

**A Study of Ontario CAOs:
Career progression and
the influence of political actors**

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Kelley Coulter

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“Conventional wisdom suggests that turnover among [CAOs] is frequent, that the average tenure in a given managerial post is brief by most professional standards, and that the odds of remaining for more than a decade in a single community are infinitesimally small. Some [CAOs] compare their own tenure and turnover prospects with those of managers of baseball, where careers are tenuous and longevity is rare” (Ammons and Bosse, 2005, 61).

Executive Summary

The role of the CAO in local government has received little attention in Ontario and Canada. This paper examines the career path of CAOs and the effect of Mayoral turnover on CAO tenure in Ontario. The career progression of CAOs needs to be understood for various reasons. The changing workforce coupled with ever increasing provincial regulations, policies, and procedures are demanding calibre leadership in the top appointed position in municipalities. For succession planning and future recruitments in Ontario, it is prudent to understand the career trajectory of CAOs.

Academic studies in the US conclude that a number of variables impact the career paths of CAOs. Of significant influence are push-pull factors. The core feature of push factors is political conflict. Pull factors are driven by the career objectives of the individual. Both impact the career path of CAOs. A municipality's economic prosperity influence the CAOs time spent in a community. The nature of the work environment and the professional training of the incumbent, including their leadership skills in navigating through, all play a role in the career path of CAOs in general.

A study of the 100 largest (based upon population) lower and single tier municipalities in Ontario was completed. This study involved various research methods to discover the professional backgrounds of CAOs and movement of the incumbents.

This study suggests a career path of single-city careerists or ladder climbers is prevalent in Ontario. Turnover among the top appointed position is substantial: 24 communities have had three or more CAOs since 2001. The average number of years that a CAO has held a single CAOs position is 4.24. Further, Mayoral change appears to influence the tenure of a CAO. It suggests that a community's size does influence the nature of turnover and Mayoral affect. Ideally this study will generate interest in Ontario and Canada among academe and practitioners alike.

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Chapter I: Problem Definition

This paper is a study of Ontario CAO career progression and the influence of political actors. In the early 1900s the Reform Era demanded change in government operations from their local government decision makers. The Reform movement started as a direct response to civic corruption and incompetence. Individuals were appointed to positions based on who they knew, rather than what they knew. Leaders such as Woodrow Wilson vigorously advocated establishing professionalism in the public service, to ensure that the community's investments in assets and infrastructure were prudent and in the long-term best interests of the community. Ultimately they ushered in an organizational structure in local government of "appointed, non-partisan managers to promote efficiency and consistency in local administration" (Feiock and Stream, 1998, 118).

In modern Ontario municipalities it is understood that the elected representatives establish policy and that the appointed staff provide professional advice on policy and are ultimately responsible for implementation (Sancton, 2011). The primary administrative lead is the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). They are the leader in substance and progress of the organization proper.

CAO career progression needs to be understood for a host of reasons. The workforce is aging. Workplace demands in municipal government, are causing individuals to rethink their career objectives. Similar to other fields, work-life balance is a strong focus of those entering the workforce. The corner 'CAO' office is no longer coveted as it once was (Bell 2010).

Municipal governments are losing top talent to other sectors. The calibre of leadership in local government is in jeopardy. Chapter II provides a broad introduction into the role of the CAO and the need to determine the career progression of CAOs and the influence of political actors.

Chapter II: Introduction

The CAO position in local government is diverse and challenging. The authors of the Reform Era sought an unbiased, apolitical bureaucracy. The CAO was to be appointed based on skill and merit, not patronage. As such, CAOs require strong leadership skills and the ability to cope with increasingly complex issues within a political environment.

Research on the career progressions of CAOs is limited in Ontario and Canada. The subject has attracted attention in United States local government research. For clarity, although the roles of the CAO and the City Manager differ slightly, for the purposes of this paper they will be considered synonymous. Both are the administrative lead in municipal government. Additionally this paper focuses solely on the CAO under a Council-Manager organizational structure.

Municipal governments are mandated to deliver an array of services. Dynamic leadership is required to deliver them in an efficient and effective manner. The CAO provides stability and institutional knowledge based on professional training which guides the bureaucracy and the community. By definition, the success and challenges faced by the incumbent have a significant impact on the overall vision and functioning of the municipal government. CAOs must focus on the growth of the community, containment of liability, overall management of the organization and the implementation of expanded services as defined by Council. Frequently they can be the face of the municipality, as they oversee operations and members of the public can have regular contact with the position. They must be exceptional communicators with highly developed negotiating skills to support the implementation and administration of policy. An evolving role for the CAO is intergovernmental relations, with a particular focus on provincial and federal government linkages. The preceding statements give “insight into the chaotic world in which the municipal CAO works” (Siegel, 2010, 142).

As the top ranking appointed official in local government, the CAO serves a critical role between the political master – council – and administrative personnel. This dichotomous structure, along with the delivery of service requirements in local government, has a profound impact on the leadership skills required of the incumbent (Siegel, 2010). “Change from one CAO to another has significant policy implications if different managers bring different preferences, skills and backgrounds to the job” (McCabe et al, 2008, 381). Given the nature of the position it is important to understand whether a standard career progression exists among CAOs in Ontario.

Why is it important to explore the career progression of appointed leaders in Ontario local government? First, the baby boomer bubble is quickly approaching. Today, many municipalities are faced with 50% of their workforce being eligible to retire in the next decade (AMCTO, 2008). Such retirement levels in a municipal workforce can erode the efficiencies of core service delivery. As experienced and knowledgeable leaders leave an organisation their institutional history leaves with them. During such personnel upheaval, the stabilizing focus of a CAO is vitally important. Additionally general risk management coupled with workforce realignment requires a highly effective leader. Further the complexity of provincial statutes, policies, programs and regulations demand a professionally trained administrator. Until there is an understanding of the career path of CAOs, the exposures and risks of poor leadership shall remain significant for local governments.

Understanding the career paths of CAOs will help local governments to facilitate the development of local leadership and proactive succession planning. Local governments continue to struggle with an infrastructure funding gap, erosion of quality employment and mandated criteria for service delivery. The organizations require innovative and effective leaders. The complexity of provincial and federal legislation, the general scope of municipal operations and increasing labour legislation will place tremendous demands on the individual who holds the CAO position. Decision makers need to understand the career trajectories of these individuals to position their organizations for the future.

This paper is organized into six chapters. It begins with a problem definition followed by an introduction. Chapter three is a literature review focusing on the career paths of CAOs and the impact, if any, of political players on CAO tenure. Given that the US is a close comparator to Canada and Ontario, research focused on this geographic location. Chapter four is an explanation of the methodology used in this study. Chapter five consists of an in depth analysis of CAOs in the largest 100 (based on population) single and lower tier municipalities, in Ontario. Given the volume of municipal amalgamations in the mid-to-late 1990s with the majority of implementations occurring on January 1, 2000, the appropriate period of study was determined to be from 2000 to 2011.

The final section, Chapter six, provides conclusions and recommendations. The research findings have been surprising: in the majority of cases, CAOs in Ontario are largely appointed from within. Size matters. When grouped by population a thought-provoking finding is that small (less than 30,000) and large (greater than 100,000) behave largely the same in terms of recruitment and occurrences of CAO turnover. Surprisingly, that same pattern was not replicated with the Mayoral turnover. With Mayoral change, the small and medium communities return like results, with large communities being the outlier.

