-29

⁵ Ibid 7.

altruistic nature, nonprofits attract skilled individuals who are incredibly passionate about their work.

The increased financial pressures being placed on city governments, combined with increased demands for services mean they must do more with less. In need of help, city governments have looked beyond their bureaucracies to the nonprofit and private sectors to develop and implement policies that effectively deal with the new emerging demands placed on them.

The first places cities are turning are the thriving nonprofits. In Lester Salamon's comprehensive overview of nonprofits in America, Salamon found that government funding for nonprofits excluding religious groups increased 42% from government sources, compared to only 8% from philanthropic sources.⁶ The role of these nonprofits does not just extend to the social service arena where one would expect them. Community Development Corporations (CDCs) have taken up the role of economic development in many cities, assisted by other housing, small business assistance and worker training nonprofits that work specifically on economic development issues.

Naturally these partnerships in economic development extend into the for profit-sector. There are private-public partnerships with professional associations, development groups and local Chambers of Commerce. Often these act as a catalyst for creating a business friendly climate. Local policy makers are no longer able to develop laws that are indifferent to the needs of local businesses, both small and large.

This thesis, which is part of the Collaborative City research project conducted at Tufts University during the summer of 2005 under a grant from the University, attempts to provide insight into those collaborative relationships between city governments and groups outside of the

⁶ Ibid. 31. Table 1-6. Data compiled from *The New Nonprofit Almanac and Desk Reference*.

government. The increased collaboration between city governments and interest groups has resulted in the emergence and growth of certain nonprofits. Many of these groups seek to shape policy in their hometowns, lobbying government to meet their interests. These interests often involve the direct incorporation of an interest group into the execution of a piece of legislation. This is in addition to the more traditional role of influencing policies that the interest group supports and thinks is in the best interest of its members and/or the community. The importance of this “implementation ability” is the focus of this thesis.

The limited resources of city government means that only a limited number of groups will be depended on by government and necessarily limits who will see their policy objectives realized. This paper will examine why certain interest groups succeed and others fail in developing relationships with city government for collaboration and advocacy. It examines the importance of collaboration, both to groups and to governments and what is the nature of those collaborative relationships.

The hypothesis tested in this research paper is in four parts as follows: 1) American cities are collaborating on financial issues because of the increased fiscal pressure to which they are subject; 2) Although the content of the issues on which collaboration is occurring is on economic and significant financial issues – especially development; the relationships are dominated by nonprofit interest groups, not private businesses; 3) The substance of these collaborative relationships largely takes the form of financial support or contracts for groups to execute policy mandates and as such they are working relationships, pursued for their benefits of implementing policy, not their political benefits; and, that 4) groups which are the most effective at not only advocating for policies but implementing those very policies are the most effective at agenda setting in cities.

The examination of existing research in Chapter 2 largely argues that group-government collaboration occurs most around financial issues, specifically development. Scholars have addressed the question of whether cities are pluralist democracies and much of the research revolves around Robert Dahl's *Who Governs*. The existing research agrees with part one of this thesis' hypothesis regarding the increased dependence on outside groups. However, the existing research, which is very limited, suggests, often that private entities are primarily the ones involved in collaboration. While this would be the most obvious conclusion assuming that their large assets would make private corporations an attractive partner in collaboration, the reality is that nonprofit groups are the entities with whom cities mostly collaborate. What's even more striking is that this pattern can even be found on financial issues themselves.

The major question that this research is attempting to answer is whether there is collaboration and if so why cities collaborate and what is the nature of those collaborative relationships. Existing research presents multiple theories on why cities collaborate and much of that research has been conducted by Professor Jeffrey Berry and Kent Portney, the senior researchers on this project. The first theory is that cities are listening to interest groups because they represent the citizenry. The second theory is that cities work with groups because of their potential electoral influence. The third explanation is that the groups have significant information capacity that is helpful in policy making. The fourth reason is that cities have limited economic resources and to effectively meet their needs they must turn to outside groups. This fourth reason for collaboration agrees with the hypothesis of this thesis. All four of these possible explanations will be explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used for the data collection in the Collaborative Cities project which is the source of data for this paper. Before we examine the nature of the

collaborative relationship, Chapter 4 establishes that there is in fact collaboration which is done. Chapter 4 also examines the content of the issues on which cities are collaborating as well as who are the major actors (group types) in collaboration.

Chapter 5 examines collaborative relationships from the city perspective. It examines whether the relative financial health of a city impacts their propensity to collaborate. It also answers the question of how economic health impacts the issue content of the collaboration relationships.

In Chapter 6 the nature of these collaborative relationships is examined. The national studies by one of the Senior Researchers involved in this project, Jeffrey Berry indicates that with the federal government the content of interaction between interest groups and the government is the exchange of information⁷. However, as is argued in Chapter 6, on the local level, information is certainly helpful to cities, but it is insufficient. In order for cash strapped cities to effectively realize the ideas of interest groups they must be able to supply human and experience capital. For example, if an interest group presents a city with a new program for a housing development, or a green space project, that will be interesting to the city, but they are too strapped for cash and resources to hire the people, find the land, deal with the community relationships and manage the ongoing needs of those projects. Therefore, if an interest group wants a city to pursue policies and project ideas which they are advocating, they must be capable of executing those ideas as well as successfully advocating them to the city government. A “think tank” interest group on the local level is quite useless to a city manager or strong city mayor. This finding has important implications for interest groups because it means they can not just be ideological politically driven advocates. To be successful they must have real capabilities to implement and manage policies and programs they are interested in advocating.

⁷ Berry, Jeffrey *A Voice for Nonprofits*.

Chapter 6 also examines other variables in the collaborative relationship. The chapter examines the impact of the political ideology on their likelihood to collaborate. It also examines what activities increase the likelihood of collaboration, such as planning, information exchange, group board membership, as well as having a government mandate. In addition the chapter explores the impact that financial cost of a project has on a city's likelihood to collaborate with a group. Finally Chapter 6 deals with the question of a groups actual ability to implement policy and how that impacts their likelihood to collaborate.

It is important to point out that collaborating is no longer an option for cities. Because of the increased demands to be competitive and find competitive solutions to problems, they are required to be open to outside groups to assist them. This will be the first idea that this paper deals with in an interest of providing a framework for the further questions raised by the hypothesis.

This research topic is important because it helps us understand why collaboration is occurring in our cities. This research will help understand the complex relationship between a city, those who work in it, those who work with it, and those who work to influence it. There has been extensive research on advocacy and agenda setting in city governments. There is also literature on what techniques interest groups, specifically nonprofits should employ when advocating their policies to city governments. This research however looks at the relationship between city governments and those who want to influence it in the context of collaboration between cities and interest groups on policy setting and implementation. That collaboration most often takes the form of funding in exchange for services, however it may take on other forms such as information exchange or the exchange of political capital.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

How are cities effectively governed?

Clarence Stone's political economy theory of city governance finds reconciles pluralism and economic forces by defining different economic city regime types. He argues that the capacity to govern is a combination of the composition of a city's governing coalition, the relationships within that coalition and the economic resources of the members of that coalition.⁸ Urban regime theory states that local governments require collaboration between governmental actors, non governmental actors and the financial resources they bring. Stone does not completely refute Dahl,⁹ but rather states that city leaders who want to initiate broad change must find partners outside of government.

Stone presents four city regime types with different capacities for partnerships to effectively govern.¹⁰ First, *maintenance regimes* are not working to implement significant change and thus do not need substantial partnerships. Second *development regimes* concentrate on economic development and require cooperation with a few powerful elites involved in lands and building. Third, *middle class progressive regimes* focus on post materialist causes which often conflict with the private sector. Therefore, unlike *development regimes* the relationship between the government and private sector in *middle class progressive regimes* is less cooperative. Finally, *lower class opportunity expansion regimes* focus on improving conditions for the poor and have a similar relationship with the private sector as the third regime type.

Stone's theoretical framework is very helpful for this paper. At its core he emphasizes the importance of outside relationships. That belief is shared with the first part of the hypothesis of

⁸ Stone, Clarence "Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, vol. 15

⁹ Ibid 4

¹⁰ Ibid 17

this thesis. However, while Stone concentrates on the government-private relationship, this research concentrates on the government-group relationship, which includes private interests as well as nonprofit and other sectors. In this regard, Stone's research theory conflicts with this hypothesis, agreeing on the need for collaboration but disagreeing on the question of who is doing the collaborating.

Who Governs a City?

Robert Dahl's influential *Who Governs* strongly argues that American cities embody pluralist democracy; open to all of those who are active and want to have an influence. His pluralist belief extends to the interactions of interest groups with the city. In Dahl's comprehensive study of New Haven 1950s politics, the best examples of collaboration and the political influence of interest groups are on issues of redevelopment.¹¹

Dahl found that while one interest group's opposition to a proposal on redevelopment was enough to derail it, no one group had enough power or influence to initiate or carry out the development themselves. Because of this the groups were forced to work together and work within the interests of the city to find a redevelopment plan upon which they could agree. Dahl's example of interest groups on redevelopment certainly exhibit pluralism. However, as Berry describes in *A Voice for Nonprofits*, immediately following the publishing of Dahl's book political scientists began to question it. For the past half century they have continued providing many alternatives to the open pluralism Dahl suggests.¹²

Those theories, along with Dahl's, all attempt to answer how truly open a city truly is. Whether there are characteristics to a city or group that prohibit them from participating with each other or prohibit specific groups from having a voice.

¹¹ Dahl, Robert. *Who Governs?* 137

¹² Berry, Jeffrey. *A Voice for Nonprofits* 33

Dahl's question of "Who Governs" in our cities is at the core of this research project. His pluralist finding, that governments are open to all, is directly contradicted by the work of Paul Peterson.¹³ Peterson argues that interest groups are not very influential because individual decision makers rely largely on their own experiences. It follows from Peterson's analysis that city governments cannot be influenced by individual citizens, and more importantly in the realm of this research, interest groups.

Peterson directly attack's Dahl's case study of urban development arguing it is a limited example. He cites case studies by others which show a greater reliance on individual experience and budgets instead of outside groups. Peterson does have a salient point that Dahl's study is limited to Newton; of course Dahl could never be accused of un-exhaustive research dedicating an entire book to one city.

The weakness in Peterson's theory that government decisions rely on the individual experiences of administrators and councilors collides with the situation that those very decision makers are being placed in. City governments can not govern closed. They no longer have the resources or the ability to execute the array of social services, urban development, environmental and other programs on their own so they are forced to turn to others. The growing reliance of government on outside groups combined with the shrinking budgets of city governments, which Salamon quite effective lays out, shows that while decision makers still may hold the ultimate authority they must turn to others for advice and help in the execution of their mandates.¹⁴

This research is attempting to provide data in support of Dahl's pluralism. Additionally it is attempting to refute Peterson's closed model by providing a broader study with more case cites (eight). Stone's theoretical work that governments are open to partnerships supports Dahl's

¹³ Peterson, Paul *City Limits*

¹⁴ Salamon, Lester *The Sate of Nonprofit America*

research but it does not specifically concentrate on interest groups as does the research in the collaborative cities project. If we accept Dahl's pluralism with Stone's requirement for partnerships, the question then arises, if governments are open, are they open to interest groups?

The Growth of Interest Groups as a Political Force

Jeffrey Berry's *A Voice for Nonprofits*, which relied on a mail survey, is the most comprehensive look at nonprofits as political interest groups.¹⁵ The book uses multiple methods, though the mail survey of over a thousand nonprofits is the central source of data for the book. The research concentrates on nonprofits whose tax forms are publicly available. This applies only to groups with \$25,000 or more of income. The organizations surveyed were state and national nonprofits and because of the income threshold it excludes many of the smaller, local nonprofits which this research was targeted at.

Berry examines nonprofits as interest groups attempting to lobby the government. The book first discusses the transition of government service responsibility to the nonprofit sector and how this has created a requirement to lobby to survive. This effect is not exclusive to the state and federal level groups which Berry discusses and is very applicable on a local level.

The survey data showed a large amount of incorrect assumptions as well as fear in executive director's regarding what activities were permissible by the IRS without risk of losing their 501c3 status.¹⁶ Berry concentrates on nonprofits lack of awareness regarding H status. H status allows nonprofits to legally dedicate around a quarter of their income to lobbying activities by filing a simple form with the IRS. He discusses the role that collaboration, contracting and granting has had on tempering lobbying activities. "It was clear from their responses that the aggressiveness of their advocacy was significantly tempered by their need to win and retain

¹⁵ Berry, Jeffrey. *The New Liberalism*

¹⁶ Ibid. 59, 63

contracts.”¹⁷ The book concentrates on information exchange and lobbying officials as a means of collaboration. It does not specifically concentrate on the execution of policy as a means of collaboration and the relationship between political efficacy and collaboration.

Berry does not ignore local nonprofits in cities in *A Voice for Nonprofits*. Throughout the book they are discussed. He specifically mentions that the survey method employed omitted many important local nonprofits. Berry states that the political climate on a local level is much more accessible for nonprofits than it is on a national level. He outlines four key reasons for this:¹⁸ 1) cities are even more pluralist than the federal government: the door is very “open” in city government to feedback, individuals and groups; 2) policy makers do not have to worry as much as their national counterparts about partisan politics of favoritism in choosing who to work with; 3) there is little competition from other providers in opportunities for partnerships; and 4) there is little opposition from other interest groups on a local level.

On the broader national and state scale, Berry concludes that it is a nonprofits’ information capacity which allows it to have the greatest lobbying effect on local government. That information capacity includes the ability to deliver research, aide in drafting legislation, or provide other guidance to policy makers.

All of Berry’s outlined reasons for success of local nonprofits are touched on in this research and this thesis examines whether his hypothesis for larger nonprofits can be applied to those in cities. Berry’s four reasons are a helpful tool for examining the causes of collaboration between nonprofit interest groups and city governments. This paper attempts to build on Berry’s research and concentrate specifically on local nonprofits as interest groups and how those four reasons impact collaborative relationships as well as the characteristics of nonprofits in cities.

¹⁷ Ibid. 106

¹⁸ Ibid. 97-98

Because of their local nature and small size, urban interest groups by definition are closer to the citizenry and thus by definition are very citizen oriented groups. Berry's *The New Liberalism* explores the emergence of post materialist citizen interest groups as a force in Washington D.C. over the past few decades. His research concentrates on citizen groups as the new forces of political influence, and he argues that it is post materialist citizen groups which yield much more power than previously thought, challenging the assumption that business yields all the power in DC.

