The governing of local communities has become very challenging as a result of major changes taking place in the political, social, and economic environments. This increasingly complex and dynamic context of policy making has rendered orthodox governance models less helpful than ever before. Many scholars and practitioners now emphasize a more collaborative mode of policy making that accepts shared roles and reciprocal influence between elected officials and professional administrators and underscore the critical importance of such themes as "connectedness," "communication," and "cooperation" (Nalbandian 1999; Svara 1999b). This new perspective stands in contrast to the politics-administration dichotomy, which divides labor and authority along functional lines to keep policy-making and implementation tasks in separate hands (Martin 1988). Vast amounts of empirical research have provided unequivocal evidence against this dichotomy view (Demir and Nyhan 2008).

As a corollary to the empirical weaknesses and inherent normative limitations of the politics-administration dichotomy, some scholars have developed what is known today as the complementarity view, an alternative conceptualization of cooperation between elected and administrative officials in the policy process. According to this view, elected officials do and should engage in administration, and public administrators do and should contribute to policy making. The complementarity view allows shared roles between elected officials and public administrators with respect to policy making and administration. The emphasis is on ongoing interaction, shared responsibilities, and reciprocal influence (Brown 1985; Giegold and Dunsing 1978; Nalbandian 1994; Svara 2001; Thomas 1990).

The complementarity view conceptualizes four activities—politics, policy, administration, and management—and treats the politics-administration relationship as a continuum rather than dichotomy (Demir 2009a; Svara 2001). The complementarity view keeps politics and management as distinct activities, suggesting that broader political questions should be framed by elected officials while entrusting professional managers with routine management functions. Elected officials do not engage in management activities, and public administrators play a much less significant role in political activities such as mission formulation and refrain from partisan politics that serves particular interests (Montjoy and Watson 1995, 237). However, duality, which is inherent in the complementarity perspective, implies the sharing of roles with respect to policy making and administration. Public administrators engage in questions that relate to policy making, while elected officials contribute to administration by directing, shaping, and overseeing policy implementation (Dunn and Legge 2002; Nalbandian and Portillo 2006; Svara 1999b). Empirical research to date has already supplied a nontrivial amount of evidence in support of the complementarity view, further corroborating the existence of shared roles to varying

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Recent literature in public administration emphasizes enhanced collaboration between elected and administrative officials. The complementarity view is presented as an alternative to the traditional politics-administration dichotomy. At the center of this new perspective lies the concept of shared roles between elected officials and public administrators with respect to policy making and administration. This article expands the emerging literature on role sharing by proposing and testing new variables to understand what enhances the policy-making role of city managers and the administrative role of elected officials. Employing data collected from a nationwide survey of city managers and utilizing structural equation modeling methodology, this research finds that the council’s expectations and the city manager’s role conception significantly influence the city manager’s involvement in policy making, while the context of policy making, the city manager’s support, and the council’s access to resources affect elected officials’ involvement in administration. This article aims to make a cumulative contribution to the literature on role sharing.
Wide agreement on shared roles notwithstanding, our current knowledge is still in need of expansion with respect to the factors that explain shared roles between elected and administrative officials. The demise of the politics–administration dichotomy was followed by empirical research that aimed at shedding light on the nature and determinants of role sharing in government. Earlier studies focused on government structure and aimed to find out whether the presence of an elected mayor increased or decreased city managers’ role in policy making (Morgan and Watson 1992; Newell and Ammons 1987; Pressman 1972; Svara 1986, 1987; Wikstrom 1979). More recent studies, however, have explored the impact of a broader number of factors, including ideological orientations and political values (Watson 1997; Wirth and Vasu 1987); contingency and demographic factors (Jacobsen 2006; Zhang and Feiock 2010); administrative attitudes, values, and networking of managers (Mouritzen and Svara 2002); seniority of elected officials (Nalbandian 2004); legislative oversight as a mechanism of administrative influence (Palus and Yackee 2009); professional experience; administrative authority of the manager; and the nature of the council-manager relationship (Zhang and Feiock 2010).

Most previous research paid more attention to the role of managers in the policy process. Empirical studies explaining the factors contributing to elected officials’ involvement in administration have been rather underwhelming. A limited number of works have examined the role of government structure (Pressman 1972; Svara 1986; Wikstrom 1979), the motives of elected officials (Abney and Lauth 1982), or the resources available to legislatures (Pelissero and Krebs 1997).

