

The Adoption of Council-Manager Model of Governance in Croatia: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the receptiveness of Croatian local governmental officials in adopting a council-manager reform model of governance, given the low administrative and fiscal capacities of many Croatian cities. We surveyed all 128 cities in Croatia with a response rate of 48% ($n=61$). Sixty-two percent of top administrators were skeptical that this reform model was feasible. Our data suggest a desire of city administrators for shielding administrative functions from political ones as half of all respondents felt political pressure in budgeting and personnel issues. This was amplified through the qualitative data where respondents cited political parties' control in city administration and interference in administrative functions. Chief obstacles to implementing reform components focused on concerns about the political influence of politicians.

Keywords

local government, council-manager governance, Croatia

Introduction

To many citizens, their local government is the most tangible form of government as it is the layer with which they have the most contact in their everyday life. It serves as an important intermediary between state and citizen, where public services are “exchanged and where local norms and by-laws regulate a good portion” of the lives of citizens (Ardigó 2019, 2). Today, local governments are operating in a time of tremendous change. Much of this change is in the form of externalities such as globalization, changing technologies, and economic pressures. Local governments are searching for innovations and effective reforms which build capacity to respond to such challenging circumstances (Andrews et al. 2021), often while simultaneously striving to promote “democracy, legitimacy, and responsiveness” to citizens (Kuhlmann and Bouckaert 2016; Tavares and Feiock 2018, 300).

Each of these challenges present in unique and complicated ways according to a country or city’s historical, cultural, and constitutional factors (Tavares and Feiock 2018). To address these multitudinous challenges, cities need effective, adaptable governance structures which are more administratively professional and less political in function (Petrisor and Vasilache 2012; United Nations, 2008; Wei 2022). Recent research has indicated that cities which separate political and bureaucratic activity have leaders who “play a key role in the modernization of city administration” (Baclija, Kronegger, and Prebilic 2023, 2). Professional

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municipal governance which is less influenced by political actors invites collaboration and innovation necessary for modernization of governance to address cities' present and future needs (Nelson and Svara 2012; Wei 2022).

In transition countries, those moving from authoritarian to democratic governance, particularly in countries which have sought to move toward greater integration with the European community, local governments have encountered unique challenges in adhering to fundamental concepts and values of representative democracy (Lackowska et al. 2021; Szent-Ivanyii 2014). There are numerous conditions beyond post-communism which affect public administration reform. These include the backsliding of democratic principles in countries such as Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovakia, and Turkey; the lack of capacity of these local governments; the strength of non-governmental organizations (Bochsler and Juon 2020; Szent-Ivanyi 2014); influence from the European Union (EU) itself; pressures from political parties; local and global economic crises, and more (Meyer-Sahling 2009). These factors all combine to influence the varying success in implementation of democratic action, which has led to diminished expectations of citizens in post-communist countries, and has led to a failure to satisfy some of the core principles for local self-governments required by the European Union (2015; Karayiğit 2016; Lackowska et al 2021; Petrova 2012; Szent-Ivanyii 2014).

The diffusion of innovations theory (Berry and Berry 1990; Walker 1969) provides a framework for understanding how some local governments end of adopting new policy reforms and innovation. The theoretical lens basically describes how new ideas, behaviors, and innovations are spread gradually rather than all at once. Adoption starts with innovators and early adopters, then spreads through the population. Sorensen (2016) suggests that certain policy innovations among local governments result not only from decisions of local governments but are often driven by stakeholders and advocacy groups, underscoring the importance of external actors. Sorensen suggests that the collaboration among local governments and stakeholders

drive both policy innovation and policy implementation.

The focus of this article is on the local government in the country of Croatia which became independent in 1991 after leaving the former Yugoslavia. It is a republic and a parliamentary liberal democracy which joined the EU in 2013. Croatia has faced challenges in its postwar reconstruction and its transition to a representative democracy. According to the latest monitoring report of the European Commission (European Commission 2022), the effectiveness of the Croatian local government administration is significantly below the European average. The main reason cited for this was the high fragmentation and low fiscal and administrative capacities of the local government, which has led to large differences in the quality of public service provision (European Commission 2022).