The New Liberalism uses legislative records to examine how and when advocacy groups were influential at three key times. The research focuses solely on national interest groups with the resources to testify in Congress. Those groups are a far cry from the city groups studied in this thesis. While some of the groups studied may be affiliate with a large group which does have a Washington presence this was never mentioned in any of the interviews. Methodologically, Berry's work is very strong and does not suffer from some of the weaknesses which the Collaborative City research project does. However, his research only examines the interaction between two of the subject types of legislators and groups. He does not look at the important administrative angle. A strong argument can be made however that as the scale of government decreases, the importance of individual administrators increases.

Berry's research is directly relevant to this thesis because he is exploring the economic conditions that lead to a change in which groups were agenda setters with the federal government. His research is closely related; albeit on a much larger scale; to the aim of this thesis. His framework for identifying post materialist groups is the exact framework that is being used in this paper.

Citizen Involvement in Interest Groups

If we concentrate on the political influence of interest groups in cities correlating with the size of those citizen groups we might begin to believe that they are on the decline. In *Bowling Alone* Robert Putnam looks at citizen participation in interest groups. He splits groups up into three categories, community based, church based and work based.¹⁹ Similar to Berry's research, Putnam documents a dramatic increase in nonprofit organizations per capita over the past three decades; however, he discounts most groups as having little membership and broad based support in the community. He states that most of these groups are Washington based advocacy which do not provide "a regular connection among individual group members as the grass roots."²⁰

Putnam argues that the increase in the number of nonprofit advocacy groups does not equate to a direct increase in the number of citizens working with local chapters or autonomous local groups on agenda setting. He looks at average membership rates and finds that it peaked in the early 1960s and has been in a sustained decline ever since.²¹

However, as the researchers have done in the Collaborative Cities project, Putnam recognizes that group membership numbers are only one way of looking at the influence of citizen groups on the local level. Membership might only mean an individual receives a quarterly newsletter, or it may mean that the individual is active, volunteering at events and helping the organization. There is no accepted definition for what makes an "active" group member – because it varies depending on the group. It is difficult, if not impossible to study the composition of each group's membership which puts the relevance of data on declining group

¹⁹ Putnam, Robert *Bowling Alone* 49

²⁰ Ibid. 51

²¹ Ibid. 54-55

membership into question. Putnam looks to the General Social Survey to find that individuals taking a leadership role in any local organization has been cut in half from 1973 to 1994.²²

Putnam finds a similar decrease in activity in two other spheres of civic involvement of the workplace and religious affiliation. He argues that we have undergone a transition away from a doing culture and towards an observing culture.²³

The next logical question to ask of Putnam's research in regards to this project is: has a broad decrease in membership and participation among the American public affected the political influence of interest groups on a local level? Further, is membership the appropriate measure for influence in city politics? If we accept Berry's argument that citizen groups are power players in government and Putnam's data showing citizen involvement is on the decline logic would say that citizen groups are losing influence in cities. But the data says they're not, why?

Cities are Listening

Before we examine why cities are tuned into interest groups, it is important to show that they are in fact listening and responsive to the demands of groups. It must be shown that interest groups are in fact setting the agenda.

A 1976 mail survey by Paul Schumaker and Russell W. Getter examined racial bias in city officials responsiveness to groups.²⁴ Schumaker and Getter agree that group membership is a poor and unscientific measure of groups. They found that white groups in affluent cities are most listened to. While race is beyond the confines of this study, what is relevant from Schumaker and Getter's study is that they found that cities were in fact responsive to groups.

²² Ibid. 60

²³ Ibid. 114

²⁴ Schumaker, Paul; Getter, Russell "Structural Sources of Unequal Responsiveness to Group Demands in American Cities" *The Western Political Quarterly* 1983

Their finding that affluent cities are more responsive aligns with Berry's assertion that post materialist governments are influenced by interest groups.

Why Listen? Interest Groups Broadly Represent the Citizenry

The first answer to the question of why interest groups are not being ignored is that they do in fact represent the citizenry. Berry and Portney's 1993 research on neighborhood groups found that despite the decrease in citizen participation, city governments are reaching the interests of the people through citizen group representation.²⁵ In their study they examined four cities. They present the important argument that neighborhood groups do not just serve the politically active, but represent the interests of broad groups of citizens.²⁶

"To diminish the accomplishment of the neighborhood associations because only 16.6 percent of the population participates would be a grave mistake... The concentration of political activism on the neighborhood level works to empower the whole neighborhood and not just the activists who go to the meetings. All the measures of responsiveness point toward the same conclusion: neighborhood associations are successful advocates for their communities."²⁷

While their research is confined to just neighborhood associations, we can naturally extend their conclusions to all local groups. First, as stated earlier, because of their local nature any urban interest group must be connected to the citizenry. Second, the biggest difference between neighborhood groups and local issue oriented groups is the topics under which they're organized. In both instances the groups are coalitions of like minded individuals organizing around one topic. Neighborhood groups are organized around a topic based on a geographic area. Issue oriented groups are organized around a non geographic topic. In fact, often, issue oriented groups are organized around a geographic topic such as a development site, often an environmental region. Both are coalitions, distinguished only by the axis of organization.

²⁵ Berry, Jeffrey; Portney, Kent *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*

²⁶ Ibid 293

²⁷ Ibid 293

Why Listen? Elections

The first, very democratic explanation for why cities listen to outside groups is because of their sway over the electoral process. There has been very little research on whether group influence on elections impacts collaboration between city governments and the groups. There is limited research on the electoral activity of nonprofit organizations on the local level – research that would be critical to tie collaboration with city governments to electoral benefits. This is likely because it is so difficult to design a methodology that can break through the fear of losing one's 501c3 status.²⁸ Additionally, while we can theorize that nonprofit interest groups are involving themselves in elections, their very nature requires that involvement be subtle. As these researchers found, psychologically leaders in interest groups separate their electoral activity as personal actions which do not represent their group. Even if there is clearly a culture of support for a candidate in an organization, nonprofit leaders are quick to establish that the group does not do any work to support a specific candidate. However, in a small community where connections are easily identified, it is impossible to truly separate the actions of individuals into their separate spheres. If the entire board of an organization volunteers to assist a candidate it could be said that that organization has a culture of indirect support for a candidate.

These methodological problems are why there is little research on the subject. Nicole Marwell's study of community based organizations is one of the few on electoral activity by local nonprofit organizations.²⁹ Her research of service organizations in a Latino neighborhood of New York included her volunteering at eight organizations for 15 months as well as conducting interviews with 80 individuals involved with the organization.

²⁸ Berry, Jeffrey *A Voice for Nonprofits* 41

²⁹ Marwell, Nicole "Privatizing the Welfare State: Nonprofit Community-Based Organizations as Political Actors" *American Sociological Review*, vol. 69, no. 2 (April 2004) 265-291

She theorizes that in a modern context community based organizations providing social services are the new vehicles for delivery of political patronage. She describes a triadic exchange between nonprofit social service agencies' electoral activities, government grants to those nonprofits, and political patronage for the agents of the nonprofit in the form of jobs. Her explanation is markedly unidirectional with the groups getting grants from elected officials, then the groups mobilizing their supporters for the groups, and in turn the leaders and supporters of the groups getting political patronage from the elected officials. Marwell does not explore the dynamic nature of the relationships of the actors in her model. She does not examine how the work provided by the social service organizations increases the governing capacity in Stone's light of those elected officials so that they may better do their job. Their increased efficacy at governing, provided by the groups could have positive electoral impacts beyond just the group members – a fact which Marwell does not explore. Additionally, she does consider that in post materialist communities, government mandates alone may be enough to motivate group members to support elected officials. In a group where the leaders are all employed in high salary positions and where there is not a concentration on economic development the altruistic benefits of helping the community may be enough “patronage” without the need for jobs.

Why Listen? Information Capacity

In *A Voice for Nonprofits* Berry found that those groups with the greatest information capacity were the most successful at agenda setting. Berry explores the possibility of extending his findings to groups but his study does not include data on those local groups. In part, the Collaborative Cities project attempts to answer this question but there is some existing research on this question.

In *A Niche Theory of Interest Representation* Virginia Gray and David Lowery use complex mathematical models as well as ecological theory to argue that groups are successful when they find a specific niche in a community which they can fill.³⁰ They argue that groups pick this niche and success is dependent on their being an opening for that niche in the government. Their research contradicts others who argue that groups adapt to the needs of governments. Gray and Lowry end their analysis calling for a comparative study of groups spanning a variety of issues – which encompasses the bounds of the Collaborative Cities project.

Why Listen? Limited Economic Resources

The last and most plausible explanation for why cities listen to groups is because they must due to their limited fiscal resources. This explanation interacts closely with Stone's typology, but is more inclusive because it is not limited just to public- private partnerships. Nonprofit groups, although not flush with cash, have critical resources and expertise which can be useful for cities in executing their policy objectives.

Economic support to cities by the federal government has been on the decline over the past 3 decades. This has resulted in greater dependence on local tax bases as a source of revenue.³¹ At the same time federalism has taken a new form in regards to funding of cities from specific controlling programs. These broader programs depend on interaction with private groups and the nonprofit sector. These new federal funding programs for cities have taken the form of block grants like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, categorical programs like the Urban Development Action Grant Program (UDAG) and economic enterprise and

³⁰ Gray, Virginia and Lowery, David "A Niche Theory of Interest Representation" *Journal of Politics*. (March 1996)

³¹ Kantor, Paul The Dependent City Revisited: The Political Economy of Urban Development and Social Policy 111

empowerment zones.³² These programs, combined with decreasing revenue, and government reform demands of competitive bidding and increased productivity have meant that cities must do more with less and design incredibly effective programs to maintain their revenue sources.

Lester Salamon and his collaborators document that in this more competitive and less robust fiscal climate cities have turned to nonprofits for the execution of their mandates. Salamon's *The State of Nonprofit America* is a collection of articles by a variety of scholars on nonprofits.³³ Salomon describes the hidden trend during the Reagan revolution of small government and the Clinton era welfare reform of outsourcing many social service functions of government to the nonprofit sector which resulted in a 195% increase of government funding for nonprofits from 1977 to 1997.³⁴ Salamon lays out ways that nonprofit organizations receive funding from city governments including direct government spending, taxation policies, and indirect subsidies through consumer side subsidies who use the services of nonprofits.³⁵

Salamon maintains government reforms have increased competition for grants where nonprofits are even forced to compete with the private sector in an effort to extract better performance. "At a minimum this will require greater government acceptance of the right of nonprofit organizations to advocate on public policies and to conduct research (with related training activities) on topics consistent with their missions and norms. These functions are easily compromised under pressure, but are essential to a democratic, open society."³⁶

The politics of nonprofit city collaboration is only half of the collaborative picture, and the research on nonprofit city partnerships comparing across a variety of issues is limited. However there is extensive research on specific areas of urban development.

³² Ibid 124-125

³³ *Salamon, Lester* The State of Nonprofit America

³⁴ Ibid 33

³⁵ Ibid 449-452

³⁶ Ibid 467

City Politics by Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom gives a good introduction to Community Development Corporations (CDCs) which are nonprofits founded by cities to work on development. They write about the growing influence of CDCs “in many cities they have become influential political organizations.”³⁷ The book cites data that in 1970s there were 200 CDCs in America, a number that has grown to 2000 by 1994. According to the authors, 90 percent work on housing, 66 percent on advocacy and community building and 23 percent on business development³⁸. They also discuss the political independence of CDCs. In some cities they work well with mayors and government officials, however they still have to compete for grants with other organizations.

What is the nature of these relationships?

The core question at the heart of this thesis asks what are the nature of these collaborative relationships between city governments and interest groups? Are they completely pluralist as Dahl would argue or are they cut on financial axis using Stone’s typology? Do the collaborative relationships actually matter, or are city councilors and administrators relying solely on their own experiences as Peterson might suggest?

As described above there has been extensive research on city governments and the increased fiscal pressures placed on them which is pushing them to move beyond the walls of city hall and work with outside organizations. There has also been extensive research on the rise of nonprofits in America. What’s missing seems to be research that connects the two.

This research paper will attempt to partially answer the question with whom cities are partnering. Is collaboration the “new” agenda setting tool? What are the characteristics of cities and interest groups that collaborate successfully? Does Berry’s thesis that those with the greatest

³⁷ Judd, Dennis. Swanstrom, Todd. *City Politics*. Fourth Edition. 394.

³⁸ Ibid 395.

information capacity have the greatest success at agenda setting scale down to cities, or does the ability to execute and implement policies matter more?

Trends in collaboration based on issues will be explored. Are there identifiable trends by issue which can help us understand collaboration? As Gray and Lowry suggest will groups fail if they don't evolve to a specific niche? Do the majority of collaborative relationships involve development or is that just a focus of research? What role do elections play? What is the relative strength or weakness of individual groups play in motivating government officials to collaborate?

While there has been extensive research on private-public partnership on the local level as well as influential research by the sponsors of this project on interaction between interest groups and national governments, there is little in the way of research on collaboration between interest groups (including nonprofits) and city governments.

3. Methodology

Portions of this section were co-written with Jessica Simoncelli a fellow field researcher in the Collaborative City Research Study.

Collaborative City Research Study

In the spring of 2005, Dr. Kent Portney and field researcher Robin Liss applied for a Tufts University grant to conduct research over the summer. Their application was approved, and that grant was supplemented by funding from The Richard Skuse chair and the Tufts Political Science Department. The financial support enabled two field researchers to work full time during the summer of 2005 on the Collaborative City research study.

City selection for inclusion in the Collaborative City research study was based on demographic data, city distance to the research center in Medford, Massachusetts at the Tufts University Campus, and the researchers' knowledge of the cities' governments in the area based on their past experiences. Additionally, data on environmental advocacy activities was used to pick cities which would produce substantial data on environmental groups for the interest of two of the researchers involved in the project. Initially, Clarence Stone's typology³⁹ for categorizing cities was proposed. Stone groups cities into four different governing regime types. However, when the list of potential cities was grouped based on Stone's typology, it was found that the cities fell into two, maybe three of the categories. Instead, it was decided by the research team that using economic data was the best method for categorizing the cities for the initial selection.

The initial list of cities included all cities and towns with a significant population within one hour's drive of Medford. While there was the possibility of including cities in Northern New Hampshire such as Nashua, it was decided that the state should be kept constant with all the test cities in Massachusetts so as to avoid introducing an extra variable. Keeping the state constant

³⁹ Stone, Clarence *Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern: A Political Economy Approach*

does characterize all of the test cities with an element of bias that is not controlled, which could result in conclusions that are highly dependent on that constant. However, keeping all the cities in the same state also allowed for concentration on the differences between the cities, the differences in their demographics, city government structure, and ultimately the interest groups without including a secondary study of state governments and their impact on collaboration between cities and interest groups. While a study of state influence on city government and local group interaction would certainly be interesting, it was beyond the scope or abilities of these researchers given time and budget constraints.