The political–administrative relationship is inherently complex, and the number of variables that can affect this relationship appear to be inexhaustible. The purpose of this article is to make a cumulative contribution to this emerging literature on role sharing between elected officials and public administrators. Specifically, this research seeks to answer two questions: (1) What factors explain the involvement of city managers in policy making? (2) What factors explain the involvement of elected officials in administration? The theoretical significance of this research lies in its objective to identify and test some important factors that augment sharing of policy making and administrative roles. There is also a practical objective that this article strives to achieve. In the absence of satisfactory empirical knowledge, the frequent call for role sharing and mutual responsibility has little guidance to offer other than a candid wish for more cooperation between elected and administrative officials. In this respect, the findings of this research may be helpful in orienting the efforts of city managers and elected officials toward some critical areas that need attention so as to improve cross-functional contributions to the policy process.

The findings of this research may be helpful in orienting the efforts of city managers and elected officials toward some critical areas that need attention so as to improve cross-functional contributions to the policy process.

This article proposes and tests two theoretical models: one for city managers’ involvement in policy making and one for elected officials’ involvement in administration. In the following sections, we review the public administration literature and specify two theoretical models. Then, using survey data collected from a nationwide sample of city managers and employing structural equation modeling, we test the theoretical models and discuss the findings in light of the contemporary public administration literature.

**City Manager’s Involvement in Policy Making**

The changing landscape of local governments, the lack of resources available to elected officials (e.g., time, staff, knowledge), and the increasingly complex nature of policy issues put overwhelming pressures on city managers to become more deeply involved in all phases and aspects of the policy-making process (Demir and Nyhan 2008; Kammerer 1964; Kerrigan and Hinton 1980; Kiracofe 1990; Nalbandian 1989, 1990; Nalbandian and Nalbandian 2003; Stillman 1977; Svara 1999b; Wheeland 2000; Whitaker and Jenne 1995; White 1982; Wirth and Vasu 1987). Consequently, city managers are expected to contribute to the policy process in the areas of agenda setting, policy formulation, leadership, and goal setting, all of which are in addition to their primary responsibility for policy implementation. Research conducted by Svara and Nalbandian strongly supports these new roles for city managers. Most recently, Demir (2009a) found that city managers complement the policy-making process in a broad array of activities, including policy leadership, policy formulation, goal setting, and resource allocation.

**City Manager’s Role Conception**

There is a significant volume of research in public administration discussing a variety of role conceptualizations for city managers. This academic interest in city managers’ roles is not surprising considering that the behavior of political actors is conditioned by the conception of appropriate roles for themselves (Loveridge 1968, 216). In one of the earliest conceptualizations, Loveridge (1968) proposes nine roles for city managers: policy innovator, policy advocate, budget consultant, policy administrator, policy neutral, political advocate, political leader, political recruiter, and political campaigner. Lewis (1982) examines the role behavior of city managers and proposes seven roles, extending from “traditional textbook administrator” to “near-boss type.” Moore (1995) proposes two distinct roles for managers, technician and strategist (see also Cooper 1991; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999; Terry 2002).

This voluminous inquiry into role conceptions places city managers’ roles on a continuum from political to professional (Sink 1983). City managers with political role definitions are more likely to get involved in a variety of policy-making activities, whereas those managers with a greater focus on professionalism would refrain from policy making and give their exclusive attention and energy to policy implementation tasks (Banovetz 1994; Golembiewski and Gabris 1994, 1995). Most of the role research in the field has focused on role conflict and specificity, as well as power, ethics, and decision making (Demir 2009b; Kammerer 1964; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999; Svara 1990). Insufficient empirical findings, however, exist to assess the impact of a city manager’s role conception on his or her actual policy behavior. Our theoretical model posits that a
city manager’s role conception is positively associated with his or her involvement in policy making (see figure 1).

**Council’s Expectations**
Elected officials’ expectations are as important as the city manager’s role conceptions (Saltzein 1974). Banovetz, among others, notes that no matter how clearly managers see or want a more active policy-making role, the role will not emerge unless it is compatible with the expectations of elected officials (1994, 317). It has been frequently noted in the literature that a city manager acting on his or her own, without explicit or implicit approval of the elected representatives, will frustrate the council, trigger conflict, and ultimately be fired (Fannin 1983; Renner and DeSantis 1994; Whitaker and DeHoog 1991). In simple terms, there are two possibilities: councils either empower the city manager to espouse an active role with respect to policy making or expect the manager to function in a more advisory capacity to generate expert opinions for informed policy making (Brimeyer 1993; Kammerer 1964; Lee 2001; Pealy 1958; Whitaker and Jenne 1995; Zhang and Feiock 2010). Carrel (1962) points out that council members become frustrated when the city manager has more power with respect to the council. Saltzein (1974), on the other hand, notes that most councils desire professionally trained managers who can assume a larger role in the governing process (see also Svara 1991). Because of the significance of the council’s expectations in determining the actual policy behavior of city managers, our theoretical model includes it as a latent construct and specifies a positive association between the two. In addition, the theoretical model specifies an indirect effect through the city manager’s role conception (see figure 1). That is, the council’s expectations affect the city manager’s role conception.