Local governments in Croatia have faced criticism for their management practices, lack of transparency, low levels of citizen participation and a number of corruption scandals (Institute for Public Administration 2018). Further, the trust of Croatian citizens in the city government is the lowest of all EU countries, and in terms of satisfaction with public services, Croatia is significantly below the EU average (Eurofound 2017). Specifically in Croatia, "lack of proper accountability and scrutiny enables local political elites to subvert democratic procedure and [to] fully promote their own interest and the interests of their cronies rather than the public interest" which decreases public trust in the government (Vuković 2019, 214).

Our study seeks to contribute to the academic literature by exploring the receptiveness of Croatian local governmental officials in adopting components of council-manager reform model of governance. Considering the low administrative and fiscal capacities of many Croatian cities and citizens' dissatisfaction with public services, the exploration of alternative structures and innovations are warranted. We assess officials' receptiveness by administering a survey to top local governmental officials in all city administrations in Croatia.

Background

The Reform Model of Governance

In response to the history of widespread corruption and corporate excess in many large U.S. cities and the need to improve administrative competence, progressive reformers in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century introduced new approaches to the way cities were governed by having the council appoint a non-partisan professional city manager to oversee municipal operations and the creation of instruments for the regulation of business (Frederickson 2011; Lineberry and Fowler 1967; Lyons 1978; Ostrom, Bish and Ostrom 1988). The Progressives believed by removing partisan politics, the entrenched machine dominating local and state governments would crack, making room for government to be more responsive to its citizens. The reforms also ushered in nonpartisan elections, a variety of direct democracy tools for citizens such as initiatives and options to remove elected officials, and the introduction of the use of merit as the leading criterion for making all hiring and personnel decisions (Feiock et al. 2003; Shafritz 1998; Wright 2008; Zhang and Feiock 2009).

Svara and Nelson (2010) suggest three elements provide the most important criteria for the council-manager model of governance. First, in this model, the allocation of authority over policy and administration takes place via the interaction between the manager and the council. Second, the assignment of executive responsibility rests with the appointed manager. Third, the accountability of the chief administrative officer is to the entire council versus a single elected official who has the authority to both hire and fire in a strong-mayor form. The authors assert that this ensures both transparency and a focus on the public interest versus the political interest of a single politician. Wei (2022) enhanced understanding of the political-administrative scale by recategorizing municipal structures based on such characteristics as separation of powers, checks and balances, and managerial professionalism.

Structure of Croatian Local Governments

Croatian territorial organization consists of local and regional self-government including 128 cities and regional self-government of 20 counties. Croatia's largest city, Zagreb, has a special status as both a city and a county. County prefects, and mayors all have executive authority within their respective jurisdictions, with both political and administrative responsibilities. Municipal and city councils, as well as county assemblies, exercise representative power. Every four years, municipal executive and representative body members are directly elected by citizens.

A city is a unit of local government with more than 10,000 inhabitants. However, exceptions can be made for historical or economic reasons. In reality, these exceptions have become more of the rule as 54% of Croatian cities have less than 10,000 citizens. Thus, 52 municipalities have less than 1,000 inhabitants, and 3 have less than 300. There is wide variation in revenue, as well. The total revenue of the municipality of Medulin is equal to the sum of the revenue of 25 other municipalities. The total revenue of Zagreb is equal to the sum of revenues of 94% of cities, while 10% of municipalities and cities have higher per capita revenues than Zagreb (Ott, Bronić, Stanića and Badovinac 2020).

In Croatia and elsewhere in much of Europe, "municipal governments do not have a comparable delineation between mayoral and managerial executive authority. Rather, mayors tend to hold executive authority and administrative oversight" (Deslatte et al. 2022, 6). During its post-communist formation, Croatia, along with much of the former Eastern Bloc, held a belief that decentralization—autonomous cities of local self-government—was the ideal form of government, as it was seen as personalized, local leadership (Swianiewicz 2014). While decentralization and local autonomy has been the goal of a post-communist Croatia, if a top-down, strong mayor form of local government is the norm, the process of democracy is still very limited, because the local mayor makes unilateral, unchecked decisions in a demonstrably corrupt

environment for political or personal purposes, rather than the public good. While specifically addressing strong mayors in Poland, Deslatte et al. (2022) describes the political jockeying of strong mayors to curry favor with varying groups in their cities, noting how this affects policy decisions, a process very much in action in Croatia, as well.

