QUADRENNIAL—ACT 36: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR-DIRECTOR FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS

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The purpose of this investigation is to review the first four years of municipal government operation under the Administrator-Director form of government in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The basis of this investigation is the reconstruction and review of the political forces and circumstances operating in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and their impact on the Administrator-Director form of government. In addition to the above, an examination of the progress made by the current Administrator-Director form of government will be undertaken.

The methodology employed in researching this thesis was based on personal observations and experiences. In addition, the following sources of information were utilized: personnel interviews, researching of local newspapers, review of official city records, review of related literature which would lend credibility to the research. Exclusive of the historical data, the period to be examined is August, 1967, to August, 1971.

A review of the historical evolution of Fort Smith, Arkansas, illuminated certain community attitudes relating
to individual self determination, general dislike of centralized government regulation, and the traditionalistic political concept of a maintenance-type political structure.

If the caretaker government concept is accepted as a valid evaluation of Fort Smith, Arkansas, we can, with greater ease, understand the opposition to an inherently progressive system as the Administrator-Director form of government. The City of Fort Smith has been plagued by a multitude of problems ranging from the inability to effect much needed revenues to personnel problems and adverse attitudes of citizens toward the city's governing body.

In order to determine the answer to the question of who makes decisions in Fort Smith, a questionnaire containing five questions on centers of influence was utilized. Distribution of the 200 questionnaires was based on occupational groups and economic areas as determined by census tract data.

The overall response to this questionnaire indicated a variety of sub-leaders in the community. The primary type of individual listed was a one-time or one occurrence leader who took charge to resolve a specific problem with which the respondent was connected.

Is there a common thread of discontent sufficient to unite normally unrelated community forces into a temporary coalition? The answer to this question, though not resolved by this research, has been dramatically set forth
in the investigation of the forces which have historically motivated the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas.
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THESIS

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For the Degree of

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

Justification for Research

The purpose of this thesis is to review the first four years of municipal government operation under the Administrator-Director form of government in Fort Smith, Arkansas. It is the further purpose of this thesis to explore the political forces which have operated on the Administrator-Director form of government, which are complex and deeply rooted in the historical and social structure of the area.

The basis of this thesis is the reconstruction and review of the political forces and circumstances operating in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and their impact on the Administrator-Director form of government. In addition to the above, an examination of the progress made by the current Administrator-Director form of government will be undertaken.

By examination of selected significant events occurring during the first four years of the Administrator-Director form of government in Fort Smith, three significant problems will be explored:

A. Examining the effect of an elected political body's intrusion into employee relations traditionally reserved to the chief administrative officer,
B. Reviewing the municipal governmental structure combining ward political representation with an appointed chief administrative officer, and

C. Considering the effects on the appointed chief administrator system of municipal government resulting from the detailed involvement in routine administrative affairs by the elected political body.

The methodology employed in researching this thesis was based on personal observations and experiences covering half of the period under study. In addition the following sources of information were utilized: personnel interviews, researching of local newspapers, review of official city records, questionnaires, and review of related literature which would lend credibility to the research. Exclusive of the historical data, the period to be examined covers from August, 1967 to August, 1971.

Change in the form of municipal government is always a complex and challenging task which carries with it serious risks of instability in the political structure. With this political insecurity many adverse consequences can be generated by the community as a whole. On the positive side, changes in government hold the potential for great strides in community development and maturity.

One of the basic problems which brought about the creation of the Administrator form of government in Fort Smith in 1967 was the lack of an effective outlet for
citizen complaints. In any political entity legitimate differences of opinion are a part of a healthy organizational structure, provided that proper outlets are available.

The Administrator form of government is unique to Fort Smith; no other city in Arkansas has considered or attempted to adopt this form. Act 36 of the Arkansas General Assembly created the City Administrator form of government in Arkansas.

Act 36, which provided for the adoption of the City Administrator form of government, prohibited consideration by the electorate of any other governmental structure for a period of four years.

The Commission form of government which existed in Fort Smith prior to 1967 attempted to meet its community responsibilities with a rigid structural arrangement and jealously guarded administrative functions. In theory the Commission form of government combines the legislative and administrative functions in elected commissioners. Each of the officials has specifically designated administrative jurisdictions.

Under authority of Act 36 of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, the City of Fort Smith adopted the Administrator form of government in August, 1967. The
Administrator form of government, as provided for in Act 36 of the 1967 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas, is similar to that of the City Manager type except for the number and method of election of the Board of Directors. Under the Administrator form, a city must be divided into four wards of nearly equal population, and one member of the Board of Directors elected from each ward. The mayor and two remaining directors are elected at large. A professional administrator is retained to manage the administrative affairs of the city.

Embodied in City of Fort Smith Resolution Number 70, adopted December 18, 1967, are the basic relationships established between the Administrator and the city's Board of Directors.

Resolution No. 70
A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE POLICY GOVERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR, INCLUDING DELEGATION OF CERTAIN AUTHORITY.

Whereas, in the interest of efficient and effective operation of City government it is necessary to establish the policy governing the basic relationship between the Board of Directors and the City Administrator, including the delegation of authority for decisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. That the Board of Directors recognizes, establishes and maintains the following guidelines in its relationship with the City Administrator.

A. In exercising its responsibilities, the Board of Directors reserves its authority to approve policy which represents broad statements of intentions, approve plans and programs, and delegate authority of administration to the City Administrator.
B. The Board recognizes that the City Administrator requires the authority to hire capable personnel within an approved wage and salary policy, to plan and establish schedules, train, supervise and when necessary, terminate or replace employees.

C. It shall be the policy of the Board of Directors, that as individuals, they will not discuss management problems with the personnel of the City. The City Administrator shall be the official contact between the Board of Directors and employee personnel.

D. The purpose of this policy is to define the relationship that should exist between the Board of Directors who are elected representatives of the City, and the City Administrator. The Board of Directors recognizes that efficient management of the City can exist only through mutual understanding and complete cooperation between the Board of Directors and the City Administrator. The City Administrator is expected to produce results and furnish the Board of Directors information in a manner of an adequate system of control. His performance cannot be of the best unless he is given latitude to exercise independent judgment in executing policies of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors acknowledges that obligation and gives the City Administrator that latitude of judgment and discretion, and expects faithful performance in carrying out the policies of the Board of Directors.

Dominant Historical Traditions

The following material will establish the historical evolution of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and will shed light on factors to be introduced at a later date. Basically, the factors which are illuminated as a result of this historical review are the community's attitude of individual self

1Minutes of the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors, Resolution Number 70, December 18, 1967.
determination, general dislike of centralized government regulation, and the traditionalistic political concept of a maintenance type governmental structure. Every state has certain dominant traditions about what constitutes proper government action.  

Daniel Elazar has characterized Arkansas as a state whose dominant political culture could be described as traditionalistic. The traditionalistic political culture is rooted in an ambivalent attitude toward the marketplace coupled with a paternalistic and elitist conception of the commonwealth. It reflects an older precommercial attitude that accepts a substantially hierarchical society as part of the ordered nature of things, authorizing and expecting those at the top of the social structure to take a special and dominant role in government. Elazar portrays the traditionalistic political culture as accepting government as an actor with a positive role in the community, but tries to limit that role in the community to securing the continued maintenance of the existing social order.

Accordingly, social and family ties are paramount in a traditionalistic political culture. "Good government" in this type political structure involves the maintenance and encouragement of traditional patterns and, if necessary,

\footnote{Daniel J. Elazar, American Federation: A View From the States (New York, 1966), p. 82.}

\footnote{Ibid., p. 92.}
their adjustment to changing conditions with the least possible upset.  

Fort Smith and its neighbor across the Arkansas River, Van Buren, represent the only metropolitan area in a territory embracing fourteen counties and 300,000 people on both sides of the Arkansas-Oklahoma border. The climate is mild; weather conditions permit year-round construction activity. Natural resources are excellent. Local fields supply natural gas and nearby mines produce high grade coal. There is enough water in Fort Smith's two municipally owned lackes to last the city for three years if no rain fell during that period.

In a literal sense, the growth of governmental structures has been an evolutionary process. New structures have been added to old ones, but the old ones persist. In order to better understand the evolution of the traditionalistic views and existing governmental structures it is necessary to examine the historical heritage of modern day Fort Smith.

Almost every Southern military station provided urban impetus. Near each post there grew up a crude civilian settlement consisting of shops and stores for traders and

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4Ibid., p. 93.

tavern keepers. Thus the station's presence generated a satellite settlement which eventually became a town. Just as the military settlement generated urban development, it also seeded the local economy.

In its early years, Fort Smith was a typical southwestern military settlement. Established by Major William Bradford and a company of the Rifle Regiment in 1817 on Belle Point, at the junction of the Poteau and the Arkansas Rivers on the present Arkansas–Oklahoma border, Fort Smith was the first United States military installation in a raw southwestern wilderness.

Time and time again War Department officials were ready to close the post and relocate the garrison at a new western station, but they succumbed to intense pressures and found new functions for the post. Fort Smith's longevity was due largely to the energy and resourcefulness of the local residents, who derived economic benefits from the presence of this income-producing federal installation in their midst.  

Even in the early 1800's Fort Smith's citizens were involved in determining their own destiny. Captain John Stuart, commander of the Fort Smith garrison in February, 1834, commented that the growing influence of Arkansas

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citizens over border affairs was distressing and interfered with his enforcement campaign. He said that local people were forever sending petitions and memorials to the Arkansas Territorial Assembly, to the Congress, and to the War Department asking for something.  