**Council-Manager Relations**
The literature portrays the relationship between elected and administrative officials as either hostile or amicable. When the relationship is satisfactory, the two actors complement each other; their relationship resembles a partnership (Dunn and Legge 2002; Nalbandian 1994, 535). This is often contrasted with a strict superior–subordinate relationship, in which the council views the manager as a person who should follow the orders of the council without argument (Lee 2001). A good working relationship helps the council delegate more policy-making authority to the manager (Zhang and Feiock 2010) and gives the manager a sense of self-empowerment (Banovetz 1994). As prior research suggests, goal compatibility between elected officials and city managers further empowers city managers in the policy-making process (Svara 1999a; Zhang and Feiock 2010). Our theoretical model hypothesizes that council-manager relations will have a positive impact on the city manager’s role conception and will increase the council’s expectations of the manager (see figure 1).

**Context of Policy Making**
The context within which the policy process takes place has a significant effect on how active a city manager will be in the policy-making process. Local government scholars draw attention to the complex and challenging nature of the new environment, which forces city managers to undertake a broader and more potent role in policy making. Empirical research shows that entrepreneurial behavior by city managers is witnessed in local governments that are characterized by a lack of budgetary resources, increasing racial diversity, and growing population size (Kearney, Feldman, and Scavo 2000; Schneider and Teske 1992). Nalbandian, among others, emphasizes the importance of this issue by stating that the “complex political environment in which elected officials are trying to make decisions and exercise leadership is getting more complicated. If the purpose of professional staff is to support the governing body, in the future it must do so taking this complex environment into consideration” (1994, 535). Complex environments increase uncertainty, stretch thin resources even thinner, put more pressure on decision makers, and require creative problem solving, all of which are rationales for shared responsibility.

**City Manager Characteristics**
Based on earlier studies in the literature, our theoretical model includes the tenure, experience, and professional education of the manager. Longevity in office helps managers develop a greater power base in their communities, which, in turn, affects how they perceive their roles with respect to elected officials and the degree of deference by the council (Svara 1999). Professionalism, as measured by education and experience, is also important. More experienced and highly educated managers are more likely to reflect the priorities of the city council and possess greater insight into how to make government more efficient and effective (Zhang and Feiock 2010, 5). Crewson and Fisher (1997) find that interaction with different political environments affects city managers’ knowledge and skills positively. Therefore, elected officials tend to trust their managers and delegate more policy-making authority to them. We hypothesize that the city manager’s experience (the length of experience as a city manager prior to the current position), professional education (attainment of a master’s degree in public administration), and longevity in the office (tenure) will have a significant impact on his or her role conception and will increase the council’s expectations of the manager (see figure 1).

**Council’s Involvement in Administration**
Elected officials can play an important part in assisting city managers in administration. They bring legitimacy and accountability
by being popularly elected, having the authority to pass laws, and possessing direct knowledge of citizens’ needs and wants (Whitaker and Jenne 1995, 89). Elected officials’ involvement in administration helps clarify legislative goals and expectations, develop politically feasible solutions, reduce the gap between policy formulation and implementation, and enhance the overall effectiveness of policy implementation (Demir 2009a, 880). Involvement (or intervention) in the administrative domain allows elected officials to oversee policy implementation and to review and correct specific performance problems through fine-tuning (Svara 2001). Svara notes that, in such cases, the manager may even use the office of the mayor (aside, the most important remedy for elected officials in council-manager local governments assist city managers in administration to varying degrees, including administrative goal setting, policy implementation, performance evaluation, and improvement.

**City Manager’s Support**

City managers are advised to increase their support for elected officials in order to improve the governing capacity of the councils. Many scholars already acknowledge that elected officials in many local governments have become conspicuously ineffective in fulfilling their responsibilities in the governance process (Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller 1999). Structural solutions (e.g., strengthening the office of the mayor) aside, the most important remedy repeatedly voiced in the literature is to move city managers into a more supportive and educational role when interacting with elected officials (Demir 2009a; Demir and Nyhan 2008; Nalbandian 1999; Wheeland 2000). A city manager’s support to his council will provide the council with a firsthand and accurate understanding of policy implementation, which, in turn, will increase its capacity to direct administration and shape policy implementation as it unfolds. This outcome depends in large part on the city manager’s frequent interaction with the council, communication, and information sharing (Nalbandian 1999, 194; Ohren 2007, 20; White 1982, 79). Our theoretical model specifies a positive association between the city manager’s support and the council’s involvement in administration (see figure 2).