The role of a CAO is complex. The field attracts individuals whose internal code of conduct believes in public service and in the importance of public representation through a duly elected council. As well, given the position is a council's chief policy advisor, professionals who seek opportunities to innovate service delivery and to have a real positive impact on a community's quality of life, are quick to serve. The CAO position and the incumbent are of critical importance to the long term health and vibrancy of communities in Ontario. Ideally, this research paper will be a launching pad for others to engage in more in-depth study not only within Ontario, but across Canada.

Chapter III: Literature Review

Academic literature on the career progression of CAOs in Ontario and Canada is scant. In the US, academic interest exists with the CAO position in general and CAO turnover in particular. As a recent study argues “City Manager turnover is especially important because these leaders play increasingly complex and interrelated roles in both the substance and the progress of city governance” (McCabe et al, 2008, 380). In an attempt to assess the career paths of CAOs and the influence, if any, of political actors, a review of incumbent tenure and turnover is necessary.

Turnover

An analysis of the source and nature of turnover will provide guidance in assessing CAO career progression. Turnover is defined as a change in the incumbent that serves as CAO. The literature suggests that turnover among CAOs is directly effected by push-pull factors.

Push factors are those that create conflict between an elected council and their manager (Feiock et al 2008; Francis et.al 2009; McCabe et al 2009). A CAO serves at the pleasure of council. It stands to reason that goodwill can disappear for a variety of reasons. As articulated by DeHoog (1990), in the interests of democratic accountability the ability of council to remove the CAO from office is crucial. The relationship between the CAO and council is dynamic. Robert Bell (2010) stated it well, suggesting that the responsibilities of a CAO and council fall along a continuum with policy setting and general administration at the two extremes. His research found that CAOs and elected representatives do not function solely in their primary domain of administration and policy setting, respectively. Rather, the individuals in both functions tended to view their roles as more fluid.

Political conflict can be the outcome of the CAO enacting a policy or process in a manner that causes turmoil within the community. An unpopular policy can result in community resentment and public backlash to the elected officials who look to their key advisor, their CAO,

for responsibility. Further, the root cause of push factors can also be driven by sincere confusion over roles and responsibilities between the elected council and the CAO (Francis et al, 2009). In Ontario, the revised *Municipal Act* from 2007 put the CEO responsibilities front and centre under the Mayor's duties. Given the mandate of the CAO, it is particularly challenging for new Mayors to grasp. New Mayors can be view the CEO responsibilities to mean that they oversee operations of the municipality. Operations remain the domain of the CAO. This genuine confusion of roles can create conflict. Citizens, members of council frustrated by the constraints of good management or even special interest groups, can apply pressure to council as a whole, who in turn become frustrated by the performance of their CAO and take dramatic steps to address the hostility.

Richard C. Feoick co-authored two studies in the US focusing on push factors. The first study completed in 2001 involved a cross-sectional study of US cities whose populations were greater than 75,000. The second study, completed in 2008, focused on 143 US cities with populations less than 75,000. Both studies concluded that the CAO position is inevitably thrust into the policy-making domain, particularly in the areas of land-use planning and labour relations. As such, their longevity is connected to how well they are viewed as successfully defining and implementing such policy.

Feoick's 2001 study demonstrates that an erosion of political support can and does result in the unpredicted exit of a CAO (Feoick, 2001). Following an election, a change in council chemistry can result in the CAO struggling with a change in focus. The study concluded that although the CAO position is apolitical, Mayoral turnover can impact the tenure of the incumbent (Feoick et al 2001; McCabe et al 2008). The second study supported that the tenure of a CAO is highly correlated to political and economic change experienced by their community. The 2008 study highlighted that if there was significant change in council membership, there was an increased likelihood of change in the CAO. The study was a time series study covering local government CAO turnover from 1986 to 1999. The study found when 25% of council members

were re-elected there was a 33% probability that the CAO would turnover. (Feiock et al, 2008, 383).

In 2002 Doug Watson and Wendy Hassett studied long-serving (more than 20 years) CAOs. This work involved interviewing and surveying incumbents to assess what they attributed their longevity to. The impact of politics on CAO turnover cannot be overstated, “Dealing with the political aspects of the CAOs role presents an ongoing challenge to even the most seasoned managers” (Watson and Hassett, 2002, 623). The survey supported: if the political (Mayor) and administrative (CAO) leaders understood the dynamics of their respective roles, and had mutual respect, then with a facilitative Mayor and a competent CAO, exceptional results could be realized for the municipality (Watson and Hassett, 2002). The study of long-serving CAOs by Watson and Hassett along with the time-series study by Feiock, conclude that mayoral turnover directly impacts the tenure of a CAO. To be clear, the apolitical nature of the CAOs role does not mean that the incumbent can operate in a political vacuum – ignoring the essence of their daily operating environment is as dangerous as attempting to engage in the political arena.

Pull factors can also be influential in explaining CAO turnover. Pull factors are the opportunities for personal, professional, or financial advancement in other communities. Pull factors equate to career and professional growth opportunities. McCabe et al (2008) reported that 45% of CAOs do not come from the community that they were serving. It confirmed that the field is characterized by high mobility, with the individual starting as an Assistant to the CAO in a small community, then moving to become a CAO in a small community and eventually assuming the CAOs role in a larger community.

Watson and Hassett, in studying CAO turnover, confirmed that CAOs are highly educated, with 86% of all CAOs holding advanced degrees, the majority being Master’s degrees in Public Administration (Watson and Hassett, 2008). Given the advanced education achieved and high mobility, increased individual growth opportunities will serve as a pull phenomenon for incumbents.

Equally important is the increased complexity of local government operations. The operating environment has become much less forgiving in terms of poor leadership and failed risk management. Further, managing the web of intergovernmental relations for policies, rules, regulations and programs has become onerous. This has mandated elevated professionalism from the top administrative post. Hence, opportunities for professional growth through advancement have been growing, creating an environment that is characterized by incumbent movement. Therefore, based on multiple studies it can be concluded that pull factors are directly correlated to CAO turnover (McCabe et al, 2001; Feiock et al, 2008; Francis et al 2010). Pull factors do influence CAO turnover.

Push factors shed light on why CAOs leave organizations. Pull factors provide guidance in explaining why CAOs join communities. Given that push-pull factors influence the movement of CAOs, next in the analysis is the need to determine if a community's fiscal vibrancy impacts the career progression of CAOs.

Economic Prosperity

Returning to the studies of Feiock et al, in 2008, the question of whether economic prosperity of a community played a role in attracting and retaining talent in local government was reviewed. Demonstrating a positive correlation between economic prosperity with CAO longevity may generally explain CAO career progression.

Literature suggests that the fiscal health of a community has a direct and positive impact on CAO tenure (McCabe et al 2008; Feiock et al, 2010; Francis et al 2009). A community's wealth can equate to more innovation and professional growth opportunities for CAOs, convincing them to stay in their role.

According to Feiock (2010) CAOs can and do convert development gains to career advancement. Success in economic development appears to lead to new career opportunities. He argues that CAO careers are directly influenced by the economic conditions of the community

they serve. Feiock's 2008 study supported that communities with economic growth have less turnover in their CAOs office. This study purports that economic growth and innovative policy serve to attract and retain talent to the community's top administrative post. The data further supports the ability to influence the future of the community and the professional challenges that accompany growth and economic prosperity all serve to hold the incumbent in the community (Feiock et al, 2008).

In the 2009 ICMA survey, CAOs self-identified that economic development is of critical importance to their role. The ICMA report asked the candidates if fiscal growth attracted them to the community. The majority responded in the affirmative. (ICMA 2009) McCabe concluded that the fiscal well-being of a community did not influence the career of a CAO. The reasoning is that CAOs tend to be hired to fix an issue and they move on when the job is done or are asked to move on when the job is not done (McCabe et al, 2008).