Process and Methodology

Data for the study was collected through an online survey (via LimeSurvey) sent to the lead administrator of all Croatian cities ($n=128$) conducted during October and November of 2022. The response rate was 48% (61 respondents), which is well above the lower range for comparable local government research (e.g., Berman & West, 2011). The survey instrument consisted of 61 questions, most of which were closed ended; others included ratings using Likert scales and several open questions were included. The survey was structured as follows: (i) socio-demographic questions, (ii) rating the current local government system, (iii) knowledge about and expectations from the council-manager system, and (iv) attitudes toward and openness to the introduction the council-manager system. The survey design and background motivation are as follows. Due to the existing dissatisfaction of citizens with local services and highest distrust in local government in EU (Eurobarometer 2023), as well as constant turmoil about possible reforms, we first formulated questions about evaluating the current system. So, the respondents would reflect and become aware of the current situation in their city at the time of filling out the questionnaire. Then we presented the council-manager reform model and asked them to rate some reform characteristics (e.g., use of merit and administrative independence). Finally, we asked a key question about the possibility of introducing components of the council-manager reform model in Croatia. To examine the associations between attitudes toward introduction of council-manager system and some political features, we employed a Fisher's exact statistical significance test. This test is most suitable for smaller samples, as in our case. Also, the test can be used with data

that are measured on a categorical scale, such as our political variables.

Results

Basic Demographic Information

The respondents are highly educated with 96.7% obtaining a master's degree or higher. Seventy-two percent were female. The majority of respondents had 10 or more years of work experience, both overall and in local government. Respondents classified themselves as politically independent (26%), 13% identified right, 8% left, and 10% other, while for 43% there was no answer. Also, 31% of respondents stated that the mayor's political orientation is right-wing, 26% said that their mayors are politically independent, 23% that they are left-wing, and 7% other, while for 13% there was no answer. Most responses (30%) came from cities with between 51 and 100 employees, followed by cities with up to 20 employees (25%).

Current System

Table 1 provides a summary of the responses on the ratings of the current local government system and cooperation with other local units. When asked how satisfied they were with how the city government was run, most respondents, expressed satisfaction with 74% indicating they were either very or satisfied, 16% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while only 10% reported being dissatisfied (variable *Satisfaction with current government* in Table 1; also discussed in Tables 3 and 4).

The respondents rated the best how their city administration takes care of the availability of documents and budget/fiscal transparency (95% and 91% respectively were very or satisfied). They are the most dissatisfied with the administrative timeliness and financial strength of their city (20% and 18%, respectively, were very or somewhat dissatisfied). When it comes to cooperation with other local units, respondents are equally satisfied (albeit in a relatively low percentage) with data availability on finances and services, project cooperation, and EU funds applications (for each category, about 48% of

Table 1. Satisfaction With and Rating Current Government System (%).

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	No answer
Satisfaction with current government	2 (3%)	4 (7%)	10 (16%)	37 (61%)	8 (13%)	0 (0%)
Rating the current local government						
Citizens' inclusivity	1 (2%)	4 (7%)	14 (23%)	36 (59%)	5 (8%)	1 (2%)
Government's accountability	2 (3%)	4 (7%)	9 (15%)	31 (51%)	15 (25%)	0 (0%)
Impartiality	2 (3%)	5 (8%)	14 (23%)	28 (46%)	9 (15%)	3 (5%)
Administrative competence and capacity	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	10 (16%)	36 (59%)	11 (18%)	0 (0%)
Administrative learning capacity	0 (0%)	5 (8%)	13 (21%)	34 (56%)	6 (10%)	3 (5%)
Administrative timeliness	0 (0%)	12 (20%)	15 (25%)	26 (43%)	8 (13%)	0 (0%)
Financial strength	3 (5%)	8 (13%)	11 (18%)	30 (49%)	8 (13%)	1 (2%)
Budget/fiscal transparency	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (10%)	29 (48%)	26 (43%)	0 (0%)
Availability of documents	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	22 (36%)	36 (59%)	1 (2%)
Public procurement integrity	0 (0%)	3 (5%)	5 (8%)	28 (46%)	25 (41%)	0 (0%)
Rating cooperation with other local units						
Project cooperation	2 (3%)	3 (5%)	18 (30%)	23 (38%)	6 (10%)	9 (15%)
Joint provision of services	4 (7%)	7 (11%)	17 (28%)	19 (31%)	3 (5%)	11 (18%)
EU funds applications	3 (5%)	6 (10%)	13 (21%)	16 (26%)	12 (20%)	11 (18%)
Data availability on finances and services	1 (2%)	2 (3%)	20 (33%)	20 (33%)	10 (16%)	8 (13%)