The initial list of cities included Worcester, Lynn, Somerville, Salem, Gloucester, Cambridge, Watertown, Arlington, Natick, Newton, Brookline and Boston. All of these are located in Eastern Massachusetts, within an hour's drive of Medford, MA. The smallest three cities, Gloucester, Watertown and Natick were eliminated from the list of potential cities, each with a population just over 30,000.⁴⁰ The next smallest city is Salem, with a population of 40,407.⁴¹ While Salem is close to Arlington in population, Arlington was included over Salem because of its close proximity to the research center.

The eight selected cities are distributed fairly evenly on the second method of selection: median family income in 2000. At the higher end with a median family income of \$105,289 and \$92,993 are Newton and Brookline, respectively. At the lower end with a median family income of \$42,988 and \$45,295 are Worcester and Lynn, respectively. Somerville, Cambridge and Arlington fall in the middle with median family incomes of \$51,243, \$59,423 and \$78,741, respectively. Although the median family income of Boston in 2000 is \$44, 015 — placing it on the lower end of the distribution among the cities—the Boston population is broken into many

⁴⁰ 2000 U.S. Census

⁴¹ *ibid.*

groups that vary greatly in their incomes. For this reason, and because of its large size and diversified population, Boston does not have the same economic homogeneity of the other selected cities.

The final list of eight cities provided the research team with a diverse group to examine, from Boston and Worcester—which are very large cities—to the smaller communities of Arlington and Brookline. More importantly, the city list provided a wide economic distribution among the cities.

Subjects were split into three types: elected officials, city administrators and outside groups. Outside groups were defined as any organizations including nonprofits, business interests, labor unions, political groups or any organization of individuals outside of the government. The division into the three group types fell along the natural line of those in power—including the elected officials and city administrators—and those trying to influence or benefit from the government. Initially, mayors were not included because of the variety in their roles depending on city structure. However, when it was discovered that some important data could be gathered from mayors, they were then included in the process. Because of the difficulty in reaching mayors, only one mayor was interviewed for the project and that mayor was grouped in with city councilors because they gained their position by being the top vote getter in the city council election.

In-person elite interviewing using open-ended questions was selected as the best method for gathering data. The senior researchers working on this project had previously been involved in numerous studies in which interviewing both city officials and interest groups. Those studies utilized a variety of data-gathering methods including written mail surveys, phone interviews and

in-person interviews.⁴² It was determined that—because of the close proximity to the interview subjects—in-person interviews were not only feasible, but also the method that would result in the best data. While in-person interviews were used for city councilors and city administrators, phone interviews were used for interest groups. This choice was made purely on a logistic basis. Since many of the interest group subjects did not have offices, it was decided that those subjects would generally be most comfortable with a phone interview. Additionally, because it was expected that there would be more group respondents than administrators and city councilors, using a phone interview method would enable the researchers to interview the largest number of these subjects.

Three similar questionnaires tailored one for each type of respondent, were designed. Each questionnaire included eight to ten questions. All of the questions were open-ended and designed to elicit data without cueing them to the nature of the investigation or prompting specific answers. The opening question gave the subject an opportunity to describe themselves and how they attained their current position. This question was designed both for background information and to ease the subjects into the interview.

Many of the questions included follow-up probing for specific data. The questions were branched to provide a customized interview that was still standardized between subjects. Beyond the branching, the interviewers were both permitted and encouraged to spontaneously probe as they saw fit in order to focus a subject's response on the question. However, this improvising was intended to be pointed, brief, and conducted without leading the subject on to the purpose of the study. As the interview progressed, the questions got more specific and concentrated particularly on collaboration. The questionnaires were designed with a rolling subject selection

⁴² Berry, Jeffrey, *A Voice for Nonprofits*
Berry, Jeffrey; Portney, Kent *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*
Portney, Kent, *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously*

process in mind for the group category. In other words, those questions that talked about collaboration were followed up with specific questions about which groups or government officials the individual collaborated with.

The City Councilor questionnaire, which was used for all forms of councils including Board of Aldermen and Board of Selectmen, was the first questionnaire designed. The other questionnaires were derived from this initial Council questionnaire. Similar to the other two interview forms, the Councilor interview began by inquiring about the subject's background and how he/she ended up on the city council. To direct the subject to his most recent work, the second question asked about the issue he had been spending the most time on in the past month. The third question probed into the groups that were involved with the issue raised in question two. The fourth question inquired about their first election and any groups that might have been involved. The fifth question inquired more generally about what groups the subject heard from most often. The sixth question asked about environmental issues and groups involved, which was placed on the questionnaire specifically for research in Dr. Portney's area of interest. The seventh and eighth questions asked about groups that worked with the councilor's colleagues and any groups that were adversarial to the interests of the councilor.

The administrator questionnaire was very similar to the City Councilor questionnaire. There was a question inquiring about the number of Full Time Employees working in the administrators office. The questions were rephrased to be more appropriate for the administrators, but were designed to be linked to the councilor questions as much as possible. The group questionnaire was designed with consideration for the phone-based nature of the interviews. This third set also queried on the interactions with both the city councilors and the

city administrators. Each questionnaire had one to two questions per page to give space for writing answers.

Following the completion of the design of the three interview questionnaires, the study was submitted for approval to the Tufts Internal Review Board (IRB). The IRB exempted the study from review because the subjects were not facing any harm by participating in the study.

After receiving IRB approval and laying all the proper groundwork, the team was ready to embark upon the field period of the project—the data collection via in-person and telephone interviews. The questionnaires were to be administered to a random sample of subjects from the three predetermined categories over a period of ten weeks, from June to August of 2005. The eight municipalities were divided in half, with each field researcher taking a set that varied in their distances from the research center. Robin Liss was responsible for Lynn, Newton, Somerville, and Worcester, while Jessica Simoncelli was responsible for Arlington, Boston, Brookline, and Cambridge. Professors Berry and Portney advised on the strategies of how to gather the pool of potential interview subjects. Additionally, they trained the field researchers in the skills of in-person elite interviewing, in order to practice the successful techniques for professionally administering the questionnaires. These techniques—which were critical to the data collection—included: how to pace the interview and set an informal tone, how to apply the follow-up probe questions, and how to take brief hand-written notes. To further the field researcher's comfort level with the interview process, as well as to progress along the inevitable learning curve and optimize interviews in the eight selected municipalities, the field researchers conducted pretest “practice” interviews in Medford, MA and Watertown, MA. During these 10-12 interviews (collectively) the interview techniques were tested, as well as the subject

questionnaires. This was expected to minimize the error from improper interview technique, poor note-taking or faulty questionnaires that emerged in the real interviews.

Before conducting any of the interviews, the field researchers collected contact information—preferably work phone numbers and emails, but often residential/personal contacts were all that was listed—from city and town government or organizational websites for as many of the elected officials and administrators as was possible. When contact information could not be found that way, the field researchers turned to other public sources, including the white pages and other available databases. Although the research net was cast across a random sample of elected officials and agency administrators, initially all city council members (aldermen, or selectmen) in each municipality were targeted for interviews. These elected bodies ranged in size from 5 to 24 officials. Approximately 10 agency administrators in each city were also targeted, but not necessarily every single administrator.⁴³ One of the “control” elements of the project was that the interview subjects would be comparable by position across municipalities, which is why there was this difference between the two categories in the targeting strategies. All of the potential interview subjects in the “elected official category” essentially have the same responsibilities and job descriptions, whereas with the administrators, people were pre-selected from certain agencies and departments that were most likely to provide useful information on collaboration. For those administrator interviews, subjects were pulled from a common set of agencies, including Community and Economic Development, Public Works, Environmental Protection, Parks and Recreation, and Housing Departments.⁴⁴ Additionally the field researchers attempted to contact the highest level of administrators in each department, and worked down through the ranks as roadblocks occurred. The problem being that often the highest level of

⁴³ Liss, Robin and Jessica Simoncelli, “Summer Scholars Report: Collaborative Cities Project,” October 2005.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

administrator was too busy to meet with the researchers. Instead, a lower level administrator worked as a substitute.

Table 1: Example Data Sheet, City Administrators

Name	Agency	Position	Phone	E-mail	Status	1 st Contact	2 nd Contact
Doe, J.	Public Works	Director	###	j.doe@	Scheduled	06/15, 3pm	06/17 10am
Smith, L.	Econ. Devel.	Dep. Dir.	###	smith@	Interviewed	06/15 3:05pm	_____

The data was compiled into Excel spreadsheets with all the contact information (see Table.1). The initial contact attempts were done through the phone, using all available numbers for each subject. If an email address was provided for the subject an initial email was also sent from the researcher’s University email accounts. The research team designed a standardized phone script, with specific wording for phone messages, in person messages as well as successful contacts. Follow up scripts for second and third contact attempts were also provided to the field researchers. Follow-up calls were spaced three to five days from each other to give the targeted subject time to respond. All messages left included the field researchers phone numbers, both at the research office in the Political Science Department at Tufts University as well as the researcher’s cell phone numbers. Often it was necessary with the administrative contacts to expand the targets to include Deputy and Assistant Director positions because of the structures and personal preferences of some governments. In line with the “snowball sampling” rolling interview method, if administrators or departments were mentioned in interviews in a specific study, an attempt was made to interview that individual or a member from their department.

Additionally, other contact strategies were used when no contact had been made with potential interview subjects. By the middle of the field period, there were subjects that had not responded to any phone calls and emails. Often, these were subjects whose interviews were required to maintain the integrity of the data for a particular category; that is, there were not

enough subjects from a given category in a given municipality (e.g.—Boston City Councilors, or Lynn Administrators) to qualify that category for valuable use in future statistical analysis of that city/town. Those subjects were therefore sent letters via Certified Mail that explained the project, emphasized its ease and confidentiality, and implored him/her to contact the researchers. This mailing effort yielded about a 30% response rate, and the certified mail contacts positively increased the overall interview numbers.

As for the interviewing process, the field researchers set up appointments by establishing contacts with the interview subjects and setting meetings at their convenience. Most of the interviews were conducted during business hours, however if a subject could only meet after hours, then such an interview time was arranged. Subjects were told the interview would take approximately 30 minutes, although the actual range was from 20 to over 90 minutes long. The interviews were conducted in a neutral location which the interview subjects selected, usually their offices, but occasionally their homes or public places like cafes. The anonymity of each subject was protected, and each interview subject was assured of that anonymity at the beginning of the interview. Careful precautions were taken during the interview process to ensure that they were comfortable with the study, such as re-explaining the general purpose of the project to the subjects before asking any questions, encouraging them to ask questions whenever they were confused or uncomfortable, and assuring them that they could refuse to answer any question they saw fit. They were told approximately how long the interview would last and that they could end it at any time if it ran too long, with the intention of then scheduling a follow-up interview to finish the interview.

The researchers took limited notes during the actual interviews to encourage narrative responses, as many interview subjects feel uncomfortable if the interviewer seems to be

recording everything word for word.⁴⁵ For this reason, audio recordings of the interviews were not conducted; it was of the utmost importance that the field researchers create an environment in which an interview subject would feel at ease and answer questions at length. The idea behind this technique—which even encouraged informal chatting after the “formal interview” was finished—is that any little detail a subject might choose to share sheds light on topics as nebulous as professional relationships and interactions. Therefore much of the interview would be recorded shorthand and committed to memory, and then immediately upon leaving the interview the field researchers would type up a more detailed transcript of the conversation with the aid of their notes.

This method may have compromised some accuracy in the interest of getting the most genuine interview. The researchers typed up interview transcripts typically within 30 minutes of the interview. However, infrequently because of logistical reasons there was a greater delay between the interview time and the writing of the transcript. This gap was rarely more than a half-day, the longer the delay the larger the amount of error introduced into the transcript. The senior researchers determined that this small amount of error was mitigated by the increased comfort provided to subjects by not recording them with an electronic device.

Throughout the interviews, subjects were asked about interactions and relationships they have with organizations and groups outside of government. At the conclusion of the questionnaire for both the elected officials and the administrators, there was a question that asked for contact information from any nongovernmental groups that the subject mentioned throughout the interview. The field researchers inquired about names, preferably the person that the elected official or administrator interacted with the most in that particular group, as well as phone numbers, email addresses, and websites. The interview subject was ensured that the contact

⁴⁵ Berry, Jeffrey “Validity and Reliability in Elite Interviewing” *PS* vol. 35 (December 2002), 679-682

person(s) he/she listed for the named groups would not be told who recommended them, and that those contacted in the groups would be subject to the exact same type of interview and requisite anonymity, reinforcing the confidentiality of each individual interview.

The purpose of this was to garner a whole new set of interview subjects to fill the third category of focus—Groups. This included groups of all sizes—neighborhood, citywide, statewide, chapters of national organizations—and of all missions—nonprofits from social services to advocacy, labor, and private sector. The targeting of groups was dictated by which were mentioned in the previous interviews, so as to eliminate groups that had little to no interaction with local government, and therefore to pursue interviews with those groups that were more likely to have relationships with government that would yield some data about collaboration. The contact information for these groups was compiled and formed a list (and spreadsheet similar to Fig.1) for each municipality. All of these groups were contacted through the same outreach procedures that were used for elected officials and administrators, and the interviews—while shorter and conducted over the phone instead of in person—were similar to the other categories’ interviews insofar as they were professional and had the same aims.

Ultimately the interviews were conducted over a period of about 15 weeks, and by the close of the field period in October, there were a total of 116 interviews completed out of the 269 targeted interview subjects. It should be noted that the 269 subjects included all possible interview subjects. This includes any group that was possibly mentioned in an interview or any possible city administrator which was possibly relevant to the research project. Many of the groups were removed because they were either too small or there was not enough contact information available. In addition, many of the city administrators and some of the city administrators and city councilors did not have available contact information. For those groups,

city councilors and administrators no attempt to contact was made and it explains the discrepancy between the targeted number and the completed number.

The research group then proceeded to the coding phase, during which the research team created a set of variables that could be identified and qualified. After several rounds of testing and revision, a codebook was compiled and a set of variables (many of which were used across different interview categories) that investigated the research questions and hypotheses provided by the four members of the research team. The variables provided a solid dataset of information about local governmental operations in Eastern Massachusetts in 2005. The variables began with the administrative interviews (e.g.—A1) and were repeated as such in the elected official and group interview coding if they were reused in the same way. New variables for the elected official and group categories were labeled C# and G# (respectively). The variables went question by question, but many of them spoke to larger, overall themes in questionnaire and therefore the entire conversation had to be considered while coding many of the variables. These variables were tested on many interviews before being formalized.