Belle Point (site on which the military post was situated and now the current central business district of modern day Fort Smith) was the busiest place on the southwestern frontier during the late 1830's. Besides being the site for construction of one of the elaborate military installations in the United States (construction costs exceeded $300,000), a new town named Fort Smith, platted by John Rogers in 1838, was growing up on the eastern edge of the military reservation.  

As was typical of so many post-oriented communities, the community had its disproportionate share of drifters and speculators anxious to make a fast buck. Major Thomas, the military commander in charge of construction at Fort Smith, commented in correspondence to General Jesup in February, 1840, that the town was of the "worst kind and description," and was "inhabited by persons of every kind and character." Most of the business establishments were "grog shops," where the shiftless "congregated."  

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7 Ibid., p. 129.  
8 Ibid.
During the 1850's Fort Smith's role as communications center for the southwest was broadened by technological developments and expanding stage, steamboat, and mail enterprises. The system of military roads radiating from Fort Smith carried an ever increasing flow of traffic. Also in 1858, Fort Smith became the focus for the Overland Mail.

Fort Smith served as a Confederate military post until September 1, 1863. Because of the station's strategic location, storage facilities, and transportation and communications network, the Confederate command continued its use as a prime supply depot. The Union victory at Pea Ridge sealed the doom of the Confederate cause in the west and cut mightily into the human resources of the Army of the West. Gloom permeated the border people, and never again would Confederate recruiters meet with much success in northwestern Arkansas.

Fort Smith played an important role in southwestern history during the immediate postwar period. After local Confederate forces had been demobilized, Fort Smith served as a mustering-out center for Union troops. One effect of the departure of troops from the Arkansas frontier was to stifle the economy of Fort Smith town. Business men complained to the editor of the New Era that there seemed to be no money in the country.  

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9Fort Smith New Era, July 22, 1865.
Certainly one of Fort Smith's most conspicuous and enduring functions was that of establishing order in the southwestern wilderness. Fort Smith's most dramatic role as a center of law and order came in the post-Civil War period, when it served as headquarters for Judge Isaac Parker's federal district court. The "hanging judge" curbed the rampant lawlessness of Indian Territory.\footnote{Bearess and Gibson, \textit{Fort Smith}, p. 4.}

President Grant appointed Isaac Parker judge of the Western District of Arkansas and, on May 2, 1875, Judge Parker arrived with his family from Missouri. Parker was soon widely known as "the hanging judge of Fort Smith." For years the attraction that drew the largest crowds on the southwestern frontier was the annual mass execution on the gallows at Fort Smith. Parker's heavy docket saw 160 men sentenced to the Fort Smith gallows. One of the most colorful and notorious characters to appear in Judge Parker's Court was Belle Starr, famous as a lover, horse thief, and bandit queen—she was found guilty of horse theft and sentenced to one year in prison.\footnote{\textit{Fort Smith Elevator}, February 23 and March 16, 1883.}

The city had grown since 1941 to depend upon Fort Chaffee, eight miles outside town, for a large part of its economic activity. In addition to the G. I. payroll, more than a thousand civilians drew pay checks for their
work at the post. In the mid-fifties it became obvious this was not going to continue forever. A group of civic leaders, seeing the handwriting on the wall, set about to find a replacement for the federal payroll. When Fort Chaffee finally closed in 1959, the movement to take up the slack was well underway.

In 1961, Congress authorized establishment of Fort Smith as a National Historic Site. Fort Smith's restoration as a National Historic Site is a latter-day reaffirmation of the old post's refusal to die. The restored Fort Smith is an enduring tribute to resourceful borderfolk who labored mightily to keep this federal income producing installation operational.12

Current Economic Structure

Modern-day Fort Smith serves as the seat of the Fort Smith District of Sebastian County, and third largest city in the state. Fort Smith is bordered by Oklahoma on the west, the Arkansas River on the north, south Logan County on the east, and the Poteau Mountains and U. S. Government Forest Reserve on the south. Based on 1970 United States census reports, the current population of Fort Smith is 62,802, with over 300,000 people in the surrounding fourteen-county area. The American Negro comprises about

8.5 percent of the population, other races less than .08 of one percent.

The territory adjacent to Fort Smith is very fertile and especially adaptable to the growth of a large variety of agricultural products. Livestock breeders have found conditions ideal for profitable production, and livestock raising has become a major activity. Western and Northwest Arkansas, of which Fort Smith is the center, leads the state in dairying and the Arkansas Valley from Muskogee, Oklahoma, on the west, to Russellville, Arkansas, on the east, is a tremendous truck crop growing section. Fort Smith has one of the largest livestock markets in the southwest. Principal products channeled through the area are fruits, vegetables, livestock, poultry, and dairy products.

As the leading manufacturing city in Arkansas, Fort Smith has a diversified group of industries—so diversified that no one industry dominates labor or employment. There are approximately 175 manufacturing plants in the city, employing about 10,000 workers. Some of the diversified industries in Fort Smith are automotive bodies, apparel and apparel products, bakery products, boxes (wood and metal), beverage bottling, canned vegetables, concrete products, clay products, dairy products, electrical products, frozen foods, foundries, furniture and fixtures (twenty-two furniture manufacturing plants), glass products, meat packing,
paper and paper cups, poultry, and meat products, printing and slab zinc.

The four most recent additions to Fort Smith's industrial growth are the Rheem Manufacturing Plant, housed by construction of a $12,000,000 plant to manufacture central heating and air conditioning equipment and employing over 400 people; the Spaulding Manufacturing Plant, representing an $1,750,000 investment, which will furnish employment for approximately 500 people; Detroit Tool and Mold Manufacturing Company, representing an investment of $500,000, which will employ fifty people; and Southwestern Dye and Tool, representing an investment of $410,000, employing thirty people.

Transportation, Education and Community

Fort Smith is served by three trunk-line railroads: Frisco, Kansas City Southern, and Missouri Pacific. Fifteen major truck lines serve Fort Smith. The municipal airport is one of the best equipped in Arkansas. A new and modern terminal building augments airport facilities for the largest commercial aircraft. The existing airport and facilities are wholly owned by the city and represent an investment of over $10,000,000.

Educational facilities are furnished by the Fort Smith Public School System, with a total of twenty-eight public school buildings. Fort Smith has several parochial schools
and the Westark Junior College offers the first two years of college training. In Fayetteville, sixty miles north of Fort Smith, is the University of Arkansas. It offers undergraduate and graduate work in arts, engineering, business, agriculture, education, and schools of law and medicine.

The city has two daily and two weekly newspapers, four radio stations, and one television station. Fort Smith has five major medical institutions, consisting of three hospitals and two clinics. The city maintains over 190 acres of parks.

Summary

In the preceding pages of this chapter a brief preamble has been given to Chapter II, Political Evolution, which will explore the political evolution of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

If the caretaker government concept is accepted as a valid approach, it is easier to understand the opposition to an inherently progressive system such as the Administrator-Director form of government. Chapter II will establish specific parameters of the political climate in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and relate these concepts to the difficulties and strife occurring since the inception of the Administrator-
Director form of government. By examination of selected decision areas a general understanding of the community and its interrelating centers of decision can be achieved.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL EVOLUTION

Traditionalistic Influences

Faced with the complexities of modern times local governments, organized to meet demands of a more placid era, have found themselves under increasing pressure to develop a more responsive municipal system of government. "Adaptation to change has been so slow, so limited, and so reluctant that the role—even the continued viability—of these institutions is now in grave doubt."¹

An affirmative response must be received to the following questions before a local government can be expected to possess the minimum qualifications to serve the purposes intended by its creation.

A. Does each area governed have enough common interests, problems, and communications to qualify as a governmental unit able to produce political leadership responsive to its citizens?

B. Is each local unit sufficiently large in area and financial resources to make long range plans, to

attract professional staff, and to maintain a program of modern services?

C. Does each government have legal authority adequate to cope with its problems and to insure compliance with its decisions?

D. Is there a representative governing body implementing policy decisions, and a single chief executive to facilitate unity in administrative procedures?²

Fort Smith may be characterized as a conservative Republican community on national issues, and traditionalistic southern in local politics. The conservative Republicanism can be attributed to the large influx of northern industrial concerns and the resultant transfer of large numbers of northern employees. A further factor is Fort Smith's border location and the metropolitan influence of surrounding communities.

Regardless of the national trend in politics, the local political structure is dominated by old Democratic founding fathers. Traditionally the old Garrison Avenue Merchants Association has been the deciding political influence.

The common binding influence throughout Fort Smith's history has been one of economic survival brought about by

²Ibid., p. 16.
over-dependence on a single economic structure based on the ever-present federal military reservation at Fort Chaffee. Only within the last ten years has Fort Smith been able to achieve the diversification necessary to insure economic freedom from the federal government. It should be noted, however, that this growth has been one of controlled guidance by the Chamber of Commerce, through local influential leaders, desiring that stability in local wages and working conditions not be inflated by higher paying national industries.

The growth of Fort Smith was estimated by special census in 1967 to reach 70,000 by 1970. The 1970 census established the Fort Smith population at 62,800, which was a severe blow to the Chamber of Commerce and city officials.\(^3\) The result of reduced revenue from state turnback\(^4\) amounted to over $70,000 annually. The physical growth of Fort Smith is determined by the Arkansas River and the Fort Chaffee reservation, which dictate that future expansion will of necessity be to the south.