Table 2. Rating of Characteristics of Council-Manager (From 1—Irrelevant to 5—Highly Relevant).

Characteristics of council manager	Average rating
Skills and qualifications are a key determinant in the hiring process for employees	4.55
Depoliticization of local government (management separated from politics)	4.30
Efficiency through professional management and network	4.26
Relieved of duty by the council	4.02
Nominated by the city council based on work experience	4.02
Appoints an auditor who reports to the audit committee	3.80
No vote or veto	3.69
Appoints and dismisses department heads	3.66
Unlimited term employment	3.41

respondents are very or satisfied). The greatest dissatisfaction is related to joint provision of services (only 36% are satisfied, while 18% are very or somewhat dissatisfied).

Knowledge of the Council-Manager Form of Government

Only 13% of respondents were familiar with the council-manager system, while 87% of respondents answered that they were not informed about the council-manager system. As seen in Table 2, when asked to rate the importance of key characteristics of the council-manager form of government, the respondents ranked the use of merit as the leading criterion for making all hiring and personnel decisions as the highest, followed by the depoliticization of local government (management separated from politics); and the promotion of economy and efficiency through professional management and networks.

When asked to rate the expected outcomes of a council-manager reform form of governance compared to their current government, respondents felt reform activities, long term strategy, and the provision of public services would be enhanced, while the majority felt other outcomes, particularly inclusion of marginalized groups and citizen participation, would remain the same.

Is a Council-Manager Form of Government Possible in Croatia?

When asked if the introduction of the council-manager system is possible in Croatia, 38% of

respondents answered positively, while 62 % were skeptical that this type of government was feasible (referred to as *Attitudes toward introduction of the council-manager system* variable in Table 3). Open-ended responses were provided for respondents to elaborate on why or why not they felt the council-manager form of government was possible in Croatia as well as the advantages, disadvantages, and obstacles in adopting this form of government.

The majority of respondents felt the current political environment would prevent the consideration of this new model of government and suggested the leaders in charge, who are members of the current political ruling party, would be resistant. One respondent commented, “We are an immature democracy, traditionally divided between the left and the right, it is almost impossible to find an independent expert without any connection to the left or the right, people are used to asking for (and getting) a solution to their problems through the queue, their own interest is usually always ahead of the social interest and in such settings is the entire system built and currently resting. This form of management at the local level seems useful and good for society, but society has not yet created the preconditions for its implementation.” Others cited there is insufficient knowledge on the form of government among city council members and professional staff.

In response to identifying the pros of introducing of the council-manager system, respondents cited, “greater professionalism and expertise,” “independence from politics,” “achieving long-term goals regardless of a

Table 3. Attitudes Toward Introduction of the Council-Manager System and Political Variables (Fisher’s Exact Test).

(a)

Attitudes toward introduction of the council-manager system	Satisfaction with current government			Political orientation of mayor		Witnessed corruption pressures	
	Not satisfied	Undecided	Satisfied	Right	Other	No	Yes
Negative	5 (83%)	5 (50%)	28 (62%)	11 (79%)	23 (59%)	36 (63%)	2 (50%)
Positive	1 (17%)	5 (50%)	17 (38%)	3 (21%)	16 (41%)	21 (37%)	2 (50%)
Total	6	10	45	14	39	57	4

(b)