The interviews were coded by the type of interview and assigned to one member of the research team. This meant that one individual was coding all interview of a specific type (Administrator, Councilor and Group). This method reduced coding error, ensuring that all interviews of one category were examined by only one researcher and hopefully removing or reducing any interpretation bias.

Once all of the interviews were coded, the data was entered into the SPSS statistical package, and analyses yielded quantifiable results to test against the initial hypotheses. Cross tabulation using Pearson Chi Squared tests was used to determine statistical relevance of the results. In addition regression analysis was used for some data analysis.

Weaknesses in this Methodology

As with any methodology, this research teams' contained inevitable flaws and biases that affected the outcome of the study. The first had to do with the response rate. The contact information provided to the researchers was not always accurate. Many of the phone numbers that were called had no voicemail, or an "unidentifiable" voicemail message preventing the researchers from determining whether or not the phone number was the proper number for the targeted subject. There is a strong possibility that many of the subjects which were eventually coded as "Refused" actually did not get any phone message requesting that they meet for an interview. This would have been a major downfall of the survey method—critically compromising the data—had the researchers not used supplemental contact methods to target subjects of written letters and email messages. Additionally, when possible the field researchers attempted to confirm contact information for a subject with a coworker such as a fellow city councilor or administrator. This phone number error was also reduced for the Groups category in particular because that contact information was provided by an interview subject in person—one who presumably knew the individual from the group and therefore had the correct contact information.

Another pitfall of the study's methodology is some of the common word choice in the questionnaires—particularly those for councilors and administrators. Those questionnaires referred to the outside groups as "nongovernmental groups." Although that is a term which political scientists would literally interpret as *any* group that is not a part of the government, it may have caused confusion for some interview subjects whom mistook it for the term "nongovernmental organization" (NGO). The latter typically elicits images of exclusively social service nonprofits, but the former has a broader connotation. While the questions included a

small definition of what was meant by a nongovernmental group—stating that it was to encompass business, labor, and social service interests—the term still seemed to perplex some interview subjects, as it was not uncommon for a subject to ask for clarification of the term. The data may be characterized by an over-representation of social service agencies because of this confusion. However upon initial analysis, it seems as though this is not the case, most likely due to the probing that allowed the field interviewers to restate and re-ask questions for precision.

A final weakness in the methodology regards selection bias in the groups which were interviewed. Although a rolling method was used for picking groups based on those mentioned in administrator and councilor interviews, this resulted in only talking to the relevant groups which were important enough to deserve a mention. Another issue was because the groups spanned a broad range some groups, likely business groups were less likely to be willing to talk to the interviews. Because of this, for questions that required the distribution of groups relied on administrator and councilor responses of relevant groups instead of results from the groups which responded. This way, even if a group refused to be interviewed, it did not result in its total exclusion from the study.

Variables Used for this Paper

The first and most critical variable that must be established for hypothesis presented in this paper regards the amount of collaboration any interview subject does with government officials or interest groups. The nature of those collaboration relationships is also a variable which is extensively used for the paper. On the government side this relates to what benefit the group provides to an official, while on the group side it relates to what the group does for the government.

Demographic data about each city is also considered. Those variables include city size and economic data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. This data is provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the 2000 decennial Census, as reproduced in the American Fact Finder website.. Other financial data about the city is certainly relevant to this hypothesis. That information is provided by public city budget reports as well as published news articles about the city.

The next major variable in this study regards which groups are present and relevant in each city and the nature of those groups. Specifically, this hypothesis asks many characteristic questions about the groups in the study including how long they have been in existence, what issues they work, whether their creation was mandated by the state, their scope, size of their organization, as well as questions on the content of the issues they have been working on. Those determinations are based on the interviews with the groups themselves, and a specific variable code for each respective variable.

Definitions

Collaboration

The interaction between governments and non governmental interest groups for policy making and execution is defined as collaboration. This is the most important variable definition in this research project because it is the centerpiece of the hypothesis. A common codebook was developed based on previous interest group and city government researchers done by the senior researchers for all variables that coded collaboration. Four levels of collaborative relationship were created: negative, neutral, cooperative and evidence of ongoing partnership. During the coding process, the researchers examined the entire interview including notes by the interviewers on the nature of interview.

Negative relationships were defined when there appeared to be “Open criticism, even hostility might be evident. Even a coolness that suggests that the policymaker would have preferred not to have dealt with the organization would qualify as a negative relationship.”⁴⁶ Neutral relationships were determined when “Descriptions may be matter of fact. What might come across is that the policymaker was doing his/her job with no value judgment or opinion connected with that description. If there are conflicting pieces of evidence, some negative and some positive, this might be the appropriate selection.”⁴⁷ To code an interview as cooperative, coders were told to “ Look for evidence that the advocacy group offered something to the policymaker that was valuable to he/she. Or, was there an indication that the policymaker found it valuable to work with the organization, that the interaction wasn’t perfunctory but was a sincere effort to work together.”⁴⁸ Finally, for partnerships “Key evidence would be some indication that there is a history of a relationship and that extends beyond this particular issue and that it is at least minimally cooperative in nature.”⁴⁹ If none of the above options could be determined the variable was given a code of “don’t know”.

In total, there were 16 variables which were coded for collaboration. These variables related to the interview subject’s relationship with a specific group, or with the group interviews with the subsets of the administrators or councilors which they frequently worked with. The councilor and administrator interviews were coded on collaboration which different types of groups similar to how the groups were coded for the two different types of government officials interviewed. This resulted in a large data bank of collaboration ratings which could be used for cross tabs and other statistical analysis.

⁴⁶ *Collaborative City Code Book*

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

Outside Interest Groups

The classification of a group was important in selecting what questionnaire to use in an interview. While most interview subjects were easily classified, some groups such as economic development corporations often consider themselves an arm of the city government. For the purposes of this study, an interest group was considered any group or organization which had an independent budget and did not directly and solely report to the city administration. If there was a question of whether a group was a city agency, this usually indicated that it should be considered a group because any independence, even if it is just partial was enough to classify an organization as an outside group.

Financial vs. Non Financial Issues

An important control used in this study to determine the content of collaboration relationships is whether an issue regards financial issues or not financial issues. This does not ask whether an issue requires significant financial expenditures, but the policy area of an issue. Economic development, zoning, budget, and housing issues classify as financial issues. Non financial issues include social services, environmental issues, school issues, police, fire and safety and any other issues. It is important to note that many of the conclusions in this thesis are dependent on this categorization of financial vs. non financial issues and that should be taken into account when reading the paper.

Collaboration

Collaboration is measured multiple ways in each interview. For councilors and administrators, the amount of collaboration with the top three groups they mentioned in the interview is measured independently. Their collaboration with group types (nonprofits, citizen groups, business interest groups, businesses, etc.) was also measured. The interview coders used

the tone and descriptions of interactions to score a level of collaboration in each instance. For many cross tabulations in this thesis, the collaboration score was distilled to a simple do they collaborate or do they not collaborate question to simplify the data as to produce reliable results.

Collaboration Ratio

For many of the cross tabulations in this thesis a collaboration ratio was also used. This was derived by counting whether or not they councilor or administrator collaborated with each group type and dividing that count with the total number of interviews. This ratio was counted based on a few variables, primarily the city, but also the type of administrator as well as the type of issue. This collaboration ratio variable is incredibly useful for this thesis because it provides a large number of cases because it combines both administrator and councilor responses on multiple questions which gives a more reliable data.

4. Painting a Picture of Collaboration by Issue

Do cities and groups collaborate?

It is important to first establish at the most basic level whether the case cities engage in collaboration with interest groups. Based on the codebook definition of collaboration the group interviews were coded for whether or not they engage in collaboration with both administrative agencies as well as city councilors. An important element to this question, as with many of the questions in this study is that it can be viewed differently from the three different perspectives interviewed in this study (groups, councilors and administrators). Groups were asked to mention the administrative agencies and the city councilors that they worked with most frequently. They were then asked to describe their relationship on a continuum between collaborative and conflictual with the option of selecting something in the middle.

Table 2: Group Relationships with Agencies and Councilors

	Relationship with Agency	Relationship with Councilors
Collaborative	52.5%	40.5%
Somewhere in middle	35.0%	59.5%
Conflictual	12.5%	0%
	N = 40	N = 37

The groups clearly believe that they collaborate both with agencies of the cities they deal in with half answering that they have a collaborative relationship and a third answering that they have a middle of the road relationship. Interestingly the groups were much more likely to describe their relationships with councilors under less harmonious terms, with the distributions switching between middle of the road and collaborative relationships.

When the question is turned on the actors inside the government we see a very similar pattern with administrators being much more likely to describe their relationships with groups as collaborative than councilors. When administrators describe their relationship with the group

they interact with most frequently with 29.4% describe it as a partnership, 55.9% as cooperative and only 11.8% as neutral with only 2.9% (1 administrator) describing the relationship as negative.⁵⁰ However when councilors are asked the same question, only 6.1% describe the relationship as a partnership, 36.4% as cooperative, a very large 51.5% as neutral and 6.1% as negative.⁵¹

Nearly a majority of city councilors consider their relationship with the group as neutral, compared with only 11.8% of administrators. What's surprising about this statistic is that we'd expect councilors to be more partisan and more likely to align with an outside group, but the opposite appears to be true. However, this data provides a window into the nature of interest group-city collaborative relationships which will be explored in chapter 6.

One group summed up the reason they collaborate in cities very simply "It is collaborative, because it's the only way to get things done." Administrators are very conscious of the need to work with nonprofit groups. "Nonprofits are the largest employer in Downtown, we work hard here with the downtown project to make sure that what we're doing was compatible with what they wanted as well," said one agency director. Another agency administrator described both a project with an affordable housing group and an environmental group saying "Well, they do things that we don't do but they do things that we support." He indicated that those groups have taken up those projects because their department doesn't have the time or expertise to do them on their own. . Both sides of the government-group collaboration pattern clearly understand the language of collaboration and it's importance to the administration of city government.

⁵⁰ See Appendix A, Table A1: Group and Administrator Perceptions of Collaboration

⁵¹ Ibid.

The data also shows that there is not a perception gap between groups and the governments. A majority of groups rated their administrator relationships as positive (collaborative) as did an overwhelming majority of administrators. If anything the administrators have a rosier picture of their relationship with the groups than do the groups. The same effect is seen when we compare the councilor perceptions and group perceptions of the relationships.

How does the content of an issue affect collaboration?

The sheer number of papers and studies on collaboration in regards to financial issues, including economic development, budgeting, and housing issues would have us believe that cities are more likely to collaborate on economic issues than they are likely to collaborate on non financial issues. When the issue that city councilors and administrators discussed in their interview (which is not necessarily the issue of their agency) is separated on the finance variable, 52% qualify as financial and development issues and 48% qualify as non financial and development issues.⁵² Cross tabulating for collaboration of any type with a group on the issue results in a suggestive, though not statistically strong pattern. 65.8% of financial and development government officials said they collaborate (either through a partnership or slightly lesser cooperation) compared to 58.1% collaborating for non financial issues.⁵³

Although the P-value is a bit high for us to make the statement that this relationship is statistically significant, it is certainly suggestive. When this clear trend is taken into context with the existing research it certainly solidifies the conclusion that there is more collaboration on finance issues than non-finance issues. Dahl's defining example of city collaboration with outside groups was on the issue of urban development.

⁵² Because this statistic included both councilors and administrators there were 73 applicable cases.

⁵³ See Appendix A, Table A2: Group and Administrator Perceptions of Collaboration

It is difficult to drill down to specific policy areas because the limited number of cases, however if we look at the distribution of mentions of any type of collaboration (partnership or cooperative) for each interview we have many more data points which we can use to draw more reliable conclusions. This collaboration mention count can be used to find a ratio of the number of mentions of collaborations per interview of a specific interview type.

When the collaboration ratio is cross tabulated for the type of issue discussed the ratio for all interviews is 2.1 mentions of collaboration per interview.⁵⁴ Budget and spending issues as well as economic development issues have the highest ratios of 2.85 and 2.45 mentions per interview respectively. What's striking however is how few mentions of collaboration occurred on the environment and social service areas with ratios of 1.88 and 1.5 per interview respectively. Schools came in the lowest however school issues were not a target of the research project (school officials were not interviewed) so they were only mentioned in three interviews.

A large development group executive director described the reason they get along with the city is because the city depends on them to do the hard work of development "I think we have a good collegial relationship, I think it's respectful on both sides, we depend on them for some of the financial and political support that we get and I think on their side [development] is one of the priorities for the city administration and we're the principal entity in the city that constructs it." In the study, the most common economic issue where collaboration was occurring was on affordable housing development. "These days a lot of [collaboration] surrounds development, and mostly 40B buildings," stated once elected official.

One discouraged social service group director said "Real estate is the mother's milk of local politics." An environmental group representative described a bias towards development

⁵⁴ See Appendix A, Table A4: Ratio of Collaboration by Issue Discussed

“The city manager and the community development department are pretty interested in expanding the tax base in [the city], so that means supporting private development. I mean their general stance has been to favor developers.” A social service agency which was quite successful at collaboration described their relation with city administrators as positive because of the litany of projects they do for the city “Basically we contract with them to provide a number of services in the city of neighborhood of [the city], emergency food, housing, employment assistance referral, summer recreation, those types of things.”

This finding follows Stone’s theory that when governments want to accomplish change they must make partnerships with outside groups for financial resources. However, the findings disagree with Stone on the types of outside groups which the city governments are turning to. The groups are not large, moneyed private corporations, but economic development groups concentrated on socially conscious development that works to provide more affordable housing or provide resources to local nonprofits.

Who are they collaborating with?

At this point it is critical to distinguish between group type and issue type. Non financially focused groups, defined as post materialist groups; in this study can and often do work on financial issues. An environmental group is post materialist but they may be consumed greatly by fighting a developments issue or a social service nonprofit may be working on a housing issue. This differentiation is important because the data shows that while cities are collaborating on financial issues, their collaboration is not dominated by individual businesses, business associations and professional associations.

One city councilor who was proposing a costly alternative energy project described how the community was only receptive to the issue when she and the environmental groups involved

presented it in a context of economic benefits “I mean it’s good for everywhere for the environment, but the community won’t buy it unless it saves money... our prediction is that the savings is around \$400 to \$500 thousand a year in electricity savings. It would be paid for in five years, they last 25 years, in the long run it’s a 7 or 8 million dollar savings. Another administrator described that they work with environmental groups only in the context of the environmental impact of development projects “[T]he only environmental issues I only touch on those when we have to do an environmental review in order to spend federal money.” One conservation group stated that in the current political context, the biggest project is green buildings, specifically on new school development.