In summary, the literature defends that the economic prosperity of a community does serve to attract and retain a CAO. Further, economic prosperity is found to be a contributing factor in minimizing political influence. In essence, the works of Feiock and Stream (2010) support that an economically prosperous community attracts and retains CAOs. Prosperous communities have more resources to contribute to innovation and their councils tend to be more comfortable with taking risks. Economic growth can serve as both a push and pull factor. Strong economic growth can act to preserve the incumbent in the organization.

Accepting the impact of push-pull factors including the crucial role of community economic health on CAO turnover, the next logical piece to study is tenure.

Tenure

The analysis on CAO career trajectories suggests that the position is subject to a relatively short tenure rate with any single community. Tenure is defined as the period of time that a CAO serves an individual community. Understanding the tenure rate of CAOs and the root causes of

change is important. Prior to highlighting the tenure of CAOs, a summary of a study of career paths is enlightening.

Local government academics in the US have long maintained that the typical career path of a CAO starts in the CAOs office as an assistant, with the individual progressively assuming greater responsibility, and then eventually moving to another organization to assume the role of CAO (Watson & Hassett, 2004). The 2001 Watson and Hassett study of CAOs focused primarily on career paths. They studied 113 CAOs in council-manager communities whose population exceeded 100,000. Their study discovered that four distinct career paths exist among CAOs: long servers, lateral movers, ladder climbers, and single city careerists. Long servers are defined as those whose careers have spanned decades in a community. Long servers generally serve a couple of communities over the course of their career. The lateral movers tend to move regularly throughout their career. Yet, they remain working within similar sized communities. Ladder climbers have an established career goal of becoming a CAO. They focus on job movement with increasing responsibilities. Typically their progression is characterized by moving to increasingly larger populations and communities with greater complexity. The final was the single city careerists. These individuals work for one organization and slowly work up the organizational hierarchy, ultimately achieving appointment to the position of CAO.

The study reported that the majority tended to be either ladder climbers or single city careerists. Of the entire population studied, 45% were promoted from within their organization while 55% were hired from outside. Of the CAOs studied, 38% had served only one city, 17.7% worked in one other city while 15% had worked in at least two other cities (Watson and Hassett, 2004).

In reference to tenure, Watson and Hassett further confirmed that the average tenure of CAOs, as CAOs, with their current cities was 6.3 years. The study revealed that the average year the individual was with a particular city was 12.2 years. The two measures defend the concept

that many worked for their current employer prior to being appointed CAO. (Watson and Hassett, 2004)

This study found that the years of service for a CAO was brief. On years of service, the study reported that: 6% had served in office for 15 or more years; 13.3% had served between 10 and 14 years; while a 38.9% had been in office between 5 and 9 years. The study reported that 40.7% had served their community for less than four years. The authors argued that in comparison to the private sector, this percentage was high (Watson and Hassett, 2004). Although less than four years appears unsettling, regular change in CAOs can result in innovative solutions and progressive practices such as workplace diversity and gender equity policies.

Continuing with Wastson & Hassett, the results indicate that close to 45% of the CAOs surveyed were promoted from within the organization. This percentage suggests that the single city careerist was the career path of choice for the appointing body - city council. The authors suggest that the larger communities “grow their own” and that the single city careerists are trained from within. Perhaps Council members are reassured as the incumbent is a known commodity (Watson and Hassett, 2004).

The studies by Watson and Hassett provide a glimpse into the employment history of CAOs. Further, their work demonstrates that the majority of CAOs tend to have one of two types of employment history. The incumbents were either long-serving, single city careerists or ladder climbers who progressively expanded their career exposure through a series of movements to increasingly more populous communities. A surprising factor of Watson & Hassett’s arguments was their underlying view that turnover, in and of itself, is negative. Turnover can serve a vital role in regeneration of organizational procedures, policies and processes. Regrettably, despite the depth of their research, they fail to address the value of turnover in germinating innovation and healthy growth in policy and procedures within an organization.

Leadership Traits and Skills

In 2010, Robert Bell completed a dissertation titled “An Exploration of What Attracts Leaders to [CAO] Positions and How [CAOs] have adapted to their positions”. Bell was particularly interested in determining if a difference existed between CAOs who had served their communities for many years versus CAOs who were products of climbing the ladder. He discovered there was limited literature focusing solely on the role of the CAO and their career development. As a result he completed an in depth study of 5 CAOs in the State of California.

His research highlighted that overall three ‘primary’ themes exist that affect the tenure of a CAO. First is the ability of the incumbent to adapt to their political environment. The second was the incumbent’s active participation in the community. The third was a prevailing maintenance of values that anchored the CAO to their community. His research concluded that the longevity of the CAO was dependent on variables that were typically beyond their control: internal council conflict, managing new upper level of government legislation to name a few. While the sample size is disappointingly small, the depth of his survey and its findings offer insight into the nature of the incumbent. He argues that CAOs share six common elements in their career progression: adaptability, fitness peaks, strange attractors, they are open to change, utilize networks and resilience. He determined that the role of the CAO cannot be tidily packaged in administration and management, but instead rests along a continuum between politics and administration / management.

In Ontario, the works of Dr. David Siegel (2010) align to Bell’s findings. In *The Leadership Role of the Chief Administrative Officer*, Siegel suggests that the position of CAO is dynamic and frustratingly complex. He argues that, to be successful, a CAO must master the ability to lead up (council), lead down (staff) and lead out (external relations). Siegel argues that the career path of a CAO must allow time for the individual to develop the leadership and relationship-building skills to succeed with elected representatives and community stakeholders.

To recap, we have discovered that push-pull factors directly impact the turnover of CAOs. Accepting this, the next step determined whether a community's fiscal and economic health had any impact on the tenure of incumbents. Research suggests, indeed it does. Furthermore, research reinforces the view that political change does in fact impact CAO turnover. Feiock et al conclude that communities with expansive resources tend to have little movement in their top appointed post (Feiock et al, 2008).

Up to Bell's work, the literature remained largely silent on career progressions of CAOs. Siegel and Bell attempt to demonstrate a correlation between the success of CAOs and particular professional experience. Their work contributes to the study of career paths, but neither author drills down to look at the career movement and the contributing factors of individual CAO prior work experience. If anything, Bell's thorough survey and analysis indicate that no standard career trajectory exists amongst CAOs. The individuals in his study unanimously reported non-linear career progressions. With subtlety, Siegel's work suggests that the three dimensions - leading up, down and out - of the CAOs position constrain individuals from enjoying a predictable and standard career progression (Siegel, 2010). Prior to concluding the literature review an analysis of career progressions relating to generalist versus specialist training and individual organizational fit is warranted.

Generalist versus Specialist

Slightly more than four and a half decades ago in 1965, Robert T. Golembiewski published *Specialist or Generalist? Structure as a Crucial Factor* in the Public Administration Review. Golembiewski analyzed the relationship of professional education and work experience upon the success of individuals in the public sector (Golembiewski, 1965). He argued that the impact of recruiting individuals with a specialist background ensures CAOs judgment skills in serving public administration are from a specialist perspective. He argued that specialist training can negatively affect their ability to be analytically flexible, to build teams and to study the impact

of a particular decision on the whole organization. Ultimately, this can negatively impact the tenure of CAOs. He warns against the risk of developing operational silos which are continually enhanced from a specialist trained CAO that oversees the area of operations.