Attitudes toward introduction of the council-manager system	Politically independent city administration			Political pressure in budget process		Political pressure in hiring process	
	No	Yes	Undecided	No	Exists	No	Exists
Negative	4 (44%)	17 (68%)	12 (67%)	13 (76%)	18 (60%)	15 (63%)	15 (68%)
Positive	5 (56%)	8 (32%)	6 (33%)	4 (24%)	12 (40%)	9 (37%)	7 (32%)
Total	9	25	18	17	30	24	22

possible four-year change of government,” “improved long term strategies,” “more stability,” “clearer accountability,” and “increased transparency.” Obstacles cited to introducing of this form of government primality centered around politics and politicization of the current system such as “political influences at the state level,” “lack of understanding of the system,” and “lack of political will to introduce it.” One respondent concluded that, “it is difficult to ensure that the manager chosen by the council will be politically neutral and acceptable to all government options.”

Comparison Results

Since the respondents’ answers indicate that the new system cannot be introduced for political reasons, we wanted to examine the associations between attitudes toward introduction of council-manager system as well as satisfaction with the current government system and some political features. Accordingly, we added four new political variables from the survey (in Tables 3 and 4):

- (i) witnessed corruption pressures, 85% of respondents said that they did not witness such pressures, and only 7%

said that they did, while 8% did not answer;

- (ii) politically independent city administration (41% of respondents stated that the local administration is politically independent, 15% that it is not, 30% cannot decide, while 14% have no answer);
- (iii) political pressure in budget process (high 16%, medium 20%, low 13%, no pressure 28%, and no answer 23%);
- (iv) political pressure in hiring process (high 12%, medium 16%, low 8%, no pressure 39%, and no answer 25%).

In exploring the association between attitudes toward introduction of the council-manager system and political variables of interest, we did not find any statistical significance. However, we singled out the following observations. Despite being dissatisfied with the current system, the respondents’ attitudes toward the introduction of the council-manager system are negative. Respondents in right-wing governments are mostly against the introduction of the new system, similar to respondents in politically independent city administrations.

Table 4 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant association between political

Table 4. Satisfaction With the Current Government System (Fisher's Exact Test).

(a)

Satisfaction with the current government	Political pressure in budget process***				Political pressure in hiring process**			
	No	Low	Medium	High	No	Low	Medium	High
Unsatisfied	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	2 (29%)
Indecisive	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	3 (25%)	3 (30%)	4 (17%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	3 (43%)
Satisfied	17 (100%)	6 (75%)	9 (75%)	3 (30%)	20 (83%)	4 (80%)	8 (80%)	2 (29%)
Total	17	8	12	10	24	5	10	7

(b)

Satisfaction with the current government	City population				Years of work experience in local government			
	0–5k	5k–10k	10k–100k	>100k	0–4	5–9	10–15	>15
Unsatisfied	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (11%)	1 (13%)	3 (18%)
Indecisive	1 (14%)	5 (17%)	3 (15%)	1 (33%)	2 (15%)	3 (17%)	1 (13%)	2 (12%)
Satisfied	6 (86%)	23 (77%)	14 (70%)	2 (67%)	11 (85%)	13 (72%)	6 (75%)	12 (71%)
Total	7	30	20	3	13	18	8	17

(c)

Satisfaction with the current government	Witnessed corruption pressures		Political orientation of mayor		Politically independent city administration**		
	No	Yes	Right	Other	No	Yes	Indecisive
Unsatisfied	5 (9%)	1 (25%)	3 (21%)	1 (3%)	3 (33%)	1 (4%)	1 (5%)
Indecisive	9 (16%)	1 (25%)	2 (14%)	8 (21%)	3 (33%)	2 (8%)	5 (28%)
Satisfied	43 (75%)	2 (50%)	9 (64%)	30 (77%)	3 (33%)	22 (88%)	12 (67%)
Total	57	4	14	39	9	25	18

Source: Authors' calculations based on STATA output

Note: Significance: ***1%, **5%, (.01, .05); two-tailed test.

independence and the pressure of superiors with satisfaction. Our findings suggest that the highest the pressure of superiors in both the budget and employment process, the lower the satisfaction with the current system. Also, a lack of political independence decreases satisfaction with the current government.

We did not find any statistically significant association between satisfaction with the current mayor-council system and: city population, years of work experience, corruption pressures, and political orientation of mayor.