**Council’s Attitudes**

When elected officials respect administrative competence and do not interfere with routine management operations, it is likely that managers will be more willing to cooperate with their councils in the administrative realm (Demir 2009a; Duggan 2006; Montjoy and Watson 1995; Svara 1999a). In such cases, the manager may even use council’s involvement in administration as an opportunity to increase his or her own influence in the policy process by proposing changes to policies as well as offering new ones (Palus and Yackee 2009). Our theoretical model specifies a positive association between the council’s attitudes and the city manager’s support (see figure 2).

**Council’s Access to Resources**

It is clear that informed decision making requires resources (Bolman and Deal 2008). Power is a function of resources, and when sufficient resources for decision making are not available to elected officials, they become more dependent on the managers. This dependence reduces their capacity to exercise oversight and direct the implementation of policies (Demir and Nyhan 2008; Koehler 1973; Pealy 1958; Pelissero and Krebs 1997). Koehler (1973) explores 12 potential sources of information to aid elected officials in exercising oversight function, such as the information provided by professional associations, the business community, and the press, as well as citizen complaints. It is clear that the more resources councils have at their disposal, the more influence they will exert with respect to administration. Considering the importance of the council’s access to resources for involvement in administration, we include it in the theoretical model and specify a positive association between the two factors (see figure 2).

**Electoral Activism**

According to Svara (1999a), council members who are electoral activists try to help their constituents by seeking to act as their spokesperson and representative. These council members are willing to make a major investment of time and talent to gain and exercise political influence (Banovetz 1994; Ehrenhalt 1992). They take an active and hands-on approach (Svara 1989). Electoral activists, according to Svara (2002), are frequently involved in administration by playing the role of ombudsman and attempting to promote responsiveness to citizens. This role is very different from what Svara (2002) calls the trustee role, which requires no involvement in administrative side of the policy process. Our theoretical model posits that electoral activism is positively associated with council’s involvement in administration (see figure 2).

**Context of Policy Making**

The context of policy making may influence the council’s involvement in administration in an effort to assist the manager in dealing with administrative issues (Gimson 2003). The fact that many
administrative decisions have political repercussions provides a strong rationale for council’s involvement (White 1982). Further, the environment creates incentives for elected officials to direct and shape administration so that they can better respond to constituency demands, be more responsive to the electorate, and enhance their prospects for reelection (Hansen and Ejersbo 2002). Our theoretical model hypothesizes a positive association between the context of policy making and council’s involvement in administration (see figure 2).

Sample, Survey, and Data Collection
We identified city managers serving in council-manager local governments as the most appropriate sample to test the theoretical models. We obtained a random sample of 1,000 city managers from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The survey included a number of statements for each construct. 1 Tables 1 and 2 report the statements used in the survey.

Between May and July 2010, we mailed the surveys to city managers along with a cover letter describing the scope of the project. After

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<tr>
<th>Table 1 Survey Statements for City Manager’s Involvement in Policy Making</th>
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<td>City manager’s involvement in policy making</td>
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<td>(1) I exercise community leadership as part of my job.</td>
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<td>(2) I play an important role in formulating new policies.</td>
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<td>(3) I am a source of new policy ideas.</td>
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<td>(4) I actively work to build support (from various stakeholders) for adoption of policies in the city.</td>
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<td>(5) I play an important role in setting policy goals for our city.</td>
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<td>(6) I play an important role in deciding which policies need to be revised or terminated.</td>
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<td>(7) I play an important role in determining which problems in the city are more urgent and in need of solution (e.g., setting the agenda).</td>
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City manager’s role conception
(1) A city manager should be very active in all aspects of policy making (not just policy implementation).
(2) A city manager’s job is not more than assisting the council in understanding the technical aspects of city management, and nothing else other than following its policy directives. (reverse scored)
(3) A city manager is more of a technician (or expert) than a policy maker. (reverse scored)
(4) The politics–administration dichotomy should be the standard that defines a city manager’s job. (reverse scored)

Council’s expectations
(1) The council frequently contacts me for advice on important policy issues or concerns.
(2) The council frequently encourages me to develop new ideas for solving various policy problems in our community.
(3) The council frequently encourages me to take a leadership role in the policy-making process (e.g., policy formulation).
(4) The council frequently delegates authority to me for conducting various policy-making activities (e.g., community leadership, relations with the press, representing the city in various meetings).