His thoughts are as timely today. In consideration of Golembiewski's theory, what path should an individual who ultimately desires to become a CAO follow? The works of Watson & Hassett in *Career Paths: Ways to the Top (2004)* suggests that individuals historically pursued the role of Assistant CAO as a stepping stone for the ultimate goal of CAO. They noticed a trend where individuals were not seeking office beyond the assistant level. The position of Assistant CAO was designed for succession planning purposes. They observed that it was being altered to become an end in itself thereby removing the training opportunity for generalists.

An individual with a specialist background certainly has a disadvantage to overcome when they assume the role of the CAO. The role of the CAO is multifaceted. Ultimately, the specialist is forced to learn the balance of town operations, on the job. This can be a harsh training environment, leading to premature turnover. Furthermore, the environment sets the incumbent up to be easily influenced by individual politicians. According to Golembiewski, the specialist is on an extreme learning curve which can erode their leadership credibility in the eyes of the very people they are supervising, and those they are serving - council. Desanti and Newell (1996) completed a significant study of 267 city managers in communities of at least 75,000 in population in the US. Their research concluded that ultimately two paths to the top job existed: a) the traditional route of intern, administrative assistant in the office of the CAO, to the assistant to the CAO and then ultimately as CAO of a smaller community; and b) the specialist route from the directorship of a line department. The works of Watson and Hassett further support this theory.

A conclusion can be drawn: the career progression of a specialist or a generalist is an equally appropriate training ground for the job of CAO. Generally speaking, the individual with a specialist training may have more developmental issues to overcome surrounding the pieces of the CAO role.

Prior to New Public Management, appropriate personality or traits was not of paramount concern in staff appointments. The New Public Management ethos brought much too local government particularly the idea of leadership capabilities and the need for agents of change. In *The Fit Model* (Hanbury et al, 2004) the authors argued that fit is affected by six factors: CAO leadership style, personality, perceptions of the CAO, perceptions of the Council, demographics of the CAO and the demographics of the municipality.

Effective leadership is statistically related to the tenure of the CAO. Hanbury (2004) demonstrated that positive and present leadership tends to have a negative impact on tenure. This is not intuitive. The results suggest, rather conclusively, that effective leadership reduces the years of service in a community. “It has been assumed an effective (CAO) would have longer tenure; however high leadership effectiveness has a negative rather than a positive statistically significant relationship with years of service indicating rather surprisingly that effective leaders are likely to be a poorer fit than less effective leaders” (Hanbury et al, 2004, 570). The political administration dichotomy immediately comes to mind. A seasoned and highly skilled administrator may not be willing to stay in a community whose political leadership either devalues or disrespects that experience and knowledge base.

The personality of the CAO too has a dramatic impact on the tenure. The study suggests that a city manager who is introverted and reflective and reflects deeply before acting, is more likely to have a longer tenure. This individual tends to identify an issue, conceives of options for a resolution to the issue and waits for the balance of the organization to arrive at the same conclusion prior to acting. They are always ahead of the balance of the organization, delicately leading up, down and out (Siegel, 2010).

The preceding literature review demonstrates that a gap exists in the study and analysis of career progressions of CAOs in Ontario. It highlights that there is a lack of research in the field of local government leadership in general, and the career path of CAOs in particular in Ontario. “Local government executives can have far reaching effects on service delivery capacity, the

ability of local governments to enter into long-term contracts and commitments, economic development and an array of other operational and planning areas” (Francis et al 2010, 4). For a host of reasons ranging from succession planning to aiding individuals to prepare themselves with the skills necessary to succeed in the position of CAO, it is vitally important to study Ontario CAOs.

The methodology and study that follows was framed by the findings of the literature review. The research in the US suggests that CAOs are more likely to be recruited from inside the organization – 45% (Watson & Hassett, 2004). In the US, incumbents are highly educated with both a generalist (MPA) and a specialist background. The works of Feiock, Watson and Hassett and Bell conclude that political actors most definitely impact the tenure of CAOs.

The study of Ontario CAOs was designed to assess if the same patterns reported in the US are replicated in Ontario. Are Ontario CAOs typically recruited from outside the organization and are their career paths influenced by change in political actors?

Chapter IV: Methodology

The province of Ontario is home to 445 municipalities. In reflecting on approach for this study, a decision was made to only look at the 100 largest (population), lower and single tier communities. The City of St. Thomas, a single tier city in south-western Ontario, was removed from the analysis. The organizational structure of that community was altered in 2005 to a Council-Department from a Council-Manager structure. In 2011 it reverted to the pre-2005 structure, however the intervening years warranted it being removed from the analysis.

The compilation of the dataset included a series of research methods. The annual membership of the Ontario Municipal Administrators Association was reviewed to compile the names of the CAOs. Following this, gaps in the dataset were observed. Next a study of community media releases and municipal website content going back to 2000 was completed. A small subset of data remained outstanding and a series of emails and telephone conversations occurred to address the balance of the gaps.

Following the confirmation of the CAO dataset, the focus shifted to obtaining Mayoral data. This proved surprisingly difficult. Ultimately, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) provided a link to their data of Mayoral candidates dating back to 1980. The data set was in Adobe format and involved manually inputting all of the incumbent's information into an Excel database. A series of verifications followed to ensure the data was free from error. All of the data (CAO and Mayoral) was captured in Excel spreadsheets.

The time frame of study was 2000 to 2011. Ontario's legacy of amalgamations from 1995 to 1999, with many new communities being born on January 1, 2000, deemed it prudent to only study between 2000 and 2011. This period covers three province wide municipal elections of 2003, 2006 and 2010; any patterns would be discernable following three electoral periods.

Chapter V: Findings & Data Analysis

The focus of this study was to examine the career paths of CAOs and the effect of Mayoral turnover on CAO tenure in Ontario. Through analysis, it made sense to group the career progression in nine (9) primary categories: 1. Appointed from a line department from within; 2. Appointed from a line department from outside – a larger organization; 3. Appointed from a line department with a smaller municipality <25,000; 4. A CAO from a larger municipality; 5. A CAO from a smaller municipality; 6. A CAO from other public agencies; 7. A line department from another public organization; 8. The private sector and 9. Unknown.

A point of clarity is necessary between Tables 1 and 5. The frequency total of 177 reported in Table 1 is highlighting the backgrounds of CAOs. In comparison, Table 5 reports 163 total CAOs who moved out of their role. The difference of 14 (177-163) represents the communities that did not have any change in CAO between 2000 and 2011.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution Career Background			
Type	Area	Frequency	%
2	line department, same municipality	72	40.68%
3	line department, larger (> 25,000) municipality	27	15.25%
4	line department, smaller (<25,000) municipality	5	2.82%
5	CAO, larger municipality	16	9.04%
6	CAO, smaller municipality	33	18.64%
7	CAO, other public agencies	5	2.82%
8	line department, other public	8	4.52%
9	private sector	8	4.52%
10	Unknown	3	1.69%
		177	100.00%

Table 1 highlights the results of the study of CAOs. During the period of study (2001 – 2011), a total of 177 individuals held the position of CAO. Ontario municipalities demonstrate a similar path to the study completed by Watson and Hassett: 40.68% of all CAO appointments

from 2000 to 2011 were from within the organization. This study returned 72 occurrences of appointments from a director or commissioner level. In comparison 18.64% (33 occurrences) of the incumbents were CAOs appointed from a small municipality. Of equal interest 15.25% were appointed from a director or commissioner level in a larger municipality. The results suggest a couple of key career paths for CAOs in Ontario - single city careerists or ladder climbers.