\(^4\)Arkansas Statutes 76-334B and 13-522, respectively, established gasoline tax and sales tax refunds to local municipalities based on population as established by the most recent United States census.
Until the 1971 General Assembly enacted a home rule provision, it could be said without qualification that Fort Smith did not possess the necessary legal authority to cope with its problems. It is hoped that further return of local power from the General Assembly to the municipalities will raise local authority to a level sufficient to meet the ever increasing demands placed upon it.

In 1967 Fort Smith citizens, reluctant to completely abandon old ties with the commissioner "ward" elections, overlooked the existing law allowing a City Manager form of government and secured enactment of Act 36 of the 1967 General Assembly of Arkansas, establishing the Administrator-Director form of government.

Under the Arkansas City Manager form, all members of the governing body are elected at large. The Administrator form maintains four ward and two at-large directors and a mayor elected at large. Even in a radical change in government, the ties with the old commission form of government could not be broken. It is this reluctance to abandon "ward politics" which casts grave doubt on the current form

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5 Act 266 of the 1971 Arkansas General Assembly set forth that "any city of the first class is hereby authorized to perform any function and exercise full legislative power in any and all matters of whatsoever nature pertaining to its municipal affairs including but not limited to the power to tax.

6 Authority granted under Arkansas Statute 19-701-19-733.
of government's ability to weather a move to return to a full five-commissioner, "all ward," form of government.\footnote{Authorized by Act 436 of the 1971 Arkansas General Assembly.}

In order to establish goals for the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas, it is necessary to understand the values cherished by its citizens. The people who settled in the southern tier of states (Arkansas included) established a governmental system relating to an extension of the landed gentry agrarianism of the old world, provided a natural environment for the development of an American-style traditionalistic political culture. In this culture the new landed gentry progressively assumed ever greater roles in the political progress at the expense of the small landowners.\footnote{Elazar, \textit{American Federalism}, p. 102.}

It is characteristic of the southern states that their legislatures retain centralized control over their subdivisions yet traditionally refrain from using this control to expand state activities.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 188.}

Three aspects of political culture stand out as particularly influential in shaping the operations of state political systems (and their legal creation, the municipality) within the context of American federalism. They are (1) the set of perceptions of what politics is and what can be expected from government, held by both the general public and the politicians; (2) the kinds of people who became active in government and
politics, as holders of elective offices, members of the bureaucracy, and active political workers; and (3) the actual way in which the art of government is practiced by citizens, politicians, and public officials in the light of their perceptions.\textsuperscript{10}

The following statements briefly establish the parameters of the political climate in Fort Smith.

1. Adoptive action normally will be taken only after an extended period of incubation, including frequently a history of prior attempts and failures. Exemplary of this trend are (a) enactment of a dog leash law, (b) defeat of water fluoridation, and (c) urban renewal attempts.

2. Action designed to adapt local government to changing needs is almost never prompt and forthright.

3. Almost every local adaptation to changing needs results from compromises designed to satisfy the parties involved.

4. A campaign of civic education resulting in public acceptance is necessary to the success of an adaptive course.

It is therefore more realistic to talk about leadership as political skill in marshalling concern with respect to a particular problem or issue than it is to speak in terms of a monolithic body of power exertable on command.

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.
over a broad governmental spectrum.\textsuperscript{11} To quote Norton E. Long, "common problems may do little more than produce common quarrels."\textsuperscript{12}

There is, after all, a firm ideological basis for the belief that "keeping house" is all a local government should do. City services combined with grass-roots governments have a persuasive appeal.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Designed for Disaster}

The history of an organization is the history of the persons who join it, who work in it, and are promoted through it, and who finally leave it through death, resignation, retirement, or dismissal.\textsuperscript{14} Too many people in Fort Smith still think of local government as made up of trash collectors, policemen, and firemen, and fail to grasp the wide range of tasks to be done and the human talents required. Citizens loudly demand road and transit


\textsuperscript{14}International City Manager's Association, \textit{The Techniques of Municipal Administration} (Chicago, 1958), p. 150.
facilities, police and fire protection, parks and playgrounds, clean water, and unpolluted air, failing fully to grasp the concept that all of the above are accomplished by educated, highly trained professionals.

What appears to be the problem in Fort Smith? Basically the problems appear to revolve around the following:

1. Basic citizen attitudes toward government.
2. Shortage of trained local or regional manpower.
3. Substandard compensation and motivational concepts.

In the past some cities have operated with the concept that any good man could conduct the affairs of municipal government. With the expansion of professional administration the above concept, although still prevalent to a high degree in Fort Smith, is no longer valid. Without a doubt much of the public has viewed the municipality as an ever present source of employment, the only qualification necessary being the affirmation "I pay taxes here."

For years the City of Fort Smith operated without the services of a personnel officer. Only in 1967, after an employee walkout, did the city establish the centralized personnel department concept. The department was organized as a strictly staff function and did not play an important role in the managerial function. Many of the functions of personnel were retained by the operating departments,

thereby further diluting the effectiveness of the personnel organization. After its creation, the personnel department served as the catchall of the organization. Over a period of years the department was plagued by a series of appointments of well meaning officers, all lacking previous municipal experience.

In the competition for topnotch employees the city was faced with another outdated public image—the fairy tale of the public servant, that dedicated person whose unselfish view of humanity entitles him to serve the people at salaries far below his industrial counterpart. Fort Smith is handicapped by low salaries and the low prestige with which municipal employment is held. The City of Fort Smith has become too large and is facing too many important decisions for this kind of organizational approach to continue. Any attempt to develop a panacea for Fort Smith's manpower problems would have to effectively deal with "public attitudes" toward its government. As long as a majority of Fort Smith citizens regard their local government and its employees with skepticism, outright hostility, or the opposite, apathy, the problems of eliminating Fort Smith's manpower problems appear slim indeed.

Robert Michel's "Iron Law of Oligarchy" states that the organization demands leadership. What roles have

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leadership and decision making, or their antagonist non-leadership and non-decision making, played in the unfolding of the first four years of the Administrator-Director form of government in Fort Smith, Arkansas?

In "Leadership and Group Life," Lippitt and White devised a system to study and define styles of leadership. Three basic styles emerged from their study:

A. Authoritarian—remains aloof from the group and uses orders in directing the groups' activities.
B. Democratic—offers guiding suggestions to encourage and participate in the group.
C. Laissez-faire—supplied knowledge to the group members, but showed little emotional involvement and a minimum of participation in the group activities.17

For approximately two years Fort Smith operated under the "Authoritarian" type of administration. Finally, in an explosive reaction, the organization shifted to a "Laissez-faire" type of direction which persists to the time of this writing.

Based on Etzioni's statement that "generally the less the organization alienates its personnel, the more efficient it is,"18 one must conclude that efficiency and progress are severely curtailed in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Strife, conflict, and dissatisfaction have been the terms most frequently utilized in the description of the city's's19

17 Ibid., p. 36.  
18 Ibid., p. 2.  
19 The term "city" hereinafter utilized will refer to Fort Smith, Arkansas.
employee relations. What has caused the city's employees
to twice resort to the strike and walkout? Although few
emotional issues can be reduced to a simple A, B, C listing
of causal factors, the following will at least give some
direction to the employee problems to be discussed in
greater detail in Chapter III.

A. Employees felt they had no real voice in the
decisions which affected them.
B. The neutral concept of the city's personnel
function.
C. Management procrastination and delay.
D. Increased knowledge of techniques of pressure
application by employee groups.

The collective political power of city hall employees
in the community may be quite significant. Thus, dis-
satisfactions in city hall may cause problems for the
manager in the community at large. Individual employees
may have ties to the community, and perhaps to the council,
as a result of having local origins or long tenure in their
positions. Indeed, despite charter provisions and merit
systems, employees may actually be in their jobs because of
such relationships. Many managers have had to contend with
employees, even departmental administrators, who, if not
incompetent, were not responsive to managerial leadership

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20 International City Management Association, Managing
and even inclined to oppose it, yet who were secure in their positions because of community ties.  

The preceding pages have attempted to establish parameters which apply to the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas. The city's organizational relationships are critical to understanding the currents evidenced in decision centers discussed in Chapter III.

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21 Ibid., p. 101.
CHAPTER III

ANALYZING DECISION CENTERS

Is there any single body of persons in the community which continuously and over a considerable period of time determines community policy? Is the exercise of power in the community best seen in terms of structure or is it a process with fluid and changing elements? If there is an identifiable group wielding power, how extensive is it? How cohesive is it? Is it really a single group or two or more factions? Is it monolithic or polynucleated? Is the power potential or actual? Is it exercised continuously or only intermittently? Is it exercised on a wide variety of issues or only on a few key decisions? Is it exercised in a negative way or positive way? Do all of the people of high status in the community also have power? Is it exercised in all realms of community life, non-governmental as well as governmental, or are there differing coalitions for different phases of community life?¹

The basic assumption that the primary point at which power is observable is at the point at which decisions are

made will be utilized in the following pages to arrive at a comprehensive evaluation of the City of Fort Smith power structure.

Within the last four years of Administrator government four areas of decision have been selected to be reviewed in depth for the purpose of identifying the local centers of power and the environment in which they operate. The four areas to be examined are as follows:

1. Employee Strike of 1968
2. Governmental Circumcision
3. Dog Leash Law
4. Water Fluoridation

Municipal Employee Unions

In the first seventy-seven days of 1971 the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics recorded fifty strikes against local governments in the eastern half of the United States—more than double the number tabulated for the same period in 1970.