Council-manager relations
(1) I would rate my interactions with the council as excellent.
(2) Partnership (as opposed to strict superior–subordinate) is the best term that characterizes my relationship with the council.
(3) We (the city manager and the council) have a mutual understanding on important problems that face our community (e.g., same priority list, agreement on problem definitions).

Context of policy making
(1) Diversity-related issues or concerns (e.g., ethnicity, race, gender) have created significant challenges in our city.
(2) Resource limitations (e.g., budget shortcomings, declining tax revenues) have been a significant challenge in our city.
(3) There has been a significant pressure for change (reform) demanded by our stakeholders (citizens, businesses, etc.).

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<th>Table 2 Survey Statements for Council’s Involvement in Administration</th>
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<td>(1) The council contributes to designing service delivery systems to help the administration accomplish adopted policies.</td>
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<td>(2) The council contributes to the setting of short-term goals for policy implementation.</td>
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<td>(3) The council contributes to reorganizing city departments for the purpose of improving administrative performance.</td>
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<td>(4) The council contributes to making changes in organizational/administrative rules and/or procedures for improving administrative performance.</td>
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<td>(5) The council helps the administration identify problems related to policy implementation.</td>
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<td>(6) The council sets specific performance targets for the city departments.</td>
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City manager’s support
(1) I frequently meet with or contact the council member(s) or council as a whole to inform them on the progress of implementation in a particular policy area.
(2) I stay in close touch with the council to help them understand the administrative aspects of a policy being implemented.
(3) I frequently share policy proposals (or ideas) with the council even when they are still under way (e.g., incomplete; administrative staff are still working on them).
(4) I frequently create opportunities (e.g., time and resources) so the council member(s) and I get together to think about and discuss pressing policy problems and possible solutions.
(5) The council and I frequently exchange opinions on policy issues or problems. Our communication is ongoing and frequent.

Council’s attitudes
(1) The council respects administrative competence.
(2) The council respects administrative authority and refrains from interfering with routine operations of the administration.
(3) The council always takes into consideration administrative concerns (as I or my staff express them) when they work on policy formulation.
(4) The council takes into consideration administrative concerns (as I or my staff express them) in the policy implementation phase and makes adjustments or revisions to the policies in light of my concerns.

Council’s access to resources
(1) Most of the council members are very informed about policy issues and problems that the city faces.
(2) Most of the council members utilize legislative resources for assistance/support for policy formulation (e.g., the use of legislative committees).
(3) Most of the council members employ interest groups or community associations’ assistance for policy formulation (e.g., working with trade associations, civic organizations, nongovernmental organizations).

Electoral Activism
(1) Most of the council members are electoral activists (run and elected to accomplish certain policy objectives).
(2) Most of the council members are trying to increase their visibility in the public.
(3) Most of the council members try to direct administration in ways that favor their own constituencies.

two waves of mailing, 334 city managers had responded to the survey, for a reasonable 33.4 percent response rate. In all, 48.9 percent of the responses came from small cities with populations of fewer than 10,000, 39.6 percent came from medium-sized cities with populations greater than 10,000 but less than 50,000, and 11.4 percent came from large cities with populations greater than 50,000. Out of the 334 city managers in the data set, 85.6 percent were male, and 64.0 percent held a master’s degree (45.2 percent of the city managers had earned a graduate degree in public administration). Examining information from the ICMA on the profession shows that in 2006, 87.5 percent of managers were male and 62 percent of managers had a master’s degree, statistics that are comparable to our survey sample (ICMA 2006). The average age of the managers in our data set was 52, and 40.5 percent of the managers were between 30 and 50 years old (40 percent of the managers in the ICMA data set were within this age range). The average tenure of the city managers in our data set was 7.3 years, which mirrors managers as a
Understanding Shared Roles in Policy and Administration

Methodology and Data Analysis

Table 3 reports the variables used in the study and their descriptive statistics. The survey statements for each individual construct follow their exact order in tables 1 and 2.

To evaluate the degree of correspondence between the data and our theoretical models, we used structural equation modeling (SEM). This methodology helps researchers to test two or more relationships among directly observable or unmeasured latent variables. It takes a confirmatory approach and thus is particularly useful for evaluating theoretical models that have not been validated by previous research. Before testing the theoretical models, we analyzed the data set to see whether the major assumptions of structural equation modeling were met. The models were tested using AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) software.