The next step of analysis required grouping the data into three population sizes: small - less than 30,000; medium – between 30,000 and 99,999; and large – greater than 100,000. Of the 100 municipalities studied: 48 were small; 29 were medium and 23 were deemed large. The purpose of this action was to determine if the same result was repeated with different populations. Table 2 reports the actual occurrences by type, whereas Table 3 highlights the results in percentage terms.

Type	Area	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
2	line department, same municipality	22	28	22	72
3	line department, larger (>25,000)	14	9	4	27
4	line department, smaller (< 25,000)	2	1	2	5
5	CAO, larger municipality	7	4	5	16
6	CAO, smaller municipality	14	11	8	33
7	CAO, other public agencies	3	2	0	5
8	line department, other public	5	1	2	8
9	private sector	4	3	1	8
10	Unknown	3	0	0	3
	Total	74	59	44	177
chi-square=15.8, p=.465					

Type	Area	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000
2	line department, same municipality	29.73%	47.46%	50.00%
3	line department, larger (> 25,000)	18.92%	15.25%	9.09%
4	line department, smaller (<25,000)	2.70%	1.69%	4.55%
5	CAO, larger municipality	9.46%	6.78%	11.36%
6	CAO, smaller municipality	18.92%	18.64%	18.18%
7	CAO, other public agencies	4.05%	3.39%	0.00%
8	line department, other public	6.76%	1.69%	4.55%
9	private sector	5.41%	5.08%	2.27%
10	Unknown	4.05%	0.00%	0.00%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 2 reports a Chi-square of 15.8 with a probability of .465 with 16 degrees of freedom. Given less than 5 occurrences are prevalent and the corresponding p value of .465, there is no statistically significant observable relationship between municipal size and CAO career backgrounds. The results may in fact be completely random.

Grouped by population, the medium and larger municipalities do appear to have a higher propensity to recruit from within: 47.46% and 50% respectively compared to the small communities with 29.73%. Smaller communities manifest a higher likelihood to promote a line department head 18.92% from a larger municipality versus a medium municipality at 15.25%, and certainly more so than a large community at 9.09%. The larger municipalities do not recruit from larger municipalities perhaps because, for the most part, they are the largest and they develop their own leadership through internal training. All three groups equally recruit CAOs from smaller municipalities: Small - 18.92%; Medium -18.64% and Large -18.18%. This feels intuitive – the CAO progresses from a ‘smaller’ community to a small community and then from the small community to the medium community, eventually landing in a large community.

The results suggest that smaller communities serve as a fertile training ground for the medium and large municipalities to recruit from. This is an important finding in terms of career

development in the field. The data suggests that an individual with the career objective of the CAOs office is more likely to achieve their goal if they join a larger community as a line manager and then move, accepting a CAOs position in a small community, or accepting a department head position in a larger community. Large communities can be somewhat insular with their councils in fact believing that ‘from inside’ is better: their thinking is that only individuals from within could understand the complexity of the operations.

A valuable next step would be to conduct a series of interviews with the incumbents to discover the details of their respective career paths. The 40.68% recruited from within, points to the specialist being the prevailing recruit within the CAOs office. Interviews would fill in the gaps in terms of highest level of education completed and, various positions held in the trajectory to the CAOs office.

Gender

Following the assessment of the career paths of CAOs the question of gender distribution was measured. Table 4 highlights the results.

Table 4: 2011 Gender Distribution by Size				
Gender	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
Male	34 (71%)	29 (100%)	18 (78%)	81 (81%)
Female	14 (29%)	0 (0%)	5 (22%)	19 (19%)
	48 (100%)	29 (100%)	23 (100%)	100 (100%)
chi-square=4.00 p=.146 Cramer's v=.2				

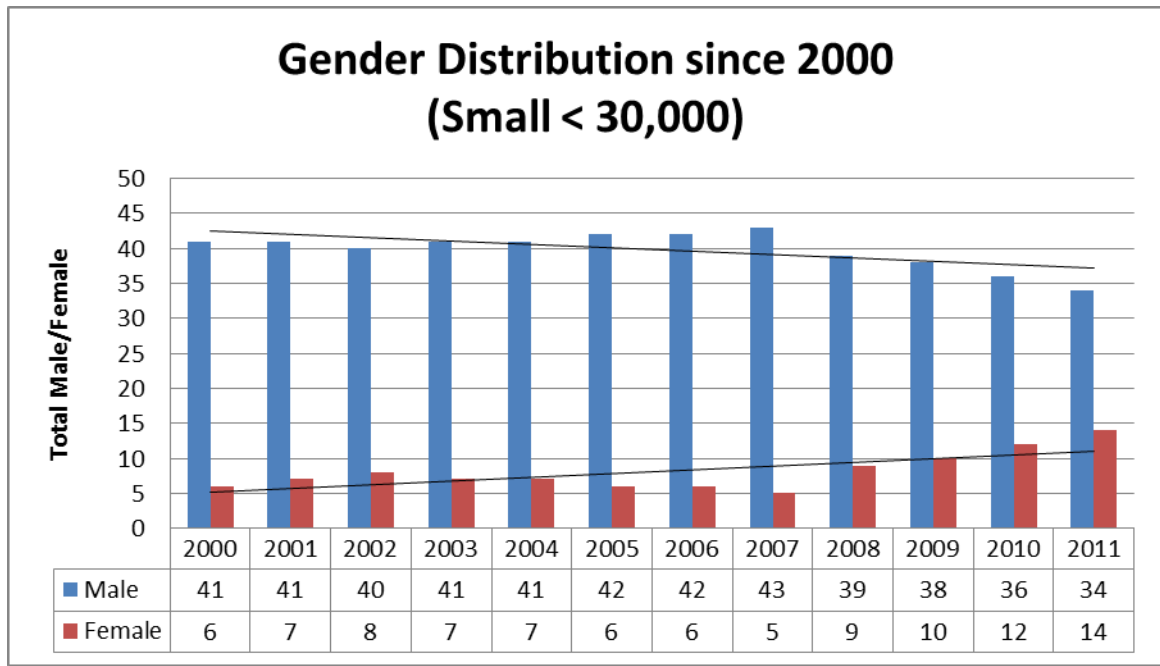
In the bluntest of terms, size matters when it comes to gender. Table 4 reports a Chi-square of 4.00 and $p=.146$ with a Cramer's v of .2. There is statistical significance in this relationship. In whole numbers, males remain overly represented. The most striking result was

the distribution found in the Medium class. Of the 29 CAOs, 0 (0%) were female. At the start of this study, the results recorded 2 female and 27 males in this subset. However, between January and June 30, 2011 both females accepted positions in 'small' communities with populations of less than 30,000 residents.

It is curious when the small and large municipalities are reviewed. For the small communities, 29% (14) were female. Of the fourteen (14) positions, two (2) were labelled the dual role CAO-Clerk. Generally, the CAO-Clerk position tends to have less autonomy as the operational leader. Similarly, in the larger communities 22% (5) were female. These are similar representations – the complete absence of female CAOs in medium sized communities is worthy of more analysis. It was a surprising finding that is beyond the scope of this research paper. Multiple trends may be influencing this result. The field of well-trained females may be a generation behind the current senior administrators who are applying for the jobs. A second factor may be that the history in communities of promoting from within may in fact be following a de facto seniority ranking system advancing the long serving male department heads. A third trend is the potential that fully qualified females are self-deselecting from the opportunities in the mid-sized community. Does the recruitment process within the medium sized communities effectively eliminate female applicants? Does the medium sized community not hold career appeal for females?