In 1971, from New Year's Day to March 23, communities from Massachusetts to Puerto Rico and west to the Mississippi River were hit by disruptions in service involving police and firemen, hospital workers, sanitation employees, street and highway maintenance men or city and county personnel in general. Strikes were most common in jobs where disruption tends to create immediate emergencies,
such as garbage and snow removal, hospital work, street repairs, water supply, and police and fire protection.

Why do local government employees strike? The reasons listed were money, hours, greater fringe benefits, union recognition, drawn-out contract negotiations, and personality conflicts.²

Traditionally, public employees unions in the United States have not attempted the same collective bargaining procedures and techniques as have developed and continue to be developed in non-governmental areas.³ The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees started out in the tradition of other public employee unions. Today it is the dominant union in the state and local government field. Its success is clearly the result of not having accepted the traditional forms of relationships between the sovereign government and its employees. It decided to discard the traditional techniques and through organization, the development of political effectiveness, and the development of new tools to bring collective bargaining to the public service. It found early that employment was inadequate in the complex operation of government. The following

²Newsletter of the National League of Cities, 2, Number 6 (June, 1971).

generally summarizes the official policy adopted by the governing body of the AFSCME.

**Union Recognition**

The AFSCME takes the stand that public employees have the right to organize and bargain collectively through unions of their choice in all areas.

**Dues Check-Off**

Presently, there are thirty-eight states where the check-off for state or local government employees has been authorized. More than 80 per cent of AFSCME membership pay dues by the check-off method.

**Grievance Procedure**

The employer-employee relationship, whether in public or private employment, inevitably gives rise to disagreements which produce grievances. Grievance procedure in the public service is frequently inadequate because it is often part of the civil service mechanism which does not lend itself to quick, practical settlement of day-by-day irritations and complaints. A multi-step grievance procedure, setting forth various steps for the orderly settlement of grievance of the employee, is found in over 351 agreements negotiated by AFSCME locals.
Strike

The strike, the basic union weapon in union negotiations in private employment, is the most questioned and most controversial device in labor relations in public employment. Behind almost every strike in public employment will be found refusal by a shortsighted, irresponsible public official to meet and discuss with organized public employees and their chosen representatives grievances and other matters of concern to both the public employee and the public.4

The overall goal of the AFSCME is reflected in the following.

Democracy means treating all people in society with equal decency with the emphasis on decency. Collective bargaining is not designed to misuse employers. It is the fruit of a dignified democracy. It means that employer and employees sit down and plan their economic and social gains. The only way that public employees can be guaranteed a modicum of decency and dignity is by collective bargaining.5

Employee Strike of 1968

On Monday night, June 17, 1968, at the bimonthly board meeting, L. D. Porter, President of Crawford-Sebastian Central Trade Council, introduced Jeane Lambie, President and representative of the AFSCME, who presented to the board of directors a formal request for recognition.

4Ibid., p. 38.

Official board action was to take the matter under study.\textsuperscript{6}

Following the meeting of June 17, 1968, the City Administrator received a letter from Jeane Lambie:

We respectfully request, in the interest of the citizens of Fort Smith, a meeting between representatives of the AFSCME and representatives of the city of Fort Smith before 7 p.m. Friday, June 21, 1968.

In the meantime I have requested the Arkansas Mediation and Conciliation Service's assistance in the labor-management dispute which apparently exists. We hope that you will welcome their efforts.\textsuperscript{7}

The City Administrator on June 18, 1968, secured authorization of the board to meet with employees as requested in a letter of June 18, 1968. The meetings were to be with groups of employees and not exclusively with union representatives.

The first of four meetings to be held on June 19 was to be in the Sanitation Department at 11:00 a.m. Prior to administrative personnel's arrival for the meeting, a group of thirty sanitation workers advised they would not meet as employees with city officials. All contact would be made through their union representatives. James Willis, Sanitation Superintendent, confronted employees with the threat that jobs would be "automatically terminated" for those walking out without showing courtesy to the city.

\textsuperscript{6}Minutes of the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors, June 17, 1968.

\textsuperscript{7}City of Fort Smith records, City Administrator's Office.
representatives by hearing what they had to say. The rumor that the Administrator got mad and fired the whole sanitation department was quickly circulated by employees sympathetic to the union demands. At 12:30 p.m. approximately 50 per cent of the sewer employees walked off their jobs, followed by various other departments. At this stage the "spontaneous" walkout was not as effective as union leaders might have desired.

An emergency meeting of the board was held at 4:30 p.m. to formulate an immediate news release and issue a return to work deadline established to be 1:00 p.m., Thursday, June 20, 1968. In summary the board

1. affirmed job termination for thirty sanitation department employees,
2. gave other personnel who left their jobs until 1:00 p.m. on June 20 to return to duty, and
3. reaffirmed a policy for dealing with employees, saying in a prepared statement "the board sees no place for a union."\(^8\)

At this point in the strike approximately 100 out of 250 employees were involved. It became obvious as the return to work deadline expired that the walkout was a carefully planned event to spark a showdown and secure union recognition by a formal contract.

\(^8\)Ibid., June 20, 1968.
By June 21 the effects of municipal pickets and an all-night telephone campaign had taken their toll of employees and the strike had expanded to approximately 200 out of 250 employees. The city of Fort Smith filed a petition on June 21 for a temporary injunction to halt picketing. As a part of the hearings Chancellor Warren Kimbrough proposed all employees be allowed to return to work and grievances be negotiated during a thirty-day period. Lawyer Sam Sexton, Jr., representing the union, recommended the proposal, and board members approved. At this point Jeane Lambie strongly urged a "no" answer unless granted union recognition and dues check-off.

Pickets were permitted to continue, the basic theme being, the city of Fort Smith refuses to bargain on wages, hours, and working conditions. Later in the day (June 21) employees released a statement by Sam Sexton, Jr., lawyer representing the employees. In summary the employees contended

1. The constitution of the state guaranteed them the right to form and join a union.
2. The action taken against the thirty sanitation workers was unjustified and an attempt to coerce the employees into abandonment of the union.

On Thursday, June 20, the board met at noon on the request of L. D. Porter. The board reaffirmed their intention not to recognize the city union. An invitation was
extended to all employees, except those thirty sanitation employees, to return to work without disciplinary action.

On Friday, June 21, the directors met for an hour to discuss plans for an employment drive to fill positions left vacant. By Saturday, June 22, directors were pursuing efforts toward reestablishing sanitation, water, and street operations. Mayor Jack Freeze announced that the board would accept applications from 9:00 a.m. to Tuesday at the Municipal Auditorium. On June 23 help-wanted advertisements were placed in all local papers, bringing on a bitter reaction from striking employees. At this point it became necessary to utilize police protection at the city dump and water pump stations to guard against sabotage. It would appear that union leaders were unable to control a certain element of their followers and a tirade of highly abusive tactics was launched toward elected officials, administrative personnel and employees remaining on the job. The following notice circulated to working employees is a typical example: "Are you married and what would your family think about you working on such a dangerous job? These fellows know about these alleys and they know where to hide in the bushes and they will gang up on you."^{9}

On Monday, June 24, at a 10:00 a.m. special board meeting directors voted to place the question of union

^{9}Undated note circulated during strike of 1968.
recognition before the people by means of a special election to be held July 9. A section in the resolution would have bound the board to abide by the voters decision.

In a surprise move on June 24, Chancellor Kimbrough denied a city petition for a temporary injunction against employee picketing. That evening directors met informally with a group of city employees and Norman Brooks, Arkansas State Department of Labor, to discuss a proposal to get employees back on the job pending the outcome of the July 9 election. The board's proposal would be submitted to employees for their approval sometime June 25. The board would meet at 3:30 on the 25th for a report on the employee session.

As a reaction to the employees' rejection of the directors' proposal the special election scheduled for July 9 was cancelled by the board. The action was taken because the board decided the election would not solve the current problem, as there was no way to bind the former employees to abide by the outcome of the election.

On June 27 one of Fort Smith's newspapers, the Border Advertiser, editorially supported the city's position.

Every employee has the right, moral or legal, to quit his or her job regardless of the employer. So does every employer have the right to dismiss or fire any employee regardless of their reason. In this case the health and security of the public is involved. As such we are steadfastly behind the city administration in its refusal to recognize a strike and to re-employ strikers.10

10Fort Smith Border Advertiser, June 27, 1968.
In a move to test public support, striking city employees started a recall movement against the mayor and seven directors. Wednesday, June 26, under the title of "former employees of the city of Fort Smith," a resolution was adopted unanimously by the striking employees; it was signed by Elizabeth Loyd, publicity chairman, Wayne Carter and Gene Baily, committeemen.\(^1\) The resolution further alleged that the mayor and board of directors were acting contrary to Constitutional Amendment 34 in denying them union representation.\(^2\)

On the legal front the city took its efforts to halt picketing to the Supreme Court and requested an immediate hearing. The appeal further requested that the strike be declared illegal and that those who still considered themselves employees be ordered back to work. The city's position was that the strike was illegal because it was directed against the citizens of Fort Smith, and further that the city is a sovereign governmental unit and not required to bargain collectively with a union.

In an effort to set the record straight on alleged various false statements issued in handbill form by various union employees, the city placed an open letter to the

\(^1\)Committee appointed by the members of the city non-recognized union.

\(^2\)Fort Smith Southwest American, June 27, 1968.
citizens of Fort Smith in the *Southwest American* on June 27.