Testing of the first model yielded reasonable yet deficient fit indices. Review of the modification indices indicated that one small modification would improve the model fit significantly. After the modification, the model was retested, and it converged after 13 iterations (chi-square = 412.227, df = 241, p < .001). The resulting fit indices are reported in table 4. We used the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), parsimony normed fit index (PNFI), and nonnormed fit index (NNFI) to assess the fit of the model to the data. We reviewed the standardized residual covariances to see whether their distribution was normal. Almost all of them were within the range of ±2.

Testing of the second model indicated that a few modifications should be made to improve the model fit. After the modifications, the model was retested, and it converged after 12 iterations (chi-square = 441.729, df = 239, p < .001). The resulting fit indices are reported in table 4. Review of the standardized residual covariances showed that their distribution was normal, indicating that the model is correctly specified. Table 5 reports the standardized regression weights for both theoretical models.

In the following section, we discuss the findings in light of the contemporary public administration literature.

Findings and Discussion

As reported in table 5, the city manager’s role conception and the council’s expectations have a positive and significant impact on the city manager’s involvement in policy making. The model explains 66 percent of the variance. Further, there is a positive and statistically significant association between the council’s expectations and the city manager’s role conception. These findings are in line with the literature discussed earlier and point to the importance of role conception and councils’ expectations in predicting managers’ involvement in policy making.

A city manager’s role conception conditions his or her behavior. A city manager’s role conception, of course, is determined by a confluence of personal and contextual factors, such as educational background, tenure and experience, values and ideology, career plans, aspirations, as well as the public’s expectations (Almy 1977; Schmidt and Posner 1987; Sink 1983). Out of the three city

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Suggested threshold: ≤0.08 ≥0.90 ≥0.60 ≥0.90
manager characteristics included in our theoretical model, only holding a graduate degree in public administration is significantly associated with the city manager’s role conception. Interestingly, the direction of this association is negative. City managers with a graduate degree in public administration are more likely to have a narrow role conception pertaining to policy making. With the focus in many public administration programs on developing technical skills so that students can find jobs or rise quickly in their organizations, city managers, especially relatively young ones, may focus more on policy implementation. One other explanation may be that city managers with graduate education in public administration may be more aware of the traditional politics–administration distinction and therefore tend to frame their roles narrowly. Finally, even under the assumption that public administration programs emphasize the significance of politics in the administrative sphere, if political skill development is not made an important part of the curriculum, city managers may still have a fairly narrow role conception (Kerrigan and Hinton 1980). It is difficult to speculate about this finding; more research about the relationship between educational backgrounds and role conceptualizations of city managers may reveal important insights regarding the impact of public affairs education on the practice of public administration.

It is clear that the council’s expectations play a significant role in the city manager’s involvement in policy making. There is a positive and statistically significant association between the two factors. This finding supports the proposition that a city manager’s role will not emerge unless it is compatible with the expectations of the council. When the council expects the city manager to be more involved in policy making, the city manager will be less hesitant to adopt such a role, as there is little likelihood of conflict over the proper division of authority and labor in the policy process (Salztein 1974). It has been frequently noted in the literature that councils are not clear in what they expect from the managers, and this creates confusion and conflict during the tenure of the managers, which ultimately leads to turnover (Whitaker and DeHoog 1991). In order to avoid such a result, we propose that after hiring a manager, the council should sit down with the city manager and develop a mutual understanding of what is the most proper division of labor in the policy process. The organizational development literature provides rich insights into how to achieve this (Gabris, Golembiewski, and Ihrke 2000; Golembiewski and Miller 2000). Alternatively, the manager can infer the council’s expectations from the behaviors or reactions of elected officials, yet such a course carries some risk that may even lead a city manager to avoid policy making. Banovetz rightly states that managers are, after all, only human. Faced with increasing political uncertainty and the possibility of imminent job loss, they will sacrifice rationality for incrementalism in decision making; work diligently more to avoid mistakes rather than to achieve success; perfect standard routines rather than assume the risks of innovation, and seek anonymity rather than leadership. In short, they will become government bureaucrats. (1994, 321)

We find a statistically significant association between council-manager relations and council’s expectations. This finding is in line with earlier empirical studies, in that positive council-manager relations enhance mutual trust and therefore raise the council’s expectations of the manager and result in more involvement in policy making (Zhang and Feiock 2010).

Out of the four exogenous latent constructs in the model for the council’s involvement in administration, three have a significant and positive impact on the council’s involvement in administration: city manager’s support, council’s access to resources, and the context of policy making. We also found that the council’s attitudes positively affect the city manager’s support to the council.