Specific businesses, business associations and professional associations were mentioned in less than half of the government interviews, with specific businesses being mentioned the most of the three at 43.8%. Nonprofits, environmental, and citizen groups were by comparison mentioned in more than half of all interviews. Nonprofits were mentioned 57.5% of the time, more than any other group type by city councilors and city administrators. However, what is even more striking is the instances of a collaborative relationship. Mentions of a cooperative relationship with the financial group types all fell under 10% with the exception of specific businesses at 20%. By comparison cooperative relationships were all above 15% for the non financial group types, with a high of 38% of all government interview subjections mentioning a cooperative relationship with a nonprofit. In regards to the more collaborative partnership type relationships, again, nonprofits were mentioned 12.7% of the time, with specific businesses coming in 2nd 7.3% of the time⁵⁵.

The data clearly leads to the conclusion that there is collaboration on financial issues. These issues include economic development, affordable housing and jobs programs. Specifically

⁵⁵ See Appendix A, Table A3: Group types mentioned and collaborated with

there is the most collaboration on economic development and budget spending with the least collaboration on environmental and social service issues. What's striking about this pattern is that the city administrators and city councilors are collaborating with nonprofits, environmental and citizen groups on these issues, not business or business associations.

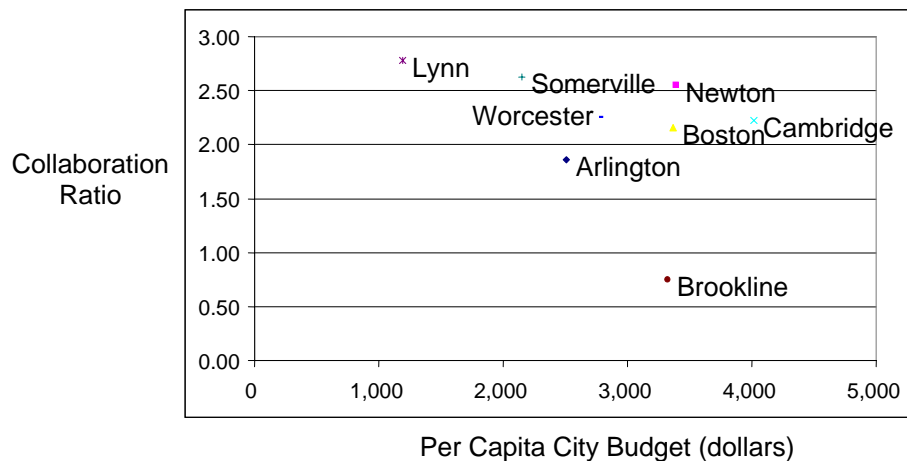
5. Collaboration by City Characteristics

City financial health and collaboration

We've examined the issues that cities collaborate on, now it is appropriate to begin to directly take on the debate surrounding Dahl's pluralism and ask: what are the characteristics of a city which exhibits a higher amount of collaboration?

The ratio of mentions of collaboration used for digging deeper into the issues which are collaborated can also be used for further differentiating the data across a variety of variables. The first question to ask is how do fiscal resources connect with likelihood to collaborate. An initial examination of the cities doesn't reveal an immediately visible pattern between the finances of a city and their likelihood to collaborate by graphing their collaboration ratio vs. their per capita spending in 2005.⁵⁶

Graph 1: Collaboration Ratio vs. Per Capita City Budget



Linear regression analysis on the graph above results in an R-squared value of 0.176 indicating that there is not a negative correlation between per capita spending and likelihood to collaborate. When the collaborative ratio is correlated with average increase in city revenue over

⁵⁶ State of Massachusetts Department of Revenue Municipal Data Bank <http://www.dls.state.ma.us/mdm.htm>

the past three years it results in a similar lack of correlation. This confirms the pluralist belief that cities are open to all and overall financial health of a city does not determine likelihood to collaborate.

The finding that there is no connection between overall city financial health and ratio of collaboration within the test cities does not immediately fall in line with the hypothesis presented in this paper. However, the financial health of all the cities in this study is relative to each other. They all exist in a climate as described in chapter 1 of deeper fiscal pressure, and, from chapter 2 we can see that they are all collaborating quite frequently. In fact, all the cities in this study are limited because of the Proposition 2 and a Half restrictions placed on them in the state of Massachusetts limiting how much they can increase their taxes. limiting This does tell us that all cities, regardless of their financial situation are collaborating. This suggests that there is a culture of collaboration in the cities in the study, and possibly in the country as a whole. In the face of increased fiscal pressure, all cities are turning to collaboration because it is the accepted solution in the culture of city bureaucrats to their fiscal woes.

In addition, no city in this study described itself as being in a comfortable financial position. Every administrator interviewed described shrinking budgets, and many described shrinking payrolls over the past decade. One city councilor described local aid from the state as being cut by 20%. While there is clearly differentiation in the fiscal situations of the cities in the study, none are in such a great financial position where they do not need to turn to collaboration for outside help. It may be impossible to find a city that considers itself in a great financial position relative to the cities studied because the financial shifts in the country have been so broad and sweeping, affecting all municipalities.

There is a clear separation between the per capita government spending of the cities into two clear groups. Brookline, Boston, Cambridge and Newton all are above \$3,300 in per capita spending with an average of \$3,524 while Somerville, Worcester, Lynn and Arlington are below \$2,700 in per capita spending with an average of \$2,154⁵⁷. Comparing lower to higher per capita spending cities with respect to collaboration there is a similar lack of statistically significant difference between the city types.

When the analysis focuses just on financial issues a pattern emerges.⁵⁸ In cities where the per capita spending is under \$2,700, 72.2% of councilors and administrators collaborated on financial issues, while only 27.8% collaborated on non financial issues. This gives a chi-squared p-value of .053, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference. By comparison, in cities where the per capita spending is over \$3,300 there is no statistically significant difference (p value of .744) between the amount of collaboration on financial vs. non financial issues.

This cross tabulation indicates that while there is little difference on the question of whether to collaborate or not based on a city's financial health, a city's financial health does impact the content of that collaboration. Those cities that are under greater financial pressure are going to collaborate on financial issues because they must collaborate to be the most effective. Another angle of this situation is that cities under financial pressure do not have the luxury to spend resources, either financial or human, on collaborative projects that do not address their immediate fiscal needs such as social service or environmental issues.

“Because of the city funding cuts in the last three years, the staff is quite low and it's hard to meet public expectations. Contractors and volunteers have thrown projects at us and helped out, but that's been our biggest challenge of late—making that financial adjustment,” stated one

⁵⁷ See Appendix A, Table A5 City Per Capita Spending

⁵⁸ For this test the individual administrator or councilor rating of collaboration is used instead of the collaboration ratio because the individual score is tied closer to the individual while the collaboration ratio is tied better to the city.

agency director. Another administrator, when asked about collaboration, said “Today, we are having to do more with less.” A director of a city development agency stated that he seeks collaborative relationships because of their limited resources. “I want to be proactive and form partnerships because municipal government can’t and doesn’t have the resources on it’s own to do economic development and housing development,” stated one agency administrator.” Another administrator described the growing trend of a need to collaborate because of fewer financial resources “You’re going to see towns going to a private business partnership to run the city.” A group in that city said “Parks and [the local development agency] definitely seek us out, because they have seen major reductions in staff in recent years.”

Suburban vs. Urban

When the cities are divided into two urban and suburban categorizations⁵⁹ there is a clear pattern. The urban cites have the smallest collaboration ratio scores while four of the five suburban cities have the largest collaboration ratio scores with a chi-squared p-value of .028. The one exception to this trend, Arlington is next to Cambridge so it could be considered a transitional city. The average collaboration ratio for the urban cities is 1.71 and 2.41 for the suburban cities, means that administrators and city councilors in suburban cities said they had a collaborative relationship with some outside group 41% more frequently than their urban counterparts.

It is difficult to explain this trend because no overt explanation exists. One theory, which is beyond the bounds of this study’s capabilities is that urban cities have more established infrastructure with larger bureaucracies and a greater number of city services. Because they have

⁵⁹ Boston, Cambridge and Brookline are classified as urban cities while Somerville, Arlington, Newton, Worcester and Lynn are considered suburban cites.

more infrastructure they are more adept at responding to demands and needs and are less dependent on outside help than their suburban counterparts.

6. The “Working” Nature of Collaboration

In Chapter 4 we saw how groups are collaborating with cities on economic issues. However, contrary to conventional wisdom the research from the Collaborative Cities project indicates that it is the nonprofits rather than private interests that are doing the collaboration. Chapter 5 established that economic development-focused cities are more likely to collaborate than their non-economic development counterparts. However, Chapter 5 also established that cities are largely pluralist, and all are open to collaboration because it is a critical part of their operation. Up until this point this paper has been dominated by a city-centric view of collaboration, which lays the groundwork to examine the groups that are the critical second piece of the puzzle.

Providing Operational Benefits vs. Political Benefits

On their top three most mentioned interest groups, city councilors and administrators were coded for what the “value” of the collaborative relationship was.⁶⁰ It’s clear from this data that the nature of the value to government officials is a “working” one. 50.7% of the collaborative relationships were described as providing a practical benefit, with 23.61% reporting a complementary benefit. Only 25% reported a political benefit and only 6.25% reported an informational benefit.

What’s even more surprising about is that political benefits are not why councilors engage in collaboration. Marwell’s hypothesis that collaboration is the new form of political patronage is not supported by the data. While the stereotype of politicians would lead to a natural assumption that politicians and those involved in government would pursue collaboration

⁶⁰ Because each interview could yield up to three data points for this variable, this frequency provides 141 data points resulting in very strong data.

because of their selfish political interests; that is not apparently why they are working with groups.

Very few city councilors described their supporters as anything beyond their “base” of friends and family as well as their neighborhood. Although the elected officials were specifically asked what groups provided them support very few mentioned actual groups. One councilor described the drop in political activity from when his father (a former councilor) was running when he said “I don’t know, small groups, people don’t get involved like they used to. They used to all get together and canvass every weekend.” A surprising result of the study was the lack of “political intelligence” of the local elected officials. Few councilors described campaign activity beyond yard signs and door knocking. Overwhelmingly the councilors are not doing comprehensive canvassing, working with their local party, or using the media. Most importantly, they do not utilize the resources of specific groups beyond the occasional endorsement, and endorsements were few and far between.

When the data is broken down by councilors and administrators, a much higher percentage of councilors report political benefits as the value of collaboration. 32.2% report political benefits with a combined percentage of 36.6% reporting practical or complementary benefits.

Table 3: Value of Collaboration Controlled for Councilors and Administrators

	Administrator	Councilor
Practical	30.2%	34.3%
Complementary	29.1%	2.0%
Informational	7.2%	11.4%
Political	13.5%	32.3%
Avoid future problems	8.3%	9.4%
Other	11.4%	10.4%
<i>Responses: 144 Chi square P-Value: >.001</i>		

This may lead to the conclusion that electoral politics does in fact play an important role in determining who gets to collaborate. It certainly plays a role, possibly an equal role as a group's ability to implement policies with councilors. However, the limit of Marwell's research and this conclusion is that it places too much weight on the councilor's role in determining who to collaborate with. While councilors are certainly important, the reality is that administrators are the ones awarding grants and mandates based on competitive review processes and have a much more vital role in selection than councilors.

Berry's research on the national level effectively argues that the nature of the relationship, or collaboration between governments and interest groups is largely informational.⁶¹ *A Voice for Nonprofits* argues that those groups with the greatest capacity to gather information are the most effective at setting the agenda. What we see on the local level is markedly different. Information capacity is in fact the least value that groups are providing to cities. Political value when taken in the context of who is making the decisions and the importance of implementation ability are also much less important.

The data gives us a window into the selection process of who to collaborate with. Councilors may play a role in the selection of a group through a recommendation to administrators, but the ultimate decision on most collaboration projects is made by administrators. "[W]e make plans and it goes through the council and they tell us if they can pay for it," stated one planning director. These findings should not be interpreted to mean that political ability has no importance. It unquestionably matters in the selection process. A group cannot get a contract or grant without having the ability to lobby both councilors and administrators. It would be foolish to think that electoral political benefits are not considered by the councilors in making their decisions. However, groups can not achieve their objectives

⁶¹ Berry, Jeffrey *A Voice for Nonprofits*

relying on electoral political ability alone. They need to have the ability to lobby councilors and to a lesser extent administrators with a political appeal, but more importantly they need to be able to execute the programs which they are proposing.

Characteristics of Groups That Who Collaborate

The cities in this study all can be considered as having predominantly liberal, Democratic political climates as they are all located in Eastern Massachusetts. One elected official said in an interview “... the Chamber of Commerce is just about the least important group outside of government that comes to us, I mean business interest in this kind of community...(laughing) with Democrats running the show?” Not surprisingly, the more liberal an interest group, the more likely they are to collaborate with the city.⁶² The amount of collaboration is less for moderate groups and even less for conservative groups as show in Table 4.

Table 4: Amount of Collaboration with Administrators by Ideology

	Collaborative	Middle or Not Collaborative
Liberal	61.90%	38.10%
Moderate	36.36%	63.64%
Conservative	0.00%	100.00%
Pro-business	80.00%	20.00%
<i>Responses: 40 Chi square P-Value:081</i>		

What is interesting is the large likelihood of collaboration for pro-business groups that aren’t considered liberal or conservative. It is important to note that “pro-business” does not mean that a group is a “for profit” entity, and many of the pro business groups in this study were nonprofits. This data reaffirms that pro-business groups are the most successful at collaboration, and it can possibly be said that if a group decides to take a positive economic stance instead of a

⁶² There were not a valid enough number of cases for the similar test with City Councilors to come to a statistically significant conclusion.

more traditionally economic one they will be more likely to work with city government in a collaborative way.

The data gathered in this study clearly indicates that groups are collaborating. There are many other indicators that point to the same conclusion. This culture of collaboration is alive and well in American cities. The key players in American cities have a familiarity with the language of collaboration which makes it clear that collaboration is not just the language of political scientists. Clearly, given the current political and economic context, interest groups and administrators understand that they must work together.