During the period of court decisions and public relations maneuvering, there were various acts of harassment such as roofing nails at strategic dump sites, burning of commercial garbage containers, and an around-the-clock telephone campaign against city officials and administrative personnel. After ten days an official count showed that 180 of 255 city employees were off their jobs.

The major problem with the city appeal to the high court resulted from the fact that the court was in summer session, with only three Justices. Justice Paul Ward stated he did not think such a far-reaching decision should be determined by three Justices. City Attorney Ben Core stated, "We are sitting on a powder keg right now and we don't know how long the fuse is . . . we do know it is lit." Justice Ward told Ben Core the court would consider an appeal July 15, when it reconvened. "'I am convinced that we can not last until then,' Core said; 'I feel like we'll be back before the 15th with a disaster.'"

On June 28, in a closed executive session, Sanitation Superintendent James Willis' employment was terminated. No elaboration was given by administrative personnel on the reasons for his dismissal.

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Additional action on the legal front occurred late Friday, June 28, when city attorneys requested a rehearing of the case in Chancery Court, seeking to have the walkout declared illegal. By this move the city paved the way for final settlement by appeal to the State Supreme Court on whether it is legal for city employees to go on strike.

On Thursday, July 11, 1968, Chancery Court Judge Kimbrough issued an opinion which staggered the city fathers and brought forth cries of victory from the union camp. Judge Kimbrough declared that

1. The city must reinstate the 199 workers to their former positions.
2. The city was instructed to recognize a union for collective bargaining on wages, hours, and working conditions.
3. Contracts for city services must be cancelled, and a private hauler cannot be engaged for sanitation department services.

The city immediately filed for a "stay of Chancery Court action" by the State Supreme Court. The effects on the city's position of non-recognition were devastating. Briefly, one of the city's attorneys summed up the situation:

It's a first in America. There is no authority for it. It's unbelievable--no precedent. No city in America has had this happen. A judge from Ozark, Arkansas, is going to run the personnel department. He can say who to hire and fire.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{15}\)Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, July 12, 1968.
The second major court blow was dealt the city on July 16, when the State Supreme Court refused to "stay a Chancery Court order" requiring the city of Fort Smith to rehire all its discharged employees and bargain with a union representative. While refusing to do this, the Supreme Court set up a time table for the appeal. The question to be decided was one of the largest to face the court in some time: Do public employees have the same right as other workers to bargain collectively through a union representative?

On July 18, 1968, in compliance with the Chancery Court decision, the board of directors passed Resolution 175, which directed the City Administrator to reinstate all striking employees and to discharge all new employees hired during the strike. As a direct result of matters relating to the strike and its untimely outcome, the City Treasurer/Finance Director tendered his resignation. With the resignation of Jack Kirkpatrick, only one newly-hired professional from out of state remained—Jack Shelley, City Administrator.

Even with this apparent union victory, things were far from tranquil. The union and anti-government factions, hoping to achieve a clean sweep, instituted a recall petition for various members of the board of directors. For reasons not completely clear, the recall petition was unable to generate sufficient impetus to secure the necessary election.

16 Ibid.
In an effort to forestall future conflict, and at the insistence of the union, the board of directors held a series of meetings with employee representatives in an effort to arrive at a workable set of employee rules and regulations. On December 23, 1968, ordinance 2707 "Adopting Employee Rules and Regulations" was placed before the board of directors for approval. Ordinance 2707 did not provide for the two major items on which the union had insisted: dues check-off and union recognition and contract. The union made its feelings abundantly clear through its representative, Sam Porter: "we do not intend for you to cram the terms and conditions of our employment down our throats—now or ever." As a result of the rejection, directors agreed to again meet with union employees on January 10, 1969, to attempt to resolve the impasse.

On a periodic basis the union continued to push for dues check-off and recognition and were repeatedly met by a four-to-three decision against their requests. On February 3, 1969, the question of dues check-off was re-introduced; again on May 19, 1969, an ordinance regulating hiring, employee conduct, and dues check-off was introduced.

Clifford V. Keheley was designated on June 2, 1969, as the city's new City Administrator. One of the primary concerns of the new administrator was to restore order and

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17 Minutes of the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors, December 23, 1968.
harmonious relations as quickly as possible. The city, by resolution 354, adopted a new pay plan designed to upgrade the underpaid employees. The revised pay plan was quickly followed by a 10 per cent across-the-board employee salary increase effective September 2, 1969.

Keheley, realizing the need for developing a professional staff, had taken steps to fill department head positions with qualified, degree-holding personnel. In February a city planner was hired, followed by a director of public works, and finally an assistant city administrator in September of 1969.

Like a Phoenix from the ashes, on February 2, 1970, additional union demands were brought to the board by the new union president, Luman Elkins. Elkins "discussed with the board the major changes in city government that the group (union) felt had driven the city workers to look for something that would give them more security." Elkins then requested a "working agreement" be drawn up.\footnote{Minutes of the City of Fort Smith Board of Directors, February 16, 1970.}

As a result of the above, on March 2, 1970, the board agreed to meet on March 6, 1970, with employees to discuss possible revisions in the existing rules and regulations. After a series of meetings and another employee walkout (based on the dismissal of union president Luman Elkins), a Memorandum of Understanding was completed and signed by
employee representatives on May 19, 1950. The memorandum did not include dues check-off or union recognition.

To date all further attempts by the union to secure dues check-off and union recognition have failed by a narrow four-to-three board vote. This failure in part must be attributed to the union's inability to arouse any broadly based support in the community.

Governmental Circumscription

Few students of public administration would dispute the fact that the administrator of any city is engaged in a delicate network of relationships between the council, his subordinates, other levels of government, and the community he serves. According to the International City Management Association, the council could reasonably expect the manager to

1. be the chief administrative officer of the city and be responsible to the city council, and
2. appoint and, when necessary, suspend or remove officers and employees of the city.19

Conversely, the manager expects certain things from the council; optimally he needs a council which

1. gives the manager the tools he needs for the job assigned to him,

19 International City Management Association, Managing the Modern City, p. 96.
2. deals with administrative officers or employees who are under the jurisdiction of the city manager solely through the manager in any matters of importance, and

3. issues directives only as a body to the manager.

When there is a breakdown of the above functional relationships the resultant problems threaten the very foundation of the manager-administrator system.20

The following circumstances vividly demonstrate the ease with which an administrator can allow his managerial perogatives to be circumscribed, thereby weakening the very basis for his existence. In fact, one must consider the question of whether the administrator system can exist apart from the previously detailed relationships.

The City of Fort Smith, not unlike most Arkansas cities, maintained a Civil Defense Office. One of the many advantages reaped by the maintenance of a Civil Defense Office was the access which it provided to surplus federal equipment.

Fort Smith had for years maintained a token Civil Defense operation by combining the Personnel Officer's position with that of Civil Defense Director. In 1969 the current personnel officer resigned and a decision was made to split the two functions. A Civil Defense Director was

20Ibid., p. 97. For purposes of this comparison, council is comparable with director and manager with administrator.
employed on a part-time basis. Shortly after the new director's employment it became obvious to the City Administrator that the Civil Defense Director was desirous of expanding his operations into an enlarged, quasi-independent department.

In the months to follow frequent disagreements arose with reference to the allocation of city funds to the civil defense operation. The disagreement rose to a fever pitch during budget preparations in December of 1969, when the Administrator declined to authorize the funds requested by the Civil Defense Director. Similar disagreements continued to occur and increase until November, 1970, when the Administrator advised the Civil Defense Director of his dismissal from the position. The events which followed were to have far-reaching effects on future city operations.

After meeting with the Civil Defense Director the city's Board of Directors directed the Administrator to reinstate the Civil Defense Director and allow him sufficient time to liquidate the responsibilities of his office. The board further directed that the Civil Defense Director was to be allowed to resign prior to January 1, 1971. In addition, the board directed the Administrator to prepare, for their approval, guidelines for hiring and dismissal of exempt (department and division heads) personnel.
The above action would merely have been an occurrence involving administrator/board disagreement had it not been for the existence of Resolution 70, passed on December 18, 1967. Resolution 70 proceeds as follows: "A resolution establishing the policy governing the relationship between the board of Directors and City Administrator, including delegation of certain authority." Briefly the resolution stated:

1. The Board reserves authority to approve policy which represents broad statements of intentions, approve plans and programs.

2. The Board delegates authority of administration to the City Administrator.

3. The Board recognizes that the City Administrator requires the authority to hire capable personnel within an approved wage and salary plan, to plan and organize salaries, train, supervise and when necessary terminate or replace employees.

4. The City Administrator shall be the official contact between the Board and employee personnel.

At their November 18, 1970, meeting, a Board segment requested that the City Administrator prepare guidelines for exempt personnel employment and dismissal, with the final decision resting with the board of directors.

The obvious effect of this action was to disavow resolution 70 and dilute the authority of the City
Administrator, thus insuring a direct link from city employees to the board of directors, with the administrator relegated to a position of recommendation only. The complete destruction of resolution 70 occurred on March 1, 1971, when the board approved ordinance 2878, establishing a series of administrative procedures for the board of directors and prescribing the conduct of the city administrator's office. Ordinance 2878 states as follows:

... the City Administrator shall obtain the approval of the board of directors prior to the employment or discharge of exempt personnel of the City of Fort Smith who are heads of departments, city clerk, secretary to the board, and the city attorney.21

Further restrictions were placed on the Administrator by excluding him, except by request of the board, from executive sessions of the directors. "Only the members of the board and the mayor shall regularly attend executive sessions of the board."22 The last traces of administrative chain of command were destroyed by Ordinance 2878 as follows:

Every department head shall immediately provide to a member of the board all available information and facts requested concerning the affairs of the department or office.23

21City of Fort Smith Ordinance 2878, adopted March 1, 1971.