The city manager’s support to the council stands out as an important factor that enhances elected officials’ contributions to administration. This finding backs the call in the literature that city managers should move to a more supportive role. Actually, doing so may serve the professional interests of city managers. Considering that many problems in local government cut across politics, city managers need a political perspective on many administrative issues (Alford 2008; White 1982). This may increase the effectiveness of administration and political acceptance of administrative decisions and actions in the larger community. Such a perspective, of course, requires city managers to be more open with their elected officials and less protective of the administrative domain. Also, as the results

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**Table 5** Standardized Regression Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Model Constructs</th>
<th>City Manager’s Involvement in Policy Making</th>
<th>Council’s Involvement in Administration</th>
<th>City Manager’s Role Conception</th>
<th>Council’s Expectations</th>
<th>City Manager’s Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City manager’s tenure</td>
<td>.568***</td>
<td>.320*</td>
<td>−.050</td>
<td>−.029</td>
<td>0.482***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City manager’s experience</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>−.167**</td>
<td>−.010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City manager’s education (MPA)</td>
<td>−.130</td>
<td>.623***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council-manager relations</td>
<td>.392***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City manager’s role conception</td>
<td>.503***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council’s expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of policy making</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council’s attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City manager’s support</td>
<td>.152*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council’s access to resources</td>
<td>.261**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral activism</td>
<td>−.088</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
<td>−.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
in table 5 suggest, the council’s attitudes significantly determine the city manager’s support. When elected officials are eager to incorporate city managers’ expertise into policy making process and refrain from interfering with routine management operations, city managers are more likely to be supportive of their elected superiors in the administrative domain.

As reported in table 5, the council’s access to resources is positively associated with its involvement in administration. This result echoes the literature. Many scholars already noted that resourceful councils exert more influence in the administrative sphere. One way to accomplish this, as proposed by many scholars, is to strengthen the position of the mayor (Pressman 1972; Svara 1986; Wikstrom 1979). This course is not without disadvantages, however. It creates trade-offs between efficiency and responsiveness, and it is a long-term solution at best (Hayes and Chang 1990). Another possible (short-term) solution is to provide governance education to elected officials to improve their capacity and skills, especially in the areas of coalition building, networking, teamwork, and collaborative decision making (Vogelsang-Coombs 1997; Vogelsang-Coombs and Miller 1999; Zeemering 2008). Equipped with such critical skills, elected officials could better locate important information sources, collect and analyze data, build coalitions, and engage in cooperative decision making without micromanaging or unnecessarily interfering with routine management operations. Essentially, they can do more steering and less rowing (Osborne and Gaebler 1992).

As seen in table 5, the context of policy making increases the council’s involvement in administration. This result makes sense in light of the contemporary local government literature. The challenging context of policy making raises public expectations and puts a great deal of pressure on elected officials to be more active in administration as the stakes get higher. As mentioned earlier, many administrative questions become political when there is so much uncertainty in the external environment caused by growing diversity and rising expectations of citizens along with declining resources. Involvement in administration provides elected officials with an opportunity to be more visible (Hansen and Ejersbo 2002), and this visibility will help them in their reelection efforts. Under such circumstances, the challenge for both elected officials and city managers is to keep their relations cooperative based on mutual respect, understanding, and trust. City managers need to develop important skills such as facilitation, situation analysis, and conflict resolution. Elected officials, on the other hand, need skills that will help them adopt a more strategic, longer-term, and broader perspective on policy problems, as opposed to short term and opportunistic orientation aimed only at increasing constituent support. Only when they are furnished with such skills can elected officials and city managers work together as a team under challenging environmental conditions.

Limitations of the Study
The political–administrative relationship is inherently complex, and there are many factors that may play a role in the involvement levels of elected officials and public administrators in cross-functional areas of government. This study is limited by the number of factors that were investigated. More constructs could be added to the models, yet the necessity of striking a balance between comprehensiveness and parsimony compelled us to be selective in our choices and focus on those factors that received relatively limited attention in the literature. By proposing new and relevant variables, this research has aimed to make a cumulative contribution to the literature on role sharing between elected and administrative officials. More importantly, our study tested, for the first time, some of the factors that contribute to the involvement of elected officials in the administrative domain. The second limitation is related to the nature of the data utilized in this study. This research collected data exclusively from city managers to test the two theoretical models. Of course, future studies could test theoretical models by using empirical data collected from elected officials as well so that comparisons may be made between the two subsets. Despite these limitations, our study is unique in terms of the methodology and the use of a nationwide sample of city managers. The findings of this research add to the growing literature on the important subject of role sharing between elected and administrative officials.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research
It has been frequently noted in the literature that complementarity is a more appropriate conceptualization than dichotomy in understanding political–administrative relations. The complementarity view is centered on the notion of shared roles, which means reciprocal influence, mutual support, and overlapping responsibilities between elected officials and public administrators. This article has aimed to contribute to the literature by expanding knowledge on the involvement of public administrators in policy making and the involvement of elected officials in administration. The findings of this study are helpful in orienting efforts in the future toward critical areas so as to maximize cross-functional contributions to the policy process. In the findings and discussion section, we made a number of suggestions in line with the statistical results.