Considering their familiarity with collaboration it would not be a stretch to think that city administrators and interest groups early on look to collaborative relationships as ways to solve problems and issues in their cities. They even consider the mandate or foundation of new groups to fix a problem. This is in fact happening on urban development issues, not only in the Massachusetts cities in this study, but throughout the country with the founding of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to handle the development of low income housing. The Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) are another example of this type of outside group. EDCs are charged with business development in one neighborhood or an entire city. In many regards, despite their independent boards, these types of groups are considered an extension arm of local government more than a true “outside” interest group. One could even hypothesize that the cause of this increased collaboration found in this study is only because city governments are creating the groups themselves, not that the cities are turning to groups founded by outside actors.

The conclusions of this study should not be seen pessimistically by independent activists seeking to form new groups to collaborate with city government. Group interviews were coded

for whether or not their formation was mandated by the city. When groups were asked to describe their relationship (as collaborative, somewhere in the middle, or conflictual) with the city government, both councilors and administrators, there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of groups whose creation was mandated by the city and those who were not.⁶³

It should be noted that the methodology of this study did not allow for a paired samples comparison on specific issues between groups. That is, a comparison of two similar groups competing for a contract or mandate from the city, one founded by the city and one not would be very helpful in answering this question. Paired samples would also be very helpful in examining the impact of other characteristics on the likelihood of collaboration. An issue centric study, looking at all the groups that even attempted to collaborate on a specific project would be an excellent follow-up study to shed more light on these questions.

In Chapter 4 we explained that agencies primarily worked with nonprofit groups. In addition, the data showed that the issues being worked on were developmental and economic in scope. On the reverse side, when the interviews are coded for the agency which the groups work with most frequently, not surprisingly an identical pattern is found. Of the groups interviewed, 43.9% said they work with a development, planning or zoning agencies most frequently. Some 22% reported that relationship with “leadership” and management offices such as the mayor, city manager, finance department or human resources department with an additional 22% reporting that relationship with public services agencies such as public works, parks and recreation, and the historic planning agencies. Some 12.2% reported that they worked with the police, fire or school departments most frequently. From Chapter 4 we know that in addition to having

⁶³ The cross tab with agencies produced a Chi Square P value of .793 and the cross tab with the councilors produced a Chi Square P value of .706.

relationships with development and economic focused agencies, those relationships are more collaborative than other agency types.

As would be expected, the issues with which the groups are dealing involve significant expenditures. This finding is not surprising considering the economic nature of their issues. The group interviews were coded for the budget implications of the issues discussed in the interview. Some 68.8% of groups described an issue coded as requiring significant expenditures, 18.8% required minor expenditures and 12.5% required no expenditures.

We might expect groups to collaborate more on issues with little or no budget implications because unquestionably policies with lower or no fiscal impact are easier to enact. It would seem that issues such as getting the rights to be the caretakers of a public garden, or hosting an educational seminar would be likely areas of collaboration because they do not require the city to spend its limited funds. The data however show the opposite situation. Those groups that describe their relationship with administrative agencies as collaborative primary project involves significant expenditures a resounding 88.2% of the time compared with 50.0% of the time for those groups who do not collaborate⁶⁴.

How can this be explained? Again, it boils down to the working nature of collaboration. In American cities, groups are working collaboratively. Given the limited resources facing these cities, administrators are becoming highly dependent on these groups. Administrators have shrinking budgets and staffs, and therefore concentrate their time collaborating on big projects that address major issues facing their cities. These projects require significant expenditures. If a group approaches a city administrator with a project which the administrator perceives as inconsequential the reality is that it's unlikely that project is going to address one of the major problems they are facing.

⁶⁴ Appendix A, Table 7

One Assistant Director for Public Works described how these small projects often cause more harm than good for their department. A group had organized a large number of volunteers to clean up a local pond, but as the administrator described “[I]n this process they pulled out a mountain of trash from the place, and then we had to come in and separate and remove it, and that was quite a job... And it took two guys two full workdays to clean up what they left behind. So you see there’s always pushes and pulls with what we can do and what we can support based on the requests of these groups or individual citizens.” In this case the group had the infrastructure to pull together a large number of volunteers, but they did not have the experience to understand all the aspects of the cleanup and as a result they left a large amount of work for the DPW to cleanup. Many other DPW and Parks and Recreation agencies described the same problem of garden clubs or small environmental groups wanting to marshal volunteers for cleanup or beautification projects. However, they often described those groups less credibly and more of a distraction because the groups did not have the professional staff able to fully handle the projects.

Although this data might seem discouraging for small groups, it also provides a great amount of hope and credibility to the field of collaboration in cities. Administrators take collaboration so seriously that they need real partners with professional abilities. A group should not be deterred by projects which require heavy financial commitments from cities. Rather, administrators want to work together on these projects because those projects will have the largest impact on their execution of government programs. It can even be concluded that collaboration has become such an important factor in the implementation of government policy that, as happens in any organization, top administrators are taking it so seriously that they are not wasting their time on small projects.

A project won't happen if the money is not there, and administrators and councilors have to decide which issues are "real" as one councilor described it based largely on finances "I'd say, maybe what distinguishes between real and not real issues. If you look at the whole array of interest and influence, it really comes down to if the money is there and if it sits well with the city." A representative from a housing group that received a majority of its funding from the city described its relationship with the planning department and city councilors as very collaborative. If they didn't have that relationship he said they wouldn't be as successful. In addition, that particular director said the relationship had gotten much more collaborative over time, and as a result the group had become much more successful.

Exactly half of the groups were coded as receiving funding from the government, and while a slightly higher percentage of groups that received funding from the government collaborate with the government, it was not a statistically significant difference from those that do not. This data slightly contradicts the finding that groups are collaborating on budget impacting issues – however it does not strike it down. It does imply at least that groups are also finding outside sources of income such as private donors or client fees to fund their projects while simultaneously pulling some revenue from the government.

One example of this complexity was an independent housing group which was founded by the city to provide affordable housing. The group representative described the resulting impact on their relationship with administrators and councilors. They received funding from the federal government in the form of HUD grants, and from state government and local government to provide affordable housing, elderly housing, and handicap accessible housing. Their funding came both from grants as well as vouchers from the clients of their developments. Although the group was founded by the government and described itself as a quasi-government agency they

explained that they have to compete with other housing nonprofits in the area. The group director described that they only got \$75,000 of a \$500,000 housing grant from the city because of philosophical differences but because of they are less dependent on the city and relationships within it.

What is astounding about this finding is that half of all the groups interviewed are funded in some part by the government. When nonprofit and citizen groups are compared to businesses and business related groups there is no statistically significant difference between the percentages reporting receiving funding from the government. “An example is with the private contractors, because now we manage those seven buildings but there are maintenance contracts and other services that are no longer provided by the government, so that is a big change in our job to now have to deal with the private sector,” described one planning director on the increased collaboration with the planning sector. The groups, both private and nonprofit are really becoming an extension of the executive functions of city governments and doing much of their governing for them. This is happening both for businesses and groups. However, as the descriptions of the group directors showed because of the diversity of their funding sources they are not as accountable to the cities as an agency would be.

Earlier we established that according to city officials the benefits provided to them from groups are not political or informational in nature, but rather practical and complementary. This working nature of collaboration is supported by the group’s own observations. Planning and city development are all reported as being a factor of their relationship with governments by cities. The greatest difference between those groups who collaborate and those who do not is in regards to those groups who carry out a mandated city program.

Table 5: Groups Coded as “Yes” to Engaging in an Activity with Governments Sorted by Nature of Relationship with Administrators

	Collaborative		Middle or Not Collaborative		Chi-Square P Value
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Joint planning with agency?	85.00%		52.63%		0.029
Engage in city planning?	84.21%		57.89%		0.074
Transmit of information valued?	83.33%		41.18%		0.010
Members sit on city advisory boards?	78.95%		47.37%		0.044
Groups carries out mandated service/program?	63.16%		31.58%		0.051
Gov't official on board?	56.25%		14.29%		0.017

The only contradiction from the above data to previous findings in this thesis is the importance of the transmission of information in the collaborative relationships. Groups report providing information to administrators and councilors, but the councilors and administrators do not consider it an important part of their relationship. It does not even register as a top benefit.⁶⁵ What can explain this difference? It is likely explained by the perception gap between what groups think is effective and what is actually effective. The data suggest that groups believe that the information they provide is an important element in their relationship with city governments. This is a similar finding to the data yielded by the wider mail survey of mostly national and large groups in Berry’s *A Voice for Nonprofits*. We would expect the two to agree. However, Berry’s study did not survey government officials on the benefits they receive from groups as has been done here.

This is a very interesting finding for which there are two possible explanations. The first is that on the national as well as local level there is a huge perception gap on the importance of providing information and on both levels information is not very important to governing actors. However, when we consider the differences between city government and federal government where testimony, research and public relations play a much larger role in federal policy making

⁶⁵ Appendix A: Chart 6

than city policymaking we certainly can not accept this first explanation. The fact is that the federal government has the governing capacity to execute programs on it's own and based on Berry's research of Congressional testimony we can confidently say that the information is much more important than a group's ability to execute actual policy on the federal level. The second explanation, which is in alignment with our hypothesis is that on the local level the ability to implement and execute proposed policy, i.e. the "working nature" of collaboration is much more important than it is on the federal level and more important than information providing capacity.

Then why are groups sending studies, memos, and zealously providing their "expertise" to their city councilors and administrators when these actors indicate that the information is not highly valued? The answer likely lies again in national and large group activity. These local groups are largely mirroring the tactics employed by their national counterparts. They see the effectiveness of the National Rifle Association, Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood and other national groups who testify to Congress and fund massive studies and whose research shops produce massive reports and policy recommendations. It appears from the survey data that this is not nearly as important as the groups believe, and their resources might be better spent on building their policy implementation infrastructure.

A city councilor described the packet of letters he gets every week and the lack of effective tactics in providing information by groups in his city when he said "They don't know how to get their message out, they need to learn effective lobbying. Local politicians in particular aren't conservative or liberal, or Democrat or Republican, we just are on local issues and we just want to know the facts, they presume we know nothing about an issue or we know everything about it."

Another interesting finding from the coding of the group interviews is the impact of boards and advisory committees on the likelihood to collaborate. Some 79.0% of groups who collaborate have a member or members who sit on advisory committees for the city compared to 47.4% for those who don't collaborate. When that situation is reversed, 56.3% of groups who collaborate have a city official on their board compared to only 14.3% of groups who don't collaborate. While sitting on a board certainly helps the likelihood that a group will collaborate with a city, having a city official on their own board seems much more important.

The Ability to Implement

The data presented in this chapter affirms the fourth part of the hypothesis presented in this paper, namely that groups which are the most effective at not only advocating for policies but implementing those very policies are the most effective at agenda setting in cities. From the administrator and councilor interviews we can conclude that it is not for political or informational benefits that government officials work with groups. Rather, it is the group's ability to execute policy and provide, real, tangible operations benefits to those cities in solving the problems they are facing.

The picture of collaboration painted by this chapter does, however, provide some guidance and warning flags to groups hoping to collaborate. While direct political benefit of working together may not be a major factor, the overall ideology of a group is important. Additionally, groups that collaborate on economically substantial issues are collaborating more with cities than those who aren't.

Beyond the ideology and subject of collaboration, the study does paint a fairly open pluralist picture for groups. A group need not be formed by the city to collaborate. But, if a group wants to collaborate it must have the capacity to plan with the city, work on specific

development projects and have the staff, volunteer or entrepreneurial resources to quickly and efficiently grown it's infrastructure to fulfill a city's need.

7. Conclusion

Increased fiscal pressure along with the demand to do more has pushed city governments to turn to the outside world to execute their mission of governing. Cities are heavily relying on nonprofit organizations to collaborate with, despite the large amount of discussion in the existing research surrounding government business partnerships. The nature of that collaboration is a working one. Groups are largely providing operational benefits to execute programs to city administrators and councilors instead of political or informational benefits.

The first catalyst for this increased dependence on nonprofits is governments inability to rely on once healthy revenue streams. Starting in the 1970s, the popularity of block grant programs and then the eventual decrease in funding for block grants meant that cities are receiving less revenue from the federal government. In addition, the “war on big government” combined with many reforms has increased the amount of responsibility that is placed on city governments. Now, in this decade, cities face a dilemma. On the one side their funding is decreasing and on the other they are being asked to do more. Cities had to find a solution.

That solution has come in the form of outside assistance from the nonprofit sector which is thriving. The number of nonprofits in America has been growing steadily and those nonprofits are diversifying their sources of revenue positioning themselves to solve problems effectively. Cities are both turning to existing nonprofits founded by private citizens as well as founding their own nonprofits to work in conjunction with the city. One popular type of nonprofit is Community Development Corporations which address economic development and housing issues.

In the introduction of this thesis a four part hypothesis was presented. 1) American cities are collaborating on financial issues because of the increased fiscal pressure to which they are

subject; 2) Although the issues on which collaboration is occurring are economic and significant financial— especially development; the issues are dominated by nonprofit interest groups, not private businesses; 3) The substance of these collaborative relationships largely takes the form of financial support or contracts for groups to execute policy mandates and as such they are working relationships, pursued for their benefits of implementing policy, not their political benefits. Finally, that 4) groups which are the most effective at not only advocating for policies but implementing those very policies are the most effective at collaborating in cities.

This thesis has attempted to answer questions posed in the hypotheses above by using data from the Collaborative Cities project funded by a grant from Tufts University. The research method provided a comprehensive look into all the major players in the collaboration “picture” and attempted to remove any alternative explanations which would jeopardize the conclusions.

The first portion of the hypothesis attempts to address the question asking why do cities collaborate. Chapter 4 explored this, however before this thesis even attempted to answer that question, it first established that groups and governments do in fact collaborate. Over half of the groups described their relationship with city agencies as collaborative while 40.5% of the groups described their relationship with city councilors as collaborative. That same pattern is mirrored with the councilor and administrator perception of the groups. It is clear that both sides agree they are collaborating.

Directly answering the first part of the hypothesis, data in Chapter 4 that budget and spending issues have higher collaboration ratios than their non financial counterparts shows that cities are concentrating on financial issues for their collaboration. The interview transcripts mirrored this trend with many social service agencies complaining about the attention that development groups and economically focused groups get from city hall.

Of equal importance as the content of collaboration are the types of groups that are collaborating. Somewhat contradicting the existing research, the data clearly showed that it was not private businesses or business associations that were doing the collaboration. Rather it was nonprofit groups and citizen groups that were doing the collaboration – even on economic issues. This data confirms the second part of the hypothesis that it is nonprofits who are doing the collaboration much more so than private businesses.