22Ibid.

23Ibid.
The council and manager must remain within their own sphere, but must have cooperation between them in order to function properly. The city manager is an appropriate executive and in theory the exercise of all administrative authority is concentrated in the hands of the manager. 24

All this means perhaps no more than to say that the performance of the manager is fundamentally conditioned by the kind of a council with which he has to work. "Probably one of the most significant sources of tension and conflict lies in the problem of defining exactly who is to do what from day to day." 25

Dog Leash Law—Ordinance 2829

As government grows bigger, more complex, and more technical, the natural tendency of the average citizen is to feel he has lost contact with his government, that he has no control over the services he receives, and that he can have no effective impact on his elected officials. The result can easily be apathy with respect to government policies and operations, and bewilderment in knowing how to deal with city hall. 26

24 Stuart A. MacCorkle, American Municipal Governments and Administration (Boston, 1948), pp. 272-273.

25 International City Management Association, Managing the Modern City, p. 97.

26 American Academy of Political and Social Science, Theory and Practice of Public Administration, p. 287.
The City of Fort Smith has been plagued by a multitude of problems, ranging from the inability to collect much-needed revenues to personnel problems and citizens' adverse attitudes toward the city's governing body. Since all municipal governments are directly supported by the citizens they serve, the confidence of the citizenry in its city administration, to a large degree, determines the success or failure of a municipal government.

Ordinance 2829, establishing a Dog Leash Law, was passed by the board of directors on August 3, 1970, under extremely vocal threats of an immediate referendum. Basically, the issue seemed split between homeowners, who were tired of picking up trash from overturned garbage cans, and a large number of avid pet owners and sportsmen, who felt any type of restraint placed on the freedom of their pets was a violation of their constitutional rights. Opponents of the ordinance were successful in securing a sufficient number of signatures to force the board of directors, on September 8, 1970, to issue resolution 581, establishing a date for a municipal election on the leash law.

On Tuesday, October 20, 1970, referred ordinance 2829 was approved by a vote of 6,156 to 3,792. An analysis of the voting indicates that the previously anti-city hall precincts provided the deciding vote. The city's voting

27City of Fort Smith voting record, October 20, 1970.
typology can be divided on a north vs. south basis. The north-side-of-town voting reflects the lower-income, old Fort Smith, status quo values. Traditionally the south side has reflected upper-income, pro-government sympathies. An exception to the general southside designation is an area designated as precincts 3-L and 3-K, which has consistently voted against all improvements over the last four years. This south side pocket represents a middle-income, blue-collar area and is ardently anti-administration in orientation.

TABLE I

PRECINCTS VOTING AGAINST ORDINANCE 2829*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Precinct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>C, D, O. P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>L, K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ward I—traditional north side; Ward II—north west side factory district; Ward III—south west and south central factory and blue collar area; Ward IV—traditional south side.

The significance of the above election may be found in the fact that a framework for opposition to the Administrator form of government had started to formulate and would come into full view in the following fluoride dispute.
Water Fluoridation—Ordinance 2857

Within four months of the dog leash dispute, community politics again began to boil on a highly emotional issue—the adding of fluoride to the municipal water system. The board, acting on a request by a joint committee of dentists and physicians, adopted Ordinance 2857 on December 21, 1970.

The opposition was immediate and extremely vocal, citing sterilization and ruination of water supplies if the ordinance was permitted to stand. On January 18, 1971, the board, by resolution 625, was forced to set a date for an election on the fluoride issue. Carrying the colors for the opposition was a group known as the Pure Water Association, with a membership surprisingly similar to the opposition in the previous dog leash controversy.

On April 20, 1971, referred ordinance 2857 was defeated by a vote of 6,248 to 4,175.28

**TABLE II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts Voting Against Ordinance 2857*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ward I . . All voted against except I, L, M, N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II . . 100 percent voted against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III . . All voted against except D, E, F, I, J, M, N, O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV . . A, B, C, L, M, N, O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*City of Fort Smith voting record, April 20, 1971.
A review of this issue indicates that the voting lines were drawn along educational and income levels rather than traditional north-south designations. Almost without exception the lower income precincts in both the north and south sides voted against water fluoridation.

With over 75 percent of all Arkansas cities currently having fluoridated water available, it was considered a major dent in the community's progressive image when the fluoride ordinance went down to a resounding defeat. An even more surprising fact was that the Pure Water Association did not disband when the issue for which it was supposedly created had been resolved.

Close on the heels of the Pure Water Association, a new group called the Tax Savers Action Council began to expound its theories on how municipal affairs should be structured. After a series of public meetings, a member of the Tax Savers group announced that they were spearheading a drive to secure the signatures necessary to call an election to change the form of government back to a modified Commission format.

The modified Commission form of government was established by Act 436 of 1971, by the Arkansas General Assembly. Although no factual determination has been made, reliable sources indicated that this act was purportedly introduced by the Fort Smith labor lobby at the request of the city's nonrecognized employee union. Act 436 specifies that
Any city of this State now or hereafter having a population of 18,000 or more inhabitants . . . may adopt the Commission form of government but to consist of a Board of Commissioners of five members.  

Act 436 further stipulates that the functions of the city shall be divided as follows:

The Mayor: Department of Finance and Administrative Services
Commissioner One: Department of Public Safety
Commissioner Two: Department of Health and Sanitation
Commissioner Three: Department of Streets and Public Improvements
Commissioner Four: Department of Planning and Public Properties

As of this writing it is rumored that the necessary signatures have been secured and will be presented at a forthcoming meeting of the board of directors.

An interesting sidelight is the alleged involvement of members of the city's employee union in assisting in securing signatures. It was generally acknowledged at City Hall that a change in government would provide the union with their best opportunity to secure a union contract, by the election of union supporters as commissioners.

"Ultimately, under our form of government, the citizen must retain control over his government through his elected representatives and, where appropriate, through the courts."  

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29 Act 436 of 1971 of the Arkansas General Assembly.
30 Ibid.
31 American Academy of Political and Social Science, Theory and Practice of Public Administration, p. 285.
CHAPTER IV

FORT SMITH—VOLATILE OR VACUUM

In the new competition for influence, any group can play; the ticket of admission for its leaders or hired professionals is now skill in organization and a working knowledge of inter-governmental complexity. For every decision is shared with other groups and every major improvement—a new hospital, a new downtown plaza, a poverty program or whatever— involves the creative manipulation of multiple public authorities.

The modern public executive thus has to move in a fluid environment. It must have been a perceptive analyst of modern administration who first said that the task of public management was as difficult as nailing jello to the trunk of a tree.¹

Group Power

It would not be without a just foundation to say that with few exceptions, local governments have failed to utilize the scientific polling and marketing techniques so ably wielded by private industry. Too often the desires of citizens for various services or their current reactions to programs underway are left undetermined. Local governments are all too anxious to assume that a telephone call from a private citizen, a plea from a local civic group, or the clamor of

¹Ibid., pp. 167-168.
influential citizens expresses the feelings of a large community segment.

The art of public management, said General William Reeder shortly after his retirement,

... consists of issuing orders based on inaccurate, incomplete and archaic data, to meet a situation which is dimly understood, and which will not be what the issuer visualizes, orders which will frequently be misinterpreted and often ignored, to accomplish a purpose about which many of the personnel are not enthusiastic. 2

The creation of consensus appears to underline the political structure operating in Fort Smith. The political history of Fort Smith is best characterized by such phrases as "don't rock the boat," "government which governs least governs best," or the state motto "let the people rule."

The trend in politics has definitely been one of "keep off the grass."

Innumerable problems calling for remedial action face the city, for modern urban life is complex and in a constant state of flux. However, under normal circumstances, past history of this city definitely indicates that when an event occurs which sharply changes existing conditions to the

2Ibid., p. 175.
detriment of a vocal group, a demand for action can be confidently expected.

Robert Dahl, as quoted in Munger's *Decisions in Syracuse*, has defined a community leader in terms of his ability to exercise power. Dahl bases his analysis of the effectiveness of the power wielder on his ability to (1) initiate proposals and carry them through, (2) override substantial opposition on behalf of a proposal, and (3) veto a proposal initiated by others.\(^3\)

Who makes the decisions in Fort Smith that influence the process by which municipal problems and issues get handled?

In investigating the question of who is running this town, one discovers that the politicians and bureaucrats have a vast array of help, often hindrance, from various individuals and groups possessing no authority or official position.\(^4\)

How then should an investigation proceed to identify and isolate the "power structure" or "force wielders" who influence events and shape their outcome?

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The results and evaluation of questionnaire responses indicate that, in Fort Smith, decisions are made at a multitude of decision centers, each set in a separate social and economic environment, each responding to different types of interests, and each struggling to maintain a separate existence. As a result of these differing conditions, local government decisions have been made in an attempt to resolve the issue without bringing about arousal of other factions and the possible uniting of two normally unassociated groups.

Analytical Procedures

The following basic research was performed in determining the general political parameters stated in this chapter.