For additional clarity, the gender distribution is reported in chart form with trend lines in Charts 1, 2, and 3. The gender distribution is reported by year from 2000 to June 30 2011. One community from 2005 to 2011 did not have a CAO position and hence the results are less than the group size. As well, two communities as of the writing of this report had vacancies in the CAO position. For one community, the incumbent in 2000 could not be verified and therefore gender was unable to be confirmed. Although, it is beyond the scope of this study, the results from 2000 suggest that gender distribution is shifting toward an equal distribution with the exception of the middle sized communities.

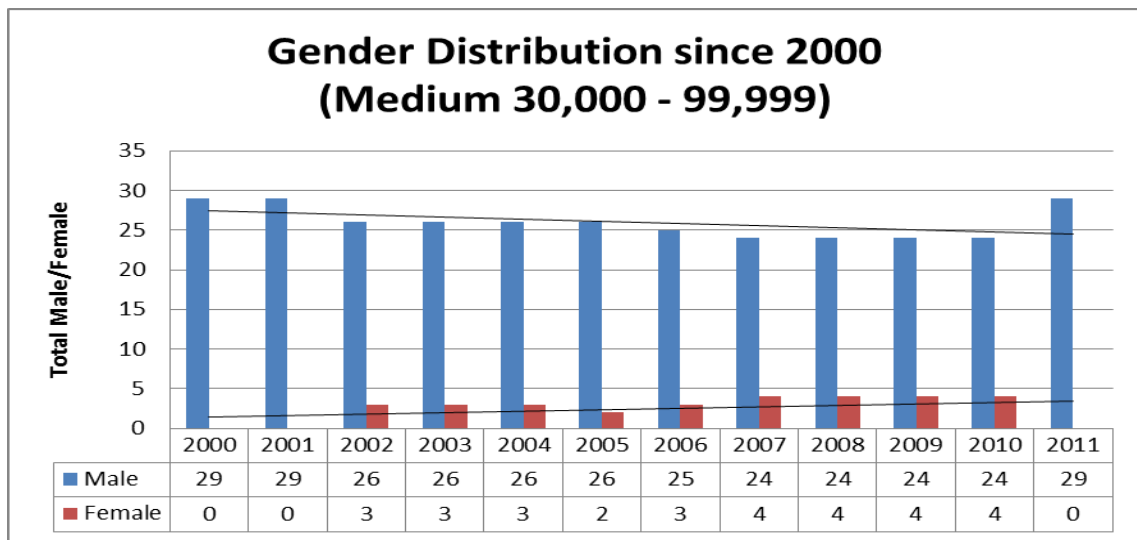
Chart 1:



Note: Chart 1

Two appointments in 2011 in the small communities are on an acting basis and both were male internal candidates.

Chart2



Note: Chart 2

One community adopted a management by committee in 2005 and returned to a CAO structure in 2010. One internal appointment in 2011 was an acting appointment to backfill for a female who left to join a smaller community as CAO.

Chart3

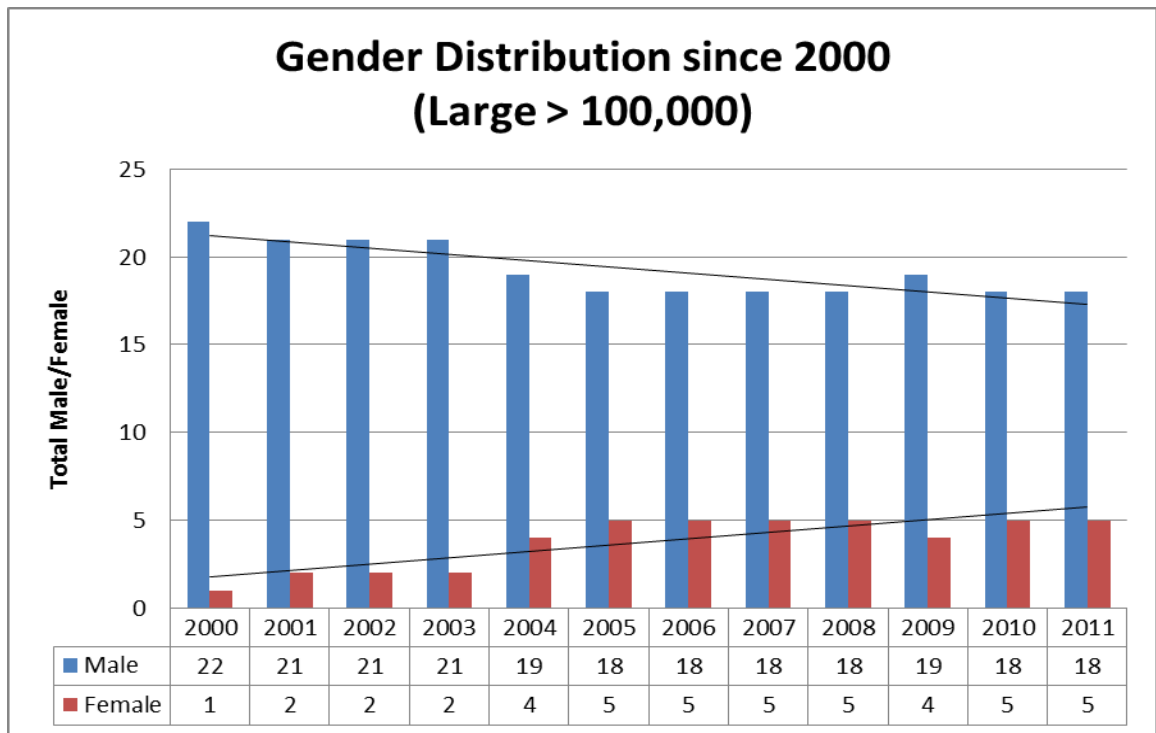
Turnover

Table 5 and Table 6 measure CAO turnover in the three strata. Recall that Turnover is measuring the change in the incumbent holding the CAO position.

Table 5: CAO Turnover Occurrences by year, 2001 – 2011				
Year	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
2001	5	2	2	9
2002	4	6	3	13
2003	3	7	4	14
2004	5	4	7	16
2005	9	7	3	19
2006	7	4	3	14
2007	8	3	5	16
2008	7	4	7	18
2009	4	5	5	14
2010	7	6	1	14
2011	6	9	1	16
	65	57	41	163

Table 6: % of Total CAO Turnover Occurrences by year, 2001 - 2011				
Year	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
2001	7.69%	3.51%	4.88%	16.08%
2002	6.15%	10.53%	7.32%	24.00%
2003	4.62%	12.28%	9.76%	26.65%
2004	7.69%	7.02%	17.07%	31.78%
2005	13.85%	12.28%	7.32%	33.44%
2006	10.77%	7.02%	7.32%	25.10%
2007	12.31%	5.26%	12.20%	29.77%
2008	10.77%	7.02%	17.07%	34.86%
2009	6.15%	8.77%	12.20%	27.12%
2010	10.77%	10.53%	2.44%	23.73%
2011	9.23%	15.79%	2.44%	27.46%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table 5 reports the CAO turnover occurrences in absolute occurrences. Table 6 converts the occurrences into percentages of all observed occurrences of turnover.

Table 6 highlights the reported percentages for each subset.

Recall that the study sample size is 100, and since 2001, there have been 163 CAO turnovers. Prior to analyzing each column, it is worth noting a few of the results from each calendar year. The lowest year for turnover, in absolute terms, was 2001 with a total of 9, or 9% of the sample. The reader is reminded of the period of local government amalgamations that largely occurred effective January 1, 2000. As such, it is reasonable to suggest that perhaps the amalgamations resulted in 2001 having reduced movement or relative stability.