Chapter 5 attempted to address many of the lingering questions from the existing research on collaboration, asking, are cities open to collaboration or are there demographic characteristics or other situational variables that prevent some groups from collaborating? This data rules out that cities under stricter budgetary constraints collaborate significantly more than those who don't, however, that does not mean that financial health does not play a role in the amount of collaboration. The reality is that all the cities in this study, and a large number of cities in the country, are all in a varying degree of financial stress because of current economic conditions. However, it does difficult to distinguish between their levels of financial stress and their collaboration.

The data did show a correlation with the subject of the collaboration and the fiscal position of the cities. Cities with lower per capita budgets were more likely to collaborate on fiscal issues than those with higher per capita budgets. These findings confirm the first part of the hypothesis that cities are collaborating on financial issues because of their increased financial pressure.

The third part of the hypothesis presented in this thesis is the most striking conclusion. It argues that cities collaborate not primarily for electoral or informational benefits as much as the existing research suggests. Rather, it argues that cities collaborate because it is the best way for

them to effectively execute their policy mandates. In effect, this creates a “working nature” of collaboration in the American city. Collaborative relationships are incredibly substantial and take the form of significant exchange between a government and a group. Chapter 6 first established that it was practical and complementary benefits which councilors and administrators described as their benefit from collaboration. The chapter also established that information capacity and political benefits take a less important role on the local level.

Considering the conditions that have been setup in the cities by the first three parts of the hypothesis, what can a group do to be an effective partner in collaboration? Part four of the hypothesis attempts to answer this arguing that groups with the greatest ability to implement policy are successful at collaborating with government. The data showed that the groups were collaborating primarily on issues with significant expenditures meaning they needed the capacity to handle those issues. The data also showed that half of the groups surveyed were receiving funding from the local government showing the large volume of collaboration that is occurring. The councilors and administrators saying the partners they are looking for in collaboration need a real ability to assist as well as groups saying that they are working on projects with major budget implications confirms the fourth portion of the hypothesis that groups must have the ability to implement policy to become collaborators.

This thesis has clearly established that collaboration in the form of a working relationship is occurring primarily with nonprofits on financial issues in cities. What does this mean for both cities and groups? The cities in this study provide a template of how to collaborate effectively. Massachusetts has faced a difficult fiscal crisis and the cities in this study have managed to survive by collaborating. They clearly have collaborative relationships of substance that are helping them govern.

The first few chapters of this paper asked the question are cities open to all actors, a question which existing research has provided varying answers to for the past half century. When we narrow this question to collaboration, the results of this study are a resounding yes. While collaboration certainly most frequently occurs on financial issues, as long as groups have actual implementation ability cities are open to working with them. This study also shows that the financial nature of collaboration should not deter nonprofits. In fact nonprofits are doing the majority of the collaboration. Additionally, some of the groups in this survey were able to collaborate on issues that are traditionally considered non financial by arguing for their economic benefit.

The lack of electoral benefits or informational benefits as a reason that governments collaborate provides another positive sign. Groups shouldn't look at the lobbying efforts of their national counterparts and be discouraged. The reality is that in a very genuine way, local governing officials understand the need to collaborate to get things done. They are going to look for outside partners because of the working benefits of the relationship not the political ones. Additionally, the data showed that cities are collaborating with a large number of groups by providing funding to them. In this regard, a group that was founded by the city is not significantly more likely to collaborate than a group that wasn't.

The conclusions reached in this paper should provide optimism to small interest groups looking to implement change in their city government. Cities need groups to be effective governing bodies. They are largely open to working with groups because they need to do more with less money. Although this is government, the groups should not be discouraged by any lack of political expertise on their part. They do not have to invest in complex studies to prove their case. Additionally, they should realize that large amounts of funds are available from the city

governments and they are welcome to work on large projects. What a group should gather most from this study is that they must have a real ability to execute the policies they propose. That collaboration in American cities takes on a “working nature.” If groups have the ability to create programs and make their ideas a reality on their own, cities will want to collaborate with them providing them the funding and support they need.

Appendix A: Additional Tables

Table A1: Group and Administrator Perceptions of Collaboration

	Negative	Neutral	Cooperative	Partnership	Responses
Administrator	2.9%	11.8%	55.9%	29.4%	34
Council	6.1%	51.5%	36.4%	6.1%	33
Combined	4.5%	31.3%	46.3%	17.9%	67

Pearson Chi-Squared Test P value of 0.002

Table A2: Financial vs. Non Financial Issues vs. Administrator and Councilor Collaboration

	No Collaboration	Any Amount of Collaboration	Responses
Financial Issues	30.6%	69.4%	36
Non Financial Issues	41.9%	58.1%	31
Combined	35.8%	64.2%	67

Pearson Chi-Squared Test P value of 0.263

Table A3: Group types mentioned and collaborated with

	Business Group	Specific Business	Professional Association	Nonprofit Group	Environmental Group	Citizens Group	Civic Group
Mentioned	27.4%	43.8%	4.1%	57.5%	53.4%	52.1%	8.2%
Not Mentioned	72.6%	56.2%	95.9%	42.5%	46.6%	47.9%	91.8%
Negative	3.8%	10.9%	2.5%	1.8%	5.1%	11.3%	2.3%
Neutral	19.2%	20%	7.5%	16.4%	32.2%	29.0%	14.0%
Cooperative	9.6%	20%	0%	38.2%	25.4%	17.7%	0%
Partnership	3.8%	7.3%	0%	12.7%	0%	0%	0%
No response	63.5%	41.8%	90%	30.9%	37.3%	41.9%	83.7%

Table A4: Ratio of Collaboration by Issue Discussed

	Collaboration Instances	Total Interviews	Ratio
Budget, spending	37	13	2.85
Economic development, zoning	27	11	2.45
Housing, public or private	27	13	2.08
Contracts with city workers	2	1	2.00
Environment	32	17	1.88
Other	15	8	1.88
Police, fire, safety	5	3	1.67
Social services	6	4	1.50
Schools	2	3	0.67
Total	153	73	2.10

Table A5: City Per Capita Government Spending

	Per Capita \$
Cambridge	4,013
Newton	3,391
Boston	3,363
Brookline	3,327

Worcester	2,772
Arlington	2,505
Somerville	2,147
Lynn	1,193

Table A6: Value of Collaboration

Practical	50.69%
Informational	6.25%
Political	25.00%
Complementary	23.61%
Avoid future problems	7.64%
Other	12.50%
<i>Responses: 144</i>	

Table A7: Budget Implications of Projects vs. Amount of Collaboration

	No budget implications	Minor expenditures required	Significant expenditures required
Collaborative	.0%	11.8%	88.2%
Middle or Not	28.6%	21.4%	50.0%
<i>Responses: 31 Chi square P-Value:.03</i>			

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaires

[Staple business card here]

Bay State Cities Project
Department of Political Science
Tufts University

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW FORM

Date:

Interview Subject:

Title, Office

Phone #:

Email address from business card:

Interviewer

Comments on quality of interview. (If typical, you need not put anything here. But if subject is uncooperative, evasive, especially helpful, note here *briefly*.)

Names of organizations/individuals he mentioned (or suggested) that we might want to talk to. When he/she mentions the name of an organization, make sure you get the name of an individual to talk with. If a phone number is offered, include it here. If your write-up does not indicate what kind of organization each is, note that here:

[Hand business card at opening; take offered card in return]

Thank you so much for taking time from your busy day to speak with me. As I think I said to you on the phone, our research team at Tufts is conducting a project on city government. We're interviewing officials from eight different cities from eastern Massachusetts in the hopes of better understanding policymaking and urban government.

[NOTE: If respondent asks you, which are the cities, it's ok to list them: Boston, Worcester, Lynn, Somerville, Cambridge, Arlington, Brookline, and Newton]

[NOTE: If respondent asks why we picked his/her city, your response should be something like: "There were a number of factors, but the principal that guided us was to choose a set of cities that were diverse from each other in terms of the socioeconomic status of the residents"]

By way of introduction let me also emphasize that this conversation is only for research purposes. In our papers and articles we'll never quote you by name or identify you in any way. Everything is confidential.

Q Intro Before we start, I just want to make sure I have you properly identified. On your card it says you're the [title]. <Or, if no card: I understand you're the [title]> Title aside, what is your job here? What are you responsible for?

Q1 To get a better idea of what goes on here I wonder if you could tell me a little about the issue you've been spending most of your time on. Over the past month or so, what have you been working on the most?

PROBE [We want to get the story here, with at least some detail, so that we can determine if there were any interest groups involved, so if their description is very brief, probe for more by picking out something in what they did say and encourage them to talk more. As with, "Interesting. I was curious, for example, that you mentioned that Jones got involved by accident, but Smith had been working all along on it. Could you elaborate?" Or some such.]

PROBE[If they don't include this information, follow-up with:] And how did that issue come on to your agenda? Where did it come from?

Q2 Thanks, that was really helpful. Looking back in time, how has the work in this office changed? Are there new procedures you use, new different kinds of demands that are placed upon you?

Q3 To round off this background, how does the size of your office today compare with its size, say, 10 years ago? In terms of FTE's, what would the comparison be?

[NOTE: We need to be able to make a comparison based on percentages. OK if the respondent says something like "12 work here today, 15 a decade ago." We can calculate the percentage from that ourselves. But if they say just "more today" or "fewer today", or "I didn't work here 10 years ago, follow up with something like: Don't worry about being exact. I just need some round numbers, a ballpark figure]

You're going to ask either 4a or 4b.

Q4 I want to return if I could to the story you told me at the outset about the [issue they just described].

EITHER:

4a-1 As you told the story, you mentioned [name of organization(s)], which were involved on this issue. Could you tell me a little bit more about their role?

4a-2 Were there other nongovernmental organizations were involved in this issue?

OR, IF NO GROUPS WERE MENTIONED

4b-1 Were there any organizations from outside of government, from the nonprofit, for-profit, or labor sectors were involved in this issue?

4b-2 [If not clear from above] Could you tell me a little about how they were involved?

ONLY ASK THIS QUESTION, Q5, IF THE ISSUE DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION #1 DOES NOT HAVE TO DO WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. (WE'RE DEFINING THE ENVIRONMENT BROADLY HERE, SO IF THE ISSUE IN Q #1 SEEMS REMOTELY CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, DON'T ASK THIS QUESTION.

ONLY ASK OF RELEVANT AGENCIES. [KENT, PLEASE PROVIDE LIST. IF NOT A RELEVANT AGENCY SKIP AND GO TO Q6.]

Q5 One area we've been asking about is the environment as such issues are often controversial in city government. Is there an issue related to the environment that you've been involved with recently?

[If they say yes but don't proceed to tell you much, probe, something like:] That's interesting, what you said about [X, Y or Z]. Tell me a little more about that:

You're going to ask either 5a or 5b

5a-1. As you told the story, you mentioned [name of organization(s)], which were involved on this issue. Could you tell me a little bit more about their role?

5a-2. Were there other nongovernmental organizations were involved in this issue?

OR, IF NO GROUPS WERE MENTIONED IN 5

5b-1. Were there any organizations from outside of government that were involved in this issue?

5b-2 [If not clear from above] Could you tell me a little about how they were involved?

Q6 When an administrator like yourself is dealing with outside organizations, he/she is sometimes just trying to be responsive to requests, making sure government is open to its constituents. Other times, administrators work with outside organizations in an attempt to collaborate with them, or try to build a coalition with them. For the organizations you just mentioned, which fall into the collaborative/partner category and which are organizations that you conscientiously respond to but don't try to partner with?

PROBE: [If not clear from their answers, for those groups that fall into the collaborative category] And what makes these groups valuable to you? What is that they have to offer?

Q7 Are there any organizations that you've found frustrating to work with? Organizations that try to block what you want, or they somehow work at cross-purposes to your efforts?

PROBE [If not clear from their answers] what is it that gives these groups what influence they have?

Q8 Does your agency have any advisory committees made up of people from the community, or representatives of local organizations?

If yes, ask, “Would it possible to get a membership list, or is it on the city’s web site?”

Q9 Let me ask a different sort of question, but again about outside organizations. One thing that’s not well understood by political scientists is the role of nongovernmental organizations in local elections. Most political science research is on state or national elections. Since you’re an administrator and don’t have to stand for election, you might be a good observer, or at least a neutral one, in discussing this. Do any of these outside organizations provide any kind of assistance, directly or indirectly, to city council [selectman, alderman] candidates or candidates for mayor?

PROBE [For the organization listed as most important, or listed first if they’re treated equally, probe for what, specifically, did they do in the last election]

Q-LAST We've covered a lot of ground. Is there something I should be asking. If you were sitting in my seat, what would you be asking?

Q-Help That just about wraps things up. If I could ask for your help on one thing, though. As we spoke you mentioned some organizations that you interacted with. We're going to follow up and try to do brief phone interviews with one representative of each group we hear about. [Here distinguish between organizations where he/she mentioned a person, and those that he/she didn't.] Could you give me the name of someone at the [organizations where he/she didn't give you a name].

Let me make sure I have the names right for [list names mentioned earlier; probe if its not clear how you get a hold of them; nonprofits might be run out of someone's home. Businesses, business associations, and unions should be easy to find.]

That's it. Thanks so much. **[Close your folder and put away your pen in a very obvious fashion, indicating that you really are done. Then:]** Maybe I should ask if there's something I should have been asking you?

[Do not take notes, leave notebook closed even if they talk about something directly relevant]

[Linger at door if comfortable; small talk might be revealing at this point]

[When you finally do leave, *immediately* write up any comments they made after your notebook was closed; *immediately* write up all other comments using the notes you took as a guide.]

[Staple business card here]

Bay State Cities Project
Department of Political Science
Tufts University

CITY COUNCILLOR INTERVIEW FORM

Date:

Interview Subject:

City's Election Cycle [year of next or last city council election]:

Phone #:

Email address from business card:

Interviewer: Robin__ Jessie__

Comments on quality of interview. (If typical, you need not put anything here. But if subject is uncooperative, evasive, especially helpful, note here *briefly*.)

Names of organizations/individuals he mentioned (or suggested) that we might want to talk to. When he/she mentions the name of an organization, make sure you get the name of an individual to talk with. If a phone number is offered, include it here. If your write-up does not indicate what kind of organization each is, note that here:

[Hand business card at opening; take offered card in return]

Thank you so much for taking time from your busy day to speak with me. As I think I said to you on the phone, our research team at Tufts is conducting a project on city government. We're interviewing officials from eight different cities from eastern Massachusetts in the hopes of better understanding policymaking and urban government.

[NOTE: If respondent asks you, which are the cities, it's ok to list them: Boston, Worcester, Lynn, Somerville, Cambridge, Arlington, Brookline, and Newton]

[NOTE: If respondent asks why we picked his/her city, your response should be something like: "There were a number of factors, but the principal that guided us was to choose a set of cities that were diverse from each other in terms of the socioeconomic status of the residents"]

By way of introduction let me also emphasize that this conversation is only for research purposes. In our papers and articles we'll never quote you by name or identify you in any way. Everything is confidential.