A questionnaire was constructed and mailed to 200 persons in a representative sampling of the Fort Smith population. Mailing was accomplished by creation of a list based on the type of occupation and economic areas as determined by census tract data on income. The following categories were utilized:

**Occupations by type.** -- 100 questionnaires mailed

Financial:  
Banking/Savings and Loan  
CPA Firms  
Merchants  
Local Association Presidents  
Selected Merchants
Civic:  PTA Chairmen  
Library Board  
American Legion Commander  
Service Club President  

Educational:  School Principals  
Civics Teachers  
Junior College Board  
School Board  

Communications:  Television Managers  
Radio Managers  
Newspaper Manager  

Miscellaneous:   Labor Council  
Ministers Alliance  
Local Bar President  
Local Medical Society  
Chamber of Commerce  

Income distribution.--100 questionnaires mailed  
Welfare Project--10  
Under $4,000--25  
$5,000-$8,000--50  
$10,000-$15,000--15  

The following questions were utilized in this study:  
1. Suppose a major project was before the board of directors, one that required a decision by a group of leaders nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group--regardless of whether or not you know them personally?  

2. In most communities, certain people are said to be "influential behind the scenes" and to have a lot to say about programs that are planned, projects and issues that come up. What persons in Fort Smith do you feel are influential in this way?
3. If a decision were to be made in Little Rock that directly affected Fort Smith, who would be the best contact man you could send to get in touch with state officials?

4. Suppose you wanted a hearing before federal officials in Washington on a matter directly affecting Fort Smith, who would you select to go there to present your case?

5. Are there other people with whom the leaders you have mentioned work closely who have not been named so far, but who should be included in any list of leaders in your community?

Ninety-seven questionnaires were returned. For each question the persons named by respondents were classified in the above listed occupational categories.

Table IV displays the responses received to the questions. A brief discussion of each question's responses follows.

Summary of Responses to Questionnaire

**Question One.**--Selection of local decision group.

Response to this question and to Question Two would indicate a definite trend toward ordinary citizens and local, small, hometown businessmen. It would appear that this would bear out the previously arrived at opinion that a conservative, workingman attitude prevails in the community.
TABLE III
RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Type of Persons Named in Response</th>
<th>Number of Responses to Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation President</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant*</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman**</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Inventory for resale.

**Provides a service.

In the most recent mayoral election in Fort Smith, the major contender—sponsored by the city's union employees—was engaged in the ministry. No contenders in recent board elections have been of the lawyer, physician, corporation president category.

It would appear that Gordon Lippitt's contention that status can no longer be observed by reference to the "well established, wealthy family, the mayor, the owner of the
local mill," is a valid contention in the Fort Smith community.

**Question Two.**—Location of behind-the-scene influentials.

To one familiar with recent Fort Smith politics, it is clearly understandable why the merchant category received such a large number of votes on this question (see Table IV). For years politics have been altered by the "self interest" group known as the Garrison Avenue Merchants Association. As members of this group may be found 75 percent of the founding fathers' descendants, operating businesses which have passed from one generation to another. For years this association has been successful in influencing the course of governmental action to suit the downtown merchants' best interests. With the development of two modern, enclosed malls, and a gradual withdrawal of merchants from the downtown association, it is anticipated that a gradual reduction in this organization's influence will occur.

**Question Three.**—Local citizens with state influence.

Of the twenty-three miscellaneous individuals referred to, a number of recognized lobby leaders were listed. Typical examples were the president of the local labor council and presidents of the local labor unions. A surprising factor emerging in this category was the number of

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responses indicating individuals occupying elected positions in municipal government. The vast majority of responses, forty, indicated that lawyers and businessmen serving in the current legislature were the most influential people. The current sampling (see Table IV) would indicate that the local influence of clergymen does not extend beyond the scope of the local power structure.

**Question Four.** Local citizens with federal influence.

From the response received, as shown in Table IV, it would appear that the community generally recognizes that to communicate on the federal level a professional collaborator is required. The responses further indicated an acknowledgment that any attempt to influence actions on the federal level would require considerable financial resources.

The high number of miscellaneous candidates can be attributed to lack of familiarity with someone in the preceding professional categories. The majority of those named in this area, as far as the poller is concerned, do not have, or have not demonstrated, the capacity to influence acts on a federal level.

**Question Five.** Other leaders not previously mentioned.

The response received to this question provided a variety of sub-leaders in the community. The primary type of individual listed was a one-time or one-occurrence leader who took charge to resolve a specific problem with which the respondent was connected. Although the individuals listed in this category provided a means of cross-referencing
the previously mentioned leaders, they pointed up the "organization of the moment" principle of community power.

Based on responses to the questionnaire and assuming that the attempted representative sampling was valid, one may conclude the following in reference to Fort Smith's political climate.

A. In the local government arena the decision-making groups expected to exert the greatest influence will be of a nonprofessional type. Composition will probably include local merchants, small businessmen, and labor-oriented working classes.

B. Although apparently on the decline, the less vocal but influential merchants will continue to exert pressure on any decisions affecting their livelihood. The traditionalistic status quo pressures of the general area have assisted in maintaining this group at a level of influence disproportionate to their economic impact on the city as a whole.

C. When dealing in the areas of state and federal influence, a greater recognition of the value of professionalism was indicated. This can in part be attributed to the fact that, historically, professionals in Arkansas were the only category of citizens possessing sufficient funding to accept low-salaried state positions. With the trend toward professionals as major decision influencers, strong labor ties were indicated by the number of labor leaders designated as state decision makers.
CHAPTER V

FOUR YEARS IN RETROSPECT

Progress Past—The First Four Years

More man hours and more dollars are spent on running community affairs than on any other peacetime activity in the United States. When one observes such things as the decreasing number of communities which are adopting fluoridation, the increasing demise of school bond issues, and the lack of agreement on urban renewal, it is time to be concerned about the use of human resources.\(^1\)

In the following pages an attempt will be made to detail the progress made during the last four years of the Administrator form of government.

The City of Fort Smith derives its powers from the State of Arkansas as set forth in Arkansas Statute 19-2301. The authority granted by the state is based on the oft quoted principle of law established by Judge John F. Dillon and known as "Dillon's Rule." Dillon's rule states as follows:

\[
\text{It is a general and undisputed proposition of law that a municipal corporation possesses}\]

\(^1\)Ibid.
and can exercise the following powers, and no others: First, those granted in express words; second, those in or incidental to the powers expressly granted; third, those essential to the accomplishment of the declared objects and purposes of the corporation—not simply convenient, but indispensable. Any fair, reasonable, substantial doubt concerning the existence of power is resolved by the courts against the corporation, and the power is denied.²

In general, a city's functions can be stated as follows: to provide for the public welfare, safety, comfort, and convenience of its inhabitants. These functions are performed in the following ways:

1. Adoption and enforcement of ordinances which regulate various activities in the city.

2. The furnishing of services which contribute to the protection of life and property.

3. Providing those community facilities and services necessary to the inhabitants of the city which cannot be obtained through private means.

4. Providing public improvements and encouraging private investments which will enhance the environment of the community for the benefit of its residents.

One of the principal functions of the City Administrator in Arkansas is to keep the board of directors advised of the financial condition and future needs of the city.

The principal operating funds of the city are (1) general,

²John F. Dillon, Commentaries on the Law of Municipal Corporations (Boston, 1911), Sec. 237.
(2) water, (3) sewer, (4) street, (5) airport, and (6) sanitation.

Water, sewer, airport, and sanitation funds derive their monies from service charges and fees. The street fund is financed through turnback from the state, which rebates, on a population basis, a percentage of the gasoline tax. The primary means of financing the General Fund are fines, license fees, permit fees, use charges, ad valorem tax, and turnback by the state of a portion of the sales tax revenue. An outstanding example of the state's failure to sufficiently fund its cities is apparent in the percentage of sales tax rebate. Fort Smith's sales turnback amounts to $4.40 per capita per year, while Fort Smith's collections paid to the state amount to $90 per capita per year.

Faced with total expenditures exceeding $1,850,000 and $1,000,000 worth of bonded debt requirements, it is no wonder Fort Smith is constantly faced with a pressing need for new and increased revenue. Accepting the fact that financial position is an accurate indicator of managerial efficiency, the following table clearly indicates the improved fiscal responsibility of the Administrator form of government.3

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TABLE IV

CITY OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS,
ANNUAL BUDGETS, 1965-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surplus from All Revenue Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>$33,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>$12,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967*</td>
<td>$329,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>$330,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>$439,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>$435,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Change to Administrator form of government.

Prior to the adoption of the Administrator form of government, comprehensive and physical planning was non-existent. Each department was responsible for determining its own destiny and the city grew like Topsy.

Comprehensive Planning

Fort Smith desperately needed physical planning. Although the city commissioners had engaged numerous firms to set forth "grand plans," agreement could not be reached on their conclusions and recommended courses of action. One of the most notable examples of planning failure is found in 1967 short-term sewer bonds issued in 1967 to mature in 1972. Due to overestimation of revenue and an unrealistic pay-off schedule, the city presently faces default of 1.5 million in bonds with no means of raising
sewer revenues, due to the enactment of the Presidential Price Freeze and subsequent denial of an exemption request. Prior to the arrival of the new Administrator, no final decisions could be arrived at with reference to long-range planning.

Note should be made of the developments which occurred in certain aspects of finances and long-range planning.

Finance

Contributing to citizen distrust and confusion was the manner in which the city's financial records were maintained. The lack of annual budgeting procedures and the Commissioners' failure to provide consistent and routine accounting procedures compounded citizen belief that a change at City Hall was necessary. The system of accounting was so disorganized that few people were aware that idle money such as unexpended bond money and current cash were not invested.