In stark contrast, a figure that appears high is 2005, at 19 departures. In essence, close to 2 in 10 CAOs left their position in 2005. Since 2001, no year has had fewer than 13 CAOs leave their post, with the average being 14.17 departures per year. If 2005 is treated as an outlier, the average still remains high at 13.71 departures per year. Of equal concern is 2011 which is

tracking to be a year of significant change with 16 departures between January and June. Reflecting on the sample size of 100 communities, 16 movements are significant for half of a calendar year. The CAO position may be going through a period of significant change and regeneration. Further, 2011 may be the start of the baby boomer bubble hitting the local government sector.

Referring to Table 6, in comparing the three subsets, no startling pattern is apparent. Similar to what was witnessed with gender, the small and large communities do tend to return similar results for any given year. The medium communities do not have the same turnover rates in a year as their small and large counterparts. Additional study is needed to offer any concrete explanations for the pattern and the differences between the communities. In percentage terms, Table 6 reaffirms the earlier observation that small communities appear to be the trainer for the medium and larger municipalities. It can also be said that they experience the most instability caused by high levels of movement. The total turnover factors changed beginning in 2005. The growth in turnover for smaller communities can be observed. From 2001 to 2004, the turnover did not reach 8%, while medium and large each reported years of double-digit turnover. Of great interest, for 2006, 2007 and 2010 the small group had the highest turnover rates. This may suggest that the medium and large communities were recruiting from the small communities.

Table 7: Number of CAO Turnover Occurrences in Communities since 2000

#	Small <30,000	Medium & Large > 30,000	Total
0	10	4	14
1	20	17	37
2	10	15	25
greater than 3	8	16	24
N=	48	52	100

Chi-Square= 6.27 p=.0992 Cramer's V=.2504

Following the review of the total turnover by year, the measurement of the number of occurrences of CAO change within a particular population subset was necessary. Table 7 outlines the number of occurrences of CAO turnover within population subset. Turnover in this table is defined as effectively a change in the incumbent CAO. In other words, a CAO who was recruited and remains in the position is counted when they assumed their position. The chart does not measure years of service to a community. The Chi-Square of 6.27 combined with a probability factor of .0992 is indicative of a statistically significant relationship between the size of the community and the number of changes in CAO. An astounding 24% had 3 or more occurrences of turnover in an eleven year period. The average year of service for incumbent CAOs is 7.47. This is calculated by summing the total number of turnovers in Table 7 and dividing by the 11.5 years under measure (86 turnovers divided by 11.5 years).

Measuring tenure, as it is traditionally defined, proved more challenging. A mechanical assessment was undertaken to measure how long on average, between 2000 and 2011 a CAO remained in their role. The difficulty rested with the individuals who began their service prior to 2000 and those who remained in their roles at the end of 2011. A subset of data was measured that included only those CAOs who were appointed and had vacated their role between 2000 and 2011. In essence, the measure was inclusive of CAOs who had completed their service in a community. The total number of municipalities that fell into this category was 52. Three communities appointed a new CAO in 2000 as a result of amalgamations and therefore the individuals were included and measured in their 'new' role since 2000, despite having worked for a pre-amalgamated community. For individual CAOs the question was how long they served their community. The resulting calculation was a surprising 4.24 years. Table 8 demonstrates that for CAOs appointed since 2000, the average years on the job is 4.239.

The sample size combined with the time period under study makes it difficult to offer any conclusions. It is worth reminding the reader that in Ontario the term of elected office until 2006

for a Mayor and Council was three years and in 2006 became four years. Interviews with the incumbents would offer insight into the reasoning behind the movements.

Richard C. Feiock (2001) argued “there is growing recognition of the importance of executive tenure and turnover for the performance of organizations in both the private and public sectors” (Feiock et al, 2001, 106).

Table 8: Average Years CAO in current position since 2000

	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
Average Years in Job	4.259	4.412	3.398	4.239
Total	21	18	13	52

The results in Table 8 are rather striking. The average length of service for a CAO between 2000 and June 30, 2011 is 4.239 years. *In Know Yourself and take Charge: The Fit Model*, the authors studied communities in the US and discovered that the mean length of service was 6.4 years with a median length of 5 years (Hanbury et al, 2004, 566).

In comparison, the study completed by Hassett and Watson (2004) of the 113 CAOs in Council-manager structures, the turnover factor was very similar to the results reported in Table 8. Fully 40.7% of CAOs in the study had been in office for less than four years and 79.6% had served for nine (9) or less years. The findings from the study report that the average duration of a CAO in a single CAOs position was 6.3 years (Hassett and Watson, 2004, 196).

Considering municipalities are expected to deliver stable public services, and under New Public Management, administration is expected to provide innovation, it is difficult to conceive of how this can be achieved with such levels of turnover. To be clear, turnover in and of itself

should not be viewed as automatically having a negative impact on a community. Properly managed turnover can result in healthy and progressive change in any environment.

At the opposite end of the spectrum 14% of the communities experienced no turnover. The overwhelming majority were within small communities despite the smaller communities appearing to serve as trainers for the larger organizations. Certainly a sweet spot for turnover must exist which ensures appropriate levels of growth and change within an organization.

Table 9 is a re-sorting of Table 8 which illustrates four communities had four CAOs in 11.5 years. Outside of these communities, the numbers suggest that the professionalization of the CAO position has started to have an impact on the tenure of the top appointed position.

Table 9: Number of CAO Turnover occurrences in Communities, 2001 - 2011

#	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
0	10	3	1	14
1	20	8	9	37
2	10	7	8	25
3	7	9	4	20
4	1	2	1	4
N=	48	29	23	100

Table 10: % of Turnover in Communities, 2001 - 2011

#	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
0	20.83%	10.34%	4.35%	14.00%
1	41.67%	27.59%	39.13%	37.00%
2	20.83%	24.14%	34.78%	25.00%
3	14.58%	31.03%	17.39%	23.00%
4	2.08%	6.90%	4.35%	1.00%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Political Masters

As reported in the literature review, a number of studies have been completed measuring the correlation between CAO turnover and political change. In completing this study of CAOs it became obvious that studying Mayoral change was necessary in an attempt to explain CAO career progressions.

The philosophical underpinning of the Council-Manager structure is the manager position (CAO) remains apolitical. Harkening back to the reform era lobbyists, the incumbents' appointment is based on merit and skill alone. Therefore, in theory, the position should not be heavily influenced by change in political actors, namely mayoral change.

Table 11: Number and Percent of Mayor Turnover in Communities, 2001-2011

Year	Small <30,000	Medium 30,000 - 99,999	Large >100,000	Total
2003	29 (41%)	19 (44%)	9 (27%)	57 (39%)
2006	18 (25%)	11 (26%)	13 (40%)	42 (29%)
2010	24 (34%)	13 (30%)	11 (33%)	48 (33%)
	71 (100%)	43 (100%)	33 (100%)	147 (100%)

chi-square=3.38, p=.496, Cramer's v=.1072

Table 11 is a general distribution of the Mayoral change from the past three elections in Ontario. The Table reports a somewhat different relationship from earlier tables regarding the CAOs position. Namely, Small and Medium sized communities tend to behave in tandem in local government elections. For example, in each of the three elections, the percentage change in the Mayoral incumbent (small versus medium) was very similar: 2003 (41% versus 44%); 2006 (25% versus 26%) and 2010 (34% versus 30%). This relationship is different from the CAO turnover. It is also interesting to note that in 2010, all three subsets behaved the same, each returning close to 33% new Mayors. An interesting question to answer is whether the new mayors had served on council prior to their election to the position of head of council. If yes, were they advocates of

public service professionalism in general and the Council-Manager structure, in particular or where they frustrated by the Council-Manager system on Ontario local government?