Discussion and Conclusion

Given the low administrative and fiscal capacities of many Croatian cities, this study explored

the receptiveness of an alternative reform model of local governance, specifically, the council manager form of government, based on the U.S model. Despite not being familiar with these reforms, city administrators did rate many of the innovations associated with it as desirable from the perspective of improving governance, specifically the use of merit in personnel decisions, separating out management from politics and the promotion of economy and efficiency via professional management and networks. However, 62% of city officials, felt the adoption of such reforms in the current political environment was not feasible. Chief among the obstacles to implementing such a structure focused on the concerns about politics and the political influence of politicians.

Administrative decisions in Croatian cities are often being made by top-down political actors who typically respond to loud, influential voices, rather than the needs of all community constituents. While direct election of mayors is democratic, the mayor-council form of local government often caters to strong local voices who can offer their political support. The policy direction strong mayors “push may depend on the dominant political coalitions or interests within the community” (Deslatte et al 2022, 6). In order to increase effective service delivery while maintaining local autonomy and encouraging democratic effectiveness for citizens, Petrisor and Vasilache (2012) as well as Baclija, Kronegger, and Prebilic (2023) have suggested it may be necessary to have a more apolitical and professional local government and decrease the politicization of mayors’ current administrative functions—separating the political function from the administrative function—by adopting components of council-manager reform governance model. And form of governance does matter. Nelson and Svara (2012) found higher innovation rates are associated with council-manager governance and the form of government account for the greatest explanation of the adoption of innovative practices in cities.

Our findings support a clear desire of city administrators for shielding administrative functions from political ones. The majority of respondents felt their city administration was not politically independent and half of all respondents felt political pressure in the areas of budgeting and employment related issues. The concern about political interference and the political environment was amplified through the qualitative data where respondents cited the control of the political parties in city administration and the interference in administrative functions. Further we found there was a statistically significant association between political independence and the pressure of superiors with satisfaction.

Taken as a whole, political influence and political interference in local governments in Croatia appears to strongly shape how cities are structured. Klaric (2021) advocates for new ways of local governmental organization in Croatia, a model “which will be inclusive,

participative, efficient, and democratic[ally] proactive” in ways which will increase cities’ “administrative capacity and ability to provide efficient local public services” (p. 130). The council-manager form of governance was designed to address these concerns about political interference. Adopting a council-manager reform model of governance system that is more apolitical and separates out some of the administrative functions from politics, particularly in the areas of budget allocation and personnel decisions would rectify many of the concerns expressed by local government leaders. Further, a more administratively professional and less political governance system can better position local governments in Croatia to respond to modern challenges by encouraging collaboration and innovative practices (Baclija, Kronegger, and Prebilic 2023; Nelson and Svara 2012; Wei 2022). This also would result in preventing local political elites from promoting their own interests above the public interest which would increase public trust in local governments (Vuković, 2019).

So how can city administrators make headway in introducing and implementing some of these innovations? The diffusion of innovations theory may provide such guidance. Research has shown that external advocates could play a key role in driving these new innovations. Universities’ schools of public administration and various civic NGOs would be the likely place to introduce these concepts and work with citizens, local governments, and the business community on how components of the reform models might increase effectiveness and trust and how it might be adapted for Croatian culture. Components of this structure such as the merit principle in personnel management and the shielding of financial and administrative functions from political interference might help it to gain traction.

Further research should go beyond surveying city administrators and also explore the receptiveness of these innovations among political officials and external groups such as universities, NGOs, citizens, and the business community. The business community, in particular, may be particularly receptive to a governance reform structure that may better position their

communities to respond to modern challenges with more innovative tools for economic development.

In light of this discussion, it is important to consider limitations to this study. First, data collection methods in this study relied on self-reports that may be susceptible to response bias. Second, although our response rate is well above the lower range for comparable research the sample is small, and does not allow robust multivariate analysis, however, the descriptive data yield noteworthy, previously unknown factors about local governments in Croatia. Finally, a limitation stems from the survey design. It is difficult to measure all aspects of introducing the council-manager system due to the lack of information and the complexity of change processes. Future research can build on this field note and take into account the limitations for more extensive insights.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.


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