One of the first jobs of the new Administrator was to implement a system of financial control and reporting. An annual budget was developed in conjunction with a new system of ledgers patterned after recommendations set forth in the Municipal Finance Officers Association Accounting Manual. Functions of the various departments became book accounts for internal control in the finance department.

One of the first major changes in departmental organization occurred when the direction of financial activities
was removed from control of the City Clerk and established under a Director of Finance. The new finance director immediately began to alter the budget-making process. Each department was held responsible for the budget preparation for that component. Detailed forms were given to supervisors to list every required item. After departmental budgets were prepared, each department head had to justify individual requests. Monthly budget reports were developed and sent to the Administrator, members of the board, and department heads.

Unencumbered monies or idle cash were invested in local banks on a highest-interest-bid basis. The success of the budgetary control has been demonstrated by the large balances carried over from one year to the next. Better methods of budget preparation have allowed more adequate planning of programs of work.

Although not apparent at the time, the increased financial controls had laid the seed of future discontent. As in most changes and implementation of new controls and procedures, a reaction to the new, formal, and sometimes impersonal system developed. Coupled with the fact that the Finance Director was an "out-of-town," highly paid employee, certain rumbles of citizen and employee discontent could be detected with increasing frequency.

Generally speaking, people are innately suspicious of ideas being "railroaded," and they do not particularly
like to be told what is good for them. The average person likes to think that an occasional idea is something of his own, and that he is capable of figuring out what to do for his own good.\(^4\)

**Physical Planning**

Another major addition to the city's developing professional staff occurred with the employment of another "out-of-town" city planner. The most immediate problem facing the new planner was the total disarray of the building, electrical, and plumbing inspection facilities. Tradition had permitted inspectors to maintain their own charge books on contractors. Complete examinations revealed some accounts two or three years overdue. Once internal problems were stabilized, the first goal was the adoption of a new minimum housing code to clarify and simplify the inspection procedure on substandard housing. A demonstrated enforcement in this area was essential for the city's recertification under federal "workable program." Under the new housing code, over 350 substandard homes were condemned and over 360 homes demolished. Another 180 homes were brought up to compliance levels.

After much work in February of 1970, the city's "workable program" was certified. The program provided a plan of action for effectively dealing with the problem of

urban slums and blight. Certification of the city's program was required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for communities desiring to utilize federal funds for renewal and housing problems.

The term "planning" of course indicates that after the plan is developed, action will be taken for its implementation. As the plan was implemented, opposition to change again became apparent. The people had not forgotten the Commission's tragic experience with Urban Renewal in 1962, which ended in a political uproar second only to the change in government.

Other Achievements

Numerous other achievements came with the Administrator plan in Fort Smith. In the areas of personnel relations a set of employee rules and regulations was drafted to cover non-uniformed employees. Later in 1969, a new set of Civil Service Rules and Regulations for uniformed employees was adopted to conform to the state statute, and overcome deficiencies in the old rules. A five-step pay plan was implemented with five-percent annual in-grade increases and specified increases for promotional ranges. Although met by intense union opposition, the system has been in effect three years and appears to have proven itself to employees. On the heels of two five-percent cost-of-living increases in 1969, specifications were drafted and
bids received to upgrade the employees health benefit program by combining the various departments into a single group and partial payment of the employee cost by the city. A $569,393 water treatment program was completed and quickly followed by a $627,377 sewer improvement project. The installation of 849 new mercury vapor street lights, removal of wooden traffic control posts, and completion of phase two of the street name-marking program, left little doubt in the people's minds that the public works program was moving in a positive manner. One of the most popular additions occurred in January, 1970, when a contract in the amount of $58,918 was issued for furnishing and installation of new traffic signals at seven major intersections.

Continuation Prospects--The Second Four Years

One of the most obvious and striking features of the modern community is its ceaselessly changing nature. People object to the fact that taxes paid to municipal organizations are too high. Their complaint is not new. On the other hand, many voices are being raised to say that Fort Smith's expenditures are too low to maintain adequate services. Every year the majority of Arkansas cities, including Fort Smith, face a budget crisis. Civic leaders complain of the complete neglect of this or that service function of the municipal government. These statements serve to substantiate the indecision in the establishment of municipal goals. Some citizens desire lower taxes and reduced
government services, while others demand more and higher quality services and thus argue for higher taxes. The truth is not so simple; in fact, the individual citizen's usual plea is for more services at a lower price.

"In practice, goals are often set in a complicated power play involving various individuals and groups within and without the organization, and by reference to values which govern behavior of the relevant individuals and groups in a particular society."\(^5\)

In spite of his paradoxical position, the local citizen continues to be extremely vociferous on this subject, and has strong motivation for his interest and outspoken attitude. His work environment, his play facilities, and the safety of his home and family, to name only a few factors, all are dependent to a large extent upon the quality of his local government.

Interest in Fort Smith's civic affairs is not the only product that naturally arises from the close contact which exists between the individual and his local government. As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, action also springs from this relationship.

The whole situation of Fort Smith's average citizen was clearly verbalized during a public hearing to discuss a possible sewer rate increase. A city director pointed out

to the complaining citizen that the city's share of his tax
dollar was small in comparison to the state and federal
governments'. The reply was, "This is the only group I can
lay my hands on." To most citizens the federal or state
government is a remote body—a machine both unfeeling and
unresponsive. Local government is close at hand and the
citizen feels that he can do something about the local
situations which displease him.

Fort Smith's government cannot be completely exon-
erated of the common charges of inefficiency, empire
building, red tape, and bureaucracy. The question which
soon must be decided by the citizens of Fort Smith is
whether the indictment of human error is sufficient to
bring about a complete reversal of the last four years of
demonstrated progress. Is there a common thread of dis-
content sufficient to unite normally unrelated community
forces into a temporary coalition? The answer to this
question, though not resolved by this research, has been
dramatically set forth in the investigation of the forces
which have historically motivated this community.

Whether the experiences gained during the first four
years of government have been sufficient to allow the
fledgling administration an opportunity to mature into an
acceptable and functional instrument of the people can only
be answered at the ballot box when the people speak.
Conclusions

In the preceding narrative an attempt has been made to establish valid parameters for the political climate of Fort Smith, and to describe how the interrelations of community decision making have functioned in four major decision areas. Political intrusion into areas traditionally reserved to the chief administrative officers has seriously weakened the Administrator's effectiveness in directing municipal activities. In relieving the Administrator of his direct hire-fire authority the board has encouraged a divided loyalty within the ranks of the professional staff.

In the city of Fort Smith professionalism has not been furthered by requiring that informational channels be established directly between board members and the rank and file. The process of direct contact has bypassed the routine administrative information flow and hampered the Administrator in directing employee relations.

As previously stated, it is a basic requirement in political-professional relationships that the chief administrative officer have the power to suspend or remove his employees. By removing this authority the board has effectively circumscribed one of the Administrator's basic management tools.

Through public reversal of the Civil Defense Director's dismissal and direct involvement in the selection of the city's professional staff, a severe strain has been placed
on nonprofessional employee relations. Viewing the dismissal reversal as a vote of no confidence in the City Administrator, employees striving to secure union recognition were encouraged to engage in direct dealings with the political body. Direct dealings by employees with the board have severely restricted the Administrator's informational capabilities in relation to employee problems. The above action has placed the Administrator in a position of equal status with employees in dealing with the political body.

Ward politics continue to dominate political actions in Fort Smith even though the Administrator-Director form of government was basically considered a departure from political control of municipal administrative affairs. The damage to the effectiveness of professional administration due to political involvement in administrative details has yet to be fully assessed. One must conclude that renewed pressures to return to the Commission form of government indicate a degree of community dissatisfaction with the current organization.

Based on the research previously presented, it would appear that citizens' dissatisfaction has resulted in part from the board's departure from the principle of separating day-to-day administrative control by the governing political body. By withdrawing certain management tools from the professional administrator, the board has in reality reverted
to a modified Commission system of government. Each board member is able to influence the daily operations of various departments in which he maintains special interest.

There appears to be considerable question whether the traditionalistic, nonprofessional political climate of Fort Smith will continue to provide a favorable climate to foster the continued growth of the current professionally oriented Administrator-Director form of government.
APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

You have been selected to participate in a political science project dealing with local decision makers. No attempt will be made to identify, by individual or firm, the responses returned. A self addressed stamped envelope is included for your convenience.

Please check the box best describing your occupation.

☐ Financial (Banking, Merchants, Company President)

☐ Civic (PTA, Service Club)

☐ Educational (Principal, School Board)

☐ Communications (Television, Radio, Newspaper)

☐ Not listed above.

In the following five questions, if you are unable to list a specific individual please list an occupational type, such as lawyer, banker, labor leader, etc.
1. Suppose a major project was before the board of directors, one that required a decision by a group of leaders nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group—regardless of whether or not you know them personally?

2. In most communities, certain people are said to be "influential behind the scenes" and to have a lot to say about programs that are planned, projects and issues that come up. What persons in Fort Smith do you feel are influential in this way?

3. If a decision were to be made in Little Rock that directly affected Fort Smith, who would be the best contact man you could send to get in touch with state officials?

4. Suppose you wanted a hearing before federal officials in Washington on a matter directly affecting Fort Smith, who would you select to go there to present your case?
5. Are there other people with whom the leaders you have mentioned work closely who have not been named so far, but who should be included in any list of leaders in your community?
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