A hallmark of democracy is elected representatives who are demographically representative of the community that they represent. The formal education and depth of professional experience of representatives may be limited, which can impact council and a new Mayors' appreciation for the nuances of CAOs. As well, a competent CAO tends to do the majority of their finest work behind the windows and walls of City Hall. For good reason the general public and to a certain extent council members do not have exposure to the inner workings of the CAOs office and the issues that are resolved before they become 'political'. New mayors in particular, may have a tendency, however innocently, to underestimate the value of Council's chief advisor.

Tables 12 and 13 try to measure if a statistically significant relationship exists between Mayoral change and change in the CAOs office. They report the relationship between the mayoral change and the change in the CAO. Table 12 measures the changes in an election year while table 13 measures the impact 1 year following an election.

Table 12: Election Year	2003		2006		2010	
	New Mayor	Same Mayor	New Mayor	Same Mayor	New Mayor	Same Mayor
New CAO	14% (8)	14% (6)	21% (9)	9% (5)	10% (5)	17% (9)
Same CAO	86% (49)	86% (37)	79% (33)	91% (53)	90%(43)	83% (43)
Total	100% (57)	100% (43)	100%(42)	100% (58)	100 (48)	100% (52)
	chi-square=.08, p=.7773		chi-square=2.34, p=.1261 Cramer's v= .1822		chi-square=.5, p=.4795 Cramer's v= .099	

In Table 12, the results in 2003 are not repeated in 2006 and 2010. 2003 suggests that there is no impact between mayoral change and CAO change. In contrast, 2006 suggests that there is a relationship between mayoral change and CAO change. The chi-square of 2.34 with a p value of .1261 indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant. The same relationship appeared in 2010, with the mayoral change and the lack thereof, having an impact on CAO change. The chi-square of .5 with a p value of .4795 and corresponding Cramer's v of .099, suggests this relationship is most likely due to random change and not statistically significant. The changes between 2006 and 2010 warranted studying the impact of mayoral change one year post election.

Table 13: 1 year post election Year	2004		2007		2011*	
	New Mayor	Same Mayor	New Mayor	Same Mayor	New Mayor	Same Mayor
New CAO	14% (8)	19% (8)	21% (9)	12% (7)	19% (9)	10% (5)
Same CAO	86% (49)	81% (35)	79% (33)	88% (51)	81% (39)	90% (47)
	100% (57)	100% (43)	100% (42)	100% (58)	100% (48)	100% (52)
	chi-square=.12, p=.729 Cramer's v= .0616		chi-square=.97, p=.3247 Cramer's v= .1261		chi-square=1.05, p=.3055 Cramer's v= .1315	

*Note: Table 13 2011 is only measured from January to June 30.

Table 13 tells a like tale: 2007 and 2011 are suggesting no statistical relationship exists between the change in Mayor and the change in CAO. For 2007 the chi-square of .97 with a p value of .3247, is less than ideal, the Cramer's v of .1261 suggests no statistically significant relationship is present. However, in 2007 the movement is 9% (21% – 12%) between a new Mayor/new CAO and the same Mayor/new CAO. This measured difference is significant. An identical pattern is present in 2011.

In 2011 the new Mayor/new CAO of 19% shifts to 10% in the case of a same Mayor/new CAO. The 9% change again suggests a statistically significant relationship. It bears repeating that the results for 2011 are only from January to June 30. Given historical patterns, there is a strong likelihood that continued change in CAOs will be witnessed for the balance of the 2011 calendar year. The final results may exceed that of 2005 where 19 CAOs shifted in/out of their roles. At 16 occurrences for half of the calendar year, it is not beyond possibility to suggest the final results are likely to exceed 2005.

Chapter VI: Conclusions and Recommendations

This study began with a clear objective: determine if there was a standard career path for CAOs in Ontario, and if the position was impacted by Mayoral turnover. The literature review offers that in US cities with a Council-Manager structure CAOs would serve their community on average for five years and their turnover was directly related to the change in political actors.

By design CAOs operate in a political environment, “Dealing with the political aspects of the CAOs role presents an ongoing challenge to even the most seasoned managers” (Hassett and Watson, 2002, 623).

It is not unreasonable to predict that a change in political actors, particularly the head of council would have a direct relationship with CAO tenure. Many studies of US cities have concluded that a correlation exists. Studies completed by DeHoog et al (1990), Feiock et al (2001), and McCabe et al (2008) all concluded a direct and positive correlation between Mayor turnover and CAO turnover in Council-Manager structures. In their studies they determined that push-pull factors are certainly at play in the movement of CAOs. They concluded that political influence does impact the timing of the exit of the CAO.

In their study of long-serving CAOs Hassett and Watson conclude that the tenure of a CAO is positively impacted by a skilled incumbent and a facilitative Mayor. This suggestion is echoed by Dr. Siegel’s (2010) work on the dynamics, and the ultimate success, of CAO leadership.

This study of Ontario CAOs sheds light on issues. The number of CAO turnovers (163) since 2000 was surprising. The results indicate that CAOs are largely recruited from within the organization and from smaller communities where the incumbent served as a CAO. Further, smaller communities seem to be serving as a training ground for CAOs to leapfrog to their ultimate career goals.

A surprising dichotomous relationship was observed in relation to community size. Small (<30,000) and large communities (>100,000) demonstrated largely the same characteristics with CAO recruitment, turnover and gender distribution. In contrast, with Mayoral change, small (<30,000) communities mirrored medium (30,000 – 99,999) sized communities. The repeatability of this relationship is worth testing.

Despite gender distribution not being germane to the research question, the results were startling. This particular area is most deserving of additional attention to try and discover the root cause of female CAOs being completely absent from the medium (30,000 – 99,999) sized communities.

The turnover of CAOs too requires additional study. A rudimentary review of the data suggests that the CAO position is still predominately held by specialists, namely planners, accountants and engineers. Further work is necessary to uncover the root cause of CAO turnover. Academic literature supports the push-pull theory, the impact of a community's fiscal health and its economic vibrancy. A study involving interviews with the incumbents would provide valuable data in measuring CAO career progression.

Finally, there is the question of whether Mayoral turnover influences CAO turnover, or not. The period studied is brief and the sample size is small. Despite this, the results suggest that indeed a relationship does exist similar to that in the US studies. Further study is needed. In particular, interviews with the CAOs who have left their post for another community or for the relaxing pastures of retirement could provide insight into why they departed their communities.

The level of turnover for the top appointed officer in local government in Ontario appears high. The level of change jeopardizes a community's ability to take advantage of innovation, creativity and may negatively impact the efficient service delivery model. Given the average yearly occurrence of CAO turnover during the eleven and a half (11.5) years since 2000 approaches 14%, additional study is warranted. This rate of flipping the top appointed position in

a municipal government is bound to have an impact on governance and the organizations general ability to efficiently and effectively manage the service delivery model.

In closing, there is an observed relationship between Mayoral change and CAO turnover. As well, there is an observed difference between small, medium and large communities in terms of CAO turnover. There is an underrepresentation of professional females in the CAOs role. Additional research may serve to explain the observed differences in the study. Although the data collected is based on a relatively small sample size of 100 communities, ideally it will serve as a springboard for additional study of Ontario and Canadian CAOs.

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