In the future, alternative theories should be tested in order to develop better-fitting models and to improve the explanatory power of theoretical models. Proposing new theoretical models will likely increase our knowledge with respect to role sharing in local government. It appears that our second model (council’s involvement in administration) is in need of improvement, as its explanatory power is less than that of the first model (city manager’s involvement in policy making). Our review of the literature revealed that there is much empirical research on city managers’ involvement in policy making. However, the research on elected officials’ involvement in administration has been fairly limited. We suggest that future research efforts focus more on elected officials’ involvement in administration.

Sound empirical knowledge will guide us in creating effective governance models that will help overcome the most challenging problems of our times, which require collaborative and creative decision making. This is why we think that more research in this area will yield tremendous benefits for both the theory and practice of public administration.
1. For statements that tapped the city manager’s involvement in policy making and the council’s involvement in administration, the survey used a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “never” (1) to “always” (5). In the remaining parts of the survey, we measured city managers’ agreement with the statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

2. One of the major assumptions of SEM is normal distribution of the data. We examined skewness and kurtosis values. Values of skewness greater than 3 and values of kurtosis greater than 8 suggest problems with normality (Kline 1998). None of the skewness and kurtosis values was greater than the suggested thresholds. We also reviewed the data to see whether there was any serious multicollinearity problem. All tolerance values were greater than 0.2, and all VIF values were smaller than 4.

3. Although not a universally accepted practice, it is recommended that researchers test individual constructs before they test the entire model (Kline 1998). We tested the individual latent constructs using confirmatory factor analysis when the construct had at least four variables. All of these constructs were validated. Note that SEM explicitly takes measurement errors into account when statistically analyzing the data (Schumacker and Lomax 2004), indicating that the estimated regression weights are free from measurement errors. This makes SEM particularly useful when testing theoretical models that have not been validated by previous research in the literature.

4. We allowed the error terms of variables 3 and 4 on the city manager’s role conception construct (see table 1) to correlate. This modification is justified on the basis that the politics–administration dichotomy views managers as technicians (experts) rather than policy makers (e.g., Demir and Nyhan 2008).

5. SEM programs provide a good number of fit indices. There is no agreement in the literature as to how many and which fit indices should be reported. Kline (1998) suggests reporting at least four fit indices. We used CFI, RMSEA, and NNFI, as they are among the fit indices least affected by the size of the sample (Fan, Wang, and Thompson 1999). The values of comparative fit indices such as CFI and NNFI indicate the proportion of the improvement of the overall fit of the researcher’s model relative to a null model. The typical null model is an independence model in which the observed variables are assumed to be uncorrelated. For example, a value of 0.90 for NNFI is interpreted to suggest that the relative overall fit of the researcher’s model is 90 percent better than that of the null model estimated with the same sample data (Kline 1998, 129). In addition, we reported one parsimony measure to allow comparisons of our models with different specifications in the future. Using PNFI, a researcher may decide which model is more parsimonious. Theoretical models with greater parsimony should be preferred.

6. Standardized residual covariance matrix is a symmetric matrix in which each residual covariance has been divided by an estimate of its standard error. If the sample is large enough (e.g., greater than 200) and the theoretical model is correctly specified, standardized residual covariances should have a normal distribution.

7. We introduced two modifications to the original model. First, the error terms of variables 3 and 4 on the construct council’s involvement in administration (see table 2) were freed to correlate. Both variables are concerned with the “design” element of administration that aims at improving performance (Demir 2009a). Second, we allowed the error terms of variables 1 and 2 on the city manager’s support construct to correlate (see table 2), as both variables are related to city manager’s support to elected officials in the area of policy implementation.

8. Standardized regression weights are analogous to beta coefficients in regression analysis, showing the strength of relationship between the variables hypothesized to associate. For example, a regression weight of 0.50 between variables A and B would suggest that when A goes up by 1 standard deviation, B goes up by 0.50 standard deviation.

References