Q1 *Let me begin by asking you a little bit about yourself. Tell me about your career background and how you eventually ended up on the city council?*

IF THE SUBJECT IS UNCLEAR OR AMBIGUOUS (I.E., "I AM A LAWYER BY BACKGROUND), ASK FOR A LITTLE MORE DETAIL (I.E., "TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT WHAT YOU DID THERE")

IF THE SUBJECT DOESN'T MENTION THE DATE: I'm not sure I got down the date of your first election to the city council?

Q2 I want to jump forward from your first election to the present. Tell me about the issue you've been spending the most time this past month. If you could, tell me the story of that issue.

PROBE [We want to get the story here, with at least some detail, so that we can determine if there were any interest groups involved, so if their description is very brief, probe for more by picking out something in what they did say and encourage them to talk more. As with, "Interesting. I was curious, for example, that you mentioned that Jones got involved by accident, but Smith had been working all along on it. Could you elaborate?" Or some such.]

PROBE[If they don't include this information, follow-up with:] And how did that issue come on to the attention of the city council? Where did it come from?

You're going to ask either 3a or 3b.

EITHER:

3a-1 As you told the story, you mentioned [name of organization(s)], which is/are involved on this issue. Could you tell me a little bit more about their role in all of this?

3a-2 What other nongovernmental organizations were involved in this issue?
IF NECESSARY, PROBE FOR THEIR ROLE.

OR, IF NO GROUPS WERE MENTIONED

3b-1 Were there any organizations from outside of government, from the nonprofit, business, or labor, sectors were involved in this issue?

3b-2 **[If not clear from above]** And could you tell me a little about their role in all of this?

You'll ask either 4a or 4b:

Q4a-1 IF THE RESPONDENT'S ACCOUNT OF HIS/HER ELECTION IN #1 WAS

THEIR FIRST AND MOST RECENT ELECTION: If I could I'd like to return to that first election you spoke of just a few minutes ago. You mentioned some organizations/an organization that helped in your race for the city council. I wonder if you could expand on what you said and describe the kinds of assistance they provided to you: campaign workers, phone calls—what did they do to help?

PROBE IF THEY MENTIONED ONLY ONE OR TWO ORGANIZATIONS: Were there other organizations that helped or was that pretty much it?

Q4a-2 ALTERNATIVE: IF THEY DIDN'T MENTION ANY ORGANIZATIONS: If I could I'd like to return to that first election you spoke of just a few minutes ago. Were there any nongovernmental organizations—civic groups, business, nonprofits, labor, political organizations—that provided assistance to you in that election?

PROBE IF NECESSARY: I wonder if you could expand on what you said and describe the kinds of assistance they provided to you: campaign workers, phone calls—what did they do to help?

OR IF THERE WAS A MORE RECENT ELECTION THAN THEIR FIRST:

4b Earlier you talked about your first election. I'd like to move forward in time to your most recent election. Could you describe that campaign and describe your coalition of supporters?

PROBE IF NECESSARY: You mentioned some organizations, like the [name of organization(s)]. Could I get you to expand on how they helped you? What kind of assistance did they provide to you in the last election?

PROBE IF THEY DIDN'T MENTION ANY SPECIFIC ORGANIZATIONS: You mentioned your coalition but I'm not clear as to whether there were any organizations that were actively working on your behalf, or was it just people like [name a constituency that he/she identified] that came to work on your behalf?

Q5 Whether they supported you or not, what are the organizations that you hear from most in your work here on the council—the organizations that most frequently come to you to ask for help, to lobby you, give you studies or memos, or just to keep in touch?

ONLY ASK THIS QUESTION, Q6, IF THE ISSUE DISCUSSED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION #2 DOES NOT HAVE TO DO WITH THE ENVIRONMENT. (WE'RE DEFINING THE ENVIRONMENT BROADLY HERE, SO IF THE ISSUE IN Q #2 SEEMS REMOTELY CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT, DON'T ASK THIS QUESTION.

Q6 One area we've been asking about is the environment as such issues are often controversial in city government. Is there an issue related to the environment that you've been involved with recently?

[If they say yes but don't proceed to tell you much, probe, something like:] That's interesting, what you said about X, Y or Z. Tell me a little more about that:

You're going to ask either 6a or 6b

6a-1. As you told the story, you mentioned [name of organization(s)], which were involved on this issue. Could you tell me a little bit more about their role?

6a-2. Were there other nongovernmental organizations were involved in this issue?

**OR, IF NO GROUPS WERE MENTIONED
IN 5**

6b-1. Were there any organizations from outside of government that were involved in this issue?

6b-2 [If not clear from above] Could you tell me a little about how they were involved?

Q7 Thinking about the whole rest of the council rather than yourself, who would you think are the nongovernmental organizations that most frequently meet with your colleagues?

Q8 Are there any organizations that you've found frustrating to work with? Organizations that try to block what you want, or they somehow work at cross-purposes to your efforts?
PROBE [If not clear from their answers] what is it that gives these groups what influence they have?

Q-LAST We've covered a lot of ground. Is there something I should be asking. If you were sitting in my seat, what would you be asking?

Q-Help [NOTE: MAKE SURE WHEN YOU'RE PINNING DOWN NAMES, THAT THOSE NAMES ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE ACTIVISTS IN AN ORGANIZATION THAT OPERATES IN THE CITY. OK IF IT'S AN ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS IN MORE THAN ONE CITY.] That just about wraps things up. If I could ask for your help on one thing, though. As we spoke you mentioned some organizations that you interacted with. We're going to follow up and try to do brief phone interviews with one representative of each group we hear about. [Here distinguish between organizations where he/she mentioned a person, and those that he/she didn't.] Could you give me the name of someone at the [organizations where he/she didn't give you a name].

Let me make sure I have the names right for [list names mentioned earlier; probe if its not clear how you get a hold of them; nonprofits might be run out of someone's home. Businesses, business associations, and unions should be easy to find.]

That's it. Thanks so much. [Close your folder and put away your pen in a very obvious fashion, indicating that you really are done. Then:] Maybe I should ask if there's something I should have been asking you?

[Do not take notes, leave notebook closed even if they talk about something directly relevant]

[Linger at door if comfortable; small talk might be revealing at this point]

[IF THERE IS AN ELECTION COMING UP BY 2006, YOU CAN ASK SOMETHING LIKE, "HOW DOES THE NEXT ELECTION LOOK?]

[When you finally do leave, *immediately* write up any comments they made after your notebook was closed; *immediately* write up all other comments using the notes you took as a guide.]

[Staple business card here]

Bay State Cities Project
Department of Political Science
Tufts University

LOCAL ACTIVIST INTERVIEW FORM

Date:

Interview Subject:

Name of Organization

Phone #:

Email address from business card:

Interviewer: Robin__ Jessie__

Comments on quality of interview. (If typical, you need not put anything here. But if subject is uncooperative, evasive, especially helpful, note here *briefly*.)

Names of organizations/individuals he mentioned (or suggested) that we might want to talk to. When he/she mentions the name of an organization, make sure you get the name of an individual to talk with. If a phone number is offered, include it here. If your write-up does not indicate what kind of organization each is, note that here:

INITIAL PHONE CALL SCRIPT:

My name is [Robin Liss/Jessie Simoncelli] and I'm calling you from the Tufts University Department of Political Science. I'm part of a research team that is currently in the field doing a project on urban government in eight Massachusetts cities. One of those cities is [name of city]. I've been doing some interviews with people in government and your name came up as someone it would be useful for me to talk to.

So what I'd like to do is to set up a time to talk. I'm very flexible in my schedule and I'll do this whenever it's convenient. I can either do it over the phone or I could come out to [city] and we could have coffee at a Starbucks or some such near your home or office. We could even do it now if you have a half hour. So what would be best for you?

NOTE: You need to be pleasant but insistent at this point. If they try to put you off, "I'm busy now but maybe next month," you respond. "Fine, what would be a good day next month. Why don't we pencil something in and I'll leave you my phone number if you have to reschedule."

NOTE: If they say either a phone interview or in-person, your response will depend on where you are in your interviewing. If time seems abundant, or if the interviewee is close by (Arlington, Somerville), then opt for in-person. If you have reason to believe that the subject may be someone marginal in that city's politics, if it's far away (Worcester), or if you have more interviews than you can handle, then opt for a phone interview. You may want to wait on these interviews until you have a number of city councilors or city administrators under your belt and opt for an in-person interview for those interest group activists whose name has come up more than once.

NOTE: If the respondent asks you, "who mentioned my name?" or "who recommended me?", say something like, "I'm a little constrained here. When we interview someone, we promise them that the interviews are confidential. But that would go for any interview I conduct with as well: everything is confidential and you'll never be mentioned by name.

If not clear from conversation already, confirm group's existence here: Before I get off, let me just make sure I have you properly identified. You were mentioned as being active in [name of group]. That is correct?

If they say something like, "well, it's not much of a group" or "we're not really active now" you should respond, That's ok. As long as you were active at one time and you were working on behalf a group, no matter how informal, that's fine. **If it becomes clear that the person really is a sole activist, acting only on his/her own behalf, then say something like,** "I guess we were misinformed. We're restricted in our interviewing to organizational representatives. So we won't need to talk to you after all. I apologize for taking up your time. But thanks! **If not clear even after some probing, err on the side of scheduling the interview.**

Interview scheduled for DATE:
LOCATION
TIME

NOTES:

OR Proceed directly to interview over phone

FOR SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW RATHER THAN THOSE DONE IMMEDIATELY OVER THE PHONE

Subsequent Phone Interview:

NOTE: When you reconnect with the respondent over the phone, your opening spiel should be relatively short. Don't ask if this is still a good time to talk; assume it is. You don't want to give them an opportunity to postpone. They'll voluntarily tell you if they can't do it right then. Your over the phone reconnection should go something like this: "Hi, this is Robin Liss/Jessie Simoncelli, calling for our appointment to talk about city government in [city]. I just want to remind you that this is a scholarly study conducted by a team of political scientists at Tufts University. The interview is strictly confidential; nothing we write will contain your name or the name of any organization you're affiliated with. So let me get started [proceed to Q1]."

Subsequent In-Person Interview

NOTE: If your reconnection is for an in-person interview, you can proceed more casually and don't need to worry about "phone fatigue". You can use the above patter and add to it as you see fit. Remember to hand out your business card at the beginning. Also remember to say, "I just want to remind you that this is a scholarly study conducted by a team of political scientists at Tufts University. The interview is strictly confidential; nothing we write will contain your name or the name of any organization you're affiliated with."

Q1 I wonder if I could ask you a little about yourself. Tell me how you got involved in the community and how you came to be active in [name of organization].

Q2 In this context I'd like to get you to talk about some recent work of the [organization]. Could you tell me about the issue you've been spending the most time on of late? Tell me the story.

You'll ask either 3a or 3b

Q3a [IF THEY TOLD A STORY THAT INVOLVED AN ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY, SEGUE INTO Q3 WITH SOME TIE, LIKE:] Your story leads to the next area I wanted to explore. We're interested in your interaction with local agencies of government. Is the [name of agency from story] the agency you interact with most frequently? **[THEN]:** Tell me what your relationship is like with that agency **[the agency he/she said they spent the most time with, even if it is not the one initially mentioned in the story]**. What kinds of interactions do you have with it?

OR

3b [THIS VERSION OF #3 IS FOR RESPONDENT'S WHOSE STORY DIDN'T DEAL DIRECTLY WITH AN ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY] I want to turn more directly to a discussion of the government here in [city]. First, the administrative side of government and then later the city council. What is the agency of the local government that you interact with most frequently? **[THEN]:** Tell me what your relationship is like with that agency. What kinds of interactions do you have with it?

Q4 Let me continue you in this vein. Thinking about your relationship with this agency, I want to give you a choice of how to describe that relationship. And let me be a bit academic and ask you to think of a continuum with three points on it. At one end we would place relationships between local community groups and administrators as collaborative: partners who work cooperatively together. At the other end of the continuum we would place relationships that are conflictual. And in the middle of the continuum, are relationships where the agency is friendly and open to talking with outside groups, but remains independent and doesn't work in a collaborative or partner-like manner with groups like yours. I know that was a long question! But where would you place your organization's relationship on that continuum?

PROBE IF THEIR ANSWER WAS BRIEF: Was the relationship always this way, or has evolved one way or the other over the years.

Q5 Do you sit or another member of your organization sit on any advisory committees for the city?

Q6 Let's move on to the city council. Who are the city councilors you work the most closely with? Tell me what kind of relationship and interactions you have with them?

Q7 Again, by way of summary, I'd like you to think of the same continuum I detailed just a little while ago: at one end is a collaborative relationship, at the other is a conflictual one. In the middle is an openness to talk with you but not a collaborative or partner-like relationship. Thinking of your relationship to the city councilors that you interact with most frequently, where would you locate yourself on this continuum.

Q8 In the last election were you or your organization active on behalf of a candidate or candidates for city council or for mayor?

PROBE TO MAKE SURE YOU GET A CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT THE ORGANIZATION GAVE TO THE CAMPAIGN(S). How would you evaluate the assistance you gave to this/these campaigns? Do you think what you/your organization did made a significant difference?

Q-Help NOTE: If there are other organizations the individual mentions that appear to be active in the policymaking process in the city, ask: That just about wraps things up. If I could ask for your help on one thing, though. As we spoke you mentioned some organizations that you interacted with. We're going to follow up and try to do brief phone interviews with one representative of each group we hear about. **[Here distinguish between organizations where he/she mentioned a person, and those that he/she didn't.]** Could you give me the name of someone at the **[organizations where he/she didn't give you a name].**

Let me make sure I have the names right for **[list names mentioned earlier; probe if its not clear how you get a hold of them; nonprofits might be run out of someone's home. Businesses, business associations, and unions should be easy to find.]**

FOR IN-PERSON: That's it. Thanks so much. [**Close your folder and put away your pen in a very obvious fashion, indicating that you really are done. Then:**] Maybe I should ask if there's something I should have been asking you?

[**Do not take notes, leave notebook closed even if they talk about something directly relevant**]

FOR PHONE: That's it. Thanks so much. Maybe I should ask if there's something I should have been asking you?

FOR IN-PERSON:

[**Linger at door if comfortable; small talk might be revealing at this point**]

[**When you finally do leave, *immediately* write up any comments they made after your notebook was closed; *immediately* write up all other comments using the notes you took as a guide.**]